

## "ZOMBIETHON" (DVD Review)

Written by Michael Koopmans

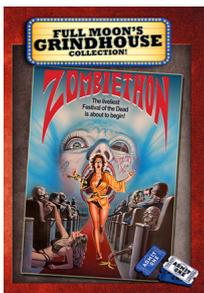
Thursday, 29 December 2011 12:31

---



First they brought us THE BEST OF SEX AND VIOLENCE (1981). Then, just when you thought it was safe to put another tape in your VCR, FILMGORE (1983) was unleashed (see review [here](#)). Finally, they completed the tasteless trifecta with ZOMBIETHON (1986). Of course, the "they" I speak of is producer Charles Band and director Ken Dixon, who concocted these semi-pointless, way-out compilation mix tapes under Band's Wizard Video label in the '80s. When it comes to cinematic expectations, if T&A and a bit of the red stuff is all you're after, look no further.

ZOMBIETHON (now out on DVD as part of Full Moon's new Grindhouse line) offers its viewers bite-size versions of seven Wizard-licensed films that happen to contain at least one zombie. The only original footage consists of numerous, delightfully simple wraparound vignettes that always end or begin in a small movie theater stuffed to the gills with an unhealthy mixture of lifeless mannequins in zombie FX and actors wearing creature masks. It's a pretty novel idea, and if you think about it too hard, it's downright clever! I would assume the undead have little interest in plot development and onscreen human interactions, so why wouldn't a zombie projectionist recut the reels to include only the scenes containing their flesh-munching counterparts and some *au naturel* meals of the female variety? But what could possibly make this 90-minute compilation of boobs and blood appealing to (barely) human fright fans like yourself and I? Right—boobs and blood.



ZOMBIETHON opens with our first linking segment, a woman being chased by an actor in a rubber zombie mask (albeit an impressive one). She runs through the bushes, out into the lifeless streets and finds refuge in LA's old El Ray Theater, which is filled with ghouls waiting patiently for the zombiethon to begin. She sits between two of the undead just as a 15-minute condensed version of Lucio Fulci's ZOMBIE begins. The first three films are given a much lengthier treatment than the later clips, and at least in this case, it's warranted. Although the atmosphere is completely lost, I'm willing to bet the plethora of nausea-inducing gore sequences and full-frontal nudity derived from Fulci's undead opus will suffice for anyone who bought something titled ZOMBIETHON.

## "ZOMBIETHON" (DVD Review)

Written by Michael Koopmans

Thursday, 29 December 2011 12:31

---

Next, a bikini-clad sunbather is attacked at the beach by an inspired, mechanical undead thing. She too ducks into the theater for cover, just in time for Jean Rollin's ZOMBIE LAKE—a French softcore Nazi-zombie romp that's nowhere near as good as it sounds. This segment feels a lot longer than it is, consisting of more full-nudity clips than zombie snippets, mirroring Rollin's film as a whole precisely. If you're a fan of impressively full pubic hair and lackluster undead attacks, this portion is for you.

The following bit was seemingly filmed the same day on the same beach, except this time there's an attempt at a little character development. A woman in a transparent gown offers a lyrical voiceover about the pains of being alive accompanied by shots of crashing waves and a red-tinted voodoo-doll ritual which resurrects a beach zombie. It picks up the woman, who wistfully utters, "I want more out of life. Let's go the movies." This line, along with a pink, heart-shaped screen-cut, transitions us into a handful of clips from Jess Franco's OASIS OF THE ZOMBIES, which do an excellent job of making the film seem more interesting than it really is. However, we do get those gorgeous shots of zombie silhouettes shambling across the sand dunes.

Then yet another woman is stalked, though this time she has an infant with her. They dodge some zombies and surprisingly don't duck into the theater—yet. We get a few quick scenes from Riccardo Freda's FEAR, one of the few Laura Gemser films I have yet to see. Apparently the scene included is a dream sequence, and there are no actual zombies in the film.

With the mom-and-daughter combo in, our theater is now packed, leaving all wraparounds to take place there, while the clip segments get shorter and shorter. Considering the quality of the films to be screened, let's be thankful!

Pierre Chevalier's THE INVISIBLE DEAD is up next, followed by Jess Franco's A VIRGIN AMONG THE LIVING DEAD and finally, Ted V. Mikels' ASTRO-ZOMBIES. The zombie projectionist gets a little too *wrapped up* in his work and the credits roll. But not before all the zombies in the theater throw a New Year's type bash, complete with party hats and blow horns. It surely is a sight to behold!

Available now from Full Moon's official website, <http://www.fullmoondirect.com> ZOMBIETHON is sure to please anyone who blindly loves anything undead-related. But I also can't help recommending this one to all fright fans reading this, mainly due to its rock-bottom price tag of \$10 and its nostalgic personality. However, that low cost comes with a few drawbacks, mainly

## "ZOMBIETHON" (DVD Review)

Written by Michael Koopmans

Thursday, 29 December 2011 12:31

---

the VHS transfer quality that rudely makes itself apparent during more than one occasion, as well as the lack of special features aside from a quick introduction from Band.

I've been curious about this one for many years, having come very close to spending way too much on its VHS counterpart many times (like, \$100 too much!). Thankfully, I waited, because the only time this one's going back into my DVD player will be to provide background imagery next time I invite some of my best fiends over to party like it's 1986. Or if I want to watch OASIS OF THE ZOMBIES

*without*

falling asleep!

