

FRIGHTFEST

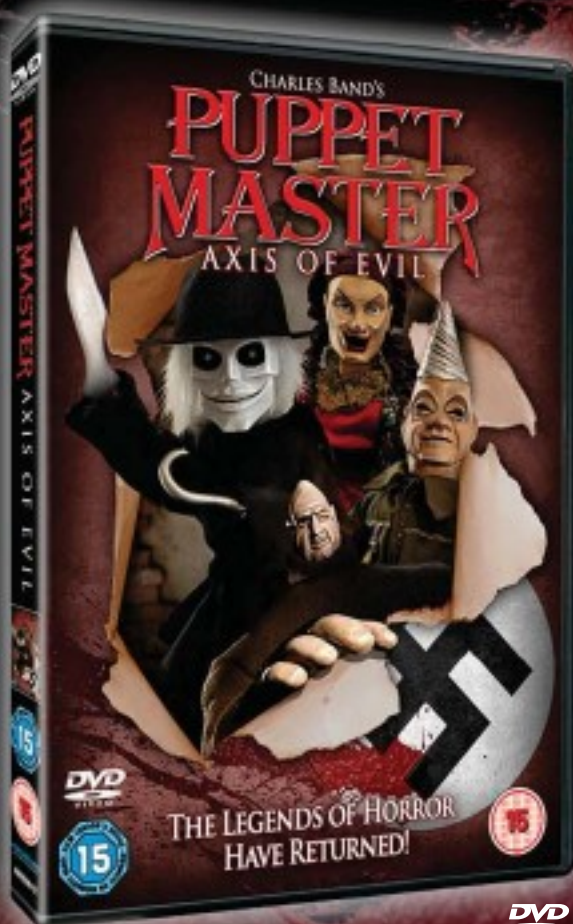
E-ZINE : ISSUE 1. THE FREE E-ZINE OF THE FILM4 FRIGHTFEST. THE UK'S BIGGEST AND BEST GENRE FILM FESTIVAL

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Welcome to the second issue of the FrightFest E-Zine.

First, I would like to say a big FrightFest thank you to everyone who contributed so freely to the first issue, and has continued to contribute for this second issue of the E-Zine. Thanks also to everyone who has given us feedback, good and bad, it is greatly appreciated.

Anyway, onwards and upwards with this second issue in which we feature an exclusive interview with Jake West and Marc Morris on their upcoming Video Nasty box set, delve into the diary of a no budget film maker, talk to Sean Byrne on his FrightFest hit The Loved Ones and Alan Jones talks to producer Magnus Paulsson about Wake Wood, the first of the new wave of Hammer films to make it in front of the camera. As well as an expanded review section we find out what Steven Goldmann has been doing since Trailer Park of Terror showed at FrightFest in 2008, Jay Slater talks to Paco Plaza on the [REC.] films, we visit TIFF's Midnight Madness and preview Austin's Fantastic Fest. We also feature some of the FrightFest official photographers stunning shots from the event.

Issue three will be in your inboxes on the 29th of October.

Ian Rattray
Editor

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THE GOOD THE BAD & THE NASTY

ALAN JONES TALKS TO JAKE WEST AND MARC MORRIS ABOUT THEIR TERRIFIC DOCUMENTARY VIDEO NASTIES MORAL PANIC, CENSORSHIP AND VIDEOTAPE

Banned by an Act of Parliament after a frenzied and hysterical press campaign, Video Nasties were seen as the harbinger of evil and a genuine threat to the fabric of society in the early 1980s. Now that shocking period in British film history, orchestrated by patronising MPs and bandwagon-jumping do-gooders who knew nothing about what they talked about, yet trashed everyone's civil liberties under the cloak of concern for children's welfare, is put under the spotlight in director Jake West and producer Marc Morris' terrific documentary VIDEO NASTIES: MORAL PANIC, CENSORSHIP AND VIDEOTAPE. A massive hit with press and public alike when world premiered at FrightFest

in August, the documentary also reflects on the influences the rushed and ill thought through 1984 Video Recordings Act has had on filmmakers and the industry today.

As someone who was caught up in the eye of the storm back then as one of the few professional horror film critics dragged in front of the news cameras, I wanted to talk to West and Morris about how important I think their text is to fully understanding the whole scandalous epoch. For there is no doubt in my mind that their balanced report should be shown in every classroom across the land as a warning to highlight not only the evils of censorship but also the venality of the tabloid press who fanned the flames to sell their shoddy



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untruths and all the opportunistic politicians who still believe they have a right to tell us what to think.

The feature documentary is part of an over 10 hour running time, three-disc DVD set to be released by Nucleus Films on October 11. The first two discs feature trailers of all 72 movies on the banned list, introduced by the likes of Kim Newman, Emily Booth, Allan Bryce and, oh, me! It all began when Marc Morris and Nigel Wingrove's book 'The Art of the Nasty' was revised and reprinted by Harvey Fenton's FAB Press in 2009. "I thought it might be fun to knock up a few trailer compilations for the launch at the Riverside Studios in Hammersmith where we were going to show a couple of the films listed", recalls Morris. "But it proved to be too much of an effort at the time so I put it on the back burner. Meanwhile our GRINDHOUSE compilation of exploitation trailers was doing well as a party DVD. So eventually Jake and I returned to the Video Nasty idea as a commercial follow-up. Why don't we do a complete set based around that peculiar era?"

West laughingly adds, "The truth is, Marc being one of the leading authorities on Video Nasties, I got bored with him banging on about them. So I agreed just so he'd shut up and concentrate his energies on getting a definitive package right. For the most part we didn't have any trouble assembling the trailers. But some proved really difficult to find, like *THE BEAST IN HEAT* and *FROZEN SCREAM*. The *LOVE CAMP 7* trailer was 12 minutes long, more a sales reel than anything else, so we had to cut that down to 2 minutes. The hardest to locate was *VISITING HOURS*, so in the end we used a rare UK television spot. They're all re-mastered though and the best they've ever looked. We



begin the documentary with clips from all 72 movies because still many people don't know the full title list and how silly some of the choices actually were".

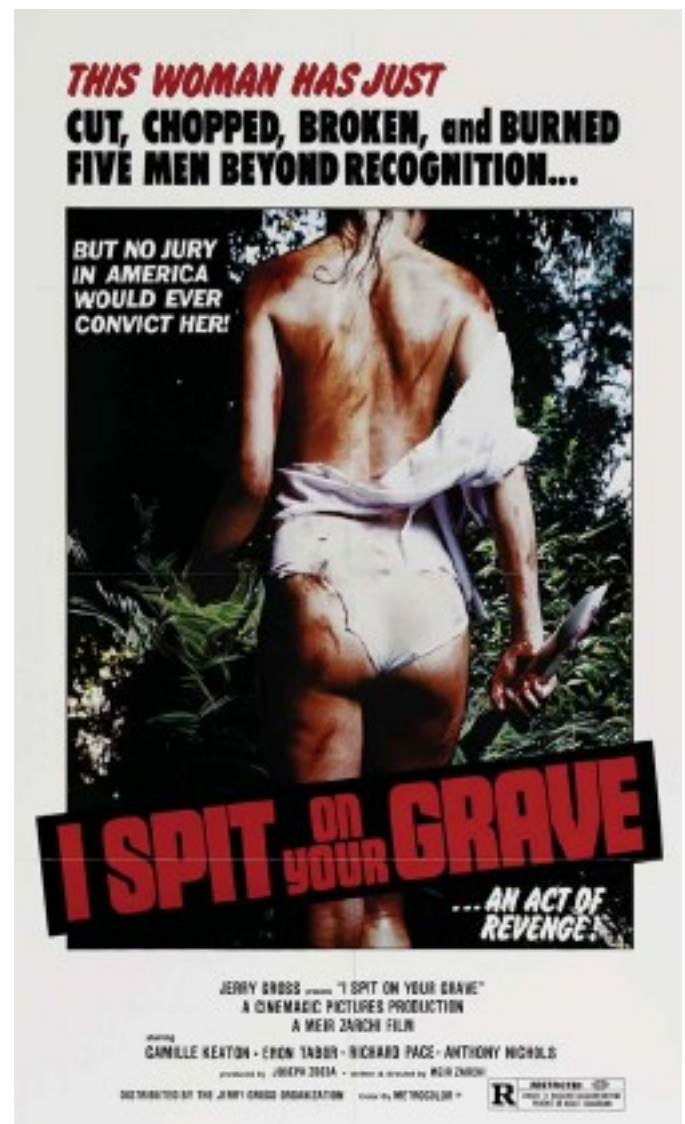
Morris continues, "Obviously we were going to face BBFC classification difficulties if we were just putting out a string of trailers. So we thought adding context would smooth any ratings passage, therefore each trailer is introduced,

explained and commented on. An accompanying documentary would add academic class too meaning we could get an exempt classification because it was a factual dissemination not a fictional entertainment. Originally the documentary was an afterthought to get everything passed by our ridiculous censors who charge £1000 every time you submit a title".

However the documentary

quickly went from being something to appease the censors to something with weight. West points out,

"Because if we were going to do it anyway, we might as well do it properly. Really get underneath the skin of the subject, go full bore and do something special. We've spent nearly a year from Marc first researching it to premiering it at FrightFest. We also took ages tracking people down,





like Sir Graham Bright (the MP responsible for the Video Recordings Act) and Peter Kruger (Scotland Yard's Obscene Publications Unit). People didn't get back at first or didn't want to talk, like the owner of Go Video (the CANNIBAL HOLOCAUST company) and Mike Lee (owner of the VIPCO label responsible for DRILLER KILLER) who became very religious. Many of these people are now over 70 and the Video Nasties period was something they

lost a lot of money in and would prefer to forget. Distributor David Grant (jailed for a year over NIGHTMARES IN A DAMAGED BRAIN) was one person we really wanted to talk to but unfortunately he had died. So many people had no desire to revisit this traumatic era and told us to basically F off”. Yet West believes they did secure the really key people like Graham Bright... “And Martin Barker (editor of the 1984 text ‘The Video Nasties:

Freedom and Censorship in the Media’). Barker has never been interviewed about the subject before and what a star he turned out to be. The FrightFest audience gave him a well-deserved huge round of applause for his comments, especially the final summation we end the documentary on. For we must allow our voices to be heard over such an issue, we must never again ignore the warning signs. Innocent people went to jail - for what, owning

a VHS copy of DON'T GO IN THE WOODS...ALONE? Absolutely ridiculous!"

However what was vital to West was to get an even balance between opposing sides of the debate. He continues, "It was important to get across the views of Bright and Kruger and we interviewed them in exactly the same way as anyone else. We weren't trying to impose a voice - we wanted to cover history and then let the viewer judge how we feel about that history. The wrong people won the argument at the time, the voice of reason being Barker. People must hold on to that especially hearing the same kind of rhetoric now about contemporary issues. Fears about the corrupting influences of popular entertainment have been a constant feature of the British political landscape for over 200 years. Knowing this history one can only look at current dissent over titles like A SERBIAN FILM with a sense of resigned *déjà vu*".

Morris adds, "Jake told me not to say anything before we interviewed Bright and after he had signed our release form. The fact he still believes what he saw was 'real' or 'snuff' is ludicrous. What was important was we didn't react, I sat stony faced, I didn't correct him over any facts or even try to have a conversation with him.





It was hard though. But his statements reveal him to be the fool we always knew he was. Impossible to believe he still thinks these films are evil and don't feature rubbish special effects after all the evidence to the contrary".

One of the best parts of the documentary is the visual flourishes used to make points; degraded images, blurriness, tracking marks, jumps. "We forget the way we used to watch videos", West remarks, "So those effects were added to recapture that excitement, the added sleaziness they brought to the table, the thrill of the forbidden, the fun of watching them on that format. Most people came into contact with the Video Nasties thanks to copies of copies of copies and it was important to state the impact VHS technology actually had on fuelling the grungy arguments. They were a rite of passage for most teenagers and I love director Neil Marshall saying he watched *I SPIT ON YOUR GRAVE* when he was 12 years old because that's what was happening. Being scared is a part of growing up and you can't legislate for that. There was no lasting harm. Marshall, like Chris Smith, grew up inspired by such films to make their movies and cause a renaissance in British horror. Now MPs talk about it as if it





didn't matter, they make a joke out of the misery they caused. They should all be made accountable”.

Have the powers-that-be learnt anything from their past ludicrous actions on behalf of the supposed silent majority? Both West and Morris don't think so, the reason why their documentary will remain a timeless dossier. Morris comments, “Those of us who love and respect the genre have learnt a lot about how people who know nothing stamp on our rights as individuals over the choice of entertainment we wish to watch. MPs, especially conservative ones, haven't because they don't care. It's all about power and imposing their own views. They want society ordered in the way they want it and they don't care about the lies they tell or the bogus information they put out in self-serving reports. That's why the Internet is the next big battleground. It's unregulated now, but I'm sure they'll try and censor it sometime in the future. And we might all look back on this period as the golden age of the information highway. Perhaps because the web is so big, so global, it will be a hard task...but look what they have done in China”.

West adds, “There has been a lot more thoughtful debate over the years that I now feel

MPs would have a harder time getting away with such an obvious con trick. The tabloid press is where the danger lies in my opinion, fanning the flames for sensation purposes. Media manipulation is now worse than ever. I also worry about 24-hour rolling news too, more offensive than cinema these days because all day long you have a catalogue of violence, scandal and footage designed to make your blood boil because of advertising ratings. The news channels decide what they want to make a story and their focus should show a stronger moral core. But when all people care about these days is celebrity trivia what chance has hard facts got. I'm proud of what we've achieved in VIDEO NASTIES: MORAL PANIC, CENSORSHIP AND VIDEOTAPE because it's a stern warning. Even if people don't like horror movies, they should be aware of this history and how it affected civil liberties. In today's culture of lies, PR and scams substituting as news, people should know the unvarnished truth and we couldn't be more pleased critics and the public alike are responding to it”.

- Alan Jones.

Video Nasties: The Definitive Guide - out on DVD Oct 11, 2010. RRP: £24.99

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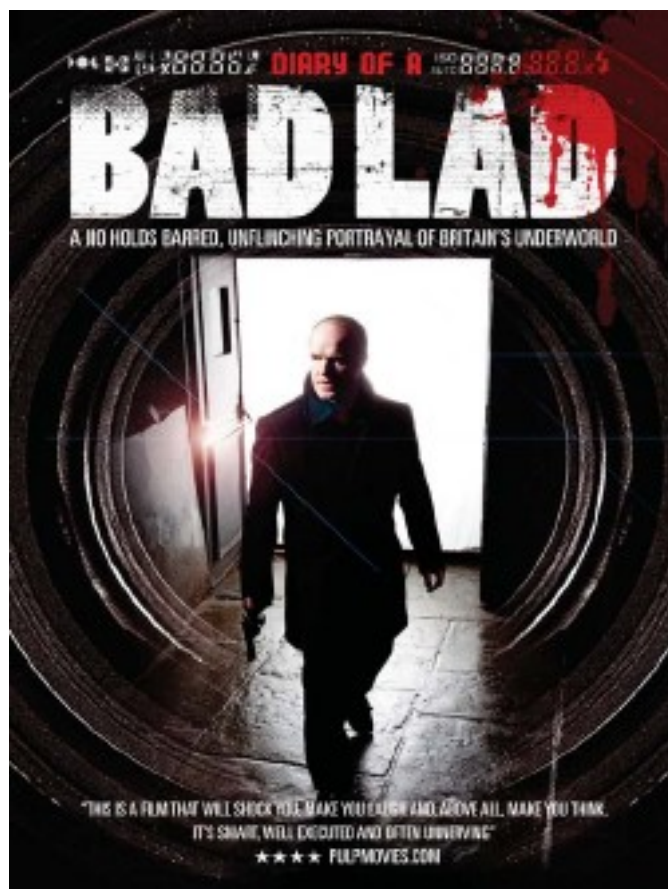
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DIARY OF A NO-BUDGET FILM PRODUCER

PRODUCER JONATHAN WILLIAMS AND DIRECTOR MICHAEL BOOTH TELL ALL ABOUT MAKING FILMS ON NO MONEY



Once upon a time you couldn't make a film without money, lots of, preferably other people's, money. So you'd have to start off by putting a package together that might appeal to investors - script, some sample stills and artwork, the names of some TV soap opera actors who'd shown interest, and details of how maybe 40% of their investment could be written off against tax. And you have to spend money on this because it's important that your package doesn't look cheap.

Now you have to try and find investors, so you have to go try and get a sales agent, along with an accountant and a lawyer experienced in the business, with contacts. Most of these people have offices in London; they don't have them in Manchester, or Leeds, or Bristol, or anywhere near where most of us live. But for two weeks of the year all these people gather together at Cannes, so that's where you go to try and pitch your

project.

If you're lucky enough to get interest from a sales agent they'll want to feel a sense of involvement, that in some way it's 'their' film. So they want you to re-write the script; I mean, they know what sells. "Genre, genre, genre," and your film just isn't 'genre' enough.

What they fundamentally mean by this is that it's not the same as the last three/five/ten American (or American re-makes of something Japanese or Korean) horror/rom-com/action-adventure movies they saw that made money. This is what they want, but you'll have to make it on less than one tenth of the budget; it's like someone saying they want you to make a 3-series BMW on two grand. Oh yes, and then the potential investors will only come on board if they can get their fingers in the pie as well - "change the script, change the location, sack the director, amuse my friends, be grateful".

This is rightly known as ‘development hell’. It lasts until you either give up, or you manage to scrape together half the minimum you need, but you can get it made if you’re prepared to give away all the rights and pay people the minimum wage, whilst pretending to promise a share of the royalties which you privately know are not going to happen. And all in order to make something you no longer believe in, that gets bad reviews, loses money, but which maybe, just maybe, means you have better luck next time...

If all of this sounds like the story of Dr. Faustus - that you get to do what you wanted to do but the price was your soul, you’d be right.

This was the situation that me and Michael Booth were in around the year 2000. Michael had been probably the youngest writer/directors to have one of his films screened at an A list festival - KARLOVY VARY. It was actually a forty minute pilot version of a black comedy horror movie: the usual ‘two young couples off for a weekend



in the countryside, get hopelessly lost, the car breaks down, they seek shelter and find a large abandoned derelict building which turns out to have been a lunatic asylum...’ But with a back story involving drugs debts and a failed robbery attempt.

Despite all that we were getting nowhere. And Michael was getting very depressed: he’s a Blackburn Rovers fan, and the thought of having to go to London, get in with the media (by developing a reliable supply of quality cocaine) and be faced with a choice of either Arsenal or Chelsea, was filling him with the most appalling dread. The only alternative was to make something on no money.

Now, as far as I’m concerned, that doesn’t mean making a film on the cheap, it means making a cheap film. For example that’s what Remy Belvaux and his mates did in the early ‘90’s with ‘MAN BITES DOG’ - a serial killer movie about how a documentary film crew becomes ever more cynically complicit in a series of murders that was made with no stars on black and white 16mm film and which just plain would not work at all if it was remade with a Hollywood budget and Hollywood-type production values. To go back to the ‘car’ analogy, don’t try to pass off your pedal car as a Beemer; don’t set out to make a ‘car’ in

“ it’s like someone saying they want you to make a 3-series BMW on two grand.”

the first place!

16mm still cost money, but digital effectively costs nothing but time. We were going to be shooting on SD, so the story had to be about a film being made on SD, in other words something maybe more like a video diary than a documentary. And why not do for the Guy Ritchie-type gangster fantasy what MAN BITES DOG had



done for glamorised multiple murder?

Guy Ritchie could get away with it because most people don't know any 'professional' criminals. At least they don't think they know any because anyone who succeeds in making money from crime doesn't behave like one of Guy Ritchie's characters. Instead they run a building firm, or a chain of mobile phone shops. And their lives are devoted to maintaining that cover. I just happen to have lived a fairly colourful existence whereby I've tripped over one or two discoveries - like how I was once working on the worst run building site you could imagine: just how was the firm making any money? And then, one Friday, the bosses didn't show up with the wages, so my gang's foreman went to the office to see what was going on. And he walked in to find the bosses with their noses buried so deep in the latest shipment of Bolivian marching powder that they'd forgotten what the time was.

Of course we all knew at the time it was in our interests to keep stum. But today things are different. Today it's the sort of story someone

would try to sell to the media. Forget the truth, just make it sensational enough and Sky might buy it. Who knows, if you promised to do it all in a way in which none of it would ever stand up in court, then the bent businessman and his associates might just agree to collaborate with you in return for their fifteen minutes of fame. But would that make you Dr. Faustus and would there be a price to be paid?

That was the story we set out to tell. We first started telling it to our mates - we knew it would maybe take years to complete, but it was what we needed - something which, just like with a documentary, you could only work on when you could arrange to shoot the next bit - and they all said we simply had to make it. But it was so hard to write as a script that I ended up having to write it first as a novel.

We then started telling it to the people we wanted to work with, the people who would both be the crew whilst acting as the fictional crew in the film, as well as those who'd play the 'subjects' in the film. And what we said was,



“This is the story we want to tell, do you want to have a stake in it?”

I suppose that’s more like being an indie band setting out to make their first album. You do it all yourselves with the help of a few mates. But once it’s finished your still faced with the task of ‘getting it out there’.

For a while we followed the festival route- and, we discovered, with more success than quite a few established filmmakers. But we couldn’t understand how we weren’t walking away with prizes at American ‘no-budget’ film festivals, we weren’t even being accepted in the first place. But then the New York filmmaker and critic, Michael Tully, put us straight, explaining that the film was too amoral, to extreme and too unwholesome for typical God-fearing Americans... And it is the case that the only bad review we’ve had was from someone who turned out to be a born-again Christian.

What proved to be better than festivals - and much more cost-effective - was emailing credible web-based critics asking them if we could send them a copy for review. And we did the same thing with filmmakers we’d met and admired, people like Alex Cox, Nick Powell, and Chris Bernard. The response was amazing and lead to our partnership with Nigel Horne and Gordon Birchley at Safecracker Pictures. Their passion for British Independent film and their determination to have DIARY OF A BAD LAD widely released resulted in BAD LAD reaching number 13 in the Asda DVD chart. Not bad for a no budget feature.

Director Michael Booth adds

If we hadn’t decided to go ahead and do it ourselves we would probably have still been in ‘development hell’, instead of having a lot of fun making a film about a bunch of people who end up in a hell of their own making.

It was as if we had these parallel existences in some parallel world that we’d slip off into from time to time where we were property developers, security consultants, drugs smugglers, cameramen, sound recordists, night club owners, and so on. Sometimes people did the same things in both worlds, which could be pretty confusing, and sometimes the boundary between both worlds would quite literally dissolve - like the time when we were shooting the gang rape scene late evening in a night club car park and people were walking past shouting encouragement.

Every stage of DIARY OF A BAD LAD, from script to completion, took a very long time and very many late nights. But at least once I’d finally done the final cut it was Jon’s responsibility to do the marketing and I could get on with something else. OK, so I did swear that I’d never make anything on no money ever again, but filmmaking’s a drug, so that didn’t last long, and I was soon writing and directing ‘Bar Stewards’, which is an out of order rather dark romantic comedy which will be out next year. Once all that’s out of the way one of the things I want to do is a satirical sci-fi torture porn cannibal movie, done as a reality TV show complete with spoof commercial breaks. But doing that will cost money...



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CANDY COATED

SEAN BYRNE ON HIS FRIGHTFEST HIT THE LOVED ONES





As THE LOVED ONES continues to appear in many FrightFester's top fives of this year's festival, we caught up with director Sean Byrne and chatted to him about his candy coloured nightmare, his cinematic influences and making people laugh at power drill abuse.

PRETTY IN PINK meets WOLF CREEK; THE LOVED ONES has delighted horror fans the world over with its bloody mix of high-school prom romance and teenage torture, Byrne was determined to mix up the horror genre. "Yeah I was trying to subvert the form as much as I could while still staying within the actual conventional realities of the genre," explains the Aussie. "I was constantly trying to flip it around. I thought it was a nice change in terms of the victim, no damsel in distress; the guy is the one that was in the chair and going through a night of hell. Hopefully it will appeal to both TWILIGHT and non TWILIGHT fans, because if you're not a TWILIGHT fan it could be a lot of fun watching Xavier (Samuels) from ECLIPSE tied to a chair and tortured for an hour and a half." You've really got to really hate TWILIGHT to enjoy THE LOVED ONES for that reason? "Yeah maybe," he laughs, "but I think there are some people out there that have a kind of extreme response to TWILIGHT so it sort of hopefully that plays into spirit of it in that its kind of fun.

The film also avoids the cliché of the masked killer lurking in the shadows. In THE LOVED ONES Samuel's character is whacked on the head and before you know it he's tied up and you know things are going to get bad. "I felt like that style of horror has been done before where it's just the boogiemer hiding behind a mask

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so for me horror is always much more threatening when it's closer to home. When you have a relationship with it and you go behind closed doors and you actually see that these people are actually human; they are three-dimensional characters and it's just that they're messed up socially. Just getting to know a psychopath is far more disturbing than just a Halloween figure that stalks you. That was always the idea, I think that's why audiences have so much fun with characters like Hannibal Lecter because you get to spend some time with him, there's a relationship there. Even HENRY: PORTRAIT OF SERIAL KILLER was another reference just because in a way your kind of complicit, your part of a drama that unfolds and there's an interaction going on. The other style of horror, the stalking horror I tend to find a little bit one note. I think it's great but I just think it's one dimension to a horror film. I think a horror film is like anything; it has to be treated with the same type of integrity

as a drama. If you don't care about the players involved then there's really not much to it other than waiting for some nudity followed by some violence usually shortly after. I mean if you have sex in a hammock," he grins, "you know you're gonna die."

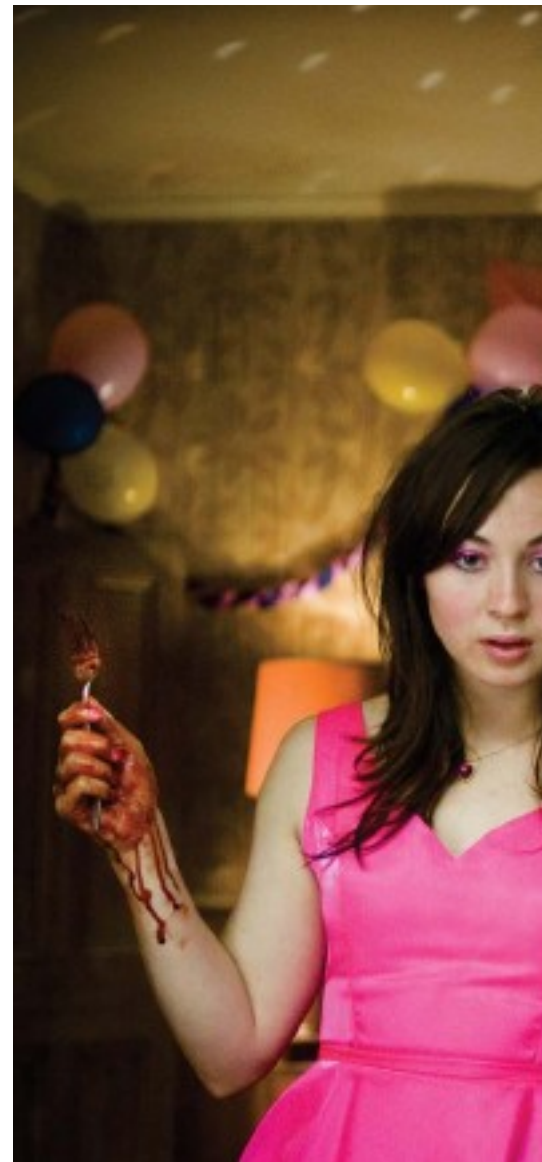
A big part of getting the audience to care for those characters is casting the right actors. Along with the aforementioned Samuel; the wonderful, Robin McLeavy, Jessica McNamee and veteran Australian actor John Brumpton all add to the manic fun. With such a talented cast Byrne was happy for his actors to enhance his script during shooting. "Oh they definitely brought things to the performance," he explains, "the dialogues all there on the page and part of my preparation is knowing what's happening in every scene, so knowing what each character wants in every scene and breaking it down into beats like pieces of a jigsaw puzzle. That's just to help me communicate with the actors and if the actors get into any kind of trouble I know exactly what the scene means. That's really important, especially to

films shot out of sequence. The casting process is absolutely crucial because you get people who come in and they get the material and elevate it bringing in their own ideas. and there's some stuff in there that Robin does that I had no idea she was seeing it that way and it was so much more exciting than anything I imagined. Like the open up for the aeroplane moment, she just turns that into a moment unto itself so I mean I think it's about doing the homework so you've got a great kind of launching pad for the actors and then you cast correctly and then they just kind of take and fly and it's a collaboration between everyone. It's just getting the blueprint right to start with so you're kind of on safe ground and you can keep building on it from there."

THE LOVED ONES wears its influences proudly on its bloodied sleeves. From the films of John Hughes to THE TEXAS CHAINSAW MASSACRE, the moments are obvious. As a director Byrne, a horror fan boy, has taken directing lessons from watching his extensive DVD collection. "Definitely Sam Raimi, especially the

early part of his career and the EVIL DEAD films, he's just so gleefully demented. You know I really really love those EVIL DEAD films, especially because you have such an incredibly good time and that's what I want the THE LOVED ONES to be like. Sure it's extreme but it's also funny and I want it to be the type of film that when the audience leaves they don't feel bad about themselves for choosing that film. It's a horror film but its not relentlessly bleak and nihilistic, its just an extreme kind of rollercoaster but the most important thing for me is that the audience has fun and that it has broad appeal and that girls and guys can both like it equally rather than the girl dragging the guy to the romantic comedy or the guy dragging the girl along to the action film hopefully there's something there that both sexes can enjoy and I think that having the male victim hopefully is something that girls will get a kick out of. Peter Jackson, BRAINDEAD comes to mind as one of my all time favourite horror films; Tarantino was a huge influence as well. The juxtaposing and balancing comedy and violence, he

does that so beautifully and keeps the tone consistent so I watched a lot of Tarantino. David Lynch, I'm a really huge fan of his work and that slide into subterranean surreal madness I really wanted that to be reflected in the design of the film. I mean THE LOVED ONES is far more literal than all of his films but hopefully there are moments of madness that will remind you of that hypnotic nightmare that he creates so beautifully. Actually a lot of European horror, Michael Haneke I really studied those guys for how objectively they shoot horror which I think is really really interesting. If you've got a tortuous moment they just let it play out; they don't let the audience off the hook which I think is fantastic because with a lot of Hollywood horror the sound design says horror the look says horror, all those different elements of the mise en scene kind of cancel each other out so your like I get it, I get it it's a horror film. I like how the European horror steps back a little and goes I'm not going to help you as an audience at all, your just going to have to watch this and enjoy it, I think that's a really powerful technique



so I tried to mix it up and just use the whole kind of horror tool kit as much as I wanted anyway.”

Many of the films he mentioned fall into that difficult sub-genre, the horror comedy. For every AN AMERICAN WEREWOLF IN LONDON we have to deal with I BOUGHT A VAMPIRE MOTORCYCLE. The difficult task of making his audience scream one moment and



split their sides the next is one that Byrne relished but the melding of horror and comedy doesn't always work as Byrne well knows. "Yeah usually one gets diluted in favour of the other. I think usually with horror comedy the horror kind of loses out a bit. I was hoping that would be the point of difference with THE LOVED ONES that both, the comedy is as jet black

as the violence is extreme. I haven't really seen that tone before. Again you do get moments in Tarantino films and David Lynch films; in LOST HIGHWAY with the road rage scene, it's as dark as it is funny at the same time and it's not necessarily been played for laughs its just the situation is just so tense you can't help but laugh."

People will remember

THE LOVED ONES for its moments. Who can forget the drill or the hammer? Byrne knows all too well how important these are in the horror film. As we round of our chat he couldn't resist in recounting his favourite moments of terror, many of which had a major part to play in the formation of THE LOVED ONES. "THE TEXAS CHAINSAW MASSACRE, that final image of Leatherface when he's on the road and he's just swinging the chainsaw and the sun has risen behind him, that's just such an amazing image and it's really demented and beautiful at the same time, so that one always stuck in my head. And also Damien looking into the camera at the end of THE OMEN is really really chilling and somehow makes the audience complicit and says that evil lives on. Oh and THE EXORCIST," adds the director. "I mean it's probably unprintable but a possessed thirteen year old girl stabbing herself in the 'you know what' with a crucifix while she's screaming" he laughs, "It's definitely a hard one to forget?"

- Dave Brown.





WAKE IN FRIGHT IN WAKE WOOD

The revived Hammer House of Horror continues to make the news. The latest being Harry Potter star Daniel Radcliffe headlining director James Watkins' 3D movie version of Susan Hill's hit West End play *THE WOMAN IN BLACK*. We know Hammer also has *LET ME IN*, the remake of the Swedish vampire classic *LET THE RIGHT ONE IN*, and the Hilary Swank 'Woman in Peril' thriller *THE RESIDENT* ready for release. There's also talk of a remake of the company's 1974 cult chiller *LEGEND OF THE 7 GOLDEN VAMPIRES*. But before all these projects were realized by head honcho Simon Oakes at the Exclusive Media Group, the company who now own the Hammer brand, there was their first feature co-production, *WAKE WOOD*.

Directed by David Keating (*THE LAST OF THE HIGH KINGS*) and co-written by him and Brendan McCarthy (producer of recent FrightFest entry *OUTCAST*), *WAKE WOOD* stars Aidan Gillen ('The Wire') and Eva Birthistle (*THE CHILDREN*) as a couple still grieving over the death of their nine-year-old daughter Alice. Relocating to the remote Irish town of Wake Wood to find closure and a fresh start they learn from village leader and folklore expert Timothy Spall (*HEARTLESS*) of a pagan ceremony that will allow them three more days with Alice. And after much ethical discussion and fearfulness the couple decides to invoke the ritual...

Completed over two years ago, and delayed so Hammer could release their more high-profile titles first, *WAKE WOOD* was produced by Magnus Paulsson, a name FrightFesters may remember from the credits of that earlier Swedish vampire movie *FROSTBITE*. It was because of that Anders Banke directed shocker that Paulsson

got involved in WAKE WOOD as he told me exclusively. “Brendan McCarthy had got my number from the Swedish Film Institute because he was looking for possible horror film co-production partners. Because FROSTBITE was the best selling Swedish language movie abroad that year, they passed him on to me”.

Paulsson continues, “Brendan and director David Keating had worked on the script since 2006 and their other co-producer John McDonnell presented the project to me at the Berlin Festival in 2007. I fell for the story straight away. The script was very well written - and VERY scary! We met up at the film markets in Cannes and again in Berlin in 2008. After two near go-aheads, and a lot of frustrating waiting around, we finally got a green light after getting Irish money, Swedish funding and the legendary Hammer Films on board in early 2008. Like every horror fan I grew up with Hammer so now co-producing

their first horror film in over 30 years feels really cool - and of course I feel a certain responsibility too. WAKE WOOD is not gothic horror in the ‘traditional’ Hammer style though, it’s a modern chiller filled with classic horror elements”.

He adds, “You know, I get sent so many scripts every week - and 99% are pretentious crap. Therefore I get really happy when I stumble upon something that is well written and well put together. It is always difficult to come up with something unique - most things have been done before in one way or another. I liked the tempo of the WAKE WOOD script, there’s a nice build up, you get to know - and actually care - about the characters before the real scares starts. And the best of all is that ‘the monster’ is a cute little girl. I think a lot of parents will relate to this!”

The movie took a long time to cast according to Paulsson. “We had to get it right,



especially finding the perfect Alice, and ensure her 'parents' felt authentic. We interviewed many girls before we found Ella Connolly. After their first meeting with her, David and Brendan sent me some footage and I wrote him right back saying that's our Alice! She is fantastic and got that 'scary innocent look' down pat. Eva and Aidan got on board pretty early on but the negotiations with Timothy's agent went on for a while, so he arrived a couple of days into production - that was a bit frightening... But I drank enough Guinness to get over it!"

WAKE WOOD was shot in six weeks in Pettigo, County Donegal, Ireland and for a further week in Sweden. After all the postponements actress Eva Birthistle was thrilled to finally get before the cameras. The Dublin born star, most recently seen in the TV series 'Five Daughters', remarks, "The script had haunted me for the year we waited to start shooting. I was struck straight away by it, not the horror element although that was good, that was secondary though. It was the relationship between the couple and I believed in their shared grief instantly. This couple had lost a child and they were at the point in their relationship where they could have broken up in the aftermath. Nothing they did was going to heal their pain. So it was the human part of the story that totally took me in, underscored by the horror element superbly. Poignant and really moving, I totally bought it"

She adds, "I'd bring back a person I loved for three days, no question. As far out there as that idea is, I'd actually do that. Three days because it's called the Ritual of the Return, it's part of the deal, if the loved one dies within the year of the death you can bring them back for three days to say your proper goodbyes and have some sort of closure. Have time with them before they return to the earth. An interesting concept beautifully

merged with the traumas this grief-stricken couple go through".

Birthistle stuck with the project because of her co-star Aidan Gillen. She points out, "Because both of us had a year of waiting for the project to start, we spoke about our characters over the months endlessly. We met up once or twice to discuss the script and what we thought was working and what wasn't. What was lovely about our working relationship was that we had very similar concerns and ideas because he's a bright interesting fellow. When you make any horror movie, there's always this feeling it could be fabulous, but also that it could go tits up and be awful. It's such a leap of faith. We both had those concerns but what we held onto was the truth in the grief of losing a child in a vicious dog attack, such a horrendous thing, and trying to hold on to some form of relationship in the fall-out".

It was a hard shoot recalls Birthistle. "All the weather elements were against us, we shot mainly at night in rain and mud, it was bloody freezing, and then there was the added pressures of low budget filmmaking, with the Hammer executives nervously looking on. I'm so used to all that now though what with REVERB and THE CHILDREN. If anything WAKE WOOD has a DON'T LOOK NOW vibe married to an atmosphere not unlike THE WICKER MAN original. Wow, I'm talking like a horror expert! It must be because I've done a few genre films now. Why I'm being chosen to play these parts I have no idea, but I do like the genre and watch a lot of it - especially old Hammer movies in the past with my dad - so perhaps I am drawn to these kinds of scripts. Or it's perhaps it's because I scream really well and can react believably to whatever nastiness is thrown at me!"

- Alan Jones.

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WHERE IS HE NOW?

IAN RATTRAY CATCHES UP WITH TRAILER PARK OF TERROR DIRECTOR STEVE GOLDMANN

One of the Film4 FrightFest hits of 2008 was Steven Goldmann's TRAILER PARK OF TERROR, based on the cult independent Imperium comic of the same name. Despite its low budget the nerve-shredding gory horror was a slick glossy production that retained the essence of its roots without resorting to cliché. I contacted Steven recently to catch up with what's been going on in his life since.

So, Steven, tell us all.

Well, I've been in writing and development mode. Which for struggling indie-filmmakers is also another way of saying that I have been trying to raise money or find someone or some studio to help you make your next film. That said it has been a wild couple of years since I was in London. TRAILER PARK OF TERROR has opened doors for me that I never thought it could, surprisingly both on the television and film sides.

On the television front, I developed a series with my dear friend Rob Travalino that we call NIGHT SHIFT. It is inspired by the 2007 Japanese horror film directed by Shinya Tsukamoto, NIGHTMARE DETECTIVE. We are



just now pitching it to the Hollywood powers. I also have been working on another very exciting television series with a decidedly UK angle. It's a comedy called SEX DRUGS & ROCK 'N' ROLL and it's all about the very true stories of a couple of famous British roadies from the 70s - known to all in the Clan of the Roadie as Wilko & Granny.

On the film side, most of the time since my FrightFest fun, has been wrapped up with two projects: THE HUMAN FLY and RED DEVIL LIE. THE HUMAN FLY is based on the "true???" story behind the Marvel comic book stuntman/superhero who in the late 70's rode on the back of a DC8 jet and also tried to jump 27 school buses on a rocket powered motorcycle. What started out as a documentary has turned into a feature





film comedy that tells one very wild tale of a group of twenty-somethings who want to be famous for anything. Looks like we will be re-launching the character in a special comic book very soon and hopefully 2011 will be the year THE HUMAN FLY returns!

RED DEVIL LIE - is my little Southern Gangster film. One part WALKING TALL, mixed with the feel of AT CLOSE RANGE and hopefully the grit of TAXI DRIVER. My producer and partner on this film is Alan Brewer who handled all the music duties on TRAILER PARK OF TERROR. He brought in an incredible artist named Matt King who has already written a bunch of original songs for us. We are moving towards a spring shoot in Tennessee. One could say this is the real life version of TRAILER PARK.. sort of.

Anything imminent on the FrightFest front you can tell us about?

Horror is a very personal thing for me. It was something I shared with my late father. He loved all the Universal Monster movies and the Hammer Horror films as well. He made it part of my life at an early age. In the horror world, the project that I am working on that hands down excites me more than anything is the screen adaption of David Whitman's DEADFELLAS. It is available digitally on Delirium books. The story is wild and out-there, but the truly exciting thing about this adaptation has been getting to collaborate with Jeff Buhler the writer of MIDNIGHT MEAT TRAIN! We feel we have a film like nothing anyone has seen in a long time. It is a mash-up of style and content. It takes films like PULP FICTION, SNATCH, LOCK STOCK AND TWO SMOKING BARRELS and crosses them with HELLRAISER and DEAD ALIVE, EVIL DEAD 1, 11, & 111!!!! It puts them through the meat grinder to get DEADFELLAS. Jeff and I think it rocks. Finally, I am attached to a film called HOODOO written by the prolific writer, director, producer J.S. "Joe" Cardone (PROM NIGHT, WICKED LITTLE THINGS, THE COVENANT, THE FORSAKEN). Joe has written a film in the tradition of THE SERPENT AND THE RAINBOW and ANGEL HEART. We keep getting close to actually making it. Hopefully this will be the year. Working with Joe as a mentor on a project like this is a dream come true.

Thanks Steven, we hope to see you back in London with some or all of the above.

- Ian Rattray.

THE WITCHING HOUR

IAN RATTRAY REPORTS BACK FROM TIFF'S MIDNIGHT MADNESS

As Friday night turned into Saturday morning here in Toronto, I took my seat for my first visit of the year to Midnight Madness and the world premiere screening of *SUPER*. The midnight crowd who had been lining up for hours are a passionate bunch and were up for a bit of fun. Colin Geddes, the Midnight Madness programmer, describes his audience as early adopters and taste-makers. He makes the comparison to the Comic Con crowd; "Unlike Comic Con though no one dresses up, but these people are the ones who see things early and are the cool kids on the block".

Over the years I have attended many screenings at the Ryerson Theatre. It may not have the glamour of the red carpet galas at the Thompson Hall - not that I have been to any - but each night the cinema is packed and this festival sidebar has become one of TIFF's hottest tickets. There you can sample everything from the latest must-see horror to Asian martial arts hits and black comedies.

Sprinkled among the faithful are buyers and executives. They are up well past their normal bedtimes and many look out of their

comfort zone, but they are desperate to make sure that they don't miss out on the next big genre breakout.

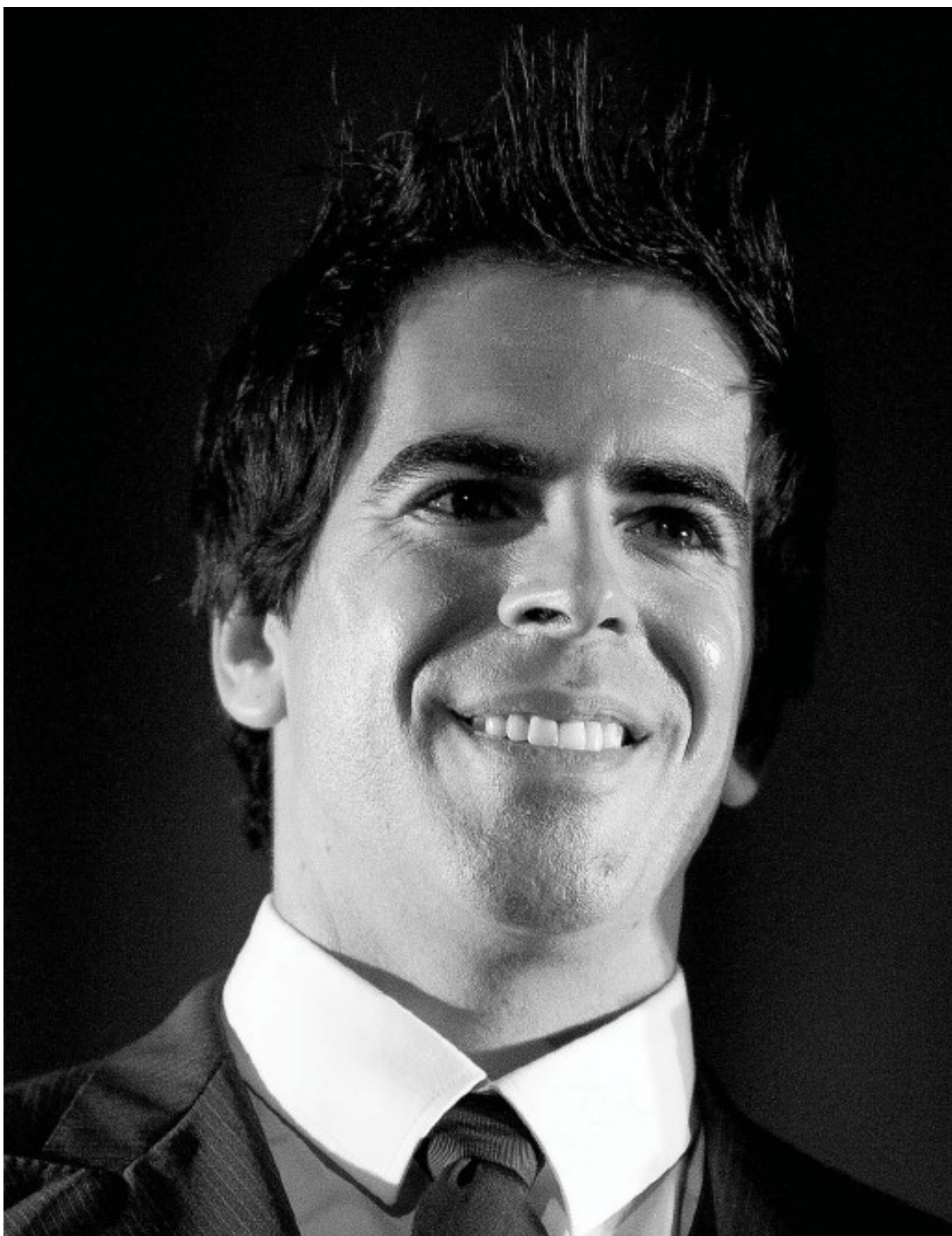
This year TIFF's witching hour lineup has generated more interest than normal. Many of the films are still looking for distribution. Distributors see these Midnight Madness films as

"Unlike Comic Con though no one dresses up, but these people are the ones who see things early and are the cool kids on the block".

safe bets, because they come with built-in audiences. Although the days of instant sales are gone, I can remember one night standing outside the Ryerson watching as Keith Calder, then the producer of *ALL THE BOYS LOVE MANDY LANE* and here this year with Guy Moshe's noire western-martial arts picture *BUNRAKU*, which played in Saturday's plum



Amber Heard in John Carpenter's *The Ward*



ELI ROTH AT FILM4 FRIGHTFEST 2010

PICTURE BY JULIE EDWARDS

slot, as he negotiated the sale of MANDY LANE with Harvey Weinstein over their mobile phones. In 2002 the then unknown Eli Roth and his CABIN FEVER was also sold in a similar midnight deal.

“I usually try and anchor midnight madness with something big, but this year the best films I saw were independents”, Geddes said. “I passed on some studio films because they did not break any new ground. I didn’t want to waste the audience’s time”.

Sitting in the Ryerson, I could have easily been in the Empire back in London. You get the same anticipation and vibe before any of the films start. A sales agent friend of mine waxes lyrical about the midnight crowd. “They start with a pre-position to like the films. After all, they have paid for their tickets and most likely have queued up for two to three hours to get in and get the best seats. They bring with them no high art pretensions, as a result they provide buyers and sellers like me with a fantastic guide to

how a movie may play in the real world”.

This year nine out of the ten films in Midnight Madness are world premieres and Friday night’s home town crowd cheered the rafters off the Ryerson at the goings on of Michael Dowse’s FUBAR II. Although personally, I didn’t like it that much, they also took the Crimson Bolt of SUPER to their hearts. I thought the film tried too hard and was not as funny as it thought it was, but on the night I was very much in the minority.

Other anticipated titles this year include Brad Anderson’s VANISHING ON 7TH STREET with Hayden Christensen, John Carpenter’s first movie in nine years, THE WARD, Julianne Carbon and Lawrence Courtiard in the French thriller RED NIGHTS, James Wan’s ghostly INSIDIOUS and Jian Xiao’s martial arts revenge movie THE BUTCHER, THE CHEF AND THE SWORDSMAN. I’ll be interested to see how those play and if they match the excitement of previous, years.

- Ian Rattray



Nick Damici in Stake Land



JAY SLATER

IN CONVERSATION

WITH [REC] 2 DIRECTOR PACO PLAZA

[REC] 2 (2009) is ferocious. Like the bloodthirsty demons it chronicles, this Spanish animal is rabid in the extreme. A bloody powerhouse of a horror movie, there's not a pinch of fat on its bones to fry a rasher of bacon - it's relentless, sharp, and angry. Rich in gore and packing punch - the film is spattered in liquid cerise and brain matter - its many set-pieces rocket through its effective *cinéma vérité* narrative with cathartic effect. Its allegory, like its predecessor, is simplistic but armed with a more resounding and apocalyptic cannon. As sequels go, [REC] 2 truly delivers with chills and physical mutilation aplenty as the infected tear limb from limb and quench their primal desires with the drinking of blood. Not only does [REC] 2 stomp in the clay footprint set by [REC] (2007) with unrivalled confidence, it's a Catalan rollercoaster shocker of a ride. For it stomps in horror. The Spanish are back.

"We were amazed by the success of [REC] and never expected it. Our only goal was to make a very scary film that could be shot in a very short schedule with a low budget and to have a lot of fun," co-director Paco Plaza says in a crowded Barcelona bar for this exclusive FrightFest interview. Smiling as

he raises a glass of smoky Rioja, Plaza is eternally grateful to the horror community that have supported both him and Jaume Balagueró. "This tiny film gave us so much back that it was impossible for us to say no to the sequel. [REC] 2 has been such a great experience for us as filmmakers and has allowed us to share our work with people all over the world. We can only be thankful for it."

Before the international and deserved success of [REC]- this hardcore journo saw a 10am screening in San Sebastian prior to its release and was spooked - Plaza had already cut his cloth in the horror genre. Hitting the ground running with *SECOND NAME/EL SEGUNDO NOMBRE* (2002), an effective work based on a book by Ramsey Campbell, Plaza enjoyed critical praise with his episode 'THE CHRISTMAS TALE/CUENTO DE NAVIDAD' for the TV series *FILMS TO KEEP YOU AWAKE/PELÍCULAS PARA NO DORMIR* (2005) where the young Spaniard rubbed shoulders with Álex de la Iglesia and Narciso Ibáñez Serrador, best known for the excellent *WHO CAN KILL A CHILD?/QUIÉN PUEDE MATAR A UN NIÑO?* (1976). And after [REC], further movies in the series were inevitable. Plaza is to direct [REC] GENESIS for a 2011 release followed a year later by Balagueró's [REC]

APOCALYPSE.

[REC] 2 does not follow standard zombie film conventions: flesh is not devoured, for example. The 'zombies' that inhabit the Spanish movie are crazed monsters that are infected by a virus - presumably spread by contaminated blood or saliva - that drives them wild and to kill. The wounded mutate into crazed killers, and like a disease, their numbers increase in strength and intensity. An interesting comparison is that both movies focus upon a closed environment, In this case a secure apartment building with no escape. Therefore, the [REC] films owe more to Lamberto Bava's *DEMONS/DÈMONI* (1985), where the monsters wreck bloody havoc in a locked West Berlin cinema, than the Romero and Fulci 'morti viventi' flicks. Plaza is dismissive that he and Balagueró tried to make something new. "We walked a path that had been opened by masters such as Ruggero Deodato with *CANNIBAL HOLOCAUST* (1979) and *THE BLAIR WITCH PROJECT* (1999) and many other films. We added the concept of live television to increase the experience instead of found footage, and did our best to make it relentless, fast and hard." Plaza beams in remembrance as another Rioja



is poured. "For us it is a punk rock film in the way that the Ramones did. 'One, two, three, four!'"

[REC] 2 is bold in its move to incorporate demonic possession as well as zombie carnage that is to be expected, perhaps fuelled by the nation's rich heritage in Catholicism. The movie culminates with stark terror as well as a religious holocaust coda impending very serious consequences for the third and fourth movies. "This is something we could track in the original," Paco explains, "in the papers you see in the penthouse. When we wrote [REC], we tried to create a cosmology, a background for the whole scenario that can be tracked in the old newspaper cuttings. And the story of possession was there among many others that might develop in [REC] GENESIS and [REC] APOCALYPSE." Paco is delighted with the splatter count in [REC] 2 as the film is awash with buckets of blood, chewed body parts and many, many squibs - it's *THE WILD BUNCH* (1969) of zombie films. Extreme hardcore violence is something that Plaza and Balagueró do not shy away from. They revel in it. "We wanted to take a step forwards. There is a particular shot - I won't spoil it! - we joked a lot about because we

think something like it has never been seen in a mainstream film. Because [REC] was such a low-budget feature we could not do a lot of things concerning special effects. And for [REC] 2, one of our priorities was to go further in that sense and we're really satisfied with the result," Plaza adds.

But wait a second... The association to the apartment building is one of an impending apocalypse. Considering that the mission by the church might have devastating consequences for the world, why would the Vatican send six clueless soldiers to save the world? Paco gets straight to the point: "There are two more films to come. Right now, in [REC] 2, only a few hours have passed since the virus was unleashed." Leaning forward, he concludes, "We have to be patient." Right you are then.

The UK theatrical release may have been a fly by night affair in terms of marketing, but it was hungrily received by fans of the original, Plaza claiming that he was curious to see if the sequel would do well. The director is proud to state that he did not want to disappoint the fans as he and Balagueró work for them. In short, Plaza says, "[REC] is no longer our film, but theirs, the fans. So we had to be careful with the

sequel. However, their response couldn't be better."

Plaza is off and running it would seem. A genuinely charismatic and kind-hearted soul, he does not have a bad word for anyone in the dog eat dog world of filmmaking and is enthused to continue working with his co-director. "Balaguero is one of the greatest directors in the genre," Plaza says. "We've had a lot of fun together and I think we balance quite well, being so different in our approach. I have to say that it's been a very positive and enriching experience." Plaza and Balaguero are now currently working on the third and fourth instalment of the [REC] series and shall both act as creative producers on their individual films. For [REC] GENESIS, Luis Berdejo is co-writing the script and the wily Plaza refused to spill the beans on the story.

As [REC] 2 is to be released on DVD and Blu-Ray in the UK on 20 September by E1 Entertainment, complemented with the Blu-Ray of the original [REC], Plaza is sincere to FrightFest readers who are keen to see the sequel. "I hope that you all really enjoy it. We tried our very best to make a film that is better than the first one." And amen to the great return of Spanish horror.

- Jay Slater.



THE MAIN EVENT



FRIGHTFEST

FRIGHTFEST 2010: A FRONT ROW PERSPECTIVE. FROM HIS SEAT IN THE FRONT ROW EVRIM ERSOY REPORTS ON HIS FRIGHTFEST

The front row of the cinema is an odd place to be: most audience members laugh at the idea of being that close to the screen, those with a keen technical eye can easily explain that the front row is not the optimal place to experience a film and on top of all this it is in relation to the rest of the auditorium the most isolated spot in the whole damn place.

Attend any movie screening anywhere in the world and you'll only ever see a handful of people ever deliberately sitting in the front: most of the time it is the last choice in a full house or sometimes the spot that seems to attract a high number of 'unique' individuals.

I love sitting in the front row. For me the cinema experience is all about being swallowed by what's on the screen: if film does not appear majestic and overwhelming, then it does not count.

And it seems I'm not alone in my madness: recently I read in an article that Truffaut and

Godard would only ever sit in the front row of the cinema - if the front row was too full,

"In terms of quality, 2010 represented a real jump for me: I don't think there was ever a year where I was so glad to be so close to the damn action"

they'd lay down in front of the screen!

FrightFest is a great place to indulge this mad love: here is a festival which rewards being as close to the screen as possible: a jump is ten times as unforgiving whilst unforgettable moments are increased in intensity by sheer proximity of the action.

In terms of quality, 2010 represented for me a real jump forward: I don't think there was ever a year where I was so glad to be so



damn close to the action!

This year we got perhaps the most diverse and exciting line-up of horror films any fan could've asked for: not all of them pleased everyone but in terms of intelligent filmmaking here was a bunch of films which kicked wildly against the boundaries of the genre.

Intelligent cinema is cinema which challenges the genre conventions it has been saddled with: a film like *WE ARE WHAT WE ARE* for example took the very familiar cannibal

family motif and ran riot with it sketching together a social portrait of Mexico so vivid and unfamiliar that it was impossible not to be moved by it.

Or *DREAM HOME* where the traditional stalk and slash formula was turned upside down on its' head in order to explore the price of capitalism on the unsuspecting average working family. As the final images of the film rolled, the dark currents were so strong they threatened to overtake the very nature of the

story on the screen.

Suffice it to say I was extremely impressed with the films we got to watch this year: after what I considered an average 2009, this reinstalled my faith in what genre cinema can bring to the table.

Perhaps the only complaint I had was about the timetable: some films were wasted on late night slots whilst I felt others got unnecessary prime positions even though they didn't do much to deserve it. I'm being deliberately obtuse here as good and bad are very relative concepts but there seems to be a consensus on certain titles throughout the entire audience. The boys' introductions were as good as ever. Perhaps it's the scope of the event now which prevents the three of them being on stage at the same time but this year I missed seeing some more of their interactions on stage. Everything was professional and yet there was a part of me which missed seeing the very dynamic push-pull relationships of the team reflected in the introductions. There is a part of me which knows that the festival is as much about the personality of the people who create it as the films it screens.

Although I'm not a autograph collector, some of my friends are and I was quite dismayed to see them having to miss the beginning of some of the movies in order to get something signed. Part of me wished that the media wall and the signings could be reversed: after all the journalists are there to work and therefore would not be disappointed at having to miss the movie that's playing inside.

The calibre of the guests this year was really something: from screen legends to first-time directors the festival was beset with intelligent, approachable talent who made themselves available to interact with the audience at every possible opportunity.





As a regular festival-hound, one of the things I detest the most is a separatist elitism which seems to occur at most festivals: an 'us and them' attitude which divides the audience from the talent attending and the organisers quite sharply.

So FrightFest is always a refreshing breath of fresh air where everyone is spectacularly equal. There is no VIP area, there is no separating cordon: everyone is encouraged to participate as little or as much they want in their own terms.

Kane Hodder being available for any photo or signing opportunity all weekend, the easy accessibility of Tobe Hooper, even the appearance of the director and producer of *A SERBIAN FILM* regardless of BBFC's decision all further contributed to making 2010 a very special year.

In 2010, the festival had a fair share of technical problems - but credit to the team, none of the hiccups lasted long or affected the viewing experience to a serious extent. It is hard not to see how much these films matter to the organisers and for anyone who ever doubted the integrity of the festival, all they had to do was to take a look at the way Ian dashed to and from the projection booth in order to address any issue however small it may be.

There is one more very important reason why 2010 counts for me as amongst the best: this was the year which proved to me beyond a doubt that the festival was maturing - the line-up featuring decidedly more 'adult' works, a selection of shorts which rank among the strongest I've seen at any festival in one single serving, a high calibre of talent attending and perhaps most importantly an audience which was responding to the material that was on offer. Yes, so we are still hounded by





mobile-phone idiots, inappropriate laughs and inconsiderate pricks who seem determined to make the festival a hell for anyone other than themselves, but in counter-balance there are the intelligent hordes who dissect each movie with razor-sharp wit and understanding - one of the very reasons why the Serbian scandal was so upsetting: if any audience could've handled that movie appropriately, it would've been the FrightFest audience.

The Q & A's this year were at points hit and miss - not in terms of the guests but more in being able to get a question in. The roving microphones were a good idea but I think we either need more of them or more helpers spotting people with their hands up - at certain points I thought some points of the auditorium became blind spots and people were frustratingly left with their hands up.

I thoroughly enjoyed the quiz this year, helped, no doubt, by Andy Nyman's charismatic presence. Now I'm a film fanatic: if it was down to

me, I'd have 7 film days like we did a couple of years ago but I also completely understand that I'm in the very small minority about this so I think it's probably a very good idea to have something like the quiz and the shorts showcase to break up the day a tiny bit. So let's hope for their return in 2011.

Last year's upgrade to the Empire was interesting: it didn't feel completely right - however this year it seems to have finally settled - coming in on Thursday, it was absolutely like coming home - and over the five days never once felt out of place in the big auditorium. I feel wherever FrightFest is based, it's absolutely essential to preserve that 'home' feeling.

I have to also say that the presence of the 'Discovery Screen' is a real step up for the festival - in its' second year, the screen managed to have screenings of titles which were quite coveted. Seeing a full house for both screenings of AMER was terrific as well as the news that based on these screenings Anchor Bay is now giving the film a cinematic release.

For 2011, I'd like to see the festival continue to grow. The transition period, in my opinion, still hasn't ended and there's going to be some more growing pains before FrightFest defines itself proper. I think in terms of the talent attending, the festival is second to none - most films have a key cast & crew member attached which certainly is impressive. I really hope that the organisers continue to re-define what counts as genre and what doesn't - a real variety far away from the straight-to-video shelf as possible would certainly be a sufficient aim. It's also very nice to see home-grown stuff - though not just for the sake of having something British in the program. Whatever happens, I'm already looking forward to 2011 Film4 FrightFest.

- Evrim Ersoy.

WAY DOWN SOUTH IN AUSTIN TEXAS

IN SIX SHORT YEARS FANTASTIC FEST HAS BECOME ONE OF THE MOST INFLUENTIAL GENRE EVENTS IN THE WORLD

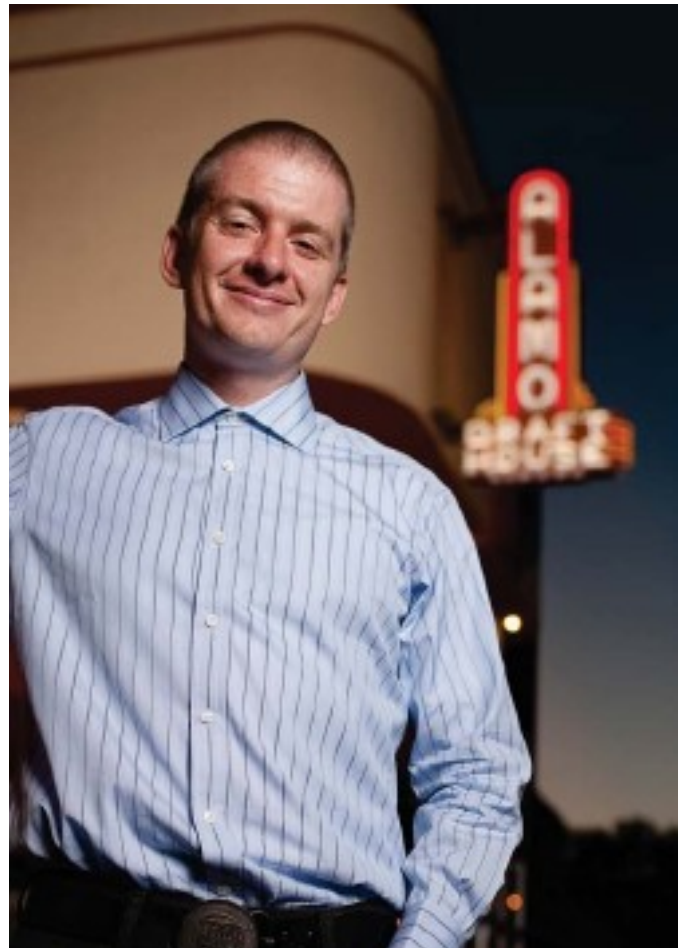
One of the genre highlights of September in the film world is Fantastic Fest. Held each year in Austin, Texas at the Alamo Draft House the great and the good of the fantastic film world gather to gorge themselves on the latest genre product. It's a film festival, it's a social gathering, it's one hell of a party. The FrightFest E-Zine talks to festival co-founder Tim League.

You had no experience in the film industry, let alone business, before opening your first cinema. You trained as an engineer so what the hell were you thinking, rightly as it has turned out, to believe that you could make a go at running a cinema?

- The answer to that is that I wasn't thinking at all. I had moved to Bakersfield, CA to be an oil field engineer and hated the job from beginning to end. I was dying to get out and do something else. Every day on my way to work I used to pass by this beautiful, abandoned art-deco single screen theater and one day there was a For Lease sign on it. I made the call, signed the lease and started renovation by the end of the

week. Its the type of asinine decision that only a 23 year old can do.

From a standing start in six years Fantastic Fest has come from nothing to



become the biggest and most influential genre film festival in the USA. How did this happen?

- A big part of it is the people involved. Everyone who started it and who has come on board since loves genre movies with a passion. And we all understand the inherent purpose of genre films, which is to entertain. So the entire festival is focused on the concept of entertainment, and people love to be entertained. We don't pretend to be anything that we're not. We're not high-toned, we're not intellectual or "artistic" (Although we do believe that the films we show are legitimate and very good art). I think that film fans appreciate the genuine love of fun film that the

programmers and organizers share as fellow fan-boys and girls. Apart from having fun, we are also focused on making sure there are opportunities for press, industry and filmmakers alike. Its a great time for those groups to mingle and interact in a casual and sometimes drunken environment.

Fantastic Fest is famous for it's signature events. To say that they are a little different from what pops up at most festivals wouldn't be an understatement. Where did the idea for them come from?

- Those events grow out of the habits that we've developed over the last 13 years programming events for the Alamo Drafthouse Cinema. Starting out as a small,







single screen independent theater back in 1997, we knew that we had to make the movie-going experience unique and different in order to survive. Plus, we have always had a blast planning, executing and attending the events. It was a natural transition to apply the same philosophy to Fantastic Fest.

The festival's opening film this year is the US premiere of the highly anticipated remake of one of my favorite films of recent years, LET THE RIGHT ONE IN. What are some other of this year's highlights?

- I won't talk about the highly anticipated well known titles. Those speak for themselves. And I won't mention the ones that haven't been announced yet..

There are a lot of foreign and independent discoveries that we're super excited about. The director of one of last years favorites, FISH STORY has a new one called GOLDEN SLUMBER that we love; There's another super crazy Serbian movie called THE LIFE AND DEATH OF A PORNO GANG; One of my favorites for sheer weirdness is RUBBER, about a homicidal telekinetic automobile tire. There's also a whole slew of really amazing stuff from Central and South America, and of course a satisfying onslaught of pure action from Asia.

You have announced Fantastic Arcade as a new strand for Fantastic Fest this year. What is the thinking behind that?

- It just seemed like a natural fit. Games are becoming every bit as accomplished as movies in terms of visual polish and storytelling techniques. I think that the decision to pursue it was cemented when Roger Ebert said that video games were not and never could be considered a legitimate art form. We are putting the spotlight on independent game designers in the same way the film section has done so for directors. There is a natural parallel between the two mediums.

Finally, what are your plans for Fantastic Fest in the future?

- However we expand, we never want to lose sight of our original goals, to be the film festival with the boring parts cut out and to make sure that everyone who comes has the time of their lives.

- Ian Rattray



Paul Conroy (Ryan Reynolds) is a US civilian lorry driver on a contract assignment in Iraq. An average family man from a small town: he is just trying to earn enough money to keep food on the table. But when his convoy is attacked by Iraqi insurgents, all that fades to black as he's knocked unconscious.

As he awakes in a dark, confined space, Paul is horrified to find that he's been buried alive in a coffin. With no idea who put him there or why, he must race against time to figure out how to free himself from this nightmarish prison. He has a cigarette lighter to offer brief moments of illumination. He has a BlackBerry. Why his captors have left him with that isn't clear until it rings. They let him know they are demanding five million dollars in ransom before nine o'clock that night or he will be left to die. But why him? As he struggles to understand the circumstances that landed him there, he must also try to find ways to satisfy or outwit his kidnappers before the deadline. With limited battery power, spotty signal reception underground and a dwindling air supply, Paul has ninety minutes to solve this riddle before becoming permanently BURIED.

Director Rodrigo Cortés sets a high bar for himself with BURIED. If the

challenge of keeping a story rushing along while confined to one space may seem impossible, Cortés meets it.

BURIED nods to Hitchcock's classic film, ROPE, using the limitations it set itself as a bold challenge. Technically masterful and told with great verve, BURIED invents new twists at every turn.

I hate confined spaces, often panicking in a crowded lift, so as I watched BURIED I often had to look away from the screen as my stomach turned over in fear and in fear for Paul's plight. I kept thinking what would I do if I, and thank God I have never, found myself in even a remotely similar position.

With the incredible cinematography by Eduard Grau (who also shot Tom Ford's A SINGLE MAN) and the masterful editing by Cortés himself, I was there in that box. This is why in my opinion cinema works so well over almost any other form of entertainment. Although it is a communal experience, it is also a very personal experience. You are there in a room with 400 other people, but you are also completely on your own.

Keep repeating, It is only a movie, only a movie

In cinemas on 29th September.

- Andrew McCracken ★★★★★

BURIED



In Cinemas 22nd September - The Hole



Welcome back, Joe Dante - you've been away far too long. Why did Hollywood turn its back on this guy? Dante's made some of the funnest movies ever - the original *Piranha*, *The Howling*, *Gremlins*, *Innerspace*, *Matinee* and *Small Soldiers*. But for much of the past decade, Dante's been making TV. Why? The big screen is his natural home, as the terrific *The Hole* proves.

Just like Steven Spielberg and Stephen King, Dante likes to set his horrors in suburbia. Dane Thompson (Massoglia) and his young brother Lucas

(Gamble) have just moved from Brooklyn into a new home, in a small town, with their mother Susan (Polo). The boys befriend cute neighbour Julie and soon come across a boarded-up, seemingly bottomless pit in their basement. Once open, all sorts of horrors are unleashed - a dead girl, a killer clown ... horrors from the pit of the kids' greatest fears, so to speak.

The Hole is Dante's best feature film since *Small Soldiers*, and far superior to his last big-screen outing, 2003's lack lustre *Looney Tunes: Back in Action*. Dante understands

how to toy with an audience's fears; he knows what scares us, and he has a lot of fun ratcheting up the scares without going over the top - this is a family film, after all. And although it is a kid-friendly horror film, there are some genuinely creepy moments to be had - along with Dante's wacky sense of humour. With nice performances all round from the mainly young cast - Massoglia, last seen in *Cirque Du Freak*, is particularly good - the film is only let down by its reliance on unnecessary 3D "comin' atcha" gimmickry.

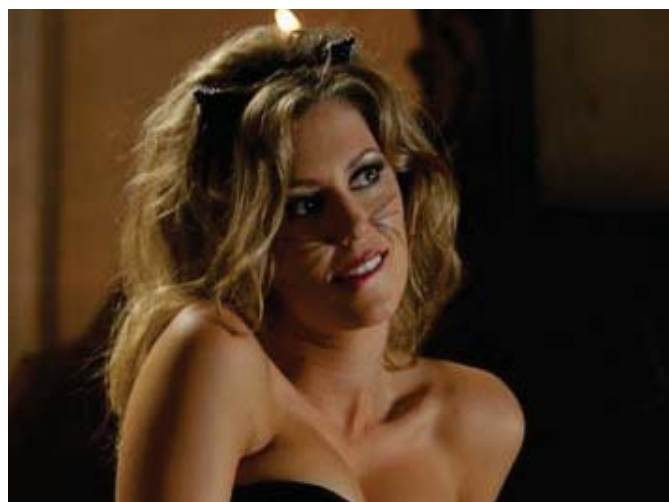
- *Stuart O'Connor*
www.screenjabber.com



17th September - The Horde

From Xavier Gens comes a major shock to the action horror system. In order to avenge the murder of one of their own by ruthless gangsters, four corrupt Paris cops go on a rampage in a condemned building. Trapped by their prey, the officers are about to be executed when the unimaginable occurs. Hordes of rage-fueled zombies suddenly invade the building, savagely attacking everyone and leaving no prisoners. But needs must and some unexpected alliances are made.

- Alan Jones. ★★★



17th September - Night of the Demons

NIGHT OF THE DEMONS is a remake of a 1988 schlock fest. Tongues are firmly in cheek, with a plentiful amount of T&A, practical FX and splatter on display paying loving tribute to the ropey DTV West Coast horrors of the 80s. If you are a 14-year-old boy, and you like boobs, this is for you. For the rest of us the enjoyment of this film is going to be highly dependent upon whether the likes CREEPOZIDS and HOLLYWOOD CHAINSAW HOOKERS evoke warm nostalgia for the 80s video store, or make you want to throw your old LA punk albums and crimpers on a bonfire.

- Stuart Barr. ★★★



17th September - F

F is a very enjoyable and well-made film clearly modelled on John Carpenter's ASSAULT ON PRECINCT 13 but takes place not in a near empty police station, but after hours in the empty corridors and classrooms of a contemporary British college.

After being attacked in his classroom and finding no support amongst his colleagues, English teacher Robert Anderson (David Schofield) turns to alcohol and eventual burn-out.

One of his pupils is his daughter, with whom he has lost connection and as he tries to repair this relationship along with facing his other demons, he finds himself confronted by a relentless attack on the school by a group of faceless thugs and bloodthirsty killers in the guise of those folk devils de jour, the hoodies (hoodie horror fast

becoming its own sub-genre).

The cast universally contribute to the film's success but David Schofield is especially effective and notable for his role as Robert Anderson. While steeped in conventions and plot lines with which we are all too familiar, director Johannes Roberts has nevertheless come up with an interesting, clever and very watchable budget film which has both relevance and panache. Definitely his best work to date.

- James Evans ★★★



In Cinemas 24th Setember - Frozen



Occasionally a film comes along which takes a rather simple scenario that any of us could potentially be in, and dissects the horrors that could come about as a result. When Steven Spielberg gave us JAWS, he made something as simple as a shark in the ocean into a psychologically horrifying threat, and one that would forever be in the back of our minds any time we decided to go into the water. One of the most impactful independent films of late was a little movie called OPEN WATER, which revolved around a stranded couple in the ocean who are trying to survive as sharks circle

them. It was a taut thriller that took a simple situation, and showed us how horrifying it could potentially be. The latest film to follow in that tradition is FROZEN, from director Adam Green (HATCHET).

FROZEN follows three friends - Dan (Kevin Zegers), his girlfriend Parker (Emma Bell), and Dan's best friend Joe (Shawn Ashmore) as they enjoy a ski trip on the cheap. They take one last night time ride on the ski lift before everything shuts down. The operator is pulled away and his relief doesn't realise they are still on the lift, and shuts everything down. They soon realise that they could be stuck

up there until the lift reopens for the following weekend. With freezing temperatures getting the better of them, they decide staying high above the ground isn't going to be an option, and begin to explore possible ways of escaping.

FROZEN isn't a horror movie, but rather a stonking thriller that is filled with horrifying elements. The film cycles through perils of the cold and frostbite, and of course man versus the beasts. Seeing Adam Green mature and grow as a director to be reckoned with is a real treat.

Review first published by Mark Walters. www.fanboy.com



1st October - Back To The Future

From the opening tracking shot of the clocks and homemade inventions of Doc Brown to his own triumphant last lines (“Roads? Where we’re going, we don’t need roads.”), **BACK TO THE FUTURE** is as close to entertainment perfection as you’re ever likely to see. While superficially a science fiction story, it’s also a family drama, a romance, a comedy and a period

piece all rolled into one.

After a time travel experiment goes wrong, Marty McFly (Michael J Fox) ends up in 1955. Being hit by a car sets off a chain of events, which put his very existence in jeopardy. Meanwhile, with the help of the eccentric but brilliant Doc Brown (Christopher Lloyd), he must find a way of getting back to 1985 before he runs out of time.

While not the first and certainly not the last time travel story, it is perhaps the simplest and most satisfying, and what cooler way to travel than in a De Lorean (and to think the machine of choice was at one point a refrigerator!)? Thanks to a sparkling script from director Robert Zemeckis and Bob Gale, it’s consistently funny throughout, helped enormously by outstanding performances from all the principal actors but especially Christopher Lloyd who displays a dazzling array of facial expressions and, let’s face it, no one falls over quite as well as Michael J Fox.

On top of all this, there’s the soundtrack, combining classic ‘80s pop from Huey Lewis and the News with Marty’s inspired/insane rendition of ‘Johnny B Goode’. But it’s actually moments such as the opening bars of ‘Mr Sandman’ as Marty discovers he’s in 1955 that really provide the film with its cultural context. From the likeable characters (even the bad guys are kind of fun), great special effects (except for that bit with Marty’s hand) to the philosophical musings on life itself, like all true classics **BACK TO THE FUTURE** bears repeated viewings and is still as fresh as a daisy and an absolute joy to behold from start to finish.

- Justin Bateman ★★★★★

www.screenjabber.com



Resident Evil Afterlife 3D

Note to self: Stop hoping the **RESIDENT EVIL** franchise will improve. Time to give up.

Back at the helm of the Capcom Entertainment videogame-to-film series he inaugurated, director Paul

W.S. Anderson once and for all puts the Zzzz in zombies with the fourth mind-numbing, inert and pointless instalment so far. At least **AFTERLIFE** was shot in 3D, using the same cameras James Cameron had on **AVATAR**, and the quality does show. Anderson heaves axes, artillery, shattered glass and those series favourites, the **THING**-style dogs, at the camera to wincing effect, scored to a storming tommandandy score, the best aspect of this movie by a mile.

- Alan Jones. ★★



KANE HODDER AT FILM4 FRIGHTFEST 2010

PICTURE BY JULIE EDWARDS



In Cinemas 15th October - Vampires Suck



Taking the piss out of the teen vamps vs. werewolves TWILIGHT series and its fan base sounds like an exercise in pointless redundancy. This bloodless, humourless offering from the filmmakers who brought us DATE MOVIE and EPIC MOVIE proves it.

The plot, or lack of it, mixes the TWILIGHT films as one. Becca, played by Jenn Proske, is new to Sporks, Washington. Becca knows something is different about this town when a vampire kills someone in front of her. And this sense of mysteriousness is heightened when she meets coiffed-haired, red-lipped

Edward Sullen (Matt Lanter). And so begins their relationship that involves a werewolf that mutates into a Chihuahua, a pack of wolves that dance to 'It's Raining Men' and a run-in with Black-Eyed Peas look-a-likes. And TWILIGHT is not the only one that gets a hard time. Watch out Tiger Woods, Lindsay Lohan, Lady Gaga and genital jokes.

Although some of the jokes hit their mark, the majority fall flat. For some reason, the writers decided that the comedy element to be obvious and wildly over the top, but it's the subtler jibes that this film almost redeems itself. However,

there is a shining light of first-timer Proske. She has done her homework as her twitching, moping performance of Kristen Stewart's Bella is spot on.

The most frustrating thing with movies such as this is that they have the potential to be intelligent and well executed, as seen in predecessors like FLYING HIGH and NAKED GUN! But VAMPIRES SUCK falls short of the mark and will probably not only piss off 'Twi-hards', but force those who are not vampire fans to check out - and shock horror, enjoy - the movies it lampoons so unsuccessfully instead.

- Andrew McCracken.

Six months after the death of his father in a car accident, Brent (Xavier Samuel) is a shell of his former self, with his girlfriend Holly (Victoria Thaine) the only comfort in his life. Planning ahead with Holly for the school prom, Brent is asked to the dance by the strange girl in the school, Lola (Robin McLeavy). Declining her offer, Brent finds out this is a big mistake, as he soon finds he is attending (not by choice) an alternative prom, but this time of the more twisted variety.

Set in Australia, Brent and his father are driving along the road when a bloodied person walks out in front of the car. Swerving to avoid them, the car crashes. Cut to 6 months later, and Brent's life remains full of remorse as he and his mother are still coming to terms with the loss of his father in the accident. After an argument with his mum, Brent decides to spend some time alone in the fields, and is abruptly knocked out by a man and taken by car to a remote house. He eventually wakes up, bound and tied, and dressed in a dinner jacket, to the sight of Lola and her father (his captor) and another odd looking dinner guest. In the meantime, noticing Brent is missing, his mum, daughter and friends are worrying frantically and trying to find out where he might be.

The build up of the movie is good, however the heart of the film is set in the house when Brent wakes up, with Lola (aided by her equally unbalanced father) looking forward to her special prom night with a difference, and in turn Brent's nightmare. It's best not to say too much at this point without giving anything away, but lets just say there is an equal mix of horror, violence and dark humour.

Described as 'Pretty in Pink meets Wolf Creek', this is spot on, and first time director Sean Byrne has crafted a gem of a movie. With a smart script, excellent performances (especially from Robin McLeavy as Lola), great music, and some mouth watering scenes, this is great fun and entertaining from beginning to end.

DVD and blu-ray release date: 4 October

- Dino Marabase ★★★★★

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On DVD 20th September - [REC] 2



This sequel to [REC] carries the story on just minutes after lead character Ángela Vidal is dragged into the darkness at the end of the first film.

While [REC] focused solely on the infection inside the Spanish apartment block, [REC] 2 starts with the events unfolding outside as the Government prepare a SWAT team (Handy Cams in hand) to enter the building in search of survivors and control the condemned area.

Outside, a group of teenagers hatch a plan to break in and take a closer look as to why the area is confined. Once

inside their curiosity soon gets the better of them as they too meet their fate of certain death at the hands/teeth of the creatures now controlling the building.

As the story unfolds we learn more about the origin of the virus infecting the residence and the conspiracies connecting the Spanish government to the outbreak. One by one the soldiers and teenagers meet a gruesome end, not helped by one of the group seemingly encouraging the creatures to feast on their helpless victims.

[REC] 2 is a brilliant follow up to the freakishly creepy

cult classic. The next chapter has the same feel as [REC] but with new twists and turns to the story telling. The film is shocking and will certainly make the heart beat faster. The introduction of more infected screaming children and new ways to kill the victims - mixed with all the darkness of the original film - makes the sequel as good if not slightly better.

With directors Balaguero and Plaza now embarking on the third instalment [REC] APOCALYPSE slated for 2012, it looks certain that this is a franchise likely to chill horror fans for many years to come.

- Nick Gibbs-McNeil.



20th September - Mother

Mother tells the tale of how far a mother would go to protect her son. Wrongly framed for a crime, she and his best friend Jin-Tae team up to prove his innocence.

Bin Won plays the part of Yoon Do-joon, a young man who is still living at home with the mother character upon whom this film is based. Suffering from a mental disability, his mother

tends to him as a young man in the same way as she would do if he was still a child. Whilst out on the street with his friend Jin-Tae, he is the subject of an attempted hit and run and the pair of them follow the car and manage to catch up with them at a golf club where they exact their revenge. The following day a young girls body is discovered hanging off a roof top, the police

investigate and find a golf ball with Do-joons' handwriting scrawled on it. They then proceed to pursue and arrest Do-joon, seeing an easy target and an easy way to bring the case to a close.

Where this film really excels is the strength of the characters, the story and how beautiful the whole thing looks. The contrast between the open fields and the dark, cold wet town really stands out, showing the poorness of Do-joon and his mum. The relationship between the two of them isn't what you may class as normal

This is a beautiful film. The run time of two hours keeps you gripped from start to finish, it justifies its running time without losing your interest at any point.

- Kris Griffen ★★★★★



20th September - Death Tube

Now please don't take this the wrong way, this film is in the vein of the SAW series, the CUBE series that came before it and, to a certain extent, the MANHUNT video games. There is no convoluted

story or over the top back plot, just a gripping tour de force of gore, tension, quality acting and a twisted sense of humour.

The main premise is as follows; a few weeks out of the year a

website appears named DEATH TUBE which shows a variety of people in individual rooms being put through different challenges. If these challenges aren't completed then the participants will be killed in all manner of gruesome ways.

I absolutely loved this film, although the majority of the film is a cookie cutter copy of many of the other 'DEATH GAME' movies the inclusion of the psychopathic giant yellow teddy bear absolutely saves this from being mediocre and makes it truly original!

- Ross McNeil. ★★★★★



27th September - I Spit On Your Grave (Re-issue)



The story (which we all know so well) is of a young magazine writer from the big city. She travels to an isolated cabin in the woods to work on her new novel. There she is brutally assaulted, raped and left for dead by a group of the locals. Barely alive, she begins to exact her revenge in the most graphic and gruesome ways imaginable.

Where to begin with this film... I remember being a teenager on a trip to the States and realising I could get hold of movies that I couldn't see over here in England. I remember the excitement as I

rushed from Suncoast to Virgin spending my holiday money on uncut video nasties such as MANIAC and STRAW DOGS and finding the infamous I SPIT ON YOUR GRAVE and being overwhelmed that I could finally just buy this damn thing and go home and watch it.

It still packs a lot of power today. It is shot and edited very creatively forcing viewers deep into the disturbing nature of both the attack and revenge. It's very brutal and hard to watch and at times feels very real, which is where the true horror is.

Unfortunately this release still has nearly three minutes

of footage missing, although this is a vast improvement from 2001, when the BBFC finally passed the film for release but with seven minutes removed.

This DVD and Blu-Ray gives the film a new lease of life. It looks and sounds great compared to how many of us remember it from old VHS. Original mono soundtrack, 2.0 stereo and even a new 5.1 surround track are all available, and the picture is very clean, clear and sharp. Well worth checking out for new viewers and even old fans of this classic.

- Russ Gomm.



4th October - Higanjima: Escape From Vampire Island

The latest film from VOLCANO HIGH director Kim Tae-Gyun, *HIGANJIMA: ESCAPE FROM VAMPIRE ISLAND* gets off to a cracking start, masked vampire hunter Atsushi reduces a vampire's head to bloody mush with a battering ram. So, Buffyesque teen vampire slayers take on sword-wielding undead in a gore-filled battle for survival; we've got a winner here, right? Well, no. Despite the movie's fun premise and fast-paced opening, *Higanjima* quickly turns into a mess. The blood-spraying, vampire-slaying action is still fun, but *Higanjima*'s excessive length and other flaws sadly prevent the film from reaching its full potential. *- Dave Axbey. ★★*



4th October - The Beckoning

From Spain, *THE BECKONING* is a supernatural thriller in the vein of *THE ORPHANAGE*. Francesca is suffering from what appears to be post-partum depression after the birth of her own child. Signed off from work and with baby on tow she and her husband move to a large house on top of a secluded hill. Of course no sooner has the couple settled in, than strange events begin to befall Francesca. A pre-credits sequence makes clear that the house has some kind of terrible secret, and in the background a parallel story runs about a priest task with investigating and debunking miracles for the Catholic Church.

THE BECKONING is competently made, and there are some chills to be had in the first half, but unfortunately just when the film should be ratcheting up the tension and scares, the Church conspiracy story line comes to the fore and this supernatural soufflé deflates. The conspiracy story line resolves itself in a way that is both contrived and ridiculous, bringing in miracles, demonic apparitions, and special cine-film able to capture images of apparitions.

This is still a reasonable rental for fans of the haunted house genre, just don't expect it to measure up to the likes of *THE ORPHANAGE*, Del Toro's *THE DEVIL'S BACKBONE* or my personal favorite, Robert Wise's *THE HAUNTING*.

- Stuart Barr. ★★★

18th September - Exquisite Corpse



A medical student perfects a serum that enables him to bring the girl he loves back to life, but at the price of another human life. We've seen this all before, and done a lot

better. The story and actions are convenient and staged, the characters seem flat and uninteresting and the distinct lack of cinematography really lets what could have been a great little film down.

- Russ Gomm. ★



18th October - The Collector



Arkin, an all-round handyman and safe-cracker, is working on the house of a jewel broker.

The film opens to a couple finding a mysterious box in their house, they look terrified once they see what it contains - before we can see, a gloved hand grabs the husband. Cue titles. Next we see Arkin who's helping secure an isolated house, ready for the family to move in. Once he finishes, he sets off to see his own family: his wife needs money, she's in deep with loan sharks and unless she pays-up today, they're going to seek repayment in their own

inimitable way. Arkin knows that the father of the family he's working for is a jewel broker and has a rare, valuable gem in his safe - and as a thief and safe-cracker, Arkin can use that jewel to save his family.

So he sneaks back to the lonely mansion in the middle of the night, masked up and ready to go. However, the eponymous Collector has also ear-marked the house, he's there to do his dastardly deeds. This film was apparently written as a SAW prequel, and it shows. The traps, and the thought behind their depravity, are reminiscent of that never-ending franchise. Arkin is likeable enough, and

his plight is easy to empathise with - so the film readily casts him as hero (even though he's actually a criminal, intent on robbing the family). Where it falls down is the lack of explanation: is THE COLLECTOR collecting human beings (it's suggested that he is)? If so, why?

There's enough ingenuity in the booby-traps and menace in the bad guy, to make this a really good horror flick. THE COLLECTOR himself has the potential to become a franchise, and I believe a sequel is afoot.

- David G Bennett.

4th October - Fanboys



Four STAR WARS fanboys decamp to the Lucas compound to snag a sneak peek of Episode 1. The feature is entertaining and well acted, and its feast of film gags and

references (you know what a light sabre is, right?) mean it is fun for fevered fanboys and freshers alike.

- Karen Oughton. ★ ★ ★ ★

11th October - Big Tits Zombies



If you're being really picky and fancy giving Trading Standards authorities a fresh challenge, you might wish to take serious issue with the title BIG TITS ZOMBIE given the fact that

something akin to AVERAGE SIZED TITS ZOMBIE or the more subtle NICE TITS ZOMBIE would be more appropriate.

- Steven West. ★ ★

18th October - The Tortured



The scene cuts back and forth between a mother gazing forlornly at her son's body and flashbacks of him laughing gaily back at her. Craig and Elise are a contented couple whose serenity is shattered when their

son is snatched from their backyard, leading them to plan their grisly revenge on the perpetrator. While the script and editing engage empathy for the pair's mixed-emotions, the acting falters in key scenes and some set-pieces come across as clichéd. You cry for not so much for the passion as for the premise, though this is worth watching for its sensitive-subject handling.

- Karen Oughton. ★ ★ ★



24th October - A Nightmare on Elm St.

A NIGHTMARE ON ELM STREET was the film that put New Line on the map. The first Wes Craven flick introduced Freddy Krueger to movie audiences, going from a macabre dream demon to eventually a punchline in the later flicks.

The film opens with Dean (Kellan Lutz) at a diner, fighting off sleep. Kris (Katie Cassidy) enters and he admits that a mysteriously burned and bruised figure has been haunting his dreams. As he struggles to stay awake, the killer in his dreams plunges his gloved and razored hand into the neck of Dean. When Dean dies in his dream, he dies in real life.

In a film like this there are only two questions. How is the bad guy? How are the deaths?

Jackie Earle Haley is proving again that his Oscar nomination was not a fluke. Here he embodies one of the most iconic characters in horror cinema and makes it his own. While the deaths are neat, we really needed to see much more of them. The film just plods along, with the audience waiting and wanting to see buckets of blood and bile.

As much as I'm getting tired of re-makes, I was really looking forward to this new Nightmare. The sum of the parts didn't add up to a great whole. While Jackie Earle Haley delivers with his role, the rest of the film is just another slash to make box office cash. *Review first published by Mark Walters. www.fanboy.com* ★ ★



JOE LYNCH AND ADAM GREEN AT FILM4 FRIGHTFEST 2010

PICTURE BY JULIE EDWARDS



GRAPHIC MAYHEM

THE LATEST GAMES REVIEWED
5 STAR FAB - 1 STAR RUBBISH

Released 24th September - Dead Rising 2

★★★★★

Capcom's zombies are back with their tongues firmly rooted in their rotten cheeks in DEAD RISING 2. Originally spewed forth from the gore dribbling maw of publishers' in-house code MASTERS IN THE EAST, the house that STREET FIGHTER built opted to outsource this follow up to Canadian developer Blue Castle Games, a development team primarily known for its sports titles.

Thankfully - and under the watchful EYE OF MACABRE maestro Keiji Inafune, DEAD RISING'S original co-designer - the result is a sequel that stays

true to its roots, while adding a few twists and turns of its own to keep the zombie slaughter feeling, well, fresh.

Unfurling under a geyser of gore in FORTUNE CITY, Blue Castle's ode to Las Vegas, DEAD RISING 2'S design fizzles; brash colours, gallons of the sticky stuff, outlandish outfits to kit your character out in, and a jaw-dropping legion of slickly crafted stenchies make up the sum of its gloriously gory parts.

Show-stopper additions to an already solid foundation are without doubt the inclusion of both four player co-op mini modes (motorcycle chainsaw

duels!) and an armoury of new weapon building combos, including the brilliantly bonkers teddy bear with a machine gun concoction.

RISING'S pièce de résistance is its robust graphical overhaul; textures are head and shoulders above the original, environments are richer, exquisitely detailed and loaded with even more bombastic bludgeoning props than before. And with more zombies on screen than you can shake a severed limb at, snapping up DEAD RISING 2 is a no-brainer. Remember, folks - aim for the head!

- Sebastian Williamson.

GORE ON THE SHELF

THE LATEST HORROR BOOKS
5 STAR FAB - 1 STAR RUBBISH

1st July - Asian Horror by Andy Richards

Short, snappy and accessible, 'Asian Horror' provides a useful overview of the genre as well as some interesting insights into the cultural values and traditions that underpin it.

Aimed at the horror buff and casual moviegoer rather than academia, film writer and producer Richards' book is intended as an introduction to the subject rather than an encyclopaedia, and in this it succeeds admirably.

As well as landmark modern titles such as Miike's AUDITION, Shimizu's JU-ON: THE GRUDGE and Nakata's THE RING, the book discusses the

classic Japanese horrors of the 1950s and '60s as well as more outré gorefests like Sato's notorious SPLATTER: NAKED BLOOD.

Richards is also fairly catholic in his selection, with movies as diverse as GODZILLA, BATTLE ROYALE and MR VAMPIRE all making the cut; a sensible decision considering that "Asian horror frequently revels in its own pick-and-mix approach to genre".

Discussion of the films themselves is tripartite in structure - story, background and verdict - and provides a slew of interesting

observations. However, 'Asian Horror' also takes time out to provide overviews of influential directors such as Hideo Nakata, Shinya Tsukamoto and Chan-Wook Park, as well as brief excursions into important themes and sub-genres that feed into the more focused evaluations of individual titles.

These include placing J-Horror in the context of Japanese folklore as dispensed by more traditional media such as Kaidan (ghost stories), Noh drama and Kabuki theatre - for example, Richards notes that AUDITION's anti-

heroine Asami is “part of a long tradition of wronged and avenging females in Japanese storytelling traditions” while THE RING’S Sadako “is merely the modern apotheosis of a long line of theatrical and cinematic yurei”, that is, unquiet and vengeful spirits.

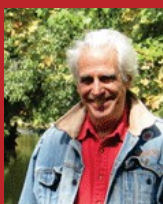
Another theme developed is the interplay between the horror cinemas of east and west; not only the high profile (and frequently disappointing) Hollywood remakes, but also Asian borrowing of classic western formulae. For instance, Richards cites Ikeda’s EVIL DEAD TRAP as a “great example of the ways in which eastern and western horror films have always fed off and renewed each other in a mutually beneficial cycle”.

Overall, ‘Asian Horror’ is an excellent read - entertaining, attractively designed and engagingly written. One caveat is that it is avowedly a gateway to the genre aimed at newcomers to Asian horror cinema and, like the reviewer, casual fans; readers searching for an in-depth sociological study should look elsewhere. That understood, ‘Asian Horror’ is well worth a look, even if the £12.99 price point seems a touch steep.

- Dave Axbey.

Published by Kamera Books -
160pp paperback - £12.99

WHO'S DEAD?



Al Williamson,
12th June.

The master illustrator brought fun, frights, fevered emotion and glorious artistry to Eerie magazine and others. **Peter Brunette,** 16th June. The cinema critic and circuit regular had persuasive appreciation for Von Trier’s ANTICHRIST’s assertive cinematography. **Frank Giering,** 23rd June. Brought scrambled social inadequacy to the civil yet psychotic Peter in the original FUNNY GAMES (1997).



Elliott Kastner,
30th June. His production of THE BLOB (1988) is

‘goriously’ good fun, while THE NIGHTCOMERS was BAFTA nominated.

David E. Blewitt, 8th July. His editing elevated PSYCHO 3 to a redemption saga, giving a hand to enable Norman to become (nearly) normal.

Vonetta McGee, 9th July. Majestic as BLACULA’s dignified bride and

brehtaking despite the Benny Hill backing track. She was proud of her part. **Alan Hume,** 13th July. Responsible for my sleepless nights, his cinematography on THE WATCHER IN THE WOODS renders the quaint countryside beautifully bell-igerent.

Peter Fernandez, 15th July. Honed the horror voices on the by-turns hilariously hammy and eerily layered THE ANTICHRIST amongst other movies.



Tom Mankiewicz,
31st July. BOND and SUPERMAN

screenwriter flamboyantly fanciful in his direction of TALES FROM THE CRYPT’s ‘Loved to Death’.



Ahna Capri,
19th August. The brave bombshell is pitted against

the witches in senior-citizen sorcery flick, THE BROTHERHOOD OF SATAN.

-Karen Oughton

THE EXORCIST

VS. THE WORLD (ahem, and me)

Growing up a Fangoria obsessed, 'video shop kid' in eighties Britain, post Video Nasties scandal, was not fun at all. Wasn't so much that every movie I read about required my parents actually having to rent the films for me, but more so the fact that there were some movies that I could not get at all. You see, even at eight-years-old, I had heard all about THE EXORCIST,

and was desperate to see it. While not a 'video nasty' itself, William Friedkin's seminal tale of demonic possession still fell victim to Graham Bright's precious Video Recordings Act, and by the early months of 1986 was pulled from every video store shelf nationwide, due to former BBFC president, James Ferman's refusal to grant the film a video certificate. In its absence





however, it's reputation in Britain sky rocketed - only reaffirming its status among those too young to have ever seen the film, that *THE EXORCIST* truly was the scariest movie ever made.

Some twenty-five-years and a long overdue video release later, *THE EXORCIST* makes its hi-definition debut this October with a Blu-Ray release that has horror fans the world over chomping at the bit to get their hands on. Boasting brand new supervised (by director Friedkin and Cinematographer Owen Roizman) transfers for both the original 1973 theatrical cut and the recent director's cut, and a brand new documentary, 'Filming *THE EXORCIST*' which shows off some forty-minutes of never-before-seen 16mm footage that Roizman shot on the set of the film. Despite constantly having people tell me that they feel the movie is unbearably overrated, the Blu-Ray announcement

certainly lit up the horror community when announced. The odd derogatory comment slipped through, but alas if we were all stinking rich, you can bet someone out there will still have something to moan about, right? By and large, *THE EXORCIST* has the horror genre by the short and curls once again, begging the question, how does it do it? Other horror big boys such as *HALLOWEEN*, *THE TEXAS CHAINSAW MASSACRE* and *THE EVIL DEAD* have had Blu-Ray releases come and go without so much as a cough from horror fans. How does *THE EXORCIST* continue to generate the kind of attention it gets nearly forty-years after it's initial release?

The film was first unleashed in America on Boxing Day, 1973 to hordes of unsuspecting cinemagoers who waited in line for up to four-hours just to see what all the fuss was about. Reports were quickly widespread of people reacting



negatively, not just in a vocal manner, but also physically, to what they were seeing on the screen. Even on opening night, cinema managers were so put out by people vomiting in their seats, that they started handing out sick bags to patrons as they entered the building. It wasn't long at all before the church got involved on the media hoopla created by the film. The more petrified people would go to their local minister begging for an exorcism, the more religious groups

would target and picket screenings of the movie - imploring with those waiting in line that by seeing the film they were 'opening themselves up to the forces of darkness'. American evangelist, Billy Graham, would even go on to publicly state that the very celluloid carried within it the mark of the devil - but still, people arrived by the thousand to see it. By the time the film had crossed the Atlantic for it's UK release on the 16th of March 1974, over a dozen local councils across Britain had refused to let THE EXORCIST be shown in their districts (despite an uncut X certificate from the BBFC), forcing many to set up independent bus runs that would take people to the nearest town screening the film.

At the 47th Academy Awards, THE EXORCIST was nominated for no less than ten Oscars, a feat not normally becoming of a 'balls to the wall' horror feature. That said the movie was tipped to walk away with many of the main categories it had been nodded for - namely Best Picture, Best Director and all of the Actor/Actress categories it was named in. The Academy however had the last laugh and of the ten nominations THE EXORCIST recieved, only managed to walked away with two wins for Best Adapted Screenplay and Best Sound Design. Commercially, the movie went on to smash box office records worldwide and to this day, with inflation adjusted for ticket prices, remains the most successful 'R' rated motion picture of all time.

The sequels and imitators have come and gone over the years, with none of them really coming close to the level of praise or disgust that THE EXORCIST generated. Whether the public liked the film or not, at the time it certainly evoked an emotional response that nobody (certainly myself) had

ever felt with any other movie they had seen. It was as if the floodgates for all that was considered decent and holy in the world of cinema was pragmatically kicked the f**k in! It's this response that gives the film its power and, in my opinion, it's lasting legacy. Although you had ROSEMARY'S BABY several years previous, it did not deal with the subject matter in a relatable fashion. Sure director Roman Polanski took the evil out of a Transylvanian never-land and into our world, but THE EXORCIST pushed further and put it in your neighbourhood and right into the house next door. It's not a film that relies on cheap jump scares (which is why I despise the 'Director's Cut' so much), but rather draws out the pain, the anguish and the torture of this innocent little girl and more importantly, those that are witnessing all of it - the mother, the priests and of course, the audience.

On a personal level I was fortunate to experience THE EXORCIST for the first time, twice. As insane as that sounds, I got to

“The sequels and imitators have come and gone over the years, with none of them really coming close to the level of praise or disgust that THE EXORCIST generated ”

see it as gore-crazed eight-year-old who was fortunate enough to have an older brother who knew a video store owner with a copy under the counter, and again as an eighteen-year-old absolutely obsessed with the ins and outs of filmmaking. As



a kid I took in the thrills and chills of the special-effects sequences. I had no idea what was going on, but the sight of Linda Blair's head rotating was enough to keep me entertained. When I saw the movie as an adult when it was re-released in cinemas over Halloween in 1998 for the twenty-fifth anniversary, that's when things really changed for me and cinema became more than a two-hour escape from college papers and exam revision. Having already seen the film at a young age, I knew what to

expect, 120 minutes of great special-effects, what I saw however was an almost documentary realistic tale of the supernatural, that conjured up in my mind for the very first time, the possibility of something beyond our existence. I came out of that screening shaking. THE EXORCIST made me think, it made me question my own values and above all else, it made me believe.

It's always been said by renowned critic, broadcaster and all round 'Exorcist' aficionado, Mark Kermode, that people tend to take from this film what they personally bring to it. If you think the world is a vile place then that's what the movie is - you've got some crucifix masturbation in there to reinforce that. If you think that there is room in the world for good triumphing over evil, then you will get that from THE EXORCIST. This is something that I whole-heartedly stand by and in my opinion, reflecting your own aspirations and fears is the greatest thing a movie can do - and that is why I firmly believe that THE EXORCIST is greatest movie ever made. Having said that, I do also appreciate and respect that it's not everybody's cup of tea, but personal opinions aside, it's a clear as day fact that websites and magazines often place THE EXORCIST at the top of horror polls year after year. Whether you're a fan of horror movies or not, it's a pretty good bet that you have heard of, if not seen the 'The Beatles' of the horror genre.

- Paul Davis. Writer and actor.

The Exorcist will be released for the first time on Blu-ray in October 2010.



WILLIAM PETER BLATTY'S
THE EXORCIST ¹⁸

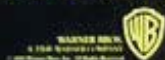
Directed by WILLIAM FRIEDKIN



KARL VON SYDOW · LEE J. COBB · KITTY WINN · JACK MACGOWRAN

WILLIAM PETER BLATTY Executive Producer NOEL MARSHALL Screenplay by WILLIAM PETER BLATTY based on his novel

Featuring The Theme Song Mike Oldfield's "Tubular Bells"





RICHARD'S RANDOM T

RICHARD STREET RUMINATES ON FILMS, FILM SOUNDTRACKS AND IN FACT ANY

There's been a lot of talk recently about 3D - how it's going to completely revolutionize cinemagoing and film-making and how it's going to be the industry standard: how everything is going to be 3D in a few years' time. Personally, I think that's hooey.

On the other hand, there's also a lot of talk recently about how it's an empty gimmick designed solely to sucker more money out of audiences and defeat camcorder pirates; how it won't make enough money to keep going and will die out in a few years' time. Personally, I think that's hooey as well.

I don't believe it's here to stay as the norm, but I do think that'll it'll hang on pretty much as it is now: the digimations, the occasional big epic such as AVATAR, and some splattery horror movies. And for all the wailing, I actually like the 3D effect. I wouldn't want to see it in everything - Woody Allen movies, low-budget independent dramas, porn - but an instalment of RESIDENT EVIL and SAW every so often certainly wouldn't go amiss.

On the other hand, three-dimensional television is insanity on stalks. It's the devil's work. Part of the problem is that the TV

screen occupies a relatively small percentage of your field of vision, compared with a cinema screen (especially if you're in the front three rows at the Empire). And secondly (and more importantly), what is there on TV to justify the third dimension? Much as I enjoy an edition of 'Would I Lie To You', it's not going to be enhanced in any meaningful way. 'Newsnight Review'? 'Antiques Roadshow'? Oh, I suppose the weather forecasts can be 150% more dizzying as the forecaster hovers like a god, five thousand feet above a 3D hologram of the British Isles, but no-one will put the special glasses on to see whether it's going to rain any more than they'll put their teeth in to listen to Mahler. Possibly some sports might benefit from the extra depth, but unless you've got a massive wall screen it's going to be like watching a game of Subbuteo from across the room. And if you have got a massive wall screen - well, you might as well go to the cinema. Or the theatre, of course, which has been in 3D since before the war and is all done in one take as well.

I don't know how the technology for 3D TV actually functions. Watching DVDs through the red-green spectacles doesn't

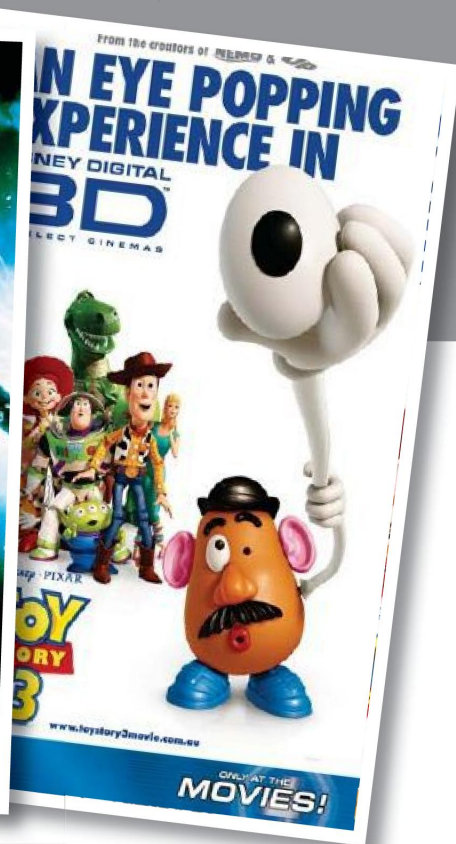
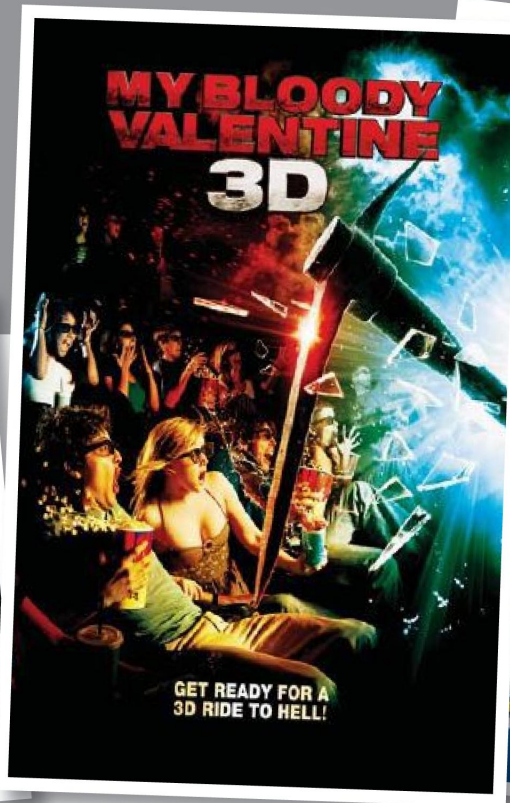
work at all - instead of any kind of depth effect everything just degenerates into a double exposure slathered in brown stodge. Indeed, the effect in cinemas wasn't all that great - maybe it's just me but FRIDAY THE 13TH PART III ultimately lost more than it gained, as did the last reel of the terrible A NIGHTMARE ON ELM STREET 6 and the third SPY KIDS movie (the only reason I went to see it was for the 3D. And a chance for another free set of 3D spectacles).

And years ago the BBC tried to utilise the Pulfrich Effect for an absolutely atrocious 'EastEnders' / 'Doctor Who' crossover (atrocious even by the standards of the Sylvester McCoy era that spawned it), but it depended on movement to get any kind of depth illusion. You can still find the episode in a hopelessly low-def format on YouTube somewhere. I still have two pairs of the fancy glasses, and a while ago I experimented with using them in conjunction with an ordinary DVD - Russell Mulcahy's RAZORBACK. It didn't work to any noticeable degree.

On the other hand, the great thing about modern theatrical 3D is that, when it's well done, it does actually work. You do get the illusion of depth within

THOUGHTS

THING THAT TAKES HIS FANCY



the image without sacrificing colour. Now apparently the downside is that you lose some light - something to do with foot-candles. But to be honest I've never been bothered by it. Maybe it's been projected brighter than normal to compensate. I went to my local's first showing of *RESIDENT EVIL: AFTERLIFE* and (given that it's a dumb videogame zombie sequel without enough zombies) enjoyed it well enough and the 3D is well used. Whether there's a film yet to come that uses 3D to provide something that doesn't work in 2D, I don't know. Even if it's just a gimmick, it's an enjoyable one.

I'd be surprised if it just disappears like Sensurround or Smell-o-vision, though. Too much money has been invested for it to fail (then again, a lot of money was invested in Betamax and the

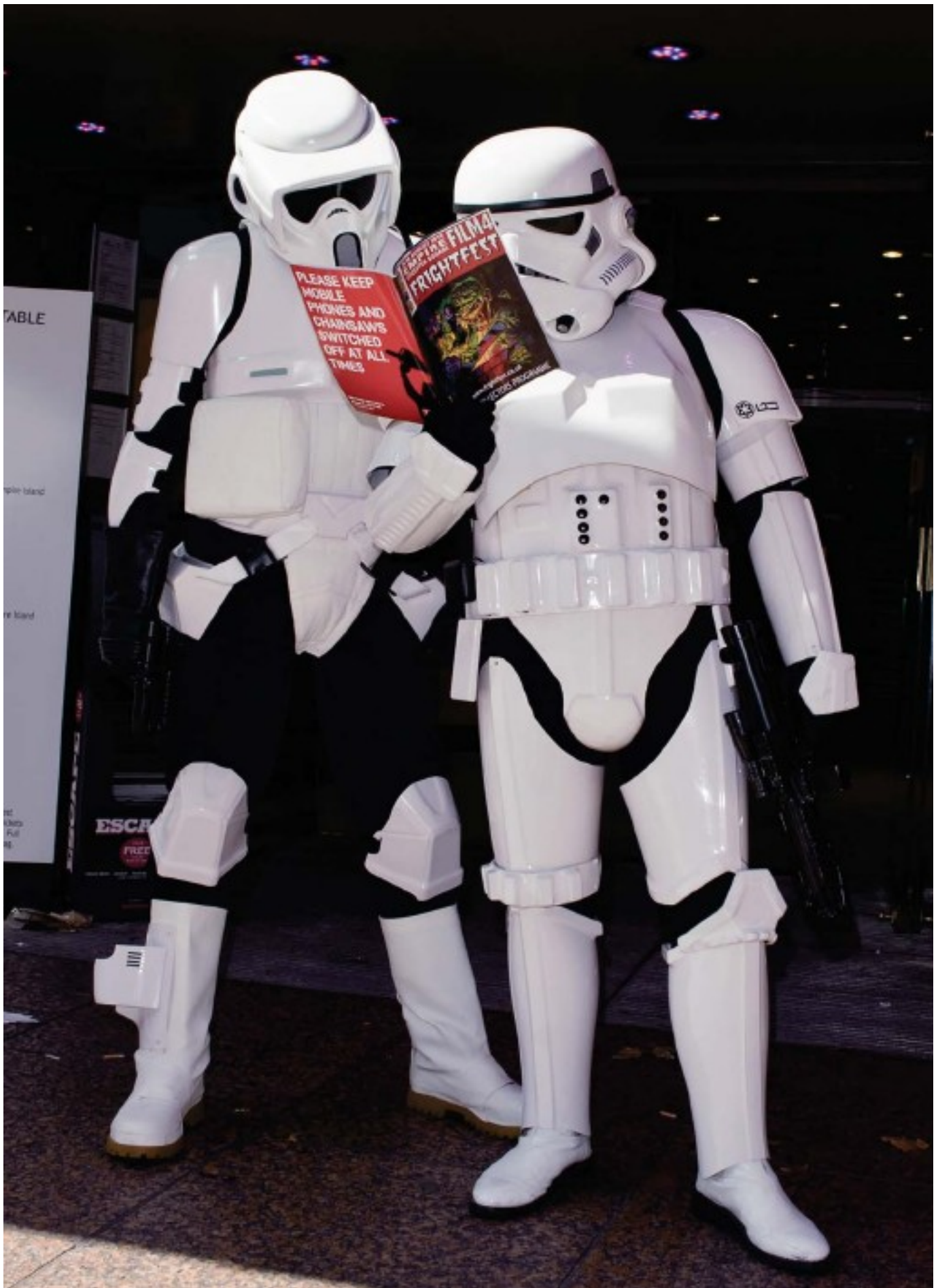
eight-track cartridge). Besides, there's all the extra cash going into cinemas in the form of the premium that's NOT for buying the glasses - they're free - but for the Enhanced Experience.

Oh really? Firstly, in the case of conversion jobs like *THE LAST AIRBENDER* or *CLASH OF THE TITANS* I'd rather see them in plain old 2D, since that's the way they were shot, and I'm mildly miffed that *PIRANHA* was only distributed in a shoddy processed 3D format. If I'm going to pay for a 3D film it should be in proper 3D. Secondly, what are we still paying for? It's not the glasses, because we still have to pay even if we bring the old glasses back, and surely the screens and projectors have been paid for by now? Even if the cinema chains were buying the new equipment on some sort of deferred credit

scheme, I can't believe they still owe money on them. Besides, they use the same screens and projectors even if they don't have a 3D film on in that particular week. We don't pay for the screen and projector then, do we?

So I think the 3D is going to trundle on pretty much as it is now - one every couple of weeks but it's not going to be the standard format for every film or even a substantial majority. For one thing people are going to get fed up of the extra cost, and for another most movies, particularly small-scale dramas, romantic comedies and arthouse numbers, just don't need it. But it's not going the way of Emergo and the Fright Break either. Like widescreen and surround stereo, some movies will use it and others won't bother.

- Richard Street.



FRIGHTFEST SECURITY TAKE A BREAK

PICTURE BY JULIE EDWARDS

AND FINALLY...

**CHRIS AND PHIL CAST THEIR EYES OVER THE
SECOND ISSUE OF THE FRIGHTFEST E-ZINE.....
BE AFRAID, BE VERY AFRAID.**



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