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# THE BEDLAM FILES

## HAPPY ALL HALLOWS

“Insanity is relative. It depends on who has who locked in what cage.”

—Ray Bradbury

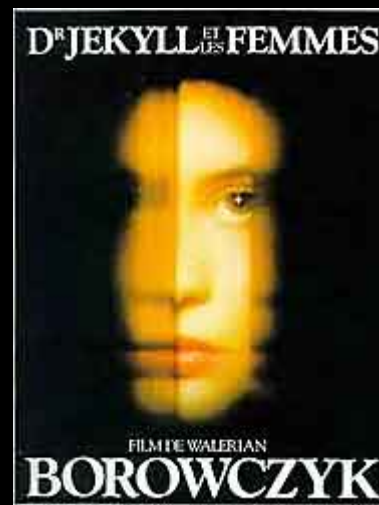
### Streaming Now



#### 1. HELLRAISER

The recent deification of this [Clive Barker](#) freak-out as an LGBTQ classic is a bit off-base. HELLRAISER’s major flaw, in fact, is that its protagonists are painfully bland, with the Hell-spawned antagonists being the true heroes. This is an issue that also plagues Barker’s written work: he insists on foregrounding his stories with thoroughly ordinary (*i.e.* non-LGBTQ) characters, even though his clear preference is for the monstrous and grotesque. That being said, there are definite reasons why this 1987

### Adam's Picks

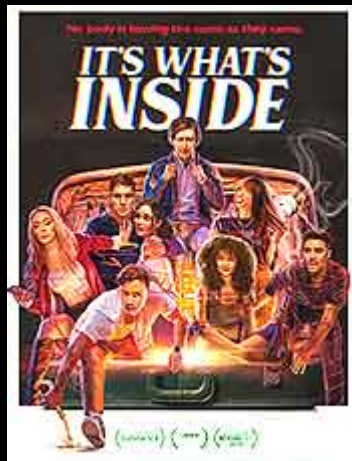


#### 1. DR. JEKYLL AND HIS WOMEN

The late Walerian Borowczyk’s highly idiosyncratic take on DR. JEKYLL AND MR. HYDE is an eerie and poetic work that may well be Borowczyk’s masterpiece. Those expecting a “well made” film will likely be disappointed as, in the manner of most Borowczyk films, the editing is choppy and the narrative a hard-to-follow jumble. Borowczyk’s focus was on lush, fetishistic visuals, given a burnished sheen by cinematographer Noel Very and enhanced by Bernard Parmegiani’s ominous synthesizer

film has endured for as long as it has, namely the inventiveness of the conception and the stylishness with which Barker visualized it.

SHUDDER



## 2. IT'S WHAT'S INSIDE

A heavily stylized twentysomething dramedy with a sci fi twist, not unlike ST. ELMO'S FIRE meets BEING JOHN MALKOVICH. The setting is a house where seven friends are having a party; they're soon joined by an eighth, a nerd with a machine that allows for body switching. This results in a game in which the participants swap bodies and then try and guess who's who, marred by the fact that the viewer never really gets to know these people or their dilemmas. This means that more than one viewing is essential to fully enjoy the outrageous antics that take up much of the remainder the film, but the mere fact that IT'S WHAT'S INSIDE holds up to multiple viewings places it ahead of 95 percent of 2014's other releases.

NETFLIX

music. All combine to form a profoundly dreamlike atmosphere that's totally unique, and totally disturbing in its depiction of the seduction of evil.

FILM



## 2. ALRAUNE

Probably the masterpiece of Germany's late, great Hanns Heinz Ewers. In ALRAUNE Ewers' autobiographical stand-in Frank Braun, a law student, initiates a heap of trouble when one day he blithely suggests that his scientist uncle artificially create a woman. Braun's uncle complies, and Alraune comes into being; from the start, however, she's a problem, as it seems she has psychic powers, and very little in the way of a soul. Ewers was a master of decadent grotesquerie, and this 1911 text is packed with moments of show-stopping outrageousness and a veritable catalog of perversion: sadomasochism, pedophilia, nymphomania and incest.

BOOK



### 3. UZUMAKI

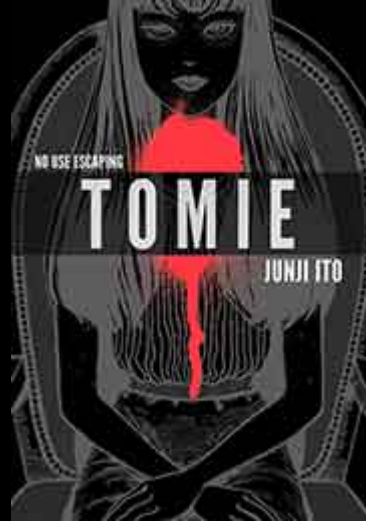
Yes, I'm well aware of the issues surrounding this anime adaptation of Junji Ito's iconic manga about a town under siege by malevolent spirals. The Hiroshi Nagahama directed first episode, at least, superbly replicates the look and feel of Ito's loopy masterwork (and does so far better than the 2000 feature film adaptation), having been rendered in nightmarish black and white and retaining Ito's visual quirks (swirly backgrounds, etc.). Alas, the remaining three episodes, from which director Nagahama and much of his creative staff departed, suffer a distinct drop-off in quality.

ADULT SWIM



### 4. DON'T MOVE

Complaints about the plausibility issues riddling this Sam Raimi produced thriller have been legion, and they're not off-base. However, if one is willing to accept the whopper



### 3. TOMIE

The debut manga by horror legend Junji Ito, who provides an unflattering glimpse into the uglier corners of Japan's national psyche. Related in twenty standalone chapters, it focuses on Tomie, a young woman with unique biological properties who invariably drives the men around her to madness. That these tales are misogynistic goes without saying; TOMIE is by no means the most virulent example of the paralyzing fear of all things female that suffuses Japanese culture, but it is an especially telling one.

BOOK



### 4. CANDYMAN

More fun from Clive B., whose BOOKS OF BLOOD story "The Forbidden" provided the source material for this 1992 film. It was a sizeable hit, and solidified its headliner Tony Todd as a genre icon. Also featured are eighties movie mainstay Virginia Madsen,



of a premise—about a scumbag (Finn Wittrock) injecting a grief-stricken young woman (Kelsey Asbille) with a serum that results in total paralysis yet doesn't stop her from surviving river rapids, a burning house and a sinking boat (and without ever smudging her make-up)—then enjoying this impeccably crafted film should be no problem.

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### 5. DETOX

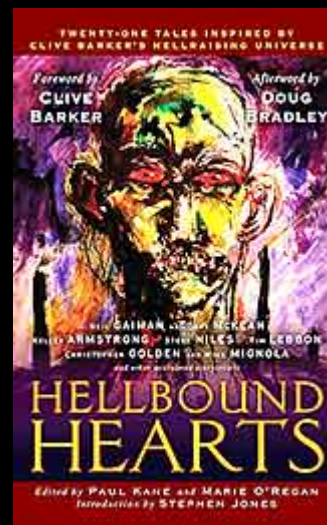
A young woman (Caitlin Morris) heads to a secluded farmhouse to undergo a digital detox in this slickly made short from director/editor Alex Hanno. Of course, not all goes as planned, as our heroine finds herself caught up in an alien invasion, in which solitude and a lack of technology are major hinderances. A pretty slight little film, but at just eight minutes DETOX outdoes most similarly themed features (including last year's NO ONE WILL SAVE YOU) in inspiration and engagement.

YOUTUBE



future EVE'S BAYOU director Kasi Lemmons and composer Philip Glass, who provided one of the decade's most memorable horror movie scores. Todd plays the title character, a hook-wielding spirit haunting a Chicago housing project, and Madsen a graduate student who stumbles into Candyman's orbit. The narrative is perilously thin, but writer-director Bernard Rose works overtime on the nuances of his screenplay, and the verite Chicago locations add a powerful note of gritty authenticity.

FILM



### 5. HELLBOUND HEARTS

I'll confess I wasn't hugely impressed with this HELLRAISER inspired 2009 anthology, despite an impressive roster of contributors. The majority of the stories have an identical trajectory: a person acts like a jerk, dies and goes to Hell, with one or more cenobites turning up on the last page. Aside from the fact that it's never a good idea to wait until the end of a story to introduce a major character, the problem here is that's the point where HELLRAISER *began*. There are, however, some worthwhile entries by writers like Mark Morris and Barbie Wilde, so HELLBOUND HEARTS isn't a complete misfire by any means.

BOOK

## Also NEW on the Site!

- **THE JOKER: FOLIE A DEUX** (Film)
- **NIGHTBREED** (Film)
- **BLOOD FOR DRACULA** (Film)
- **FLESH FOR FRANKENSTEIN** (Film)
- **SALUTING THE BLOOD OF HEROES: BEHIND THE APOCALYPTIC FILM** (Nonfiction)
- **HANSEL & GRETEL BY TIM BURTON** (Film)
- *And Much More!*



## INSIDER NOTES

Amid the [scandals currently embroiling Hollywood](#), here's a story that should have shaken the industry to its core: the takedown of Tenet Media. A conservative outfit co-chaired by YouTuber Lauren Chen, Tenet was hit with [an indictment last month by the DOJ](#), who alleged the company was funded by a Russian media organization aiming to "create and distribute content to US audiences with hidden Russian government messaging." This resulted in Tenet being disbanded and Chen having her videos pulled by YouTube (and threatened with jail time).



I don't know much about Tenet Media or the conservative vlogosphere, but I do know a bit about filmmaking, a discipline summed up by the late Jean-Luc Godard as "the art of raising money." The Tenet Media story, in other words, has disturbing implications for an industry in which questionable funding sources aren't at all uncommon.

It's a widely known fact that the porno films of the 1970s were financed in large part by organized crime, while a sizeable percentage of the mainstream films released during the following

decade are alleged to have been backed by drug money (SHOGUN ASSASSIN producer David Weisman likes to claim that 1980 film was funded entirely by pot dealers). More recently there was [the case of Red Granite Pictures](#), a Los Angeles based production company that in the 2010s financed several high-profile films, among them THE WOLF OF WALL STREET and DUMB AND DUMBER TO, with stolen money.

Red Granite's honchos, like Tenet Media's founders, claimed they knew nothing about the source of the money they were using. If true, that ignorance was likely deliberate, as it seems the more anonymous the backers, the better; in the words of the late megaproducer Jerry Weintraub, "it's a comfort to think of the money people, those who lose if you fail, as a far-off 'them.'"

That "far-off them," from what I understand, often includes deep-pocketed foreign strangers whose particulars tend to be shadowy. This may be satisfactory to cash strapped content makers, but, as Tenet Media learned, there may well be a reason for that secrecy. Moral: follow the money!

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