

## Fango Flashback: “SHRIEK OF THE MUTILATED”

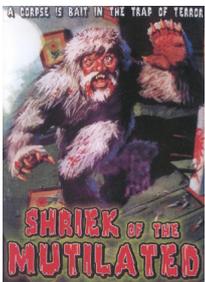
Written by Somerset Hamilton  
Sunday, 09 May 2010 15:54

---



When pondering iconic cinematic power couples, one pair who are *never* likely to be thought of are Michael and Roberta Findlay. The two have been appropriately dubbed “the most notorious filmmakers in the annals of sexploitation.” Meshing sex and sadism into one nasty mix, the couple took over the underground market of New York grindhouse theaters.

With Michael directing and writing and Roberta taking care of cinematography (and both of them acting), the two spewed out several “roughies” (pre-porn sex pictures) that began attracting crowds and making money. One such film, SATAN’S BED (1965), starred then-unknown Yoko Ono, only two years before she destroyed The Beatles. But what really brought the Findlays success was their FLESH trilogy: THE TOUCH OF HER FLESH (1967), THE CURSE OF HER FLESH and THE KISS OF HER FLESH (both 1968). The series was filled with fetishistic elements and catered to countless sexually repressed men and curious women everywhere.



But in the '70s, after the introduction of hardcore porn, and sensing they needed something new and relevant, they turned to horror. First up was 1971's THE SLAUGHTER (later re-edited and released as the still-notorious SNUFF). A couple of years later, the couple acknowledged the hot trend of Bigfoot and Yeti sightings and created what was to be their last movie together, SHRIEK OF THE MUTILATED (1974). The film follows an eccentric professor who leads a group of very trendy students into the wilderness in search of the infamous Yeti. Yes, the Yeti—the creature of Himalayan folklore, not the Sasquatch that hangs out in these parts. Before their departure, they are warned by *another* eccentric to stay away. Insert the most hilarious murder scene ever conceived for a horror film as the second eccentric freaks out on his wife before taking a bath with a toaster.

Ignoring the warnings, the students depart for the woods and stay at the house of yet another

## Fango Flashback: “SHRIEK OF THE MUTILATED”

Written by Somerset Hamilton  
Sunday, 09 May 2010 15:54

---

eccentric, whose backyard is of course the shambling grounds for the not-Sasquatch. Once there, the students insult a Caucasian-Native housekeeper and are individually murdered by the Yeti in the “less is more” variety. Oh, and the Yeti’s hunting call is “Iggly ooogly argh!” which it mumbles very loudly—almost as loudly as its heartbeat, which shakes the ground and signals that it’s approaching. Without spoiling the specifics of the, um, “plot,” a lone student survives only to have his mind blown (much like the audience’s) by the film’s final twist. It’s a real doozy, all right, and no one will see it coming.

Watching SHRIEK OF THE MUTILATED (currently available on DVD as part of Retromedia’s four-movie BIGFOOT TERROR set), my eyebrows going up my forehead to keep my eyes open, warm memories came back to me. Memories of Christmas morning when I was 12 years old, watching THE EVIL DEAD for the first time with my family (Christmas tree in one corner, a woman being molested by a tree in the other). Although that is the only comparison I will ever have linking the two films and the holiest of holidays, I found it to be fairly powerful and absolutely noteworthy. The nostalgia brought me back to far simpler times. I felt like I was a child again, making home movies in my backyard with my friends. Since Findlay was very much doing the same, maybe it wasn’t a coincidence.



After the (un)shocking disaster of SHRIEK, the couple split. Michael made gay porn, developed a new 3-D film technology and, in 1977—en route to the Cannes Film Festival to showcase that creation—was killed in a helicopter accident on the roof of the Pan Am Building in New York City. Michael and two other passengers were chopped to ribbons by the chopper’s spinning rotors. His last name was misspelled in the newspapers the next day.

Roberta made a name for herself as one of the few women directing hardcore porn and, in the ‘80s, she turned again to action and horror after a failed attempt at a feature chronicling the suicide of porn star Shauna Grant. She has since crawled under a rock and refuses to talk about her days with Michael doing stuff like SHRIEK OF THE MUTILATED.

And as much as I dig this turkey, I certainly don’t blame her.

## Fango Flashback: "SHRIEK OF THE MUTILATED"

Written by Somerset Hamilton  
Sunday, 09 May 2010 15:54

---

{comments on}