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The Slashing of INTRUDER

"In not giving the home viewer these scenes, Paramount has sabotaged their chances for a truly satisfying splatterfest."

By TIM LUCAS

SPECIAL REPORT

In *Intruder*, splattermeister Sam Raimi finally got his—but costs prevented his demise from getting too graphic.

When Scott Spiegel's *Intruder* was profiled in GOREZONE #6 (the one with the offensive cover), its enthusiastic director was quoted, "We're going to have that triple-X version for video release." Unfortunately, there's been a lot of blood under the bridge since then. The film was produced with the expectation of being released by Empire, the demise of which left *Intruder* in the care of Paramount Home Video—who

has a policy about releasing unrated films that weren't made before 1967. The R-rated *Intruder* is the only version on the market, the only version we're likely to ever see on the market, and it's about three minutes shorter than what we were expecting.

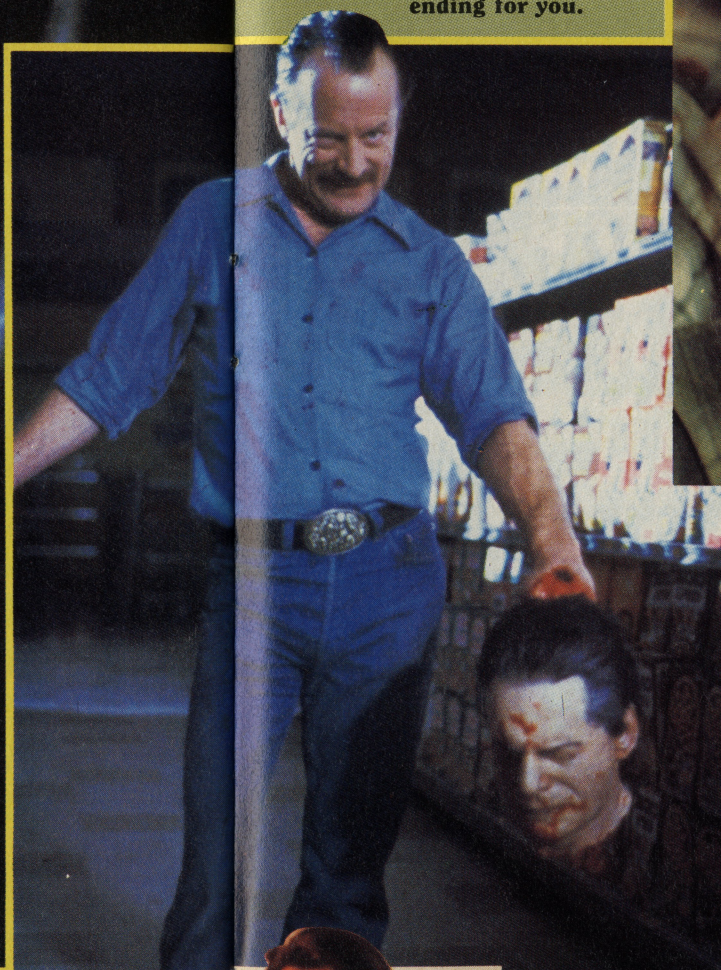
This is especially bad news because, in its uncut form, *Intruder* is one of the most stylish and visually creative slasher films in years. Set in a supermarket after hours, the film exploits an eerie neon nightmare setting that hasn't been milked for unease so well since Willard Huyck's *Messiah of Evil* (1973), and Spiegel fleshes it out with the kind of

budget of the completed feature at only \$130,000—less than half the reported budget of the 10-second computer-generated Paramount logo seen at the top of the video!

With Spiegel's help and the privileged loan of an uncensored tape, the Video Watchdog has assembled this shot-by-shot description of the missing footage:

1: Danny (Eugene Glazer), the store's owner, has his eye impaled on the spindle—a medium profile shot of the prosthetic head with spike penetrating the eye, blood jetting from the wound; blood drips onto the bulb of an overturn-

In case you haven't seen *Intruder* yet, we thought we'd ruin the surprise ending for you.



After all the problems this darned head has caused us, Paramount cuts it out of the flick?!

practical insight that can only be won from years of living and toiling in such places. While it suffers from certain inadequacies of dialogue and performance (not to mention the dreaded he's-still-not-dead clichés), *Intruder* excels on the level of detail. Spiegel isn't afraid of getting in there with his camera and creating artful, sometimes hysterical, signature touches that set his film apart (many of which would have taken the film over budget and were accommodated at Spiegel's own expense). There are certain shots in *Intruder* (even the R-rated version) which recall such disparate influences as *Attack of the 50 Foot Woman*, *Halloween* and a Spiegel favorite, the "Drop of Water" episode from Mario Bava's *Black Sabbath*; I'll leave the pleasure of spotting them to you.

The \$500,000 budget quoted in GOREZONE #6 was a projected budget only, and Spiegel now quotes the

ed lamp on the floor; Danny's convulsing hand triggers the desktop calculator, which adds up the damages; blood drips lavishly over the bulb until the light on the ceiling is tinted red.

2: After Produce Joe (Ted Raimi) gets the butcher knife in the back of his head, there is an additional medium shot of blood dripping freely down the right side of his face.

3: After Tim (Craig Stark) is stabbed in the stomach inside the cooler, the medium profile shot continues as blood sprays everywhere a la Kurosawa's *Sanjuro*; a front view medium shot as Tim groans in pain, blood squirting upwards from the bottom of the screen; a shot of generic beer cans getting spritzed with the overflow; another medium shot of Tim, as he grows faint from the liquid sound FX; a close side view as his hands grip the blade; a close-up of his bloody hands squeezing the bloody knife in his bloody wound; another medium shot as he listens to his life dripping away.

4: The trash compactor scene: a long shot as the compactor descends while the

A complete stranger to gore movies, Bruce Campbell only appeared after being convinced by director Spiegel (left).



Photos: Courtesy Scott Spiegel

This sort of thing transpires all the time in supermarkets.



Intruder holds the struggling Bub's head onto the flatbed; cut to a lower left hand view of the compactor denting his face; blood flecks the surface of a netted wall as the screams give way to crunching, gristly, visceral noises; a medium shot of Bub's legs and feet as they lose their fight and come to rest; a shot of the hydraulic neck of the press moving down; another long shot of the press coming to rest on the flatbed as the body convulses in the background; another lower left hand view as Bub's head pops like a balloon, splashing the press; another shot of the hydraulic neck of the press as it lifts, blood oozing down the steel pipe.

5: Randy (Sam Raimi), the store's butcher, is murdered by being lifted onto a meathook. His impalement on the hook, through his lower jaw, is not shown in the unrated version; according to Spiegel, there wasn't sufficient time to film Raimi's prosthetic head properly. There are, however, two views of Randy's dangling body: a straightforward medium shot followed by an extreme low angle as his pierced throat drips blood onto the floor (the camera lens itself!).

6: After Dave (Billy Marti) falls from the ladder following a surprise grappling

Jennifer lands face-to-face with Tim's severed torso, propped up inside a bucket and displaying a sign that reads, "1/2 OFF!"



with the eyeless Danny, there is a shot of Danny, leaning over the wooden rungs, picking feebly at his hollow socket, milking blood from it that drips, as the camera tilts, down five rungs and the wall behind as well.

7: The most intrusive cut on the Para-

Don't you wish this would happen to video censors?

mount release happens after Dave is struck by the meat cleaver, which segues from the dropped weapon to an exterior shot of the market. In the uncut version, we cut from the dropped meat cleaver to an overhead shot of Dave being dragged by his ankles across the floor, trying in vain to reach the cleaver; Dave's POV of the ceiling, hooks, lamp, etc.; the overhead shot briefly continued; the POV shot continued as a band saw looms into view; a medium close shot as Dave's head slams down on the band saw table, the saw in line just above his ear; a close-up of the saw's teeth; a close-up of the power switch as the Intruder's hand turns the apparatus on; a close-up of the saw's teeth as they come alive; return to the medium close shot as the Intruder's hand grips Dave around the throat, guiding his head toward the blade; a new long shot angle as Dave's body thrashes, trying to fight free, the Intruder's shadowy form holding him still; upside-down overhead shot of the band saw tearing through Dave's grimacing (now prosthetic) face at his upper gum line; a medium close shot of saw cutting through prosthetic head's cheekbones; a shot of the spinning rotors as meat and gristle dribble everywhere; the upside-down overhead shot continues as the band saw takes the top half of Dave's head off; the rotors shot continues, camera tilting down to show the volume of gristle and gore gathering in the works; the long shot continues as body thrashes in agony; back to the close-up

on the switch as the Intruder's hand kills the power.

(The above description doesn't come close to capturing the unnerving power of this highly convincing scene, which puts the head-drill highlight from Fulci's *Gates of Hell* to shame. The scene, which bears a soundtrack that sounds like a dentist office nightmare, lasts just over one minute. Spiegel says of this completely excised scene, "Paramount doesn't want to *know* from band saws!")

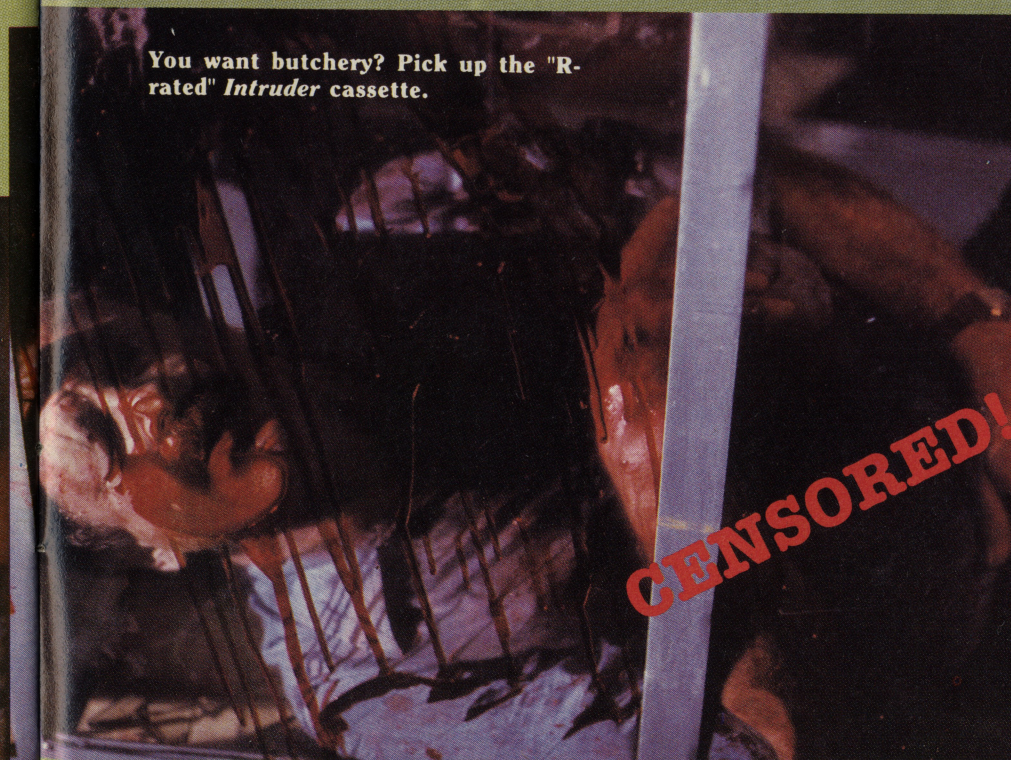
8: While seeking sanctuary in the meat locker, Jennifer (Elizabeth Cox) unknowingly flattens an eyeball under her Reeboks.

9: Jennifer, trying to force the freezer shut against the menacing hand grasping at her from inside, repeatedly slams

Anyone who's ever worked the night shift in a store has entertained murder scenarios, but usually they involve customers.



You want butchery? Pick up the "R-rated" *Intruder* cassette.



Randy's dangling, hooked corpse against the heavy metal door.

10: After falling down the conveyor belt into the cellar, Jennifer lands face-to-face with Tim's severed torso, propped up inside a bucket and displaying a sign that reads, "1/2 OFF!"

11: After Produce Joe's body comes down the conveyor belt, Jennifer's terrified reaction triggers the mechanism that puts the belt in reverse. As Joe heads back upstairs, his head falls off and his body disintegrates like a cow's.

12: An entire brief scene is missing in which Jennifer hides from the Intruder inside the cooler, where she must stifle her screams when confronted with Dave's bisected head wearing a necklace of the beer cans he'd earlier consumed.

The scene includes two disgusting close-ups of the reassembled head.

13: As Jennifer struggles to pry open the shatterproof store entrance, a deliveryman (Scott Spiegel) arrives with a shipment of fresh bread. As he opens his mouth in greeting, blood barfs forth, splattering the glass. His body slumps down, revealing the Intruder standing exactly behind him—a la *Tenebrae*—holding the butcher knife that did the deed. The Intruder bonks him on the head with the butt of the knife, for good measure.

14: After Jennifer sees Danny on the floor, whimpering, "Help me!" she finds that the Intruder is holding his severed head and using it as a ventriloquist's dummy. In two snipped close-ups, the Intruder manipulates the head's mouth with his hand gloved inside its neck, makes it say "Help me!" again, then kisses its cheek.

15: The Intruder grabs the knife away from Jennifer by the blade, then

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INTRUDER

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squeezes it in his hand, forcing scarlet rivulets to wind down his forearm.

16: In the Paramount version, the Intruder strikes Craig (David Byrnes) once with Danny's severed head, as opposed to five times in the unrated version.

17: Likewise, Craig strikes the Intruder only once with the meat cleaver in the grand finale. The original cut shows our hero literally *tenderizing* the Intruder with 15 cleaver slams—the fifth time landing, in a medium close-up shot, between the fingers of his left hand.

In not giving the home viewer these scenes, Paramount Home Video has sabotaged their (and your) chances for a truly satisfying splatterfest, reducing *Intruder* to another dry-run along the lines of their *Friday the 13th* features. If the audience feels disappointed, think how Greg Nicotero, Robert Kurtzman and Howard Berger must feel; they performed makeup miracles on a miserly budget, and their accomplishment can only be circulated through the filmmaking community by word-of-mouth and bootleg cassette. Without their impressive work to climax director Spiegel's persuasive staging, most viewers will rewind *Intruder* best remembering the cameos of a couple of *Green Acres* veterans and Emil Sitka (the original "Fake Shemp").


There is an interesting—not to mention revealing—footnote to the *Intruder* saga. The film was released on videocassette in England earlier this year by Colorbox, a new video company—in its *unrated* edition! This brave action promptly solicited the wrath of the BBFC (the U.K. equivalent of our MPAA), which insisted that a series of cuts be imposed on all subsequent copies of *Intruder*. In a turn of events similar to those experienced in Britain by Frank Henenlotter's *Brain Damage* (another Paramount Home Video release), the BBFC's list of cuts are said to be far less extensive than those demanded by the increasingly stifling MPAA.

Edited copies of *Intruder* are already in circulation in Britain, but an unspecified number of uncut cassettes remain on the loose through British video stores and distributors. The only means of telling the two versions apart, sad to say, is by renting and auditing them personally until you find the one with the band saw.

It's heartening to know that, somewhere in the world, someone is perpetuating—however covertly—the freedom of choice.

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