

Video: Toronto Critics and David Cronenberg Honor Late Cinepix Producer John Dunning

Written by Chris Alexander
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If you read my editorial in FANGORIA #309 (the David Cronenberg/SHIVERS cover) you're aware of my personal connection to the late producer John Dunning, who along with his partner, Andre Link co-founded and operated the legendary Montreal based Canadian exploitation and horror production/distribution outfit CINEPIX.

On Tuesday, January 10th the Toronto Film Critics Association – of which I am a voting member – posthumously awarded John (who passed in September of last year at age 84) the Clyde Gilmour Award at our lavish annual dinner and ceremony, for his pioneering, tireless work in Canadian film and for the massive barriers he broke in making lurid, lively homegrown pictures that were exported and adored internationally.

Cronenberg presented the award, telling tales of how his “movie father” mentored and influenced him, ushering his first two features SHIVERS and RABID into the world and standing by him, putting his unique visions on the map. The legendary filmmaker then gave the award to John's son Greg, who brought the room to silence and, for many—myself included—tears, as he emotionally accepted the honor, relating further stories of that wild west of weird cinema culture that he himself grew up in.

In the audience were CINEPIX alumni like producer Don Carmody (also profiled in FANGORIA #309) and director Larry Kent and comedian/actress Andrea Martin (SCTV) even stepped up to present another award while sharing anecdotes about another notorious Canadian horror show, the Ivan Reitman (who also was mentored by Dunning) classic CANNIBAL GIRLS.

In between the moving speeches was this, a sonic blast of CINEPIX clips and imagery edited by FANGORIA contributor and Montreal screening room BLUE SUNSHINE co-founder David Bertrand. In it, you'll find a flurry of sexy, violent segments from some of Dunning's most

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notorious works like the French Canadian soft porn VALERIE, the ILSA series, the Cronenberg classics, MY BLOODY VALENTINE, MEATBALLS, DEATH WEEKEND, FRANKENSTEIN 88....the list is long. Have a look.

{vimeo}34901555{/vimeo}

The evening represented something significant for yours truly as I helped bring this award to life, wrangled the players and was even with John in the summer when the press announced that he would be receiving. We all hoped he would make it to attend the event, but alas, he did not. But he passed knowing that he was loved and that his legacy was secure. And because of that, everyone at the TFCA should be proud...

For a look at the rest of the awards and some of the acceptance speeches (including Fango fave TAKE SHELTER and its stars Jessica Chastain and Michael Shannon) go [here](#).