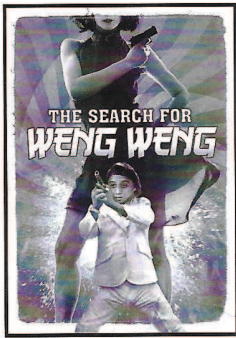


It would be hard to imagine a documentary more simpatico with this magazine than 2013's **THE SEARCH FOR WENG WENG (Wild Eye)**, a feature-length labor of love and madness from director Andrew Leavold. Owner/operator of Australia's premiere cult-film store Trash Video, Leavold's fascination with 2-foot, 9-inch Filipino actor Weng Weng began over twenty years earlier, after first seeing him play diminutive super-spy Agent 00 in 1981's certifiably insane **FOR Y'UR HEIGHT ONLY**. Embarking on a personal mission to weed through hazy urban legends and dig up the truth about the amazing Weng Weng, Leavold and co-producer/co-writer Daniel Palisa haul their camera to The Philippines, with good fortune definitely on their side — accidentally stumbling upon the editor of Weng Weng's films in a Manila parking lot, unearthing additional Weng Weng movies in a Quezon City TV station's archives, tracking down Y'UR HEIGHT director Eddie Nicart, and in-

gratiating themselves with local film industry veterans who offer firsthand recollections about Weng Weng. Many of these anecdotes are amusing, like how the l'il guy bragged about his sexual exploits and having multiple girlfriends; others are much more troubling, because while Weng Weng's work made a fortune for producer



Pete Cabelles and his wife Cora (who "adopted" the tiny actor), he was also maltreated by the pair and never paid a real salary. Leavold even tracks down Weng Weng's only surviving relative, his brother, who discloses previously unknown facts about his sibling. Plus it doesn't get any more mindblowingly bizarre than when Andrew's quest lands him and his crew an invitation to the home of ex-First Lady Imelda Marcos! Interspersed with clips from Weng Weng's films, such as **THE IMPOSSIBLE KID** and **D'WILD, WILD WENG**, as well as insights from Filipino film historians, Marrie Lee (**CLEOPATRA WONG**), Franco Guerrero (**THE ONE-ARMED EXECUTIONER**), and comedian Rodolfo "Dolph" Quizon, this absolutely fascinating film once again proves that fact is stranger than fiction. The DVD includes a director's commentary, extended interview footage with Weng Weng's brother and Nicart, plus Leavold's Q&A from the Sydney Underground Film Festival.

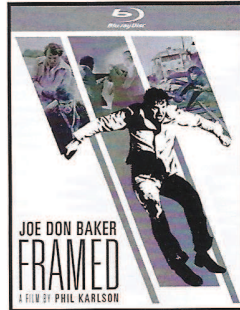
Fueled by a wonderfully contemptuous view of authority, wall-to-wall character actors and several memorably brutal moments, 1975's **FRAMED (Kino Lorber Studio Classics)** was the final feature by director Phil Karlson, who'd hit the jackpot two years earlier with Joe Don Baker in **WALKING TALL**. Adapted from a novel by Art Powers and Mike Misenheimer (both longtime inmates at the Indiana State Prison), this throwback to Karlson's gritty early efforts like **KANSAS CITY CONFIDENTIAL** and **99 RIVER STREET** once again casts Joe Don as a morally-complex protagonist fighting a corrupt system by any means necessary. At first glance, Ron Lewis (Baker) has a sweet life. He owns a Tennessee nightclub where his girlfriend (Conny Van Dyke, **W.W. AND THE DIXIE DANCEKINGS**) sings, tools about in a red Corvette and just won a sackful of cash at a high stakes poker game. Unfortunately, after stumbling across the wrong crime scene and killing a dirty cop, his money is stolen by the sheriff and he's railroaded into the slammer by the end of the first reel. Lewis doesn't take shit from anyone though, which gets

him gassed and beaten by guards, but also earns him a friend in convicted mobster Sal Viccarone (John Marley), who springs him after only four years. Determined to root out the bastards who put him away, Lewis is aided by the town's *only* honest cop (Brock Peters) and reunited with a lockup pal (Gabriel Dell) who's been contracted to kill Lewis, while uncovering shady political secrets. Baker is amazing as this ridiculously short-fused force of vengeance; Marley and Dell are standouts amongst an impressive supporting cast that includes Warren J. Kemmerling, Red West, H.G. Haggerty, and Hoke Howell as various asshole cops and guards; while two of Karlson's nastiest sequences belong to Roy Jenson (in an unflinchingly ugly brawl with Baker) and Paul Mantee (who gets his ear graphically blown off). In fact, the only weak link is bland Van Dyke (who won "Miss Teen of 1960" at age 14 and recorded under Andy Williams' country-western Barnaby Records label) and her whiny, disposable character. Though often heavyhanded, this is no-bullshit, revenge-fueled, B-movie fun. The Blu-ray has a commentary by Howard S. Berger and Nathaniel Thompson, who both display a deep appreciation of this genre.

Finally available in a beautifully restored print, director/co-writer Eddy Matalon's 1977 Canadian schlockfest **CATHY'S CURSE (Severin)** is spectacularly dopey horror hokum that doesn't even try to be coherent. The Gimble family — father George (Alan Scarfe), mother Vivian (Beverly Murray) and young daughter Cathy (Randi Allen, thankfully, in her only film role) — has moved back to George's old childhood home, where his dad and sister perished in a freak auto accident when he was just a boy. As if that wasn't bad enough, Vivian is a basketcase, while Cathy becomes unusually possessive of a filthy old dolly found in the attic. Soon Cathy is creeping out the neighbor kids with her weird behavior and having random visions of another girl, which is just the tip of the film's arbitrarily mysterious occurrences: the child destroys cheap knick-knacks with her mind, her doll awkwardly flies across the room on its own, food rots before our eyes, and Cathy literally vanishes and reappears (using the same simple old in-camera

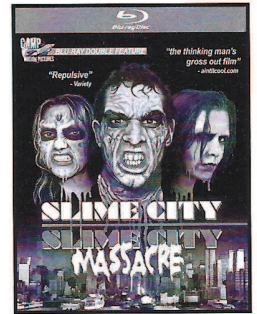


trick that every kid with a Super 8 camera has attempted). Supporting stereotypes include a drunken old handyman, a spiritual medium and a nosy, short-lived housekeeper. Meanwhile, when amusingly snotty Cathy isn't swearing at adults or violently lashing out, she's catatonically wandering into a nearby pond. So what exactly is to blame for this supernatural shitstorm? Is it the doll? The glowing-eyed portrait of Cathy's dead aunt? The film's obviously plastered scriptwriters? With its horrendous excuse for special effects, painfully awkward acting, altogether misguided approach, and unintentional hilarity at every turn, this is a clusterfuck of BadFilm riches! The disc contains both the 82-minute US release and a 90-minute



director's cut (containing additional early, non-horrific character interaction); an interview with Matalon; a talk with Randi Allen and her mom, costume designer Joyce Allen; plus a fan commentary by BirthMoviesDeath critic Brian Collins and YOU'RE NEXT scriptwriter Simon Barrett.

The freshman feature from writer/director Greg Lamberson (**KILLER RACK**) and its belated sequel both ooze their way onto Blu-ray in a cool **SLIME CITY / SLIME CITY MASSACRE (Camp Motion Pictures)** double-bill set. 1988's **SLIME CITY** is the perfect example of a New York City '80s-underground feature — from its sick humor and fearless intent to shock, to its quaintly crude practical make-up effects, to its insanely ambitious do-it-yourself agenda. Robert C. Sabin stars as struggling-artist/video-store-clerk Alex Carmichael, who moves into an apartment building filled with more-eccentric-than-usual residents. And although he has a cute, blonde girlfriend (Mary Huner), the guy is instantly tempted by the slut across the hall (also Huner, sporting a black wig and punk-pleather). Most unsettling, after ingesting a neighbor's unusual food and drink, Alex experiences strange visions and awakens with his face dripping in slime! The only thing that reverts him back to normal is



murder, with increasingly twitchy Alex wrapping his head in bandages, roaming the streets and slaughtering innocents. Could all of this gooeyness be somehow connected to Zachary, an alchemist who committed suicide in this building, along with his followers? Lamberson sprinkles Alex's tragic tale with hilariously cheesy mayhem and makes excellent use of his seedy locations (with much of it shot in his own Bay Ridge apartment, in addition to Queens and the South Bronx), while both Sabin and Huner are winningly amenable to every nutty notion thrown at them, right down to its deliriously excessive, brain-creeping climax. Extras include a brief behind-the-scenes documentary; a 2009 conversation with Sabin and Huner; and two commentaries — a 2002 one with Lamberson and Sabin, plus a new track with Greg solo... In 2010's **SLIME CITY MASSACRE**, Lamberson returns to his roots with a Buffalo-lensed sequel, and while better acted and more polished, with a broader canvas and deeper subtext, it lacks the original's inspired craziness and streetwise charm. Seven years after a dirty bomb turned the city onto a radioactive urban wasteland, fugitive couple Alexa (Jennifer Bihl) and Cory (Kealan Patrick Burke) stumble upon squatters Alice (Debbie Rochon) and Mason (Lee Perkins). While scavenging for food, the quartet uncover alchemist Zachary's old cache of elixir and "Himalayan Yogurt" ectoplasm. After chowing down on this slop, the possessed foursome ooze multi-colored, fluorescent goo and are off to find worthy victims, such as shithead real estate mogul Ronald Crump (Lamberson's old teacher, Roy Frumkes), who wants to redevelop Slime City after killing all of its residents. Meanwhile, the original **SLIME CITY**'s Sabin pops up in black-and-white flashbacks as Zachary and his old co-star Mary Bogle [Huner] plays a refugee. Though weird and sporadically amusing, the film's dependence on silly digital effects and outlandish characters makes it all feel somewhat generic, with Lamberson unable to recapture his debut's raw