

SLUMS OF



THE DRINK TANK



Episode 1 Cannibalism

Tom and Slate debut with an incredible episode that completely delivers the concept, and especially the repartee, but the sound isn't great. If the 'cast had been done like this one technically, it still would have caught on, because the two of them have amazing chemistry, and that allows for the kind of interactions that draw in listeners. This is a little echo-y, I guess, but it doesn't much distract from the guy bouncing ideas back and forth, with Slate on the lead of the topic!

They do a great job of introducing their concept, with the classic pitch being "the kind of podcast we wanted to listen to didn't exist." They pitch themselves not as experts, but as two friends who love gross movies, but more importantly, they pitch themselves as giving a topic that they research and then school the other one. In a way, we, the audience, is basically standing there with the other one they're schooling.

They briefly touch on a few early cannibal films, notably *The Enchanted Kiss* and *Sweeney Todd*. *The Enchanted Kiss* is lost, but [Sweeney Todd](#) is around. There's a bit of talk about Elizabeth Taylor in *Suddenly Last Summer*, but there it's all about Herschel Gordon Lewis and *Blood Feast*. It's a good look, and it brings us to the first in-depth dive into a film.

There's also a long section of very annoying music playing under the talking. That works in some podcasts, *You Must Remember This* is the best example I know of, but the mix is off. The way they look at *Blood Feast* is the perfect example of the way they talk about films, with a combination of wisdom, intelligence, and whimsy. They follow this up with a talk of *The Texas chainsaw Massacre*, and the annoying music comes back, but it's great to listen to them talk about it. It's obvious that the two of them LOVE the film, but

also see the deeper meaning and the path of the film and it's tendrils.

They then follow the story of Cannibal Holocaust. It's one of the most frequently spoken of films in the podcast, and the way they talk about the film is that it's not at all jokingly, but also not dead-on serious. It's an interesting method for talking about a film they see as both significant and terrible. If you've never seen it, you probably don't need to unless you're really interested in the history of exploitation cinema, or even on the history of Found Footage Horror. It's a great dive into the film, and more importantly, it actually makes it unnecessary to watch the film if you want to claim that you have looked into those earlier mentioned subgenres! The description of the animal cruelty in the film is really important in reminding me why I do not want to watch the film itself.

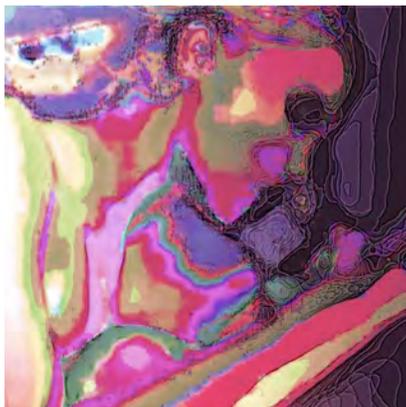
They look at the relationship between Reality TV and Exploitation cinema, and then the follow-on films. The look at Make Them Die Slowly and the others is pretty dang brief, before going into the 1980s, starting with Eating Raoul, which is one of the better films of the kind. There's a look at Microwave Massacre, which is TERRIBLE and was a regular feature on the shelves of the VHS Horror section at Rangoon Video. Other films, like Touch of Death and then the 1991 trio of cannibal films – Delicatessen, Silence of the Lambs, where they go in depth over the score swelling, and Fried Green Tomatoes, which is a lovely film and really unusual.

They look a little into Ed Gein, which is important to the stories of much of the cannibalism stories, but he also probably wasn't a cannibal. There's a bit about Jeffrey Dahmer as well, but not much. One of the things they do so well is mixing the external, the real world stuff, with the weird film history stuff.

When they look at the Survival Horror stuff, notably talking about Alive, and various other cannibal survival films from post-1990s, it feels like they're talking about the defused nature of genre film these days where what once would have been Exploitation films making their way into the mainstream.

Slate then goes and discusses his experience of Green Inferno in a post-script he recorded solo. It's a nice touch, but more importantly, he makes it feel like he's discussing films with a personal aspect that recognizes the difficult nature of having terrible films, or films with incredibly difficult themes, being not only enjoyable, but vital.

That is what Slums of Film History does the best.



originally called Slaughter, gets a lot of play, and for good reason. It's basically the film that solidified the word "Snuff" into the lexicon. I've only seen the VHS box, I never rented it.

Tom talks about Faces of Death, which I have seen parts of, and more importantly, about the Driver's Ed films that were coming out of Ohio. These films, including the brilliantly named Mechanized Death, are some of the most widely-seen snuff-type films ever made, along with Blood on the Highway and Red Asphalt. These 100% belong in the snuff genre.

The 1990s saw a lot of flicks with snuff films as an important aspect, though I do feel that Tom gave short shrift to the better-than-it-needed-to-be 8mm. Nick Cage isn't at his best, but it's actually a pretty decent little thriller that plays with audience expectations in a smart way. I love that about it. It is not Peeping Tom good, but the fact that it followed not too distantly behind Seven hurt it for sure.

The discussion of The Blair Witch Project is short and sweet, but it really does sort of fill out an important aspect of the discussion: that the big problem with snuff films is the lack of cohesion. They are intended to be simply a view of real life, a documentary after a fashion, and so it is films that use snuff films as a concept within a storyline that are more impressive.

People have made actual snuff films Luka Magnotto, the pair of Fotopoulos and Hunt, and Maury Travis all killed people and recorded the results. There are other serial killers who are thought to have taped their murders, but there is almost certainly no underground market, and it's even harder to believe there was one before the internet.

I love this episode, and I think they'd really begun to hit their stride with this one.

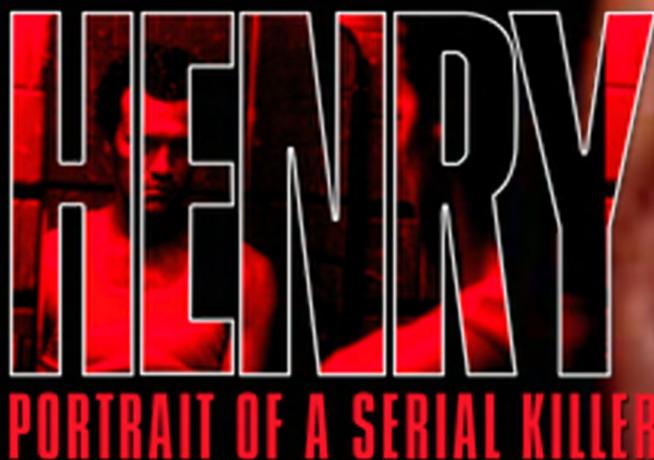


This one might be my favorite episode of Slums of Film History. It's not quite like the rest of the series as it's more about an industry idea than an actual subgenre or topic. Slate hits everything with a complete hammer of understanding, and they come up with an episode that is actually deeper than most discussions of the idea of film ratings because it comes from the side of the gross film lover, which is usually not the ones doing the talking.

Slate covers the film rating process a bit, and especially the MPAA and looks at the reason the NC-17 rating was conceived. I had no idea that it was Roger Ebert who had one of the strongest voices calling for the creation of an 'adult' rating that wasn't just for porn. The films that had gotten an X when they submitted, including *Midnight Cowboy*, were lumped in with films that had chosen an X, mostly porn or low-budget films that didn't go through the ratings process. It was rare that the big chain theatres would carry an X rated film, though for a time you could usually find unrated films at art houses. The idea of X as the place where adult films of all varieties go was nuts. If you have a rating system, and one of the ratings is able to be self-applied, that's a big deal, and fairly dumb. The entire concept of the X rating, if it was to mean anything, should have been to give Porn a place to live, and NC-17 should have been a logical, welcome space for serious adult fare.



Episode 3 The Rise and Fall of NC-17



HENRY

PORTRAIT OF A SERIAL KILLER

They cover the most famous films that had to do with the creation of NC-17, including *Henry: Portrait of a Serial Killer* and *The Cook, The Thief, His Wife, and Her Lover*. They don't spend as much time talking about the films as they do about the atmosphere surrounding them, which is exactly what this topic needed. They do go a bit in depth on *Henry*, but mostly they talk reactions and reviews of the films, which gives you all the insight you need to see why NC-17 was a needed thing.

Oh, and then they talk *Showgirls*.

Now, you're laughing because *Showgirls* is considered one of the worst films of all-time. I don't quite agree, there's actually a lot to like about *Showgirls*. No, it's not great, but if you're watching as a study in excess and glaringly boundary-pushing satire, it becomes a far more watchable film. Anyone who thinks that Es-terhaus or Voerhoven didn't know exactly what they were doing with the film miss the point that these are two famous control freaks, that they chose the exact wrong cast (with the exception of Gine Gershon, who has a certain swagger to her performance. It's not that Elizabeth Berkeley can't act, it's that the material just wasn't right for her. It wasn't that Kyle McLaughlin can't act; he was just given material that he took as straight, or worse was told to take it as straight, when it was obviously meant to be played with something between a nod and a wink. I've actually read the script, I love the script, but its tone is far more satire than serious. I always got the feeling that this was either the writer seeing it one way and the director seeing it another, or actors simply going in their own directions and the editor not having the coverage to make the script work on screen.

You don't really hear as much about NC-17 these days, though films are still being assigned it. They do cover some of the most well-known films to get the rating recently, including *Shame*, featuring Bond Villain-in-waiting Michael Fassbender, but really it's not the force that it once was. In fact, movie ratings systems aren't what they once were, and that's in large part to the way that new media and streaming have affected the movie industry. The portion where Slate lets us know that there's no formula, that the filmmakers can't ask for direct cuts to get a rating, they can only ask for guidance, lets us know everything we need to know about the MPAA and their lame system. It's not censorship; it just kinda functions like censorship. They even dust off the old chestnut about *Team America: World Police* that they'd take the suggestions and just add in something worse to get the original stuff through.

This is where they shine, not being too academic, nor too broad. They look at it seriously, but they're not overly serious themselves. When Slate mentions the concept of OLDTAGG (Oral Sex, Language, Drugs, Teens, Abnormal Sex, Genitals, and Gays) is a solid idea.



People who know me well will be aware that my Father was, at times, homeless, or on public assistance. The last 15 years of his life were tough like that, but he made the most of it. I am a bit tender on the subject of homelessness, especially as it's a part of the world that gets a lot of crap dropped on them.

Tom starts with *The Tramp*, which makes a lot of sense, and it's an oddly positive role. There had been homeless characters, but they were almost always either positive characters, or the kind of characters that were just there to make you feel bad. *The Tramp* was developed to be a fine example of a character who is on hard times, but retained his heart of gold. Interestingly, *The Tramp* was used as the spokesman for the IBM PC, which is strange as the character was homeless. *The Tramp* is only a part of the Chaplin thing, but he was the most identifiable character in the world, with the possible exception of Mickey Mouse, throughout the Depression.

The discussion of *The Depression* is utterly important to the story, especially in getting across the idea that the films of the 1930s were largely escapist films, with gangster and westerns being big genres. Tom talks about the various films showing homelessness, including *Man in the Castle*, which is a film that is not great, but fun, and *My Man Godfrey*, which is an awesome film!

Looking at the concept of homelessness during the Depression was a good point, because

it gets across the idea that homeless characters were always working towards a happy ending, but they jump forward to the 1980s and the way that homeless characters in films like *Trading Places* and *Down and Out in Beverly Hills* are treated as gurus, or magical humans who are there to teach non-homeless characters important messages. That is one of the ideas that you realize is not at all possible, and in a way makes the reality of interacting with the homeless so different. We're told they're magical creatures, and does that happen, are there homeless people who are super-smart and talented? Yes, of course. Any segment of society will have those types of people, but the representation of homeless characters almost exclusively as such is unrealistic, and potentially harmful.

There's some good talk about C.H.U.D. (aka Cannibalistic Humanoid Underground Dwellers) and how it played with the ideas of the homeless and toxic waste as the things that middle class America feared. There's also a couple of horror films that are focused on the homeless, none of which I had heard of.

There were a lot of other films discussed, with the one that I had been waiting for – *Street Trash*. This is 100% Homelessploitation, a horror film, terribly made, and with a theme that was really troubling. It's a story of people drinking an alcohol that melts them. It's set in a junkyard, all the characters are homeless, and it's set between Williamsburgh and Greenpoint, both prior to their gentrification. It's got every sort of exploitation concept, features a disturbing rape scene, and there's a lot of difficult material in it. It could have been a decent drama, but it's also played for laughs in a way. That's never a good idea.

They do have a few things they don't talk about. There was a wave of films in the 1910s and 20s that dealt with homelessness, including *From the Submerged*, which also dealt with the idea of slumming parties, which is batshit crazy if you ask me. There were a lot of films prior to the Depression that dealt with the idea of the homeless, and not just Chaplin either. In fact, I'd say the homeless were far more visible in films of the teens than after Chaplin.

They also don't really talk about documentaries, which is a significant flaw, I think. While films like *The Pursuit of Happiness* dramatize the real difficulties of people, it is through documentary that many get a taste of what life is like for those who are not in regular housing. The recent documentary short *Hotel 22* is an excellent example, or the upcoming Moondog documentary *The Viking of 6th Avenue*. There are a LOT of documentaries that give the sense of what is actually happening, and while I understand why they focused on the narrative films that deal with it.

Not my favorite episode, but one that shows how the show was growing in both scope and technique.

This was the first of two nudity examinations that really played off of each other. Slate gives us the best look at male nudity I've ever heard. There's been a lot of folks who talk about how there is the differing views of male and female nudity. They start with a look at Muybridge's photo series, and mention a few early silent nudes, including a brief mention of Hexen. One thing they miss, though understandably, are the nickelodeon nude films, which I believe had both male and female versions.

Of course, they go into Tarzan. There is a theory, one that I'm not 100% behind, that Johnny Weismueller was cast as Tarzan specifically for the purpose of being used as a sexual fantasy figure. I can see that, but he was basically a big name by the time he played Tarzan for the first time, largely from his Olympic fame and touring.

They also WAY overuse the audio of the famous Tarzan call. It was cute as an example of the most famous early sound film running sound, but it was overdone.

They follow that with Slate bringing up the path of film history's trail of studio tears. It's a look at the Hays Code and the dismantling of the studio system later, but ultimately about how all this led to the famous ruling that nudity, in and of itself, was not obscene.

Slate then goes into the idea of the Nudist films of the 1930s through the 50s. They were an interesting, and really lame, form of film that were basically meant to give cheap thrills of a glance of the naked body on the big screen. They were far closer related to the educational films out at the time, as they were simply narrated scenarios of naked people doing naked stuff. The Nudity Cuties of the 1960s came out



browngirlslovefanny

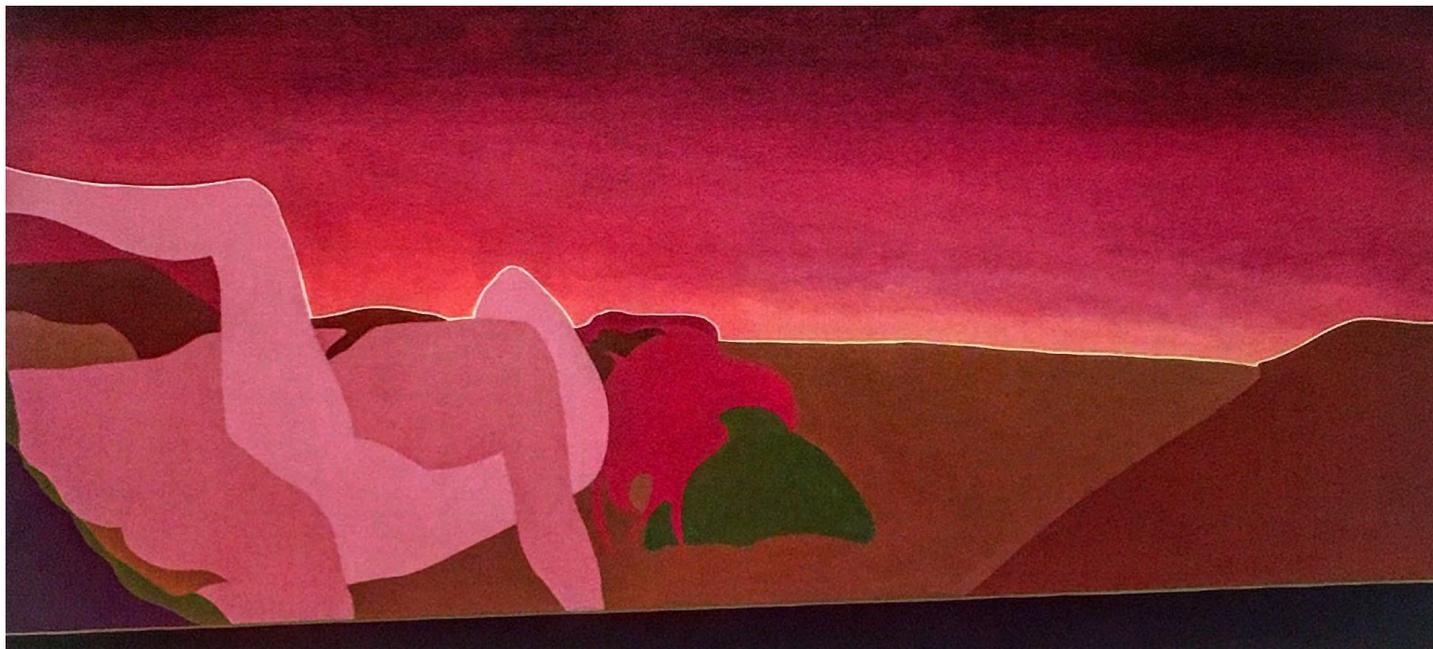
Episode 5 Male Nudity

of these as well, which were some of Russ Meyer's early films. Sadly, they didn't note that Francis Ford Coppola directed two Nudie Cuties! The Raw Ones is the nudist film most deeply discussed, but not in the kind of detail that makes it unnecessary to view the film. The fact is it's a footnote in the story, though it was the first that we know of that really exposed dong to the movie public.

Far better covered is I am Curious: Yellow. The Swedish film was an important step in the development of foreign cinema featuring differing attitudes towards nudity and sex becoming a mainstream matter. They talk a bit about the legal issues, and the reason that I Am Curious: Yellow become such a hit.

The explosion of nudity in the 1970s and 80s really happened because a generation of filmmakers raised on foreign cinema began to gain prominence. They run through a massive list of brief penis flashers in mainstream films, really only missing one really significant comedic appearance in Walk Hard: The Dewey Cox Story. They do point out how it has changed, that in the 1970s and 80s, and into the 1990s, male nudity was used as a differentiator for dramatic films whereas it's become a comedic staple in the last twenty years. It's an interesting take, and one which I will admit to not noticing as it was happening. You still get a lot of films that use nudity as a signifier of an internal struggle, such as Shame with Michael Fassbender, but really, they're rarer these days.

Again, there's a lot here that's potentially valid in the area of documentary, and possibly in the area of ephemeral films such as educational or ethnographic films, but really, this is a strong episode, and the first time that I can think of that the two of them play off each other in a way that makes the entire episode feel more like a partnership than a lesson. These two are great together, and that's a big reason I love it so much!





Episode 6

Female

Nudity

The follow-up has Tom being amazing! It's an examination of women getting naked in movies, which is far more prominent in cinema than male nudity. They talk about Muybridge, but miss the fact that these photos were designed not only for science, but also art. They also bring up that Stag Films hit the screen within a year of the Lumiere brothers. I did not know that the first stage film, *Bedtime for the Bride*, is incomplete, with the nudity portion being missing! That does make a bit of sense as it was likely excised as a part of a censorship for foreign distribution. They also mention the early porn films, which shows that the basic structure of story-porn films has remained roughly the same. Interesting note: they showed these in brothels and bath houses, which I was unaware of!

There was a short film in 1915 called *Inspiration*, which is part Cinderella story, and part Muse film, but it's gone now. A HUGE number of porn/adult films are lost now, partly because they were taken and suppressed, often being destroyed after they were taken.

They do a brief discussion of Stag Films, that they will return to later in the series.

Clara Bow was in a film called *Hula*, which is often pointed to as the first appearance of nudity on screen, from the naked swimming scene.

They also discuss *Is Your Daughter Safe?* Which is one of the earliest anti-sex educational films. These, like *National Geographic*, were as often used for titillation as education.

This is followed by a further discussion of the Hays Code. The power of the Hays Code is undeniable, and within the realm of nudity it was a major step towards the slowing of the use of nudity as story element. There was a beautiful naked shot in *Tarzan and His Mate* that was cut because of the Code, but the reaction of the industry against the

Code at various times was part of what led to a maturation of cinema at times, especially in the 1960s. Foreign Films started to gain hold after WWII. IT was the reaction against the Hays Code, and the ruling that The Garden of Eden was not obscene, and that nudity without sexual context is not obscene at all. They kinda went over the same ground in the prior episode, but it's also more interestingly delved into here, as the two of them seem to banter better when Tom is in the driver seat.

Here they finally delve into the Nudity Cutie in a bit of depth, though we have to wait for a more thorough look, and there's a LOT of discussion of Russ Meyer. It's without doubt that Russ Meyer was the king of Sexploitation, but he was also important to the general path of nudity becoming a part of the cinema scene. It was an interesting thing that it was more out of Meyer's work that we see the influence on art house filmmakers, along with foreign films, but you only have to look at the fact that Francis Ford Coppola worked within the Nudie Cutie subgenre to see that he was a significant driver in that area.

They look at Blow Up by Michaelangelo Antonioni. This is probably the film that first hit the mainstream scene that featured female pubic hair. It was a majorly important film when it comes to influence, but not a massive hit in the US theatres.

The look at Caligula and the Porno Chic movement is incredibly smart. They get the idea of porn as playing a role in cinema, and they deal with that later. They seem to present the material in a way that isn't pushing ideas of morality, or even anti-morality, but in a way that is making it sound like a failure of artistic vision. Too often, it is attacked from the point of view of Bob Guccione as opposed to on its merits as a film. Tom takes a look at what it meant to be an actress in Hollywood in the 1950s, and what it took in the 1950s and 60s. They played a part of the audio from an educational film that is all about how they chew young women out and spit them out. This was new to me and I loved the view of what Hollywood was viewed as for young women. The idea of the casting couch was not new even then. The 1970s saw that major actresses were willing to show some skin, including Julie Christy and Jane Fonda. One of the ideas that out there is the difference between Jayne Mansfield and Marilyn Monroe may be the willingness to get naked on film.

The look at Basic Instinct is a good one, as it took the way that Sharon Stone is viewed all flows through that film. They look at Elizabeth Berkeley and how she is the opposite of Sharon Stone, that the nudity in Showgirls killed her career, while the nudity from Sharon Stone in Basic Instinct basically turned her into a giant star.

One thing I love is when Slate then goes and tells a story from his life. Those are a major part of the enjoyment for me. It's impressive that he makes them work within the flow of the show without feeling like a crowbar. The little story about how his sister took him to see a Madonna film was really excellent! The discussion of SAG's nudity clause is a really good was to bring the episode towards a close. The fact that the largest actors' guild now has a reason to make a standard boilerplate clause really shows how deeply its ingrained into the fabric of cinema.

If you've heard of Doris Wishman, you're a deeper film fan than even I am. This episode is the first of Slate's episodes looking at an individual director and their films. Doris Wishman isn't a household name, unlike John Waters or Russ Meyers. She's also one of the filmmakers who helped to define the Nudie Cutie and the "Roughie" as a distinct subgenre. Her films are sexually charged, and some of them are among the worst films of the 1960s and 70s. This is a big episode full of stuff that was new to me, which is a good thing, as it leads me to new and exciting films.

Terrible, but exciting.

She started in the 1960s, and made films that played off of female nudity and sex, but they mention a few things that I had never thought of. The Supreme Court ruling that allowed for nudity on film, that nudity was not, in and of itself, obscene, but that meant that films made to feature nudity needed to be something like educational. When she made *Nude on the Moon*, it led to an interesting ruling. Like the rest of the nudist films, it was set in a nudist colony, only this nudist colony was on the moon, and since there are no actual nudist colonies on the Moon, that meant they had no redeeming social importance. That meant they could be banned. An interesting twist.

It turns out that I had seen a single film she made without knowing that she was involved, directing it. *Blaze Starr Goes Nudist* was the first Nudist film I'd ever seen, and it wasn't great, but it was so impressive because, well, I was 18 and it was the incredibly sexy Blaze Starr. The film was terrible, but Blaze Starr is easy on the eyes, and more importantly, Wishman's cameraperson had a pretty dang good eye for how to shoot her as well.

They way Slate deals with his topics is really smart. He's a smart reviewer, but more impor-



Episode 7

Doris Wishman

tantly, he looks at the various ways that his topics interact with the wider world of film without losing focus on the topic itself. When he talks about Wishman, he doesn't lose sight of the fact that a lot of her films are problematic in today's environment. The entire Roughie concept, films centering around women being treated violently by men, often leading to them actually liking the treatment by the end of the film. Even then, this message wasn't seen as a positive thing, but many directors, such as Russ Meyers, made these films. They were, in a way, quite different from the Nudie Cuties and Nudist films, and the path of audience expectations is traced right to the more violent films.

The single film they talk about the most is *Bad Girls Go to Hell*. Something Weird Home Video released it back in the day and it was something of an underground hit. It's not a well-written film, but the direction is clean, and the cinematography not too annoying. They don't pretend it's not problematic as hell, which is a good thing.

The look at the latter portion of her career, when she worked with Chesty Morgan and Annie Sprinkles, among others, is probably a bit too short, There's a lot to talk about with Wishman, most importantly I think is the fact that she, like Ed Wood before her, was driven to directing porn. She denied it, but it was obvious. Filmmakers on the Sexploitation scene often had to find new work after the Porno Chic trend basically put them out of work and the San Fernando Valley explosion led to a MASSIVE uptick in the number of porn films being made.

This is my second favorite of Slate's Director series, and I imagine it will play well for just about any listener!





Episode 8

Hooker Vengeance

This is the slimmest episode so far, with a concept that seems like it would not be able to sustain the length of an episode. While the edges do go a little fuzzy, the episode holds together pretty well. This is also the start of Tom's revenge series, that like Slate's Director series, runs through the entirety of the Podcast, with the final episode of the final season being the final Revenge episode.

They start by looking at the classic *Inside the White Slave Trade*, and *The Red Kimono*. These are both classics, and *The Red Kimono* has had a significant cultural footprint, I think. I loved the film when I finally bought it. I would not at all be shocked to see it named to the National Film Registry, and there's even a possibility of it being one of the most important films in a legal system sense, as the case where the subject on whose life the film is based sued producer Dorothy Davenport, and has been named in several court rulings.

The idea of a Hooker who is fighting to avenge being put into the life isn't completely outside reality. There are stories of sex slaves seeking revenge on their captors over the years, and even the story that *Inside the White Slave Trade* was based on a true story, but perhaps one of the reasons that there aren't that many films in the sub-genre is that these stories first ran afoul of the Hays Code which prohibited much discussion around sexual matters, and second, that as a society, we've been programmed to see sex workers as immoral, and thus its harder to make them sympathetic characters.

The two best portions of the episode are both discussions of movies. The first film is a true classic of incredibly bad film. Thriller, a *Cruel Picture*, though better known as *They Call Her One Eye*. It's a terrible film. I remember watching it after *Kill Bill* came out and just being blown away by the

weakness of it all. Sweden isn't known for its exploitation films, and this one wasn't good at all. The way they talk about it, covering the revenge aspect and how it influenced the universe of films that came afterwards. Kill Bill is the most obvious, but several films that come along later certainly seem to have the mark of One Eye on them!

The other one is Malibu High. It's probably the worst film I've ever seen. It's a story about the lengths that a young woman will go to for good grades, and how the loosening of those morals will, inevitably, lead to a career as a prostitute and assassin. It's a messy messy film, with a lot of ineptitude just flung all over the place. There's a classic part, which the guys highlight, where a character just says "She's a piece of shit" over and over and over again. It's an incredibly terrible script, and one that should be studied. Amazingly, I was told about the film by a friend who HATES exploitation films but loves assassin films.

The brief mention of Taxi Driver, where Jodie Foster was at her best, actually made a good case for a secondary sub-sub-genre: the Hooker Avenger, who is out to take vengeance FOR Hookers, but there's another episode, perhaps.

Angel is probably the film that first came to mind when I saw the title of the episode. I remember watching a sequel, Avenging Angel far better. . The entire series were favorites when I was in high school, but since it has fallen out of favor with even Grindhouse film fans. The story is great, and Tom's take on the first film is solid, which is rough when you consider how bad the later films were.

What I love about Tom's Revenge series is that he looks at it with an eye towards both the filmic and real world concepts behind the movies. Here, he is so smart in looking at a rather limited set of films, but uses an eye towards the This is the slimmest episode so far, with a concept that seems like it would not be able to sustain the length of an episode. While the edges do go a little fuzzy, the episode holds together pretty well. This is also the start of Tom's revenge series, that like Slate's Director series, runs through the entirety of the Podcast, with the final episode of the final season being the final Revenge episode.

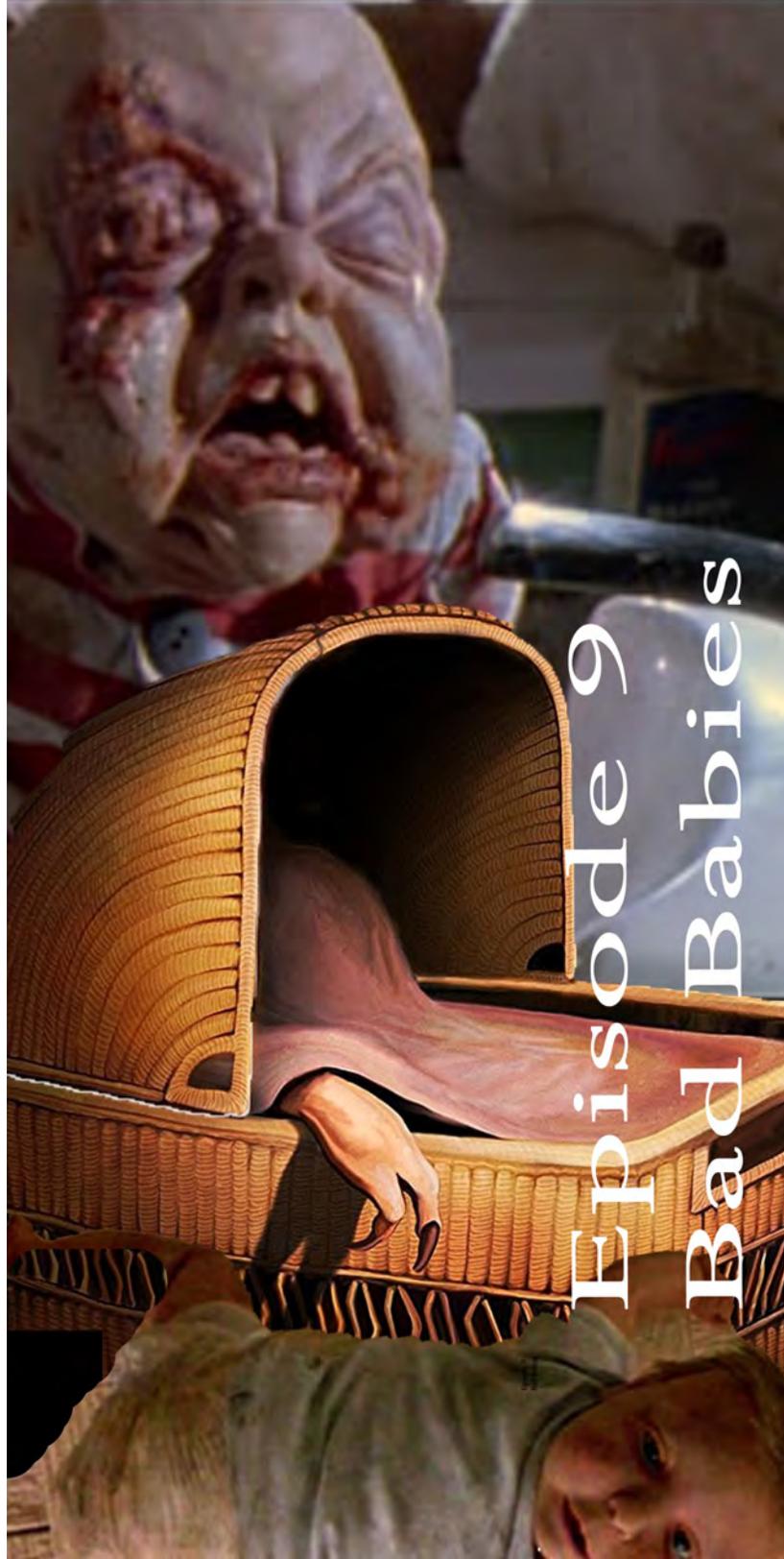


When this episode was released, I was living in Lucille Packard's Children's Hospital, a pair of kids, born three months premature, were in the NICU and they happened to belong to Vanessa and me. Benji and JohnPaul were in the other room, and after Slate's intro, I knew I had to turn it off. Crying jags at that point were all too frequent, as was the terror of seeing my tiny humans in the boxes that were literally keeping them alive, with all the other boxes in the room, each with a baby inside that would not last if they were taken out. I finally revisited, three years later, and it wasn't disturbing in the least.

I shouldn't have been listening to an episode about Bad Babies, I've got a kid with Cerebral Palsy, but I happened to love this episode, and in fact, didn't find it as disturbing as they did. I kinda know why, but I also had to do a lot of personal soul searching to figure out why others would have been so disturbed. That's not to say that some of the content of episodes of The Slums of Film History isn't disturbing, there are several episodes that are, but mostly, it's just that there were a couple of films I really wanted to hear them talk about.

The first was, of course, Rosemary's Baby. It's Slate's favorite film, which I think goes without saying, but more importantly, it's a fantastic film that is kinda proof that using bits that aren't supposed to work to make something that is way outside the norm can be amazing! Rewatching it in recent years, I've realized that it's a brilliantly paced film, but it's also the smartest use bait-and-switch there has ever been. Fuck The Sixth Sense, this is a twist that makes so very much more sense when it's all revealed, and then it gives us a positively John Saylesian ending.

I'm not as big a Roman Polanski fan as many people, and the rape that he fled the US to escape is



a part of that, but I'd say that it's a film that is so dense with sign and symbol, with meanings that are neither obvious nor overwhelming. There's so much in *Rosemary's Baby* that helps to make it into one of the most significant films of the 1960s.

The film they discuss that had me most excited was *It's Alive!*. I have never actually seen the film, but I instantly flashed back to Rangoon Video, and the VHS tape sitting on the rack, exactly at my 13 year-old eye height, staring at me, that single weird hand calling to me to pick it up. I never did, and I don't regret it after hearing the description!

I can not believe I didn't have *Dead Alive* on the tip of my brain. I love the pre-respectable Peter Jackson, and *Dead Alive* is one of my fave of his films. The baby in it is 100% the most disturbing! I mean, there's a lot of slapstick, and the baby looks freaky, but also a little faker than you'd expect from a film of its level. I love the use of a lawnmower!

Trainspotting is the most disturbing to me, but at the same time, it's the only one that isn't used in an exploitative way. It is literally the turn of the entire film. A neglected baby is the sign that changes the entire film from one direction to another. It's the best of the uses of an evil baby, and the dream sequence baby is easily the most disturbing.

I enjoyed this, though I am so glad I waited to listen.





I swear. Quite a bit, and one of my favorite documentaries is called Fuck. This episode is a wonderful look at swear words, a more generalized topic episode along the lines of NC-17, and again there's the Hays Code popping up!

Profanity in film is an important aspect of the transition from the first era of sound film to the more modern era. If you read the three-part Film History issues of The Drink Tank in 2014 and 15, you'll see that the dividing line is, more or less, 1970. MASH, in many ways, is a dividing point, though far from the first to use swearing, it was one of the most important in that it made it HUGE and featured a far more natural dialogue. It was, in many ways, the withoutadoubt beginning of New American Cinematic Vocabulary. The 1960s were the beginning, but it was MASH that turned it awesome!

And, of course, they hit on that, though not as hard as I just did because I am a total Robert Altman mark.

They look at Silents, which is an interesting place to start. There were times when the title cards were not 100% the words being mouthed by the actors, and sometimes, those were filth-ridden diatribes that would make Red Foxx blush. Hulu has Clara Bow mouthing "Fuck", but I've read that she was also well-known for the dirtiness of her vocabulary.

One thing they didn't mention, and admittedly it's pretty dang obscure, is that there were a lot of Silents that were made with titles that sounded like swear words. Perhaps the best example of that is from 1905 The Whole Dam Family and the Dam Dog. This is a simple little cinema postcard, but the entire thing is based around the word "Damn" though spelled in a way that wouldn't get 'em in trouble with local censor boards.

The best part of things in this one is the

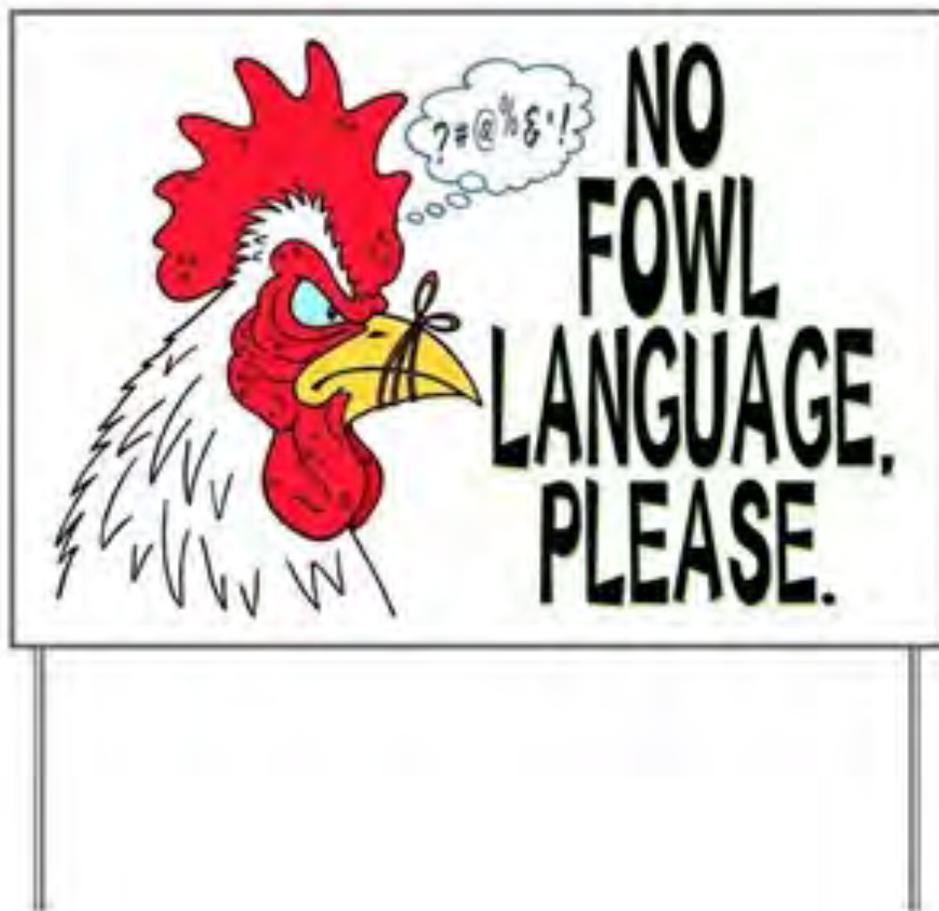
avoidance of traps. They mention “Frankly My Dear, I don’t give a damn.” But don’t say it’s the first time the word had been used in film, or even in an Oscar-winning film. It’s a frequent mistake, but the OVER emphasis on other films having done the same is also a problem. Many times, the discussion that mentions *Gone with the Wind* not being the first they completely avoid the idea that it was the most IMPORTANT use of Damn in the history of film up until that point. It is out of *Gone with the Wind* that most other damns flow!

The other trap Tom avoided was being TOO swearsy himself. Yes, these guys are potty-mouthed, but no worse than, well, me. The interview elsewhere in this issue will give you an idea about that, but instead of making this every other work fuck, Tom peppers it, but also it doesn’t feel like he’s peppering it. It feels like he’s just doing his episode and the topic happens to be profanity!

The look at the top five most Fuck-filled narrative films of all-time is great, and pretty simple. They include a link to one of the all-time great YouTube videos – *The Wolf of Wall Street*, with everything cut out save for the swearing. I might mention here that the website, slumsoffilmhistory.com is great, and every epi-

sode has an amazing image that Slate creates, and this one is one of my personal faves. It’s got Leo D-Cap standing proud as Jordan Belfour from *The Wolf of Wall Street*. Slate is the art director for the show, and he’s incredibly good at it! The fact that he works in creative for advertising probably has something to do with that. This episode is my second favorite of the season, and perhaps it’s the fact that it is one of those broader topic episodes that makes it so great.

Fuck yeah!



This is an interesting subgenre, and one that has several films that I really enjoy. The idea of the Crazy Old Biddy isn't new, it goes back to the late Silent era, and probably earlier, but it really came of age in the 1960s, largely because the first generation of film stars getting older, with Gloria Swanson, Joan Crawford, Bette Davis, and Mary Astor were all older, and willing to take advantage of their history and make some Psycho Biddy films!

Also, the term Grand Dame Guignol is just awesome!

The first great example has to be *Arsenic and Old Lace*, and they talk about it a little. It's one of the funniest movies ever made, and it holds up better today than I'd have expected. It's based on an actual murderer who the podcast *Serial Killers* recently profiled. The story focuses around a pair of sisters who run a boarding house and happen to murder some of their lonely lodgers. I can't think of an early psycho-gramma film, but I imagine at least one is out there.

The real heart of the sub-genre sorta starts with the legendary *Sunset Blvd.* It's a masterful piece of work, and *Slate* covers it beautifully. It's the kind of movie that seems to ride a lot of lines, but to me the most important aspect is that Norma Desmond is, in every way imaginable, Gloria Swanson, even if it's supposedly based on Norma Talmadge. She embodies the character so fully it's insanity, and her path through the film, as the aged star of a by-gone era, is so much her story, but it's also played for a sort of deep-meaning "There but for the Grace of God Go!" presentation. I loved this movie, and not just because of Buster Keaton!

The real flood gate film of the Hagsploitation realm is *Whatever Happened to Baby Jane*. This is a masterpiece of the Hollywood film engine. It's a weird, wonderful, bizarre, sometimes over-the-top,



and totally pitch perfect film. If I had to choose one film of the last century to represent the smartest drive of the machine, the best work with the real world meaning of stars and the artificial world of Stardom, it's the way Whatever Happened to Baby Jane was put together, handled, and ultimately cast. Bette Davis and Joan Crawford, who hated each other, playing sisters who hated each other in a film that should not, in a MILLION years, have worked as well as it did. This is the best example of how a casting director with an eye towards combative decisions can actually help a film. These two were in careers that weren't going up any longer, and they were well-known to not like each other. They use it, to great effect, and there's a twist that makes the movie that much more interesting. As is always the case, the success of the film led to an endless number of copy cats, as well as a direct sequel and a remake.

And, of course, if it's the 1960s, and it's a genre-adjacent success, William Castle is there to pick up the ball and hap-hazardly run with it! Joan Crawford starred in his film Strait-Jacket, a pretty terrible film. It's actually better than a lot of Castle stuff, but it's more that Crawford had to carry the film all on her own, but alas, she had no framework to hang it on.

The follow-up to Baby Jane was Hush, Hush, Sweet Charlotte, which they talk about just enough to make it sound just as interesting as it gets. The cast for that one is pretty amazing – Bette Davis, Los Gatos' own Olivia deHaviland, Mary Astor, and Agnes Morehead, along with Joseph Cotton makes this more Hag per square inch than just about any other Hagsploitation flick. The film itself is just missing the spark that propelled Baby Jane to the heavens. It's a decent film, but the way that Slate talks about it makes it sound like a film that you'd really want to go and see.

This episode moves a pretty quick between concepts, which is nice when they're going over somewhat broad topics, but they're also able to give enough of the most important aspects of the concept. That's really impressive, and something that a lot of podcasters never really get a handle on.





This one had me from the get-go. I come from a family of Christmas worshippers. MY mother's front lawn is a practical warzone of competing inflatable snowmen and santas and reindeer and, for some reason, pigs in hats, from Thanksgiving to New Year's. So, a Christmas episode was bound to be for me!

And it was!

Tom handles this as the Crachett to Slate's Scrooge. I'm a Tom on this one.

The depiction of Santa Claus in many silent films was kinda scary, particularly in German and Scandinavian films. The Danish version of Santa is freakin' messed up! American depictions are almost all based on 19th century picture books and cards, and some of them are pretty scary too!

The episode covers the way that Santa is made out to be scary, but not until recently was Santa himself made into a figure of terror. Usually, it was someone dressing up as Santa and killing folks. It's funny to think that people have ACTUALLY dressed up as Santa to kill people, but it has happened. The Covina Massacre was committed by a guy who dressed as Santa. Bruce Pardo murdered nine people at a Christmas party while dressed as Santa. There was also Bruce McArthur as well, who probably didn't kill people while dressed as Santa, but regularly played the role! He was the recently arrested Toronto Serial Killer. There was also a famous Texas bank robbery that saw a man dressed as Santa Claus work with two others to rob a bank.

And there's also the tradition of kids, in general, being scared of Santa. The biggest reason for that may be something called Beard fear. If a kid grows up with a parent with a beard, they are apparently less likely to be frightened of men with beards. That's one theory, the other is mere sensory overload, which I guess makes sense.

There are a bunch of films they talk about that I have seen, notably Santa's Slay, starring Bill Goldberg. It's terrible. Christmas Evil is actually a fun, if awful, little VHS gem that I watched on the hottest day of the year after renting it at California Super Video. Krampus was just released and they did an add-on portion of the show about it, which is a nice touch. I never saw it. I'm not a Krampus guy.

I'm a Santa guy.

In fact, for the City of Santa Clara, I was Santa for 4 years, going and spreading Christmas cheer to those families that had signed up for the visit, including the family of the mayor at the time! That was a nice touch. I love Santa, and the fact that they were ending their first season with a Christmas episode might have been just about perfect!

All in all, the first season didn't feel like a first season. It felt like two guys who knew exactly what they were doing doing it and doing it and doing it well. It was awesome to get to dive in with them, and it was 100% an excellent example of what a genre film podcast can be if you strip away the worst of the pretense and just leave the conversation and content. Plus, these are two dudes with excellent chemistry, who are presenting material in a way that actually plays off the often-raw nature of that material. It's a great first season!



STILLS FROM TONY NATOLI'S I NEVER HO'D FOR MY FATHER



Part 1 of Our Interview with Tom and Slate

- Chris: Oh, yeah. Well, thanks for taking the time. This is just great. I've been wanting to interview you guys for awhile, but I just never had a good reason until now. (laughing)
- Slate: Yeah, absolutely. This is our first interview so we're thrilled to do it.
- Tom: Yeah.
- Slate: Tom looks like he's in jail but.
- Chris: (laughing)
- Tom: I do. I have like a jail kind of thing going on behind me. I meant to put posters and shit. My cat will show up at some point, I'm sure.
- Chris: Yeah, I'm actually at the computer history museum so.
- Slate: Oh, nice. Is that where you work?
- Chris: Yeah.

Tom: That's cool.

Slate: Awesome.

Chris: Yeah, so if I was actually at my desk instead of the conference room, I have this giant 1950s Sci-Fi poster.

Tom: I've got some Star Wars and Fury Road posters around here, it's out of view. Trust me, I'm not in jail.

Slate: The warden took them from him, yeah.

Tom: Yeah, basically, yeah.

Chris: (laughing) Well let's start with the simplest thing I could ask is, why'd you start the podcast?

Slate: Go ahead, Tom.

Tom: Alright, so let me just say, I don't know how this started, but I did something on Facebook where I called it bad movie Monday. And what it was was I was watching some shitty movie and I posted it a little bit of a blurb and I think it was on youtube, whatever it was. I don't even remember what the personal was. But I put it on as a Facebook post called a Bad Movie Monday and just said, "Hey, watch this shitty movie, it's free on youtube." And Slate, I think commented on it and texted me or called me, I don't remember. And was like, "Hey, I wanna watch one of your Bad Movie Mondays video." And actually communicate via text or whatever while we were doing it. So sort of like comment on it while we're watching it.

Slate: We got on Tube Chat and we synced to that but we hit play. It was Exorcist II with Linda Blair. And we synced up the movie, both hit play at the exact same time and then we just chatted back and forth about the movie. And we kind of mystery science theater the movie together, but via Tube Chat.

Tom: Right. By the way that movie's fucking terrible.

Slate: Terrible.

Chris: It's not great.

Tom: It was just fun watching it.

Slate: Yeah.

Tom: And so we did that and then I think, I don't remember if you came down to visit or whatever. But we brought it up again, we talked about it, and we're like, "That was fun. Maybe we could do something else with it."

Slate: We were like, "We're funny, we're kind of funny about movies. We're not funnier than mystery science theater and that's already been done. But there's something here." And we've known each other for 20...

Tom: 23, 24.

Slate: Almost 25 years. And we've always talked about doing some movies but we've never done anything



other than watch them. And we just started kind of throwing ideas back and forth. And originally we had talked about doing a podcast called Bad Movie Monday. But from the beginning, I was like, "There are a million podcasts out there that are like that of people that are a lot funnier that are professional comedians that watch bad movies and comment on them. We can't do that."

Tom: Yeah, how did this get made and whatever.

Slate: Yeah and there are plenty of that, yeah.

Tom: There isn't many of those.

Slate: So, I started telling him about this podcast I listened to, which we talk about on the podcast all the time, called You Must Remember This. It's Karina Longworth, she does history. I love listening to her just because it's scripted and so she kind of delivers a beginning, middle, and an end to a story. And I thought that was great. So we kind of smashed those two ideas, You Must Remember This and how did this get made together. And we decided... Cause I was very, very firm that ours had to be scripted in some way. We couldn't just sit around and talk bullshit. Because there's so many podcasts that just ramble and ramble and ramble. And we're not that funny. I mean we might get three good lines in an hour long podcast. And so we kinda came up with the format of picking a topic, delivering it to the other person. And then we sat down and we figured out just, oh what should we do? What types of movies should we do? And we both decided that we would probably get more fans if we did disgusting, gross topics.

Tom: We were big fans of movies and there's always either tropes, or interesting things, or types of movies that are out there that people might talk about the movies themselves. But it's like where the hell did this start. Where did Blaxploitation start? Where did exploitation start? Or whatever. What's the first profanity used in movies where people really don't talk about that, or at least I haven't seen that. So we're like, why don't we just talk about that shit? Because I'm interested in that cause I like trashy shit

and so does Slate. And so we we're just like let's talk about that. I haven't seen a lot of that so let's talk about it and see if we can find anything interesting, or a trend, or history about it. And see if we can make an actual episode out of it. So that's kinda where we did our jumping off point.

Chris: Yeah, and actually I have to say thank you to Slate cause you're the one that turned me on to You Must Remember This and...

Slate: Oh really? Good job Slate.

Chris: And I interviewed Karina.

Slate: Oh wow. That's awesome.

Chris: And she's phenomenal.

Slate: That's awesome.

Tom: Yeah. She's great.

Slate: She's amazing. We both really loved her podcast and so it kind of made sense that she was doing something that... She's telling stories about Hollywood and we love the stories. But we were kinda trying to tell more stories about the movies and then do it with the... She's very highbrow

Chris: With her perfect diction.

Tom: She is.

Slate: We're the opposite of that.

Tom: Yeah.

Chris: I don't know, I'd say you we're middlebrow. (laughs)

Slate: On a good day.

Chris: Yeah.

Slate: Maybe a compliment, yeah.

Chris: Yeah.

Tom: But anyways, so all this happened I don't know, Summer of '05 when, sorry 15, when Slate and I we're talking about it. And Slate, god bless him, he's like I love you to death, but he's also like let's do this and let's do this. And he's kind of a task master so by then he's like, "We need to write this now, and we need to record this now, and we need to have a theme song, and we need a logo." And I was like, "Shit, heck no, fuck." And so we were like scrambling to get this thing together and get it going. And he's like, "Momentum, momentum, momentum. Do it, now."

Slate: Well, the reason why though is because Serial had just come out and was obviously this huge thing. I didn't know what a podcast was before Serial came out and people kept saying, "Oh you need to listen to podcasts." That's not true, I actually used to listen to them a lot during the first Obama administra-



tion during the election. So political podcasts. But I hadn't listened for awhile. I didn't know it was a fun experience and so I started listening to Serial. And then I just started listening to all these podcasts and I was really afraid someone was gonna come along and do this. I thought that our idea had already been done before and then I actually had my ad agency do a competitive analysis to make sure that this was a new idea. That we weren't gonna do all this work and then somebody was just gonna be like, "Oh, no there's garbage of film grade podcasts and you know that." So I wanted to make sure that like we have this idea, we have momentum, we were really excited about it.

Slate: And I work in the creative industry, I work in advertising. So I was just like, I know how to get a project off the ground. And I was like, "This is what we need to do, we need to start getting out of this. I already bought all the websites, I bought everything. Everything is starting to move forward and..."

Tom: See I work for the U.S. Government so I'm not used to being efficient or whatever. So I was like what are you doing. Cause we came up with a bunch of names, we had like a whole list of names, we both were kind of throwing that out there. We were coming up with logo ideas. I got a good friend of mine and a good friend of Slate's to do our theme song. Cause I was like, "Hey, let's see if we can come up with a theme song, something different." And Slate did take the logos and the name, and our tag line. Highbrow look of, sorry, lowbrow look of the highpoint, whatever. Whatever the fuck we're talking about. And actually, I remember you telling me you shot that around your ad agency to get what people like the most to see which one worked better. So we just were like let's do this and hit the ground running. And by October, I came down for the New York film festival cause I come down every year and we were like we can record while I'm down there and we sort of did that. It's crazy. Our first, yeah.

Slate: We had a couple, we did some tests, we managed to get Cannibalism done and then we had to rerecord a bunch of stuff. Audio wasn't that great. And it was just, we stumbled a little bit in the beginning and it was just kind of, we're like, "Is this it? Do we put the sounds? Should we work on it more?" And

then we finally decided let's... We rerecorded a bunch of stuff and then we put out those episodes. And we waited until we were a good, I think seven or eight episodes in before we even started inviting people on Facebook or really telling anyone about it. Just because if you're like, "Hey there's a new podcast," it's one episode. And then they listen to it and then they're like, "Great," and never listen to it again. So we waited until we had a good chunk of episodes up and had some stuff for people to listen to before we started to grow on it.

Tom: Yeah.

Chris: Yeah, and I'm listening to those first ones right now. And cause you mentioned in a episode a little bit ago, you re-listened to Cannibalism and you thought the audio quality was crap. And I'm like, "This is better than 99% of podcasts I listen to right now." (laughs)

Slate: Yeah, Tom is actually an audio person. So he does music and stuff like that. So he's in charge of all of the audio stuff. So he bought the mixer, the microphones, set up the studio, figured how to master everything. He does all of that.

Tom: Slate does all the artwork and all that creative stuff. So all the poster stuff, and the animated stuff, and even the video work, that's all Slate too. So we designate those things to each other.

Slate: And it worked out cause I don't know shit about audio and I kinda don't care. (laughs) I mean I edit my own episodes and then I send them to Tom and I'm like, "Yeah, it should be done. All you have to do is just do a couple things." and he's like-

Tom: And I'm like, "What the fuck did you send me?" He's like, "I did it. It's done."

Slate: ...of an episode.

Tom: Yeah. I was like, "Holy shit."

Slate: I was like, "It's fine, just put it up. It's fine."

Tom: For awhile I thought you were just trolling me. So yeah, yeah it was something. It was a challenge there for awhile there, Slate. No, but like the audio stuff early on, I mean it's not terrible but I kept moving away from the mic. And Slate would do that too, or not talk into it. And so that's annoying cause you have to go in there and piece it together and I know it's yeah.

Slate: Tom would too, he'd be like, "Blah, blah, blah."

Tom: Yeah, that's exactly right. It's terrible.

Slate: Reading is hell. And so it's just, the whole thing is just like, "Blah blah blah." All of that has to be rerecorded.

Tom: Yeah. All of them, yeah.

Slate: So it's just, it was a little bit... I mean everything we just had to figure out. So even how to make a podcast, how to get it up on iTunes, how to promote it. We just kind of just read a lot of articles, we just Googled everything and just kinda figured it out as we went.

Tom: One thing I'm glad we did and now I've actually had a few people ask me about podcasts since then so that's nice. But is we've kept everything under an hour. We're like, "This needs to be commute linked." Because generally, people either have like a half an hour commute or an hour commute to work. So we're like, "That's when people are gonna listen to this. They're gonna listen to it on their way to work or half of it on one way or the other." And so none of our episodes are over an hour because of that. And we're like, "If the topic's bigger than that, we'll split it up." It was our philosophy. Which I'm glad we did that.

Slate: Yeah, there are a lot of film podcasts out there that are three hours per episode. And that's totally fine, that makes sense. But for us, we just wanted to really be getting, just like Karina did, beginning, middle. And then if you ever needed to do a two parter, then do a two parter. But not have anything that's just kind of went on for hours. I listened to a couple podcasts that will do three hours. A lot of times you skip over them cause you're just like, "I don't want three hours right now." Right?

Chris: Yeah, I have some of those in my life. Yeah, and so as I'm going through the first season again, and I've, cause I had skipped a couple of the... I love the fact that the Bad Babies episode dropped the day my twins were born.

Slate: Oh, I remember you telling us this.

Tom: Oh, wow. Congratulations.

Chris: Yeah, and they were three months early. And at any minute, my kids could've turned into monsters.

Slate: Right.

Chris: So I had to wait...

Slate: So at what moment we're you like, "I'm skipping this."?

Tom: Oh, you were like, "I'm not gonna listen to this one." Were you like, "Fuck this episode."?

Chris: I think I listened to the opening, went, "Yeah, fuck this."

Slate: Yeah, got scared.

Chris: I think it made sense.

Slate: Yeah, cause you sent us an email about terrible twins, too. Right?

Chris: Yeah. Oh, yeah.

Slate: As a father of twins, I'm sure one of them is evil.

Chris: Ellen, and I know which one it is now. It's great, yeah.

Tom: Oh, you figured it out? Oh, good.

Chris: Yeah, I'm very happy that we solved that conundrum. Yeah, we're trying to figure out how to put bars on these cribs that will... We might go with barbed wire.

Episode 13

Toxic Waste

We dive into Season 2 with an episode that does all the things that best episodes of Slums do so well. It's not a broad genre look, but a dive into a single element of a type of film, in this case the element is toxic waste and how it plays as a part of horror and science fiction films.

Tom is handling things this go-round, and he hits all the major points. While I knew a lot of what was coming, he handled it in a way that was both clear and well-paced. He opens with introducing the very idea of what toxic waste is, and the role it plays in the modern world. It really was the boogey man of the 1980s and 90s. The re-counting of the major events in American toxic waste history was especially good, because providing a context as to why toxic waste became a big deal during the period between WWII and 2000 is an important aspect.

Of course, there were a ton of documentaries that talk about pollution in many forms, going back to the 1930s, though a massive upswing took place in the 1950s and 60s. There's a great film, I'm not sure where to find it these days, called *The Third Pollution*, which influenced a lot of depictions of toxic waste.

Tom starts with *Godzilla*... I mean *Gorija!* That's a logical place to start, and the original *Godzilla* film is an absolute masterpiece. It's so different than anything you'll see today in films about toxic waste. It's an incredibly humanistic film. It's basically replaying the most emotionally damaging part of World War II through the lens of a massive monster representing the Allies destruction using the power of the atom. It's got a few brutally emotional moments that are 100% lost in the American version.

The early toxic waste films, like *Them*, are really interesting because they are similar to those



terrifying evil computer films of the 1960s. We'd just started to see what was possible with nuclear power, and that led to a slew of films that slurped from that pot of terror. Them, by the way, is a phenomenal film for the time, and it holds up better than so many of the 1950s horror pieces that were crapped out. I just love it so damn much! It's one of those films that you think is going to be like the satires of 1950s horror seen in films like *Matinee*, but turns out to have a seriously impressive sense of pacing, plot, and even characterization.

One thing I love about *Slums of Film History* in general is the ability to surprise me with films I've never even heard of. This go-round, it's *The Suckling*, which sounds like the most incredibly terrible, perfectly conceived film ever. It's basically the synthesis of the fear of what abortion will do to American society mixed with the idea that toxic waste will kill us all. It's got to be the rarest of the rare cross-overs. The film sounds like an absolute disaster, and the preview they played from it made it sound like they were trying to cover up by going all camp with it.

The two big topics are the ones I expected: *The Toxic Avenger* and *Teenaged Mutant Ninja Turtles*. Those two are the more important players in the history of toxic waste as film trope. *Toxie* was a terrible film, I really have almost zero love for the actual films of Troma, but love the way they've marketed themselves. *TMNT* was a great comic, a fun film franchise, and most importantly, the best example of what post-modernism meant in comics. The entire series was a giant referential mass of recontextualized theory and literature. Every page of the comic seems to be hinting at some strange new view on American popular culture or life, and the films do manage to bring a bit of that to life.

Of course, they give time to what I still consider the greatest effect in the history of film. It's in *RoboCop*, where a villain has been dumped into a vat of toxic waste and then gets liquefied across the windshield of a car. It was pretty amazing, and still holds up!

Overall, this is a really good narrow-topic episode, and a good way to start the second season.

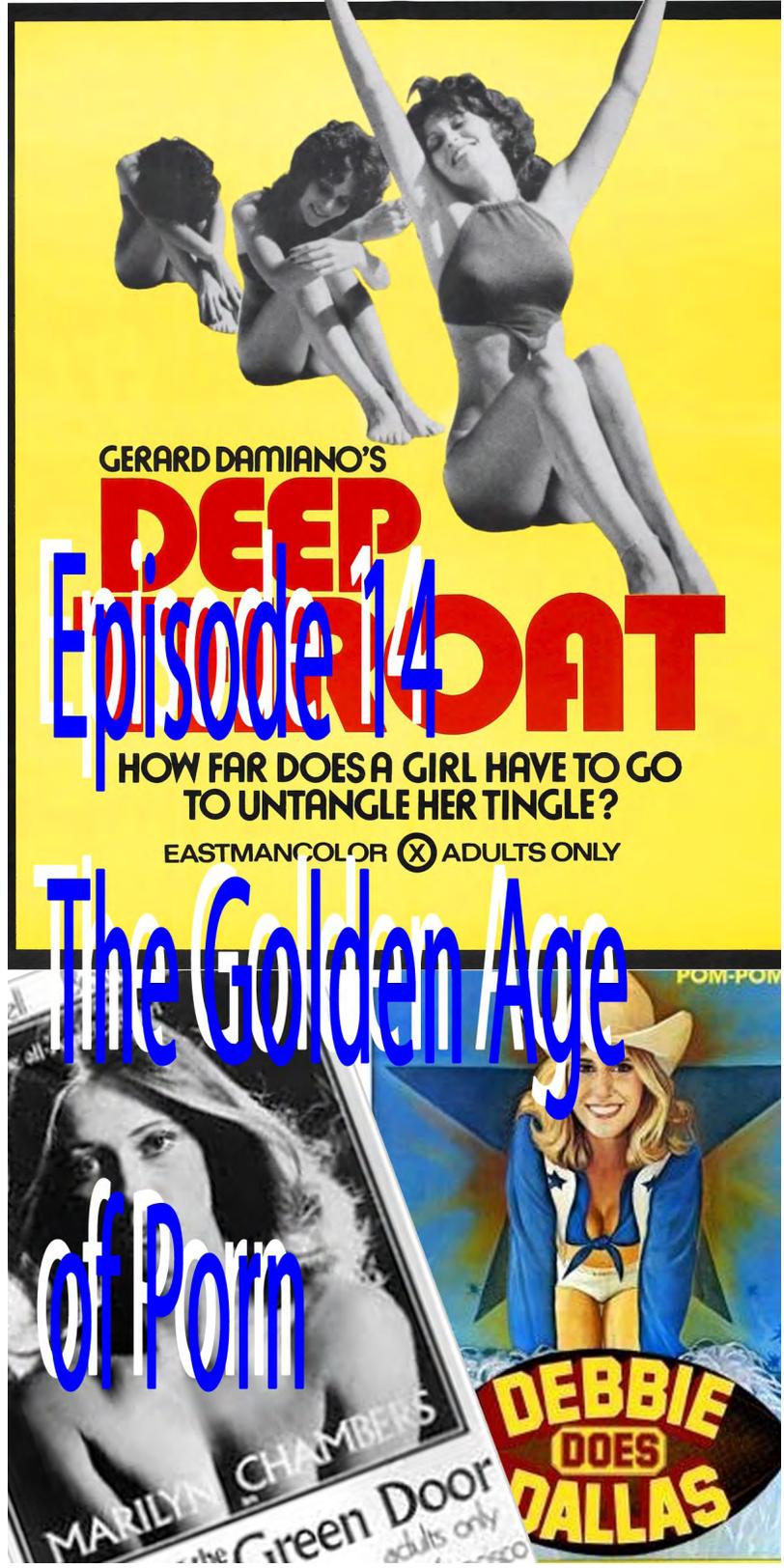
The Golden Age of Porn

This is almost certainly my favorite episode of the series. It's a large topic, though time-bound to a few years, with some great info as well as Slate sharing a personal story. That right there boils down to the things I most want to see in a film history podcast. I want the massive amount of information with a touch of the person delivering it. This one hits that perfectly!

Porn dates back to the beginning of film. There are some incredible French porn shorts including one where Santa Claus (I guess Pere Noel, in this case) comes down the chimney, if you know what I mean. There were stag films circulating by the 1920s, and the 8mm Loop was an important part of the world of pornography by the 1960s, but it was the early 1970s that gave us the Golden Age of Porn.

Slate does these episodes so very well. Like the NC-17 episode last season, this one starts with an excellent interview, though lighter on the Hays Code, and then dives in with an intelligent look at what happened to lead to the Golden Age of Porn and Porno Chic. There have been entire books written about the period and the players, and I've read a few of them, but what Slate manages to do is relate the information that is key to the topic and then layer interesting discussion on top in a way that is natural and fresh.

They cover well Deep Throat, which is the peak of Porno Chic. They don't go into the depth that some podcasts have, Slate says because the documentary Inside Deep Throat was so good and thorough. The way Slate approaches it isn't so much as a film story, but as a cultural moment. Yeah, he gives the rough outline, and hearing him say Linda Lovelace makes a cock disappear is BRILLIANT!, but it more talks about the way that it introduced



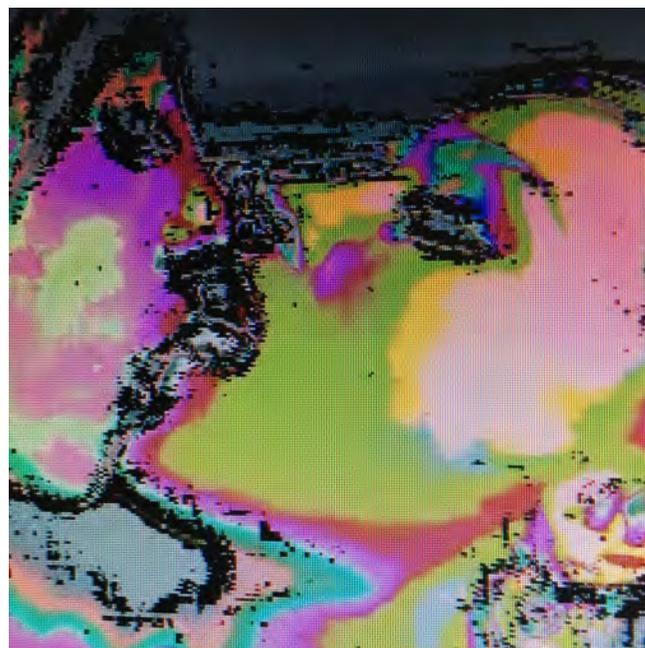
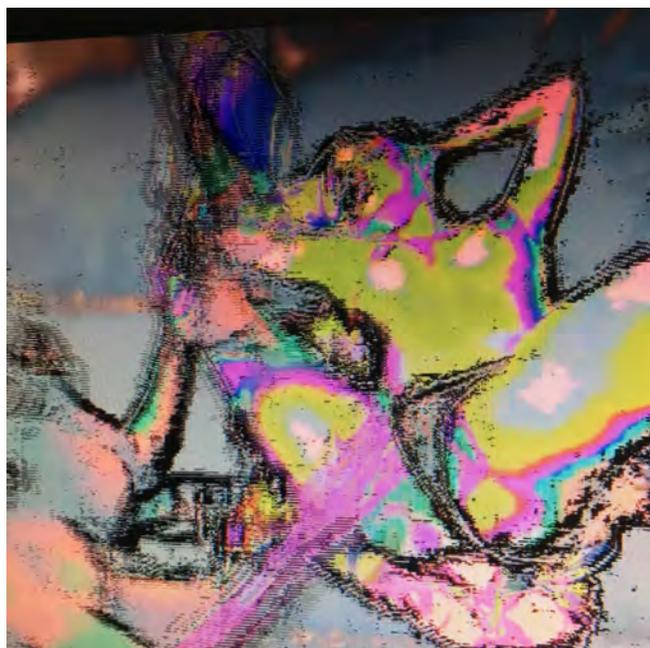
the idea of Porn to the mainstream, and of course what it meant to those who were involved with the film. It's the best look at Deep Throat in the short film as opposed to an expanded piece.

The fact is Deep Throat was far from the only Porn Film that got a wide-release, nor was it the first, but it was the one that really set the table for the success of many other films. The one that is likely the best of the lot is Behind the Green Door. That was produced by the Mitchell Brothers, San Francisco porn impresarios. The film made a star of Marilyn Chambers, the woman behind only Linda Lovelace as far as name recognition for Porn Stars in the 1970s. Chambers was the only one who had any sort of significant acting career outside of porn. Behind the Green Door is a very smart film, and the first Interracial sex scene in porn so far as most can tell. I've watched it, and while I don't dig on 70s porn, it does tell a story. An interesting set of notes on the film itself – Chambers has no dialogue, and Chambers had been the Ivory Soap baby for years!

The Devil in Miss Jones, which may be the best storyline of all the Golden Age of Porn films. It's a classic storyline, and the vision of Hell it presents is flat-out O Henry-like. They don't give it as much time as Deep Throat or Behind the Green Door, but honestly, it doesn't deserve it.

Slate talks a bit about The Bands in the Sand, which was actually one of the most interesting Gay Porn pieces of the time. They do a bit on Debbie Does Dallas, but they spend way more time on Caligula, which makes a bit of sense. You can say a lot about how bad Caligula was, but really, the end fo Porno Chic was Debbie Does Dallas, which was one of the first massive hits on video tape.

In totally, this is the best episode of the series. It's a perfectly paced, smartly told version of a key moment in the history of American mainstream cinema.





Episode 15 Head Trauma

This one was actually a lot of fun. I will admit, there is little that gets to me as much as head trauma, but this episode wasn't nearly the most disturbing episode in the season.

This one doesn't have the medical introduction that I was expecting, but it does have an awesome semantics debate between Tom and Slate. In fact, this is one of the episodes with the most cross-talk, which can be really annoying, but in this case it's pretty nice to hear them banter, perhaps borderline bickering, because it totally reminds me of watching movies at Sarah Stanek's apartment back in 2001.

That may just be me.

Tom breaks it into types of head trauma, with decapitation going first. Here, they mention *The Execution of Mary Queen of Scots* as the first decapitation film. It's a really simple and cheap effect, and while it's aged poorly, I can totally see how people would have flipped their shit.

The world of filmic decapitations is shockingly large. Tom doesn't mention all of 'em, but it's a good smattering of the highlights. *The Brain That Wouldn't Die* is talked about, and that's one of the films I've always loved for all the right reasons. The one that has always stuck out to me is the Dennis Hopper beheading in the film *Speed*. It's a fast paced film, one that has exactly one good performance, that from Hopper, who far exceeded the performance of the lead, Keanu Reeves. I was working at the Century 22 when they were showing *Speed*, and I would have to clean the theatre after the showing, which meant I stood in the wings waiting for people to start to leave about five minutes before the film was over, so I ended up seeing Hopper's head get knocked off while he said "I'm smarter than you!" about 50 times. It's a funny part.

Then, there's the Flying Guillotine.

The weapon was supposedly created back in China in the old days. It's a ranged weapon which I think could be best described as an aerobic with a bladed interior on a chain. You'd throw it, if you were good you could get it around the neck of your enemy, and then you yank and they have one less head to deal with. Was it ever widely-used? No, even though Mythbusters proved it could work. Tom talks a bit about it, because he's a big fan, and talks briefly about the martial arts flick Master of the Flying Guillotine.

If you've never seen it, go and watch it. You'll find a lot of things to love within a film that just makes no damn sense on first view.

It's a fun film, and the weapon is still one of the most fun in the history of film!

The section about bashin' in heads is kinda short, or at least feels short. This is one that could easily have gone the wrong direction into the gross, but instead it's a smart look. They talk curb-stomping (American History X) and fire extinguisher beating (Irreversible) and a bit more. Tom specifically didn't cover baseball bat beatings, which meant no The Untouchables, but it was a good touch on the topic.

A majority, or at least a plurality, of the time spent on the episode was about the Exploding Head. It's been the source of at least one classic film quote (from Hot Fuzz) and a source of debate as being completely unrealistic. This is where the semantics bit happens, and it's an interesting section, because it feels very thorough, though it misses the world of Hong Kong action flicks, several of which feature head explosions, including the one that was featured on The Daily Show back when it was still a comedy show. They discuss Tom Savini's role in popularizing the head-exploding effect, particularly those used in films like Dawn of the Dead. They discuss how you make a head blow-up if you're a 1980s effects artist, and Savini was great at it.

And, of course, Scanners.

Scanners is, as Slate would say, bonkers. Michael Ironsides is one of the best genre actors who ever lived, specifically in the horror genre, and the single most Croenberg moment in the history of Croenberg film. It's the most memorable, and while Scanners isn't quite Videodrome, a film that feels like it was five years in the future, it's a great and memorable film. The way they made the head explode was so simple and perfect!

There's a bit about Pulp Fiction, where Tarantino made a face shooting leading into an exploding head into something that is comedy. It was more a shock laugh, but it still worked as comedy. It's a good talk moment where they go into it. They then talk Mars Attacks, and play the part where they discover that Slim Whitman's yodeling leads to Martian heads going all 'plodey. It's one of my favorite films, though it's not the best Tim Burton film, it's easily the one that feels like Burton working in the mainstream. It's a super fun flick.

It's a good episode, middle-of-the-road for the entire series, but well-rewarding for the listener!

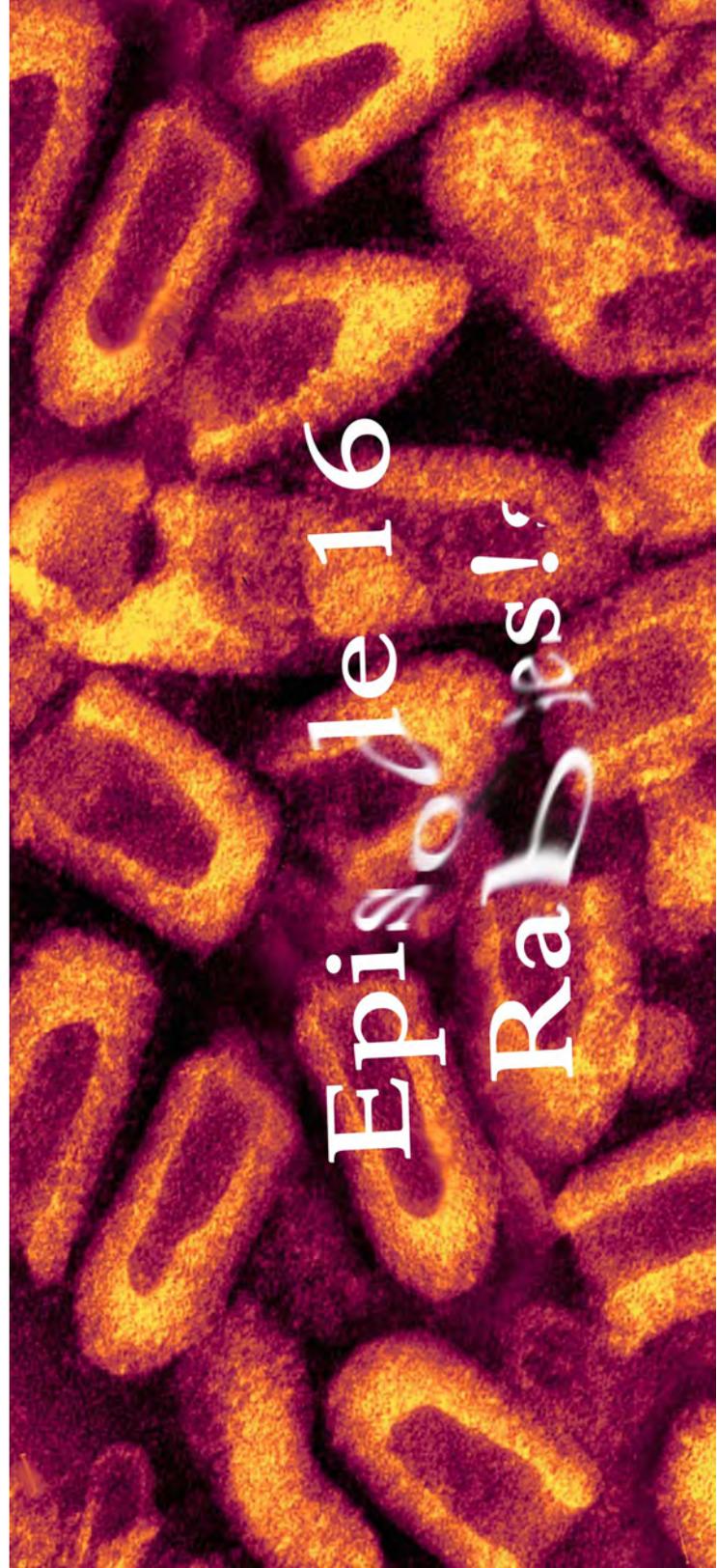
Slate said going in, he felt like this would be a slim episode, but it turned out to not only be a significantly thick episode, but one of the best of the season. It's a real testament to the power of these two to take micro-elemental bits and turn them into awesome episodes like this one.

Slate starts with an excellent recap of what rabies is, and how it passes. It's the real world stuff in these episodes that drive things home. He presents the info in a very smart way. He includes the elements that will strengthen, or straighten out, the plots and conceits of the movies he'll be talking about. That allows for a combination of things. First, it makes running jokes possible, but it also allows them to clear up a few misconceptions, which then turn into a running joke themselves, which allows it to not feel like forced comedy. That's key in these kinds of shows.

The basics of rabies as a piece of a film is pretty simple, and it brings to mind a few classics instantly. The first, of course, is *Old Yeller*. It's arguably the single most powerful coming-of-age story ever told. It actually makes you dread having to grow up and make the hard choices. I hate this movie. It's brilliantly made, and Tom and Slate are right, it's pretty bad ass, but it hurts so goddamn much to watch it.

A film I had never really known about is *The Story of Louis Pasteur*. It's the story of... well, you know. It's got an outstanding performance from the great Paul Muni, which I believe won him an Oscar. I watched it and it's really a strong little movie, but the incredible thing is the acting of Muni. I've often said that I'm not a fan of early sound acting, but here, he's great. I think it's basically Muni and Laughton who really got it before everyone else did.

That leads us to the meat of the episode, and a discussion of a film I've never seen, but I've got a friend writing up for later in the issue – *I Drink Your Blood*. If you've never seen it, count yourself lucky, but it's also



Episode 16 Rabies!

incredibly smart as a story. It's just not well written or produced. They also talk about Marilyn Chambers' first non-porn role, in David Croenberg's *Rabid*. I saw it back about 1995 or so, and it's not good Croenberg; it's the kind of Croenberg that people who don't like Croenberg think of when they think of Croenberg. The film is OK, but really, they give it as much time as was required.

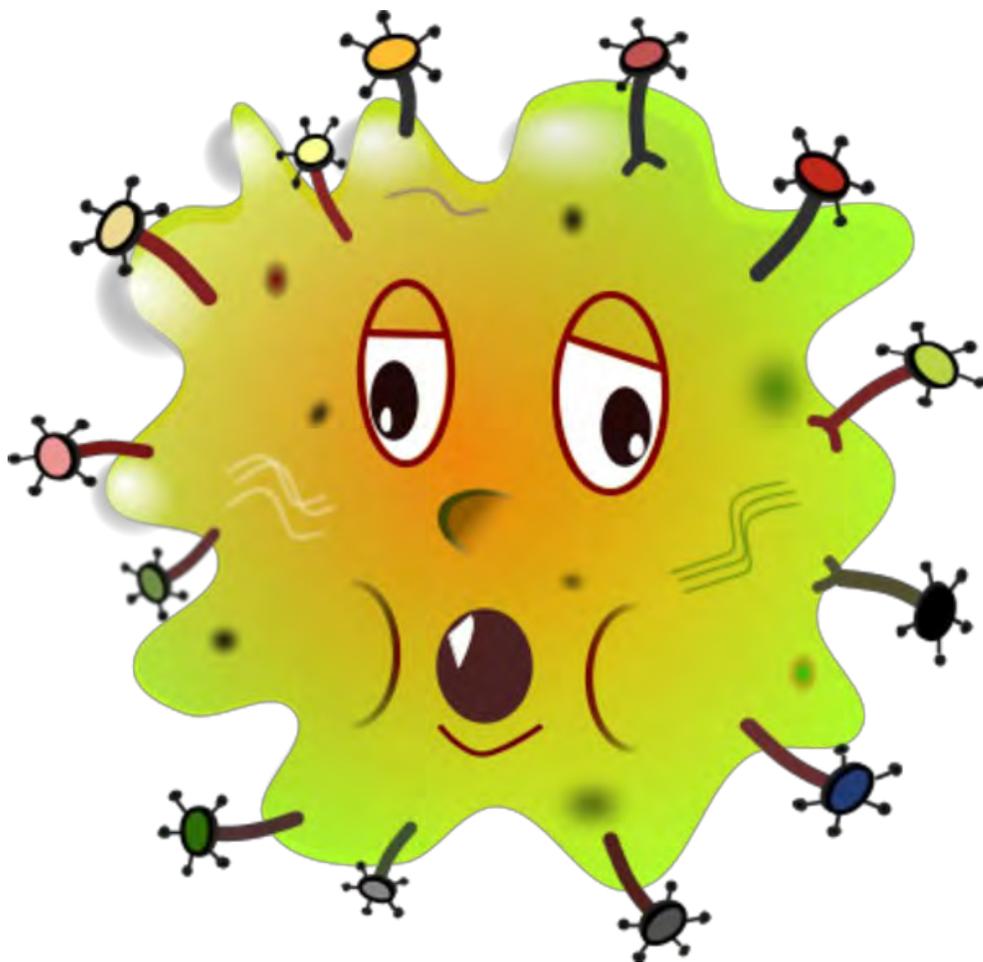
And then there's *Cujo*.

Without *Cujo*, there's no *Open Water*. It's the last third of *Jaws*, only done with a sense of claustrophobia. The last portion of the film, based on an awesome Stephen King book, is basically a mother and son stuck in a car on a hot day with a rabid dog circling. It's TERRIFYING! I love that film's sense of terror, and while the book is at least twenty percent better, the film is phenomenal.

The discussion of the Spanish film series *Rec* is nice, as it's one I'd heard of, but knew nothing about, but it was the brief discussion of *World War Z* that really got me thinking. It's a fine film, and the concept is perfectly fitted for rabies. I actually loved the movie, in a completely different way than I loved the book, and

only slightly less than the audiobook. It's not the book, but a perfectly serviceable action thriller than moves incredibly well.

There are the little things that this episode does so well. Slate interjects "Two Truths & A Lie" as a little game they play as they're going along. That's a neat way to give a bit of filler that is both entertaining and informative. Slate breaks down Rabies as the possible inspiration for werewolves, vampires, and various other traditional beasts. It's a smart thought. I really enjoyed everything they put into this episode, and it's one that I've gone back to more than once.





This is the second part of what became an annual event for Tom. This one focuses on veterans who go out and kick ass as a way to put the world right. This is a perfect example of how we did wrong by our vets following Vietnam, and it's telling that it is only following Nam that we got these kinds of stories. It's also telling that they are almost all the descendants of westerns, and to a lesser extent, the Hong Kong action films of the late 1960s and early 1970s. The films all have the same message – the ones who can clean up the mess that our world has become are the ones who were abandoned after they got back from the War. It's a fun message for a generation that had largely never had to go to war. That also explains why these films pretty much dried up in recent decades.

The one that hits hardest, at least as far as mainstream fare that feels totally at home within the frame of an exploitation subgenre is *Taxi Driver*. It's a damn fine film, one that I resisted for quite a long time, and when I finally watched it, I found myself watching it in a way that was much closer to the way I watch things like *Angel*, as a gritty genre film. It's a straight up genre flick, and unlike *Gangs of New York*, it's not an absolute mess that's propped up by a lot of costumes and performances. It's a sold, smart, hard-to-stomach at time flick that is 100% great, and it feels less like a Scorsese film.

It's also a straight-up Western.

That leads to *Death Wish*, and they spend a fair amount of time taking about it, and I love it. It's the film that made me certain I could handle both Peckinpah and Sam Fuller films. Again, visceral, but at the same time, there's a certain amount of emotional weight carried by Bronson that makes it worth watching as more than just a flick to work out your anger against the modern world.

One thing they talk about a bit, but is worth noting again, is that the world was a much more violent place than it is today. We tend to think things have gotten worse, but really, violent, and especially gun violence, has gone down, and partly due to the fact that violence in number of events have gone down, while the events themselves have gotten bigger, and far far far more media attention.

Then Tom talks Rambo.

I could go on and on about how First Blood is the film that is second most responsible for the moder Republican party (After Whatever Happened to the Human Race) but really, that first Rambo film is well done, and brilliantly paced. The worst thing about it is Sly Stallone's acting, which is funny as I usually really like his acting (he's great in Copland, and surprisingly awesome in Oscar) but here, he's entirely riding his charisma and physique, which got him a long way in the 1980s. The film has a good script, based on a strong novel, but more importantly, it was giving us a strong message – we can still win Vietnam. That was the message of a lot of films, that we could, given the right scenario, go back and win Nam.

Tom points out, quite rightly, that the Vigilante Vet has mostly been replaced by the Super Hero. This is true, largely, but also we are no longer trying to redeem our Vets. We have either ignored them, or simply accepted that we're no longer interested in the idea that they need to be redeemed. The biggest thing is that when you see an Angry Vet these days, more often than not they are shown as either angry at the system, or a threat to society. Super Heroes allow us to have the cake that is revenge, and eat it without the unsightly vision of those who got their hands dirty in our wars.





EPISODE 18 FREAK SHOWS

I have to admit, I was a bit over-hyped for this one. I mean, there are few people who know the stories of the Freak Shows of the late 19th and early 20th century as well as I do. That's not true, I know a few, but not too many. I know all about Gibsonton, Florida, the summer home for many of those who lived on the Carny circuit, and a place my Dad once stayed when he was a carnies. Slate did an amazing intro, one of the best of the entire series, but the whole episode suffered from one thing for me – that I could have done this episode in my sleep. Which isn't as much of a knock as it sounds, it just means that I'm a specialist listening to a generalist podcast episode, and for what it was, it was a darn good listen.

There have been freaks on films since at least 1897.

The use of Freak Show performers in films goes way back to the Actualities. Only a few of these still exist, and mostly in the form of snippets from newsreels. They talk about a couple of films from the silent era that I hadn't seen. That's what these guys do best. They dig, often into places that I wouldn't find too often. They've got a view of a layer of cinema that isn't mainstream, but also isn't really the avant garde, which is where I tend to live. They're good in this zone.

Of course, they talk about the film *Freaks*, by Tod Browning. It is, without a doubt, a masterpiece. It's the rare early sound film that doesn't feel confined. The acting is incredibly subtle, which is remarkable because so many of the actors were new to it. They were, literally, performers in the side shows. The story, which was at least a little exploitative, features a little person who falls in love with a little person. She's a 'Normal' and he's a 'freak' and the story is about how she's playing him, along with the strongman, who is her actual boy-

friend. They plan to kill him, but it turns into beautiful revenge story.

The performances in this one are amazing. I mean really phenomenal. Johnny Eck, called the Half-boy, was great, and while appearances by The Human Torso and some of the other performers can be seen as somewhat exploitative, they were presented quite sympathetically as characters within the story. This is almost unheard of at the time, but what's more interesting isn't the way the performers are treated in the excellent script, but the distance Browning and the talent went to make them humans. These aren't performers as much as they're people whose lives are spent performing. That's a subtle, but important difference. The way the film handles the characters is incredible, and the Hilton Sisters are a solid pair in this one while on their own in their own film they're actually really bad. The entire presentation of Freaks is phenomenal. The cinematography, while muted in the versions I've seen, still shows a lot of perfection of camera pointing that marked the early sound era. Visually, this is a stunning film, and I am so glad this was included and spoken of so well!

The Hilton Sisters' own vehicle, *Chained for Life*, was awful. One of the few movies I turned off instead of simply tuning out. Bad. Bad, bad, bad. The sisters were on a downward slope by that point, and the filmmakers obviously had little interest in the film beyond just featuring the two of them. Such a bad flick, but worthy of mention in any discussion of freak shows on film.

There's a bit of a jump here, but they next tackle *The Elephant Man*. There's a reason for the jump, it's because *Freaks* was such a failure at the box office that it poisoned the well for any other freak show film. They do pop up for a moment in several films, but largely in novels by the likes of Eudora Welty and Carson McCullers. It's largely because of the supposedly grotesque appearance of the freaks in the film *Freaks* that it was banned and labeled as a horror film. It should have been a massive hit, but time has been incredibly kind to it!

The Elephant Man is another masterpiece, and that's because it was David Lynch pushing the limits of the mainstream by presenting his own style within a film that was Oscar bait. This is Lynch for the masses, and what's incredible is that he manages to make his style digestible for those who would usually not be overly fond of that sort of avant garde approach. It's not *Eraserhead*, nor is it even *Blue Velvet*, but the way the story of John Merrick is presented is so dead-on perfect that it's worth the time no matter what kind of film fan you are. The way that *Slate* talks about the film is just about exactly how I feel about it, which is always nice. It's a biopic crossed with a straight drama, crossed with an art house film. It works totally and completely on all levels.

Santa Sangre is much the same concept, but from Jorodowsky. It's a fair bit more avant garde, but compared to a lot of Jodrow's stuff, it's downright popcorn. I never need to see it again, because it's largely burnt into my brain, but it is a classic from a guy who understood how to make a classic.

There are more, like *Big Fish*, but really, they cover things pretty darn well. A really strong introductory episode, and even I found a couple of things I had no idea about.

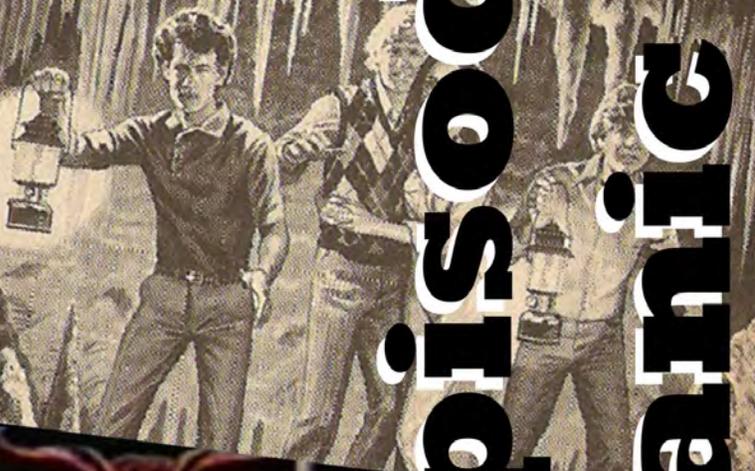
Episode 19 Satanic Panic

THE
Oprah
WINFREY SHOW

It could be the
horror movie, b
Cults are growing,
among young people. Find out
how to save your kids from

Satanic World
RONA JAFFE'S

MAZES AND MONSTERS



This is an awesome episode for a large number of reasons. There are many podcasts that deal with Satanic Panic to various degrees, like Last Podcast on the Left, and Tom manages to give it exactly the right level of Real World vs. Cinema World, because it was a HUGE freakin' deal! I was exactly the right age to have been in early elementary school during the McMartin Pre-School thing, and remember the way parents were freaking out the entire time.

But, this was also not the first time.

Films like Haxen about witchcraft played in the same stream. There have been various anti-witchcraft movements over the centuries, notably Salem, but also the anti-Crowley and Thelema movements of the early 1900s, and so many other ones. These are so clearly related to the Satanic Panic. The paranoia was tangible, and it was even amped up with The Exorcist.

There is no question that Rosemary's Baby is an excellent example of Satanic Panic, but more importantly, it's the foundation on which so many other films of the 1970s were built.

I Had never heard of Race the Devil, but the trailer they play makes it one of the BIGGEST must-sees for my near-future! Anton LeVay was the technical advisor! It sounds like a hoot, and probably less impressive than the fact that it's got both Peter Fonda and Loretta Switt. I gotta go and see it.

Tom talks about the Satanic Panic stuff of the 1970s, but also about how it was a big time for the expansion of horror films, notably follow-ons to The Exorcist (like The Omen, or the Sentinel) or Rosemary's Baby (like The Changeling or It Lives!) and how this set-up the emergence of the Slasher flick with the release of the incredible National Film Registry-listed film Halloween. This time gave us pretty impressive films in the horror genre, and satan was a major part of it.

Tom covers McMartin and the trial in-depth,

which is a good thing because it give you the ecosystem that these films came up in. It was a HUGE deal, and there were so many other films that featured not only Satanism, but that featured this terror of cults. Let's remember we were not too far removed from things like Jonestown. We had COBRA, Temple of Doom, and Young Sherlock Holmes, all of which used cults as a main stream. This wasn't necessarily satanic, but they were deeply tied together.

Tom covers PMRC, and how it was trying to censor metal music. That's not entirely true, but the entire music labeling thing would become a bit of a thing that led to major retailers not carrying music that hadn't been passed through the PMRC. It's a good section, especially the part that deals with the back-masking controversy. The entire episode is solid, but this is the best portion, including a ridiculously dumb demonstration about backmasking that's borderline hilarious. Slate then follows that up with a look at how he went to Christian Camp and there was a show that dealt with Satan and music! Awesome!

They had a great mention of Trick-or-Treat from 1986. It's an absolute classic that features Gene Simmons, and has Ozzy Osborne as a Televangelist! Seriously, this is an incredibly fun film, more than a little tongue-in-cheek, and one that gets over-looked. They talk about Angel Heart, which is a great film. I mean that. I know people spat all over it, but it's really creepy and plays with the tone amazingly well. While it gets looked at more for the Lisa Bonet nudity thing, it's actually a decent flick, and it reminds me of the Johnny Depp film Secret Window.

They talk Hellraiser, Evil Dead, Prince of Darkness, and various others. It's a good portion, but it really is the look at the real world. The Geraldo Rivera portion was a nice piece of news, that I knew, but had completely forgotten existed. They also point out that Oprah was trash-TV back in the day, and that she had participated in the Satanic Panic by having a show about Satanists who participated in rituals and so on. They also play a section from Sally Jesse Raphael. It's again the best part, as it goes into the reality again, and it provides a lot of context. They even talk about the amazing kids book Don't Make Me Go Back, Mommy which is to warn kids about Satanic Ritual abuse, complete with supposed triggers for kids who have been brainwashed. They follow it up with the West Memphis 3 as well.

The film portion of the episode is good, but like with NC-17, they are talking about the world beyond films, and it's exceptional, one of the strongest Tom would do in the entire run.

Episode 20 Bodily Fluids Pee and Poop

This was almost too difficult for me to listen to, and thus, I'm talking about the Pee and Poop moments in films that have most effected me!

10) Team America: World Police

There's a Hot Carl. The episode talks about it a bit, but for a puppet-based film, to have one character unleash such upon another is a mark on my memory forever. The film isn't great, though it has dark and heavy laughs the entire way through.

9) Weird Science

Bill Paxton (or was it Bill Pullman?) gets turned into a shit monster. It's a funny moment, and it's one of the better moments in a film that doesn't hold together very well, but is chock full of great moments. Chet is the perfect example of how you can use poop as a comedy bit and not be too far over the top. They mention this one too.

8) The Loss of Sexual Innocence

Mike Figgis isn't the greatest filmmaker to ever live, but he's got his moments. The Loss of Sexual Innocence isn't one of them, but in an intermingled semi-narrative, he puts Adam and Eve in with an idea of sexual identity and awakening as a neat little metaphor. There's a scene where Adam and Eve pee together into a river. It's almost cute. Slate doesn't mention this one, but it's kinda niche and minor, but it actually plays with the idea of the awakening that the film is ultimately about.

7) Magnolia

Slate mentions this one, as an entire subplot in one of the most Robert Altman non-Robert Altman movies ever made hinges on a little kid, a Quiz Kid, having to pee and not being able to because he's on the television show. It's

another really strong metaphor, that our perceived obligations to our parents to use our strengths to their fullest often lead to our own personal downfalls. I completely get that one!

6) Secretary

This is the one that I found the most disturbing sign of submission in the history of film. Maggie Gyllenhaal is phenomenal in this film, easily her best performance to that date, and the way she demonstrates her dedication to her boss/lover (kinda) is by sitting in the chair and waiting, peeing herself along the way. It's an incredibly powerful moment, and of course Slate caught this one too!

5) Short Cuts

Here, we see Huey Lewis' news. They're in a boat, Huey needs to pee, and he happens to pee on a corpse. Slate talks about this one and gives it exactly the right amount of attention. Being a mark for Altman, I adore this film, while still recognizing the flaws, and I think this scene really shows what Altman was trying to get across.

4) A DAD

What, you ask. I understand, I'm just about the only person who regularly sees short art films, and I absolutely love them. In honor of the 100th anniversary of DADA, filmmaker Robert Cambrinus, makes a Dadaist film that is funny and strange, but it features a moment where a woman has something written across her chest, and a man then appears to pee on her, erasing the writing. Not sure it's legit golden shower, but it certainly looked like it! Not mentioned, but then again, how would they have known?

3) Harold and Kumar Go to White Castle

The BattleShits scene. It stars my dear friend Kate Kelton, and it's the high-point for the non-NPH-related comedy in this really lame movie. The sequel was terrible, but this scene was hilarious and perfectly played bathroom humor. They mention it very briefly.

2) Pink Flamingoes

I'm more of a mainstream John Waters fan than an early Waters nerd, though I must admit, Pink Flamingoes is a masterpiece of no-brow cinema. Devine was an absolutely genius. Her performance was sly and over-the-top in the same measure. The two poop scene, where Devine receives a bowel movement as a birthday present, and then the famous dog poop eating scene at the end while How Much Is That Doggie in the Window plays is legend. Slate loves John Waters, so how could he have avoided mentioning it? Well, he talked about it a lot!

Billy Madison

This is the only example of the use of pee as a positive character trait. Slate talks about the scene, and they even play the audio from it, but they don't mention it as the absolute sweetest moment, the only time in Billy Madison where Adam Sandler seems like he's playing a loveable character. Oh, he's likeable, but here he's downright loveable when another kid in the 5th grade class he's enrolled in pees his pants, and then he goes out of her way to convince the class that peeing your pants is cool. Plus, the line "If peeing your pants is cool, then consider me Miles Davis" is masterful writing!



Episode 21—Bodily Fluids Puke and Jizz

This one was a bit harder than the last. I get it, they're a part of what happens in film, but these are harder to deal with for me. So, here's another list like the last!

10) The Wrestler

This one sneaks under the radar, and there's really one moment, where Randy the Ram has a heart attack and ends up throwing up on the locker room floor. That's our indicator that there's something wrong. Also, there's a pee moment, as you see one of the old-timer wrestlers with a urine collection bag strapped to his ankle. Wonderful film, one of the best of the 2010s. They don't mention this one, I don't think.

9) The Silence of the Lambs

It's short, but who can forget the moment when Multiple Miggs sends a wad of baby-enabler towards Clarice? It's a brief but really important moment, and the only time anyone seems to be aware of that a Best Picture Oscar-winner has a jizz moment!

8) Happiness

Arguably Todd Solondz's most fucked-up movie, and it's got two particular jizz moments, and I seem to remember a puke moment or two as well. It's an impressive film, but Philip Seymour Hoffman's moment of jissmaticism is just disturbing.

7) Hot Tube Time Machine

A film that is completely enabled by vomit, as after drinking illegal energy drinks, a character vomiting on the hot tub controls ends up turning it into a time machine. This

is a very silly movie, but it is so much damn fun!

6) Team America: World Police

Remember when Parker and Stone of South Park fame looked to be the next big thing? They were supposed to change the course of media history, and aside from South Park, they really only had a few years where they were a big deal. Here, it's an overly long gag about a puppet puking for something like a minute and a half. It's funny... once. There's also a lot of jizz gags as well. It's weird.

5) Scary Movie

The start of a legendary franchise, and a terrible film. The moment that rates a 5th place finish is pretty obvious, though. There's a sex scene, and Anna Ferris, who I really like these days, is shot off by a stream of cum that is firehouse like! It's a good laugh, but ultimately, still a terrible movie.

4) Monty Python's The Meaning of Life

I'm actually not a huge fan of The Meaning of Life, but the song Every Sperm is Sacred is awesome, and the legendary Mr. Creosote vomiting scene is also remarkable. The use of vomit here is classic, and compared to the actual bodily explosion portion is minimal, but it's a memorable scene.

3) There's something About Mary

Hair Gel. It's a great gag. The idea that you have to fire off one before you go on a date is weird, but whatever. There's Something About Mary really cemented the idea of the 20th Century gross-out comedy. It was a lot of fun, and not entirely slight either.

2) Stand By Me

This deserves every accolade it gets as the best Stephen King adaptation. It's a wonderfully fun, smart, and poignant film that plays with many ideas that King uses in his straight horror, but they also amp it up with an incredibly solid sense of direction and one of the smartest scripts of the 1980s. The famous pie-eating contest story that features all the puke is awesome! It's over-the-top, but only because of the times it was made in. I love this film and the moment!

1) The Exorcist

Was there any doubt? The scene that helped define 1970s and 80s horror expectations for the mainstream was an incredible peasoup vomit moment. It was amazing, and it always makes me hungry. Because I love pea soup.



The second of Slate's director series, it's an impressive episode largely because Castle was such an impressive force. I should say one thing first – Joe Dante's *Matinee* is the single film dealing with the idea of William Castle and gimmickry in film. They talk a bit about it a bit, but really, watch it and you'll get a good idea.

The look at Castle is impressive, especially when they talk about the films just as much as the gimmicks. While Castle's gimmicks were what folks tend to talk about, but the movies themselves deserve some attention. They talk about his pre-film theatre work, where he used gimmicks as well. He wrote a play for a German actress in a weekend, and then vandalized the theatre in the early days of WWII, which ensured a good turn out for the show.

A film like *The Whistler* is actually a half-decent flick. It's a film Castle directed that showed he had a good eye for plot. It's the classic "I hired a hit man to kill me, and now I want to call it off, but I can't!" and Richard Dix is just about perfect in the role! And Gloria Stuart was in it too!

The film *Macabre* followed, which was directed and produced by Castle. It was kinda a reference to the French film *Les Diabolique*. It was not a great film, but it was entertaining. *Macabre* saw Castle issue 1000 dollar life insurance policies against dying of fright. It helped make *Macabre* a big hit. He followed that with *The Tingler*, and really, that was all about the gimmick, where there were buzzers attached to the seats. The film itself is among the worst I've ever seen, It's just boring and over the top, all at the same time. It's one of those great examples of the audience and theatre experience being a key part of enjoying a film. See: my entire body of writing about film as attraction.

Folks talk about the *House on Haunted Hill*

and the EMERGO gimmick. Slate talks about the movie, which is actually a very fun movie, and Vincent Price gives his best performance in a pre-1970 film. It was such a fun film, even if Castle's lack of nuance in direction meant that it wasn't an actor's film. The gimmick, of the skeleton that emerges from behind the screen and flew over the audience, was lame. Still, it was a decent film.

There are so many great things that Castle came up with. 13 Ghosts was a decent little movie, and the gimmick wasn't as intrusive as you would think, but it was still there. You were given a set of glasses that had two lenses: one red and one blue. If you look through the red one, you can see the ghosts, if you looked through the blue, you couldn't. That was a pretty simple gimmick, and the film didn't really need it, because it's a really watchable flick.

Homicidal was one of his better films, and critics at the time weren't overly kind, though some did compare it favorably to Psycho, which came out the same year. It's a decent film, with the possible exception of House on Haunted Hill, probably the best he directed. The gimmick was so weird, where there was a Fright Clock before the climax that allowed patrons who were too scared to walk out and get a full refund, though they had to go through Cowards' Corner, where they were berated. The old dats were so different, no?

Mr. Sardonicus was terrible, where supposedly the audience could vote on the fate of the main character. Zotz, a comedy so bad it deserves the capitalized TERRIBLE. 13 Frightened Ghosts featured a great contest where each of 13 countries it would be opening in had a beauty pageant and the winner was featured in the movie. Castle shot 13 minorly different versions, one with each winner. I've seen two of them, and they aren't good, but there is charm.

Castle worked with Joan Crawford, then on a comeback after her turn in Whatever Happened to Baby Jane?, in two very interesting films. Straight-Jacket was a decent little picture which also featured George Kennedy and Lee Majors. This time, the backers demanded no gimmicks, but Castle couldn't help himself, and had miniature axes made and handed out. Also, the Columbia logo, the Statue of Liberty-like female statues, was decapitated with the head laying at her feet. Slate gave it a big thumbs-up! The second was I Saw What You Did, and it was awful. Crawford was OK, but ultimately, it was a really poor film.

Castle produced Rosemary's Baby. He wanted to direct it after reading the book, so he optioned it, and when Legit Hollywood came calling, he basically was forced out of directing and instead produced it, and made a LOT of money for it. After that, he basically made one movie, Bug, and it was nothing special.



EPISODE 23—DEAD ON SET

This one, like all discussions of death, was hard for me. You do know I am terrified of death more than is reasonable, right? Still, this one was fascinating with so many films and stories that I had no idea about. Part of that was the fact that I am not as familiar with the behind the scenes stuff as the on-screen stuff. This is an incredible episode that shows their ability to deal with issues both in and out of the films themselves.

The silent era was a dangerous time, as actors were often forced to do their own stunts, and there was no real protective group. This led to some frightening scenarios, and like Jackie Chan ore than half-century later, actors were often putting themselves in great danger, with folks like Buster Keaton and Harold Lloyd taking risks that were not advisable. It's kinda shocking there weren't more deaths in that period.

The first one they talk about is *The Skywaymen*, which is lost. It was a plane crash, and many other early deaths are from plane crashes. After that, *The Warrens of Virginia* saw actress Martha Mansfield die after her dress caught fire when a match was thrown into the car... or at least that's the legend. Honestly, no one is quite sure what happened, and as is often the case, people pretty much only discuss her death instead of her life. She was good in *Jekyll and Hyde* with John Berrymore, for example.

After that, it was the silent that some think is the most dangerous in the silent era: *Ben Hur*. After the chariot race was re-shot, they supposedly offered many to whoever did the craziest stunt. That led to a death, but the rumors were always that there were many more that were covered up, but that's not actually true. *Hell's Angels* was the big one. It was the final celluloid resting place of three pilots. They used a bit of a documentary, I believe narrated by John Huston, that briefly described the film. It was a BIG picture, brought up by the success of *Wings*, and Howard Hughes

The next ones were big ones, in this case *Such Men are Dangerous*, where director Kenneth Hawks and nine others were killed, again in a plane crash. *The Viking* saw 27 people killed when the ship *The Viking*

blew up, Never carry dynamite when you're dealing with heat sources!

The Charge of the Light Brigade was fatal for a rider, but also for three dozen horses after breaking their legs when they hit trip wires. This did lead to some changes with how animals were used in movies. That was a big deal, and it was an important step towards protecting actors as well. Jesse James led to the entire No Animals Were Harmed In The Making of This Film after a horse died after jumping off a cliff.

Tom talks The Conqueror. Arguably the most interesting case, as it was filmed down-wind from the various Nevada Test Site, and there were tests a year or so before, but more than 90 of those who worked on the film ended up dying of cancer (or related causes) including Agnes Moorhead, Susan Heywood, and John Wayne. Maybe that's what they get for casting John Wayne as a Mongolian. Howard Hughes hated that this was made, and he supposedly bought every copy and wouldn't allow it to be re-released.

They bring up a Pontiac commercial that led to a death, which was a famous one.

Tom talks SHARK! It was a Troma film, and it was filmed by the legendary visceral director Samuel Fuller. Sam Fuller directing for Troma makes no sense in these days after Toxic Avenger, but there it is. Apparently, it was a shark that was supposed to be sedated, but ended up eating an extra. That led the film that was originally called Cane to be re-named SHARK! The now dead Burt Reynolds was the star initially, and afterwards it was stared by the sharks. Total exploitation in that case.

They spend a lot of time talking about Twilight Zone: The Movie. It was a major moment in the history of film safety, and the rise of Risk Management groups. It was a major part of the expansion of the entire consultant explosion of the 1980s and 90s. The lawsuits were giant, and the film wasn't as huge as you'd expect. The footage is on-line, but it's far from graphic. There was also four deaths in Braddock: Missing in Action 4, also in a helicopter crash.

The only Bollywood film they talk about was from 1989. The Life of Tipu Sultan was a major TV movie, and also saw 62 die when the studio caught fire. The most in the history of film. This supposedly led to some change to the industry, but not too much as many others have been injured in Bollywood filming over the years.

I had no idea that a pilot died in Top Gun. It's always the pilots who end up dying, sadly. He was involved in the shooting, not as a stuntman, apparently. The most famous of the cameraperson deaths was a part of the shooting of the unreleased Midnight Rider. One of the camera team, Sarah Jones, was killed by a passing train. They didn't have permissions, and OSHA got them on a number of violations. Jones' family started a movement to create better safety measures, and for lower-level employees to speak up even against the wishes of the director and producers. This death was straight-up negligence.

The Crow is likely the most famous, of course, after Twilight Zone. Brandon Lee died in a rousing game of Russian Roulette, and they CGled him in other scenes they hadn't shot yet. It was a part of the Bruce Lee curse, of course, which is a shame, because Brandon was an amazing talent... that film with Earnest Bourgnine notwithstanding.

Jackie Chan has always done his own stunts, but others in his films have been killed doing stunts. There are still deaths, despite the increase of safety factors. XXX, The Dark Knight, The Expendables 2 and some others. The Hobbit had some animals. After the Jones death, there has been even more stringent requirements, and it's been a bit safer, or so people are saying.

A solid episode, and one that I believe I will visit again in the near!



Episode 24 Underwater Slaughter

How can you not be afraid of the water? It's full of things that want to eat it, and the water itself, so necessary for the continuance of life, can drown you so damn quickly. The ocean, and even lakes and rivers, can be death traps, so it totally makes sense why they're the site for so many different horror-filled death film.

The real start of Underwater Slaughter has to be 20,000 Leagues, all the different versions. The giant squid attack in the Disney version is one of my all-time faves, and it led to so many insane and cheaply-done knockoffs. The Ed Wood classic Bride of the Monster features the worst effect in the history of Ed Wood's special effects basket. The scene of this moment in Tim Burton's brilliant Ed Wood is one of the best in the entire film (which should be on the National Film Registry, and I am pretty sure it will be) and is perfect.

Slate looks at The Monster on the Ocean Floor, which I'll talk about more later. It's not a good movie, but there's something there.

The bulk of the episode deals with Jaws and its fallout, and rightly so. It's just that important, and one of the big reasons that so many people my age and slightly older are often scared of the ocean. Jaws was an amazing film, and the difficulties of shooting Jaws is great and has served as the inspiration for a great documentary, The Shark is Still Working. If the making of a great film leads to a great documentary, that means its super amazing.

There is no end of films that were take-offs and references to Jaws. The one that specifically got to me was Piranha. Even Spielberg said that it was the best of the rip-offs. Joe Dante is one of my top ten directors, and his vision really defined the best of the 1980s for me. The fact that it was written by

the incredible John Sayles helps.

Orca is terrible, and one of the first films I remember seeing on VHS. We rented it from The Wherehouse in Sunnyvale which was where I got so many of my VHS tapes into the 2000s. There's really only scene that matters. If you've seen it, you're flashing back right now, but the rest of you, you'll need to visualize the scene of a Killer Whale miscarrying, which turns it into a murderous sea mammal. It's so bad, but it's a lot of fun ruining your image of these majestic sea mammals.

Alligator was bad, though it really set the stage for the classic Lake Placid, which while not great, was fun and a big part of the re-emergence of Betty White. The second Piranha was directed by the legendary James Cameron. It's terrible, but in a fun way. Cameron's always been obsessed with the water, from Titanic to the exceptionally good The Abyss.

Yes, they talk about the Jaws sequels, though the first one was really good. In fact, the way it was made really made it exciting. The third one, aka Jaws 3D, was a part of that 1980s 3D wave that included Friday the 13th 3D and a few other terrible ones. The film features Lou Gossett Jr. as the guy who's running an amusement park that Jaws has infiltrated. It was a good concept, but poorly done, and so seldom shown in the original 3D format. There's a moment when a worker's body floats up in a window and the worst effect in flat ford, the shark swimming towards the control room. It's just terrible.

But nothing compared to Jaws: The Revenge. One of the worst, stupidest films ever made. Really, I've written about it for other Magazine and it was a real slog to make it through, even pointing out the stupid moments, like when Michael Caine comes out of the water with a dry short but wet hair. It's just full of stupidity.

The other film of these that I have a soft spot for is Deep Blue Sea. I've written about it before, largely due to the brilliant moment of Samuel L. Jackson giving a rousing speech, one of the finest in his career that didn't happen in Pulp Fiction. Only to be bitten in half as he was obviously wrapping it up in a nice bright bow. The entire film is so greatly terrible, with Saffron Burroughs in a clingy-wet shirt, and then LL Cool J and Aaron Eckert making it through. It's a TERRIBLE, and truly stupid film, but it was a fun one.

And that is season two! Overall, it was as strong as season one, and the entire series was so dang good up until that point. No, it didn't go downhill at all, but as it was at this point, the wait for Season 3 was insanely difficult!



I Drink Your Blood by Richard von Busack

This was viewed in a good print in De Luxe color on Shudders, a free channel on Roku.

By Richard von Busack

I Drink Your Blood is what *Manos* would have looked like if it were made 7 years later--not better, just with more permissiveness, and starring a pube-baring Satanist with Apache head scarf and shirtless vest instead of the ever-displeased Master. The Torgoescent Horace Bones is played by Bhaskar: actually Bhaskar Roy Chowdhury, an Hindu with an impressive set of abs and a hard-to-place accent similar to that of Tommy Wiseau--something like Chico Marx after a stroke.

Bones shows his bona fides immediately by sacrificing a chicken for Satan. (Thankfully, the hen is dead already--lots of animal cadavers get mangled in this movie, but no living ones.) Bones invokes the Lord of the Flies and the Monarch of the Overactors: "I am a Capricorn! Satan was an acidhead!" Bone's cult is called SADOS--"Sons and Daughters of Satan"

Among the typical squidgy nudist camp film bodies displayed at this bedevilling is the tastefully nude and uncredited Lynn Lowry, of the wide, zonked, slantindicular gaze and the numb firm mouth. No one likes

a stage door Johnny, so let's refrain from cataloguing the lissome Lowry's efforts in detail. But they include *Sugar Cookies* (where she sported with Mary Woronov) and Radley Metzger's gorgeous *Score*. She worked for King Cronenberg, too.

The theme is Mansonism. Sharon Tate wasn't cold in her grave yet, and the public was quite worried about knife-wielding hippies. Manson was a smelly murderous scruff, but worse, he was a racist. By contrast, *Bones* leads has a multi-culty cult, very fey, highly theatrical: about one chorus of "Day By Day" short of breaking out into a production of *Godspell*.

The roster includes pregnant Molly (Rhonda Fultz, the best actor in the movie). Rollo (George Patterson) is a fey parasol-wielding African American who is about as scary as Ben Vereen. Sue-Ling is played by Stockton's own Jadin Wong. In this rare screen appearance, Wong is dressed as Dr. No's girlfriend, with chopsticks in hair and cheong-sam. Wong had a remarkable career. Streisand opened for *her*. In later life Wong was invited to the White House, and as an agent she represented performers as varied as John Lone and Lucy Liu.

The campfire ritual is discovered by a passing townie Sylvia (Arlene Farber) who is assaulted--mostly off camera, though it must have been worse before director David E. Dursten cut this for an R rating. If you seek a film that accurately depicts the trauma of rape, *I Drink Your Blood* isn't for you--Sylvia is literally rolling in the hay a day later her ordeal. Local reactions to Sylvia's assault range from fecklessness to indifference. When the obvious suspects, a Mystery Machine full of weirdoes arrives, sure, rent them rooms and sell them meals.

The SADOS invade Valley Hills, NY (actually Sharon Springs, NY) a nigh ghost town about to be inundated by a hydro electric project: "There's no one left in Valley Hills because of your damn dam!" says a subsidiary character to Roger (John Damon) who cannot be arsed to do anything: "Honey, rape is a little out of an engineer's domain." Oddly the only one with any gumption is young Pete (Riley Mills) who goes all Titus Andronicus on the SADOSes, dosing their meat pies with dreaded RABIES. (*I Drink Your Blood* anticipates *Desperate Living*'s use of rabies as a weapon of revenge; one guesses John Waters would come clean if asked if he borrowed this element from this movie.)

The hydrophobic and foaming Satanists are thus held at bay simply by splashing water at them. As you know, Bill, rabies victims loathe and dread the sight of water and cannot abide its very touch. You thought hippies hated baths before, ha ha.

There are four pillars necessary for a really bad movie, and here are two: little-theater quality actors and important social commentary; heavy, solemn narration and stock footage are the other two pillars missing here. *I Drink Your Blood* has one reference to the self-immolation of Vietnamese monks as well as to the important social prob of hippie maniacs.

It's made with a certain amount of care, with electronic music on the soundtack, and helpful sound cues (a wolf howling to let us know it's night, and a rooster crowing to remind us it's morning). The quickly-cut finale emulates the gunplay at the end of *Bonnie and Clyde*; the editing here is worthy of the professional photography by the mysterious and perhaps psuedononymous Jacques Demarecaux.

It's producer Jerry Gross created a drive-in double bill by pairing this lulu with a retitled '60s zombie movie by Del Tenney (*The Horror of Party Beach*); thus I EAT YOUR SKIN met I DRINK YOUR BLOOD. As for the whimsical director, Dursten began his career working on TV's prestigious *Playhouse 90* and ended doing 3D gay porn. As "Spencer Logan" he directed 1978's *Manhole*, the plot of which sounds a little like 1980's *Cruising*, which came out two years later.

Cine mauvaise expert Michael Weldon describes *I Drink Your Blood* as "comedy(?)"--the question mark can be safely dropped, considering the repeated views on an office wall of a schedule for the El Rancho drive-in theater in Montgomery County--still in business in 2018, *mirable dictu*. You certainly don't have to remind yourself it's only a movie. Clearly it's not to meant to scare, despite the flying amputated limbs and fire-engine red stage blood.

And it's no spoiler to quote one of the beautiful last lines here: "Well, what can you say. At least the poor bastards have been put out of their misery." Clearly it's not to meant to scare, despite the flying amputated limbs and fire-engine red stage blood. If it's missing the deep-down threat of H. G. Lewis' revered *Two Thousand Maniacs*, it would otherwise be a fine double-up for an audience of demented oddballs.

