
Coming to the Clay May 8 & 9: a CANNIBAL HOLOCAUST and CANNIBAL FEROX DOUBLE FEATURE!

Contributed by Mr. Heck

With A live musical tribute by SABRETEETH before the show May 9!

This is a 17+ screening only. Accompanied minors will not be admitted.

Banned and heavily censored the world over, the CANNIBAL HOLOCAUST surpasses its reputation as a shot-gun blast to the senses. It presents the "found footage" of a group of four documentary filmmakers who experience brutal death at the hands of a savage South American tribe of flesh-eaters. This footage is so intense, so graphic and so unflinching in its realism that the director and producer of the Cannibal Holocaust were arrested upon its original release and the film seized.

Just as rough but but a lot less inadvertantly preachy, Cannibal Ferox tells the tale of a small group of anthropologists who take to the Jungles of Colombia to study the culture of a primitive indigenous tribe from the perspective that cannibals don't exist-- and find out they're very, very wrong.

For more info on Sabreteeth, visit www.ratskin.org

Meet your musical hosts for the evening of May 9... SABRETEETH

is a San Francisco-based trio who play a raw, uncompromising style of noise-punk, collage, post rock that fuses elements of improvisational jazz. Formed in the early spring of 2004 by co-founders André Stafford (guitars, noises, vocals) and Tyrone Davies (bass, sax, vocals), Sabreteeth began when André and Tyrone bumped into each other one morning at San Fran's teetering landmark the Roxie cinema, where they're both employed. Combining their mutual interests for art, film, and extreme obscure music, the two quickly began churning out broken fragments of grinding melodies as a duo. Later that spring while attending the San Francisco Art Institute, André met Mike Daddona (drums, and programming), making the outfit a trio.

With Mike's spastically, heavy pounding providing the perfect backbeats, the trio's chemistry became undeniable. Then much later later, yet anoher ingredient was introduced into SABRETEETH with the addition of programming and sampling guru Jsun McCarty.

SABRETEETH has an established monthly residency at El Rincon where they put on a monthly event, and have wrecked several local house parties throughout San Francisco, performed at the San Francisco Art Institute, the Roxie cinema, ATA (Artist's Television Access), The Rockit Room, Oakland Metro El Rincon, Beale St. Bar and Grille, 418 Project, Red Devil Lounge, Kimo's, just to mention a few.

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Please note...

Due to the extremely graphic and shocking nature of the material depicted in Cannibal Holocaust, it is impossible to be true to the subject matter and discuss it meaningfully without depicting it.

Hence, the editors of Landmark after Dark have elected to do so; this material follows on the subsequent pages of this article. If you wish to see it please continue to the following pages-- if not, please stop now and look no further.

Although we feel strongly that Cannibal Holocaust is a significant film worthy of being screened, we harbor no delusions that it is suitable viewing for all.

Lloyd Kaufman, Cult film icon, speaks

Italian horror cinema has had more than its fair share of brilliant filmmakers and groundbreaking movies. Italy has produced directors like Dario Argento, Lucio Fulci, Mario Bava, Lamberto Bava and Michele Soavi, and masterpieces like *Suspiria* (1977) and *Dellamorte dellamore* (1994). These are movies of near operatic grandeur, taking horror to grandiose heights and extremes. But one movie stands out from the pack by going in the opposite direction, by taking horror back down to its most primal level: Ruggero Deodato's *Cannibal Holocaust*, one of the most prescient films ever made.

Much has been made recently of the success of *The Blair Witch Project* (1999) and its back-to-basics approach to horror. As good as that movie may be, it pales in comparison to the accomplishment of *Cannibal Holocaust*, to which it bears some obvious similarities. In screenwriter Gianfranco Clerici's story, four filmmakers disappear in the jungle while making a documentary about cannibal tribes. The first half of the movie follows an anthropologist's efforts to recover the footage. In the second half, we watch this footage and find out exactly what happened to the first group. The influence on *The Blair Witch Project* is hard to deny. But beyond that, *Cannibal Holocaust* pioneered the entire fake documentary sub-genre³⁶, predating movies like *This Is Spinal Tap* (1984) and made concurrently with the other 'mockumentary' groundbreaker, Albert Brooks' *Real Life* (1979).

However, *Cannibal Holocaust* was, more successful in its ruse than any comparable movie. To this day, there are still those who come away convinced that they've just watched a 'snuff film'. Their reaction is understandable. *Cannibal Holocaust* features some of the most graphic depictions of rape and torture ever filmed. These staged sequences, which feature startlingly realistic special effects, are interspersed with scenes of real live animals actually being killed and eaten. *Cannibal Holocaust* could be shown in film schools as proof of Pudovkin's theory of editing (although any professor brave enough to show this movie would almost certainly be fired).

Pudovkin's theory held that if you took a shot of someone with a neutral expression (like the Mona Lisa, for example) and cut to a shot of a steak, the viewer would think the person looked hungry. If you took a shot of that same person and then juxtaposed it with a shot of a baby, the viewer would think they wore an expression of love. In *Cannibal Holocaust*, we see the actors kill and rip apart a giant sea turtle and other animals. Later on, they run across a woman impaled on a stake (the shot clearly demonstrating that the actress is sitting on a bicycle seat). The audience has already seen actual death on screen, and have been subtly brainwashed into assuming they're now seeing a woman with a stake rammed up her genitalia. The brain has been conditioned to accept that which it's now seeing as real. This mixture of real and staged violence, combined with the handheld camerawork and the rough, unedited quality of the second half of the movie, is certainly enough to convince someone that what they are watching is real.

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What truly sets *Cannibal Holocaust* apart from its contemporaries is its pitch-black view of the media. I once interviewed Deodato at his home in Italy, and asked him to comment on his views on the media (the entire interview can be found as a special bonus feature on Troma's DVD release of Argento's *The Stendhal Syndrome*, 1996). Deodato told me that if I planned on asking him stupid questions like that, he'd stop the interview. He'd set out to make a movie about cannibals, and that's it. Whether he intended to be profound or not (and I personally think he did, and was simply being disingenuous when I interviewed him), *Cannibal Holocaust* can certainly be seen as a brilliant response to media hypocrisy. While television news programmes can get away with showing the most extreme images of horrific violence and mayhem, films are censored for depicting staged versions of the exact same thing.

In their coverage of events in Kosovo, CNN broadcast long, lingering, fetishised images of dismembered body parts, strongly reminiscent of the long, fetishised shot of the phoney severed leg in *Troma's War* (1988). Our movie had to be disembowelled to get an R rating by the MPAA, while CNN beamed its uncensored pictures of genuine atrocities into millions of homes, every hour on the hour. Sure, we made every effort to make the special effects in *Troma's War* as realistic as possible, but I don't think anybody was mistaking the movie for the nightly news. (Maybe if they had, we wouldn't have had to butcher it.)

Cannibal Holocaust was the first film bold enough to suggest that the stuff we see on the news is every bit as staged as what's shown in the cinema. Today, of course, this point is taken almost as a given. The proliferation of so-called 'reality' programs like *The Real World*, *Survivor* and *Big Brother* has called into question the authenticity of TV documentaries. When someone auditions for *The Real World* or *Survivor* today, they know that if they act in a way that affords good ratings they will become celebrities. Deodato was addressing this issue twenty years ago. In the discovered footage of *Cannibal Holocaust*, the filmmakers are constantly talking about how rich this movie will make them and how they'll win an Oscar for it. Not only do these four people know exactly what they're filming, but they know what the effect of it will be, both on their audience and on themselves. They also have every intention of manipulating their subjects to create the desired 'cannibalistic' reality, if necessary.

When *Cannibal Holocaust* premiered, the idea that a film crew would manipulate their subjects to get sensational footage was almost blasphemous. Television journalists were expected to operate under the same ethical guidelines as their counterparts in the newspaper industry. Today it seems as though finding an ethical, truly impartial TV journalist is tantamount to the discovery of life on other planets. Moreover, television journalists are now starting to influence events before they happen.

During America's recent presidential election, television coverage declared Republican candidate George W. Bush had won the election. Democratic candidate Al Gore actually called Bush and conceded defeat, based on what he'd seen. It wasn't until later that someone suggested the count was a lot closer than he'd been led to believe. Gore had to call Bush back and retract his concession - oops! Cannibal Holocaust understands the power of film and television. The professor knows that once this footage hits the airwaves, this biased, orchestrated view of the South American Indians will become indisputable fact, and he therefore refuses to be a part of it.

Cannibal Holocaust has had a long, difficult road towards achieving whatever respectability it may now have. Banned in several countries, the movie has done well wherever it has been allowed to play, including a successful run in New York City. It's one of those movies whose reputation precedes it to such an extent that it's difficult to approach with an open mind. The viewer approaching the movie today expects a shocking, disturbing, visceral experience. What makes Cannibal Holocaust such a masterpiece is its ability to meet, and exceed, these expectations, even some twenty-odd years after its original release.

The power of films that meet with initial controversy tends to diminish over time. Cannibal Holocaust is that exceedingly rare film that, if anything, seems more shocking today than it did upon its original release, standing alone in that regard with *A Clockwork Orange* (1971) and *Bloodsucking Freaks* (1976). In the end, it's basically irrelevant whether Deodato intended his movie as a scathing indictment of the media or as a simple exploitation flick about cannibals. If it's the latter, then he's accomplished something far greater. And if he had loftier goals, then he led an attack against the mass media that the world is finally catching up with. However, it may never be fully prepared for the savagery of Cannibal Holocaust.

Lloyd Kaufman is a prolific director whose credits include the notorious Toxic Avenger films, as well as head of Troma Studios, one of the world's foremost distribution houses for cult film.

The trailer follows on the next page.

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