

The 'Worm' turns and the 'Horse' rides at the Hop Yard

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Aaron Stielstra plays a gun-for-hire who has a very bad day at work in the low-budget Western 'The Scarlet Worm.' The movie is designed for Western fans who like a lot of shooting and blood in their oaters.

Written by **Mark Hinson**
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The bullet-spewing Western "The Scarlet Worm" (2011) was made on a budget that would barely cover the cost of a half-decent used car.

Some say it was made for \$7,500. Others put the bill at as much as \$25,000. Either way, it wouldn't be enough to cover Lindsay Lohan's bar bill.

That's why "The Scarlet Worm" does not exactly look like "Deadwood" or "Cowboys & Aliens" when it comes to production values. Some of the sets look more like the Old West towns at the late Six Gun Territory tourist attraction or the backdrops in those "Yellowwood" lumber commercials on TV.

Ah, but if you get past the bargain-basement window dressing and minor architectural anachronisms, there is a bloody good, drive-in-worthy Western at work inside "The Scarlet

Worm." Emphasis on the blood. Lots of it.

"The Scarlet Worm" is being shown on a double bill with the cult spaghetti Western classic "Death Rides A Horse" (1967) during this month's installment of the Kino-Kola Double Feature at All Saints Hop Yard. It's an evening designed for connoisseurs of the Western genre and definitely not intended for kids. As a bonus, actor-producer Mike Malloy, a former Tallahasseean, will be on hand to discuss making "The Scarlet Worm."

The plot of "The Scarlet Worm" is pretty simple. A gunslinger (Aaron Stielstra) in 1909 is paid by his rancher boss (Brett Halsey) to kill the owner (David van Husen) of a brothel in town. Supposedly, the rancher is morally offended because the pimp-proprietor makes his sex workers have

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What: The Kino-Kola Double Feature presents "The Scarlet Worm" (2011) and "Death Rides A Horse" (1967); films contain violence, profanity, sexual content and nudity

When: 8:45 p.m. Saturday, doors open at 7:30 p.m.

Where: All Saints Hop Yard, 453 All Saints St.

Cost: \$4 (includes admission and a bag of popcorn)

Contact: Call 320-7806

abortions against their will. Oh, yeah, and while the gunslinger is at it, he may as well break in the new kid on the ranch and teach him the ways of killing for hire.

The gunslinger is the most fleshed-out character. He is a religious man who is fond of poetry, an admirer of art (particularly Monet) and lives his life by his own twisted moral code. He could have walked next door from a movie by Quentin Tarantino.

Apparently, most of "Worm's" budget was spent on rifle blanks and blood squibs, which explode like overripe watermelons during the movie's numerous, slow-mo' shots to the head. There is also copious amounts of nudity during the scenes in the brothel. Again, it's pure drive-in fare.

Besides having a great title, "Death Rides A Horse" has the menacing Lee Van Cleef at his potent peak as its star. He plays a skillful gunfighter who was betrayed by his murderous gang of outlaws and sent to prison for 15 years of hard labor. When he gets out of the rock yard, he goes looking for his old pals for a little payback. Along the way, he meets a young man (John Phillip Law from "Barbarella") who is out for vengeance on the very same gang. Law comes across as a poor man's Clint Eastwood.

Tarantino was heavily influenced by "Death Rides A Horse" for his "Kill Bill" bloodfests. "Death" was directed by Giulio Petroni, who is not as well known in the United States as Sergio Leone ("The Good, the Bad and the Ugly") but is considered by fanboys as the true master of the spaghetti Western genre.

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