

DISC OF THE MONTH

It's said repeatedly by the interviewees on Criterion's new Blu-ray and double-DVD releases of **DON'T LOOK NOW** that the movie benefits from multiple viewings to glean the meaning of certain shots. That's just one reason Nicolas Roeg's 1973 masterwork warrants return visits; a key title from the dawn of modern horror, it doesn't have quite the popular rep of *Rosemary's Baby* or *The Exorcist*, but should. Like the former, *Don't Look Now* is a slow burn that doesn't reveal its true terror till the very end, instead following its central couple, played by Donald Sutherland and Julie Christie, to Venice as they try to deal with a horrific personal tragedy. Rather than a recuperative paradise, the Italian city becomes suffused with

sometimes surreal mystery and menace for the two of them, captured in immersive fashion on Criterion's 1.85:1 transfers. Even amidst Venice's shadows and fog, though, the colors that have to (among them a certain red coat) really pop.

The discs are drenched in supplemental goodness as well, starting with two featurettes ported over from previous UK discs: "Looking Back," in which Roeg and his team reflect on the creative processes behind the film, and "Death in Venice," an equally revelatory look at Pino Donaggio and his *Don't Look Now* music. The new stuff includes the half-hour, appropriately titled "Something Interesting," featuring more recent interviews with Sutherland and Christie (both of whom confess to initial misgivings about the now-classic ending), co-scripter Allan Scott (who divulges that Larry Peerce was one of two directors attached to the film before Roeg) and DP Anthony Richmond; like "Looking Back," this piece reveals that as well-thought-out as this project was, certain key scenes occurred on the fly. In "Nicolas Roeg: The Enigma of Film," Steven So-



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derbergh and Danny Boyle delve into the filmmaker's distinctive, indefinable style, and Roeg discusses more about the shoot and his creative inspiration in a Q&A from the Ciné Lumière. Best of all is a lengthy interview with editor Graeme Clifford by writer/historian Bobbie O'Steen, in which he goes into fascinating detail about the manipulation of both image and sound to elicit the maximum emotional and thematic impact.

CYCLOPS RATING:

—Michael Gingold

colorful tales from the shoot. The fresh material is led by a Lo Bianco interview, in which he speaks admiringly of Cohen, whom he dubs a "one-man band" and an "excellent pirate" when it came to stealing shots on Manhat-

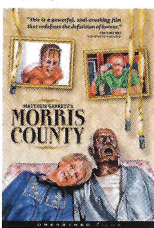
tan's streets. The only disagreement he recalls was over a certain makeup effect, which is discussed by artist Steve Neill in an on-camera chat that also covers his other collaborations with Cohen. "God Told Me To Bone" catches

the filmmaker at a New Beverly Cinema screening of the two titular flicks, in which he offers a few unique and funny anecdotes about Andy Kaufman and Bernard Herrmann, while in an earlier Q&A from NYC's Lincoln Center, Cohen notes the ahead-of-its-time documentary style of *God Told Me To*, which even today remains one-of-a-kind.

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MORRIS COUNTY (Unearthed) is not your typical horror anthology; there are no gimmicks, no checklist of featured creatures, no framing story tying the segments together and wrapping them up at the end. There are simply three "subjects" representing the dissolution of the human condition, in youth ("Ellie," showcasing a devastating performance by Darcy Miller as an extremely troubled teenager), family ("The Family Rubin," that is, who only look perfect on the outside) and the twilight years ("Elmer & Iris," a



meditation on aging and loss that contains the movie's most gruesome imagery). Writer/director Matthew Garrett doesn't aim for traditional

horror-movie thrills here; these are dark dramas more than anything else, but there's something among the triumvirate to disturb practically every viewer. And for those who might not be affected there, "Beating Hearts," Garrett's subsequent short included as a DVD supplement, and opening with perhaps the most shocking moment of the bunch, ought to do the trick.

It's part of an impressively wide assortment of disc extras, led by a pair of commentaries. One, by Garrett and author/early supporter Kier-La Janisse, is billed as a "late-night, beer-infused" track, but belies that description as the duo engage in thoughtful and introspective dissection of the themes and creation of each story. Garrett teams with producer Thomas Rondinella, associate producer Adam Schoon and co-editor Arin Sang-urai on the second commentary to go into more technical detail, occasionally covering the same topics but still offering a good amount of distinct info. "Beating Hearts" comes with commentary as well, and its stars Gianna and Georgeanne Bruzese, along with Miller, sit down for on-camera interviews to explore their emotional, tragic roles. It all adds up to a supplemental package of unusual breadth for such a grassroots

film—and Morris County certainly warrants the attention.

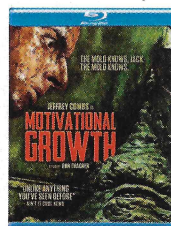
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VIEWING MOTIVATIONAL GROWTH

(Parade Deck) is like binge-watching a season of one truly weird TV series, particularly since writer/director Don Thacker divides the movie up with chapter titles. It takes place entirely within the squalid apartment of Ian (Adrian DiGiovanni), a shut-in so disengaged with the outside world, he has actually named his TV set. He receives encouragement toward self-improvement from an unusual source: a sentient, vocal pile of mold that refers to itself (with the voice of Jeffrey Combs) in the third person, motivates Ian to clean up his act and his dwelling and is the most freakishly ingratiating animatronic character since the title demon of *Bad Milo!* But in the great *Faust/Little Shop of Horrors* tradition, the mold's intentions aren't entirely altruistic... The assorted strangeness—including scenes set within various TV shows and others done in 16-bit-style animation, all geared toward the film's early-'90s vibe—doesn't always hold together, but the central relationship between Ian (well-played by DiGiovanni) and his fungal friend (a perfect marriage of Combs' vocals and fine FX supervised by Steve Tolin) carries the day.

The DVD and Blu-ray's 2.35:1 transfers are as clean as the visuals are scuzzy, with their abundance of blood and other colorful bodily effusions. For all the gross-outs, there's a philosophical side



to the movie too, expressed in more detail among the DVD and Blu-ray extras. Thacker, DiGiovanni and Combs evince a

great camaraderie on their commentary, which is rife with anecdotal detail, that no doubt served them well on set. A group of behind-the-scenes/interview featurettes offer additional insight into everything from the characters to the aesthetics of vomit, and first-hand peeks at the staging of the stunts (admirably performed by the actors themselves), the "making up" of the icky apartment and the creation and articulation of the talking mold—the latter of which was undoubtedly a lot harder than it looks, and is key to selling the story.

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