

RIP “I DRINK YOUR BLOOD” director David E. Durston

Written by Michael Gingold
Wednesday, 19 May 2010 09:08



David E. Durston had a long career in movies, TV and on the stage, from touring with Bela Lugosi in theatrical productions of DRACULA to writing episodes of the early genre series TALES OF TOMORROW, among many others. But the man who died May 6 will always be remembered by fans of '70s horror as the writer/director of the cult fave I DRINK YOUR BLOOD.



According to [The Hollywood Reporter](#), Durston (pictured at a 2004 Cinema Wasteland convention) succumbed to complications of pneumonia at age 88 in his West Hollywood home. He got his start in summer-stock theater, and soon made the move to Broadway. He then leaped into the burgeoning television scene, contributing scripts to such noteworthy shows as PLAYHOUSE 90, KRAFT THEATER and STUDIO ONE, before making the move to independent features in the '60s. Approached by producer distributor Jerry Gross to come up with a flick for the drive-in trade that would “outdo in gore and horror” the recent hit NIGHT OF THE LIVING DEAD, Durston took on the then-thriving hippie scene with a film originally titled PHOBIA, in which a cult of devil-worshipping free-lovers are fed rabies-tainted meat pies and go on a bloody killing spree. “When I talked to experts about about rabies and what it did to the human mind,” the filmmaker told Fango in 2003, “there was no limit to what I could do with the horror.”

Originally rated X for its violent content, the movie received plenty of attention when Gross rechristened it I DRINK YOUR BLOOD and paired it with a several-years-old Del Tenney flick retitled I EAT YOUR SKIN; the double feature first hit screens in 1970 and played for years thereafter. Many prints were cut to make them acceptable to the communities where they played, however; years later, the uncensored version finally became available for home consumption via a special-edition DVD distributed by Fango and Grindhouse Releasing. Durston next wrote and directed STIGMA, a 1972 VD drama starring a pre-MIAMI VICE Philip Michael Thomas (coming on remastered DVD from Code Red June 8, with a Durston

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commentary); his last film was 1978's adult feature MANHOLE, starring Jamie Gillis and originally shot in 3-D, on which he took the pseudonym "Spencer Logan."

{comments on}