

Paper Cuts: Wild Posters #7: "SHIVERS"

Written by Tal Zimmerman
Sunday, 30 May 2010 08:21



SHIVERS (a.k.a. THEY CAME FROM WITHIN)

1975, Canada

Poster country of origin: France

47" x 63"

During my teens, discovering horror beyond the oft-mentioned classics would amount to a real crapshoot. The limited resources offering reviews and insights into the genre made good and certain that the bigger titles—those that still sit on many a top-10 list—would be the jumping-off point of my horror education.

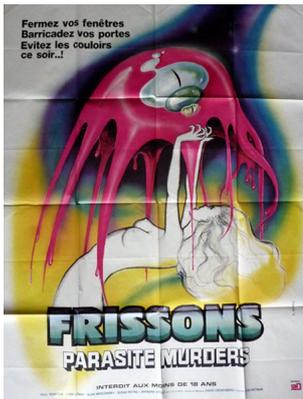
Reaching beyond the standards, taking home so-called "lesser" exploitation titles could steer my after-dark movie-watching sessions into certain territories the staples most often could not. H.G. Lewis' BLOOD FEAST, for example, shocked me for a number of reasons. The combination of low production quality with a high gore content turned my entire world upside down, opening the possibilities of a world where budget, cohesive storytelling and desire to appeal to the masses were not prerequisites for an effective product—someone could simply combine lamb guts, stage blood and a camera, and they had a horror movie. My mind ignited with the thought of a thousand renegade filmmakers risking it all so I could revel the red stuff, up close and personal, and without input from "the man."

I soon learned, however, that the crapshoot wouldn't always reward me with titillation. Often, it was aggravation. Many video incarnations of fringe titles were either edited for gore, poorly transferred or just plain bad. Sure, a lot were actually good and uncensored, and even watching

Paper Cuts: Wild Posters #7: "SHIVERS"

Written by Tal Zimerman
Sunday, 30 May 2010 08:21

the bad ones could still be fun, but the point is that wading out into the deep end was an at-one's-own-risk endeavor. My conclusions at the time were that the popular movies were popular for a reason, and that everything that followed was but a poor (but potentially entertaining) riff on their predecessors. How many more times did I need to see a collection of morons venturing into areas they shouldn't, only to be dispatched by zombies/masked psychos/werewolves/aliens/demons/sharks, etc.? It was all becoming rather stale. Then, one day, I took home David Cronenberg's SHIVERS, and realized that even at the wise age of 13, there was still so much more for me to learn.



I admittedly have little recollection of the specifics of that viewing of SHIVERS. I do, however, clearly recall the feeling that I was watching something unique. I didn't quite get the sexual tones, and I wasn't enamored of the FX, something that would have me practicing forgiveness for many a bad movie. But because Cronenberg didn't present me with a typical narrative, or even remotely typical themes, I had to work to appreciate what was going on. The weirdness got me. The strange, art-flick atmosphere got me. That feeling you get when you sense that you shouldn't be watching something was very present, and it got me. I didn't fully understand it, but I wanted more.

From there it was on to THE BROOD and RABID; again I didn't understand them, and again I wanted more. Cronenberg's THE FLY had just been released on home video, and the fact that it was more congruent with Hollywood standards than anything the director had made before only served to disarm me so much, key scenes still make me gag just thinking about them. By that point, I was able to stay current with his films upon their release. And course, I still am.

So you see, SHIVERS would forever change the way I look at movies. Let me rephrase that: Cronenberg's approach would change the way I look at movies; his filmography is proof that

Paper Cuts: Wild Posters #7: “SHIVERS”

Written by Tal Zimerman
Sunday, 30 May 2010 08:21

artistic vision and unpredictability are hallmarks of the genre at its best, and that even when we think we've seen it all, we most certainly have not. The French poster for SHIVERS, displaying an angry, oversized microbe forcing itself upon a woman, represents Cronenberg quite well—elegant and charming in its technique, positively repulsive in its subject matter and well ahead of the curve.

{comments on}