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MCN Columnists

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### Where the Dead Go to Die: Blu-ray

Watching "Where the Dead Go to Die," I flashed on the underground comix of the 1960-70s and wondered how such outré artists as S. Clay Wilson, R. Crumb, Robert Williams, Spain Rodriguez, Victor Moscoso, Rick Griffin and other members of the psychedelic school might have exploited the digital tools available to artists today. For the most part, they were confined to the analog world of ink-on-paper and poster art. Today, computers perform as much of the grunt work as the artists once were required to do. Jimmy ScreamerClauz's "**Where the Dead Go to Die**" clearly was informed by the work of the grand old men of the psychedelic school, several of whom are still productive. In his determination to set his animated feature in the darkest of all dark places, ScreamerClauz pushes an envelope I'm not even sure exists anymore. Outlets for such depictions of grotesque psycho-sexual and hyper-violent behavior no longer are limited to headshops and underground newspapers, both of which were frequent targets of police harassment and moral outrage. The Internet bypasses both channels of interference. Moreover, the costs associated with making indie movies have decreased to point where kids can borrow from their First Communion and Bar Mitzvah funds to launch careers that could lead directly to Hollywood. The horror genre has reached a point in its evolution where do-it-yourselfers can afford the same special-effects techniques once available only to the pros, and let their sick little imaginations run roughshod on all previous notions of good taste. It takes a lot more than a butcher knife and mummified mom in a rocking chair to scare today's kids.

The animated feature, "**Where the Dead Go to Die**," is unique among most of the other DIY titles in that it is consistently interesting to watch and the artwork is as intricate as it clever. Fittingly, too, the images and ideas are often as shocking as anything in a live-action genre flick. Anytime vulnerable children are added to the mix of a horror film, the stakes are raised accordingly. Here, the narrative revolves around a group of troubled kids living in the same neighborhood. Labby, a talking dog from hell, arrives out of nowhere to help them deal with their perverted parents and other disgusting adults. With Labby's assistance, the kids become time-travelers and dimension jumpers. Among the more familiar voicing talents are Ruby Larocca, Brian Slagle, Joey Smack, Linnea Quigley and Devanny Pinn, all veterans of the horror-porn game. "Where the Dead Go to Die" doesn't always work, or even make a lot of sense. It is memorable, however. Now, if only someone would make a movie adapted from Wilson's epochal "Captain Pissgums & His Pervert Pirates," we could finally put the '60s to bed.