



The Short Films & Documentaries Pages

First, the Short films:

CHILD OF THE APOCALYPSE

(2000 - short, 9 mins.) writ & dir: Jennifer Whitaker; w/ Jason Smith, Jennifer Whitaker, Lori Kirkland. No skin; no gore.

A crew from a tabloid-TV show goes to interview a young lady claiming to be pregnant with Lucifer's child, only to find she's a bubbly, pig-tailed blonde. It's well made and amounts to just a quick lightweight gag with rather a weak punch line. But I'll have to admit that it did have me laughing out loud in spots (although sensitive Christians may wish to avoid it for its vulgar references to the Virgin Mother).



ESTUARY HOUNDS

(1996 - 28 min.) dir: Will Martin; w/ Will Martin, Ralf Langenhelm, John Galleni, Randy Foster.

A delightful parody of *Reservoir Dogs* done in the Mad magazine mold. Considering that the budget didn't go much beyond some strawberry syrup and a can of whipped cream, it's well put together, and they do a great job of roasting Tarantino's flick. The original is required viewing, of course, but if you liked that one you'll get a kick out of this version.

(Found on the same disc with *The Invincible Kung Fu Guy*.)



the **GLOVE**

(2003 - short, 11 mins. from Beer & Smokes Films) dir: Mark Walling; w/ Jeremy Young, Dave Miller, Ron Richardson. No skin; no gore.

A young man receives what he thinks is a powerful new force-feedback game controller device -- that is, until it starts sucking his blood. This short flick is obviously a send-up of video game addicts, but also pokes fun at chip-heads and horror fans. It has the feel of a live-action cartoon, and even at 11 minutes, it's lighter on plot than you might expect. But it's well crafted and the cast is clearly having fun with it -- it would make a nice party appetizer, especially if your crew includes some gearheads or frag-addicts.



THE INVINCIBLE KUNG FU GUY

(1994 - 23 min.) writ & dir: Will Martin; w/ Will Martin, Ralf Langenheim, Randy Foster, Rohana Kenin. No skin; no gore.

“You killed ma brutha!” A terribly silly but well crafted parody of those even sillier old HK chop-socky flicks. They manage to capture not only the dubbing and posturing but even the lighting of the old films; the one thing they miss on is the speed -- their Kung Fu is really slow. This is one of those shorts that was certainly more fun to make than to watch, but it's more than cute enough to make a nice intermission between your party flicks.



the **PLEDGE**

(2002 - short film, 12 min.) dir: Jennifer Whitaker; w/ Roxanne Kowalska, Michelle Rickman. No skin; a tidbit o' gore.

Four teen girls pretend to summon the devil in order to freak out their annoying cousin. Unfortunately, the cousin is all too serious about conjuring Lucifer. It's a cute little Twilight Zone-style short (with a little gore added). The production quality is not much above home movie, but it's filmed with some style and evident talent, and the cast does a very good job. A good appetizer for Movie Night.



TERROR OF THE DISGUSTING WORMS FROM OUTER SPACE

(1985 - Germany - Short, 34 min.) dir: George Hampton; w/ Hanna Monteverdi, Mark Savage. A peek o' skin; a bit o' blood.

Two young people walk around an abandoned chemical plant for several minutes. And then the girl has to run from a zombie-guy who got eaten by space worms. And pretty much, that's all there is to the film -- running and running and running -- it's like a damn marathon training video. As an example of ultra-low-budget amateur filmmaking... this just sucks the big moose. There is no story, no fun, bad photography, and the soundtrack is mostly intensely irritating synthesizer noises. This was a tragic waste of time even for the filmmakers themselves, let alone any schmuck unfortunate enough to have to watch it. *Ouch.*



The Documentaries:

MARJOE

(1972) prod & dir: Howard Smith & Sarah Kernochan; w/ Marjoe Gortner.

Little Marjoe Gortner started his show biz career as a child evangelist, forced into that mold by a domineering mother. During his last years as a pulpit-pounder, Marjoe took a film crew behind the scenes of the "revival meeting" business to expose his own hypocrisy. Watch as Marjoe and other preachers whip the flock into a froth and then fleece them blind for no higher purpose than lining their own pockets. His attitude isn't at all bitter and it's not even anti-God, but it is certainly anti-preacher. Actually, this exposé seems more like Marjoe's own penance, as he obviously got a buzz out of it all and was good at conning the rubes, but he just as



obviously felt guilty about it. It's also a fascinating peek at a class of professionals who exploit guilt, auto-suggestion, and mass hysteria for fun and profit.

PROJECT GRIZZLY

(1996 - Canada) prod: Michael Allder; w/ Troy Hurtubise.

After a close encounter with a grizzly bear, a Canadian north-country good-ol'-boy decides to create the ultimate Grizzly-proof suit of armor. Troy is certainly an earnest, creative, and determined young man -- but his elevator has trouble getting out of the basement, let alone going all the way to the top. After seven years of expensive R & D and much arduous testing, he finally has a suit that withstands fire, shotguns and 3-ton trucks -- and very probably *is* grizzly-proof... of course... it's also so heavy and cumbersome that it can't maneuver over anything but perfectly level ground... and you don't meet many grizzly bears in parking lots. Oh, my -- a life is a terrible thing to waste.



SATANIS, THE DEVIL'S MASS

(1970) prod & dir: Ray Laurent; w/ Anton LaVey.

A slightly unflattering documentary of LaVey's Church of Satan; it consists mostly of interviews with members and neighbors (precious few of whom seem to have an adequate supply of brain cells). As a film, it's wandering and immensely dull, but they do try to add a little titillation with footage of some of the actual ceremonies, which involve a little nudity, a little butt-flogging, and a whole lot of bad poetry. Most of the interviewees (both in and out of the church) are such pathetic losers, that it can be a bit embarrassing to watch -- but by the same token, we're provided with a little hilarity at the expense of some extraordinarily weak-minded individuals (such as the satanist-nerd who prays to the devil for the power to wank himself harder and longer). Oog -- incompetent filmmaking among the dregs of humanity -- if you like that sort of thing, this is choice.



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Icon Glossary:



Good Stinker -- These are the films where a good deal of the entertainment comes from filmmaking incompetence; fun to watch in spite of themselves.



Goopy Gore -- These films exhibit distinctly above-normal quantities of unpleasantly abused body parts.



Naughty Nudie -- Films with this flag feature frequent and/or explicit nudity (almost always female) beyond that normally found in your average T&A flick.



Butt Stompin' -- These films feature at least one superior violent fight or shootout scene that will get the testosterone pumping.



Gold Star -- These are the flicks that I felt reached above their expectations or at least pleasantly surprised me; they may not always be actually good flicks, but I did find something in them worthwhile.



Blue Max Medal of Really Goodness -- These are flicks that I not only enjoyed, but I think are actually quite good films (not always the same thing).



Lethal Cinema -- These wretched viewing experiences go beyond being merely bad to become genuine sources of pain and regret; they should be avoided by all but the most masochistic trash cinema veterans. Don't say I didn't warn you.