

David and Jack are two young Americans who find themselves in the UK for a trip of exploration, starting with the desolate yet beautiful countryside. As they wander the landscapes they happen upon a pub where they take refuge from the miserable weather, however, after not reading the mood and accidentally upsetting one of the locals, they are abruptly forced to leave the pub. This leaves the pair stranded in the dead of night, with no other option than to hike through the marshlands to find another shelter, even though they were warned not to stray from the road. Soon enough the pair are attacked by a werewolf, killing Jack and leaving David wounded. After being transferred to London, it's not long until David and everyone else realise he may have become more like an animal than they thought.

There are memories of *An American Werewolf in London* that have lingered within my mind since my first viewing, always the recollection of sheer fright and horror at seeing how a man can transform into a creature within the blink of an eye. However, upon a second viewing, it was clear that this film is far more than pure horror, it has such a balance between the beloved werewolf genre and also comedic value. Some creature movies take themselves too seriously and therefore falter in the execution and getting the audience to fall for it, but Landis clearly recognised the audacity of such a myth like a werewolf and plays upon it through the entirety of the film, allowing the audience to feel more relaxed while watching a somewhat out there concept. The comedy is continuously well-paced and never feels forced or too much, which really means we're able to connect with every scene.

David Naughton gives an impeccable performance as David, and never once gives the audience an opportunity not to love his personality. Although goofy and a little strange, he's an easily relatable character which helps us to sympathise with his position and only wish for the best outcome for him, even though we know that's not possible due to the fact that he keeps on brutally slaughtering people under the full moon. The only downfall of David's character is how quickly he seems to get over the death of his best friend Jack, which is perhaps down to apparitions of Jack as he constantly reappears, becoming more and more decayed with every visit, but it feels a little out of character. Regardless, he is the hero of the story and also the villain which means were destined to hate him through his actions towards innocent



people but also have an undeniable liking for him because he's just a regular guy that unfortunately becomes a monster.

Something that feels very intelligently done in the film is how all of the characters recognise and don't even particularly dispute, that David being a werewolf could be a real possibility. From the very beginning of the film the villagers know that demons hunt the moors and even try to warn the pair without being too direct. Afterwards, it's quite a quick conclusion for Dr. Hirsch to come to that David could have been bitten and now transforms into a hairy demon once the full moon comes out - and he doesn't even have to talk around Nurse Alex Price who is romantically involved with David. Horror films often make their characters battle against the realms of anything out of the norm, but Landis' film just runs with the aspect that people would think it's possible that a man could turn into a werewolf. This somehow gives *An American Werewolf in London* a realistic tone to it, and the audience can easily submerge themselves in the fantasy.

One of the most iconic scenes is David's first real transformation into a werewolf; it's one of the greatest werewolf transformations and features some stunning special effects work. As his hands begin to break and stretch and his feet begin to grow to an abnormal shape and size, we see his body sprout more hair, develop fangs and become a terrifying creature straight from the nightmares of hell. It is this sequence that even though should feel a little dated because it's from the 80s, still feels as fresh and horrifying as the first time it was released. Werewolves aren't an easy universal creature to recreate and show how they are birthed but Landis really understood how the mechanics of changing might happen, and brought that horror to life on screen. The film

goes on throughout to show more werewolf monstrosities and bloody carnage that shows this film isn't just intended to make the audience laugh.

*An American Werewolf in London* has a nostalgic vibe for me as something watched at an age where the only part I would ever remember was that damning and inhuman metamorphosis. However, this comedy horror film has a lot more than just one horrific scene; there's believable comedy, likeable characters and a very iconic yet particular charm to it. This film manages to fight the changes of technology to still look exceptionally well-made, and hold its place as one of the most iconic werewolf films ever made.

**Rating:** 🧟🧟🧟🧟

**SPECIAL FEATURES:** Arrow Video have treated their audience with the edition they have released for *An American Werewolf in London*. The extras feature an incredible amount of interview footage with the likes of David Naughton, John Landis and other cast and crew members. There's a documentary in there, video essay and even interviews with make-up artists about how a lot of the inspiration came from the Universal monsters Wolfman films. For fans of the film this is a special edition must-have that cannot be left behind, because it truly delivers all the extras you would want to see and then pulls the guts out, runs another mile and gives even more.

**Rating:** 🧟🧟🧟🧟

*AN AMERICAN WEREWOLF IN LONDON* is out now on **UK Blu-ray** courtesy of Arrow Video.

REVIEWED BY ZOE SMITH

## TWO EVIL EYES

**THE FILM:** Blue Underground is back at it again with an amazing three-disc limited edition 4K restoration of the George A Romero and Dario Argento's collaborative masterpiece, *Two Evil Eyes*. Split into two parts, each directed by one of the filmmakers and are based on short stories by Edgar Allan Poe. So that means audiences can look forward to two tales of horror fuelled by betrayal, mistrust and murder. Everything you'll need to send icy chills down your spine.

In Romero's *The Facts In The Case Of Mr Valdemar*, Adrienne Barbeau plays a gold-digger who teams up with her lover to plot a scheme to take the money from her old terminal husband Mr Valdemar. However, when her husband dies sooner than expected, the lovers soon discover that Valdemar has been possessed by evil forces.

Meanwhile, in Argento's *The Black Cat*, Harvey Keitel plays Rod, a photographer who takes his love of photography one step too far after his girlfriend brings a stray black cat home. Rod's murderous intentions become unstoppable when he begins to hate the animal.

In his half, Romero surprisingly displays a much more restrained approach to horror. Now, this may disappoint fans wanting to see something gory but I urge you to check it out. Under his direction, Romero's segment is well-conceived and Barbeau does an amazing job in the lead role as is the rest of the cast Ramy Zada and Bingo O'Malley. Don't worry though, the climax of this segment provides many macabre moments and its supernatural elements will sit right with any *Creepshow* fans out there.

As for Argento's half, *The Black Cat*, the horror here is much more visceral. Featuring a rich colour pallet, bizarre visuals and outrageous gore, *The Black Cat* has all the conventions that you would come to expect from an Argento film. Although it is much more effective than Romero's segment, in my opinion, Argento lets himself down by using a crazy dream sequence that feels wholly out of place. That said, actor Harvey Keitel does a good enough job to make the scene credible and the payoff worth sticking around for.

Even though both segments perform strongly, *Two Evil Eyes* suffers from the way it packages them both together. There's no attempt to link them both either in tone or via the use of a decent wraparound segment linking them both. This is a shame as we all know how good *Creepshow* and *Creepshow 2* were at linking unrelated stories to one another. Other than this gripe, I still dig what Argento and Romero have to offer fans with this one and that's why I recommend you seek it out!

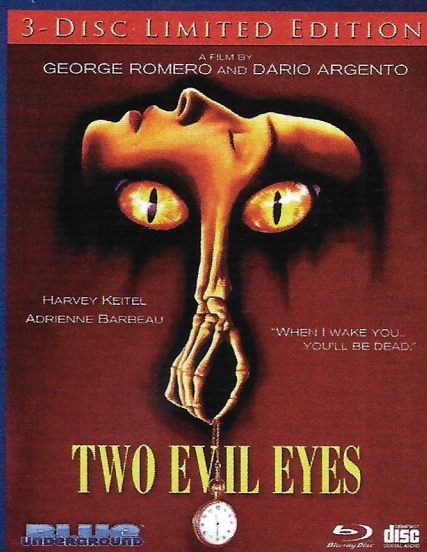
**Rating:** 🧟🧟🧟🧟

**SPECIAL FEATURES:** Any fans of Blue Underground will know about the volume of extras they include in their 4K restorations and their three-disc presentation of *Two Evil Eyes* is no exception.

On the first disc, fans can look forward to checking out the beautifully twisted 4K restoration of the film which comes with a fascinating audio commentary track with author Troy Howarth. In it, he waxes lyrically about his admiration of the film and for the work of both Argento and Romero. Also included on this first disc is the original theatrical trailer alongside a

photo gallery that features everything from stills, marketing material and promotional assets. It's this level of material and respect for the marketing material that I love to consume.

On the second disc, there are even more juicy materials to consume in the form of several featurettes lasting more than two hours in total. Firstly there's my personal favourite, *Two Masters' Eyes*, a fascinating making-of documentary featuring archived interviews with Dario Argento and George Romero. Lasting 30 minutes it provides plenty of insight into the making of the film and it was a pleasure to see unfold.



Elsewhere on this disc, there are candid interviews with Tom Savini, Executive Producer Claudio Argento, actress Asia Argento, Adrienne Barbeau, Ramy Zada, Madeleine Potter, Composer Pino Donaggio and more. However, a real must-see featurette for gorehounds are Savini's *Effects* and *At Home With Tom Savini*. In them we get a peek into Savini's world as he discusses his work on the film, his career and his love for gore and horror. Seriously, I couldn't get enough of it.

Rounding off the extras available in this presentation is a collectable booklet featuring an essay by Michael Gingold and the original motion picture soundtrack by Pino Donaggio. So, believe me, when I say this, the extras on this disc are just as entertaining that the feature and that's why I love Blue Underground so much. This is the level of detail us fans deserve!

**Rating:** 🧟🧟🧟🧟

*TWO EVIL EYES* is out now on **US 3 Disc Limited Edition Blu-ray** courtesy of Blue Underground.

REVIEWED BY JON DICKINSON

## NIGHTWISH

**THE FILM:** Bruce R. Cook's *Nightwish* is the latest title to be revived by Unearthed films. It follows a professor and four graduate students investigating a crumbling mansion to obtain evidence of the paranormal. On arrival, the team's expectations are exceeded as they don't just encounter ghosts but they run into aliens too. What happens next becomes a race against time for the survivors to save themselves from annihilation.

As director Cook's efforts here are quite ambitious. The script is inventive and the effects are pretty decent embodying everything that I love about 80s low-budget horror. However, in an attempt to combine multiple story elements into one film, *Nightwish* quickly loses its own identity in the process and the result is extremely confusing to follow.

The cast does what they can with Cook's script and become the films saving grace. Although the majority of the cast is largely unknown, 80's horror starlet Elizabeth Kaitan (*Friday The 13th Part 7: The New Blood*) plays one of the students alongside TV's *Buffy the Slayer*'s Brian Thompson. The cast does their best to make good with what they can to bring a sense of credibility to the film and I was incredibly grateful for this.

It shouldn't shock you to learn that I didn't enjoy *Nightwish*. It's a nonsensical fever dream that constantly changing gears with very little to no success and for that reason, I may never watch it again. However, it's not all doom and gloom. I appreciate what Cook's team tried to deliver because, by the time the film reaches its climax, Cook delivers a very thrilling gore effects led finale that goes a long way to try and turn the viewer's stomach.

**Rating:** 🧟🧟🧟🧟

**SPECIAL FEATURES:** Disappointingly, this presentation of *Nightwish* from Unearthed Films only comes with a handful of extras. There are a selection of trailers and a photo gallery to enjoy. Lastly, there is an audio commentary track with Executive Produce Paul White and Stephen Biro. It's a shame that there isn't more of an effort to include more material to give more insight into the making and promotion of the film. If this was included I may have had reason to revisit the feature beyond writing this review.

**Rating:** 🧟🧟🧟🧟

*NIGHTWISH* is out now on **US Blu-ray** and **Amazon Prime Video** courtesy of Unearthed Films.

REVIEWED BY JON DICKINSON