

DISTURBED

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This collaboration dealing with the fiendish world of the disturbed cinema is hopefully something that you, the reader, might have an affinity with. If not, then let us guide you through the dark chasms of the human mind. At the end of your journey, rest assured you will be thankful that your one pound coin was not spent on a rather fruitless attempt at winning the lottery.

The purpose of this pilot magazine is to give you an insight into the controversy surrounding the darker side of cinema. But please take heed, it's only introductory. The imagery which haunts you as you immerse yourself in the murky depths of this tome, is merely the proverbial tip of the iceberg. Each theme has been condensed to give you a taste of what's to come. We hope to tempt you with forthcoming special issues revealing more devilish intricacies of the genres which lie within.

Those of you willing to allow *Disturbed* to penetrate your mind, will learn much about cinema of a different nature, and maybe even a little about yourselves.

Enjoy this fleshy feast and keep your mind open.

Photos: Kostas Voulgarakis

Editors: Mat Hunt & Nick White

Writers: Matt Fossick, Mat Hunt,
Kostas Voulgarakis, Nick White

How To See Banned Films...

You're not going to find video nasties on the shelf of your local Blockbuster, but that doesn't mean that they're impossible to get hold of... Pirated videos are on open sale at car-boot sales up and down the country, but because copying and selling banned films is illegal, you won't be able to get your money back if you buy a bootleg tape and it turns out to have crap picture and sound.

Contrary to popular belief, cinemas *can* show banned films, if they have permission; the BBFC's cinema censorship is not legally-binding, it's merely advisory. Local councils are under no obligation to agree with BBFC decisions, and they can show banned films if they like. For instance, in 1974 the BBFC banned *The Texas Chain-Saw Massacre*, but the Greater London Council ignored the BBFC and gave permission for the cinemas in its area to show the film.

To screen a banned film, a cinema would have to ask for permission from its local council, as was the case last year in Birmingham. The Midland Arts Centre

asked Birmingham City Council for permission to screen three new European art films which all contain brief scenes of hard-core sex. None of the films had been viewed by the BBFC. The council agreed to the screening of two of them (*The Idiots* and *I Stand Alone*), but rejected one (*The Life Of Jesus*). Nearby Coventry

Spain being particularly liberal. Indeed, if you can't find a film in Spain than you won't find it anywhere, because they tolerate just about anything. If you're bringing back banned films along with your other souvenirs after a holiday, British customs could confiscate your tapes. Customs sometimes turn a blind eye to horror films from abroad, but they're bound to impound foreign porn. Why not put the internet to good use, by ordering



City Council, though, did give permission to show *The Life Of Jesus*, as did several other councils across the country. The film has still not been classified by the BBFC, so it can't be released on video. If buying bootleg tapes is too dodgy, or your local arts centre's screening policy is restricted by a reactionary council, the only other option is to buy from abroad. All kinds of forbidden films are on open sale across Europe, with Italy and

videos from America? American companies such as Reel and Amazon are all too pleased to sell you videos online. Assuming you can get these imports through customs without detection, you'll need an NTSC-compatible VCR and TV to watch them on.

MAT HUNT

The Twisted Triumvirate

Seeing as this magazine is about films relating to the dark side of the psyche, we thought we'd list a selection of the most psychologically disturbed characters in the cinema. Part of the fun of watching a film is identifying with the characters on-screen, but anyone who identifies too strongly with any of the following probably needs some therapy...

NORMAN BATES



You've probably seen Alfred Hitchcock's *Psycho* (1960) about a million times (and if you haven't then you

should), but if you're not familiar with young Master Bates (a deliberate pun from Hitchcock), then here goes. Norman Bates is a very unfortunate young man. A domineering mother, who made sexual advances towards him, has left him shy and withdrawn. When his dad died, his mother found someone else, and Norman - in a fit of Oedipal jealousy - killed them both. He couldn't bare to lose his mum, of course, so... he kept her corpse in the cellar. The problem with a corpse, though, is that it can't really engage in conversation. But resourceful Norman Bates had a solution: he developed a split personality, so that one half was himself and the other half was his mother.

And Norman was perfectly happy, running a motel and talking to himself, sometimes wearing his mother's clothes (and why not?). But the real problems started whenever guests stayed at the motel,

especially if they were female. Marion Crane checked into cabin #1, and Norman liked the look of her. Now, here's where it gets complicated:

Norman fancied Marion, but the mother-half of his mind was jealous. So Norman dressed up as his mother, stabs Marion, then changes back into his own clothes. Once he's back as Norman, he forgets what he's done, and when he's finally caught, the mother-half of him takes over completely. Oh, and as if all that wasn't weird enough, there's also the small matter of Norman's hobby (taxidermy), and the script's subtle hints at incestuous necrophilia ("A boy's best friend is his mother", etc.).

TRAVIS BICKLE



Martin Scorsese's *Taxi Driver* (1976) is a powerful and violent study of urban alienation. Robert DeNiro plays cabbie Travis Bickle, a Vietnam veteran who's been having sleepless nights. He meets a woman, Betsy, but she dumps him pretty much straight away. His TV set gets smashed. He shaves his hair off. Individually, these are inconsequential events, but by the end of the film you realise the cumulative effect they've had on Bickle. He shoots 'Sport', who pimps for a child-prostitute called Iris. To Bickle, killing Sport is a moral act, and he's congratulated for it by Iris's parents. But the most important thing about Bickle is his motivation: what made him go on his killing spree? Was it 'Nam flashbacks? Loosing Betsy? Loosing his TV? The only clues are in the disjointed monologues Bickle narrates. As he drives his taxi through New York at night, he hopes for "a real rain" to "wash all the scum off the streets".

DARTH VADER



More Oedipal problems, this time for Darth Vader, the evil Dark Lord of the *Star Wars* films (1977+). Vader was formerly a Jedi Knight called Anakin Skywalker, but he was enticed by the Dark Side of the Force, and from then on he dedicated his life to the annihilation of the Rebel Alliance resistance movement. To make more sense of the story, see *The Phantom Menace* (released imminently), which shows us Vader's childhood (but doesn't hint at the evil Anakin is later to personify). Leading the rebel Alliance are Luke Skywalker, Princess Leia, and Obi-Wan Kenobi. Obi-Wan once instructed Vader in the ways of

the Force, so he must be kicking himself now, what with his star pupil growing up to be the Dark Lord of the Sith. Vader and Obi-Wan meet up again, in a light-sabre duel. As Vader says, "We meet again, at last. The circle is now complete. When I left you I was but the learner; now, I am the master". "Only a master of evil, Darth", reminds Obi-Wan. "Your powers are weak, old man", the Dark Lord points out (not entirely correctly, though Kenobi does loose the duel). Later, Vader and Skywalker also duel, at which point Darth reveals that he is Luke's father. This puts an end to the duel, as neither of them can bring themselves to kill the other. And there's more: Luke's had his eye on Princess Leia, but any hopes of reciprocation are dashed when it is revealed that she's his sister. So, is *Star Wars* a harmless kiddie's film about the battle between good and evil, or is it a dark and disturbing tale of incestuous desire and sordid Oedipal antics? Or is it, in fact, both?

MAT HUNT

Snuff:

All This Filming Isn't Healthy

The French philosopher Voltaire said: "If God did not exist, it would be necessary to invent him". Voltaire wrote those words in the 18th century, and in our more godless times it might be appropriate to make an alteration: "Snuff movies do not exist, therefore it is necessary to invent them". Despite the lack of any real evidence to support the existence of snuff movies - films in which kidnap victims are killed on-camera - the rumour-mill continues to churn out speculation and hearsay. Recently, the snuff myth can be said to have well and truly entered the mainstream, as the Hollywood action film *8mm* (released earlier this year) revolves around the discovery of a snuff film. In *8mm*, Nicholas Cage plays a private detective who is contacted by a rich, elderly lady. Her husband has just died, and she found an 8mm film reel in his safe. The reel seems to show the assault and murder of a woman, and the

lady asks Cage to ascertain whether or not the woman really died. Cage's character is initially sceptical, dismissing snuff as "an urban myth". After more investigation, though, Cage changes his mind, manically shouting "The film is real".

Essentially, *8mm* is a mere propagation of the myth that snuff is some sort of ne plus ultra of film violence, a myth which began in 1969, when Charles Manson's followers (known as The Family) murdered actress Sharon Tate. There were rumours at the time that Manson had stolen a video-camera from a TV studio, leading to inevitable speculation about the grisly goings-on he could have filmed with it.

The killer in *8m* says that what turns him on the most about what he does is the faces of his victims at the moment of death. The same applies to the killer in a film made exactly forty years ago: *Peeping Tom* (1959). In *Peeping*

Tom, a camera-operator stabs several women with his camera tripod, and films their deaths (one of the women warns him ominously: "All this filming isn't healthy"). We, the audience, see the women's faces at the moment of death, just as the killer does, therefore we are implicated in the crimes: we are forced to confront our voyeuristic curiosity. The film was hated by the critics when it was first released ("shovel it up and flush it down the nearest sewer", suggested one journalist) - maybe this was because they couldn't, or wouldn't, accept the questions it raises about our desire to observe at any cost. Long before *8mm* took snuff into the multiplexes, director Michael Findlay made a low-budget film subtly titled *Snuff* (1976). *Snuff* is, at first, an unremarkable sexploitation flick, though it changes very dramatically in its final scene. We hear



someone shout "Cut!", followed by a sequence supposedly showing the film's director kissing the lead actress. Then, the 'director' is shown cutting off one of her hands, stabbing her in the stomach, and, ahem, pulling her guts out through her vagina. There are no end-credits for the film, no cast-list: nothing to reassure us that the woman we've seen being killed was only acting.

Snuff was advertised with the tag-line "Made in South America - where life is CHEAP!". The implication is that what we are watching is a real murder on film, with no special effects. In fact, the effects are certainly not special, but they *are* affects. The film was originally called *Slaughter*, and was made in 1972. The final scene was added four years later to justify the title-change and make the film more 'marketable'. It isn't really the director we see 'murdering' the girl, and the ridiculous butcher's shop offal and raspberry-sauce 'blood' prove that this was no genuine killing. Audiences wanted to believe that *Snuff* was genuine, which is why its tasteless tag-line drew in the crowds instead of scaring them away. We've all driven past car accidents and slowed down to get a better look, and this

voyeurism is the same trait which drew audiences to *Snuff* in the 70s. We go to horror films not only to be scared but also to watch characters being killed. We like observing death (either real or fictional) because it tells us more about what the process will be like for ourselves and it makes us feel superior to those whose deaths we see: we are reminded of our own mortality and also distanced from it by time.

Enjoying the suffering of others is not a particularly virtuous pleasure, but it has been an important part of the human experience for centuries: gladiatorial championships in Roman amphitheatres, Victorian public executions... ours is a society, after all, which has elevated Muhammad Ali to the status of cultural icon for no other reason than his ability to knock the shit out of people in a boxing ring.

Nicholas Cage may shout about snuff being "real" in *Smm*, but saying a lie louder doesn't actually make it any more true; no police officer anywhere has ever found a genuine snuff film. British customs occasionally seize films which are thought to be snuff, but these invariably turn out to

be S&M tapes depicting painful but consensual degradations. Vice

squad officers sometimes raid film fairs looking for pirate tapes, and whenever they find banned horror films the press has a field-day with totally unsubstantiated headlines about snuff.

The most surprising thing about the lack of evidence of snuff's existence is that it would actually be fairly easy to make such a film: camcorders are widely available, and people are kidnapped and murdered everyday, yet police have still never convicted a murdered who has filmed their crimes. The closest police have ever come to discovering a genuine snuff film was in April this year, when two Germans were jailed for the murder of prostitute Jueleyha Akpinar. The two men had kidnapped her and tied her up in a deserted farmhouse. They tortured her on-camera, then left her overnight, intending to return the next day and kill her for the camera. However, she died from her injuries during the night, and thus her death wasn't captured on film.

The deaths of murder victims may not have been recorded, but this does not mean that real death on film does not exist. Those who wish to satiate their

voyeuristic instincts have videos such as *Faces Of Death* at their disposal - compilations of filmed executions and autopsies. You've seen *Police, Camera, Action?* Well, just as that compiles careless driving footage from police cameras, so Mondo documentaries like *Faces Of Death* compile camcorder footage of fatal accidents, live TV suicides, etc. There are currently five films in the *Faces Of Death* series, and a similar series - *Traces Of Death* is four films long.

The reason they keep making more is that people want more, and the biggest market is in Japan. Also, the Japanese are the makers of much of the world's extreme S&M tapes, and this year Interpol revealed that 80% of the child pornography on the internet is made in Japan. It's hardly surprising, then, that the Japanese could make a film like *Flower Of Flesh And Blood*, which is probably the

most convincing fake snuff film ever.

Flower Of Flesh And Blood is part of a series of short films called *Guinea Pig*. It was made for the video market in Japan in the 1980s, but no more details about its production are known - no-one can prove who the director is, or who the actors are. In the film, a young woman is tied to a table and then slowly dismembered in very graphic detail. Her limbs are hacked off one-by-one, and she is finally decapitated. The film deliberately follows the conventions of what a snuff film 'should' look like: the action is confined to one room, the camera is hand-held, and there are no titles or end-credits.

The film has been designed to appear amateurish (to create a sense of authenticity), and its violence is very realistic. Actor Charlie Sheen saw the film in 1991, and, convinced that it was genuine, he handed it over to the FBI. The Bureau

established that it was a fake, but it's so brutal that it's banned all over the world. *Flower Of Flesh And Blood* is not a genuine snuff film, and this is apparent if it is analysed closely.

Despite the verité-style filming, there are clearly multiple camera set-ups, and even point-of-view shots, indicating that it is a professional film rather than a snuff movie. In fact, another film in the *Guinea Pig* series is a *Making Of 'Flower Of Flesh And Blood'* documentary, showing how the violent special effects were achieved.

The film's sole purpose is to simulate the mutilation of a young woman - there is no other narrative - and obviously this raises questions about the nature of its target-audience. However, the film contains no genuine violence, and, to quote again from Voltaire, freedom of expression should always be paramount: "I disapprove of what you say, but I will defend to the death your right to say it".

MAT HUNT



Die Quietly, Sleep Silently

Millions of people currently carry organ-donor cards, authorising the transplantation of their internal organs after death. And if you were honest, wouldn't you agree that the best way to die would be while having sex ("At least I'll go with a smile on my face", etc.)? So, we've got no problem with being cut up after we die, and dying during sex would be a good way to go. Now, let's imagine that you're having sex and you do actually die half-way through. Should your partner: a) call the hospital straight away, or b) wait until the, er, cork has popped, and then phone the hospital? Most of us are definitely 'a' people, right? But if you're a 'b' person, write to Stuart Home (at BM Senior, London, WC1N 3XX) for a free 'necrocard'.

With a donor card you can leave your body to medicine or science, and necrocards work on a similar principal, except that they're used for sex lives rather than for saving lives. Of course, necrocards are not legally binding, though, surprisingly, necrophilia itself isn't actually illegal. After a person dies, the law states that the body must be either buried or

cremated. There are some exceptions to this, though: an autopsy may need to be performed, organs may be donated (with consent), or the body may be used for scientific research (again, with consent). Prolonging burial without good cause is a crime, and necrophilic sex would obviously be deemed an improper prolongation of burial, but, crucially, it's the delay in burial that's the criminal offence, not any acts committed in the course of the delay.

One person who knows all about the legal ramifications of necrophilia is Karen Greenlee, who was arrested in 1979. Greenlee worked at a funeral directors in California, and had

regular sex with the male corpses she embalmed there. One day, instead of taking a corpse to its funeral, she drove the hearse over the state border and spent two days alone with the body. When the police tracked her down, she confessed to sleeping with up to forty corpses. She was jailed for eleven days.

Greenlee insists that necrophilia is common amongst morticians, and this is also the standard approach that cinema takes to the subject.

Necrophilia is obviously one of society's greatest taboos, and consequently it's not a topic which is particularly common in cinema. There are a handful of very sleazy European horror films which deal very



explicitly with the subject (more about them later), but virtually the only necro-themed film most people in this country can legally see is *Kissed*, an independent Canadian film from 1996.

necrophilia being "the hardest deviance" to practice (rigor mortis, etc.).

Ferman has described *Kissed* as a "gentle" film, and this is exactly what it is: beautifully photographed, and

films. Their director, Jorg Buttgereit, clearly envisaged these films as pure exercises in bad taste. He even has no qualms about including stock footage of rabbits, cats, and seals being killed for real. Animal-

I request that after my death:

A. my body be used for any type of sexual activity ☐

or

B. gay only ☐ straight only ☐ I do not wish my body to be dismembered or disfigured (during necropsy: see ☐ (tick as appropriate))

Signature _____ Date _____

Full name
(BLOCK CAPITALS) _____

In the event of my death, if possible contact:

Name _____ Tel () _____

Issued by Necrot Affairs, 1941 Denon, London WC1N 3BX. Send Stamps or PCCs for further information.

Kissed stars Molly Parker as Sandra, a character who has many parallels with Karen Greenlee: Sandra and Karen were both fascinated by dead animals as children, they both work in morgues, and... they both have sex with young, male corpses. Necrophilia is a horrific subject, but *Kissed* is in no way a horrific film. It doesn't dwell on necro-sex itself, and its '18' certificate is due to the general necro theme rather than to any explicit content (of which there is none). James Ferman, BBFC director from 1975-1999, passed the film uncut on video last year because "the subject-matter is too obscure to generate anti-social behaviour". For good measure, he joked about

inoffensive without being bland. But it does pose the question: why make a gentle film about something as unsettling as necrophilia? Having sex with a rancid corpse is surely not a gentle act. For more exploitative, far less gentle, totally unsubtle depictions of necrophilia, look no further than the *Nekromantik* films from Germany, *Aftermath* from Spain, and *Beyond The Darkness* from Italy. *Nekromantik* (1989) *Nekromantik II* (1991) are both shot in grainy 8mm. They include mutilations and decapitations in addition to necrophilia, and they're both banned in Britain. The fact that they're banned, though, is no great hardship, as they're both pretty awful

lovers are therefore advised not to watch the *Nekromantik* films. If animal-lovers should be wary of *Nekromantik*, then *Beyond The Darkness* (1979) should be avoided by, er, people-lovers, due to its use of real human corpses in some scenes. *Beyond The Darkness* (aka *Buio Omega*, aka *Blue Holocaust*, aka *Buried Alive*) is a truly disgusting Italian horror film about a taxidermist who murders women and then has his way with them. Don't worry - real corpses aren't used for the necro scenes (that would be *really* sick), but scenes showing autopsies and cremations *do* use real bodies. This film clearly isn't for the squeamish, in fact such a necrophilia-themed

horror film which includes real autopsy and cremation footage is probably of most interest to necrophiliacs themselves.

Unlike *Nekromantik* and *Beyond The Darkness*, the Spanish necro-horror movie *Aftermath* (1994) actually looks like some time and money was spent on the making of it. Its lead character is a mortician who performs an autopsy on a female corpse, fondles her breasts, stabs her, then has sex with her. When he's finished, he puts her heart in a bag, takes it home, mashes it up, and feeds it to his dog (giving new meaning to the phrase "Have a heart"). *Aftermath* - probably the most expensive of the European films mentioned - may have cost more, but it certainly isn't any more mainstream. It was filmed in a real morgue, and no fake props were used: the clothes, knives, autopsy tables, bone-saws, etc. used in the film are all taken from a real morgue.



All of the films mentioned concern the

necrophilic tendencies of morgue attendants, and this seems to be an accurate reflection of real-life necrophilia: the desecration of graves is virtually unheard of in Britain, and the only other way to gain access to corpses is to work with them. What is not clear, though, is at what point necrophilic feelings begin to manifest themselves: do necrophiliacs work in morgues to satisfy their urges, or do some people who work in morgues become necrophiliacs after some time in the job?

Certainly, performing an autopsy is an unthinkable act for most people, but for coroners a post-mortem is merely a medical procedure, probably comparable to a surgical operation on a living patient. And when we're anaesthetised in an operating theatre, who knows what happens to us?

Finally, a selection of famous figures from history who died during sex (whether they're 'a' or 'b'-inclined is sadly



not recorded)...

- Attila the Hun died in 453 as he was consummating his twelfth marriage. He may have burst an artery during the act, though his wife is also rumoured to have poisoned him.
- The Duke of Orleans died of a stroke in 1721, exhausted by a mistress thirty years younger than him.
- Felix Faure, president of France, no less, died in a brothel in 1899 (tasteless-but-true fact: he had to be surgically removed from the body of the prostitute who he was 'with' when he died).
- Lord Palmerston, British prime minister, died in 1865 while committing adultery with his parlour-maid on a billiard table. And, surprisingly, four popes have died during sex:
- Pope Leo VII (in 939),
- Pope John VII (in 964),
- Pope John XIII (in 972), and
- Pope Paul II (in 1471) - divine punishment, perhaps?

MAT HUNT

And so, we come to the end of the pilot issue of Disturbed. If you aren't sitting in a pool of sweat and trembling with fear at the prospect of the next literary injection, then you haven't been paying enough attention. If it's Italian flesh-starved zombies that flick your switch, psychopathic killers, or the dark underworld of organised crime, we hope that they have managed to quench your thirst.

Created in just under two months, many a sleepless night was spent with only a VCR for company. Non-stop video-viewing from dusk til' dawn took its toll on all of us. Several nervous breakdowns were narrowly averted during the making of this opus so if, at various moments whilst reading, you had the impression that the writers were a little too involved, then maybe we were.

It's now time to relax your grip on this magazine, sit back and worry yourself to death about whether the dark side of your psyche will transform you into the next Norman Bates. You can't escape, everybody has a dark side. What you have to ask yourself, is whether you have the strength of mind to control your fears.

Management accept no responsibility for readers suffering from insomnia, damp sheet syndrome or blood lust.



Matt Fossick Nick White Kostas Voulgarakis Mat Hunt

