

THE BEDLAM FILES SWAG STORE opens in less than 2 weeks!

# THE BEDLAM FILES

*With Adam Groves*

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“If you want to help people you tell them the truth. If you want to help yourself you tell people what they want to hear.”

— Professor Thomas Sowell

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## Streaming Now



### 1. THE SUGARLAND EXPRESS

One of the most auspicious feature directorial debuts of the 1970s was THE SUGARLAND EXPRESS. The Director: one Steven Spielberg, who proved himself an extremely astute chronicler of blue-collar America, which was depicted with a great deal of naturalistic texture (something Spielberg's more recent films don't bother with), humor and excitement. He also coaxes excellent performances from Goldie Hawn as a young Texan who helps her Hubbie (William Atherton) escape from prison and Ben Johnson as a sympathetic

## Adam's Picks



### 1. INTERVIEW WITH THE VAMPIRE

With Tom Cruise currently dominating the media, here's a look back at one of his more notable roles. His casting as the vampire Lestat in this 1994 adaptation of [Anne Rice's classic novel](#) was widely criticized, but Cruise credibly embodies the character's haughty aristocratic air. Faring considerably less well is Brad Pitt as a Louisiana plantation owner vampirized by Lestat, a most unfortunate fact given that Pitt has the most screen time. But director Neil Jordan knew what he was doing, turning out a uniformly good looking, lushly

trooper who leads the police pursuit. The bleak ending is a shocker, although quite evocative of the era in which the film was made.

NETFLIX



## 2. LADY PARTS

Another effective dispatch from the short film outfit Alter. LADY PARTS stylishly explores the awkwardness of adolescence, which here (as in reality) involves shame, insecurity and a great deal of slimy substances. Writer/director Ariel McCleese claims that 25 gallons of lube were used in the film, which involves dark dreams, murder and one of the goopiest sex scenes ever.

YOUTUBE



## 3. THE CLOCK

A 1999 USC student film that explicitly references/spoofs the most famous such film in existence: George Lucas's ELECTRONIC LABYRINTH THX-1138 4EB (it's not for

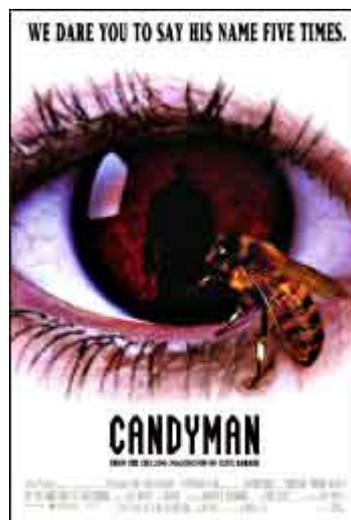
mounted film I much prefer to the novel.

FILM



## 2. THE INTERFACE SERIES

A horror-science fiction “novel” related entirely in the form of 2016 Reddit posts by an individual who identifies himself as “\_9MOTHER9HORSE9EYES9.” The insanely wide-ranging, multi-pronged narrative encompasses quantum physics and time travel, and has a tendency to flash back and forth from prehistory to a futuristic America, with a cast of characters that includes Countess Erzsebet Bathory, Philip K. Dick, the Manson Family and the author himself, who frequently breaks the fourth wall to comment on, and eventually insert himself into, the ongoing narrative. Pretty weird. BOOK



## 3. CANDYMAN

No, it wasn't the “first” film to feature Tony Todd, but CANDYMAN (1992) can

nothing that Lucas's ex-wife Marcia is prominently thanked in THE CLOCK's end credits). As in the former film, THE CLOCK occurs in a dystopian hellscape, in this case a nursing home where a man (Logan Ramsey) is looking to escape, or at least quiet a ringing clock, conveyed via burnished cinematography and a well delineated atmosphere of stultifying oppression.

YOUTUBE



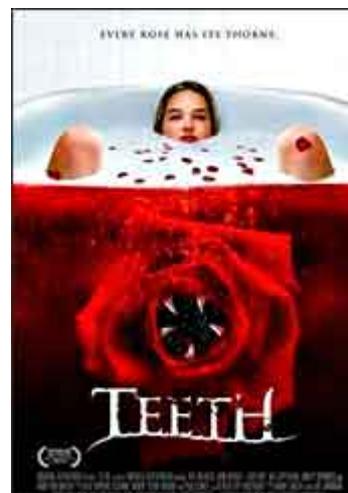
#### 4. BLACK BAG

Director Steven Soderbergh and screenwriter David Koepp are to be commended for mining the sophisticated grown-up thriller model of old (as displayed in classics like THE THOMAS CROWN AFFAIR, PRIZZI'S HONOR and THE RUSSIA HOUSE), even though BLACK BAG has its problems. Foremost among them is the fact that the protagonists are all antisocial assholes with whom I had trouble emphasizing. That's a shame, as Koepp's story, involving a secret service agent (Michael Fassbender) whose wife (Cate Blanchett) is accused of leaking classified software, is a grabber, and Soderbergh's filmmaking quite sleek.

PEACOCK

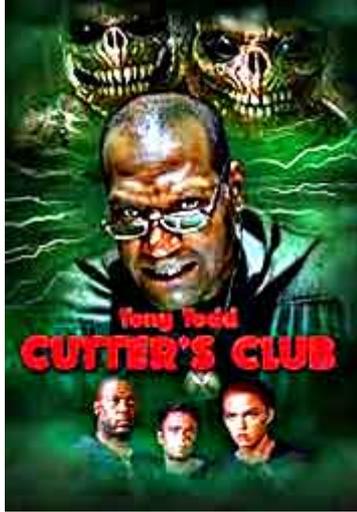
be said to contain his breakout role. Adapted from a story by Clive Barker, it's about a hook-wielding slave (Todd) whose spirit haunts a Chicago housing project and can be summoned (BEETLEJUICE-like) by saying his name thrice. So assured is director Bernard Rose's helming that one is nearly persuaded to overlook the fact that his narrative is perilously thin, while the lyrical and hypnotic score by Philip Glass ranks among his finest-ever work and Tony T. creates a deeply menacing, non-wisecracking horror icon far removed from the outdated Jason/Freddie model.

FILM



#### 4. TEETH

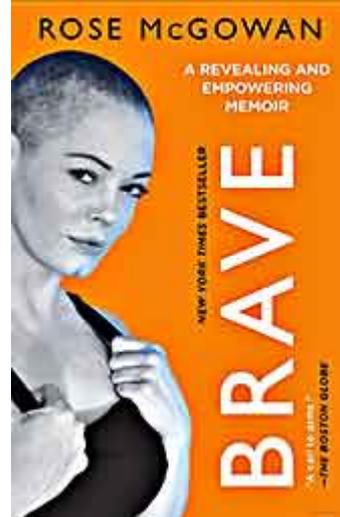
Female insecurity was given a memorable airing in this 2007 indie, which wittily dramatizes the myth of the *Vagina dentata*. Dawn (Jess Wexler) is an absurdly prim and proper teenager bearing, apparently because of toxic smoke belched out by a nuclear power plant near her house, a vagina lined with sharp teeth. Claims of TEETH being a feminine empowerment story take this black humored goof of a film far more seriously than is warranted. It works primarily due to the lead performance by Jess Wexler, who renders her character's journey from clueless victim to steely predator in touchingly immediate fashion, and with an impressive retinue of facial contortions. FILM



## 5. CUTTER'S CLUB

Allegedly the final film to feature Tony Todd (1954-2024), a **Charles Band** production that was lensed back in the aughts but for some reason took until 2025 to be pieced together and released. It's not much, being a cheap and trashy depiction of a renegade doctor played by Todd; calling this guy mad would be far too mild a designation, as he's a histrionic loon who leads a band of renegade surgeons in the creation of a two-headed critter that, as you might guess, has severe behavioral issues. The film only runs a little over an hour and suffers from an obnoxiously open-ended fade-out (a great deal clearly went unfiled), but an overacting Tony Todd is quite something to behold.

TUBI



## 5. BRAVE

Here's someone we don't hear from much these days: actress Rose McGowan, who was instrumental in popularizing the #metoo movement but has since fallen out of favor. This 2018 memoir details her upbringing in the Italy-based Children of God cult and subsequent career in Hollywood, where she claims to have endured all manner of abuse that culminated in a rape by a "Pig Monster" (a.k.a. **Harvey Weinstein**). There's a lot to admire about Rose McGowan, she being one of the only people to call out vacuous Hollywoodians patting themselves on the back for "courageously" wearing black to the Golden Globes, but after reading this book my main thought is one that has been voiced by quite a few other readers on and off the net: *she needs help.*

BOOK

Less than two weeks away!



## Free Shipping Oh My MUG-O-MONSTERS

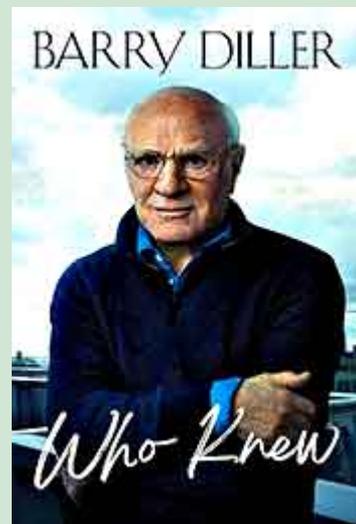
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## Also New

- **SELF DRIVER** (Film)
- **PARASITE** (Film)
- **THE RAY BRADBURY CHRONICLES** (Nonfiction)
- **WONKA: THE SCANDAL THAT ROCKED BRITAIN** (Film)
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## Insider Info

It's the event that launched a thousand memes: **the Million Lives Book Festival**, celebrating the **romantasy literary genre**, that was held at the Baltimore Convention Center on May 2 and 3. A great deal was promised, but guests and authors were met with inhospitable decoration-free meeting rooms and extremely sparse crowds; as one of the participants stated, "There were more authors at their booths than there were attendees, and I'm not exaggerating."



Were this an isolated incident it might seem passable, but it wasn't. Examples of poorly planned post-millennial events abound, including the **2008 Lapland New Forest attraction** and **2017 Fyre Festival** that concluded with their respective organizers indicted for fraud, and the infamous 2024 **Willy's Chocolate Experience**, which apparently "Rocked Britain."

The online commentary about these events has thus far been quite predictable, placing the blame on Gen-Z laziness and AI adverts promising what poorly funded humans couldn't deliver. Those may well be valid points, but I have a different take: I believe it may be wrong to lump the Million Lives Book Festival in with the Fyre and Willy's Chocolate events, and that,

furthermore, the actions of the Million Lives' organizers might not have been entirely misguided.

Consider: the Million Lives Book Festival's chief architect Bily McFarland, a.k.a. Grace Willows, is a romantasy author herself. She clearly knows the ins and outs of a literary genre that has failed to attain the cultural relevance or sales figures of its closest antecedents: the gothic romance novels of the 1970s and Harlequin published bodice-rippers of the 80s (which at their height are alleged to have sold around six books a second).

Romantasy's shortcomings were amply evidenced by the scant turnout at the Million Lives event, which by all accounts woefully failed to approach the "500-600 tickets" that were purportedly sold. I believe that, in short, with the Million Lives Book Festival the romantasy genre got the event it deserves.



Check out Adam's  
recommendations in the  
***NEWSLETTER ARCHIVE.***

**I'm done reading. To the website!**

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