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THE BEDLAM FILES

With Adam Groves

“If we’re ever called upon, we Americans can and will rise to the occasion and be stupider than absolutely anybody.”

— Charles Band

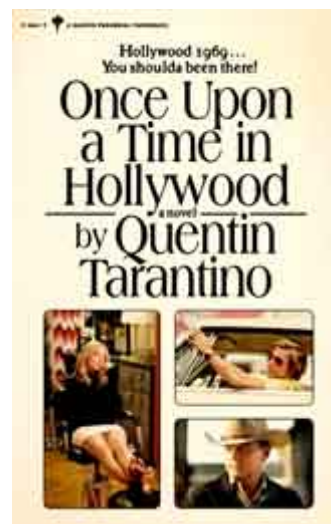
Streaming Now



1. **SILENCED**

A rough watch, but a powerful one. This was one of several pre-2020 films made by South Korea’s Hwang Dong-hyuk to be acquired by Netflix in the wake of the monster success of Hwang’s SQUID GAME. The fact-based SILENCED depicts the sexual abuse of several hearing impaired children by the headmasters of an elite boarding school, and the ensuing criminal trial (*spoiler alert*: justice was *not* served). The presentation of the abuse is plenty graphic, and nearly places the film in **IN A GLASS CAGE** territory. Offsetting that is Hwang’s penchant

Adam's Picks



1. **ONCE UPON A TIME IN HOLLYWOOD** by **QUENTIN TARANTINO**

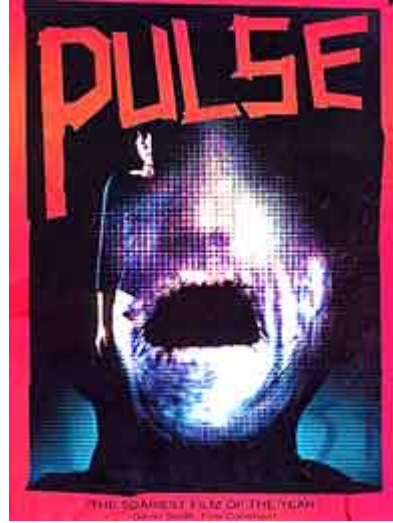
Currently making its hardcover debut, this is Quentin Tarantino’s premiere work of fiction, about which I’ll give the remainder of this entry over to the rantings of an internet colleague. He claims it “reads like fan fiction written by a 14 year old...This may be one of the most terribly written pieces of fiction ever released by a major publisher—seriously, it’s E.L. James level awful,” but “That said? It’s a hell of a lot of fun.”
BOOK

for *shinpa* (melodramatic sentimentality), which, as in *SQUID GAME*, is a tad overwrought. NETFLIX



2. THE MAKING OF ROCKY VS. DRAGO

A more accurate title would be *THE EDITING OF ROCKY VS. DRAGO*, as that's what this 93 minute iPhone lensed doco shows. Specifically, director John Hertzfeld shows Sylvester Stallone preparing *ROCKY VS. DRAGO*, the director's cut of the now 36 year old *ROCKY IV* (in which, as you may recall, Rocky goes up against a Russian super-boxer and single-handedly ends the Cold War). The setting is a Sunset Boulevard editing suite where Stallone provides a consistently fascinating lesson in the mechanics of filmmaking, although I don't agree with all the "improvements" he makes (dammit, I *liked* the now-excised robot!). YOUTUBE



2. PULSE

This now 20 year old chiller was one of the key films of the early-00's **J-horror** boom, and remains one of the most striking works of the brilliant Kiyoshi Kurosawa. Remade (poorly) in 2006, it's about a suicide plague caused, it seems, by malevolent ghosts unleashed via cyberspace. Rigorously controlled, concise and teasingly ambiguous, it's a standout example of art-horror with a concept of the internet as a harbinger of the apocalypse—that may have seemed far-fetched back in '01 but is all-too-prescient now.

FILM

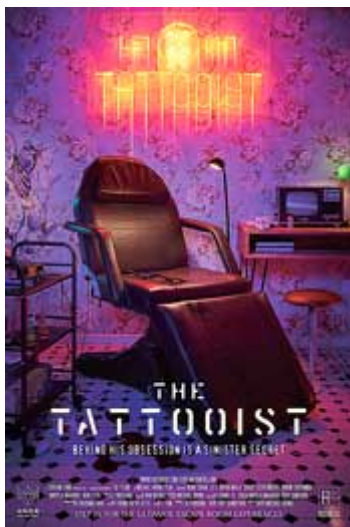


3. I BURY THE LIVING

From the prolific B-movie auteur Richard Band, a 1958 drive-in programmer about a guy (Richard Boone) who thinks he can make people die by sticking black pins into opportune spots on a cemetery wall map. A sterling example of old school

3. **MOTHERLY**

Maternal madness from Canada's Craig David Wallace, of **TODD AND THE BOOK OF PURE EVIL** fame (and **THE LAYPERSON'S GUIDE TO MODERN LIVING** non-fame). Made for about what **THE ETERNALS** spent on a single week's catering, **MOTHERLY** has a distraught woman (Lora Burke), her young daughter (Tessa Kozma), a pair of disgruntled acquaintances and some dark secrets, all contained in a secluded farmhouse. Absorbing and suspenseful, with a (literally) killer twist. **AMAZON**



4. **THE TATTOOIST**

A primo example of Micro Short cinema, meaning a film that functions as both a standalone short and a trailer for same. Created by the Malaysian born, Beijing based Michael Wong, **THE TATTOOIST** runs a VERY kinetic one minute and twenty seconds. Depicted is a young woman (Lu Li) getting an elaborate tattoo on her back, unaware that the tattooist (Wang Yanhu) is a lunatic who abducts and imprisons his customers for purposes that, it's inferred, are profoundly deranged. The film is professionally visualized and detail-oriented, suggesting a horrific saga that stretches far beyond what we're shown. **VIMEO**

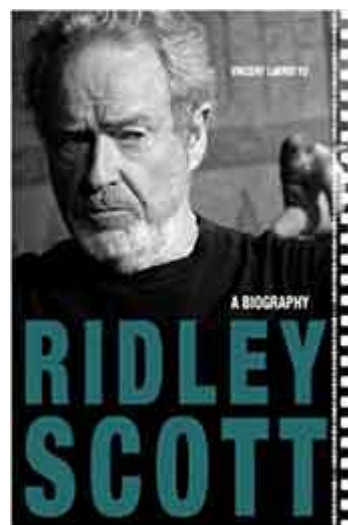
horror at its most unique, but an "overlooked classic" it's not. Also, that title is quite misleading, as nobody is buried, living or otherwise.

FILM



4. **CRASH!**

Not to be confused with the similarly titled **David Cronenberg** and Paul Haggis flicks, this 1977 exploiter was the second feature directed by Richard Band's son Charles. He appears to have been attempting something along the lines of **THE CAR** meets **THE EXORCIST**, with a creepy medallion, a self-driving car and demonic possession mixed into an odd and (unintentionally) dreamlike swirl. **FILM**



5. **RIDLEY SCOTT** by **VINCENT LoBRUTTO**

The first and only biography of Sir Ridley Scott, who's had two films (**THE LAST DUEL** and **HOUSE OF GUCCI**)



5. **BROADCAST SIGNAL INTRUSION**

A 1990s set thriller that starts off like BLOW-UP, with a videographer (Harry Shum, Jr.) becoming obsessed by a series of pirate videos that cut in on TV broadcast signals. His investigation takes the material in a very RING-ish direction, with various creepy folk turning up and Shum's own behavior growing increasingly erratic. Director Jacob Gentry (SYNCHRONICITY) favors bombastic music cues and a very unadorned, straightforward style, which makes it all the more puzzling that he ends the film on such an ambiguous and inconclusive note. Not bad, but it could have been lots better. AMAZON

released in late '21. This 2019 book never delves too deeply into Scott's attitudes or proclivities, and it's also a few years out of date, but taken purely as a surface-level chronicle it's not without worth.

BOOK

Look for
a new
website
feature
coming
in
December.
Ho Ho Ho.

Also NEW on the Site!

- **Mulholland Drive**
- **One December Night**
- **TV Flashback: Todd and the Book of Pure Evil**
- **Faces of Fear (Book)**
- **Titane**
- **Scream and Scream Again (Book)**
- **Midori the Camellia Girl**
- **And Much More!**



Insider Info

Thanksgiving horror cinema: such a category does exist, although it's a small one. Thanksgiving is a holiday that would appear to offer filmmakers an excellent opportunity for reality-based scares, given that it's built on a rather glaring, and horrific, contradiction (the white settlers certainly gave the Native Americans plenty, but very little in the way of thanks). That, however, may be precisely why the subject has been so widely avoided; as a prominent horror novelist/filmmaker once said of the Holocaust, a story on that subject "would be in bad taste." Thanksgiving appears to inspire similar sentiments.



In most "Thanksgiving" horror movies topics like overconsumption (as displayed in *LA GRANDE BOUFFE* and *FEED*) and all things turkey-related (**BLOOD FREAK**) are utilized in narratives that have no direct connection with the holiday. There are also horror films set on Turkey Day simply to get a bunch of people together in one place so they can get scared and/or picked off (see *ALIEN ABDUCTION: INCIDENT IN LAKE COUNTY*).

In recent years, though, horror moviemakers have increasingly utilized the holiday as a direct subject (Halloween, Christmas, Valentine's Day and even—in **GREMLINS 2**—Lincoln's birthday having already been exhausted). Unfortunately the films that have resulted, which include **BLOOD RAGE** (1987) and *DEATH ON DEMAND* (2008), haven't done much to elevate the genre.

The greatest-ever Thanksgiving horror movie is an unlikely choice: Eli Roth's mock trailer **THANKSGIVING** from **GRINDHOUSE** (2007). About a homicidal nut loose on Turkey Day, *THANKSGIVING*, patterned after the classic **HALLOWEEN** trailer, is easily one of the highlights of *GRINDHOUSE*, and very likely the finest thing Roth has ever done, with a 1970s exploitation movie flavor that's flawlessly carried off. (Certainly the tagline, "*White meat, dark meat, all will be carved!*" is a classic of the form.)

Of the fake trailers contained in *GRINDHOUSE*, one of them, Robert Rodriguez's *MACHETE*, was **made into a 2010 feature**,

and it's been said that the others, which include Rob Zombie's WEREWOLF WOMEN OF THE S.S. and Edgar Wright's DON'T, contained enough footage for feature-length films. In the case of THANKSGIVING, that's a feature I'd very much like to see.

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The Bedlam Files

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