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## The Witch (1966, aka **Witch In Love**)

Picture: C-    Sound: C-    Extras: D    Film: C+

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Richard Johnson was a popular actor throughout the 1960s, appearing in many big films and other interesting projects, including the two films he revived the Bulldog Drummond character. That included **Deadlier Than The Male** (reviewed elsewhere on this site), but none of his films were big enough hits for him to have long-term name recognition, though he too was considered for James Bond at one point. Damiano Damiani's **Witch** (1966) is one of his more interesting projects, a supernatural tale about a historian (Johnson) who meets a matriarch concerned with her wealth and library and the daughter who wants him to do a little research on her.

Though the film is not great or even necessarily scary, it is constantly interesting, creepy and has its own mood that sticks with you once you have watched it. It used to get TV airplay all the time and this print is like one of those copies. At 1.33 x 1, it looks like the full frame of the film, but we have to consider it was more likely 1.66 or even 1.77 or even in framing. This copy is soft and muddy throughout, while the film was shot in black and white by cinematographer Leonida Barboni at a time when such Horror films were still being made. The Dolby Digital 2.0 track is down so many generations that dialogue is sometimes hard to make and if it were any worse, it would be a disaster. Luis Enriquez Bacalov did the score, a composer whose music recently turned up in Quentin Tarantino's **Kill Bill** films. Even though this is not the best copy and basic at that, **The Witch** (aka **La Strega In Amore**) is worth a look.

- Nicholas Sheffo

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