

## Linnea Quigley Returns with the “LIVING DEAD” to Chicago!

Written by Brian Kirst

Thursday, 18 October 2012 09:46

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Horror icon Linnea Quigley has been in many fright films, but is perhaps best known for her raucous performance as Trash in Dan O'Bannon's 1985 cult classic THE RETURN OF THE LIVING DEAD. To celebrate her appearance at a RETURN screening at Chicago's 24-hour event The Massacre (see full schedule below) this Saturday, October 20, Quigley took a moment to discuss her most famous role and its lasting impression on the public with FANGORIA.

**FANGORIA:** You've been in many successful cult films, from HOLLYWOOD CHAINSAW HOOKERS to NIGHT OF THE DEMONS, but everyone seems to love Trash best. Do you believe RETURN OF THE LIVING DEAD is the film you're best known for?

**LINNEA QUIGLEY:** Yeah. It went to the theaters and played a lot. I think the mass majority of people love it, and I think there are more zombie lovers than demon lovers. And it was just done so well that someone who doesn't really love horror can watch it and still have a good time.



**FANG:** True—there's humor, a great soundtrack; there's a lot going on there.

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**QUIGLEY:** The rock 'n' roll people, the punk rockers, got into it—people who like that kind of humor. It wasn't like a slasher film or anything. It was just a little bit scary, but a fun ride.

**FANG:** What about the cast? Was there a general camaraderie?

**QUIGLEY:** There actually was. I was kind of to the side; except for Suicide, I wasn't really paired up with anyone. Like Tina and John were paired up, and they got along great. I was kind of away from the cast, because I was with the punk rockers up until a certain point. Then with my demise, I was ostracized by them.

**FANG:** Trash was just ahead of her time!

**QUIGLEY:** [*Laughs*] Yeah, they just weren't cool enough. I had respect for the dead and they didn't. I was just the bad, bad girl.

**FANG:** You mentioned Suicide. Can you talk about Mark Venturini? He died so young of leukemia.

**QUIGLEY:** I know, I know. At first I heard that it happened because of a stunt. It was kind of kept quiet for a while; I don't know why. I guess the family really didn't want to talk about it or something. Now, with the documentary MORE BRAINS, they talk about it. He was a doll. Everybody will tell you that he was a gentleman and fun. He was a very good actor who had a bright future ahead of him.

**FANG:** He was a big guy, too, at 6-foot-5, so he sounds like a gentle giant type.

**QUIGLEY:** He was a gentle giant. He had no ego or anything. He went in and got his hair shaved like that. He was really into the part.

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**FANG:** There have been stories about director Dan O’Bannon, and how difficult he could be on set. What’s your take on that?

**QUIGLEY:** Not everyone got along with him, but I was fine. I’m usually fine with people like that. I just don’t get involved with the drama. I do remember this one time the firehose had soaked his script, so he was mad. Then, some extras were sitting on the stoop to his trailer, and he kicked this coffee cup they had, a Styrofoam one, out of the way. [Right after] we were talking about things like how I was going to rise up from the dead. I thought, “Oh my God, he’s gonna yell at me.” But he was fine. He was just tired, exhausted. He was battling with the producers, about the money. He was under a lot of pressure. And he had this vision he wanted to come through.

**FANG:** You spend a majority of your scenes in the film naked. How did that affect you? Where there times when it was rough?

**QUIGLEY:** Oh, yeah. In the zombie rampage, my friend from my band, the girl who played the bass in The Skirts, I got her in there. She would hear the extras, the other zombies, saying, “Oh, she just likes to show off her body.” I had to. You know, I was freezing cold from the rain; I couldn’t really put a robe on or anything, so I had no choice but to stand there, barefoot with leg warmers on, freezing my ass off. So I heard that back, and it kind of got to me. Everyone forms this opinion of you, and you’re just being a professional. Actually, the producer was trying to keep me warm; I sat in his Jaguar, and the [body] paint came off on his leather interior. It was a rare Jaguar, and it was such obnoxious paint! I must have been shaking. It would not come off his leather interior. I think he was a *little* upset.

**FANG:** You’ve said you’re kind of the Janet Leigh in RETURN. You have some big opening scenes, and then you die quick.

**QUIGLEY:** Oh, yeah, yeah!

**FANG:** Do any memories about those particular scenes stick out in your mind?

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**QUIGLEY:** There are a couple things. Remember the scene where I ask Miguel [Nuñez], “Do you ever fantasize?” Right before that scene, Dan was just rearranging the mushrooms in front of me *exactly*, trying to get them how he wanted them. He was so obsessed with the detail. Then I remember the night we did the tombstone dance, we didn’t have rain and it was so humid. I was dancing and the sulfur flames were coming up in my face from the smoke flares they were holding, and they were really making me dizzy. Sulfur is not fun to inhale. I remember after that night just feeling really woozy. I actually had somebody drive me home. I also remember getting strep throat after being buried alive in the mud. And I started getting these calls, like that urban legend where it’s, “I’m gonna call you 3 times, and you’re dead!” I remember unplugging the phone. I had three nights off, so the second night it happened, I woke up at 3 in the morning, and my VCR was blinking. And the electricity was off! And I thought, “Oh my God, someone is coming to kill me!”

**FANG:** It was like THE RING, 20 years ahead of time!

**QUIGLEY:** [*Laughs*] Yes!

**FANG:** In the late '80s, after RETURN, there was a huge profile of you in *Premiere* magazine, proclaiming you the Queen of the B's. That must have been a huge honor, but did the low-budget trenches ever get a bit stifling for you?

**QUIGLEY:** There was a time after TREASURE OF THE MOON GODDESS, which was after RETURN, when I spent a year doing training for the LAPD. I had to go through about a year of background, all the tests, everything like that—so I was going to become a policewoman [*laughs*]. I decided at the last minute that I was gonna stick with acting, though!

**FANG:** It's interesting that you considered a career in law enforcement. Many of your characters, like Trash, have powerful dispositions. Because of that, have you found that you've been an inspiration to women?

**QUIGLEY:** Yeah. I've noticed at conventions that I get a lot of women coming up to me. It has changed over the years, as well. The time I spent playing the regular victim roles, they weren't as attracted to that. But with the films I've done now and RETURN, they are really attracted to

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that. They've even dressed up like me. It's an honor. They recite the lines from the movie. It's just great.

**FANG:** That must be nice. There must be a feeling like you're working out in this wasteland, as an actress. You do your job and you go onto the next thing. You're kind of in a vacuum, so finding out later that you've had a positive effect must be an honor.

**QUIGLEY:** Yeah. Truly! You don't know how it's going to turn out. It could be just junk. I've worked on some that I thought were going to be pretty good, and then I looked at them later and thought, “Oh my God. This is horrible!”

**FANG:** But not RETURN OF THE LIVING DEAD!

**QUIGLEY:** [*Laughs*] No! Never RETURN OF THE LIVING DEAD!

On October 20, Movieside Presents The Massacre, 24 hours of horror movie madness with special guests Quigley and Jack Hill (director of SPIDER BABY, COFFY and FOXY BROWN) at The Portage Theater, 4050 N. Milwaukee Ave., Chicago, IL. Pre-sale tickets are available [here](#) for \$20, or \$25 at the door the day of the show. Doors open at 11 a.m., and the show starts at noon. The lineup of films:

11:30 a.m.: Trailer Trash (vintage trailers and short films)

12 noon: UN CHIEN ANDALOU (silent with live organ!)

12:30 p.m.: THE BLACK CAT (Karloff and Lugosi!)

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1:45 p.m.: THE CURSE OF THE WEREWOLF (Oliver Reed Hammer horrors)

3:30 p.m.: WITCHFINDER GENERAL (Vincent Price!)

5:15 p.m.: FROM THE DRAIN (Rare David Cronenberg short!)

5:30 p.m.: SPIDER BABY (with Jack Hill in person!)

7:45 p.m.: RETURN OF THE LIVING DEAD (with Linnea Quigley in Person!)

10 p.m.: PHANTASM II (The ball is back!)

11:45: THE CAPTURED BIRD (Guillermo del Toro-produced short!)

12 midnight: A NIGHTMARE ON ELM STREET 3: DREAM WARRIORS (prime time Freddy!)

1:45 a.m. HAUSU (Japanese insanity!), presented by Chicago Cinema Society

3:15 a.m.: NIGHTMARES ('80s anthology awesomeness!)

5 a.m.: PRINCE OF DARKNESS (John Carpenter cult film!)

6:45 a.m.: DEAD SNOW (Nazi zombie mayhem!)

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8:30 a.m.: FRENZY (classic Hitchcock!)

10:30 a.m.: HALLOWEEN II (the original!)

Short films also include “Fertile Green” (High on Fire video) by Phil Mucci and Lowcarbcomedy’s SLASH AND BURN. There will be free autographs and photo taking with Quigley and Hill along with vendors, vintage trailers, a short horror film contest, a zombie makeup station, prizes, surprises and a live charity auction for [Vital Bridges](#) .