Written by Michael Gingold
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Neither memory nor a handy copy of the old VHS release allow me to compare the original director’s cut of THE DORM THAT DRIPPED BLOOD, which Synapse Films released today in a Blu-ray/DVD combo pack, with the version that played theaters (initially as PRANKS) and appeared on tape back in the ’80s. What can be said is that Synapse’s assembling of the behind-the-scenes talent for the supplements has paid greater dividends than their restoration of the movie itself.

This is not to take away anything from Synapse team’s efforts to present the most complete and best-looking version possible—their new transfer is leaps and bounds past any previous home releases. But beyond the reinstatement of some MPAA-trimmed gore (which nonetheless stands as rather tame compared to what R-rated horror gets away with now), there’s no revelation of a neglected gem here. The only movie I can recall being cited as a “Dog of the Week” twice on Siskel and Ebert’s TV review shows, DORM may not warrant that sort of repeat condemnation, but it’s awfully generic stuff, with all the slasher clichés present and accounted for. There’s the isolated location (a dormitory set to be closed down), the small group of young victims-to-be (students who have volunteered to clean the place out, some of them looking too old even for grad school) led by a sensible, sweater-wearing Final Girl, a weirdo red-herring character (played by Woody Roll, pictured above, apparently because Clint Howard wasn’t available), ominous point-of-view shots, a bit of nudity that even the filmmakers admit is gratuitous, phones that go dead shortly before the coeds do and a missing power tool that reappears later for some drastic misuse.

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