Written by Samuel Zimmerman
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Quite recently, a blog went up on FANGORIA taking a handful of legendary horror directors to task for essentially riding the waves of their legacy and failing to continuously and contemporarily put out excellent work. No doubt, it's an interesting theory worth debating and investigating. However in my eyes, its author made one fatal mistake (and no, it wasn't that confrontational opening line—although that was slightly devoid of taste). Nick sought to claim that Wes Craven neither is, nor ever was, great. I'm under the belief that no matter how you feel about many of his films, that's simply a falsehood. So with four weeks until the filmmaker's latest, MY SOUL TO TAKE, hits theaters, I've decided to look at one of his movies a week (excluding the landmarks like LAST HOUSE, NIGHTMARE and SCREAM) to showcase that even during misfires and his lesser praised works, Craven displays talent, chops and incredible imagination. Check out last week's right here and read on for week three—my look at 1988's Haitian Voodoo-zombie flick THE SERPENT AND THE RAINBOW.

"Listen to me, there's a door to the mystical, and you just walked through it," says Michael Gough to Bill Pullman. "Right now you are very vulnerable. I wouldn't go back to Haiti. You'd be a grade school boy in a world of Nobel Prize winners."

Considering the fine china, parlor room, bow ties and Boston/Cambridge Ivy League setting, and especially considering the American conceit of often thinking of ourselves as the most developed and intelligent (often in relation to third world and struggling nations), it's an interesting (and ironic since Pullman's Alan Dennis would presumably be awarded something akin to a Nobel Prize if his mission were successful) choice of words that hold a lot of weight in explaining just what makes well done horror and THE SERPENT AND THE RAINBOW so effective. It's that classic fear of the unknown, the different. A good many citizens of superpower nations around the world may study all they want, and the idea here is that Alan—being an anthropologist—has, but will never fully understand or not be unsettled by the clash of values, customs, superstitions and beliefs that often crop up in underdeveloped countries. Nor will they grasp that often their aid and wishes to help will have nary a dent of an effect thanks to corrupt political regimes.

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