

## '60s SHOCKERS!

### ARROW VIDEO

(\$39.95 2-disc Blu-ray) 5/16

#### BLOOD BATH (1966) B&W

Movie(s) ♂♂1/2/Blu-ray ♂♂♂♂

D: Rados Novakovic, Jack Hill, Stephanie Rothman. William Campbell, Merissa Mathes, Lori Saunders, Sandra Knight, Karl Schanzer, Patrick Magee, Sid Haig, Jonathan Haze. 95, 81, 62, 79 mins.

All right, so what we have here is your basic Roger Corman pick-up flick that was released in no fewer than four different versions; its various releases and re-releases stretch over a couple of years and cover every way you can see a film, from theaters and drive-ins to late-night TV. Starting in 1963, Rados Novakovic delivered what was a pretty straight art heist under the film's original (first?) title **Operation Titian**. An old man is murdered and a famous painting is stolen. Magee is a creep trying to get his hands on the stolen art and figures in as a major player in the plotline, as does Campbell, who is also trying to find the missing artwork. Unhappy with the results (and not thinking it commercial enough for the American market), Corman went back to re-edit the film completely, with Rothman filming a couple extra scenes. (Novakovic was credited as director under the name Michael Road.) Running 14 minutes shorter, the film begins with a high-energy striptease (as opposed to a shadowy stalking) and the same basic plot speeds along at a much quicker pace. Magee is now a disgruntled husband out to get Campbell for cheating with his wife. (Amazing how a couple of newly dubbed lines can change an entire character.) It showed up on TV with a package of other AIP flicks under the title **Portrait in Terror**. Still suffering sleepless nights over the twenty thousand he invested in the flick years before, Corman instructed Jack Hill to re-shoot scenes to use with **Operation Titian** footage for the shortest version, known as **Blood Bath**. In this version, Magee is not really in the picture except fleetingly, and Campbell is now a stark raving lunatic, haunted by the ghost of a former lover. Haig and Haze are a couple of hepcat artists who inadvertently get mixed up in the terror. A beautiful ballerina plays into the crazed climax. Hill gets a little artsy with some dream scenes out in the desert. Finally, with a little more tinkering by the ever-clever Rothman, we have the version that is probably the most known, **Track of the Vampire**. Sharing directing credits with Hill, Rothman concocted a plot about vampire artist Campbell and his stalking of young nubile women and beatniks. At some point, the film was put on a double feature with **Queen of Blood** under

the **Blood Bath** title, but I think it was the **Track of the Vampire** cut that was shown. Confused yet? This is an incredible journey as one simple film was transformed numerous times into different films that, in my opinion, were never any better than the last incarnation. It's dumb fun whichever version appeals to you—nothing that was ever supposed to be anything more than the bottom half of a double bill. Arrow archivists deserve major props for their tireless remastering of all four versions. The HD transfers are nothing less than incredible. Copious extras include **The Trouble with Titian Revisited**, a visual essay by Tim Lucas chronicling the many changes of the four versions, interviews with Haig and Hill, a booklet with new writings on the film and more. I watched all four versions in one marathon sitting, which proved to be equally frustrating and fascinating. To see how each of these films transformed from version to version was amazing. It is a lesson in how editing really does make a movie. Watching these films back to back at one time, however, is something you realize you only want to do once. (One version a night over four nights would have probably worked better.) A wonderfully realized presentation for the true film scholars among us.

—Rob Freese

### MILL CREEK ENTERTAINMENT

(\$14.98 Blu-ray) 7/16

#### WILLIAM CASTLE DOUBLE FEATURE:

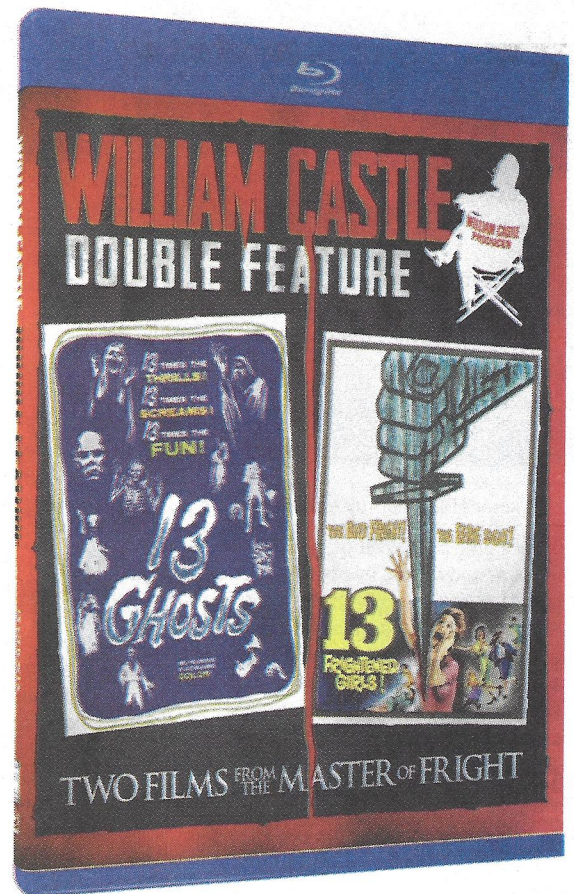
##### 13 GHOSTS (1960) B&W/Color ♂♂♂

D: William Castle. Charles Herbert, Jo Morrow, Martin Milner, Rosemary De Camp, Donald Woods, Margaret Hamilton. 85 mins.

##### 13 FRIGHTENED GIRLS (1963) ♂♂♂

D: William Castle. Murray Hamilton, Joyce Taylor, Hugh Marlowe, Khigh Dhiegh, Kathy Dunn, Charles Briggs. 88 mins.

Released on Blu-ray for the first time, one is a classic William Castle spooker, the other is a spy comedy thriller. Both have the number 13 in the title and both have actors with the last name of Hamilton. **13 Ghosts** is presented in Eastman Color and black-and-white and includes all the "Illusion-O!" effects but does not include the ghost viewers. Fortunately, I had a pair from the earlier DVD release and found, despite the box's claims that the viewers are not needed, if you want the ghosts to pop out, you need them. Or if you want to see the scenes sans ghosts using the blue filter, you definitely need them. Briefly, **13 Ghosts** is a classic shocker comedy about the Zorba family inheriting a haunted house. As Elaine, the housekeeper/medium, Margaret Hamilton is on hand at her Wicked Witch of the West best, right down to a broom, her black dress, hair in a bun, and smirk to the camera. Milner is the



lawyer for the late ghost expert Plato Zorba, who, before his death, captured 11 ghosts and set them loose throughout the house. There's also a hidden fortune. Great fun—and much better than the 2001 remake (**VS #43**). Besides having Hamilton as a "witch," the moans emitted by ghostly Uncle Plato supply another possible **Oz** connection: I'd swear that's Bert Lahr yawning after waking up from a poppy field nap in the 1939 classic.

The second feature, **13 Frightened Girls**, is in color, and, despite the title, only has one frightened girl in this espionage romp. The 16-year-old daughter (Dunn) of a diplomat becomes a spy to help the intelligence agent she has a super crush on (if you can image a pretty blonde lass having a crush on Murray Hamilton!). She sends him vital intel in the form of ransom note-style communiqués she signs as "Kitten." She even uses her white kitty cat's paw to make the paw print on the notes. Fans of **Hawaii Five-O** will enjoy the wicked performance of Wo Fat actor Khigh Dhiegh as Red Chinese diplomat Kang, who is out to perform some nasty spy shenanigans. All in all, I liked **13 Frightened Girls**. It's kind of **The Trouble with Angels** meets **The Girl From U.N.C.L.E.** Both films are recommended, but I deduct one Ro-Man for trying to get away with selling an Illusion-O! feature without the ghost viewer. Use a pair of red-and-blue 3D glasses instead or go to your crafts store and buy red-and-blue plastic sheets and make your own. So, **Ghosts** or **Girls**, you can't go wrong! ♂

—Dwight Kemper