

Raw, perverse and lovably unhinged, writer-director Matthew Reel's 2009 feature **JESSICKA RABID** (Troma) is a white trash psychodrama with a rough veneer reminiscent of '80s underground fare. Elske McCain (who also executive produced and provided the story) stars as Jessicka, a mute young woman who's treated like an animal by weed-dealing Marley (Trent Haaga) and his dumb-ass brother Brad (Jeff Sisson). In addition to keeping her in their garage — locked in a dog cage, no less! — they shoot Jessicka up with drugs, hose her down naked, keep her on a leash, and make her eat from a dog bowl. When sister Abby (co-producer Ciciany Olivar) pays a visit to this demented household, we quickly discover she's no innocent either. Jessicka is clearly an all-purpose family pet. Need cash? Rent her out to a skanky porno crew. Are you horny? She'll get you off (with the aid of some tasty, well-placed peanut butter). Plus she'll love you unconditionally — that is, unless you mistreat her. Then pissed-off Jessicka is liable to turn on her owners. No question, this is one severely dysfunctional household. In fact, the whole film is an abyss of incestuous, misogynistic, abusive, utterly repellent fuckwads. McCain is effectively unsettling as our mentally-challenged protagonist, while Troma-veteran Haaga continues to prove he's one of the best actors on the indie/exploitation scene. Instead of going for easy shocks, Reel instead allows a pervasive seediness to soak through every single frame, while giving the film a distinctive look through the use of saturated colors, disorienting visuals and old film clips for darkly humorous effect. DVD extras include a commentary with McCain and Olivar, outtakes and a digital comic.



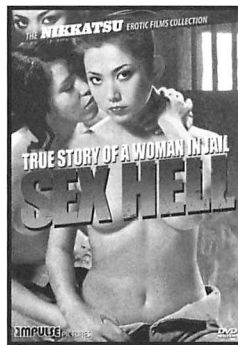
In no way, shape or form is **ATTACK OF THE OCTOPUS PEOPLE** (Alpha Video) a good film, but it's still a damned impressive achievement for 16-year-old writer/director/editor Joshua Kennedy, who also stars in this 44-minute, Texas-lensed



homage to old b&w monster movies... War-weary veteran Daniel Davis (skinny, rather nerdy Kennedy) returns to his hometown, hooks up with an ex-squeeze (Andrea Negrete) and is hired at Oasis Foods, a factory that makes dessert treats called "Octopies" and where suspicious events are brewing. Soon Oasis employees are turning into ultra-cut-rate octopus people thanks to tainted food, amidst some awkward romance and even a shout-out to global warming! The average age of the cast seems to be about fifteen, and Kennedy's resemblance to a young Eddie Deezen makes his leading man casting doubly absurd. This embellished home movie features purposely melodramatic dialogue, makeshift sets (the town's movie theatre has a Super 8 projector and scotch-taped signage) and ridiculously awful effects (tiny rubbery octopuses stuck to victims' heads, a beach ball wobbling down the street), yet is continually energized by Kennedy's

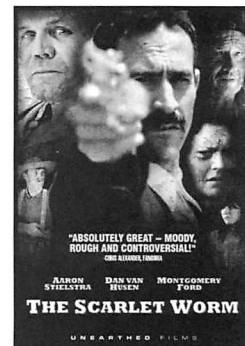
love of classic creature features and good use of old Universal soundtrack music. This is the type of do-it-yourself project that every kid with a camera wants to make, but never has the dedication to actually finish. Nevertheless, it's often quite a chore to sit through... Also on the disc is Ace Fronton's **FRANKENSTEIN VS. HITLER**, a silent, b&w, 23-minute ode to vintage horror that makes Josh's opus look like Steven Fuckin' Spielberg. At the "Casa de Frankenstein," the Doctor's monster needs a head and Dracula (running about in the daylight) helps with the search. The Doc eventually gives his male creation a 'radiohead,' with hoary sight gags, lousy lighting, mannequin heads posing as body parts, and undead Hitler crawling out of his grave to battle Frankenstein's goofy monster and retrieve his missing balls. It's unwatchable.

One of the newest releases in the "Nikkatsu Roman Porno Collection" is 1975's **TRUE STORY OF A WOMAN IN JAIL: SEX HELL** (Impulse), a Japanese entry in the Women-in-Prison genre that begins like most babes-behind-bars outings, with a vanload of female jailbirds heading to lock-up (in this case, a small "juvenile" hall that fits into the production's obviously threadbare budget). There's the requisite nudity, as inmates change from street clothes into prison garb, but we're soon aware of a kinkier agenda than comparable US fare. Each woman must endure a painful gynecological exam, and when first-timer Houjou (Kozue Hitomi) refuses to cooperate with bad-ass queen bee Hiromi (Seri Kaori), her punishment includes being pissed on and having her pubic hair plucked out. Ouch! In addition to the usual group shower, makeshift dildo, cat fights, colorful supporting inmates (a prison-savvy underage prostitute, a pregnant wacko who murdered her previous kids), plus a male guard who rapes women stuck in solitary (by forcing them to stick their bare ass out of their cell door window), we also learn via fragmented flashbacks that Houjou and Hiromi have one major thing in common. They're both stuck in jail because of goddamn, untrustworthy men! Unfortunately, while these melodramatic backstories help pad out the film to a whopping 72 minutes, they also drag down the pace. Hey, at least it's capped off by a lively escape plan involving a concealed key, a bloody tampon and arson. The female stars play it earnestly, while director Kôyû Ohara — who later delved into nunsploitation (**WET & ROPE**) and S&M (**FAIRY IN A CAGE**) — seems less concerned with cheap thrills than stark eroticism and scattered perversity. It's amusing enough for W.I.P. fans, but never pushes the envelope like Toei's earlier **FEMALE PRISONER SCORPION** series.



If you're curious to witness exactly what a microbudgeted feature can accomplish when guided by genuinely creative individuals, look no further than 2011's **THE SCARLET WORM** (Unearthed Films). Director Michael Fredianelli, his cast and crew — with many of the actors pulling double-duty behind the camera — set out to create an old-school, widescreen, period western and they succeeded brilliantly. Set in 1909, Aaron Stielstra (who also composed the score) is hired gunslinger Print, a self-proclaimed "artist" who poses his corpses for maximum perversity. This unorthodox shootist works for wealthy cattleman Mr. Paul (Montgomery Ford, a.k.a. spaghetti west-

ern veteran Brett Halsey) but is getting bored with his brutal career choice. His latest assignment is to ventilate Bible-thumping, fetus-aborting, brothel owner Heinrich Kley ('70s/'80s Eurotrash veteran Dan Van Husen), with Print and his hotshot young partner going deep undercover into Kley's operation. This is a lovingly crafted, impressively ambitious tale with no shortage of gunfights, killings and cleverly-redressed sets. Although the acting is a bit stiff at times, Halsey excels as a rich scumbag, Van Husen makes a scene-stealing sociopath and Stielstra is a compellingly conflicted protagonist. Populated by murderers, whores, nutcases, and morally dubious assholes, the script also puts a unique twist on western archetypes, particularly how its religiously-hypocritical characters constantly hide behind the Bible in order to justify their own greed, ambition and bloodshed. [Note: The title refers to one of Kley's unique biblical interpretations.] The DVD includes a fun making-of featurette and commentaries with scriptwriter David Lambert and supporting actors/producers Mike Malloy and Eric Zaldiver.



Two mismatched blue-collar workers discover true love and shitty working conditions in director Luigi Comencini's 1974 Italian melodrama **CRIME OF LOVE** [Delitto D'Amore] (RaroVideo). At a depressing urban factory, handsome Nullo Branzi (Giuliano Gemma) spots Carmela Santoro (gorgeous Stefania Sandrelli, from **DIVORCE ITALIAN STYLE**) and flirts with this beauty, but she plays hard to get — that is, until he follows her home, she cops to a crush on this hunky stalker and, before the film is even half over, the pair are deeply in love. Although both slave away at similarly-lousy assembly-line jobs, their regional differences (Nullo was born in Northern Italy, while Carmela



is from an impoverished Sicilian family who emigrated from the South to work in Milan's factories) cause major problems. Nullo's family thinks Southerners are filthy, while Carmela worries that her hot-tempered brother will learn of their relationship; Nullo lives with relatives in a high-rise complex, and Carmela resides in a poor section of town that still uses outhouses; most importantly, she's highly religious and he's a godless anarchist. In addition, on-again/off-again Carmela is a neurotic mess who's torn between her domineering family or Nullo's love, while this sweet yet gritty tale of opposites attracting takes some surprisingly tragic turns by the end. The script includes plenty of socially conscious subtext (their workplace's polluted air causes Carmela to pass out, and the lovebirds rendezvous near a river that's foul with trash, industrial waste and dead birds) that moves to the forefront by its somber conclusion. Atmospherically shot by Luigi Kuveiller (**DEEP RED**) and with a pair of personable leads, it's a working-class romance rooted in grim reality. The DVD includes an analysis by some insufferably-dull Italian film historian.