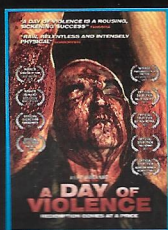




OVERLOOKED, FORGOTTEN AND DISMISSED

THIS ISSUE: LANCE HIRES A HITMAN

PUTS THE ASS IN ASSASSIN



A DAY OF VIOLENCE

MVD Visual

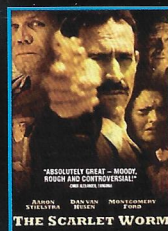
When I was a kid in school and someone would say that his dad could beat up mine, I always used to reply, "Yeah? How much would that cost me?" Seriously, though, the life of a hitman isn't all champagne and caviar – just ask Mitchell, the protagonist of this hard-boiled British flick who is on the run after he whacks a crackhead who owes his boss a lot of money... and then takes off with the ill-gotten gains. Though camerawork and sound quality are a wee bit clumsy, there's lots of good gore here, including a scene where a guy gets emasculated

with a pair of garden shears and his teeth removed with a chisel. The most unnerving part of this film, however, lands in a sex scene within the first two minutes. Pasty white British man buttocks? Huzzah!

BODY COUNT: 26

HITMAN'S PAYOUT: £1,000,000

THE TALE OF THE VICIOUS VARMINT



THE SCARLET WORM

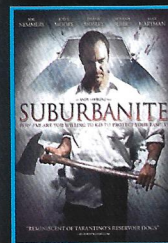
MVD Visual

If you're the kind of bushwackin' scallywag that's fixin' to see how the hits were done in the Old West, then this is the moving picture for you, I reckon. Print (yes, that's his name) is a hitman who takes his job very seriously by bringing a sense of artistry to his work. Instead of just killing a cattle rustler and leaving him to dry out on the dusty plain, Print strips the poor feller naked and shoves his body inside of a dead cow with his head poking out for all to see. When he's hired to kill off a brothel owner who's been performing backroom abortions, the creative killer decides this hit will be his grand masterpiece. Teeming with blood, bodies and bodacious barmaids, *The Scarlet Worm* is a refreshingly original film that'll have you thanking the Lord for things like indoor plumbing, toothpaste and soap, consarn it!

BODY COUNT: 45

HITMAN'S PAYOUT: A dirty \$2 whore

THE SEMI-PROFESSIONALS



SUBURBANITE

Midnight Releasing

After hiring a hitman to kill his wife, Mack hits the bar, gets plastered and leaves, only to get smoked by a car whose driver has fallen asleep behind the wheel. A few hours later, he wakes up in the garage of the guy who hit him, and who refuses to take him to the hospital lest he find himself in trouble with the cops. Shot almost exclusively within the confines of a cramped garage, the majority of the scenes and dialogue revolve around the two main characters yelling at each other for about an hour. Sadly, neither actor has the chops to carry off such a

character-driven piece and the film suffers immensely because of it. In retrospect, I'm guessing that the director should've taken a hit out on the casting agent!

BODY COUNT: 3

HITMAN'S PAYOUT: 25 large

LAST CHANCE LANCE

this is precisely where filmmaker Issa López turns her camera to find her tale.

It concerns ten-year-old Estrella (Paola Lara), who lives as much of a normal life as she can manage in a neighbourhood riddled by crime on the edge of Mexico City. One day, she returns home from school to find that her single mother has inexplicably gone missing. With no caregiver in sight, the young girl soon takes to the streets, sidling up to a young group of vagabonds led by a boy streetwise beyond his years, whom they call El Shine (Juan Ramón López). The boys initially shun Estrella, but she soon learns that they are all orphans, their parents killed by the crime bosses who lord over the city. She begins having hideous visions of being visited by her tortured mother, still wrapped in a body bag, as the kids fall upon a brutally single-minded plan: revenge on the man who took their loved ones from them.

Woven throughout this tale of despair and trauma is a splash of fantasy that morphs the viciousness of street life into a dark fairy tale with magical flourishes at every turn – graffiti-laden walls come to life, a bloodstain has the power to protect – a stunning and beautiful bouquet of charged images that elevate the story into a poignant elegy to the ghosts created by the drug war.

Tigers Are Not Afraid is essential viewing for those with a penchant for horror set south of the border and a lesson in genre storytelling for everyone else. We hear that López has turned her sights to comedy next; here's hoping she'll return to the genre sometime soon. We need more filmmakers like her.

BENOIT BLACK

THE DEVIL RESIDES IN INDONESIA

SATAN'S SLAVES

Starring Tara Basro, Bront Palarae and Dimas Aditya

Written and directed by Joko Anwar

Rapi Films

Want edge-of-your-seat supernatural horror that makes dusty old jump-scare tactics seem new? Look no further than Joko Anwar's *Satan's Slaves* (*Pengabdian Setan*), now streaming on Shudder.

Set in the early '80s in rural Jakarta, Rini (Tara Basro) has quit college in order to save money and care for her bedridden mother Marwani (Ayu Laksmi), who was once a popular singer. Her family – father, grandmother and three younger brothers – is struggling to get by as Marwani wastes away, but her sudden death is only the beginning of their nightmare. Their religious neighbours offer their prayers, but when Grandma (Elly D. Luthan) dies suddenly and apparitions start haunting the household, Rini reaches out to her grandmother's childhood friend, a tabloid jour-

