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# THE BEDLAM FILES

*With Adam Groves*

It's actually happening: after nearly four months of Coronavirus quarantine we're opening back up. Unfortunately, we're also seeing **a new spike in infections**. It's no surprise that a wave of anger and disillusionment has swept the land--and to think that, according to the experts, **we've got at least another year** of Corona awfulness (and that's on the optimistic side). I just hope that, with all the discontent, we'll still be around when this nightmare finally ends.

## Streaming Now



### 1. **FIRE** (POZAR)

Leave it to David Lynch, who's stayed off the public radar in recent years, to resurface during the Coronavirus lockdown with a [YouTube channel](#) featuring daily weather reports, interviews and short films. In the latter category FIRE is the obvious pick, a genuinely haunting and evocative animated puzzlement that favorably recalls the work of France's [Patrick](#)

## Adam's Picks



### 1. **GOODBYE UNCLE TOM** (ADDIO ZIO TOM)

If GONE WITH THE WIND is now considered beyond the pale, I can only imagine how this 1971 monstrosity might fare with modern-day tastemakers. The Italian made GOODBYE UNCLE TOM is quite possibly the single most offensive exploitation movie of all time, a quasi-documentary portrayal of

Bokanowski and Lynch himself in his early years; as one YouTube user put it, FIRE is “the ERASERHEAD children's storybook we've all been waiting for.”  
YOUTUBE



## 2. BLOOD MACHINES

A truly eye-popping viewing experience, this sci fi mini-feature was made by director/screenwriter/editor/production designer/visual effects supervisor Seth Ickerman and composer Carpenter Brut. The film’s neon-hued imagery is astounding, particularly in the mesmerizing H.R. Giger-esque art direction, and it boasts an electronic score that fits the imagery like the proverbial glove (and has led to the film being termed a “musical” by the imdb). SHUDDER

filmmakers going back in time to document the horrors of slavery. But exploitive or not, this film’s portrayal of an America torn apart by its own legacy of oppression rings disturbingly true. FILM



## 2. AGONY (AGONIA)

A one-of-a-kind Rasputin biopic, AGONY presents that contentious figure not as an evil genius, a sinister occultist or an unwitting patsy (as most moviemakers tend to depict him), but as, simply, a lunatic leading his country down a dangerous path. I wonder what relevance this 1975 film might have to modern-day America?  
FILM



## 3. THE LEGION OF CHARLIES By TOM VEITCH, GREG IRONS,



### 3. UNSUBSCRIBE

A zero budgeted 29 minute film that recently **made headlines for being the number one movie in America** during the week of June 10 (the filmmakers booked it into a single theater and bought out all the screenings, which was apparently enough to beat out everything else). The pic is surprisingly not-bad, being a tight and suspenseful account of a Zoom meeting, one of whose participants is a mysterious, and possibly homicidal, troll. VIMEO



### 4. BIRD TALK (MOWA PTAKOW)

The final screenplay by Poland's Andrzej Zulawski, filmed after the great man's death by his son Xawery. The film, an ensemble piece about life in modern-day Poland, is not up to the high (some would say impossibly high)

### DAVE SHERIDAN

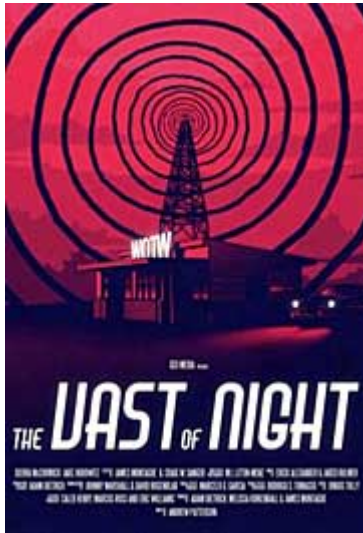
A ferocious dispatch from the underground "comix" scene of the early 1970s. Depicted are My Lai orchestrator William Calley, a.k.a. Kali, and **Charles Manson**, a.k.a. Charlie, joining up and setting off a worldwide orgy of sex and cannibalism. According to this book's scripter Tom Veitch, "We're protesting a government that dehumanizes its citizens and makes robot killers out of them" in a "non-partisan work of imagination aimed toward a public catharsis." BOOK



### 4. VALHALLA by NEWTON THORNBURG

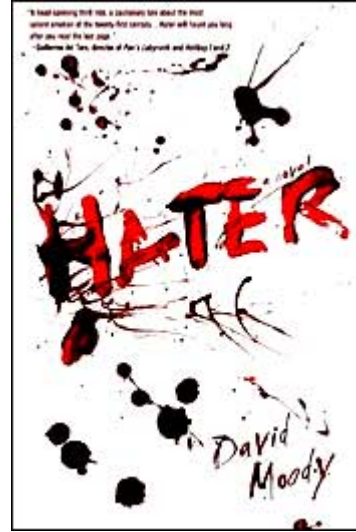
A decidedly right-of-center apocalyptic fantasy from 1980, notable for a well told and engaging narrative, and for the fact that its presentation of a future America destroyed by out-of-control government spending--now that could *never* happen, could it?--feels unsettlingly prophetic. BOOK

standards set by the elder Zulawski, but Xawery does a credible job replicating his father's notoriously excessive, hysterical filmmaking style (on display in crazed masterworks like **DIABEL** and **SZAMANAKA**). MUBI



#### 5. **THE VAST OF NIGHT**

A stylish and intriguing (if stagey and self-indulgent) late 1950s set alien invasion thriller, about a radio station picking up the voices of people claiming to be in the midst of a UFO invasion. I'll leave it to you to discover what happens next! [AMAZON](#)

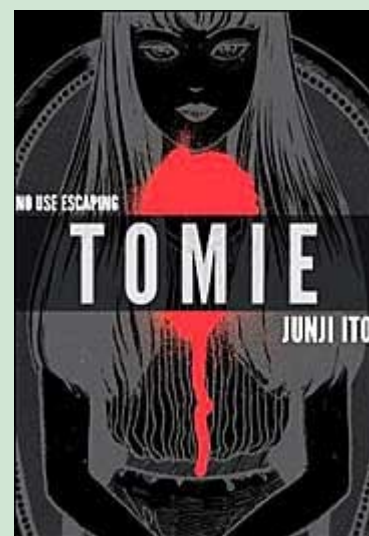


#### 5. **HATER** by **DAVID MOODY**

Ordinary folks turned into rage-driven killers? Not an especially novel premise, but this 2006 novel contains one of the best uses of it. Plus, I believe its real-life relevance has increased appreciably in recent weeks. [BOOK](#)

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The famous people deaths have been coming hard and fast this past month. The most recent was director **Joel Schumacher**, who passed on June 22 and who I've eulogized [here](#). Before that was the great British actor **Ian Holm**, who left us on June 19 after appearing in classics like ALIEN, TIME BANDITS, BRAZIL, NAKED LUNCH, eXistenZ and THE LORD OF THE RINGS, as well as lesser-known gems like OH! WHAT A LOVELY WAR, DREAMCHILD, THE SWEET HEREAFTER and JOE GOULD'S SECRET, all of which were enhanced appreciably by his presence.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "Alan Metter".



Earlier in the month, on June 7, we lost director **Alan Metter**. Greatness isn't something I've ever associated with Metter, but his BACK TO SCHOOL (1986) was a cable TV mainstay for myself and, I believe, just about anyone who came of age in the 1980s. I'm also familiar with other, less beloved Metter efforts like GIRLS JUST WANT TO HAVE FUN (1995), COLD DOG SOUP (1990) and POLICE ACADEMY: MISSION TO MOSCOW (1994). Not exactly a prestigious cinematic legacy, but a legacy nonetheless.

I'm done reading. To the website!

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