

Getting the Fear: The Wild, Bloody West

Written by Philip Nutman
Thursday, 26 May 2011 11:47



I am back from the grave (literally; had to lay a parent to rest). Personal pain, and my blogging absence, aside, over the past few weeks I joined THE NIGHT CREW, a terrific webcast created/hosted by fellow Fango writers Sean Smithson and Thom Carnell (with a little backup from our editor, Mr. Alexander). When I was asked to contribute, my first words to “Butcher” Smithson were, “Can I talk about Westerns?” He may have scratched his head a second—then said “Yes!”

I have contributed to Fango for 29 years. I love my dose of good splatter, the trembling cleavage of a scantily clad maiden, her chest heaving in fear at the mad moves of the monster; I love actually being freaked out in a cinema...an event that seldom happens these days, sadly.

Give me sex, death and starshine, and I’m a happy lad.

But give me cowboys, killing, blood and moral regeneration on the range (i.e., redemption, usually through killing a few worthy scum) and I am happy as a snoozing clam in its shell, dreaming of desolation, death...and survival.



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In one of my early NIGHT CREW broadcasts, I proposed my theory that director Arthur Penn throwing blood squibs in the faces of 1967 audiences, as Warren Beatty and Faye Dunaway spurted blood in the climactic gore orgy of physical destruction in BONNIE AND CLYDE, opened a new door in cinema history. Sam Peckinpah took cinematic bloodshed to a new level in 1969 with THE WILD BUNCH...and without he and Penn opening the doors, breaking the barriers...well, we wouldn't have had the taboo-breaking explosion of filmic exploitation of death as catharsis that became an eruption in the late 1970s (and we probably wouldn't have this magazine, either).

So what does all this have to do with THE SCARLET WORM—an independent, low-budget Western—and why am I writing this? Well, in a few days, I shall explain all about one of the best movies you'll see soon. THE SCARLET WORM reinvents the Western. It is a film that transcends its meager budget to show fledgling filmmakers what can be achieved when imagination takes the reins. Characters conjugate like rampant verbs, and die in spurts of gun-smoked triggerisms...it is a ballet of blood and pain and hurt and soil...

But more later; for now, here's a taste:

{youtube}ppJC44TJSts{/youtube}

And to check out the NIGHT CREW podcasts, click [here](#).