

# HEAVY METAL MOVIES

GUITAR BARBARIANS, MUTANT BIMBOS & CULT ZOMBIES AMOK  
IN THE 666 MOST EAR- AND EYE-RIPPING BIG-SCREEN FILMS EVER!



MIKE "MCBEARDO" MCPADDEN

THIS IS THE NIGHT OF THE NIGHTMARE...THE DAY OF THE UNDEAD!

A story that goes beyond the boundaries of the Supernatural to the half-world of the living dead. Where a woman's soul inhabits a fly's body, where Vengeance is only a voice and where vampires suck only the blood of those they love the dearest.

AMERICAN INTERNATIONAL presents

**BORIS KARLOFF** STARRING IN

# Black Sabbath

...The most gruesome day in the calendar of the Undead!

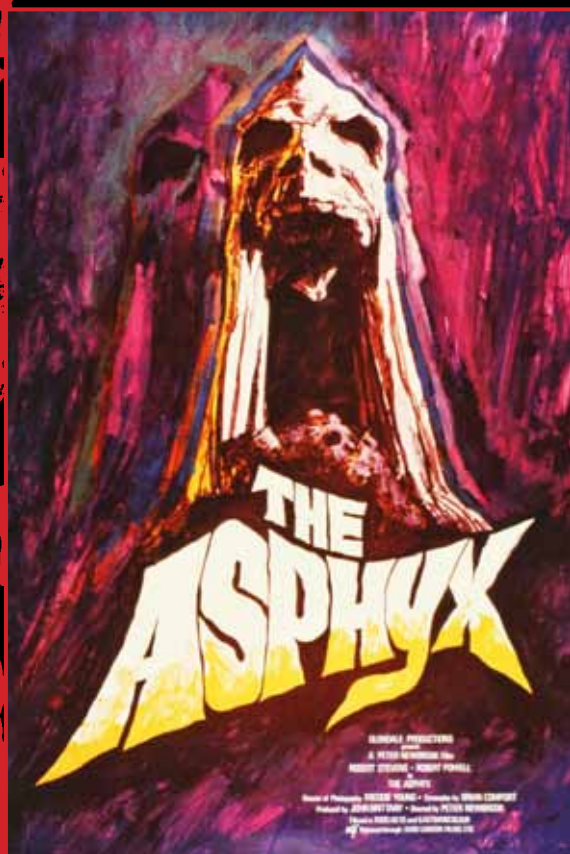
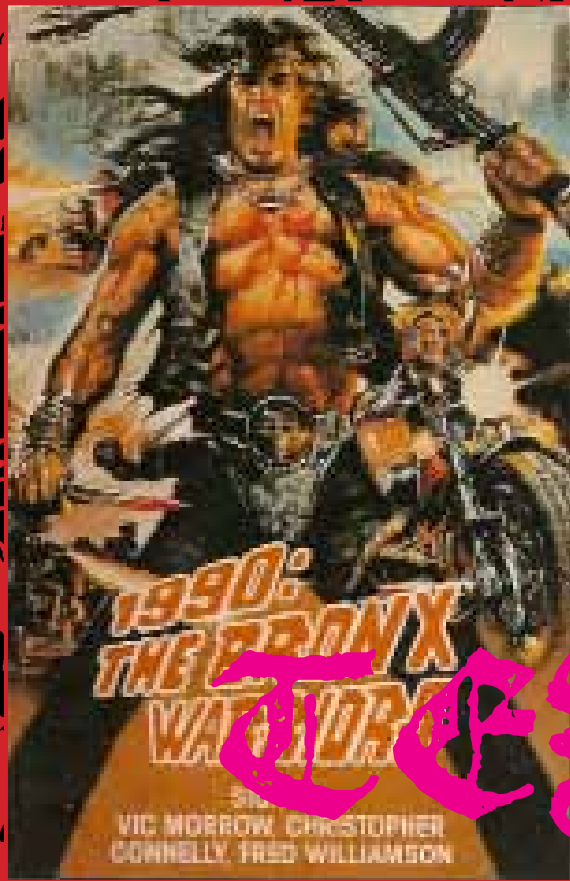
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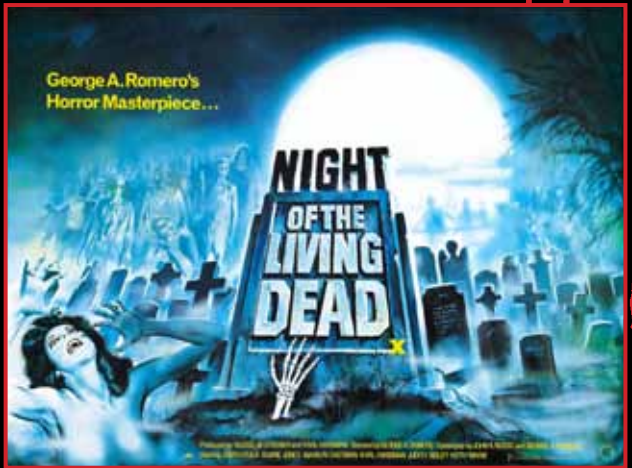
MARK DAMON MICHELE MERCIER DIRECTED BY MARIO BAVA AN AMERICAN INTERNATIONAL FILM



Clockwise from top: Mario Bava's *Black Sabbath*, the movie that inspired Geezer Butler and started it all; Taarna in the decade-defining *Heavy Metal* (1981); Skippy meets Satan in metal exploitation film *Trick or Treat* (1986)



Clockwise from top left: *It really was a tough year in New York City, 1990: The Bronx Warriors; Joe D'Amato's unbelievably gruesome Anthropophagus; Sheri Moon Zombie, Bill Haig, and Bill Moseley as The Devil's Rejects; the irrepressible Lips in Anvil: The Story of Anvil; and hand-drawn poster artwork for The Asphyx*



เดอะโฮวลิง

Before Columbus was born, a reckless band of blonde giants sailed to an unknown land we now call America. There a new peril awaited them—the savage warriors of the Iroquois nation. Thus began an epic adventure.

Clockwise from top left: Werewolves loose in The Howling; Night of the Living Dead at its sexiest; lurid and imaginative Thai poster for Nightmare on Elm Street 3; Dragonslayer soundtrack; Lee Majors as The Norseman

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Bazillion  
Points

**RIGHTY MONSTERS,  
DELINQUENT DOUBLE FEATURES,  
AND STICKY SEATS:  
MY LIFE IN HEAVY METAL MOVIES**



*Liberty Theatre, 1980, 42nd Street, New York City. Photo by Vaticanus*



**O**NE SUMMER NIGHT IN 1933 in the bayside amusement hamlet of Keansburg, New Jersey, *King Kong*, the movie and the giant ape star himself, delightfully terrified my grandmother and set in motion a spectacular chain of events. Twenty-year-old Frances Jean Mackey had just come from a screening up the block at the Casino Theater, built in 1914 and active under a series of different names until late 1982. Accompanying Granny, as I would much later know her, was a gentleman caller of whom I know not much except I respect his ideas as far as what makes a proper date movie.

That night long ago, Granny and her Raritan Bay beau sat on the front porch of her humble home, reliving *King Kong's* unprecedented thrills and wonders. Suddenly—BOOOM!!!—right before their eyes, the back half of the house across the street exploded, the victim of a badly repaired boiler. Nobody, I have been repeatedly assured, was injured when the spirit of Kong mashed his mighty foot down on that beach-town bungalow. On the contrary, the sidewalks buckled and my fate was sealed in a sudden furious moment of volcanic visual mayhem, deafening sound, chaos, horror, amazement, and hilarity. My granny experienced a perfect event that rippled through the generations until I was born in its echo. I came into this world craving the larger-than-life film experience that erupts off the screen and storms into consciousness and remakes your very being from the inside out. The Heavy Metal Movie!

I first felt that great madness in 1972 at the age of four, as the lights went down for a showing of Walt Disney's bonkers *Pinocchio* at the very same theater where my grandmother had experienced *King Kong* four decades earlier. I felt the curse, for sure, growing up in Brooklyn's lordly Flatbush and watching excitedly as WOR-TV (the legendary Channel 9) reran its hardworking *King Kong* print, seemingly several times every single week throughout the first half of the '70s. From kindergarten onward, I tore out newspaper ads for movies; mostly kids' stuff at first, but also anything with a horror and exploitation bent. The titles and the images grew more lurid the nearer I lurched toward puberty. I assembled the clippings into scrapbooks that I revered like talismanic runes—which they were (and still are!)

The giant monkeys, the madmen, the cannibals, the motorcycles—they exploded in smudged black print across the listings each week. To make sense of the mayhem, I turned to seemingly biblical film tomes like the annual *TV Movies* compendium edited by super-nerd Leonard Maltin. This brick-size paperback, as thick as a phone book, listed thousands of capsule reviews of seemingly every movie ever made. The book utilized a scale of one to four stars plus “BOMB!” for movies that Lenny really hated. I pored over every page and circled each “BOMB!”, then combed the TV listings and tried to catch every one of them. I kept this up for years, and I was never disappointed. Not once.

As my movie mania advanced and I grew a little older, I discovered the same thunderous transcendence provided by movies through music, first through AM radio rock, and then FM radio hard rock. The Ramones and *The Uncle Floyd Show* introduced punk rock. Suddenly heavy metal appeared all around, courtesy of everything and nothing, and never left. I devoted myself to heavy metal wholeheartedly and headbangingly, arriving via my gateway to the heavy stuff, Kiss.

I discovered heavy metal and movies to be two byways of a single continuum. Each stream led to uncharted, unpredictable, unlimited oceans of experience and expression and elation. The combined powers proved to be packed with almost lethal transformative potential. In 1978, my thoughts were not nearly so fancily splayed out while I watched *Kiss Meets the Phantom of the Park*—but, believe me, all that bombastic shit was exactly what I was feeling.



Soon, the Heavy Metal Movie gods smiled most glitteringly upon me. Decamped, as I was every summer from birth, at my grandparents’ house in Keansburg and perusing the newspaper’s film section with no other concern in the world, I noticed an ad for *The Rocky Horror Picture Show* that was emblazoned with the rating PG. This information was incorrect, of course—the glam horror movie is rated R. But for my purposes, the error was oh so right. I was fascinated with *Rocky Horror* based on New York media reports of the movie somehow involving rock and roll, monsters, and naked women in the audience. After memorizing the songs by taping them off *Dr. Demento*, I had finagled the soundtrack cassette for my tenth birthday. Grabbing the misprinted ad, I set upon Moms McBeardo in a frenzy, barking: “Look! Ma! Look! *Rocky Horror* is rated PG! It’s PG! SEE! That means I can see it! Right?! RIGHT?! PG! PG! PEEEE-JEEEE!”

Foiled and exhausted, Moms relented. “Yes. Fine. You can go. Ask one of your aunts or uncles to take you.” My hippie aunt Carol lived in Greenwich Village and my super-cool uncle Freddy was crashing with us in Keansburg, so I suggested that he and I go visit his sister and take in the movie at its home base, Manhattan’s Eighth Street Playhouse. During the 1970s, ten-year-old kids really could pull off master capers like this.

My plan was flawless. The movie blew my mind and the teenage girl who played Janet in the live *Rocky Horror* shadow cast nearly blew every other one of my circuits by sitting on my lap momentarily and then flashing her boobs up onstage, the first pair I wasn’t

related to on which I ever laid eyes. “Don’t dream it,” *Rocky Horror* famously advises. “Be it!” Point taken! Hard and deep.

By time I saw *Pinocchio* back at that ramshackle boardwalk movie house in Keansburg, New Jersey, the venue was called the Colonial. When I turned eleven, I took in my first parent-sanctioned R-rated movie there, *Alien*. Over the course of the next two summers—1980 and 1981—the Colonial transformed into an unholy Heavy Metal Movie temple where my buddy Mickey Cosgrove and I slunk past the reddened ganja-zonked eyes of the local teens who manned the ticket counter and basked in atrocities: *Dawn of the Dead*, *Maniac*, *Mother’s Day*, *Phantasm*, the first two *Friday the 13th* movies, *Don’t Go in the House*, and *Prom Night*. I kept my eyes clamped shut during most of the reissue screening of *The Texas Chain Saw Massacre*.

During this period, I stumbled upon a couple books by brothers Harry and Michael Medved: *The Fifty Worst Films of All Time* (1978) and *The Golden Turkey Awards* (1980). These were detail-laden textbooks exploding with information about the men and the madness behind all those fantastic “BOMB!” extravaganzas. I can still recite long passages from those books.

Then came 1982, the Year Everything Broke. In April ’82, the Easter Bunny enriched my basket with a copy of *Cult Movies: The Classics, the Sleepers, the Weird and the Wonderful* by Danny Peary. This and its two follow-up volumes became the crucial texts of my human existence. That same spring, the *New York Daily News* ran an article on the *Gore Gazette*, a xeroxed screed-sheet that came screaming twice a month out of New Jersey. In its pages, mad publisher the Right Reverend Rick Sullivan reviewed every exploitation film that blew through the tristate area in the manner of a jocular misanthrope. I subscribed and, unknowingly, opened the door on the rest of my life.

Come September 1982, I started attending Xavier High School on Sixteenth Street and Sixth Avenue in Manhattan, a long subway ride from home in Flatbush. The Village loomed just minutes away, awash in an cinema-lover dream venues like the aforementioned Eighth Street Playhouse, which boasted a new double feature every day and midnight movies seven nights a week. St. Mark’s Cinema was pure punk, with more double features, more midnight movies, and real popcorn. The Waverly was totally new wave, and home to *Eraserhead* and *Forbidden Zone*. The Thalia was heavy on the black-and-white classics. The Bleecker Street Cinema aimed for the glands, playing *Toxic Avenger* on weekends for more than a year. Many others threw motion pictures up on the walls; only the Quad among them is still breathing.

More foreboding and infinitely more fulfilling was the golden heavy metal wasteland festering two subway stops north of my high school: Times Square at its unreal psycho-orgasmic peak of pimps, prostitutes, peep shows, and porn palaces. Forty-Second Street in its mega-squalor was dirtily awash with a dozen or so rough-and-tumble, open-all-night, triple-feature discount exploitation grindhouse theaters. These life-or-death casinos showcased the best and worst (and newest and oldest) from the chum buckets of cin-

ematic sleaze, horror, hooker, splatter, kung fu, slasher, zombie, cannibal, rape-revenge, women in prison, sci-fi, cheerleader, teen sex, and nut-crushing action nuggets to float up from the bottommost gutters of the international motion picture trade. The slow-burning anthem “The Zoo” by Germany’s beloved metal masters Scorpions perfectly nails this time, place, and overall feel. Listen to that precisely harmonized sleaze. How could I resist? How could *anybody*?

The first picture I saw on Forty-Second Street, or the Deuce, was the gorily tormented teen monster quickie *The Beast Within*. I was killing time while I accompanied my older cousin Martin to pick up his sister Mary at Grand Central Station, after her train was delayed. Martin and I ducked into the Lyric Theatre, and caught the flick for \$1.99 each. (I think it might have been even cheaper). Martin subsequently got on with his life. In many ways, I never left that moment.

Meanwhile, back at home in Flatbush, I was a quick B9 bus ride’s distance from storied Kings County metal mecca L’Amour: The Rock Capitol of Brooklyn. As a frequent patron there, I can tell you exactly how it should be properly pronounced, “La-MAWZ,” inexplicably plural, with the second syllable rhyming (fittingly) with “jaws.”

Now that I was trusted to make my way via public transportation between Brooklyn and Manhattan every day without adult supervision (another aspect of life that would be impossible now), my immediate daily destination after last period was Forty-Second Street. At first, I’d just walk around and attempt to mentally tattoo the area’s overwhelming porn propaganda into the pit of my psyche (I think it worked). Soon enough, I ponied up for a ticket to a double feature of the high school horndog romp *Goin’ All the Way* and the babes-behind-bars bruiser *The Concrete Jungle*. The audience, as legends do tell, was absolutely apeshit, but no one bothered me. I watched the show and then went home, and I lied to Moms about hanging out with nonexistent friends. Only it wasn’t exactly a lie. I had just rammed open an entire new universe of . . . friends. And there were so many more to come.

The New Amsterdam, the grandest of Forty-Second Street’s fallen movie palaces, closed in 1982, so I got never inside that one. But the others became my cathedrals. Aside from the Lyric, there were the Selwyn, the Harris, the Anco, the Empire, the Liberty, the Rialto, the Times Square, and the nastily hardscrabble Cine 42 Twin, which, unlike the others, wasn’t a time-trashed jewel of classic architecture, but a warehouse for post-human reprobates strewn about deadly hard plastic seats that really seemed to fit the particularly insane fare that ran there.



On Columbus Day weekend in 1982, Keansburg’s little fleapit auditorium (then called the Midway), where King Kong rattled my ancestor’s genes, was shuttered forever. I caught the last movie ever screened there: *The Road Warrior*, on the bottom of a double bill with *Night Shift*, a warmhearted comedy about a prostitution ring run out of a morgue. The shotguns and hot pants made a mighty send-off for one era, and a fittingly

spectacular heralding in of another.

Christmas 1982 delivered me the final socially ruinous yet divinely transmogrifying Heavy Metal Movie haymaker: *The Psychotronic Encyclopedia of Film* by Michael Weldon, which featured write-ups of about two thousand movies that Weldon himself had seen on Forty-Second Street. And Santa's death blow was a VCR. Now there was no movie I could not see and, maybe even better still, there was no movie I could write about myself. Destiny beckoned.

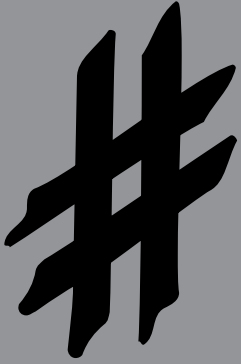
*Happyland*, a zine I published under the pen(is) name Selwyn Harris from 1991 to 2002, trafficked largely in hard movie and heavy music coverage, and I parlayed that early on into a weird professional journey that has included editing *Hustler* magazine, raving about metal bands for the metal-hating *New York Press*, slaving at Troma Films for two long weeks, writing porno screenplays, serving as head writer for eleven years (and counting) at celebrity nudity Internet powerhouse Mr. Skin, and playing guitar for bacchanalian shock rock platoon Gays in the Military, whose albums were filed at Chicago's legendary Metal Haven Records —appropriately—under “Noise.”

*Heavy Metal Movies* is the summation of forty-five years of movie-devouring, music-hoovering passion, and maniacal attention to detail alchemized by three and a half years of brute labor into a reading experience that I hope will rock you, ravage you, light up your inner screen, and stomp your very being like the heel of King Kong slamming down on that beach house across the street from my grandmother in 1933. The airplanes didn't kill Kong after all; they only liberated the savage beauty of Heavy Metal Movies and helped give birth to this beast!

Enjoy what is positively the most horrifying book ever written...



Clockwise from top left: 2020 Texas Gladiators; French poster for 2019: After the Fall of New York; 1990: The Bronx Warriors VHS; 976-Evil VHS; "the ultimate trip" is 2001.



3 INCHES OF BLOOD: WARRIORS OF THE GREAT WHITE NORTH ✧  
200 MOTELS ✧ 300 ✧ 976-EVIL ✧ 1984 ✧ 1990: BRONX  
WARRIORS ✧ 2001: A SPACE ODYSSEY ✧ 2019: AFTER THE FALL OF  
NEW YORK ✧ 2020 TEXAS GLADIATORS

## 3 INCHES OF BLOOD: WARRIORS OF THE GREAT WHITE NORTH

(2014)

(DIR. TOM MACLEOD; W/CAM PIPES, SHANE CLARK,  
JUSTIN HAGBERG, ASH PEARSON)

✧ METAL REALITY ✧ BON SCOTT'S GRAVE

**M**y worst day as a musician really would have been the best day of my life when I was working construction,” declares guitarist Shane Clark at the start of the film about his band 3 Inches of Blood. This thoroughly agreeable good-time documentary then demonstrates the appeal of hitting the road with 3 Inches of Blood—even with all the low-budget travel challenges, and, as discussed in hilarious detail, putrid body odor.

Headbanging highlights of the Canadian quartet's trek through their homeland include Clark displaying a mini Crown Royal bottle filled with dirt from the grave of fallen AC/DC frontman Bon Scott; Justin Hagberg showing off a collection of pages marked “666” that he has ripped out of every hotel-room Bible; Arnold Schwarzenegger imitations; and the code word “Windows!” which means somebody in the van is about to fart. Industrial metal gods Frontline Assembly (with whom Hagberg has collabo-

rated) visit the band in Ottawa, and we meet 3 Inches' colorful tour manager Mathias “Staddy” Stadlbauer—a German who somehow sounds like a Scot. Notes Clark: “He doesn't mind being the asshole.”

Every single show seems to be followed by a Viking bacchanal of cold beer, hot metal babes, and beard-quaking belly laughs. *3 Inches of Blood: Warriors of the Great White North* truly makes us feel as though we've been invited to the rolling party of a band that remembers the fundamental metal concept of enjoying success to the hilt.

## 200 MOTELS (1971)

(DIRS. TONY PALMER, FRANK ZAPPA; W/FRANK ZAPPA,  
RINGO STARR, MARK VOLMAN, HOWARD KAYLAN)

✧ NUNSPLIOTATION ✧ CONCERT FOOTAGE

**B**efore earning metal sainthood for battling the censor-witches of the PMRC and being name-checked by Deep Purple in “Smoke on the Water,” musical visionary Frank Zappa led many rock fans to heavy metal. In the other direction, he also opened countless headbanging minds to the far reaches of rock, jazz, classical, doo-wop, and any other art form that could involve brilliant noise and brilliantly dumb dirty jokes.

*200 Motels* is Zappa's first crack at motion picture madness, embodying the forgotten cultural moment when acid rock tumbled into the black pits

of rising heavy metal. Surrealistic sketches and psychedelic set pieces about the insanity of touring are interspersed with performances of the Mothers of Invention jamming with the London Philharmonic. Ringo Starr plays Zappa during the talking parts. A psychedelic cartoon interlude admirably tweaks Black Sabbath and Grand Funk Railroad. Keith Moon, madman drummer of the Who, pops in and out as “The Hot Nun.”

Zappa himself plays lots of guitar, demonstrating what a six-string maestro he was, every lick on par with those of his future protégé Steve Vai.

## 300 (2007)

**(DIR. ZACK SNYDER; W/GERARD BUTLER, LENA HEADEY, KELLY CRAIG, DOMINIC WEST)**

✦ SWORDS AND SORcery ✦ BATTLE ELEPHANTS

**S**partans, ready your breakfast and eat hearty, for tonight...we dine in HELL!” Adapted from a graphic novel by Frank Miller (*The Dark Knight Returns*), and inspired by the Battle of Thermopylae circa 480 b.c., 300 pits Sparta’s King Leonidas (Gerard Butler) against Persia’s Xerxes (Rodrigo Santoro), a “god-king” of gender-flexibility and exotic quadruped transportation. His battle rhinos rule. The action kicks off when Xerxes sends a messenger to Sparta, demanding that the independent nation bow to Persian control. Leonidas replies by whomping a boot to the messenger’s chest and sending the fellow tumbling down Sparta’s precariously open-access “Pit of Death.” The Persian military numbers one million troops, while Spartan forces top out at 300. Hence the title. Each side’s army strips down and oils up, marching into battle like a-million-and-300 Manowar album covers brought to loin-clothed, spear-chucking, earth-scorching life.

300 then brings the gift of carnage—shiny, gory, and spectacular, end-to-end, pure molten power metal cascading off the screen, like a Frank Frazetta-designed Xbox 360 game based on Iced Earth lyrics that plays you. No wonder bands named Sparta, Spartan Warrior, Leonidas, and Xerxes have sprouted up all over the place. This

looks like no other previous movie, and sounds like an all-out apocalypse in Dolby 6.66. 300 ripples, sweats, bleeds, pierces your brain, and then detonates your nervous system as you are propelled upward, arms pumping overhead, involuntarily grunting in a prehuman tongue: “Holy flaming fuck!”

## 976-EVIL (1988)

**(DIR. ROBERT ENGLUND; W/STEPHEN GEOFFREYS)**

✦ SATAN ✦ YOUTH GONE WILD ✦ TELEPHONES

**F**reddy Krueger directs Evil Ed from *Fright Night* (he was also Wendell Tvedt in *Fraternity Vacation*) in a gimmicky, effects-heavy fright flick about Satan possessing callers by means of a “horror-scope” telephone line. The ring-dings include our bedraggled teen nerd hero, who soon turns into a purple-faced demon hell-bent on wasting his bully tormentors.

Upon release, *976-Evil* was a relative disappointment. A quarter century later, the VHS special is an automatic blast back to an extremely specific, knuckleheaded headbanger past. Aside from Robert Englund (yes, Freddy) behind the camera and Stephen Geoffreys (the aforementioned Ed/Wendell) in the lead, *976-Evil* traffics in rubber monsters, sticky gore, Satanic Panic, Spencer Gifts-ish punk chicks, and, in its every moment, the look and feel of an MTV hair metal video.

Besides all that, the central plot device is a pay-per-minute call-in number for a dubious entertainment service hustled hard via late-night TV ads. Circa 1988, these semi-scams were everywhere, offering prerecorded messages from teen idols, scandal queens, pro wrestlers, rappers, Howard Stern, and no dearth of metal bands, including Kiss (of course) and Warrant. There were also 900-number Heavy Metal Movie spin-offs such as the Freddy Krueger line, where he’d tell you a scary story, and a Bill and Ted touch-tone time-travel game that touted the Wyld Stallyns van as a grand prize. I’d love to meet the winner.

*976-Evil* generated a useless 1992 sequel, and the Deftones recorded the 2010 tribute “976-Evil.”

## 1984 (1984)

(DIR. MICHAEL RADFORD; W/JOHN HURT, SUZANNA HAMILTON, RICHARD BURTON, BOB FLAG)

✦ POST-APOCALYPSE ✦ BIG BROTHER

Heavy metal is music's loudest cry against oppression. 1984 by George Orwell performed the same function for literature. Director Michael Radford's stark, well-made, and very British movie adaptation potently realizes the soul-poisoning dread of omnipresent state authority as viewed through the struggles of dissatisfied citizen Winston Smith (John Hurt) and Julia (Suzanna Hamilton), the woman with whom he dares to fall in love.

"War is peace," spouts Big Brother (Bob Flag), the face of a government that offers "protection" through constant, inescapable surveillance. "Freedom is slavery. Ignorance is strength." Bullshit then, bullshit now. The rebellion of 1984 is heavy metal. That's the truth. And in a metal context, Suzanna Hamilton's lushly overgrown lap brush during her full-frontal nude scene looks as though she's using her thighs to apply a headlock on Buzz Osborne of the Melvins and Claudio Sanchez of Coheed and Cambria.

## 1990:

### BRONX WARRIORS (1982)

(DIR. ENZO G. CASTELLARI; W/MARK GREGORY, STEFANIA GIROLAMI, FRED WILLIAMSON, VIC MORROW)

✦ POST-APOCALYPSE ✦ '80S ITALIAN EXPLOITATION

At the turn of the final decade of the twentieth century, the basic scenario of *Escape from New York* is replayed in the Big Apple's northernmost borough, whose only occupants are homicidal hooligans clad in Dumpster discards from *The Warriors*. Only a bare-chested, hippie-haired brutalist in the mold of *Conan the Barbarian* could survive, and then only by being handy with motorized vehicles and handmade oversize weaponry; just like in *The Road Warrior*!

That cavalcade of movie names explains all any-

one needs to know about 1990: *Bronx Warriors*. Small surprise that the movie was made in 1982, and more specifically by the Italian exploitation outfit behind *Zombie* (1979), *Zombie Holocaust* (1980), *The Beyond* (1981), and *New York Ripper* (1982). In the early '80s, the country of Caligula went plumb *pazzo* for Hollywood's dystopian action outbursts, especially the Big Four named above. Even Italy's most hard-charging metal export of the moment was named Bulldozer, as in the *Road Warrior* kill machine.

Debuting in the lead as skinny-jeaned street gang leader Trash is Mark Gregory, all of seventeen years old, whom director Enzo G. Castellari reportedly discovered at either a shoe store or a gym. Perfectly adequate in the role of teenager in a leather vest, Gregory seems just tough enough to defend runaway debutante Ann (Stefania Girolami) and throttle the asses of rival roller-skating street gang the Zombies. One piece of semi-official trivia floated after the fact hilariously reports that Gregory "beat off 2,000 other hopefuls for the role." Now that's a man's man.

## 2001:

### A SPACE ODYSSEY (1968)

(DIR. STANLEY KUBRICK; W/KEIR DULLEA, GARY LOCKWOOD, DOUGLAS RAIN)

✦ VIOLENT APES ✦ MONOLITH ✦ EVIL COMPUTER

Stanley Kubrick's *2001: A Space Odyssey* stands, monolith-like indeed, as one of the definitive heavy metal statements—all the way from the Dawn of Man to Jupiter and Beyond the Infinite. The film profoundly influenced contemporary British solid-rock mind-blowers Earth who, after catching sight of another movie, changed their name to Black Sabbath.

The on-screen events of 2001 are almost as familiar as its five-note musical refrain ("Also Sprach Zarathustra" by Richard Strauss). In the beginning, a black monolith appears to a society of simians, emits a drone, and seems to change them from peaceful to violent. After beating another animal to death, one of the apes throws

a bone into the sky and we cut to a spaceship floating gracefully among others through the heavens. The year is 2001, and the same black monolith appears on the moon. Astronaut Dave Bowman (Keir Dullea) takes off to investigate. The monolith vanishes and turns up again on Jupiter. Bowman and Dr. Frank Poole (Gary Lockwood) set off to find it on a ship controlled by HAL 9000, an all-seeing computer with a mind, and a very distinct voice, of its own. In time, HAL goes “insane” and kills Poole. Bowman is forced to shut HAL down as the computer pleads for its life. Bowman then flies directly into the monolith, experiences the ultimate psychedelic sound and light show, and turns up in a fancy room as a very old man. He is transformed into the Starchild, an infant floating in the vastness of space whose face radiates pure hope.

There are as many theories as to what 2001 is “about” as there are those who’ve seen the movie. My own, quickly: The monolith is God, or a divine spirit or higher power. The monolith appears when man is ready, and empowers him to surge forward via intelligence and technology. Immediately, though, consequences occur: the apes learn to use tools and build shelter, but they also learn greed and war. In the space age, man is entirely reliant on ever fancier tools and ever more intricate shelters. The monolith materializes far away, so that man must travel to reach it and, in the process, grow. When HAL, the ultimate tool and the ultimate shelter, not only fails man but works to destroy him, Bowman reaches within and conjures his humanity. In doing so, he directly confronts the divine. Bowman then hurls himself headlong into this higher power, undergoes an entire transformation, and emerges reborn, the embodiment of limitless possibilities.

As for Black Sabbath, the band also formed in 1968, landing smack in a mud pit of hairy, unwashed grunters. Sabbath also pulsed and overwhelmed and emitted its hypnotic drone to serve as the propulsive force driving the primitives upright and onward through a gateway to previously inconceivable creativity and creations,

as well as being the very gateway itself. Whether that makes any sense to you or not, your head just got banged!

## 2019: AFTER THE FALL OF NEW YORK (1983)

(DIR. SERGIO MARTINO; W/MICHAEL SOPKIW, ANNA KANAKIS, GEORGE EASTMAN)

✧ POST-APOCALYPSE ✧ '80S ITALIAN EXPLOITATION

✧ EVIL APEMEN

Italians must like it when bad stuff happens to New York City. That’s the only logical deduction one can make after mopping up the heaps of Gotham-based slasher movies and post-nuke adventures made by friendly Roman countrymen in the 1980s. One shell-shocked survivor in 2019 calls the city “the Baked Apple.” Done and done.

This go-around, Parsifal (Michael Sopkiw) is our requisite leather-headbanded motorcycle hero. The bad guys, who dropped the big one in 1999, are the Eurax. They dress like Darth Vader, ride horses, and fuck shit up with flamethrowers. Rats are food, eyes exist for gouging out, and entertainment comes in the form of circus-like “car fights.” Rape and torture serve as the main forms of currency. All the women are hot punk chicks, but none of them can reproduce.

Word bubbles up into this radioactive spew-stew that a single fertile female has been discovered. Just as surely as the main dwarf character is called “Shorty,” this sole beacon of hope for human breeding is named—what else?—“Mary.” She needs safe transport to Alaska, where she’ll presumably be kept extremely busy repopulating the planet. Parsifal is up to the challenge.

Then *After the Fall of New York* ups the ante by ripping off *Planet of the Apes* in the most enjoyably literal way—by introducing a tribe of apemen with no explanation as to how and why they got to the big city. Out of nowhere, just: “Hey, hey! Some monkeys!”

# 2020 TEXAS

## GLADIATORS (1982)

(DIR. JOE D'AMATO; W/AL CLIVER, HARRISON MULLER, JR., HAL YAMANOUCI)

✧ POST-APOCALYPSE TEXAS ✧ ITALY ✧ NUN RAPE  
✧ PRIEST CRUCIFIXION

The Lone Star State backdrop immediately sets 2020 *Texas Gladiators* apart from its Italian-born, post-apocalypse peers of 1982. The film opens a world of extreme entertainment even blacker than Black Sabbath: The villains meld Nazi aesthetics with *Star Wars* stormtrooper stuff; director Joe D'Amato mines *The Deer Hunter* for P.O.W. Russian-roulette action; the Texas setting allows for dips into spaghetti western and Native American iconography; and the vehicles of the final battle look like the kind of mutant multi-wheelers Sid from *Toy Story* would knock together out of old Tonka trucks and Malibu Barbie convertibles.

The film's first five minutes conjure a black-metal milieu unequalled in cinema. A gaggle of nuns and a kindly priest go about their solemn business in a quiet convent. Mad marauders storm the place and turn it into Unholy Rape Central Station—slashing, stripping, stabbing, burning, and gouging new holes in virgin flesh for penile plunging purposes. The nuns scream, cry, and bleed. The priest who rushes to help is graphically crucified. The youngest sister, seeing no lesser agony, slashes her own throat with a piece of jagged debris, making sure to cut all the way down between her visibly bare breasts.

After this relentless body-fluid basting runs for a while, the scene's *real* kick in the nuts is revealed: The good guys have assembled their bulging muscles above the melee, readying to descend upon the raiders at any moment. That means the movie's heroes just stood by and witnessed all these lovely Texas nuns get sodomized into armadillo soup, and nice Father Longhorn having to accept nails through his appendages, wailing, and they could have stopped it, but they

chose to wait—so that we, the audience, could see it all happen. Thank you!

Our debt of gratitude is due the heroic Nisus (Al Cliver), who sports long locks and mounts numerous motorcycles in defense of a small band of survivors, as is required of any Italian post-apocalypse-movie hero. The leading lady is tiny-titted, badonka-butted Stefania Sandrelli, one of the great beauties of heinous European exploitation flicks. Bringing up the rear, so to speak, is a sexy, chubby machine-gun chick dressed in an S&M outfit that completely exposes her naked boobs every time she's on camera.

You may have been told to not mess with Texas, but by all means, let 2020 *Texas Gladiators* mess with you. I did, and look at me now!



THE ABOMINABLE DR. PHIBES ✧ ABSENT ✧ ABSURD  
✧ AC/DC: LET THERE BE ROCK ✧ ACE VENTURA:  
PET DETECTIVE ✧ ACTRESS APOCALYPSE ✧ THE  
ADVENTURES OF UNCLE COLT AND CLETUS: HEDGE-  
HOGGIN' ✧ AFTER PARTY MASSACRE ✧ AIRHEADS  
✧ ALICE COOPER: THE NIGHTMARE ✧ ALICE COOPER:  
WELCOME TO MY NIGHTMARE ✧ ALICE SWEET ALICE  
✧ ALIEN ✧ ALL THE COLORS OF THE DARK ✧  
ALUCARDA ✧ AMEBIX RISEN: A HISTORY OF AMEBIX  
✧ AMERICA 3000 ✧ AMERICAN MOVIE ✧ AN  
AMERICAN WEREWOLF IN LONDON ✧ AMITYVILLE 2:  
THE POSSESSION ✧ ANGEL AT MIDNIGHT ✧ ANGEL  
HEART ✧ ANIMAL INSTINCTS III: THE SEDUCTRESS ✧ AN-THOR-OLOGY (1976-1985) ✧ ANTICHRIST  
✧ THE ANTICHRIST ✧ ANTHROPOPHAGUS: THE GRIM REAPER ✧ ANVIL!: THE STORY OF ANVIL ✧  
APOCALYPSE NOW ✧ AQUA TEEN HUNGER FORCE COLON MOVIE FILM FOR THEATERS ✧ ARENA:  
HEAVY METAL ✧ ARISE: THE SRI LANKAN METAL MUSIC DOCUMENTARY ✧ ARMY OF DARKNESS ✧  
AS THE PALACES BURN ✧ THE ASPHYX ✧ ASSORTED ATROCITIES: THE EXODUS DOCUMENTARY ✧  
AT MIDNIGHT I'LL TAKE YOUR SOUL ✧ ATOR THE FIGHTING EAGLE ✧ AUGUST UNDERGROUND ✧  
AURAL AMPHETAMINE: METALLICA AND THE DAWN OF THRASH ✧ AUTOPSY

## THE ABOMINABLE DR. PHIBES (1971)

(DIR. ROBERT FUEST; W/VINCENT PRICE, JOSEPH  
COTTEN, VIRGINIA NORTH, PETER JEFFREY)

✧ VINCENT PRICE ✧ GOTH BABE ✧ BIBLICAL  
PLAGUES ✧ ANCIENT EGYPT

**A**s horror movies evolved from the unprec-  
edented intensity of *Night of the Living Dead*  
(1968) into the dead-hearted, documentary-style  
shocks of *Last House on the Left* (1972) and *The  
Texas Chain Saw Massacre* (1974), old-school  
master Vincent Price reclaimed his fright film  
crown one final time with his campy tour de  
force *The Abominable Dr. Phibes*.

Anton Phibes (Price) is a world-renowned British organ-player with doctorates in music and theology. As the movie begins, in 1925, it is believed that Phibes was killed four years earlier in a car accident that resulted in the death of wife Victoria during surgery. Alas, the mad maestro is hardly dead. He is alive and unwell—a scarred, mouthless monster who rigs up a perfect face mask and sound system that, when hooked to a gramophone, enable him to “speak.” Phibes lives in a mansion full of music-playing automatons, where he’s tended to and accompanied by black-clad and mute (a miracle when it comes to goth chicks!) Vulnavia (Virginia North). All he does is plot his revenge, until the time comes to put his wicked plans into action.

The diabolical doctor blames Victoria's death on incompetent medical practices, so, one by one, he inflicts the ten Old Testament plagues that befell Egypt upon the attending doctors and one nurse. Bees, locusts, rats, blood, a head-crushing mechanical frog mask, and on and on—check your scripture. Dr. Phibes's weapons of choice are each eloquently employed while Vulnavia looks on adoringly. Scotland Yard's Inspector Trout (Peter Jeffrey) is on the case, but fails to catch the fiend.

*Dr. Phibes* is funny, scary, vicious, and classy. In other words, the film is the perfect embodiment of its star, Vincent Price—as unholy a Heavy Metal Movie god as has ever reigned in blood and hailstones. NWOBHM greets Angel Witch summed it up with their song “Dr. Phibes.”

## **ABSENT (2010)**

(DIR. JUSTIN HUNT; W/JAMES HETFIELD, JOHNNY

TAPIA, JOHN ELDRIDGE)

✦ JAMES HETFIELD

Heavy metal fan Justin Hunt gets heavy, and deep, with his documentary *Absent*, starting with this proclamation: “The father is the first person in the world who chooses you...or doesn't.” Many a young headbanger has been molded, at least in part, by the soul-deep wounds left by a dad who ditches his familial responsibilities. Hunt sits with a series of adults to ponder their own childhood betrayals, including *Wild at Heart* novelist John Eldredge, boxer Johnny Tapia (a shattered soul who was led to believe his father was murdered), and, most surprisingly, Metallica's James Hetfield.

Metallica's ferocious frontman reveals himself, even more so than in *Some Kind of Monster* (2004), to be just another battle-fatigued human trying hard, again and again, to do better.

Hetfield remarkably drops his notorious guard here, opening up to the point of near tears and even sharing family pictures. He musically addressed his Christian Science upbringing in the furious song “The God That Failed,” but this

sit-down provides a more nuanced picture—and one that is even more heartfelt when it comes to his inability to heal emotional hurts by sheer faith. By the end, *Absent* drains and devastates, all for a higher purpose.

## **ABSURD (1981), AKA MONSTER HUNTER; HORRIBLE; ROSSO SANGUE**

(DIR. JOE D'AMATO; W/GEORGE EASTMAN, EDMUND PERDOM)

✦ ITALIAN HORROR ✦ BANNED VIDEO NASTY

While fleeing a furious priest (Edmund Perdom), bearded burly-man Mikos Stenopolis (George Eastman) climbs a spiked fence, slips, and gorily disembowels himself all over the place. With his guts spilling out, Mikos amazes doctors at a hospital with his ability to spontaneously heal. He then also brutally murders all those doctors. And nurses. And anyone and everyone else who gets in his path. So goes the appropriately absurd opening of *Absurd*, splatter legend Joe D'Amato's pseudo-sequel to his legendary fetus-eating atrocity parade from earlier in 1981, *The Grim Reaper*, aka *Anthropophagus*.

Mikos leaves a trail of bloodshed in his wake until arriving at a house with a babysitter and two kids. A family friend gets pickaxed in the skull; the babysitter has her face forced into a lit oven; and, ultimately, our villain gets stabbed in the eye with a drawing compass by an infirm little girl, who goes on to decapitate him.

*Absurd*, an extreme black metal band from Germany, took its name directly as a tribute to this film upon forming in 1992. The teenage group's love of violent movies was apparent in their songs, and spilled into real life in 1993 when members overpowered a fifteen-year-old associate and strangled him to death with an electrical cord. While in prison, leader Hendrik Möbus released a tape with a cover featuring the grave of their murder victim. And in case anyone didn't get it, the liner notes explain: “The cover

shows the grave of Sandro B. murdered by horde ABSURD on 29.04.93 AB." This earned Möbus further jail time for mocking his victim. Truly Absurd. Less damaged bands named Absurd hailed from Belgium, France, Poland, Russia, Sweden, and Switzerland.

## AC/DC: LET THERE BE ROCK (1980)

(DIRS. ERIC DIONYSIUS, ERIC MISTLER; W/BON SCOTT, ANGUS YOUNG, MALCOLM YOUNG, PHIL RUDD)

✦ CONCERT FOOTAGE

Let there be light. During my first week of work on this book, *AC/DC: Let There Be Rock*, after decades as a semi-lost classic, emerged in a special edition Blu-ray package. I like to imagine Bon Scott, from the beyond, somehow puked that convergence into being.

Anything seems possible seeing AC/DC's original singer alive onstage, and this is the defining document of the end of the Bon Scott era. He rides on the vital apex of his frontman prowess during a Paris show in December 1979, just prior to his alcoholically exiting this mortal coil, at thirty-three, in February 1980. Watch him, wonder what might have been, and weep. Then watch him again, in just plain wonder.

*Let There Be Rock* also provides permanent proof positive that AC/DC's pipsqueak guitarist Angus Young really did wail and rail nonstop onstage, as though the electrical current for which his band is named was coursing through his body in places where the rest of us have mere blood.

The concert consists of thirteen songs, many from *Highway to Hell*, bookended by stalwarts "Live Wire" and closing with "Let There Be Rock." Every performance is great. Between numbers, the band chats and clowns around. These bits were likely designed for pee and popcorn breaks, but they stand as invaluable treasures. These are goofy glimpses of the men who were members of what would become of one of history's most successful rock bands. At this point, they had no clue that they were about

to lose their vividly live wire Bon Scott and yet somehow reemerge from that tragedy as giants.

The legend persists that some theaters screening *Let There Be Rock* ran the movie's sound through stacks of Marshall amplifiers. No proof of this exists, and eyewitnesses who caught the flick on its first run do not recall any stacks. But if it is not true, it certainly should be. Let there always be *Let There Be Rock*.

## ACE VENTURA—PET DETECTIVE (1994)

(DIR. TOM SHADYAC; W/JIM CARREY, COURTENEY COX, SEAN YOUNG, TONE LOC, CANNIBAL CORPSE)

✦ KILLER CAMEOS

For a wiseacre generation that came of age in the '90s, *Ace Ventura: Pet Detective* served as the gateway to three of life's most profound pleasures: slapstick comedy; talking out of your butt, literally; and death metal.

During his lunatic quest to recover the Miami Dolphins' kidnapped bottlenose mascot, Jim Carrey as our pointy-haired hero stumbles into a metal show. After joking with a reveler whose face is entirely covered by hair ("I think Uncle Fester is looking for you!"), Ace leaps on stage and jams along with Cannibal Corpse. Driven into a frenzy by the blast beats, Ace tears off his shirt, headbangs, roars into a microphone in classic Cookie Monster style, spazzes out to the song "Hammer Smashed Face," and announces, "I gotta go, guys! I got a date with your mothers!" *Ace Ventura: Pet Detective* made Jim Carrey a superstar and, for a few months in 1994, turned Cannibal Corpse into the house band at kiddie movie matinees in multiplexes everywhere.

Cannibal Corpse appearing in *Ace Ventura* is certainly surprising. That they got the gig at the insistence of Jim Carrey himself is even more of a brain-banger. Upon seeing a rock band scene in the original *Ace Ventura* script, Carrey insisted that the job go to Cannibal Corpse. The rubber-faced funnyman was an avowed death metal nut.

THE  
**ALICE COOPER**  
SHOW



WELCOME TO MY  
NIGHTMARE

WB  
WARNER HOME VIDEO



"AC/DC, LET THERE BE ROCK"  
with RON SCOTT, ANGUS YOUNG,  
MALCOLM YOUNG, PETER BRIDGEMAN, CHRIS WILLIAMS  
Directed by KEI THONMANN and LEE MINTZER  
Produced by BOB WEED PRODUCTIONS  
Distributed by Warner Home Video, A Warner Communications Company  
© Warner Home Video 1988

You feel them in your blood!



THE GRAPHIC STORY OF THE... "ALIEN CONTAMINATION"  
Starring MALCOLM MACDOUGALL, CLAUDE WINTERS, WALTER SELLERS, BARBARA FAYLER, CLAUDE WINTERS  
Directed by MALCOLM MACDOUGALL  
Produced by WALTER SELLERS  
Distributed by LYNNE COOPER  
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Introducing  
**BROOKE SHIELDS**



A story of unnatural love...  
and unnatural death



It's too late for prayers.  
A RICHARD K. ROSENBERG — ALFRED SOLE PRODUCTION — HOLY TERROR  
Original Screenplay by ROSEMARY FRY TO and ALFRED SOLE  
Produced by RICHARD K. ROSENBERG • Directed by ALFRED SOLE  
TECHNICOLOR: A DYNAMITE ENTERTAINMENT RELEASE

Clockwise from top left: Welcome to My Nightmare; AC/DC Let There Be Rock VHS; Alien Contamination; alternate Alice, Sweet Alice moniker Holy Terror; An American Werewolf in London lobby card; Bruce Campbell as Ash in Army of Darkness, aka Evil Dead 3.

FROM THE DIRECTOR OF "DARKMAN"

Trapped in time.  
Surrounded by evil.  
Low on gas.



**ARMY of DARKNESS**  
DINO DE LAURENTIS COMMUNICATIONS PRESENTS A RENAISSANCE PICTURES PRODUCTION BRUCE CAMPBELL "ARMY OF DARKNESS" EMBETH DAVOUTZ  
JONNA FRANNI ELLMAN • JOSEPH LOVACA • SERIO MURANAKI • MORTEN THORSEN • JIMMIE BILL POPE • BRUCE CAMPBELL  
© 1992 RENAISSANCE PICTURES  
"I SAW BLOOD & I SAW RAIN" • "ROBERT TAYLOR" • "I SAW BLOOD" A UNIVERSAL RELEASE

From the director of Animal House  
— a different kind of animal

**AN AMERICAN WEREWOLF IN LONDON**



A masterpiece  
of terror

PolyGram Pictures presents a Lycanthropic Films Limited production "An American Werewolf in London" starring David Naughton, Jenny Agutter, Griffin Dunne & John Woodvine  
Original music by Elmar Bernstein • Executive producers Peter Guber & Jon Peters  
Produced by George Folsey, Jr. • Written and directed by John Landis

PolyGram Pictures "Mazo's Impressions of An American Werewolf in London" Marketed by PolyGram Pictures Released in the UK by Barber International Films Ltd

His taste for Florida death metal mellowed over time, however—twenty years later he tapped far more cerebral Cynic/Death guitarist Paul Masvidal to collaborate on a children's record.

In the documentary *Cannibal Corpse: Centuries of Torment* (2008), the band members talk at length about flying from Buffalo to Miami to shoot the scene and how they felt when Carrey seemed even more excited to meet them than they were to meet him. Carrey provided similar big-screen exposure to satanic noise punks the Dwarves in *Me, Myself, and Irene* (2000), where he sings along in a car to the band's song "Motherfucker."

## ACTRESS APOCALYPSE

(2005)

(DIR. RICHARD R. ANASKY; W/GARO NIGOGHOSSIAN, GREG G. FREEMAN, JAY INGLE, DAHLIA LEGAULT)

✦ SLASHER ✦ DOOM METAL

Frustrated by the difficulties facing his unreleased acid opus *I Am Vengeance* (2006), writer-director Richard R. Anasky shot *Actress Apocalypse*, a mock documentary about the shooting of an independent horror movie that goes nakedly and messily off course.

The Lincoln brothers, square David (Garo Nigoghossian) and wildman Vance (Greg G. Freeman), attempt to shoot a slasher film. Vance loses his mind due to filmmaking pressures, he sets up a succession of starlet auditions that begin with nudity and add up to the title of the movie. *Actress Apocalypse* is trippy and ingenious, making terrific use of adroit editing, impressive gore, and the greatest visual effect of all: female nudity.

Albums by pioneering British doom band Witchfinder General feature on-screen repeatedly in *Actress Apocalypse*. Director Anasky is a worshipfully devoted fan and wanted the group's influence to be seen all over the movie. Fuzzed-out Swedish stoner rock outfit Space Probe Taurus provides the rocket ride soundtrack.

## THE ADVENTURES OF UNCLE COLT AND CLETUS—HEDGE-HOGGIN' (2013)

(DIR. NATHAN COX; W/JEREMY SPENCER, BOBBY WATSON, RON JEREMY, VERNE TROYER)

✦ KILLER CAMEOS ✦ HEADBANGER BUDDIES

Bill and Ted, Wayne and Garth, and Terry and Dean of *Fubar*: the notion of two heshier buds looking to bang heads and score babes en route to delusional rock stardom is a grand Heavy Metal Movie archetype. *The Adventures of Uncle Colt and Cletus: Hedge-Hoggin'* introduces another long-locked numbskull duo, with the twist being that one is a real-life rock star. Jeremy Spencer, drummer of platinum-selling Five Finger Death Punch, plays Colt. His actual drum tech Bobby Watson costars as Cletus. Spencer and Watson created the slapstick yokel characters to amuse themselves on tour.

During the nine-minute movie, Colt and Cletus do yard work for Ron Jeremy and unleash Verne Troyer as a genie. When Troyer, the former *Mini-Me*, is displeased by a limp handshake, he yips: "Shake like a man, bitch!" Uncle Colt and Cletus then magically become MTV-type pop sensations with bikini-clad groupies, but before long they end up losing it all. Multiple follow-ups are promised to come gushing through the pipeline.

## AFTER PARTY MASSACRE (2011)

(DIRS. KRISTOFF BATES, KYLE SEVERN; W/SCARLETT VON SINN, KYLE SEVERN)

✦ SLASHER ✦ RAPE AND REVENGE ✦ SOUNDTRACK (16 VOLT, ASPHYX, DENIAL FIEND, MASTER)

The bloodily bile-spattered brainchild of online culture maven Kristoff Bates (proprietor of the sites Horror Merch and Spooky Girls) and musician Kyle Severn (member of Incantation

and Acheron), *After Party Massacre* supplies a properly outlandish volume of death metal slasher righteousness. Whatever plot peeks through is centered on sexy alt-nude model Scarlett Von Sinn as (yes) Scarlett. She attends a death metal show, where she is uncomfortably manhandled, and she retaliates (and then some) by torturing, murdering, and/or mutilating anyone she encounters—including some of her hot friends. Amidst seas of Spooky Girl nudity and lesbianism, a wire hanger is jammed into pee-hole, a dildo is hammered into a skull, limbs are removed by a power saw, and vats of gore pour down over Scarlett's targets. Overwhelmingly, the visual effects rock; the nudity 100 percent entirely rocks.

*After Party Massacre* also boasts more than twenty bands on its soundtrack. The music is laid end-to-end, underscoring every single moment of activity. Incantation and Soulless also deliver ripping live performances. Opeth fans be warned: numerous jokes here come at the expense of you.

## **AIRHEADS** (1994)

(DIR. MICHAEL LEHMANN; W/BRENDAN FRASER, ADAM SANDLER, STEVE BUSCEMI, HAROLD RAMIS)

✦ SUNSET STRIP ✦ KILLER CAMEOS

The year 1994 was a great time for anybody who liked watching metalheads suffer. Lollapalooza ruled. L.A.'s once-towering all-metal KNAC-FM flipped to a foreign-tongue format. *Headbangers Ball* limped toward the first in its series of executions by MTV. Not long after Kurt Cobain gave himself the ultimate makeover from the neck up, Metallica took to pondering how much of his audience they might acquire if they abbreviated their hairdos.

Into this toxic terrain, *Airheads* arrived, born ready for VHS video rental. Brendan Fraser is atypically zesty in *Airheads*, not long after his likable caveman turn in the near-metal laffer *Encino Man* (1992). He plays the frontman of a power trio, backed by Adam Sandler and Steve Buscemi—who is especially good in Adam Sandler

movies. This band, the Lone Rangers, fills a water gun with hot sauce and takes over a radio station. They receive sympathy from a DJ (Joe Mantegna), grief from a broadcast exec (Michael McKean), and butt-kissing from a Columbia Records bigwig (Harold Ramis). Sunset Strip hordes, outside the station, lap it all up.

White Zombie plays the Whisky A Go Go, showcasing Sean Yseult's mesmerizing hair-spins. Beavis and Butt-head make a surprise vocal cameo. Lemmy mouths a scripted line, as does *The Howard Stern Show's* Stuttering John Melendez, who also scored a pleasant toe-tapper on the soundtrack—"I'm Gonna Talk My Way Out of This"—which lives up to the Lone Rangers' description of their sound as "power slop."

## **ALICE COOPER: THE NIGHTMARE** (1975)

(DIR. JORN WINTHER; W/ALICE COOPER, VINCENT PRICE, SHERYL COOPER, STEVE HUNTER, DICK WAGNER)

✦ VINCENT PRICE ✦ HAUNTED HOUSE

**A**lice Cooper: *The Nightmare* aired April 25, 1975, on ABC. The prime-time special is an hour-long, shot-on-video phantasmagoria with Alice in the role of Steven, an innocent youth trapped inside a nightmare. Vincent Price emerges as the Spirit of the Nightmare, and Alice's real-life lady, Sheryl Cooper, plays Cold Ethyl.

*Alice Cooper: The Nightmare*, the TV show, is often confused with *Alice Cooper: Welcome to My Nightmare*, the concert film. They are two separate entities, although they often both get referred to as simply *Welcome to My Nightmare*.

Looking like it was shot inside a haunted house designed by Sid and Marty Kroft, replete with ghouls and puppets and a Bat Woman (Robin Blythe), *The Nightmare* is a ghoulish delight. The music covers the entire *Welcome to My Nightmare* album, plus the early song "The Ballad of Dwight Frye." The action, art direction, and general aura are a warm-up for Alice's classic guest host shot on *The Muppet Show*.

*The Nightmare* was scripted by Alan Rudolph, who worked extensively on *The Brady Bunch* and served as assistant director to Robert Altman on *The Long Goodbye* (1973) and *Nashville* (1975). He went on to direct the rock and roll comedy *Roadie* (1980). Just prior to this, Rudolph directed *Barn of the Naked Dead* (1974), about a maniac who kidnaps women and forces them to learn circus tricks—a perfect precursor to Alice’s *Nightmare*.

## **ALICE COOPER: WELCOME to MY NIGHTMARE (1975)**

**(DIR. DAVID WINTERS; W/ALICE COOPER, DICK WAGNER,  
STEVE HUNTER, JOZEF CHIROWSKI, WHITEY GLAN)**

✦ MUTANTS ✦ GIANT CYCLOPS ✦ ROCK CONCERT

**N**ot to be confused with the ABC-TV special *Alice Cooper: The Nightmare*, this better-known offering is a feature-length theatrical concert film that bombed upon release, but lived on through the late '70s as a regular midnight movie.

The film documents Alice on tour promoting the album of the same name, his first without the original Alice Cooper Group, with footage mostly shot at London’s Wembley Arena in September 1975. Glam vixen Suzi Quatro, aka Leather Tuscadero from *Happy Days*, was the opening act. In addition to entirety of the *Welcome to My Nightmare* album, the band plays “I’m Eighteen,” “School’s Out,” and “Department of Youth.”

The *Nightmare* stage opus takes place in the bedroom of young naïf Steven, played by Alice. The setting transforms into a graveyard into which an array of monsters and mutants drop by or pop up. Among these are dancing skeletons, flashy demons, a behemoth spider with the voice of Vincent Price, and, most fan-friggin’-tastically, a nine-foot-tall Cyclops. The sheer scope of the production makes it seem like this show could have only played in soccer stadiums.

Thanks to master choreographer David Winters, the action onstage is positively stupefying. One

amazing effect has Alice jumping into a movie being projected on a giant screen behind the band, running wild among some phantoms, and then tumbling back out. Apparently, the production cost \$600,000—more than a Broadway musical of that era—and all that spending shows.

As a movie, though, *Nightmare* is point-and-shoot concert footage, which is more than fine when the subject is Alice Cooper at the peak of his powers as the Greatest Showman on Earth... or any other planet. Rhino’s *Welcome to My Nightmare* DVD includes a great commentary track by Cooper. Director David Winters went on to make the skateboard movie *Thrashin’* in 1986.

## **ALICE SWEET ALICE (1976), AKA COMMUNION; HOLY TERROR**

**(DIR. ALBERT SOLE; W/LINDA MILLER, PAULA  
SHEPPARD, LILLIAN ROTH, BROOKE SHIELDS)**

✦ SLASHER ✦ EVIL MASKS

**D**escribed by *Psychotronic Encyclopedia of Film* author Michael Weldon as “violently anti-Catholic,” *Alice, Sweet Alice* is a tantrum that oozes forward from an old, deep, and very clearly Church-of-Rome-inflicted wound, drawing you into a hellishly thrilling and intriguing mystery.

Alice (Paula Sheppard) is an angry twelve-year-old in the highly Italian, entirely Catholic town of Paterson, NJ, in 1962. She dons a unnerving clear mask to scare church housekeeper Mrs. Tredoni (Mildred Clinton) and her goody two-shoes nine-year-old sister, Karen (Brooke Shields). Karen’s First Communion arrives. Before she can receive the sacrament, the girl is strangled and set ablaze by someone in a yellow raincoat and a mask like the one Alice wore.

Alice’s world is dominated by despicable grown-ups: her miserably divorced mother; a morbidly obese child-molesting landlord; some nasty kids her own age who hate her; and the dictatorial misery of pre-Vatican II East Coast ethnic Catholicism. An obviously intelligent and creative

child, she takes refuge in a basement lair with her mask, a hideous three-faced baby doll, and strange rituals she performs involving a candle. In another time and place, Alice could have turned onto Black Sabbath, Coven, and other burgeoning heavy metal routes to occult exploration. Instead she goes someplace darker.

*Alice, Sweet Alice* evolves into a devious maze involving multiple murders in and near the local parish. The crisis leads to a logical but terrifying solution, compounded by a multitiered shock ending that may well prompt lapsed Catholics to involuntarily make the sign of the cross.

*Alice, Sweet Alice* opened in theaters three times. First as *Communion*, in 1976, then under its most familiar title, and finally as *Holy Terror*, in 1981. The last campaign cashed in on Brooke Shields's star power at the time, being careful to hide the fact that she is only nine in the movie, too young even by *Blue Lagoon* standards (not to mention that she gets offed in the first ten minutes). Paula Sheppard, like Brooke, makes her movie debut here. She went on to one other film role, as Adrian, the heroin-pushing bisexual, in the new wave midnight movie *Liquid Sky* (1982).

## ALIEN (1979)

(DIR. RIDLEY SCOTT; W/SIGOURNEY WEAVER, JOHN HURT, TOM SKERRIT, YAPHET KOTTO, HARRY DEAN STANTON, IAN HOLM)

✧ H. R. GIGER ✧ SCIENCE FICTION ✧ SPLATTER

An out-of-nowhere box-office smash turned genre-buster, *Alien* exerted enormous impact on sci-fi and horror in the years to come. None of the imitators picked up on what really made Ridley Scott's slow-building masterpiece unique: the story is really a gritty, Method-acted '70s blue-collar drama set in a haunted house—but the house happens to be a spaceship. And a womb.

*Alien* rip-offs focused on two of the most talked-about visuals: The infant creature bursting out of John Hurt's chest, and the full-grown alien itself, a raging, acid-bleeding eight-foot-tall exoskeletal insect that somehow also looks like a giant penis

covered in fanged vaginas. Any living person will be struck dumb by each of these sights, the first for its sudden, visceral shock, and the latter for its masterfully intricate, horrifyingly sexual originality courtesy of Swiss surrealist H. R. Giger.

*Alien* matches silvery prog-rock visuals with the hammer-blow terror of sleek metal. The film remains the shining high point of a golden age of heady, adult science-fiction cinema that spanned from 2001: *A Space Odyssey* (1968) to Ridley Scott's *Blade Runner* (1982). We've seen so many films and other entertainments copping *Alien*'s surface elements, but nothing truly like it since.

H. R. Giger's heavy metal connections are profuse—witness his hugely influential, often-tattooed “bio-mechanical” imagery. Most familiar is his painting “Satan I,” depicting the horned one aiming a crucifix slingshot right at you, that graces the cover of Celtic Frost's *To Mega The-ri-on*. Giger artwork also features on albums from Danzig, Atrocity, Necronomicon, Sacrosanct, and Triptykon—not to mention punk giants the Dead Kennedys and prog masters Magma and Emerson, Lake and Palmer. The landmark Carcass album *Heartwork* features a photo of a Giger sculpture. Singer Jonathan Davis of nü-metal troupe Korn uses a custom microphone stand designed by Giger, so that, unlike in space, everyone can hear him scream.

## ALL THE COLORS OF THE DARK (1972)

(DIR. SERGIO MARTINO; W/EDWIGE FENECH, GEORGE HILTON, MARINA Malfatti)

✧ SATAN ✧ BLACK MASS ✧ GIALLO

Beginning with its eerie, evocative title, *All the Colors of the Dark* puts a fresh spin on two horror genres: rip-offs of *Rosemary's Baby* (1968) and Italian *giallo* crime thrillers. Gorgeous Edwige Fenech stars as Jane, a woman whose pregnancy ends in a car crash. She is subsequently inundated with striking, surreal nightmares involving a blue-eyed knife-wielder, an old lady in a baby bonnet, and the slaughter of a screaming

nude nubile. Neighbor Mary (Marina Malfatti) reasonably suggests to Jane that participating in a satanic mass ritual will put end such mental torment. Unfortunately, after Jane drinks fox blood from a golden goblet and participates in an occult orgy, her torments only intensify—and so do the jolts and brain-popping visuals of this well-crafted acid rock devil shocker.

Jus Oborn, high unholy magician of Electric Wizard, has raved about the “really hallucinatory vibe” of *All the Colors of the Dark*. The little-known bands Blue Holocaust and Chains have written songs titled “All the Colors of the Dark.”

## **ALUCARDA (1978),**

**AKA SISTERS OF SATAN**

**(DIR. JUAN LOPEZ MOCTEZUMA; W/TINA ROMERO, SUSANA KAMINI, CLAUDIO BROOK, DAVID SILVA)**

✱ SATAN ✱ DEMONIC POSSESSION ✱ NUNS

**M**exican horror director Juan Lopez Moctezuma (*Mansion of Madness; Mary, Mary, Bloody Mary*) hits his peak in *Alucarda*, a surreal blend of Catholic spookery, blood-drenched teenage lesbianism, and proto-retro torture porn. Who could ask for anything more? The title is simply “Dracula” spelled backwards, with an *a* at the end because the story is about a chick.

*Alucarda* (Tina Romero) and Justine (Susana Kamini) are orphan girls being raised in a convent. After a run-in with Gypsies and a stray coffin in the woods, *Alucarda* conjures Satan in their bedroom. From then on, they’re converts to his unholy cause. The girls proclaim their new love of the Dark Lord in Bible study class. As evidenced by the Spanish Inquisition, the Catholic Church has ways of quieting such talk. But then so, too, does Satan when it comes time to respond.

Moctezuma produced the original midnight movie, *El Topo* (1970), and maintained a close friendship with its mad genius creator, Alejandro Jodorowsky (*Santa Sangre*). After being a hot ticket among bootleg video traders in the 1990s, *Alucarda* attained wider cult status on

DVD, thanks to Mondo Macabro’s killer 2003 special-edition release. Moctezuma’s set design, costuming, and commitment to outrage remain astounding throughout *Alucarda*. His female stars rise to the movie’s high standards. They may even be the most prolific screamers in any horror film I’ve ever seen. I bow to them, while wearing earplugs.

## **AMEBIX RISEN: A HISTORY OF AMEBIX**

**(2008)**

**(DIR. ROY WALLACE; W/ROB “THE BARON” MILLER, STIG, MARTIN, JELLO BIAFRA, SCOTT KELLY)**

✱ CRUST PUNK ✱ ALEISTER CROWLEY

**I**n the course of just two official albums, fascinating genre-busters Amebix forever altered the extreme music landscape. Bedecked in sunglasses and black leather amidst multicolor-mohawked UK punks in the late ’70s, the squat-dwelling bikers in Amebix commingled occult sorcery with antiauthority street-riot philosophy to conjure the heaviness of Black Sabbath, the rocket thrust of Motörhead, the rebelliousness of Crass, and the apocalyptic firestorms of Killing Joke, along with their own uniquely energetic and inventive take on raising the roof.

*Amebix Risen* is a straightforward documentary on the band, consisting of talking-head interviews, performance footage, and rudimentary graphics, all of which serve the subject well. Core Amebix members Rob “The Baron” Miller and Stig prove particularly compelling and well-spoken on screen, chronicling their rise and fall with good humor and a shockingly clear perspective.

Rob Miller reveals his post-Amebix career as a professional sword maker with amusement over how people are not surprised by it. He recounts reading: “Rob Miller went on from being a singer in the band Amebix to making swords on the Isle of Skye—of course he did!”

Singularly named drummer Martin discusses at length his psychic involvement with the ghost of

Aleister Crowley, and how he introduced occultism into the overall Amebix mix. Scott Kelly and Steve Von Till of Neurosis wax lovingly on the band, too, citing how Amebix managed to convey anarchic spirit and pagan spirituality while never spouting specifically political or religious lyrics. "Everybody else was getting caught up in details," Scott says. "They were way past that."

Rob Miller talks about Amebix's sonic drift from punk to metal on their 1985 full-length debut, *Arise*: "I was always interested in heavy metal as a musical form, but I thought the lyrics were shit. I loved Black Sabbath—the way the music made you feel something, other than just the words. I liked Crass, and the words would make you feel something, but the music didn't have much resonance. That's why I thought—we can make good music and good lyrics, to get a bit of force together, to push a point home with intensity." Hence, the English take on the punk-metal crossover was born.

## AMERICA 3000 (1986)

(DIR. DAVID ENGELBACH; W/CHUCK WAGNER, LAURENE LANDON, STEVE MALOVIC)

✧ POST-APOCALYPSE ✧ AMAZONS ✧ MUTANTS  
✧ CANNON FILMS

**A**merica 3000 begins by sharing this information: "Nine hundred years after the Great Nuke. The world man created, he destroyed. Out of the darkness and ignorance of the radioactive rubble emerged a new order. And the world was woggos." As you could never guess, "woggos" is future-speak for "totally cuckoo." Battle-savvy Amazons, complete with Sunset Strip-ready giant hair and animal-print bikinis, rule the desert landscape. Men, who are ape-dumb and defenseless, work as slaves or, if they're lucky, "seeders." Mutants wander about. Then Corbus (Chuck Wagner), a resident of "Camp Reagan," falls into a bunker stocked with laser guns, grenades, and a ghetto blaster equipped with hard rock cassettes. The revolution is on.

The post-nuke setting and Cannon Films pedi-

gree earn *America 3000* its Heavy Metal Movies stripes, but the real metal beast here is a Wookiee-like mutant named "Aargh the Awful." The on-screen function of this head-to-toe hirsute, stoner-metal monstrosity is to whoop and wail along with the rock jams pouring out of the unearthed boom box. After Corbus and an Amazon leader (Laurene Landon) swap some sweat and lots of mega-jiggy plastic lingo, *America 3000* wraps up with a charging-cavalry action climax. Divert your eyes if you're sensitive to the old movie stunt trick of "horse-tripping."

## AMERICAN MOVIE (1999)

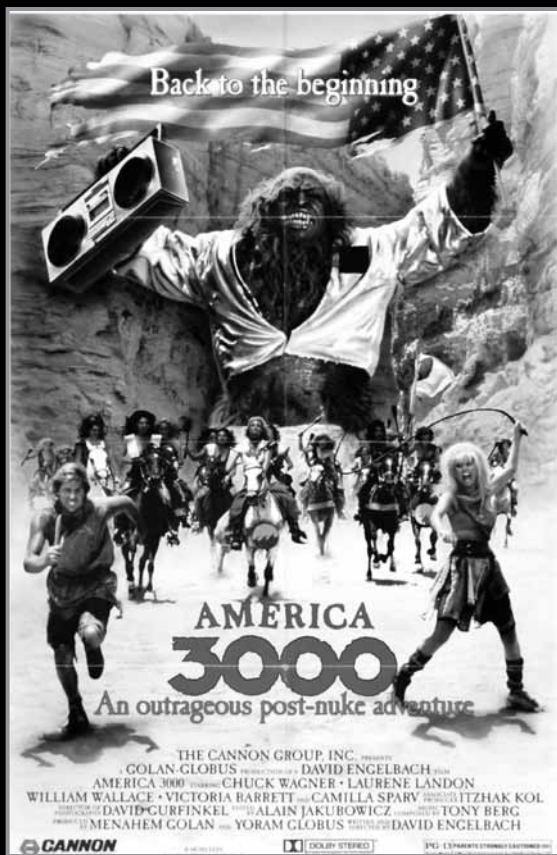
(DIR. CHRIS SMITH; W/MARC BORCHARDT, MIKE SCHANK, TOM SCHIMMELS, BILL BORCHARDT)

✧ METAL REALITY ✧ HORROR ✧ OBSESSION

**T**he narrative American movie at the heart of the documentary *American Movie* is titled *Coven*, a short supernatural horror film written and directed by gangly Milwaukee auteur Mark Borchardt. He hopes that the success of *Coven* will finance his full-length coming-of-age drama, *Northwestern*. Aiding and abetting Mark at every turn is his hefty, sweetly dim, mightily mustachioed metalhead best friend Mike Schank.

Replete with a long, floppy mane of dark hair, a cheesy goatee, active alcoholism, multiple children out of wedlock, a volatile temper, an inability to finish seemingly any task, and a hilarious insistence on mispronouncing "Coven" with a long o, so it rhymes with "cloven," Borchardt embodies the Midwestern heshier stereotype—including a lopsided, often inexplicable, likability.

Tom Schimmels, the spookily aristocratic local thespian who plays the lead in *Coven*, is like Wisconsin's answer to Brazilian horror host Coffin Joe—and that's when he's not even on the set. He is some find. Uncle Bill Borchardt, Mark's chief financier, has a single line in *Coven* that he repeats maniacally, to the point that, even in the midst of this upbeat, life-affirming documentary, it packs a real chill: "It's all right, it's okay, there's something to live for...Jesus told me so!"



Clockwise from top left: Golan-Globus gets mega jiggy plastic with America 3000; Alucarda displays a cross correctly in a special edition; American Movie stars Mark Borchardt and Mike Schank just get comfortable



*American Movie* mines the most admirable and relatable traits of its central figure, and unironically salutes his ambition. Ultimately, when Mark completes *Coven*, we see pieces of it, along with its premiere audience's genuinely delighted reaction. Borchardt does possess talent on par with his ambition, no matter how much he muddles both. What a great surprise ending.

The heart of *American Movie*, though, is the tirelessly supportive Mike Schank. Trading in booze and hallucinogen addictions for a very healthy electric guitar enthusiasm and a potentially not-so-swell fondness for scratch-off game cards, this soft-spoken, gentlest of headbangers—who, frankly, seems to have never quite fully returned from his previous psychedelic drug excursions—is one of the most huggable personalities in American movies. Long may he shred.

The special-edition DVD of *American Movie* comes with the complete *Coven*—which is great—plus a bonus scene titled, “I Wish I Were a Member of AC/DC,” which depicts Mark and Mike stranded by the side of a road on a freezing, rainy afternoon. Poor Mike laments: “I wish I were a member of AC/DC.” When asked why, he says: “Because then I wouldn't be here. I'd be in one of my mansions.”

## AN AMERICAN WEREWOLF IN LONDON

(1981)

(DIR. JOHN LANDIS; W/DAVID NAUGHTON, JENNY AGUTTER, GRIFFIN DUNNE)

✧ WEREWOLVES ✧ ENGLAND

A pair of college-age backpackers look wet and worried on the poster for *An American Werewolf in London*. They're eyeing something in the distance while a full moon beams through the cloudy night sky above. “From the director of *Animal House*,” reads the tagline, “a different kind of animal.” Earlier in 1981, Joe Dante's *The Howling* most excellently resurrected lycanthropic cinema. That film's approach was

summed up by the image of long claws crazily tearing through a curtain to reveal screaming female facial features on the other side. *American Werewolf* is both subtler and more startling; the movie fulfills its promise with a perfect blend of gothic chills, lilting comedy, visceral shocks, and eyeball-blasting terror visuals.

American friends David (David Naughton) and Jack (Griffin Dunne) are traveling the English moors on a foggy evening. They stop at the Slaughtered Lamb, a foreboding country pub straight out of a classic Hammer gothic horror film. Locals warn of a werewolf on the loose. The boys don't listen. Jack is killed as a result and David suffers a worse fate: he is only bitten.

Recovering in London, David takes up with sexy nurse Alex (Jenny Agutter), but is plagued by horrific visions. Jack's ghost visits him in progressively grotesque states of decay; a jiggling piece of skin on his neck is a real gut-churner. David sees himself nude in the woods, stalking and eating a live deer. In the last, most jolting nightmare, David is at home in America with his family when Nazi werewolves suddenly kick the door in and slaughter them all with machine guns. (Slayer adapted this gruesome image for its Slatanic Wehrmacht fan club).

Soon, the full moon rises again and David transforms into a werewolf. The masterful onscreen metamorphosis, so familiar now, broke new ground in the realm of special effects. David runs the streets, feeds, and awakens nude the next day in the wolf cage at the London Zoo. That night, David ducks into a porno theater. Jack and David's victims from the previous night confront him, saying he should kill himself before he changes again. It's too late. Dave wolfs out and embarks on a wild massacre through Piccadilly Circus. A stalking sequence in the London Underground, shot from the point of the view of the werewolf, perfectly captures the feel of Iron Maiden's “Killers,” released earlier that year: “You walk through the subway, his eyes burn a hole in your back.” When police bullets cut David down, he shockingly reverts to human form.

Makeup master Rick Baker, whose work on *American Werewolf* earned him the first-ever Academy Award for Outstanding Achievement in Makeup, exposed audiences to what they could only previously imagine. He spoke of childhood frustration with movies where a guy sees a full moon, ducks behind a rock, and steps out a full-fledged wolfman. "Show me what's happening behind that rock!" Baker recalls thinking.

The *American Werewolf* soundtrack consists almost solely of songs that comment on the action, including "Moondance" by Van Morrison and "Bad Moon Rising" by Creedence Clearwater Revival. Religion quashed other components of the proposed *American Werewolf* song list. Cat Stevens forbade the use of his "Moonshadow" as he was in full Koran-waving "Yusuf Islam" mode. Bob Dylan, a born-again Christian at the point of filming, similarly passed on allowing his cover of "Blue Moon," citing the movie's R rating.

The film's violence, frank sexuality, and humor mirrored exactly the changes happening in rock music; heavy metal leapt forward to tear away all veneers and expose the loudest, scariest, most perilous, and most electrifying components lying dormant in rock music. The new era was opened wide like a gaping wound, and heavy metal came gushing forth. Once the beast was loose, we could never go back. *American Werewolf* heralded a new breed of no-blinking, explicit terror. The American werewolf's death in London gave birth to the age of heavy metal horror in Hollywood.

## AMITYVILLE 2: THE POSSESSION (1982)

(DIR. DAMIANO DAMIANI; W/JACK MAGNER, DIANE FRANKLIN, BURT YOUNG, JAMES OLSON)

✧ HAUNTED HOUSE ✧ EXORCISM

The best-selling 1977 book *The Amityville Horror* tells the supposedly true story of a haunted house on New York's Long Island, replete with an invisible pig, rooms swarming with flies, and disembodied voices that moan: "For God's sake, get out!" This well-told urban legend blew

up to be a monstrous pop-culture phenomenon, spawning no fewer than ten films. At least one element was undeniably true; several years prior to the events described in the book, teenager Ronald DeFeo really did murder six members of his family on the premises. Besides, the half-moon windows in the attic make the house seem to have evil jack-o'-lantern eyes.

The useless 1979 *Amityville Horror* movie made sufficient dough to warrant a follow-up, produced by Dino De Laurentiis (*King Kong*), which tastefully commingles the real-life DeFeo tragedy with exorcism exploitation and sexy incest. Jack Magner plays Sonny Montelli, a troubled Italian-American teen who, upon moving into 112 Ocean Avenue, increases the disobedience quotient. He seduces his topless sister (Diane Franklin) and hears demonic voices through his headphones that say, "Kill 'em!" Sonny undergoes full possession from there and he does, for sure, kill 'em all. An exorcism saves the day, as well as Sonny's soul—but no amount of Latin chants and holy water could stop the sequels.

Director Damiano Damiani (*A Bullet for the General*, *The Devil is a Woman*, *How to Kill a Judge*), came to Amityville with dozens of sleazy Italian crime thrillers under his belt. Not surprisingly, his rather extreme entry in the *Amityville Horror* annals stands out, and is praised as a favorite by Phil Anselmo of Pantera. I would further endorse *Amityville 3D* (1983) as an *objet d'schlock*, while *Amityville Dollhouse* (1996) deserves a cheerful mention just for its title. Though the original *Amityville Horror* story is pooh-poohed today when remembered at all, as a horror brand name the legend remains unstoppable. To further scare you away from Long Island, it's worth mentioning that "say you love Satan" killer Ricky Kasso was institutionalized in Amityville prior to committing a drug-addled 1984 murder.

The *Amityville* movies inspired the song "High Hopes: The Amityville Murders" by Wind Wraith, and others by Hellbilly, Nominon, and Sodomizer, and Carpatia Castle; plus bands named Amityville hailing from Germany and

the U.S. New York act Amityville Dollhouse is named after the straight-to-video eighth movie in this series.

## ANGEL at MIDNIGHT (1977)

(DIR. PETER LAKE; W/PUNKY MEADOWS, MICKIE JONES, GREGG GIUFFRIA, FRANK DIMINO)

✦ SUNSET STRIP ✦ GLAM ✦ CONCERT FOOTAGE

Gene Simmons brought Washington, D.C.'s, semi-prog, hard-edged glam-rockers Angel to Casablanca Records—the home of Kiss throughout the 1970s. Yet no matter how many times Casablanca pitched Angel to the public, the overwhelming response was “Go to hell.” That is a shame, because Angel was a genuine curiosity. Draped with flowing flaxen locks and pristine white robes, the band posited itself as the yin to Kiss's yang, complete with equally elaborate stage shows. Instead of blood and fire, however, Angel projected the giant face of the Archangel Gabriel descending from on high to summon the band members forth from a giant plastic recreation of their *White Hot* album cover.

Casablanca had enough faith in Angel to invest \$150,000 in this 35mm film. As executive Larry Harris writes in his thoroughly readable memoir *And Party Every Day: The Inside Story of Casablanca Records*: “Given the recent release of *The Song Remains the Same* [and] the wildly popular midnight screenings of *The Rocky Horror Picture Show*..., an Angel movie wasn't that hard a sell. Cleveland, one of the band's biggest strongholds, was chosen as the location of the live segments. Attendees were strongly encouraged to wear white, so that in the film it would look like they were in Heaven with the band.”

Shooting went well and editing was under way when Casablanca began to panic over Angel's lack of album sales. Then the group fired bassist Mickie Jones before his proper “beauty footage” was shot. Alas, *Angel at Midnight* never took public flight, although enough footage was completed for Casablanca to ponder a LaserDisc release at one point. For now, *Angel at Midnight*

is languishing, somewhere, yearning to spread its gorgeous, feathery wings. Casablanca again tried to sell the band via the movies by making them a centerpiece of the teen-angels-on-the-road-to-ruin movie *Foxes* (1980), starring Jodie Foster and Cherie Currie, but most of Angel's footage ended up on the cutting room floor.

At least Frank Zappa noticed. He was so amused/appalled by the archly effeminate Angel that he wrote “Punky's Whips,” one of the most savage take-downs in rock, directly satirizing frontman Punky Meadows. The lyrics ooze about Zappa drummer Terry Bozzio hopelessly falling in love with poofy Punky, rhyming “bite his neck” with “more fluid than Jeff Beck.”

## ANGEL HEART (1987)

(DIR. ALAN PARKER; W/MICKEY ROURKE, ROBERT DE NIRO, LISA BONET, CHARLOTTE RAMPLING)

✦ VODOO ✦ SATAN ✦ CHICKEN BLOOD

In 1955 New York City, hard-boiled private dick Harry Angel (Mickey Rourke) is summoned by a thorny man of wealth and taste identifying himself as Lou Cyphre (Robert De Niro), who hires him to track down a lost crooner named Johnny Favorite. Ace investigator though he is, Harry doesn't put together that his goateed, raven-maned, wizard-fingered, never-before-seen client's moniker adds up to “Lucifer.” Instead, he hightails it way down yonder to New Orleans for some voodoo sex and violence.

In keeping with the “Get it? GET IT!?” nomenclature of *Angel Heart*'s opening, erstwhile Cosby kid Lisa Bonet also plays topless hoodoo hottie Epiphany Proudfoot. She bones Harry Angel in a barn where black magic chicken blood rains down on them in buckets from on high.

Subtle, *Angel Heart* ain't. It also never comes close to the fake movie critic quote on its TV commercials hyping *Angel Heart* as “*Chinatown* meets *The Exorcist*.” For metalheads in 1987, though—particularly metalheads equipped with smokable enhancers—*Angel Heart*'s stylish imagery and ham-hoofed satanic shenanigans

provided plenty of late-night viewing pleasure, occasionally at midnight screenings and more often while gathered with cohorts for home video viewing and boot-stomping.

*Angel Heart* courted controversy, earning an X rating before release, due to the graphic Rourke-Bonet get-down. Several seconds were scraped to secure an R rating. Lisa Bonet was bounced from *The Cosby Show* due to *Angel Heart*. No longer pristine enough to continue playing teen daughter Denise Huxtable, she was banished to her own sitcom, *A Different World*. After that, she actually did punish herself by marrying Lenny Kravitz. Metal bands including Dark Age, Insanity, and Manimal wrote songs about this movie.

## ANIMAL INSTINCTS III: THE SEDUCTRESS (1996)

(DIR. GREGORY HYPOLYTE [GREGORY DARK]; W/WENDY SCHUMACHER, JAMES MATTHEW, MARCUS GRAHM)

✦ SUNSET STRIP ✦ HAIR METAL ✦ SELWYN HARRIS

**Y**ou don't need to have seen *Animal Instincts* (1992) or *Animal Instincts II* (1994) to follow what happens in *Animal Instincts III: The Seductress*. I didn't—and I wrote the goddamn movie! If you tuned into Showtime after 1 a.m. during the tail end of the 1990s, odds are you caught at least one unhappy gander at this erotic thriller. *Animal Instincts III* (AI3 for short) was a soft-core effort by director Gregory Dark (*New Wave Hookers*, credited here as Gregory Hyppolyte), following our decidedly metal XXX collaboration *Devil in Miss Jones 5: The Inferno* (1995).

After crafting the first two *Animal Instinct* movies, Greg wanted to work a couple of his personal passions—knife throwing and hip-hop—into the third installment. I asked if we could throw in some heavy metal and rock and roll groupies. Greg replied, “Why the fuck wouldn't you?”

The result was this plot: Joanna Coles (Wendy Schumacher), the World's Greatest Exhibitionist, falls in love with Alex Savage (James Matthew), a big-shot record producer and a champion knife thrower. Alex also happens to be blind. But wait!

He isn't really blind. He's just faking, because, as we find out, Alex is actually the World's Greatest Voyeur. The knife skill, he explains, is just a Zen thing, like the deaf, dumb, and blind kid who had that reputation for pinball.

In the course of Joanna and Alex's courtship, they come across various and sundry musician types, a sexy groupie played by porn star Jen Teal, and couple of Hollywood strippers wearing maid costumes. Joanna fucks all comers right in front of Alex's face, and he pretends he can't see anything happen. But, oh, is he ever taking it all in! Among the secretly seduced rock stars is heavy metal guitar whiz and operatic vocalist Trick Willy (John Bates). Trouble storms upon the arrival of gangsta rapper Stone Chill (Marcus Graham). Over the course of a dinner party, Stone, believing Alex can't see, terrorizes Joanna, has his bodyguard nail her on the fully set table, and kills his manager. Alex ends the one-man crime wave by winging a knife into Stone's heart. Everybody ends up happy and/or dead.

I want to state outright, here and now, that I was certifiably insane when I wrote *Animal Instincts III*. The film is a psychographic snapshot of a deranged mind in a condition of severe tumult. And all that would be extremely metal if the movie weren't just so mortifyingly terrible, mainly due to the screenplay. But, hey, headbangers, I gave you Trick Willy!

At one point, Joanna reads aloud from a newspaper about how Stone Chill beat a previous record producer hideously close to death. Upset, she repeatedly talks about all the horrible stuff that befell the producer named “Mr. Albini.” Fortunately, no Steve Albinis were actually harmed during the production of the film, leaving him healthy enough to record Burning Witch and High on Fire records in coming years.

The name Trick Willy was an homage to my friend Peter Landau and his genuinely great NYC bluesy scum-punk band Da Willys. In the mid-1980s, Peter Landau served as the original drummer in White Zombie. After playing on the group's first record, Pete informed Rob Zom-

bie that he was quitting, as he was hitching his drumsticks to yet another Lower East Side supernova in hot ascent toward stardom, GG Allin. We all know how that turned out.

## **AN-THOR-ODOLOGY (1976-1985) (2005)**

**(DIRS. FRANK MEYER, PAUL HARB; W/JON MIKL THOR)**

✧ THOR ✧ MUSIC VIDEOS ✧ CONCERT FOOTAGE

✧ MIDWAY MAYHEM

**A**n-*Thor-Ology* (1976–1985) serves up muscle-bound Canadian metal titan Jon Mikl Thor unchained, uncensored, and unfettered by any level of professional production. First, strangest, and best is a 1976 *Merv Griffin Show* clip from the Aladdin resort in Las Vegas. Thor is introduced as a member of the hotel's "Red, Hot, and Blue" revue. He takes the stage, short-haired and long-mustachioed, to strip out of a superhero costume in proto-Chippendales fashion while singing the most lackluster version of Sweet's "Action" ever emitted by a human being. Then he blows into a hot-water bottle until it explodes.

A 1979 Canadian TV report, played twice, describes Thor as "The King of Muscle Rock...sort of a male Dolly Parton" and dubiously claims that "he's been offered Conan and Tarzan movies...and a Broadway show." Dearest to me is Thor on *The Uncle Floyd Show* in 1982, during the beloved New Jersey garage-punk kiddie program's brief tenure as an NBC overnight series. Again, Thor puffs a water bottle into combustive oblivion. A few years later, Thor visits U68, a New York-area UHF music video channel (and the only music video platform anywhere for bands like Voivod and Razor). Glaring, flexing, and flashing his steel-bending teeth, Thor pumps up the U68 *Power Hour*, snarling: "This is Thor, reminding all you headbangers to tune in every night to U68 at eleven for some bone-crushing metal. Get your rocks off!"

After thirty-three minutes of these disconnected jewels, the title "Thorumentary" floats on screen, and Jon Mikl starts narrating, or rather boasting

about his bodybuilding titles and revealing how as a boy he got other kids to throw bricks at his head to prove he was invincible. He confesses that he once starred in "a blue musical" titled *What Do You Say to a Naked Waiter?* "There was nudity," Thor states. "Yes, I was naked. But it was classy. Hey! It was the swingin' '70s." Shortly thereafter, during a live cover of the Troggs' "Wild Thing" Thor voraciously sucks the tongues of entranced female audience members.

Beyond that, *An-Thor-Ology* is mostly dawn-of-the-VCR camcorder live footage; our boy in some TV commercial bit parts; a couple of run-of-the-mill music videos. Thor peaks while playing "Thunder on the Tundra" on a bargain-budget UK comedy show called *Channel 72*. While messing with all of this, do not lose track of time and forget to watch Thor's *Rock-'N'-Roll Nightmare*.

## **ANTICHRIST (2009)**

**(DIR. LARS VON TRIER; W/CHARLOTTE GAINSBORG,**

**WILLEM DAFOE)**

✧ CHAOS ✧ WITCHCRAFT ✧ ANTICHRIST

**T**he Scandinavian kingdom of Denmark, which whelped unto heavy metal Mercyful Fate and Lars Ulrich, also gifted cinema with an invigorating and debate-inspiring fellow traveler named Lars von Trier. The first firebrand of global art cinema since his whore-for-God saga *Breaking the Waves* (1996), von Trier finally went for broke with *Antichrist*, dividing critics, converting new fans to his extreme experiences, and creating the most respectable indie cinema release since the '70s that could lay claim to *Cannibal Holocaust's* tagline: "the one that goes ALL the way!"

As married characters He and She (Willem Dafoe and Charlotte Gainsbourg) have rhapsodic sex, their baby son toddles from his crib and tumbles right out a window. We watch him fall to his death in slow motion, set to soothing classical music. Willem Dafoe's character, He, is a psychiatrist composing a thesis on "Gynocide," a grindcore band name if ever there was one. When She goes into complete mental collapse

after the baby's funeral, He then whisks her to a cabin in lush woodland area called Eden. Hell follows with them.

She spins out into unreachable salvos of madness. He comes across a talking fox who plainly states, "Chaos reigns!" A crow and a deer also prove unnaturally communicative. Hail falls hard. Eden's former resident is revealed to have been a weather-changing witch. By the end, She provides He (and herself) with the ultimate lesson in gynocide, although we can't imagine what the hundreds of blur-faced women ascending up a hill toward the cabin might have in store.

*Antichrist* is a benchmark midnight-movie gross-out/freak-out on a par with the works of Alejandro Jodorowsky (*El Topo*, *The Holy Mountain*), but reduced from epic scale to agonizing intimacy. Often, metal music is praised as "ear-bleeding." *Antichrist* warrants similar descriptive lauding, but draws plasma from organs well south of one's ears, both metaphorically and on-screen.

*Antichrist's* biblical references and pagan-conjuring nature setting create an air of heady spirituality that packs a soul-quaking wallop when the interpersonal Armageddon comes down. When He and She make love under a tree, hundreds of hands emerge from the roots. The *Antichrist* poster uses this scary, trippy image.

But this abstract description is unsatisfying, so here's the deal with the big, bloody climax: She pulverizes He's testicles with a wooden block, then jacks him off until he comes blood. While He is passed out, She drills a hole into his leg and bolts a hefty grindstone through it so He can't escape. After He makes it to a foxhole, She beats him with a shovel and partly buries him alive. She takes a pair of scissors, cuts off her clitoris, and masturbates to screaming orgasm as blood spews from the wound. All of this is well-lit and in close-up. The sex acts are actually performed in hardcore pornographic detail. To the extreme!

## THE ANTICHRIST (1974), AKA THE TEMPTER

(DIR. ALBERTO DE MARTINO; W/CARLA GRAVINA, MEL FERRER, ARTHUR KENNEDY)

✧ SEX WITH SATAN ✧ EXORCISM ✧ INQUISITION

**T**he *Antichrist* is one of many grotesquely delightful Italian *Exorcist* rip-offs from the mid-1970s. Retitled *The Tempter*, the film enjoyed a second life in theaters in 1978. After that, it filled out drive-in and grindhouse double and triple bills for nearly a decade, even getting a sizable release in Portugal in 1986. The movie still stood out as weird enough to warrant C-level circulation.

After crippled Ippolita Oderisi (Carla Gravina) visits a spooky shrine to the Virgin Mary and undergoes hypnosis, she experiences flashbacks to her previous life as a witch who was burned at the stake. Ippolita transports herself to that realm, where she nakedly submits to a ritual in an eye-popping, all-gray hell, building to a frenzy as she copulates with a goat-horned Satan. Newly able to walk in the present day, she then goes on a sex rampage that includes snapping one conquest's neck and seducing her brother. She also pukes green and wills the furniture to fly around the room.

*The Antichrist's* standout segment is not just Ippolita making sex with Old Scratch, but the gnarly rites she performs to make it happen: she laps up blood, eats a toad's head, and then lustfully licks the ass of a goat. Such gross rites sounds like the sort of nonsense Ricky Kasso-type burnouts would try in the vicinity of a barnyard while whacked out of their minds on PCP and Venom records. If we are to believe *The Antichrist*, it works!

## ANTHROPOPHAGUS: THE GRIM REAPER

(1981), AKA **THE GRIM REAPER;**  
**ANTHROPOPHAGUS: THE BEAST;**  
**THE ZOMBIE'S RAGE**

(DIR. JOE D'AMATO; W/GEORGE EASTMAN, TISA FARROW, SAVERIO VALLONE, SERENA GRANDI)

✧ CANNIBALISM ✧ '80S ITALIAN HORROR  
✧ BANNED VIDEO NASTY

A group of tourists sails to an uninhabited Greek island. A diary indicates that murder most barf-bag-conducive befell whoever landed there before them. A prior traveler, Nikos Karamanlis (George Eastman), was the source of the slaughter. He arrived on the island some time ago with a wife and child who died and ultimately became his sole food source. Nikos is still around now—lurking as a scabby-skinned, zombie-like madman—and hungrier than ever.

*Anthropophagus: The Grim Reaper* (as the film is now definitively known) opened in the United States as *The Grim Reaper* and marked the straightforward horror debut of Italian sleaze specialist Joe D'Amato (*Emanuelle in America*). In unedited form, the only form that counts, *Anthropophagus* stakes a strong claim among the other European regurgitation exercises of era.

One transgression truly elevates the film to grindcore gross-out greatness. In graphic close-up, Nikos overpowers the hugely pregnant Maggie (Serena Grandi), tears open her belly, yanks out the living contents, and devours the mewling fetus in front of her and the rest of us. Happy Mother's Day—Joe D'Amato style!

*Anthropophagy* is the Greek root term for the eating of human flesh, but the fetus eaten by Nikos is actually a skinned rabbit. The film was cowritten by director D'Amato and star Eastman. They reteamed later in 1981 to serve the same functions on the pseudo-sequel, and fellow banned UK video nasty, *Absurd*.

## ANVIL! THE STORY OF ANVIL (2008)

(DIR. SACHA GERVASI; W/STEVE "LIPS" KUDLOW, ROBB REINER, IVAN HURD)

✧ METAL HISTORY ✧ CONCERT FOOTAGE  
✧ VIBRATOR GUITAR SOLO

**A**nvil! *The Story of Anvil* is a heartfelt, soulful, touchingly funny, and finally inspiring chronicle of one the great '80s metal bands that could have, would have, and should have, but didn't. The movie makes that point immediately, opening at Japan's 1984 Super Rock festival. Hot off the albums *Metal on Metal* and *Forged in Fire*, Anvil, led by best friends Steve "Lips" Kudlow (singer/guitarist) and Robb Reiner (drummer), plays to a stadium of roaring fans alongside Scorpions, Bon Jovi, and Whitesnake.

We know what became of those other groups. Now we see what's up with Anvil. Today in their native Canada, Lips drives a truck for a school catering company, and Robb works construction. For fun, they play a local bar, always to the delight of the crowd and the odd old-time admirer who happens by. Incongruously, the former greatness of Anvil is praised on-camera in interviews with metal giants on the order of Lars Ulrich, Slash, Lemmy, Tom Araya, and Scott Ian.

Lips gets a shaky offer for a European tour from a fan named Tiziana Arrigoni. Robb is not immediately enthusiastic, but these lifelong partners promised to ride the rock train to the very end so, along with guitarist Ivan Hurd and bassist Glenn Five, off they go, tumbling headlong into one calamity after another. Five weeks later, after making exactly no money, they return home. One catch: Ivan Hurd takes up romantically with Tiziana. Anvil, hilariously inappropriately, plays their wedding. Glenn Five becomes homeless.

Lips and Robb begin work on the band's thirteenth album, *This Is Thirteen*. To finance the recording, Robb attempts to sell sunglasses by phone. It doesn't work. And so it goes. We fall in love with these guys as they remain steadfastly

committed to the spark that launched them as teenagers. We also see that, despite the real-life slapstick all around them, Lips and Robb are not easy rock and roll clowns. Each is sharp and witty, with Reiner being particularly well spoken. He paints, too!

*Anvil* ends on a fantastic up note, with the band returning to where the movie began: Japan. The final scene is a pure surprise and an even purer outburst of inspiration. Metal on metal forever.

Following the critical acclaim and popular success of *Anvil: The Story of Anvil*, the reinvigorated band scored opening tour gigs for AC/DC and Saxon, followed by their headlining tours of Europe and festival slots alongside Alice Cooper. The movie proved to be an endless blessing for the band. Noted Lips: "One of my heroes is Ian Anderson from Jethro Tull, and he came up to me in Heathrow Airport and told me the movie had completely inspired him to keep playing music. He just kept thanking me for all of the inspiration my band gave him. I mean, this is Ian Anderson from Jethro Tull—how cool is that?"

Many critics incorrectly pegged *Anvil: The Story of Anvil* as a modern-day mockumentary made in tribute to Spinal Tap. There are many uncanny similarities: Anvil plays a disastrous tour; the band members visit Stonehenge; scuzzy record execs shaft them (one of whom spews the Artie Fufkin-worthy line, "You've been around a long time, and that has currency!"); and they launch a comeback in Japan. In addition, Anvil drummer Robb Reiner's name was mistaken as homage to *This Is Spinal Tap* director Rob Reiner. Sometimes, metal is just stranger than life.

## APOCALYPSE NOW (1979)

(DIR. FRANCIS FORD COPPOLA; W/MARTIN SHEEN, MARLON BRANDO, ROBERT DUVAL)

✦ VIETNAM WAR ✦ LITERAL NAPALM DEATH

✦ ANIMAL SACRIFICE ✦ WAGNER

The images that leap immediately to mind when *Apocalypse Now* comes up are all those helicopters. Iron and steel birds of prey descend

from the sky to the Götterdämmerung strains of Richard Wagner's "Ride of the Valkyries," whereupon they scorch a seaside Vietnamese village with a rain of napalm death. Once the hostiles have been leveled, attack leader Lt. Col. Bill Kilgore (Robert Duvall) surveys the utter destruction his team has wrought and declares: "I love the smell of napalm in the morning!" Then he goes surfing. Horns all the way up.

Adapted by screenwriter John Milius (director of *Conan the Barbarian*) from the 1899 Joseph Conrad novel *Heart of Darkness*, and originally titled *The Psychedelic Soldier*, *Apocalypse Now* documents the Vietnam War journey of Captain Benjamin Willard (Martin Sheen) on an assignment to "terminate with extreme prejudice" the rogue Colonel Kurtz (Marlon Brando). Kurtz has installed himself as a demigod in the Cambodian jungle, surrounded by worshippers and leading his own army. Willard joins a beat-to-shit crew on a beat-down boat, named *Erebus* after the son of the Greek god of total darkness, and together they experience an overwhelming complement of every bizarre high and unimaginable horror that quasi-legal combat in Southeast Asia can offer.

The heaviest of war films about the heaviest of American wars, the genuinely epic *Apocalypse Now* opens on a bombastic note and only metallizes further until imploding into a crescendo of darker-than-death doom that resonates, indeed, apocalyptic. The very first scene is a masterwork of tension and release. Willard boozes in a hotel room to the slow build proto-goth of the Doors' "The End". He freaks out, spastically launches into martial arts moves, and trashes the place while Jim Morrison wails about Oedipus and mass murder and a mythic travail to hell.

That opening gambit is bookended with a reprise of "The End" that underscores *Apocalypse Now's* final bloody payoff. Willard, who suffers through agonies after arriving at Kurtz's compound, seizes a moment to complete his mission. Morrison moans and the music escalates as Willard's machete execution of Kurtz is intercut with a (very real) ritual decapitation of a water buffalo.

Kurtz's jungle lair of face-painted natives, bamboo cages, heads on pikes, and makeshift torture devices was imitated by nearly every Italian cannibal horror movie of the subsequent decade—as was the actual footage of locals slaying a live animal. Echoing in the final moments are Kurtz's dying words: "The horror...the horror..."

The film is in league with Apocalypse Now bands and albums by Discharge, Goregod, Undergang, and Total Fucking Destruction, not to mention songs by Cro-Mags, Fortress, Goregod, M.A.C.E., Mephisto, Torment, and Trance.

## AQUA TEEN HUNGER FORCE COLON MOVIE FILM FOR THEATERS

(2007)

(DIRS. MATT MAIELLARO, DAVE WILLIS; W/DANA SHYDER, CAREY MEANS, DAVE WILLIS, NEIL PEART)

✧ ANIMATION ✧ CAMEOS

Kicking off with a poster painted in the tradition of Frank Frazetta fantasy art, the big-screen adaptation of Adult Swim's late-night stoner favorite opens with a parody of 1950s drive-in movie intermission cartoons, depicting a cute parade of snacks singing pleasantly about moviegoing etiquette. The sweets are promptly overpowered by Mastodon—in the form of a wailing gumdrop, pretzel, candy box, and cheesy nachos sampler—blasting through an updated set of rules and consequences: "Do not crinkle your food wrappers loudly! Be considerate to others or I will bite your torso and give you a disease!"

*Aqua Teen Hunger Force Colon Movie Film for Theaters* proper then starts off with Frylock, Master Shake, and Meatwad caroming through time and space on their typically absurd, non sequitur-driven adventures. Whereas Glenn Danzig voiced himself on the *Aqua Teen* TV show, for the movie, we get Neil Peart of Rush, who mans his drum kit aboard a spaceship piloted by a talking

slice of watermelon named Walter Melon. The soundtrack boasts still more Mastodon, along with Andrew W.K., Early Man, Uneath, and Brass Castle.

## ARENA: HEAVY METAL

(1989)

(DIR. HELEN GALLAGHER; W/OZZY OSBOURNE, TONY IOMMI, JIMMY PAGE, AXL ROSE)

✧ CONCERT FOOTAGE

After fifteen long years on air, the BBC series *Arena* finally set its heady gaze upon contemporary hard rock. *Arena: Heavy Metal* is a kaleidoscopic hour loosely centered on England's 1989 Monsters of Rock festival at Donington. Seemingly devoid of structure, the documentary opens with footage of misery-torn Birmingham, leading into Ozzy Osbourne yukking it up with Tony Iommi at a diner, and some-odd minutes later concluding with Napalm Death onstage roaring through "Scum."

Between the Brummie highlights are plenty of metal superstars turned talking heads, and performance clips including uniformly excellent live footage of Sabbath, Deep Purple, Iron Maiden, Motörhead, Metallica, Slayer, Megadeth, and Japanese thrashers Outrage. The real juice comes from the interviews, though. Tom Araya talks Satan, illustrated here by B-roll footage from 1968's *The Devil Rides Out*. Jim Marshall takes us through a history of his namesake amplifiers. Bill Steer and Shane Embury groove on George Romero's *Day of the Dead*.

Three of the Q&As are truly extraordinary. Jimmy Page, perched on a stool with an acoustic guitar and loose as a Crowleyan goose, picks and strums through "Kashmir" and "Over the Hills and Far Away." Bruce Dickinson, ever the affable ham, demonstrates his fencing skills, then leads a tour of classic metal wardrobe items, including the aforementioned Mr. Page's glittery trousers and Gene Simmons's dragon boots. He wraps up with a tribute to Blackie Lawless's exploding chainsaw codpiece.

Finally, witness W. Axl Rose at a noxious height of rock-god assholery. Axl disses Kiss, and then lays into Iron Maiden. "Have you got anything in common with Iron Maiden?" an interviewer asks. "I hope not," Axl replies. "[Iron Maiden] doesn't have anything to do with rock and roll as far as I'm concerned. We're a rock and roll band. What they do is what they do, I don't know what it is, and I hope to never be like that. I hope it's not catching." Unfortunately for him, he never did catch Iron Maiden's magic.

*Arena: Heavy Metal's* final moments belong to ten-year-old guitar prodigy and Steve Vai protégé Thomas McRocklin, wailing for awestruck headbangers at a pub. This parting shot is intended signal that the kids are all right, except that McRocklin, after an early-'90s stint in the kid band Bad4Good, dropped off the metalsphere and has been MIA for decades.

The BBC reran *Arena: Heavy Metal* in 2009 as part of a multi-night *Heavy Metal Heaven* series hosted by Elvira, alongside heavy viewing including *Get Thrashed* (2006), *Hysteria: The Def Leppard Story* (2001), and *Metallica Live at Hammermith Odeon* (2008).

## ARISE: THE SRI LANKAN METAL MUSIC DOCUMENTARY (2010)

(DIRS. NAVEEN MARASINGHE, DINESH GUNERATNE; W/ CANNIBIS, FALLEN GRACE, MERLOCK)  
✧ WORLD METAL ✧ METAL REALITY

Few headbangers outside of Southeast Asia were hip to the Sri Lankan metal scene before this movie. Shot on the fly throughout 2008 and 2009 by young fans with borrowed video cameras, *Arise* opens up the world of heavy metal in Sri Lanka by focusing on four bands practicing distinct forms of the music. Cannibis drips stoner sludge. Fallen Grace plays melodic death metal. Funeral in Heaven rages black metal. Mer-

lock blows minds with progressive thrash.

Home recording and tape trading planted heavy metal seeds all over the globe. The musicians of *Arise* represent the flowering of that never-ending stream of rich metal bounty. Cheap cameras and the Internet have now made the documentary form the next powerful stage of metal's grassroots revolution. Stomping like their homeland's elephants, and soaring like spiritual holy men, these Sri Lankan headbangers redefine the concept of "unleashed in the East."

## ARMY OF DARKNESS (1993)

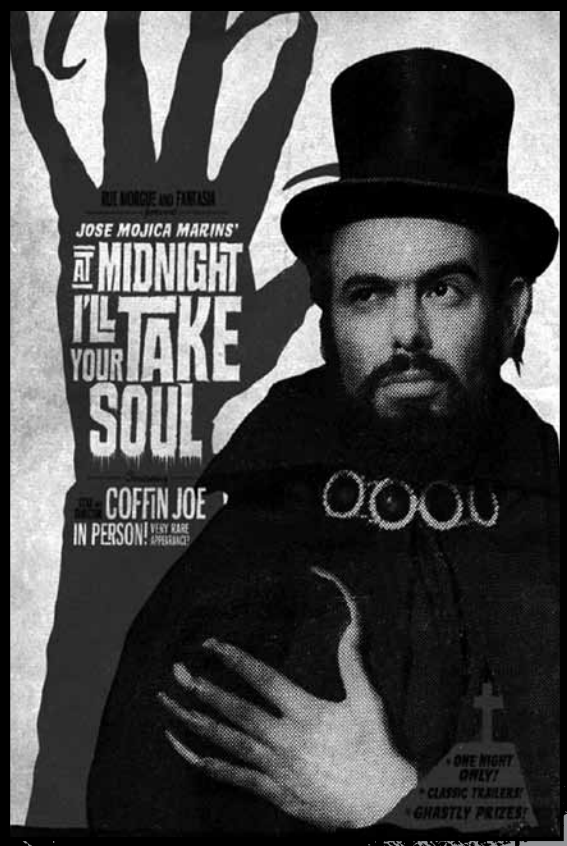
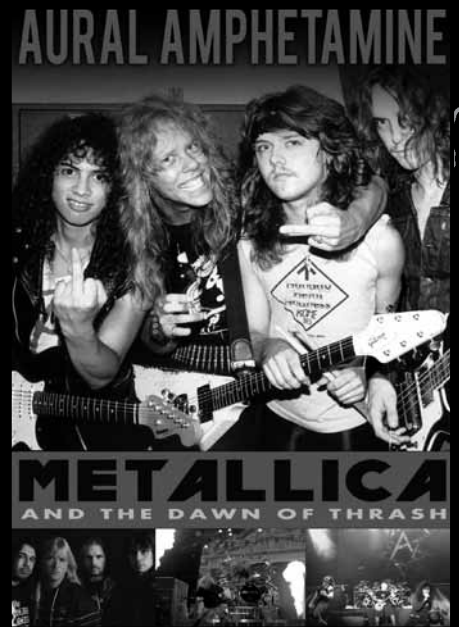
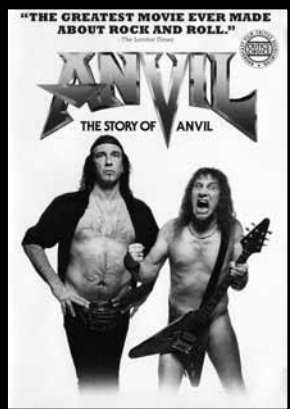
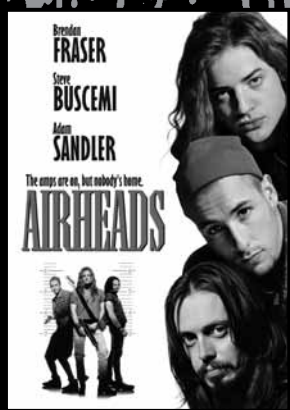
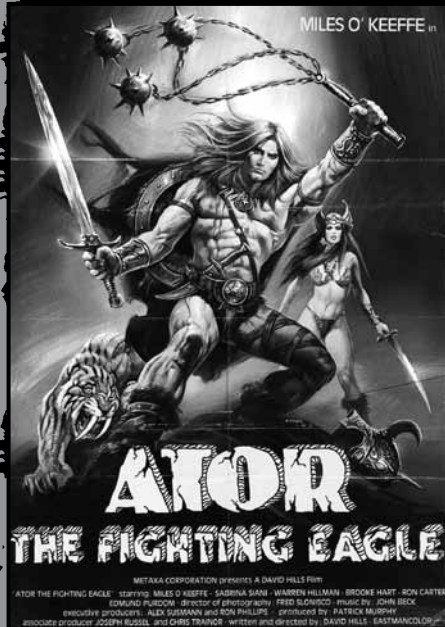
(DIR. SAM RAIMI; W/BRUCE CAMPBELL, EMBETH DAVIDTZ, MARCUS GILBERT, RICHARD GROVE)  
✧ SWORDS AND SORCERY ✧ NECRONOMICON ✧  
DEMONIC POSSESSION

Beginning exactly where *Evil Dead 2* (1987) left off, the film starts with Ash (Bruce Campbell) being time-warped back to AD 1300, where he is caught in a conflict between Lord Arthur (Marcus Gilbert) and Duke Henry (Richard Grove). Hence the movie's original title: *The Medieval Dead*. Good thing his right arm is still a chainsaw, and he brought along a shotgun—which he famously calls his "boomstick."

Ash wins over the locals by kicking a Deadite's keister, something that comes naturally after he's spent two movies doing just that. When he lands in yet another haunted forest, he contends with miniature versions of himself that form into his evil double. He soon sets out to find the Necronomicon, the book of spells that can send him back home.

The search eventually entails Ash leading royal forces against a battalion of the living dead led by his doppelgänger. Victory ensures his return to the 1990s, where he is just another S-Mart employee who can really effectively eliminate anybody possessed by demons. And when someone fitting that description wanders into the store, he does just that!

The words Ash must speak to do the time warp again are "Klaatu barada nikto," a quote from



Clockwise from top left: Ator the Fighting Eagle; Airheads; Anvil; no-budget thrash; Coffin Joe U.S. event poster; The Antichrist (1978) as it spooked Italian theaters

the alien in the 1951 sci-fi classic *The Day the Earth Stood Still*. (In 1973, a Canadian prog band named Klaatu inspired rumors that they were the Beatles recording in disguise. They were not.)

After the convulsively brutal *The Evil Dead* (1981) and the more comedic second installment, the entirely self-aware *Army of Darkness* revs right into straight-up slapstick. Countless horror-comedies have followed this model. Campbell's Ash became one of the great icons of fantasy cinema because, frankly, this was the *Evil Dead* movie kids could watch. Even more so than in *Darkman* (1990), with *Army of Darkness* director Sam Raimi announced himself as the talent to whom the previously unfilmable *Spider-Man* could be entrusted. Good for him.

## AS THE PALACES BURN

(2014)

(DIR. DON ARGOTT; W/RANDY BLYTHE, MARK MORTON, WILLIE ADLER, JOHN CAMPBELL, CHRIS ADLER)

✧ METAL REALITY ✧ JUSTICE ✧ WORLD METAL

As he stepped off an airplane in the Czech Republic on June 27, 2012, Lamb of God vocalist Randy Blythe was seized by police and arrested on charges of intentional infliction of bodily harm resulting in death. Czech authorities had been waiting to apprehend Blythe following the 2010 death of Daniel Nosek, a nineteen-year-old fan who died hours after repeatedly stage-diving during a heated Lamb of God show in Prague. Caught completely by surprise, Blythe was taken from the airport directly to a Czech prison. After five confusing weeks behind bars, Blythe was granted bail. The singer returned to the U.S. but bravely vowed to return to Prague to stand trial and face his charges as a matter of honor.

These events and Blythe's subsequent return to court became the unexpected core of director Don Argott's powerful documentary about modern Virginia metal band Lamb of God. His film-in-progress, initially a look at the band's widely varied audience, turned into an unforgettably powerful true-crime chronicle that masterfully

shapes horrible happenstance into a stranger-than-fiction narrative. This is the second time Argott has caught metal lightning in bottle, having luckily captured similarly pivotal events in cosmically troubled Pentagram frontman Bobby Liebling's life in the 2011 movie *Last Days Here*.

In fact, *As the Palaces Burn* flies nearly halfway through before the Czech intrigue arises. Blythe and the rest of the Lamb of God boys make great on-camera subjects, whether talking or fist-fighting backstage. The film compellingly tracks a newly sober Blythe approaching life sans liquid assistance. We meet two remarkable die-hard Lamb of God lovers: a guy who headbangs while driving a taxi in Colombia, and a female death metal vocalist in India. Their lives tell the power of metal, specifically as channeled through Lamb of God. They will make believers out of anybody.

The second half of *As the Palaces Burn* focuses on Blythe's trial overseas, and how the other members of Lamb of God scramble to help him back home. They display almost parental and at least brotherly concern for the teen who lost his life, and his family. Leading up to the verdict, sufficient twists and turns emerge in court that make the movie suspenseful even if you're aware of the verdict. Come the final scene, there is no way to avoid being moved, shaken, saddened, uplifted, and inspired. Lamb of God is an extraordinary collection of humans first and musicians second, and they are extraordinarily well served by Argott's best effort to date.

## THE ASPHYX (1973), AKA THE HORROR OF DEATH; SPIRIT OF THE DEAD

(DIR. PETER NEWBROOK; W/ROBERT POWELL, JANE LAPOTAIRE)

✧ SUPERNATURAL HORROR

After making the kinky, metal-plated shocker *Crucible of Terror*—about a mad sculptor who slays London nubile for his bronze statues—intensely British director Peter Newbrook

went retro and supernatural in *The Asphyx*. At the turn of the twentieth century, ghost-hunting London photographer Sir Hugo Cunningham (Robert Stephens) captures an “asphyx,” a floating phantom that yanks the spirit from the body of a dying being. If an asphyx is seized, though, whoever was about to die becomes impossible to kill. Cunningham becomes hell-bent on achieving immortality for himself and his loved ones. Nothing goes as planned. Corpses result.

*The Asphyx* is a high-class, lushly mounted, and vividly photographed production, and exudes enough heaviness that the veteran Dutch doom-drenched death metal group Asphyx were inspired to take their name from the film.

## ASSORTED ATROCITIES: THE EXODUS DOCUMENTARY (2010)

(DIR. CRAIG GEFOLA; W/ROB DUKES, GARY HOLT, LEE ALTUS, TOM HUNTING, PAUL BOSTAPH)

✦ THRASH METAL ✦ CONCERT FOOTAGE

**A**ssorted Atrocities: *The Exodus Documentary* takes an invigorating look at the Bay Area thrash legends at work and play around the twenty-fifth anniversary of the band’s 1984 masterwork, *Bonded by Blood*. Beginning in 2005 as a rejiggered Exodus lineup comes together to record the album *Shovel Headed Kill Machine*, *Assorted Atrocities* covers the next five years onward as the group tours Australia, Japan, Europe, and the ever metal-inflamed South America.

The movie also depicts making of two Exodus music videos (“Riot Act” and “Now Thy Death Day Come”), and shows the band supplying voices to the cartoon *Metalocalypse*. Life on the road never gets easy, but for veterans such as the survivors in Exodus, exporting metal to the masses worldwide is its own reward. Racking up frequent flyer miles sure beats the fuck out of working for a living. Stories about Exodus’s late, legendary front-beast Paul Baloff abound in *Assorted Atrocities*, and they never, ever disappoint.

The *Assorted Atrocities* DVD includes Exodus performing the *Bonded by Blood* album in its entirety at the 2008 Wacken Open Air festival.

## AT MIDNIGHT I’LL TAKE YOUR SOUL (1964),

AKA *A MEIA-NOITE*

*LEVAREI SUA ALMA*

(DIR. JOSÉ MOJICA MARINS; W/JOSÉ MOJICA MARINS, MAGDA MEI, VALÉRIA VASQUEZ, NIVALDO LIMA)

✦ COFFIN JOE ✦ ZOMBIES ✦ SPIDERS

**T**he character who became nothing short of “The Boogeyman of Brazil,” Zé do Caixão—“Coffin Joe”—debuted in *At Midnight I’ll Take Your Soul*. This black-clad gravedigger wears a top hat and a flowing black cape, and sports jarringly long and curvy fingernails. To see him once is to carry Coffin Joe in your unsafe soul forever. Referenced by White Zombie in the song “I, Zombie,” José Mojica Marins plays Coffin Joe, as only he can, with simmering morbid intensity. Marins also wrote and directed *At Midnight*. In the movie, our antihero’s hatred of religion is surpassed only by his obsession with finding “one perfect woman” to carry his unholy seed.

Joe’s mission involves him killing his infertile wife with a spider, bludgeoning and drowning a rival in a bathtub, using his talon-like nails to gouge a doctor’s eyes out, and raping young Terazhina (Magda Mei), who hangs herself with a pledge to return from hell to drag him down there with her. The action climaxes with ghosts, maggotty faces in a mausoleum, and Joe getting his hellfire comeuppance, just as nighttime church bells strike twelve.

*At Midnight I’ll Take Your Soul* is great gothic spookery from the early 1960s, spiked with some genuinely nasty flourishes. Marins made horror history with his film and his memorable character. Coffin Joe transformed Brazil into a fertile wellspring for the dark arts, from the nation’s vibrant fright film culture to a Sepultura-led heavy

metal explosion in the '80s. Righteously united in the 1990s, Coffin Joe in fact cut his famous fingernails at a Sepultura concert and presented them to the band as a bizarre sort of blessing. He has introduced the band often since, and appears on their *Live in São Paulo* DVD (2005).

Coffin Joe returned in numerous other films, as well as TV shows, documentaries, and comic books. Many cite the second Coffin Joe movie, *This Night I'll Possess Your Corpse* (1967), as his best. Oddly, in *The Strange World of Coffin Joe* (1968), Coffin Joe himself only appears on the poster for the movie, not in the film itself. He does appear, if only as a prolonged LSD vision, in *Awakening of the Beast* (1970).

*The Bloody Exorcism of Coffin Joe* (1974) is a meta-commentary on the CJ phenomenon, with Marins appearing as both himself and his ghastly creation. They actually get into a fistfight. I remain partial to the outrageous and surreal *Hallucinations of a Deranged Mind* (1978). It consists of lurid, nonsensical sequences of sexy horror and bright red gore that were censored or otherwise discarded from previous Coffin Joe productions. These scenes are presented as nightmares plaguing a psychiatrist who lives in terror that Coffin Joe is trying to steal his wife.

*The Embodiment of Evil* (2008) is the final installment in what Marins calls "The Coffin Joe Trilogy." It completes the story set in motion by the very first two films about CJ's quest for "one perfect woman" with whom he can procreate. Although he is impaled through the heart with a crucifix, the movie ends with every female at Coffin Joe's funeral pregnant with his children.

Outside of the movies, Coffin Joe has been a beloved TV horror host in Brazil for decades. Liz Marins, real-life daughter of Jose Mojica Marins, has followed in her father's spooky footsteps. Brazil knows her as "Liz Vamp" and she's the sexy, fang-mouthed face of "Vampires Day," when citizens are encouraged to donate blood to hospitals and blood banks. Necrophagia has feted him in song with "Zé do Caixão."

## ATOR THE FIGHTING EAGLE (1982), AKA ATOR L'INVINCIBILE

(DIR. JOE D'AMATO; W/MILES O'KEEFE, SABRINA SIANI, EDMUND PURDOM, DAKAR, RITZA BROWN)

✦ SWORDS AND SORCERY

Mega-muscled Miles O'Keefe, the titular swinger in Bo Derek's 1981 *Tarzan the Ape Man*, returns in the title role of *Ator the Fighting Eagle*. He lives in a setting familiar to swords and sorcery fans, and he is the grown-up survivor of a massacre perpetrated on his childhood village by the High Priest of the Spider Cult (Dakar). All Ator wants to do is marry his sister Sunya (Ritza Brown). The High Priest poops their nuptial plans by kidnapping Sunya and forcing Ator to battle a giant eight-legged attack arachnid. Also, there are witches.

Italian B-movie machine Joe D'Amato, arguably the fastest celluloid slinger in schlockdom, rushed out *Ator* as a quickie rip-off of *Conan the Barbarian* (1982). D'Amato is credited with making no fewer than six films in 1982, the same year he directed *Ator*. Among them is *Emperor Caligula: The Untold Story*, one of D'Amato's multiple cash-ins on the *Penthouse* magazine blockbuster *Caligula* (1979).

As has happened more than once with D'Amato movies, *Ator* achieved its own cult, independent of *Conan*, running endlessly on HBO in the mid-'80s. *Ator* is heavily metal in its milieu and will be as happy a relic of '80s adolescent nostalgia as an arcade token or a silk Judas Priest tour jacket. As a reward for completing its quest and earning back the production budget, *Ator* spawned three sequels: *The Blade Master* (1984), *Iron Warrior* (1987), and *Quest for the Mighty Sword* (1990).

# AUGUST UNDERGROUND

(2001)

(DIR. FRED VOGEL; W/FRED VOGEL, ALLEN PETERS, ANNMARIE REVERUZZI, ERIKA RISOVICH)

✦ SERIAL KILLERS ✦ SNUFF ✦ CENSORSHIP

**A**ugust Underground shoves the “video diary of a homicidal maniac” framework of such aboveground art house hits as *Henry: Portrait of a Serial Killer* (1985) and *Man Bites Dog* (1992) to a heinous new low (or high)—then pushes the threshold for sick and sadistic explicit degradation past the nauseating point into anger and, ultimately, sadness. Presented without plot or overarching commentary as a “found” VHS tape, *August Underground* consists of camcorder footage of Peter (director Fred Vogel) and an unnamed cameraman (cowriter Allen Peters) wandering from one atrocity to another.

How bad could it be? A naked girl tied to a chair, covered in blood, urine, and feces, has her nipple cut off and is forced to eat her dead boyfriend’s toe. A hitchhiker is orally raped and beaten to death. A store clerk is stabbed. Twin brother tattoo artists are murdered and dismembered. Peter sodomizes a prostitute while smashing her skull to liquid nothingness with a hammer. Between such episodes, these two creeps mellow out in high creep style by visiting a cemetery and—bringing to mind the Big Black song “Cables”—a slaughterhouse. The entire seventy minutes is exhausting and soul-sullyng. Take that as a recommendation, if you’re so inclined.

*August Underground*’s initial death blow brought mixed reactions from horror fans. Roger Watkins, director of his own tape-traded, quasi-legal cult outrage *Last House on Dead End Street* (1977), once declared *August Underground* “the *Citizen Kane* of horror movies.” Not long after that, he died.

Among the most immediate and outspoken proponents was singer Killjoy of Necrophagia, who went on to cowrite and codirect the sequel, the upsetting *August Underground’s Mordum* (2003),

in which the word *fuck* is spoken more than five hundred times in seventy-seven minutes. Killjoy’s death metal side project with members of Autopsy and Brutal Truth, the Ravenous, also recorded an homage, “August Underground.”

En route to the Rue Morgue Festival of Fear horror convention in Toronto in 2005, Fred Vogel was arrested by Canadian authorities for attempting to transport “obscene materials” over their border. Vogel spent about ten hours behind bars, and the charges were later dismissed.

His vicious vision returned via a second, even more repellent, sequel, *August Underground’s Penance* (2007). Vogel had at this point long been an instructor with supreme splatter effects artist Tom Savini in the macabre master’s Special Makeup Effects program. The visuals in *Penance* appear more hideously realistic than ever, with a burbling, fluid-secreting organ achieving a singular new level of gag-inducing grossness. Merle Allin, GG’s musician brother, cameos by playing guitar onstage at a rock club. He fits right in perfectly with everything else here.

## AURAL AMPHETAMINE: METALLICA AND THE DAWN OF THRASH (2008)

(DIR. ROB JOHNSTONE; W/METALLICA, MALCOLM DOME, LONN FRIEND)

✦ THRASH METAL ✦ NWOBHM ✦ METAL HISTORY

**T**he UK documentary *Aural Amphetamine: Metallica and the Dawn of Thrash* views metal’s early-’80s Bay Area revolution by way of Ol’ Blighty, putting an interesting spin on an otherwise very familiar story. A Cockney-accented narrator guides us through a lengthy history of the New Wave of British Heavy Metal, with just a quick detour into punk before hopping back to the States to chronicle the making of Metallica’s *Kill ’Em All*. From that point, *Aural Amphetamine* focuses on Metallica and the band’s rise through 1988’s *...And Justice for All*. Photomontages and archive videos fill the screen effectively. Metal

journalists Malcolm Dome, Lonn Friend, and Joel McIver do what they do at such times.

Although *Aural Amphetamine* contains no original Metallica interviews, the rock doc scores satisfying sit-downs with Diamond Head guitarist Brian Tatler, Megadeth's Chris Poland, D.R.I. bassist Harald Oimoen, and NWOBHM band Elixir, among others. Though better viewed in its original context in the *20th Century Box* documentary, the black-and-white footage of early London headbangers carrying paper guitars into the Bandwagon rock club is beguiling as ever.

## **AUTOPSY (1975), AKA TENSION**

**(DIR. ARMANDO CRISPINO; W/MIMSY FARMER, BARRY PRIMUS, RAY LOVELOCK, ANGELA GOODWIN)**

✦ HORROR ✦ GIALLO ✦ ITALY

**A**utopsy puts a weird spin on the Italian horror-mystery *giallo* genre by introducing *sunspots* as a lethal threat to the population of Rome. A sexy pathologist (Mimsy Farmer) and a semi-lunatic priest (Barry Primus) join forces to prove that a wave of gory suicides has actually been a wave of gory murders. Aside from shock shots of nude bodies on slabs, *Autopsy* achieves metal intensity by way of wild, hallucinatory visions that Mimsy repeatedly suffers in which the bashed, burned, and broken bodies in her morgue arise, attack, and run wild. Two of them even fuck!

*Autopsy* makes a good movie out of these very bad trips. Akin to *Snuff* generating publicity by indicating it contained real murder footage, *Autopsy's* American release benefited from whispers that its on-camera corpse dissections were the real deal. Take even a brief look: they are not.

The landmark movie is celebrated by the mighty band Autopsy and songs titled "Autopsy" by the Accused, Becoming the Archetype, Dark Autopsy, Dismember, E-X-E, Eternal Hate, Rampage, Sixgun Symphony, Trencher, and, of course, Ultra Vomit.