



## The “O” Pages from Oblivion to Overdrawn

### OBLIVION

(1994 - Full Moon studio) Prod: Charles Band, Dir: Sam Irvin. With: Richard Joseph Paul, Jackie Swanson, George Takei, Meg Foster, Julie Newmar, Isaac Hayes.

A delightful Sci-Fi Western Comedy -- sort of *Rio Bravo* meets F-Troop as staged at the Mos Eisley Cantina. Script was by Peter David, veteran comics writer & Star Trek Novelist -- and he packed into it a lot of bad jokes as well as pun-homages to Star Trek & some favorite comics characters. You have to be alert to catch them all, but some are painfully obvious. I liked it!

### OBLIVION 2

See Backlash: Oblivion 2.

### the OBLONG BOX

(1969) prod & dir: Gordon Hessler; w/ Vincent Price, Christopher Lee (guest star); Rupert Davies, Sally Geeson.

A byzantine tale of betrayal, premature burial, voodoo, and revenge (plus they threw in some gratuitous debauchery in the hopes we wouldn't get bored). It's a good flick, but truly I can only recommend it to fans of the AIP Poe series. It is heavily marred by obvious



padding, irrelevant scenes, a confused jumble at the end, and really disappointing sfx makeup.

## OCTAMAN

(1971) writ & dir: Harry Essex; w/ Pier Angeli, Kerwin Mathews, Jeff Morrow. No skin, no gore.

Scientists investigating radioactive pollution cross paths with a half-man, half-octopus (that looks exactly like a guy in a bad Halloween costume). The filming here is amateurish and the plot is nonexistent. We spend most of the film alternating between watching the scientists make (badly written) small talk and watching Octaman lumber through the scenery. (The critter suit has to be one of sfx man Rick Baker's embarrassments, but I suppose it was the best he could do given the budget -- the flick looks like most of the crew were paid in pizza & beer.) And, by gum, no fakey looking day-for-night photography on this flick -- when they film a night scene, it's really at night... and you can't see a damn thing. This movie can be fun, but only if you've had too much to drink already.



## OCTOPUS

(2000) dir: John Eyres; w/ Jay Harrington, David Beecroft, Carolyn Lowery, Ravil Isyanov, Ricco Ross. No skin; no gore.

The CIA captures an infamous terrorist and they transport him to the US aboard a submarine. In the middle of all this, the CIA, the Navy, and the terrorists all run smack into a really fig buckin' mutant octopus! Yup, they try for a mixture of crime thriller and monster movie (a popular trend of late), but only prove that two halves do not make a whole. It does manage to be mildly fun, but in a stupid sort of way. Okay, so this is a giant octopus movie, but even given that, it's remarkably unrealistic. The concept of "water pressure at depth" is utterly ignored, and people routinely survive underwater explosions at close range. The nuclear attack sub has a civilian scientist on board as a "guest"; but that's okay, 'cause she's braver than the crew of undisciplined wimps who abandon their posts when things get tough. The octopus -- a cute thing about the size of a cruise ship -- has long slender tentacles that snake through half the compartments of a submarine to snatch up tasty



humans. And the characters, although modestly entertaining, are wearisome stereotypes. Recommended strictly for giant octopus fans.

## OCTOPUS 2: RIVER OF FEAR

(2001) dir: Yossi Wein; w/ Michael Reilly Burke, Meredith Morton, Frederic Lane, John Thaddeus. No skin; no gore.

Manhattan is terrorized by what they describe as an *ordinary* octopus. Big as a yacht! Armored like Godzilla! Stronger than a wrecking crane! So clumsy its victims have to help the tentacles wrap around themselves! Despite the New York setting, the bulk of the flick was filmed in Bulgaria, and they got the spfx from whoever was cheapest -- it's a mixed bag of bad CG, miniatures, mock-ups and limp rubber tentacles, none of which match in scale or appearance. The wholly moronic script sticks to the old nature-gone-wild formula, but this time a harbor patrol cop substitutes for the environmentalist. And he gets to kill the monster because, well, the monster doesn't even notice him, despite killing everyone else who gets close (very large *Hero Death Battle Exemption*). And because they did that part so badly, they also tack on a dull disaster movie piece at the end, so our hero can rescue a bunch of tykes from a collapsing tunnel. And then -- oh, it's just too lame. Sad, very sad.



## OF UNKNOWN ORIGIN

(1983 - Canada) dir: George P. Cosmatos; w/ Peter Weller, Jennifer Dale, (Shannon Tweed bit). No skin; no gore.

A high-octane businessman enters into mortal combat with a cunning rat that has taken over his brownstone -- the mad duel becomes an all-consuming obsession for both of them. This film tries to be a tense & occasionally tongue-in-cheek drama of a man's mental disintegration under pressure. But it succeeds in being an immensely dull trudge through a poorly thought-out script filled with characters who don't particularly resemble either humans or rodents. And both species have good reason to be offended by this dipstick of a movie.



## OFFICE KILLER

(1997) dir: Cindy Sherman; w/ Carol Kane, Molly Ringwald, Jeanne Tripplehorne. No skin, a bit o' gore.

A brilliant but mousy & insecure copy editor at a major magazine gets stressed out by all the changes at work and begins a little "downsizing" on her abusive coworkers. Carol Kane plays a serial murderer -- how could you not run right out and rent this? Well, actually, there are reasons you might want to resist the urge. The flick is very well made and Kane delivers an exceptional & powerful performance, but the story seems to lack focus. It's not really an offbeat black comedy, nor is it a straight horror film, and neither is it a disturbing psycho-drama about childhood sexual abuse & criminal insanity. Yet, it partially succeeds in all these areas, but fails to lead the audience in any definable direction. I don't dislike this flick, but the best thing I can say is that I respect it.



## the OFFSPRING

(1986 - aka *From a Whisper to a Scream*) dir: Jeff Burr; w/ Vincent Price, Clu Gulager, Terry Kiser, Rosalind Cash, Cameron Mitchell, (cameos for Lawrence Tierney & Martine Beswick). A teeny-weeny peek o' skin; some gore.

Vincent Price, as the town librarian, hosts an outstanding anthology of four short horror tales which illustrate why Oldfield, Tennessee has such a violent history. The town's story unfolds with murder, necrophilia, voodoo, and cannibal children. These old-fashioned fright tales turn out to be delightfully wicked and occasionally gruesome, and are well played by a strong cast. In fairness, I've noticed quite a few negative reviews on this flick. Some critics dislike the unabashed EC-magazine tone of supernatural horror, and many seem put off by the inclusion of some genuinely grisly bits. But for me, both these things are a plus. There's no tiresome and self-conscious "dark" humor to try and lighten the tone, and better still, there are no embarrassed attempts to turn bald-faced horror tales into something cute or quaint. I loved it -- and to anyone who cut their teeth on the pulp horror of the 50's & 60's, this stuff is nectar.



## OLD BOY

(2003 - S. Korea) dir: Park Chan-wook; w/ Choi Min-Sik, Yu Ji-Tae, Kang Hye-Jeong. A little skin; a little gore.

An average sap finds himself imprisoned and mentally tortured for no apparent reason at all; when he is mysteriously released after fifteen long years, his only thought is to find and destroy those responsible for his misery. But among the many things he does not know is that his punishment is only just beginning. This is an original and twisted tale of madness and revenge that fold back in upon themselves. Ultimately, it doesn't have much of a point, but it is a nicely sordid yarn very much in the mold of the macabre fiction of yesteryear. Not for all tastes, of course, but it's certainly something different.



## The OLD DARK HOUSE

(1932) dir: James Whale; w/ Boris Karloff, Melvyn Douglas, Charles Laughton, Raymond Massey, Gloria Stewart.

Two sets of hapless travelers are stranded by the storm – they take refuge in a decaying mansion occupied by an utterly psychotic family that has more skeletons than closet space. Yes, you've seen this plot a dozen times, but I believe this is the original, and it is the altar at which all other films of this sub-genre worship. This is great entertainment even by today's standards – it's full of outrageous characters, dark stairways, locked doors, awkward humor, suspicious glances, exaggerated emotions, and gibbering lunatics! Every other scene and half the dialog have since become clichés – you can enjoy it at face value or, if you wish, chuckle at its quaintness and try vainly to count how many times that last plot point has been copied.

## OMEGA DOOM

(1996 - filmed in Slovakia) writ & dir: Albert Pyun; w/ Rutger Hauer, Shannon Whirry, Tina Côté, Anna Katarina, Jill Pierce, Norbert Weisser.

Would ya believe, *Last Man Standing* with robots? In a bleak apocalyptic world, gangs of androids feud over the right to exterminate the last humans, but someone throws a reprogrammed monkey wrench into the works. It's a loose & abbreviated adaptation of the classic *Yojimbo* tale -- it scores some hits & some misses. It is stylish, well visualized, nicely filmed -- but a little too stylish and the pacing is downright pedestrian. In spots, it appears as if Pyun was trying to make an art

flick. It's not a complete waste of film, but the best thing I can say about it is that it's "interesting."

(For a different take using many of the same story elements, check out Pyun's *Knights*.)

## ONCE UPON A GIRL...

(1976) dir: Don Jurwich & Jack Conrad; w/ Richmond Johnson, Carol Placente, Kelly Gordon. Teensy bit o' real skin; tons o' cartoon nudity.

When Mother Goose is put on trial for obscenity, she reveals the true stories behind the fairy tales -- which serves as a wrapper for three silly, X-rated animated spoofs of Jack & the Beanstalk, Cinderella, & Little Red Riding Hood. The cartoons (brought to us by some of the same folk responsible for Scooby Doo and other TV toons of the era) really are quite lewd, although more cute than erotic. And the humor seems aimed at a 42nd street audience that has already had three beers too many. I think it's too rambling and dopey to be a success as a party flick, but even if just from the nostalgia angle, it is good fun to watch.



## ONE MILLION AC/DC

See the Ed Wood page.

## ONE MILLION YEARS B.C.

(1966 - 7 Arts/Hammer) dir: Don Chaffey; w/ Raquel Welch in a fur bikini, John Richardson, Martine Beswick.

With no dialogue and even less plot, the cast gamely grunts their way through a pointless melodrama about two young lovers & their feuding (& none too bright) tribes. Raquel Welch in a fur bikini. The landscape is gorgeous and three scenes spotlight Ray Harryhausen's stop-motion magic. Raquel Welch in a fur bikini. However, there's way too much walking around, the characters don't actually do much of anything, and the story is erased at the very end by a volcano. Raquel Welch in a fur bikini. To be honest, I find this flick rather dull. Raquel Welch in a fur bikini. There is, however, one special thing about it that makes me want to see it again & again...



## ONE NIGHT IN THE TROPICS

(1940) dir: A. Edward Sutherland; w/ Allan Jones, Nancy Kelly, Bud Abbott, Lou Costello.

One young fellow is in love but he's not certain with who, while his pal puts an insurance policy on his future happiness and winds up on the wrong side of a criminal investor. Bud & Lou are supporting players as bumbling henchmen in their first film appearance and mostly reprise some of their best known radio & stage bits. It's a capable lightweight musical romantic comedy with a good cast all around. Add a little slapstick from the boys and it's an enjoyable enough little flick.



## ONG-BAK

(2003 - Thailand - aka *The Thai Warrior*)  
dir: Prachya Pinkaew; w/ Tony Jaa, Petchtai Wongkamlao, Pumwaree Yodkamol. No skin; no gore.

A simple country boy journeys to the big city to retrieve a stolen idol; but when his phenomenal fighting skills come to the attention of the mobsters, he winds up in kickfighting purgatory. It's the basic peaceful warrior melodrama that's been done a few zillion times. However, they mix some good Jackie Chan-style humor with some of the best and most brutal skull-splitting fight scenes ever filmed. Plus, the flick is well made, with outstanding photography and a good soundtrack. There are a few stumbles, but those are easily forgiven, considering the amount of talent here and how generous they are with the entertainment. If Thailand keeps making movies like this, they're going to leave everyone else in the dust.



## OPERATION DOUBLE 007

(1967 - Italy - aka *Operation Kid Brother*; *Secret Agent 00*; *OK Connery*) dir: Alberto de Martino; w/ Neil Connery, Daniela Bianchi, Adolfo Celi, Bernard Lee. No skin; no gore.

A vastly overblown Italian imitation of the Bond movies, featuring several alumni of those movies and Sean's brother. Neil Connery plays a karate-chopping plastic surgeon who can hypnotize with a glance and just happens to be the brother of the "West's top secret agent." And just in case the audience still isn't aware that this is Sean Connery's brother, the character he plays is named Dr. Connery. I

believe this was supposed to be a tongue-in-cheek spoof, but with slow, serious Italian pacing, it comes off more foot-in-mouth. There are a couple of huge fight scenes that look like training sessions at stuntman school -- “OK, keep doing that over and over until you get it right!”

## ORGAN

(1996 - Japan) writ & dir: Kei Fujiwara; w/ Kei Fujiwara, Kimihiko Hasegawa, Kenji Nasa. A faint bit o’ skin; truckloads o’ gore.

There’s a big market for transplant organs, so some folks seek out unwilling donors and harvest them for profit. A cop loses his partner and his sanity during a botched raid on a hellish slaughterhouse, and after leaving the force, wanders the back alleys searching for the gang behind it all. Meanwhile, the brother & sister who ran the operation, both victims of horrific child abuse, are sinking deeper into their diseases, both mental & physical. The brother, a school teacher by day, has chopped the arms & legs off the other cop and keeps him alive as a specimen. There isn’t one character in here who isn’t insane, corrupted, and/or hopelessly doomed. The focus here seems not so much the disembowelings and amputations, but rather the oozing puss and decaying bodies -- but there’s all manner of unpleasantness for all tastes. And to top it all off, this entry in the Gross-Out sub-genre was written & directed by a woman. The worst thing about this flick is that it is quite superbly made -- it is both captivating and nauseating, the grossness here being not just visual, but psychological as well. It tells its story through a disjointed series of scenes, flash-backs, flash-forwards, and hallucinations (an unfortunate habit in 1990’s Japanese cinema), but eventually weaves it all together. On the other hand, there are several elements that are too silly or contrived -- but it’s hard to notice that when you’re groping for a barf bag. And don’t even dream about a happy ending. If you make it all the way through this one, an immediate dose of sunshine & chirping birds should be prescribed.



## ORGAZMO

(1997) writ & dir: Trey Parker; w/ Trey Parker, Dian Bachar, Robin Lynne, Michael Dean Jacobs. No skin besides a bunch of hairy male butts.

A Mormon missionary in L.A. needs to earn money for the big wedding his fiancé wants -- and ends up playing a superhero in stupid porno movies. If that didn’t cause him enough moral quandaries, he also ends up becoming a crime-



fighter for real. Yes, that's South Park's Trey Parker up there, and Matt Stone makes an appearance as well. Less over-the-top but just as strange as the rest of their work, this one actually succeeds in simply being a funny little comedy about a clean-cut boy trying to keep his virginity while making a living in the porno industry. Not overly hilarious and it stretches to get in some spoofs on porn & thriller flicks, but it does have some good laughs. It's okay if you're in the mood for a stupid comedy.

"I'm from Utah."

"Oh, I'm sorry."

## ORGY OF THE DEAD

See the Ed Wood page.

## ORGY OF THE VAMPIRES

See Vampire's Night Orgy.

## the OTHER HELL

(1980 - Italy - aka *Guardian of Hell; The Presence*) writ & dir: Bruno Mattei (under the name of Stefan Oblowski); w/ Franca Stoppi, Carlo de Mejo, Francesca Carmeno. No skin (!?); mild gore.

When a church psychologist investigates some mysterious deaths at a convent, he runs smack into loopy nuns, more murders, man-killing dogs, and the devil's daughter. Of course, he has to wade through a lot of padding to get there -- and the actual "meat" of the story is kind of gimmicky. Still, I confess I enjoyed it -- a little corpse mutilation gets the movie started on the right note and there's enough trash along the way to keep our interest.



## OUT KOLD

(2001) writ & dir: Detdrich McClure; w/ Ice T, Tommy "Tiny" Lister, Jr. (in what amounts to a cameo), Clifford Stubblefield (the flick's actual star), Isley. Just a hint of skin; no gore.

A simple but honorable ex-boxer becomes the chief driver for the L.A.'s bad-ass boss pimp. But when he falls for the boss's number one ho', there's betrayals, drug deals gone bad, and serious hell to pay. The flick is light on action and budget, but long on talent. The script is rather trite and shallow, but makes a few good stabs at real depth and drama. But it's really the caliber of the cast that makes this thing and saves it from being a complete waste. Ice T, although hopelessly stereotyped



here, fills out his role with gusto, and Stubblefield is convincing as the Georgia bumpkin who still believes in fairy tale endings. I wouldn't call it a success, but it's at least an interesting little flick.

## OUT OF MIND

See the H. P. Lovecraft page.

## the OUTING

(1986) Dir: Tom Daley, writ & prod: Warren Chaney (many other Chaney's are seen in the credits). Top star billing goes to Deborah Winters, who also gets a credit as Associate Producer (she must have fronted the cash). Just a bit of skin.

Actually, despite some flaws in script & execution, I liked this one -- and it was actually scary in spots. It's a bit of an overlooked gem (semiprecious only). It's a low-budget film with some talent and originality. It is a bit of a hybrid -- basically a traditional slasher-monster flick (adolescents spending the night alone in a museum -- uh, oh), but adding in an old-fashioned monster movie theme with a good background for the monster (an ancient and bloodthirsty djinn finds a new "keeper"). Kinda neat.

## OUTLAW OF GOR

(1989 - aka *The Outlaw*) dir: John "Bud" Cardos; w/ Urbano Barberini, Rebecca Ferrati, Donna Denton, Jack Palance. No skin; no gore.

In this second adaptation from John Norman's novels, Cabot flexes his pecs and fights the evil usurpers with a big flat, fakey-looking sword and his mighty elbow-pummeling maneuver. One thing I'll give this show is that they certainly didn't scrimp on sets & costumes. However, the script is as rambling and repetitive as the original novels, the acting is horrendous, and the dialogue is so flat-out moronic that it could leave you with a concussion. To say that the fight scenes were clumsy and slow does not do it justice; some of them looked rather like rehearsals -- perhaps they didn't have enough film stock for more than one take. And Jack Palance actually looks a little embarrassed -- not merely to be seen in a movie of this caliber, but to be seen in one of the dorkiest costumes in the known universe. This flick would be a great one just for yuks, except... the incompetence here is so blatant, it's a little frightening.



## OUTLAW FORCE

(1987) music, writ, & dir: David Heavener; w/ Paul Birch, Frank Stallone, David Heavener. A teensy flash o' skin; no gore.

(Try reading the following synopsis in slow motion, you'll get a better idea of what the movie is like.) Heavener stars as a country singer whose wife is raped & murdered by city punks (they also kidnap his little girl for kiddie porn); the law is ineffective, so he grabs his guns and goes on a sleepy little hunt for vengeance; so we get a sixgun-packin' cowboy against the L.A. gangland. What we really get is auteur Heavener's first attempt to portray himself as the ultimate action hero. The plot drags wearily along, and there are so many dramatic shots of Heavener trying to make him out as Mr. Sensitive Hero Guy that it's kind of embarrassing. And the only reason this hero isn't toast is that everyone who tries to shoot him just stares at him over the gun for two seconds giving him a chance to do his fast-draw. I get the same sensation from this movie as I do from spilling a bowl of cold porridge in my lap.

Okay, if tortured, I will admit that Heavener is modestly talented as a singer/songwriter.

But we need a court order to keep this man away from a movie camera. He's done about a half dozen more like this, including a much uglier cinematic wart called *Kill Crazy*.

## OUTSIDE THE LAW

See the Cynthia Rothrock page.

## OVERDRAWN AT THE MEMORY BANK

(1985? - Canada) dir: Douglas Williams; w/ Raul Julia, Linda Griffiths.

A Public TV Sci-Fi flick from WNET, if you can believe (and it's pretty hard to believe). Shot on video on TV sets with cheap fx & a largely unexplained plot. A dissatisfied worker gets lost in the mega-computer & his old-movie fantasies start messing with reality. That sounds like it could be fun, but not in this dreary flick.

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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.