

## “DOUBLE EXPOSURE” (DVD Review)

Written by Chris Haberman  
Monday, 09 April 2012 16:18

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A frustrated and frustrating flick, *DOUBLE EXPOSURE* (now on DVD from Scorpion Releasing) is one of those odd jackalopes that awkwardly attempts to hop back and forth between a psychological horror film and character-study drama, with clearly more of an interest in the latter.

Though the film is widely regarded as a slasher movie (it was made in 1982), it's far less concerned with mimicking *HALLOWEEN* or *FRIDAY THE 13TH* than in presenting a paranoid study of depression and sexual woes. Despite featuring a succession of gruesome murders—indeed, a faceless, black-gloved killer does a bit of damage—the flick contains an abundance of soapy romance material that efficiently elbows the horror elements out of the way. That's not to say it isn't a fairly fascinating movie to challenge yourself with on a rainy Saturday afternoon (do *not* attempt to do the beer-and-friends screening the first time you watch it—it does not work).



Plot—and dig this cast: Men's magazine photographer Adrian Wilde (actor/producer Michael Callan) dreams that his models are being murdered, only for the dreams to come true. Is he the brute who's killing these women? Can his shrink (Seymour Cassel) help him solve this mystery? His one-armed, one-legged brother, B.J. (James Stacy) sure isn't much help—he's an angry man whose career as a stunt-car driver has given way to bitter divorce and partying. A guy/gal team of police officers (both rocking no-bullshit leather jackets and jeans) are on the case when they're not being yelled at by the chief (Cleavon Little). And while Adrian is coping with these strange deaths he envisions, his actual relationships with women are crippled by

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infidelity and inner turmoil. Along the way, Sally Kirkland, Pamela Hensley and Victoria Jackson show up, as well.

DOUBLE EXPOSURE, directed by William Byron Hillman, works very hard to be a serious, adult film—you will not find any horny teens goofing around here. The cast do the best they can to sell the pretty silly story with over-the-top intensity, which makes the film far more watchable than it should be. And the horror element? I'm sorry to say that with the exception of two pretty wicked murders, there's not much here for the slasher fans some seem to think this film is geared toward. It's much more focused on studying sweaty paranoia and maintaining a (now very dated) sensuality that's a bit entertaining in and of itself. However, I have caught myself grinning while showing friends one particularly cruel scene involving a rattlesnake and a garbage bag.

This disc comes to us as part of Scorpion's Katarina's Nightmare Theater line. Katarina Leigh Waters (former “WWE diva and current TNA knockout”) introduces the film *à la* Elvira, and is integral to the special features. She's right when she says the film's history is “overcomplicated” in her introduction to the film, which can be left on or turned off. We'll get to that in a moment, though.

A commentary by Callan, Waters and Scott Spiegel at first feels a bit like pulling teeth. Spiegel is really fanboy-giddy, which really doesn't interest Callan. Like, at all. There are plenty of interesting stories here—Callan answers questions, but he has to be asked the right ones in order to really deliver any goods.

Waters also chats on camera with Callan, who seems more in the mood to talk about how he came to be in show business. The guy looks great, by the way—not sure he aged since the movie, outside of some silver hair. He again discusses the film that brought this movie about, THE PHOTOGRAPHER (1975), which also starred Callan in the same role and wasn't seen much. The idea was to take footage from THE PHOTOGRAPHER and use it for EXPOSURE, which didn't last long when a lawsuit was threatened. He shares a very intense story regarding actor Stacy, who had just had his own car accident the year before EXPOSURE and was hopeful that Callan would put him out of his misery. Callan refused, but offered to kill Stacy in six months if he still wanted to die. Thankfully, this didn't happen. More talk about the cast, casting decisions and Callan's other films ensues, most of which is mildly interesting.

The other commentary by Waters, cinematographer R. Michael Stringer and his wife, script

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supervisor Sally Stringer, is a tad...snoozy. Yes, you learn a lot of tidbits, and for fans or students, I'm sure this is great stuff. Personally, I wondered what would happen if Spiegel came back in and started whooping it up with this group. Waters keeps things moving along when they slow down, but it's still a very, very mellow listen. Jack Goga's very passionate score is thankfully given a shout-out, which I noticed pulling me into film throughout when I was either losing interest or was way too distracted by the early-'80s aesthetic to appreciate the emotion of the scenes.

Scorpion is justifiably proud of this transfer as a “brand new 16x9 [2.35:1] HD master from the original internegative, first time anywhere in its original scope ratio.” The film looks excellent for a modestly budgeted (\$1 million) film. Also provided are EXPOSURE's trailer and delectable previews for other vintage Scorpion releases, including DEATH SHIP, THE SURVIVOR, THE HOUSE ON SORORITY ROW, DON'T ANSWER THE PHONE, FINAL EXAM, HUMONGOUS and THE INCUBUS.

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DVD PACKAGE: 🍷🍷🍷👤