

DO YOU DARE VENTURE INTO... THE VIDEO VAULT

Lane Van Ham/Daily Nebraskan

By Lane Van Ham
Staff Reporter

"So there you are! I hope you're satisfied with what you've done."

"I'm the Old Flick Fiend's mother ("mummy," he calls me of course) and I'm introducing today's trashy film feature because he's sick. And it's all your fault. If you people had something better to do other than read up on these weird movies, he wouldn't have a job. But no! He had to try to get a tan in sub-zero temperatures to introduce the movie this week. He's tucked in his coffin even as we speak, getting plenty of Vitamin C and warm blood."

"Well, let's get this underway. Flicky told me to warn you, though unless you have a high bad film constitution, you may not be able to sand it (yes, sand it). Now roll 'em!"

If the weather doesn't do it to you, this video probably will. I am speaking of the 1964 shocker, "The Horror Of Party Beach."

The movie starts with a scene typical of most beach movies made at the time: a bunch of actors and actresses in their 20s pretend to be teen-agers and dance to bad rock 'n' roll on a stretch of sand, spouting awful dialogue in-between songs.

"Hiya, Charlie. Do you like bathing beauties?"

"I dunno. I've never bathed one."

Ha ha ha, oh, please, stop it. In this case, unlike "Beach Blanket Bingo," there is a rude intrusion on the festivities by a hideous monster. The monster was created by nearby radioactive waste dumping. Upon appearance, it challenges the all-white affluent youth and the terrible rock band (The Del-Aires) as the most disgusting part of the movie.

Needless to say, the writers and directors probably intended the monster to be the most terrifying part of the movie, but considering the acting ability of the beach kids, the monster's intrusion may not be

so much "rude" as "welcome."

After the beach party massacre (not shown on the video) the police recruit scientist Dr. Gavin to help them. Gavin's daughter, as it turns out, was among those who witnessed the monster.

From here on, the movie basically alternates scenes of the investigation and new murders by the monsters.

I'll let the victims speak for themselves:

"It smells like the Fulton Fish Market in the middle of July . . . aaagh!"

"Sounds like someone big walking in mud. Yeaargh!"

"It's . . . like somebody in rubbers filled with water. Urkl!"

The investigation gets nowhere until Eulabelle, Dr. Gavin's maid steps into the lab. Previously, Eulabelle has acted as a sort of parapsychological Aunt Jemima by blaming the deaths on "voodoo." (I kid you not. The character is almost unbearable to watch, especially considering that the writers should have known better in 1964.)

By sheer accident, anyway, Eulabelle accidentally spills sodium on a monster sample and discovers that the monster disintegrates.

And so, armed with several tubs of sodium solution, Dr. Gavin, his daughter and others go to work. This is the kind of movie that really makes me wish I hadn't spent so much time spacing off biology back in 10th grade. I guess my teacher never talked about combatting radioactive waste monsters, but I'd still like to know about all that stuff just in case a monster comes out of Woods Pool someday.

Needless to say, the day is saved, and the world is a safe place for bad actors and actresses once again. "Horror of Party Beach" is

absolutely indefensible as a good movie. The script is bad, the acting is atrocious, and there isn't anything creative or original about it.

Michael and Harry Medved, in their book, "Son of Golden Turkey Awards" write: "Each additional viewing (of "Horror of Party Beach") reveals new levels of incompetence." I won't argue.

But it does sustain your attention, and although, as I said earlier, it doesn't do a thing to advance the creative potential of film making, it is unique in one particular way; it's level of badness. If you're used to watching multi-million dollar productions downtown, renting this video will probably put you in a state of altered consciousness.

Whether just to get the satisfaction of watching a weird movie or to feel better about the next proficient movie you see in comparison, I highly recommend "The Horror of Party Beach."

The video is available from Nebraska Bookstore.



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