“You think this is a f**kin’ costume? This is a way of life.”
—Suicide, RETURN OF THE LIVING DEAD

The morning after another Christmas party, I’m hung over, irritable and sleep-deprived. Every waking second is full of regret over an uncountable number of Irish car bombs that all seemed like a good idea at the time. However, this post-celebratory haze seems like the perfect mindset for reviewing DESTROY ALL MOVIES!!!: THE COMPLETE GUIDE TO PUNKS ON FILMS (Fantagraphics Books), an in-depth account of flicks that have either featured or were heavily influenced by the punk movement.

When punk style made its way into the mainstream, the trend was quickly embraced by the movie industry. Whether Super-8 indie or Hollywood stylized, the punk movement broke out of urban decay and made its way into the theaters of suburban America. With combined flamboyance and ferocity, America soon found itself in the fearful grip of “the punk.” Filmmakers stoked the fires of fear with an increasingly terrifying portrayal of punks in cinema. DESTROY ALL MOVIES!!!, edited by Zack Carlson and Bryan Connolly, not only gives an great anthology-like overview of those pictures, but provides a strong focus on the talent and punk-brains behind the art.

Even thought the book covers a multitude of genres, it seems that when punks are present, horror will naturally follow. Horror fans will love the pictures and write-ups of Abel Ferrera’s DRILLER KILLER, KILLER KLOWNS FROM OUTER SPACE and many other favorites. The book gives a nice spread to the above-referenced classic THE RETURN OF THE LIVING DEAD (pictured above), including interviews with director Dan O’Bannon and actor John Philbin. Fright fans will also appreciate chats with Mark Lester, Stefan Arngrim and Lisa Langlois, discussing my all-time favorite punk shocker CLASS OF 1984. Additional interviewees include legends like Richard Hell, P.J. Soles, Nick Zedd, Lee Ving and numerous others.

Hell says it best in his foreword when he states, “The world is really not worthy of this book, and if you don’t buy it now you will regret it later when it’s a lot more expensive.” It’s the perfect summation of a 1980s American society that didn’t know how to handle the punk uprising, and a film industry that capitalized on it. Check out the book’s website here .

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