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THE BEDLAM FILES

With Adam Groves

“An actor I worked with did lots of films for money. When the press asked what he thought of an exploitation film he worked on, he said he hadn’t seen it, but he saw the house that it bought and it was beautiful. Good answer.”

— [Steve Guttenberg](#)

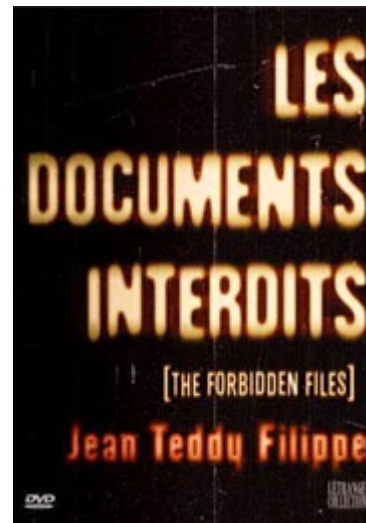
Streaming Now



1. TITANIC SINKS IN REAL TIME

This extremely meticulous CGI depiction of the sinking of the *RMS Titanic* (based on the findings of the book *ON A SEA OF GLASS*) can lay claim to being the definitive filmic treatment of this subject. Lasting 2 hours and 43 minutes (the exact time-span of the sinking), and taking place largely in an eerie silence, this is almost certainly a better use of your time than the only slightly longer James Cameron movie. [YOUTUBE](#)

Adam's Picks



1. LES DOCUMENTS INTERDITS

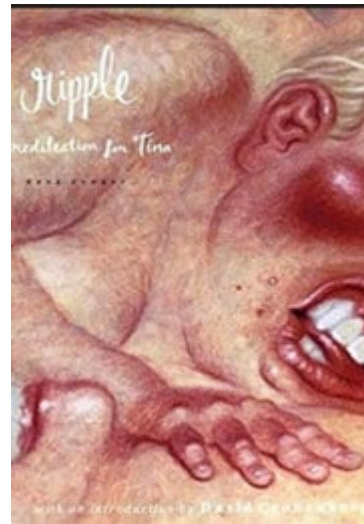
The true progenitor of the Found Footage trope mined by **THE BLAIR WITCH PROJECT** and **PARANORMAL ACTIVITY**, a 13 episode French TV series consisting of mock-documentary depictions of odd and inexplicable phenomena. The program’s success is indicated by the fact that many initial viewers believed these “Documents” were real, and that many a tribute video has turned up on YouTube and elsewhere. Those tributes, alas, have none of the eeriness and ingenuity of

the Jean Teddy Philippe directed original episodes. TV SHOW



2. CENSOR

The 1980s “**video nasties**” craze, in which several horror-themed videos were subjected to censorship in the UK, is aped in this slick but imperfect film. About a dedicated woman censor in the nasties era whose reality is upended quite severely by a film she’s charged with examining, CENSOR is marred by an issue that afflicts quite few movies about making movies: the fact that the clips shown of the films-within-the-film are amateurish and plain lousy, and not worthy to be placed alongside actual video nasties like **THE TEXAS CHAINSAW MASSACRE** and **CANNIBAL HOLOCAUST**. Otherwise, though, CENSOR isn’t bad. AMAZON



2. RIPPLE by DAVE COOPER

The freakiness factor of this graphic novel is affirmed by the introduction, written by none other than David Cronenberg. *Cronenbergian* is an apt description for RIPPLE’S concentration on perverse sexuality and abnormal biology, contained in the relationship between a nerdy painter and a slovenly young woman, and rendered in very R. Crumb-esque pen and ink artwork. BOOK



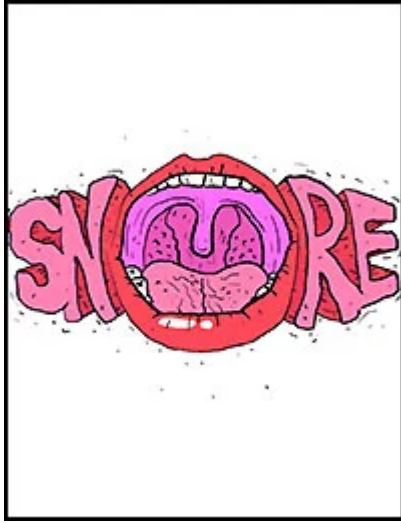
3. MAJOR GROM: PLAGUE DOCTOR

Further proof that foreign nations, in this case Russia, are capable of turning out cinema that’s every bit as crass and shallow as anything produced by



3. KNOCK KNOCK KNOCK KNOCK

A chance to see the abovementioned Luther Bhogal-Jones working at full capacity, in a British made, Italian language oddity that captures the spirit of **Dario Argento** (albeit with more than a hint of the anything-goes insanity of Nobuhiko Obayashi’s



this novel won't ever displace WAR AND PEACE, but it is well paced and mayhem packed, with no-nonsense prose that pulls the reader along. You could certainly do worse.

BOOK

5. **SNORE**

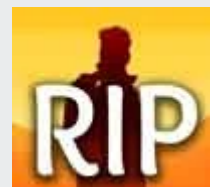
The latest short film from the UK's Luther Bhogal-Jones, a cheerfully twisted puppet movie in the mold of MEET THE FEEBLES. The story, about a ruthless businesswoman and a hapless male underling battling pig creatures, is total nonsense, but the film, as we've come to expect from Bhogal-Jones, is technically impressive, with puppetry that's quite skilled given the low budget. Plus it only lasts ten minutes, so it won't put you out too much. YOUTUBE

Also NEW on the Site!

- **Bottomfeeder**
- **The Amazing Transplant**
- **You're the Director... You figure it out.**
- **Laserblast**
- *And Much More!*



RIP Director Richard Donner





Richard Donner

Regarding the recently deceased director **Richard Donner**, it's a near-certainty that if you (like me) are of the Gen-X demographic you grew up watching his movies. The journeyman Donner wasn't anyone's idea of an *auteur*, but he did have an unusually skilled affinity for commercial moviemaking (note that I'm consciously using the term "movie" rather than "film"), and kick-started two immensely popular Hollyweird tropes: the comic book epic (with *SUPERMAN: THE MOVIE*) and the buddy cop thriller (with *LETHAL WEAPON*). He also made *THE OMEN*, *THE TOY*, *LADYHAWK*, *THE GOONIES*, *SCROOGED* and *MAVERICK*, movies whose quality varies rather dramatically, but which most everybody knows about (for that matter, Donner also directed several memorable episodic TV episodes in his early years, for programs like *THE TWILIGHT ZONE* and *GILLIGAN'S ISLAND*).

I'm not sure I buy all the claims being made about the thematic brilliance and complex characterizations that supposedly marked out Donner's oeuvre, but he was, again, an undoubted master of audience-friendly cinema. There will never be another Donner.

RIP Director Robert Downey



Robert Downey

Another important director who left us in July of '21 was **Robert Downey**. In many respects the polar opposite of Richard Donner, Downey was one of the key underground filmmakers to emerge from the late 1960s. His filmography includes one authentic classic—PUTNEY SWOPE (1969), a freewheeling media satire with much to say about the state of television then *and* now—and several less-than-classic films (yes, I've switched to using the term "film")—BABO 73, CHAFED ELBOWS, POUND and GREASER'S PALACE—that are, at least, interesting, and quite evocative of their era.

Downey was a master at making the viewer wonder if s/he was misunderstanding films that contained very little that was truly comprehensible. Of his attempts at commercial moviemaking (which include UP THE ACADEMY, TOO MUCH SUN and HUGO POOL) the less said the better, with Robert Downey Jr. having done more to popularize the name than the senior Downey ever did.

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The Bedlam Files

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