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## Monster Dog (Leviatán) (1984)



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A forgotten moment in Alice Cooper's career is the 1984 Italian horror film *Leviatán* (a.k.a. *Monster Dog*), now re-released on DVD under its English-language title. In the movie, Cooper plays a rock star

named Vince Raven who returns to his hometown to shoot a video, only to find a plague of werewolf attacks underway. The premise is a recipe for a cheesy good time, but the resulting film is flat and ponderous.

The movie starts with Raven and his crew



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watching one of his videos. The song is called “Identity Crises [sic]” and the sound and visuals resemble generic early-’80s MTV pop. Cooper strikes a suitably goofy, mocking note in the opening, but as the story progresses, he isn’t up to the job of expressing dread, and instead comes off as spacey and distracted. It’s hard to say whether the bad dubbing with someone else’s voice helps or hurts.

The other acting performances are better than Cooper’s but not by much. The strongest part of the film is a series of early scenes in Raven’s old family home. The night-time shots have good atmosphere, but both the scenarios and much of the camera work are borrowed from the films of Lucio Fulci, particularly *The Beyond*. Since *The Beyond* debuted just three years earlier, *Monster Dog* is too early to be considered an homage, and director Claudio Fragasso has been involved in a number of cheap rip-offs of Fulci’s greatest hits.

The tension dissipates in the second half of the

film, and while the gore effects are fairly realistic (thanks in part to sparse lighting), the werewolf costume is cheap and disappointing. However, there are a few unintentionally funny moments. When Raven and his crew first arrive in town, they stop at a roadblock and the sheriff informs them that wild dogs have recently killed five people in the area. The travelers’ cheery mood gives way to fear. In shock, one says to the sheriff: “Five?! At the other roadblocks, they only mentioned two deaths.”

By the time Raven & Co. get around to making the video that provided the reason for their voyage of doom, it lacks both musical punch and the humor of the first video. This film could only have worked as a straight Alice Cooper vehicle, in which the star hammed up his acting and rocked hard in the musical segments. However, he did little of the former and none of the latter. Did the filmmakers ever see Cooper’s live shows?

- [Chris Pepus](#)