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GIRLS NITE OUT

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James Carroll Teddy Ratliff

Suzanne Barnes Dawn Sorenson

Rutanya Alda Barney

Al McGuire Coach Kimble

Lauren-Marie Taylor Sheila Robinson

David Holbrook Mike Pryor

Laura Summer Jane

Mart McChesney Pete "Maniac" Krizaniac

Carrick Glenn Kathy

John Didrichsen Ralph Bostwick

Lois Robbins Leslie Peterson

Matthew Dunn Benson

Susan Pitts Trish

Paul Christie Dancer

Gregory Salata Hagen

Tony Shultz Bud Remington

Larry Mintz Charlie Kaiser

Richard Bright Detective Greenspan

Kevin Mulvey Sergeant Parker

Richard Voights Dean Kemper

Hal Holbrook Jim MacVey

CREW

Directed by **Robert Deubel**

Produced by **Anthony N. Gurvis**

Executive Producers **Kevin Kurgis** and **Richard Barclay**

Screenplay by **Gil Spencer, Jr., Kevin Kurgis,**
Joe Bolster and **Anthony N. Gurvis**

Based on a story by **Gil Spencer, Jr., Kevin Kurgis** and **Joe Bolster**

Director of Photography **Joe Rivers**

Editor **Arthur Ginsberg**





CAN YOU BEAR IT?: THE STORY OF *GIRLS NITE OUT*

by Michael Gingold

Slasher movies were all over the cinema scene when the 1980s began, but by the time the decade's third year came to a close, the subgenre was starting to fall out of favor. As a result, the advertising for some of these films suggested they were sexy romps rather than stalker sagas. When Artists Releasing Corporation/Film Ventures International opened *The House on Sorority Row* ("Where nothing is off limits") in late 1982, the posters and print ads made it look like an erotic revenge drama. (As did the radio spots; this writer recalls hearing one played during Howard Stern's radio show with some whips-and-chains audio enhancements.)

The murder mystery/horror flick *They're Playing with Fire* (1984) was sold as an older woman-younger guy softcore adventure, in the mold of star Eric Brown's previous *Private Lessons* (1981). And the print campaign for *Girls Nite Out* started off scary in summer 1983, but became progressively racier as the regional release continued, until the ads were showcasing the dead, strung-up Jane (Laura Summer), passing it off as some kind of bondage game with taglines like, "You know what really turned her on...she loved to be scared, weird and kinky things really got her motor running."

As it happens, *Girls Nite Out* wasn't the movie's initial title, nor was this the first time it had been pitched to potential audiences in a rather deceptive manner. And although it came in late to the slasher stakes, the film was conceived early in the cycle – before the release of the first *Friday the 13th* (1980).



It all began with Anthony N. Gurvis and Kevin Kurgis, law firm partners and friends since childhood in Columbus, Ohio with long-held ambitions to get into the motion picture business. Their first attempt didn't go anywhere, and the duo decided to take a stab at the slasher genre. The result was a screenplay initially titled *Blood Games*, which they wrote with the help of Gil Spencer, Jr. and Joe Bolster, two acquaintances of Kurgis' from Denison University in Granville, Ohio. As the plot took place on a college campus, Gurvis and Kurgis began negotiations to shoot the film at Denison, first bringing the project to cinema professor R. Elliot Stout in March 1980.

Although there was some apprehension that the script's violence and sexual content might cause problems, the Denison administration agreed to allow *Blood Games* to be filmed there, with a few conditions. These included no full-frontal nudity or identifying the setting as Denison. Another was a casting coup: the securing of veteran actor Hal Holbrook, also a Denison alumnus, to play a role

in the movie. (They had previously attempted to land entertainer and Denison grad John Davidson, then co-host of the popular reality show *That's Incredible!* [1980-1984].) Figuring there was nothing to lose, Kurgis approached Holbrook backstage at Columbus' Mershon Auditorium after a performance of the actor's one-man show *Mark Twain Tonight!* He left a copy of the script with Holbrook, who later called up the fledgling producers and, Kurgis claimed to *The Columbus Dispatch*, told them, "This script is light years ahead of *The Fog*." Holbrook agreed to do three days on the movie, his son David became part of the cast as well, and plans began rolling to shoot during the university's 1980 summer break.

Unfortunately, at some point in the process, at least one of Denison's trustees read the script and was put off by the quantity of sex and drinking it depicted. "Although," Stout told Denison University's student newspaper *The Denisonian*, "no one to my knowledge objected to the amount of violence in the film." Nevertheless, they apparently put pressure on Denison president Robert C. Good, and the college's cooperation was abruptly withdrawn. Stout stated that he was "distressed that Denison and Granville have lost the excitement of having a professional film shot here."

Still, there was a silver lining to the circumstances: The producers switched their shooting site to the New York area, which saved them a considerable amount of money in transporting and lodging the crew. It also helped, when putting the money (secured from private financiers) and production together, that they had legal backgrounds. "I don't think we could have done it if we hadn't been lawyers," Gurvis told the *Dispatch*. "We saved \$100,000 just in legal fees." In the same interview, Kurgis admitted, "Our big gamble was when we signed Holbrook and didn't have any money to pay him...but we'd have paid him through the income from our legal practice."

Somewhere along the way, the title changed from *Blood Games* to *The Final Clue*, and Gurvis and Kurgis joined forces with Concepts Unlimited Inc., an entertainment firm headed by Robert Deubel, Richard Barclay and Gaby Monet.





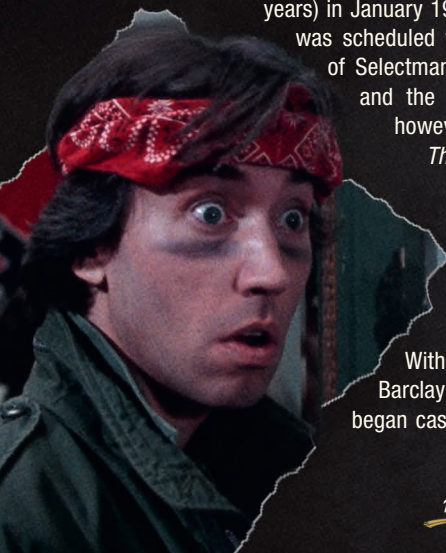
Founded in 1964 as a promotional and marketing agency that quickly built a rep creating multimedia presentations for major clients such as General Foods and Olivetti-Underwood, it got into filmmaking before the decade was out. They specialized in documentary shorts, and one of the first, *Rodeo* (1969), was helmed by Carroll Ballard, future director of *The Black Stallion* (1979), *Never Cry Wolf* (1983), and *Fly Away Home* (1996). In 1972, Concepts Unlimited produced the 25-minute *Norman Rockwell's World... An American Dream*, written by Monet and directed by Deubel, which won Best Short Subject, Live Action Film at the 1973 Academy Awards (the same prize taken by *The Resurrection of Broncho Billy* [1970], co-scripted, edited and scored by John Carpenter, two years before).

Several years later, Concepts Unlimited revisited the artist, planning a two-hour TV movie called *A Christmas Story* that would bring characters from Rockwell's beloved paintings to life. The team hoped to cast stars like Lee Remick and Geraldine Page, and got as far as shooting snowy exteriors in Stockbridge, Massachusetts (where Rockwell lived for his last 25

years) in January 1979. The bulk of principal photography was scheduled for that March, but the town's Board of Selectman objected to the potential disruption, and the film never went forward. That year, however, Concepts Unlimited did turn out

The Halloween That Almost Wasn't, a half-hour live-action special for kids starring Judd Hirsch as Dracula, Mariette Hartley as a witch, and Henry Gibson as Igor, which aired on ABC on October 28, 1979.

With Deubel installed as director and Barclay as an executive producer, the film began casting in New York City, drawing around



500 headshots to fill its youthful ensemble. Several of those chosen already had other East Coast horror films under their belts: James Carroll had done a small role in *He Knows You're Alone* (1980), Suzanne Barnes was in *The Children* (1980), and Carrick Glenn was another slasher's victim in *The Burning* (1981). And given that the movie was essentially a cross between *Friday the 13th* and *National Lampoon's Animal House* (1978), it was only appropriate that one part would be filled by Lauren-Marie Taylor, who was among the doomed counselors in *Friday the 13th Part 2* (1981) and had just wrapped the role of John Belushi's daughter in *Neighbors* (1981). (She and co-star John Didrichsen got married the year after shooting the film.)

Cast in the small but crucial role of cafeteria waitress Barney was Rutanya Alda, capping a string of horror appearances in *The Fury* (1978), *When a Stranger Calls* (1979), *Christmas Evil* (1980), and, most notably, *Amityville II: The Possession* (1982). Her husband Richard Bright, who appeared in the first two *Godfather* films among others, came on board to play Detective Greenspan. Others in the ensemble were making their feature-film debuts. Lead Julia Montgomery, who had done time on the soap *One Life to Live* (1968-2013), soon moved up to roles in the mainstream youth comedies *Up the Creek* and *Revenge of the Nerds* (both 1984), and then to the 1987 creature feature *The Kindred*. Laura Summer went on to a career in animation voice work, speaking for everyone from Janine Melnitz in *The Real Ghostbusters* (1986-1991) to Patamon in numerous *Digimon Adventures*.

The movie was lensed on locations including The Masters School in Dobbs Ferry, New York, a nearby private home, and Upsala College in East Orange, New Jersey. According to Kurgis in the *Dispatch*, there were on-set clashes between the producers and Deubel: "He liked to improvise, but we couldn't afford that." In an interview for the podcast *The Hysteria Continues*, Alda

claimed the film was shot in just three days (no doubt that was just the duration of her own time on set), and said she was never paid for her work. Tom Brumberger (*Don't Go in the House*, 1980; *Alone in the Dark*, 1982) handled the makeup effects, and several in the design/art department wound up later amassing impressive production-designer résumés. This was the first such gig for Howard Cummings, whose subsequent credits range from *Mortal Thoughts* (1991) to *Contagion* (2011) to HBO's *Westworld* (2016-); art director Richard Hoover designed the original *Twin Peaks* (1990-1991), *Apt Pupil* (1998), *The Mothman Prophecies* (2002), and many others; set dresser Jane Musky did *When Harry Met Sally...* (1989), *Ghost* (1990), *Hustlers* (2019), and more.



Another set dresser, Neil Prince, art-directed series such as *Person of Interest* (2011-2016) and *The Marvelous Mrs. Maisel* (2017-).

When it came time to send the finished movie out into the world, Gurvis and Kurgis turned to a mainstay of East Coast exploitation distribution: Samuel M.

Sherman, founder and president of Independent-International Pictures Corp., which had been stocking drive-ins and grindhouses with B-pictures (many directed by Al Adamson) since the '60s. Sherman, who recounts his colorful career in the book *When Dracula Met Frankenstein*, says, "These two producers didn't know much about the industry, or what would happen in the distribution of films. But they had made this picture on what seemed to be a reasonable budget, and what appealed to me about it was that Hal Holbrook was in the movie. I always like good, solid stage and film actors, and him being in this one greatly impressed me."

He also has positive recollections of the Concepts Unlimited team: "They were very interesting people, very hard-working and diligent. [Monet] was rather business-like and serious, and [Deubel and Barclay] were always clowning around and had great senses of humor. Anytime I would see Deubel, he would crack me up. He'd just make some silly comment; he was very funny. That was, I think, a strong point of his; he was not somebody who let things bother him. I liked working with all of them."

Still, Sherman believed their movie could use some tweaking, starting with the title; he rechristened it from *The Final Clue* to *The Scaremaker*. Then, since the first murder didn't occur until after nearly half an hour of collegiate hijinx, he suggested some additional horror content be added to the first reel. "I don't remember if I had anything to do with the writing and planning of these new scenes, but they were filmed at night in Central Park."

This material involved a couple of gravediggers who are preparing to inter Dickie Cavanaugh's body, and wind up murdered and buried instead. "I went down there one night," Sherman recalls. "It was pretty dark, the area they had chosen, and the crew was digging up a big section of ground in Central Park. I don't know if the city had approved that or not, but they dug it up anyway! I was standing around waiting for them to get on with the filming, but the digging went on and on and on, so I decided to walk off and see what I could see in

Central Park at night. That was kind of a crazy idea, because I didn't know what I was doing or where I was going, but I kept walking north and finally found an opening into some sort of brick-covered section. So I went in there, and I could see this was an ancient fort, going back hundreds of years. It was an ancient New York landmark of some kind, and there I was with no flashlight in the dark.

"I crawled out of there and went back," he continues, "and by that time the crew was ready to film, and they shot the stuff they had to. The next day, I was reading a New York City paper, and there it was: They had found a dead body in this fort I had discovered! I didn't see it, but I might have been there at 1 or 2 in the morning, and maybe they found the body at 3 or 4 – who knows? But it was an interesting story."

With the new footage added, Sherman and Independent-International came up with ads suggesting a back-from-the dead chiller rather than a mad-killer opus. "I don't remember the specifics, but I would say it's very likely" that they intentionally shied away from a slasher campaign. "I might have said, 'If we identify it as x, people will assume it's just x, but since there are other elements in it, we can identify it as y and go in another direction.'" *The Scaremaker* went out in test releases in Memphis and Jackson, Tennessee (double-billed with Jeffrey Obrow and Stephen Carpenter's *Pranks* [aka *The Dorm That Dripped Blood*] at drive-ins) and Clarksdale, Mississippi on December 3, 1982. It opened all over Florida the following February, but didn't get further than that. "It didn't do any business," Sherman says. "And I guess the producers put the responsibility on my head and my company's head, for not making it commercial. But, you know, you can't always make miracles in this industry. At the time, we had already seen great changes in the theatrical market in the United States. Land that was valuable, that was being taken up by drive-in theaters, was being bought out, the drive-ins were torn down, and shopping centers and all kinds of housing developments went up. It limited the amount of theaters that played exploitation product. So [the producers] took the picture back, and I heard nothing about it for some time until I heard that it had been released as *Girls Nite Out*."

Under that title, the film began making its way around the country in August 1983 from Aries International Releasing Corp. – a company set up by Kurgis to distribute it – with an ever-mutating advertising campaign. “Never has TERROR been so real,” promised the tagline over a trio of running, desperate girls in the first round of ads, and they slowly but surely evolved into the “kinky” come-on. Reviews were scarce, and unsurprisingly dismissive. In *Variety*, the only publication to review it out of New York City, “Lor” (Lawrence Cohn) deemed it “...a routine slasher picture, offering little entertainment to already jaded horror pic fans.” The Gannett News Service’s Mike Hughes, noting that its



"title contains a misspelling AND some questionable punctuation," damned it with the faint praise of, "It could have been much worse. That may not be a hardy endorsement, but it will have to do... By horror standards, it's almost adequate." *The Atlanta Constitution's* Scott Cain wrote that *Nite* "has all the predictable ingredients... There must be 50 supporting roles and, as a consequence, none of the characters has much chance to make a favorable impression. Even worse, several roles are badly cast." And *The Grand Rapids Press'* John A. Douglas, after pointing out the misleading ads, wrote, "It doesn't matter who's alive or dead. None of the characters is anything more than a puppet. Comedy relief hits a new low in *Girls Nite Out*."

Girls Nite Out quickly made its way to VHS in the US via Thorn EMI, and went out on videocassette in Britain and many European territories under the *Scaremaker*

GIRLS NITE OUT

Starring HAL HOLBROOK, RUTANJA ALDA, SUZANNE BARNES,
LAUREN-MARIE TAYLOR, DAVID HOLBROOK
Producer ANTHONY N. GURVIS
Director ROBERT DEUBEL
Editor ARTHUR GINSBERG
Executive Producers KEVIN KURGIS, RICHARD BARCLAY
Director of Photography JOE RIVERS

A scavenger hunt game is planned one night for the Dewitt University sorority. The game takes the girls from graveyards to bellfrys and from beds to bathtubs. The terror begins as one by one, each girl is mysteriously murdered by a sadistic maniac.

After each killing, the murderer telephones the local radio station and recites a clue to the disc jockey about the evil things he is doing to each girl.

The suspense and tension mounts as the sinister clues are deftly pieced together by ex-cop Mac McVey (HAL HOLBROOK). In a truly original surprise ending, the sadistic killer is cleverly trapped in his own game.



Running time: 96 minutes
Color
©MCMXXXIII Aries International
Releasing Corporation



VHS
TVB 2674

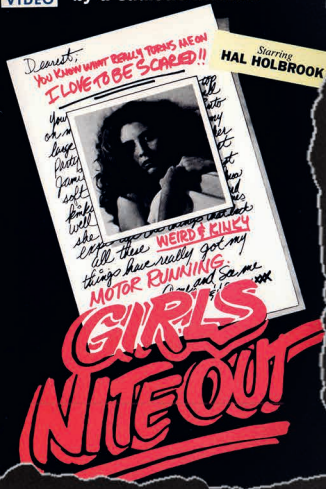


WARNING: The program contained in this videocassette is intended only for adult viewing. All other rights reserved. No part of this program may be reproduced without written permission from Thorn EMI.



The terror begins as one by one, each girl is mysteriously murdered by a sadistic maniac.

GIRLS NITE OUT



title. (In Sweden, the case art used a repurposed image from the *Grizzly* [1976] poster to represent the bear-suited killer!) And while, as noted above, it was the first step in a number of notable acting and creative careers, its prime movers weren't so fortunate. Deubel's only subsequent directing credit was *Verse Person Singular*, a 1983 entry in PBS' *American Playhouse* (1980-1994) series starring Richard Kiley. And although Gurvis and Kurgis planned to make a Bela Lugosi biopic after *Girls Nite Out*, that remains their sole feature-film credit. They now have separate personal injury firms in the Columbus area.

Michael Gingold has been with Fangoria magazine since 1988, and the Fangoria.com website since 2000, as a writer and editor. He also contributes to Rue Morgue magazine and its website and Delirium magazine, and has written for *Birth. Movies. Death.*, *Scream* magazine, and *Time Out* New York, among others. He is the author of the *Ad Nauseam* and *Ad Astra* books (1984 Publishing) and *The Frightfest Guide to Monster Movies* (FAB Press), and has directed numerous Blu-ray documentaries and featurettes, including the award-winning *Twisted Tale: The Unmaking of "Spookies"* (Vinegar Syndrome). He once attended a Halloween party hosted by a friend who dressed in a replica of the bear suit from *Girls Nite Out*.

En kvinnlig student blir brutalt mördad av sin pojkvän. Han blir klassad som mentalt instabil och döms till att sitta på Weston Hills mentalsjukhus. Några senare organiserar den kala studentföreningen en nattlig jakttur, men de ser snart att de inte är samma i området. En ser en hittas sönnertra- de kvinnokroppar och någon skymtar en mystisk figur i jörnkostym – med sylvassa knivar fastsatta på ena tassan.....



Aka: *Girls Nite Out*

Skådespelare:
Hal Holbrook (The Fog, Craggsnow)
Julia Montgomery (The Kindred)
Bridgette Alder (The Dark Half, Vigilante,
Amityville II (The Possession))

Loren-Maria Taylor (Friday the 13th pt. II)



Internet: www.horror.nu
e-mail: order@horror.nu

År:	1984	Speltid:	Ca: 96 min
Regi:	Robert Deubel	Rek. min. ålder:	18 år
Producent:	Kevin Kurgis	Ansvarig utgivare:	Verkställande Direktör



SCAREMAKER

HH 352

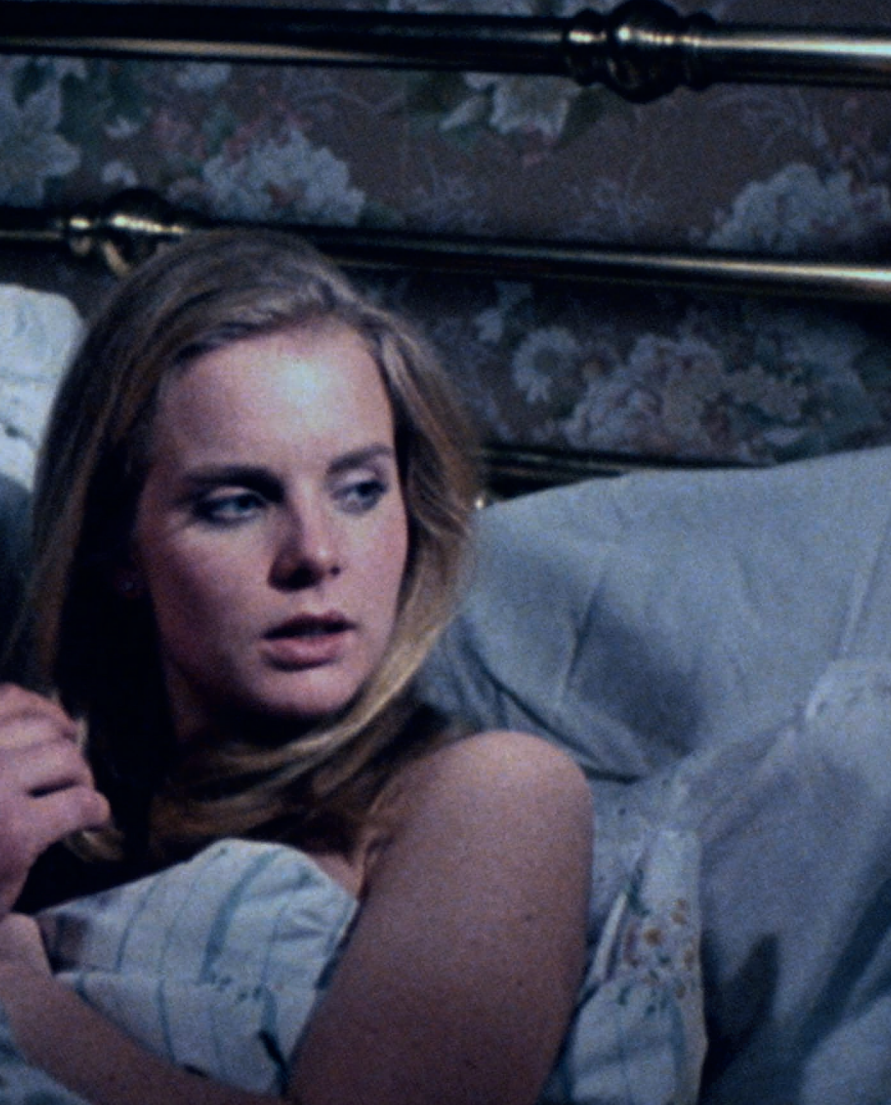


"one-by-one they are all dispatched
a killer...."

IMDB







ABOUT THE RESTORATION

Girls Nite Out is presented in its original aspect ratio of 1.85:1 with mono sound.

No pre-print materials for *Girls Nite Out* could be located, so for the purposes of this restoration a number of 35mm release prints were sourced from the producer's personal vaults.

The prints were scanned in 2K resolution on a Lasergraphics Director by Celluloid Solutions, after which the scans were reviewed and the highest quality sections of each composited and assembled. The assembled version was graded on DaVinci Resolve 17 and all digital restoration was performed using Phoenix Finish and PFClean. A few very brief sections which were not present in the film material were sourced from an SD tape master and inserted to create a new and complete restored master.

The soundtrack was sourced from the 35mm optical track and was ingested via a Magnatech Dubber and restored in Pro Tools. Additional audio remastering was completed by Matthew Jarman.

Although every effort has been made to present *Girls Nite Out* in the best condition possible, some obvious signs of picture wear remain, due to the poor state of the materials available.

Restoration Producers **Joe Rubin** and **Andrew Furtado**

Lead Scanning and Audio Technician **Joe Rubin**

Colorist and Lead Restoration Artist **Lannie Lorence**

Additional Conform/Assembly **Beatriz Alcalá Carrillo** /

The Engine House Media Services

Additional Audio Remastering **Matthew Jarman** / **Bad Princess Productions**

PRODUCTION CREDITS

Disc and Booklet Produced by **Ewan Cant**

Executive Producer **Francesco Simeoni**

Technical Producer **James White**

Technical Assistant **James Pearcey**

QC **Aidan Doyle**

Production Assistant **Samuel Thiery**

Blu-ray Mastering and Subtitling **The Engine House Media Services**

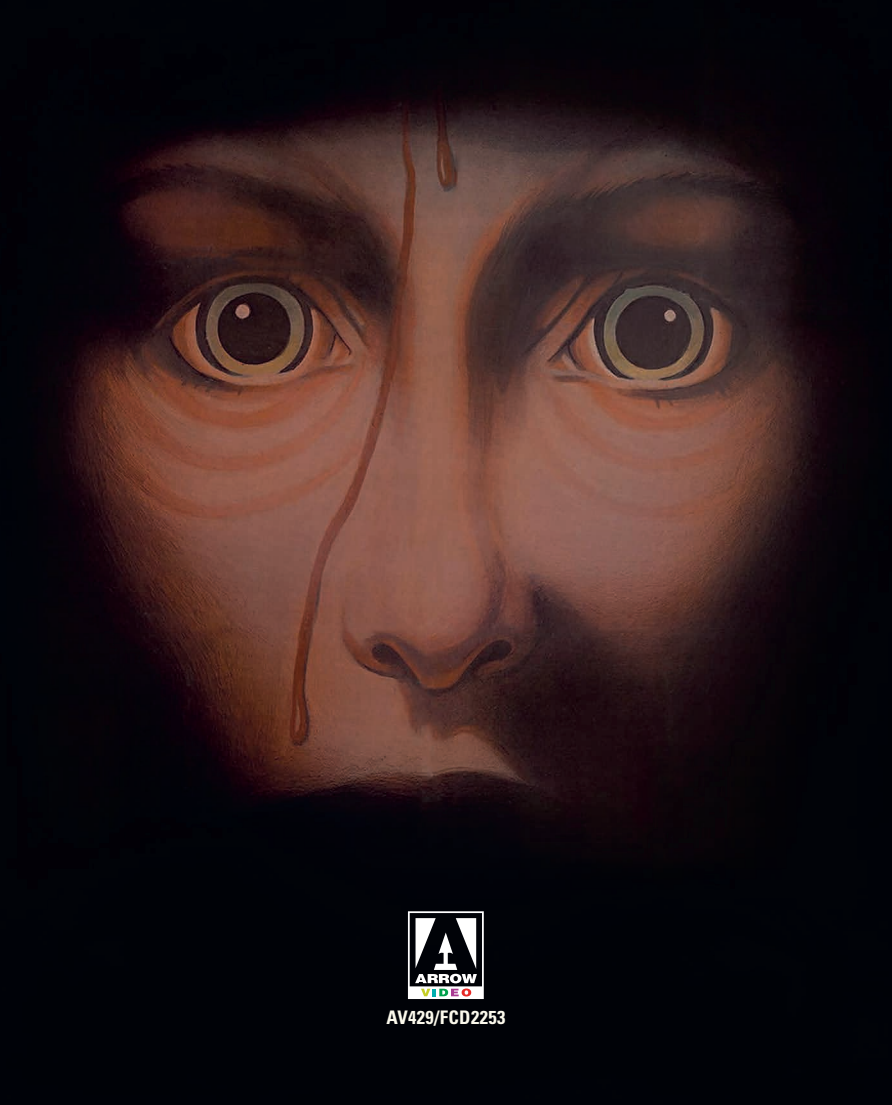
Artwork by **Justin Osbourn**

Design by **Obviously Creative**

SPECIAL THANKS

Alex Agran, Paul Christie, John Didrichsen, Anthony N. Gurvis, Jim Harwood,
Justin Kerswell, Jim Kunz, Julia Montgomery, Carl Morano, Amanda Reyes,
Lois Robbins, Laura Summer and Lauren-Marie Taylor.





AV429/FCD2253