

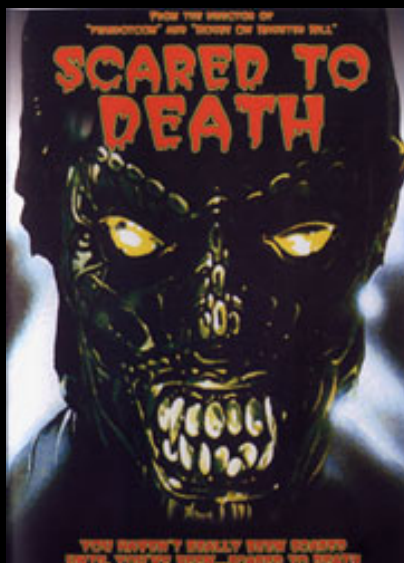
the B-Movie Buffet

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Scared To Death [Substance]

1982; color

Directed by William Malone

Starring: John Stinson, Jonathan David Moses, Diana Davidson & Toni Jannotta

What do you get when military scientists create a new super soldier, one who escapes and runs amuck in the sewers, surfacing only to feed on dimwitted teens and other clichéd horror movie morons? You would get the 1982 drive-in monster flick *Scared To Death*. The movie opens in a grey mist; the camera moving through a dark, dank sewer. Next, we get our first (and last) glimpse of some prime '80s style T&A, as a blonde teenage bombshell is seen undressing in front of her bedroom window. Unluckily for her, this monster wants a little more than your average Peeping Tom. Yes, you guessed it, she gets the honor of being the first victim of this mysterious monster. After the body count has started, we meet our reluctant hero, Ted Lonergan (John Stinson), a retired cop turned aspiring novelist. (Huh?) Ted's ex-partner tells him about the murder and asks for his help but Ted is reluctant to get back into the detective game. In the meantime, the body count continues to grow: another dead blonde (this time the monster attacks his female prey while she's trying to get in her car); two dead sewer workers; and one dead roller skating teen. Did I mention that the monster has a name? It does. It's called "Syngenor." Don't bother asking what it means, they don't really explain that in the movie. (Along with a lot of other things.) Also, he kills people by sucking out their

spinal fluid through his lizard-like tongue that acts like a needle. This is probably the coolest part of the movie, even though it is a total rip-off of Alien. After a sewer chase with the monster, Ted eventually corners the beast in an old factory and crushes it in some sorta sheet metal pressing machine. Scared To Death borrows from 1950s sci-fi and '70s/'80s slasher flicks, as well as a lot of specific movies (the monster-in-the-sewer classic Alligator, the monster-in-outer-space classic Alien, and the monster-from-the-water classic Creature from the Black Lagoon) but to the film's credit, it does pre-date C.H.U.D. For a low budget monster flick, the makeup / man in the rubber monster suit looks pretty good. Throw in some purposefully shaky camera work, an overall dark and grainy view, requisite eerie music and you got yourself a pretty decent, if not entirely standard, horror movie / monster flick.
Scary? No. Fun? Hell yeah!
—Peter Santa Maria

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