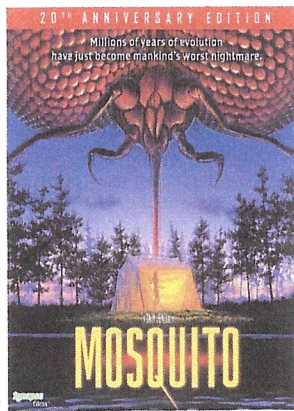


# MOSQUITO

Back in 1995 who knew that mutant bug movies would return to assault unsuspecting viewers? Director Gary Jones whipped up **MOSQUITO** which posits that mutant giant bugs attack people in a park. From the space themed opening shot to the fiery climax there aren't many frames that pass by without some action happening on screen. The special effects are all over the place with some stop motion flying scenes added for good measure. Yes they vary in execution but stylistically they are all pretty neat. Perhaps the best bit involves a scenario straight out of **HUMANOIDS FROM THE DEEP** where a naked girl in a tent has her ass assaulted by one of the skeeters proboscis!



Adding to the fun is the casting of the late great Gunnar Hansen who of course gets to wield a chainsaw! The cast are up for the challenge of reacting to the insurmountable insect odds and that's half the fun.

The blu-ray release from Synapse Films has everything you could possibly want including a stellar transfer (there is a note tucked inside the sleeve explaining the process about the transfer including the amazing new 7.1 DTS surround mix). There is an audio commentary, a new documentary featuring Gunnar (and a slew of others) plus deleted, extended and behind the scenes footage (all of this has optional audio commentary by Gary Jones). A trailer and still gallery round out the extras.

I dig big bug films and you should too. The nineties wasn't the best time for genre films but a few sneaked by that delivered the goods and **MOSQUITO** falls into that niche. Grab a copy today.

# THE MUTILATOR

Many years ago I reviewed the VHS edition of **THE MUTILATOR** in one of the early Liquid Cheese issues. I reasoned that the film works as a gory slasher but that the characters were perhaps the dumbest yet seen on film. 20 years later my opinion hasn't changed.

When a birthday present (cleaning dad's guns) doesn't go according to plan for young Ed Jr., his dad is none-too-pleased about it. Years later when Ed junior is all grown up and going on a 'fall break' with his college buddies, papa Ed devises a plan for his son to clean up their dilapidated lakeside home. Unbeknownst to them, Dad is waiting in the wings ready to pick off anyone who gets too close...by pick, by axe...bye bye!



This odd slasher film was directed by Buddy Cooper who knew the horror market was lucrative, but he was clearly marching to his own beat. While the opening credit sequence plays right up to conventional slasher convictions, the normalcy that Ed Junior exhibits is the opposite of what the audience expects. When we see the grown Ed dismiss his father's strange behavior to his friends we question his motives. For example a photo of a 'victim' is brushed off as being an 'accident.' Of course the dimwits are equally dismissive of big Ed's violent hobbies (including a vast array of fishing implements that are put to good use!). Yet Ed Junior is just another victim...but why his dad waits all these years to 'off' him is anyone's guess. In any event the gory and sadistic murders give **THE MUTILATOR** a decided edge over

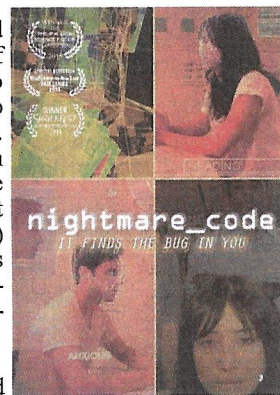
most of the slasher fare that emanated in theaters post 1982. In fact one remarkable kill (achieved by the use of condoms) is so over-the-top that by its inclusion alone, renders **THE MUTILATOR** cult status...for life.

While it's been far too long of a wait for a decent version of **THE MUTILATOR** to arrive on digital disc, Arrow Video has delivered a product that is far more than what anyone could have possibly expected. The uncut print is a thing a beauty...a remarkable achievement considering that past versions were way too dark (I had the VHS and laserdisc). Now the bloody and effective FX can be seen in all their gory glory. The extras are bursting with a feature length documentary plus interviews with FX genius Mark Shostrom (who speaks calmly) and composer Michael Minard (who plays part of the score on the piano during his talk). There are some swell radio spots, various trailers (most under the original title **FALL BREAK**) plus screen tests and outtakes. There's even more but suffice it to say it's a package that will disappoint *no one*.

2016 has barely begun but Arrow Video's presentation of **THE MUTILATOR** stands as one of the best. Look for it.

# NIGHTMARE\_CODE

A computer program dubbed R.O.P.E.R. (makes me think of **THREE'S COMPANY** for those who get the connection) was developed to suss out behavioral patterns in humans. The program works all too well which leads the main programmer to kill the staff and himself. His replacement (brought in to 'crack' the original code) arrives in the form of Brett, who needs a job to stay out of jail. What he discovers is something truly evil that borders on the apocalyptic.



Here we have something unique and dare I say it...original. While the idea of a computer program taking on a life of its own has been done many times before, writer/director Mark Netter takes this idea into new realms (incorporating everything from cell phones, wi fi, Skype and even snuff footage). To liven up the proceedings the filming technique involves multiple camera angles (with the screen usually split into four sections) and multiple points of view. It can be a little disconcerting at first but stick with it...it'll grow on you. The acting is unusually good, with solid performances all around.

The film tackles a lot of pressing issues involving technology and world problems. What if we could spot a terrorist before they strike? Who is programming who? What if we could plug ourselves into a computer thus becoming immortal? Many of these ideas are talked about in some of the special features. Food for thought...and good food at that.

There's much to like with **NIGHTMARE\_CODE**. It's a sterling effort that remains one of the best independent films I viewed in 2015. It is available on DVD from MVDvisual. Make every effort to track this one down, you won't regret it.

# NIGHTMARE WEEKEND

A brilliant scientist creates a computer dubbed "Apache" that runs with help from George...a hand puppet?!?!? His 'college' Julie is scheming to plunder the system from out under his nose. She invites three young girls to partake in an experiment...subjecting them to silver balls that either decimate or transform the 'victim' into gooey creatures. Another young girl, Jessica, is the scientist's daughter who gets involved with Julie's assistant Ken (Dale Midkiff). They try to figure out what's going on...either by spending time at the local arcade (popular early '80s games like Zaxxon, Ms. Pac Man and Centipede are on display) or fending off would-be rapists.

