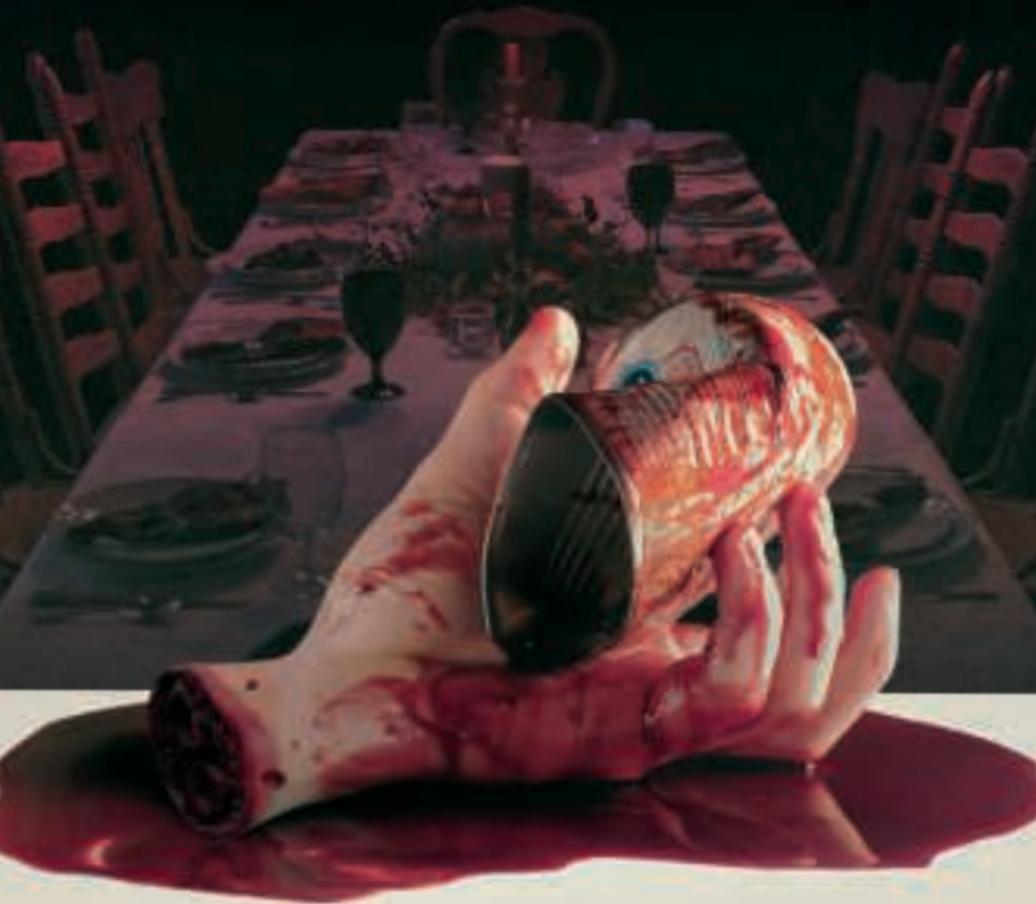


BLOOD RAGE





BLOOD RAGE

LOUISE LASSER as Maddy
MARK SOPER as Terry & Todd
JULIE GORDON as Karen
JAYNE BENTZEN as Julie
MARIANNE KANTER as Dr. Berman
JAMES FARRELL as Artie
CHAD MONTGOMERY as Gregg
LISA RANDALL as Andrea
WILLIAM FULLER as Brad
DOUG WEISER as Jackie
GERRY LOU as Beth
ED FRENCH as Bill
and **TED RAIMI** as The Condom Salesman

Directed by **JOHN GRISSMER**
Produced by **MARIANNE KANTER**
Written by **BRUCE RUBIN** (as "RICHARD LAMDEN")
Director of Photography **RICHARD E. BROOKS**
Production Designer **JIM RULE**
Edited by **MICHAEL R. MILLER**
Special Make-Up and Effects by **ED FRENCH**
Music by **RICHARD EINHORN**

ROUTE 35 DRIVE
IN

THE HOUSE THAT CRIED
MURDER R

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THANKS BE TO BLOOD RAGE

by Joseph A. Ziemba

Thanksgiving isn't the most exciting holiday. It's all mashed potatoes, football, and desperate conversations between relatives who usually only see each other once a year. I've talked to my uncle about traffic on Chicago's Dan Ryan Expressway over Thanksgiving dinner for thirty years, but he still doesn't know what I do for a living. Thanksgiving typically ends with everyone falling asleep while they complain about the weather. Or sharing their opinions about my cousin's ex-girlfriend. She was on a reality show. She had a dog that wouldn't stop peeing in my cousin's bed. But she did not sit on the floor and stuff her face with Thanksgiving stuffing after finding out that her son was a machete-wielding lunatic. That's where *Blood Rage* comes in.

Thanks to *Blood Rage*, the one and (almost) only 1980s Thanksgiving slasher, Thanksgiving Day activities are now a bazillion times more fun. So before you take an electric carving knife to your ears because your sister's boyfriend won't shut up about how he's vegan straight edge and can't eat anything on the table, gather the family together. Take their hands. And guide them on a journey to Shadow Woods.

Terry and Todd are twin brothers with awesome names. Their mom (Holy shit, it's Louise Lasser aka Mary Hartman!!) has a voice that suggests a licking of ashtrays for breakfast. Mom and her weasel boyfriend have a steamy interlude at the drive-in while Terry and Todd watch. The brothers leave the comforts of their station wagon. Terry has plans, which include murdering a couple with an ax and blaming it on Todd by wiping blood on his face.

When a slasher features either: 1. Children killing people, or 2. Children getting killed, I'm on board.

Soon enough, it's TEN YEARS LATER.

Terry is eighteen and battles a receding hairline. He lives with Mom in a tacky condo, which is part of a ten-acre community called Shadow Woods. In a scene straight out of Doris Wishman's *Keyholes Are for Peeping*, we're informed by an inexplicable

combination of narration and mismatched dubbing that Todd is in a mental institution. During Thanksgiving dinner, Mom receives a phone call from Todd's doctor. Todd has escaped! No one can find him!

At this point, we're treated to the most pleasing scene of any movie that was released in 1987. It's even better than that part in *The Lost Boys* where Corey Haim sits in a bathtub and sings "Ain't Got No Home". Mom says something like, "Terry, let's keep this quiet until after dinner." Terry agrees. Then he sits down at Thanksgiving dinner. Terry looks across the table at Mom's fiancée and says, "Looks like you're gonna get a chance to meet the rest of the family. My psychotic brother just escaped."

Gore flows. Bodies pile up. But who, exactly, is the crazy one? It's a case of mistaken identity! Terry gets violent, but everyone thinks it's Todd. Mom hits the vodka. A horny couple pulls an elaborate practical joke instead of having sex. Terry smokes pot and takes a piss break between killings.

We never stop smiling.

By the second half of the 1980s, the slasher genre had lost its teeth. Freddy Krueger was transformed from a vile child-rapist to a cuddly stand-up comic. Michael Myers re-emerged in *Halloween 4: The Return of Michael Myers*, but his stuffed overalls made him look like a constipated plumber who was wearing a neck brace. While fresh weirdo slashers were still being released, like Bruce Pittman's *Hello Mary Lou: Prom Night II* (1987) and Skip Schoolnik's *Hide and Go Shriek* (1988), the ripple effect of the genre's influence was dying down. The atmosphere of mainstream horror was tired and desolate. It felt like no one was trying. And if they were, they had either misplaced their edge (*Sleepaway Camp II: Unhappy Campers*, 1988), or shamefully buried it with tongue-in-cheek anti-comedy (*Doom Asylum*, 1987).

Blood Rage is one of a handful of mid-fi slashers that kept the dream alive in the late 1980s. And it still does today. Part of the reason why is because this movie is a sincere, minor masterwork of irresponsible exploitation that feels like it was beamed in from another dimension. Louise Lasser's unhinged performance alone is enough to bend the logic of reality, almost feeling like a mutated continuation of her character in *Mary Hartman, Mary Hartman*. But the other reason that *Blood Rage* is so satisfying is because it was produced before the slasher boom cannibalized itself. This movie was



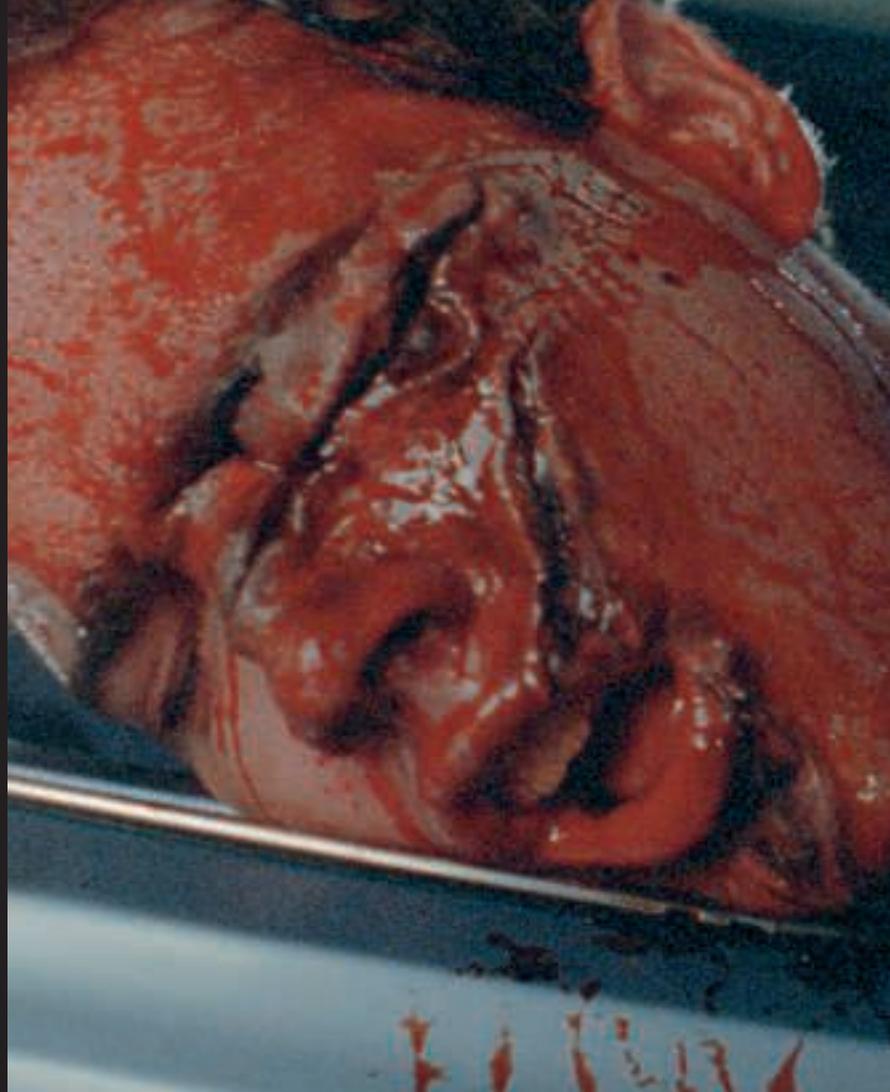


completed in 1983, but only saw a wider theatrical release in 1987 as *Nightmare at Shadow Woods*. That version removed some gore and replaced it with scenes of people hanging out by a swimming pool. But it's just as entertaining as the *Blood Rage* cut. Thanks to the powers of technology and Arrow Video, you can now experience both versions of the movie in EXXXTREME HIGH DEFNESS!! Life is good!

I don't know anything about the production history of the movie. And that's good, because there are plenty of extras on this release to help you out with that. But I do know why *Blood Rage* has been a Thanksgiving fixture in my living room – and at Terror Tuesday screenings at the Alamo Drafthouse – since the beginning of forever. Like Lamberto Bava's *Demons*, this movie proves that when the right people come together at the right time, great things can happen.

Slashers have the power to invoke a special kind of nostalgia. It's not the same type of feeling you get when revisiting *The Goonies* or *House Party*. Slashers are more intimate. For obvious reasons (stupidity, low budgets, heads getting chopped off), their mainstream acceptance was never as widespread as more "competent" films. Parents and critics placed these movies on the same level as shot-on-video porn, as if watching *Unhinged* was a criminal offence. So our appreciation for these movies requires more work to cultivate. We're not only enjoying them for what they are – we're making a stand for an important era of motion picture history that deserves to be understood and preserved. When *Blood Rage* touches on certain elements – a wood paneled condo wall, a can of Miller Lite, blood splashing on someone's loafers – and strikes a nerve, a feeling is captured. That makes us happy. It makes us feel like we're a part of something special that not everyone can understand.

Blood Rage is a prime invoker of the comforting nostalgia inherent in late 1980s slashers. It's cheap, but ambitious. The synths are huge. Ed French's beautiful gore effects are still in-line with his work on *Breeders* and *Creepshow 2*, before he "upgraded" to garbage like *Terminator 2: Judgement Day*. Director John Grissmer improves on the foundation that he set in the previous decade with movies like *Scalpel* and *The House That Cried Murder* (aka *The Bride*), which were more about mood than consistent engagement. At the same time, *Blood Rage* is a transfixing mess of random ridiculousness. Inserted scenes of naked people pop up, then repeat later in the movie. Two dudes in full denim outfits accept the challenge of Advanced Pole Position. A woman wears a leopard-print bathing suit and dances with her Walkman at the pool. Granted, *Home Sweet Home*, the





OTHER Thanksgiving slasher from the 1980s, features a PCP-enraged Jake Steinfeld dropping atomic elbows through car hoods and onto people's heads. Plus a kid in KISS make-up running around a house while shredding with a portable guitar rig. But *Home Sweet Home* does not feature a grown man mushing up a piece of pumpkin pie and throwing it at the wall. You have to watch *Blood Rage* to see that.

Blood Rage has the ability to conjure pleasant thoughts of the "bad old days" of classic slashers with those of us who can appreciate this power. That doesn't sound like much. But if you've tried to sit through a slasher that was made in the last fifteen years, you'll understand how important this feeling can be.

P.S. It's not cranberry sauce.

Joseph A. Ziemba is an art director and film programmer for the Alamo Drafthouse Cinema in Austin, TX. He's the creator of BLEEDINGSKULL.COM, co-author of BLEEDING SKULL! A 1980s TRASH-HORROR ODYSSEY (Headpress, 2013), and co-founder of BLEEDING SKULL! VIDEO, all of which document ultra-obscure horror movies that can never be recommended to anyone in good conscience.

ABOUT THE RESTORATION

Blood Rage is presented in 1.85:1 with stereo 2.0 sound and has been exclusively restored in 2K resolution for this release by Arrow Films.

The original 35mm camera negative was scanned in 2K resolution on a pin-registered Arriscan at OCN Digital. Kodak Digital Ice software was used to remove thousands of instances of negative dirt and debris. Additional image restoration was performed using Pixel Farm's PF Clean software.

The film was graded on a DaVinci Resolve by OCN Digital. Due to severe fading and instances of chemical stain, a select number of short sequences and shots appear soft and exhibit a slight strobing effect.

The original stereo soundtrack was transferred from the 35mm optical negative using a Magnatech Dubber. The soundtrack was conformed by Marc Morris.

Restoration managed and approved by **James White, Arrow Films**

Restoration Services: **Joe Rubin/OCN Digital**

Our presentation of the theatrical cut, entitled *Nightmare at Shadow Woods*, is comprised of the newly restored *Blood Rage* footage combined with footage transferred from the best available 35mm print element. Because of the significant variations in quality between the two elements used, the differences remain noticeable. The audio for this presentation was transferred from the print. This version was produced by Marc Morris.

PRODUCTION CREDITS

Disc and Booklet Produced by **Ewan Cant**

Executive Producer: **Francesco Simeoni**

Production Assistant: **Liane Cunje**

Technical Producer: **James White**

QC and Proofing: **Ewan Cant, Liane Cunje, Michael Mackenzie**

Subtitling: **Deluxe Media**

Blu-ray / DVD Mastering: **David Mackenzie**

Authoring: **Digital Cinema United**

Artist: **Marc Schoenbach**

Design: **Jack Pemberton**

SPECIAL THANKS

Alex Agran, John A. Dalley, Art Ettinger, Michael Felsher, Doug "Tranzor" Finkelstein, Ed French, John Grissmer, Marianne Kanter, Louise Lasser, Aaron O'Laughlin, Marc Morris, Ted Raimi, Joe Rubin, Edwin Samuelson, Mark Soper and ED Tucker.



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