



Dog Soldiers Directed by Neil Marshall

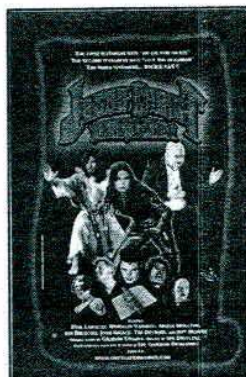
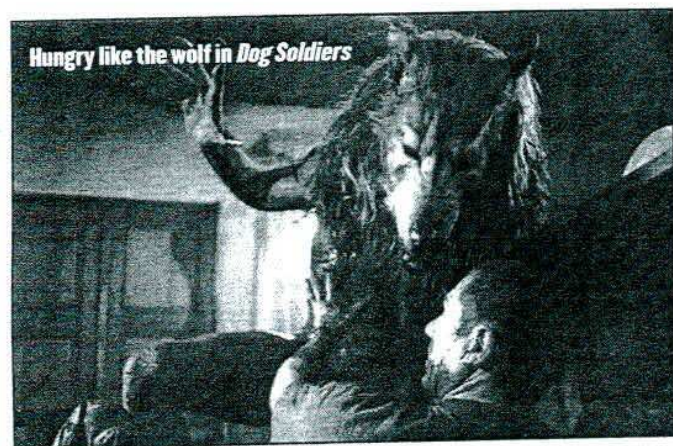
With the exception of a sparse few classics (*An American Werewolf in London* and the original installment of *The Howling* chief among them), the werewolf is easily one of the most underused villains within the horror genre. The definitive lycanthrope film has yet to be made in my humble opinion and, while completely entertaining, the action-heavy

Dog Soldiers doesn't quite reach the mark.

Set in the wooded forests of Scotland, the film opens with a group of soldiers engaged in a weekend of training war games. The platoon soon discovers the shredded remains of its rival unit, along with a stunned villainous survivor too bug-eyed to speak. With communication to the outside world conveniently cut off, the hardened veterans quickly encounter not one, but an apparent army, of blood thirsty werewolves. A mysterious woman in a speeding jeep offers a much needed getaway from the snarling horde, leading the now-battered crew to (of course) an isolated cabin deep in the wilderness.

If the first half of *Dog Soldiers* borrows heavily from *Predator*, the second half practically marries its influences of *Aliens* and *Night of the Living Dead*. Far from the first film to do so, *Dog Soldiers* at least adds some black humor to the gore-infused action sequences. In one memorable scene, a disemboweled soldier yells out 'sausages!' upon seeing his intestines hit the floor. While not entirely original, the film's script is exceedingly sharp and unexpectedly witty. Of more importance is the cast's ability to actually act, an increasingly rare commodity in the straight-to-video horror film market. The werewolves prove to be both the film's biggest strength and, albeit unintentional, biggest laugh. When the beasts are left in the shadows, the menace seems surprisingly believable. The pack-like battle mentality of the wolves is also a cool slant, with occasional first person werewolf vision camera shots adding a neat effect. In full view, however, the monsters look uncomfortably like a guy in a grey ballet suit trying to balance an enormous wolf head on his shoulders.

Certainly worthy of at least an initial viewing, *Dog Soldiers* ultimately doesn't exceed above the sum of its influences. While it might make you think twice on that next camping trip, it's doubtful to make you change your plans. JT



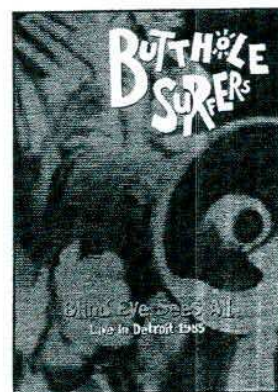
Jesus Christ Vampire Hunter

A hilarious title and theme song do not a classic make. How *Jesus Christ Vampire Hunter* avoided being a Troma release I'll never know; the low-rent gore and horrible edits would be right at home next to *Toxie IV* or classic fare like *Redneck Zombies*.

JCVH desperately wants to be the next *Cannibal: The Musical*. Unfortunately, the atrocious acting and what-the-fuck plot jumps make the film quickly lose any humor gained. Musical numbers also tend to work better when they're funny, rather than a tedious showcase for your friend's shitty garage band. In any event, Jesus shows up early on to battle a group of lesbian hungry nosferatu. The joke might have had a longer life span had the son of god retained his hippie hair and beard; instead, JC undergoes a Hot Topic makeover within the first ten minutes that leaves him clean shaven and pierced. The result is a leading hero that looks like your neighbor in a bathrobe.



Moments of laughter appear sporadically throughout JCVH, highlighted by a talking bowl of cherries and the Batman-style scene shift device of a spinning cross and a chorus of 'Jeeee-sussst!', but these do little to save the floundering flick. Better vocal dubbing can be seen in any given *Godzilla* feature, and the kung fu fighting is so poorly choreographed it might as well have been designed by Helen Keller. It's obvious that those making *Jesus Christ Vampire Hunter* intended it to be bad; what's stunning is how well it succeeds. JT



Butthole Surfers - Blind Eye Sees All - MVD

Ahh, the Butthole Surfers. Who else could swallow handfuls of pills onstage naked while projecting footage of surgery room disasters and make it feel like art? Capturing the mid-eighties chaos of the Surfers' live set, *Blind Eye Sees All* is a long way from the radio ready band responsible for freak hit "Pepper". The footage is largely professionally shot, which is a nice surprise considering how fucking wrecked these guys were at the time. Interview footage of the band naked together in a bed while eating pizza is interspersed, with Gibby engaging in some astounding stream-of-consciousness conversations with an off screen interviewer. You may not be completely sure what the hell he's talking about, but