

# ELEGY

## The New Blood

One of the pleasures of editing this magazine is unveiling promising new filmmakers and championing their works in these pages. Thanks to my editorial position here and acquisitions duties on our video labels, beginners are always sending me their movies. They're looking for press, exposure and distribution. I try to watch everything that comes across my desk. It's not always easy: 90 percent of the submissions just aren't very good, plus the sheer volume can be overwhelming. There is nothing more exciting, however, than finding the occasional gold nugget in the pan and introducing the daring independents who overcome formidable low-budget (well under \$1 million) odds to deliver movies of worth and substance.



Delaware writer/director Ti West's first effort, *The Roost*, caught the attention of fans and pros alike at its New York Two Boots Pioneer Theater premiere screening last October. The film's setup is simple (a car carrying four young adults breaks down one dark night in the middle of nowhere), but the less you know—and the fewer expectations you have—the

better. West builds palpable moments of suspense and slow-building terror by relying on atmospheric sound FX, music and lighting. *The Roost's* gore FX and convincing CGI assault that eventually arrive serve as a relief for the audience for all the tension they've been harboring. Larry (Wendigo) Fessenden executive-produced this winner.

Dante Tomaselli, another East Coast writer/director (who also composes his unnerving psychedelic soundtracks), has been churning out indie shockers on a regular basis since 2001. His first two films, *Desecration* and *Horror*, displayed a haunting visual sensibility. His movies, which unspool like fever dreams, sometimes come up short in the story department, but they are always intriguing and well-shot. His third feature, *Satan's Playground*, may be the charm. He has cast some familiar names (*Evil Dead's* Ellen Sandweiss, *Sleepaway Camp's* Felissa Rose and *Texas Chainsaw's* Ed Neal), and the spare script that I read goes for the jugular in the manner of classic '70s screamers.

LA-based writer/director Chad Ferrin's *The Ghouls* (see review on page 34) is a rough and disturbing gore flick about a slimy paparazzo and the undead nightlife he uncovers with his lens. The movie's quality is marred by its shot-on-video cheapness, but the ideas on view and originality of the concept will win you over, especially if you need an antidote to slick and empty Hollywood horrors.

The living dead also turn up in David Gebroe's surprisingly effective *Zombie Honey-moon*. Though you may think schlock when you hear the title, *Zombie Honey-moon* is actually an effective and heartfelt little shocker about a young bride trying to keep her marriage together after her husband begins decomposing. This project first entered my radar when the eager Gebroe rushed me his early draft screenplay; the arc of the story reminded me of the pathos and heartbreak elicited by David Cronenberg's *The Fly*, which Gebroe has now likewise captured on screen.

Like Gebroe, Indiana's Travis Betz (who now lives in LA) mailed me his script, *Joshua*, before he started shooting his nightmare-in-a-small-town thriller back in South Bend. His very dark story freaked me out, and the screenplay's nasty twists and turns have been faithfully translated in the rough cut I watched recently.

Gebroe also shot his emotional horror yarn in his home state (New Jersey) on a tough 20-day shoot. Long Island director Christopher Garetano recorded the process for his documentary *Horror Business*, which takes you into the trenches with struggling low- (and no-) budget guerrilla filmmakers (who also include Las Vegas' Ron Atkins and Wisconsin's Mark Borchardt of *American Movie* fame). These obsessive guys are living the life with little dollars and big dreams. Garetano interviewed over 100 subjects and traveled across the U.S. for *Horror Business*, which emerges as a perceptive and revealing documentary about the enormous struggles to make creepy celluloid.

Though some of the movies on display in *Horror Business* barely rise above amateur-level, the same can't be said for Garetano's sharply edited documentary or his short films, one of which, *Inside*, won a prime spot on volume one of the FANGORIA *Blood Drive* compilation DVD. Scores of new auteurs are currently hard at work submitting their scary movies to *Blood Drive II* and racing to make the April 15 deadline. If you have the bug like the emerging fear artists you just read about, then go to [www.fangoriablooddrive.com](http://www.fangoriablooddrive.com) and make some malevolent magic. It's time to be discovered!

—Anthony Timpone,  
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Dedicated to Ossie Davis (1917-2005)

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