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Masters of horror cigarette burns

"Cigarette Burns" is the eighth episode of season one of the horror anthology series Masters of Horror. It was directed by John Carpenter and written by Drew McWeeny and Scott Swan. It premiered on Showtime on Friday, December 16th, 2005. The episode concerns rare films dealer Kirby Sweetman who is deeply in debt and trying to keep his small independent theater open. He is hired by an old cinephile, Mister Bellinger, to find the only existing print of an elusive thirty-year old movie, La Fin Absolue du Monde, which supposedly sparked a homicidal riot during its premiere at the Sitges Film Festival, after which it was destroyed. The episode follows Kirby as he pursues a series of clues that lead him inexorably towards a horrific and bloody conclusion.
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Alternatively known as John Carpenter's Cigarette Burns. Cigarette burns refers to the yellow circle that blinks intermittently in the upper right hand corner on older films. This is an indicator of where an editor has cut and spliced a section of film. See also[]
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Episode aired Dec 16, 2005
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With a torrid past that haunts him, a movie theatre owner is hired to search for the only existing print of a film so notorious that its single screening caused the viewers to become homicidally insane. With a torrid past that haunts him, a movie theatre owner is hired to search for the only existing print of a film so notorious that its single screening caused the viewers to become homicidally insane.
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Masters of Horror: Cigarette Burns
Season 1 Episode 08 (see below for trailer and preview images)
Cigarette Burns
Season 1 Episode 08 Originally aired December 16, 2005
Directed by John Carpenter
Written by Drew McWeeny, Scott Swan
Starring: Udo Kier, Christopher Redman, Norman Reedus, Gwyneth Walsh
IMDB 7.6/10
This was a Masters of Horror episode I was excited to watch because it's directed by a true master of horror, John Carpenter. In this episode, a rare films dealer named Kirby Sweetman is living the life of a desperate man swimming in an ocean of debt without so much as a life preserver. He owes \$200,000 or else he's going to lose his little noire theater, the last love of his life. He's already lost his wife to a drug overdose so; this theater is his heart and soul and the only thing he really has left...of himself or his wife. But, his reputation for his talent of procuring rare and obscure original films precedes him and he soon gets contacted by a Mr. Bellinger, a man who is not only a videophile, but also so filthy rich he has more money than he knows what to do with. So, he wastes it. Like most narcissistic filthy rich people do. This guy Bellinger, wastes his money on finding rare original films that nobody outside the small circle of true videophiles has ever heard of, let alone would want to watch. The film being requested this time is one named La Fin Absolue du Monde, a French film with a wretched reputation. The title translates into "the absolute end of the world" and in this "film" horrible and hideous things happen, atrocities such as the sacrifice of an actual angel, including the vicious and violently gruesome removal of the angel's wings. There are rumors surrounding the existence of this film, as it hasn't been seen since its first initial viewing. At that time, the audience in the theater supposedly went insane, erupting in violence and madness, leaving one lone survivor and that was only because he was the one in the film booth and he turned away as it was being watched. The horror involved with this film is what makes it so desirable and so rare. Sweetman and Bellinger negotiate a price, one that will save Kirby's theater AND allow him to view the film, if he so chooses. Still, during the search for this film, all of the people Kirby comes into contact with warn him to walk away and even if he doesn't, to never watch the film. Of course, this only intrigues him more as he continues his search for this one and only original print, a search that ends up taking him in many directions. Yup, that's right. That's all I'm going to tell you. Hahaha! BUT, if you want to watch it, you can view it at the link below for free. I know this is Carpenter we are talking about here. And for the most part it was good. The only thing was I was expecting a little more I guess BECAUSE it WAS Carpenter. I also read a book not too long ago that was very similar in plot. It was Hot Splices, you can find the review HERE. There was a lot more violence in that book than in this movie so, that might also be why I expected more. However, this was still a very nice way to take up an hour if you are looking for something horror based and short. I don't think this would disappoint anyone and I think the true Carpenter fans will see his genius in this short film. I can definitely see why it's part of this Masters of Horror series. And where I think you will see the most of what we know to be John Carpenter-esque, will be the second half of the show. So, do enjoy and thanks for reading!
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Directed by John Carpenter and written by Drew McWeeny and Rebecca Swan.Kirby (Norman Reedus) is the owner of a run-down cinema whose girlfriend Annie (Zara Taylor) recently committed suicide. In order to pay a debt to Annie's hateful father Walter (Gary Hetherington), Kirby accepts the request of eccentric millionaire Bellinger (Udo Kier) to find and bring him the only surviving copy of the late director Hans Bakovic's La Fin Absolue du Monde ("The Absolute End of the World"), a film shrouded in myth that is said to be the ultimate Brown Note.Tropes: Affably Evil: Bellinger is a very polite individual who admits nonchalantly to having murdered people in order to build his fortune, and deserve Hell as a result. And he is obsessed with being the sole owner of and watching a film so evil that it should never have been made, according to its own legend. Ambition Is Evil: Bellinger's single-minded ambition to possess the only copy of the film causes all the deaths and damage in the episode. Anti-Hero: Kirby is the "brooding hero with a dark past" type. Formerly a drug junkie who got his girlfriend addicted and eventually drove her to suicide, he still has few heroic qualities in the present day, and is only doing the job for the money and his obsession with the film. He still cares for his dead girlfriend, though. Artifact of Death: Pretty much anyone involved in the production of La Fin Absolue du Monde killed themselves and each other because of it, as do people who go after it or see it. Asshole Victim: Pretty much everyone who dies as a result of the film is an asshole of one shade or another, though Kirby and his father-in-law are still somewhat sympathetic. Ate His Gun: Kirby eats a bullet under the spell of La Fin Absolue Du Monde. Ax-Crazy: Dalibor, a murderous Snuff Film director. He demonstrates this by gratuitously murdering the innocent taxi driver that took Kirby to see him in front of Kirby. Bath Suicide: Kirby's late girlfriend killed herself by slicing her own wrists in the bathtub when they both lived together as heroin junkies. Kirby has to relive the event during one of his visions. Bittersweet Ending: Literally everyone dies... except the Angel, who retrieves the reels of La Fin Absolue du Monde and thanks Kirby before leaving the theater, finally free. Blood Is the New Black: Annie is covered head to toe in blood when she emerges out of the theater screen at the end. Downplayed with Dalibor after he decapitates the taxi driver. Blood Magic: Dalibor explains that this was the secret to Bakovic's success — blood spilled on film grants it supernatural power, and Bakovic took this to the ultimate extreme by doing so to a sacred being. Broken Angel. The main character encounters a pale, gaunt, vaguely male figure with healed stumps at his shoulder blades kept by a deranged art collector. He is the Angel that was mutilated in La fin absolue du monde, the short film that the protagonist seeks. As revealed by Snuff Film director Dalibor, the sheer sacrifice of this act was the key to the late Bakovic's success and turned his film into a madness-inducing Artifact of Death. Brown Note: La Fin Absolue du Monde drives people crazy just from thinking too much about it. The Collector: The millionaire Bellinger collects various films depicting extreme acts. He's also keeping a mutilated angelic creature locked up in his gallery as part of his collection of La Fin Absolue du Monde. Corrupt Corporate Executive: Bellinger admits to having killed people to get his money and flat-out says he's going to Hell when he dies. He claims the reason he wants to see La Fin Absolue du Monde is to "get a glimpse of Heaven... before the eternity of Hell." Creepy Good: The angel looks very off-putting and creepy, but is entirely benevolent. Cruel and Unusual Death: Bellinger's suicide. Intestines + film projector = not a pretty combination. Dead Person Conversation: Kirby's dead girlfriend Annie appears before him to remind him what he's lost. Subverted when Kirby sees through the illusion and realizes she's not real. Decapitation Presentation: Dalibor creates a Snuff Film by filming himself decapitating Kirby's taxi driver right in front of Kirby, and presenting the severed head to him. Driven to Suicide: Bellinger cuts out his small intestines and inserts them into a film projector. He don't see him breathe out his last breath, but not much else could have come of it. Eye Scream: Bellinger's butler cuts out his own eyes after seeing the film. Fan Disservice: In a hallucination near the end, Annie is completely naked... and also completely covered in blood, and still thirsty for some more. Fingore: Henri reveals that he was the original projectionist at the bloody premiere of La Fin Absolue du Monde. When he tried to stop the film all the fingers on his left hand fused together. La Fin Absolue du Monde includes a shot of the Angel scratching a wall until his nails fall off. The Fourth Wall Will Not Protect You: When La Fin Absolue du Monde is shown at the end, Kirby's dead girlfriend Annie emerges from the screen covered in blood and hungry for human flesh. Subverted when it turns out to be another hallucination. Gorn: Quite possibly the most Carpenter has ever put into a single feature since The Thing. Greater-Scope Villain: Whatever enigmatic figure or group bankrolled Bakovic to create La Fin Absolue du Monde and presumably got him the captured angel. The idea that it might have been Satan himself is brought up and not wholly discarded. Haunted Technology: La Fin Absolue du Monde is a haunted movie. The Hero Dies: Kirby ends up killing himself under the cursed film's influence. I'm a Humanitarian: When the film is presented at the end, Annie emerges out of the theater screen. Her father comforts her, but she's "hungry", and takes a bite out of his neck. It turns out to be another hallucination. In Case You Forgot Who Wrote It: The title card reads "John Carpenter's Cigarette Burns" and the episode is often referred as such. Ironic Name: Kirby's last name, Sweetman ("Are you my sweet man?" Annie asks in her flashbacks). The episode shows that he is anything but a "sweet man". Jerkass: Both Kirby and Annie's father are rather unpleasant to talk to. Jerkass Has a Point: Annie's father. Kirby treats him like an unreasonable jerkass, but Kirby did get his daughter killed by indulging her drug habit, abysmally failed to get her on the right track despite agreeing to do so, is still massively in debt to him, and just evades him whenever the topic of repaying the loan comes up. It's only when he resolves to kill Kirby that he crosses the line into outright villainy. Le Film Artistique: La Fin... is pretty much an exaggeration of this trope. Murder-Suicide: At the end Kirby kills his late girlfriend Annie's murderously unhinged father under the evil film's effects because they both keep bringing her back with their remaining love for her. Moments afterwards he eats his own gun after pleading at another vision of her that he's sorry for everything. Only in it for the Money: Initially Kirby only takes the job offer to look for La Fin Absolue du Monde to pay off his enormous debts. Subverted later on as he becomes increasingly obsessed with the film itself due to its corrupting influence. This is lampshaded by Bakovic's widow who notes that the money is just an excuse. Ultimately, he wisely decides not to see it, only to accidentally watch it along with his father-in-law when the projector starts on its own accord. Our Angels Are Different: In this case, angels are corporeal creatures and can be tortured, and the one seen in the episode is uglier than one would expect at first (he has a bald, bulbous, pale head and looks like the Engineers from Prometheus). Posthumous Character: Kirby's late girlfriend Annie is seen only in flashbacks and periodically appears before him as an apparition during his search. La Fin Absolue du Monde's director Hans Bakovic died long before Kirby set out on his search. His film was so evil it even killed its creator. Riddle for the Ages: While most aspects of the film are directly addressed (e.g. the entire film crew being dead), no one knows who exactly produced La Fin Absolue du Monde. Bakovic's widow says her husband never directly talked about them, only saying they were "people behind sorrow". Kirby sarcastically asks if The Devil was involved, to which she essentially shrugs. How exactly they got a hold of an angel is also left unclear. Sole Survivor: The only character present at the climax to survive is the angel. We also earlier hear the only surviving member of the La Fin Absolue du Monde crew is the DP, who is blind and insane. Troubling Unchildhood Behavior: Part of what makes La Fin Absolue du Monde so evil — it depicts an angel being mutilated by children. Sanity Slippage: Anyone who watches or is involved with La Fin Absolue du Monde. When meets Myers, who wrote the initial review, he finds that the critic has been spent the last thirty years writing a second review, accumulating thousands of pages. Snuff Film: Kirby visits a Snuff director called Dalibor while searching for the film, and La Fin Absolue du Monde itself depicts the torture and mutilation of an angel by schoolchildren. Shout-Out: The film playing at Kirby's cinema is Dario Argento's Deep Red. Bellinger says he skipped out on watching La Fin Absolue du Monde to watch "the first Phibes". Kirby briefly mentions the esoteric film critic Myers as "Kael's most interesting disciple", presumably referring to controversial film critic Pauline Kael. What little see of La Fin Absolue du Monde seems reminiscent of famously horrifying, controversial and sacrilegious film Begotten, as both are deliberately black-and-white, silent films featuring the brutalization of divine beings. Shrouded in Myth: La Fin Absolue du Monde was buried years ago after the initial massacre at the premiere and is nearly untraceable. Kirby remarks that everywhere he goes to look there's a wall of silence surrounding the topic. Vancouver Doubling: Referenced-in-universe. Late in life, La Fin Absolue du Monde's director moved to Vancouver because he thought it would be a good place to make movies and would be cheaper than Hollywood. His widow notes that he was proven right twenty years later. Switch to Desktop
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TV Tropes is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 3.0 Unported License. Permissions beyond the scope of this license may be available from thestaff@tropes.org. Reddit and its partners use cookies and similar technologies to provide you with a better experience. By accepting all cookies, you agree to our use of cookies to deliver and maintain our services and site, improve the quality of Reddit, personalize Reddit content and advertising, and measure the effectiveness of advertising. By rejecting non-essential cookies, Reddit may still use certain cookies to ensure the proper functionality of our platform. For more information, please see our Cookie Notice and our Privacy Policy. In 2023, pop culture maven J. B. Spins deemed the episode to be Carpenter's "best work of the 21st Century thus far" and wrote, "With the passage of a few years, it also now looks quite 'influential,' as in it has been ripped off a few times." He praised the cast: "As you would expect, Kier is delightfully weird as Bellinger. Norman Reedus also does great work freaking out and stewing in his own guilt and remorse as Sweetman. In fact, the entire ensemble is consistently strong, in twitchy and sinister ways." Like DVD Review, he likened it to the 1998 box office hit Ringu.[18] In a laudatory 2018 retrospective review, the Daily Dead website said that the installment is "the darkest and most intense episode" of the series and called it "a cool, imaginative story - one that draws us in and fills us with dread: we're never sure where it's going, but we know it's nowhere good. The stylization of Carpenter's direction never leans into film noir, but it's impossible to watch 'Cigarette Burns' and not be reminded of other horror noir like Alan Parker's Angel Heart and, in particular, Roman Polanski's The Ninth Gate." The reviewer said admiringly, "There is a nightmarish inevitability to the mystery at the center, in that we want to see it solved to satisfy our own curiosity about the resolution, but at the same time don't want to see Sweetman getting closer and closer to the truth because we know some form of Hell awaits him at the end of the trail. And boy are we right. There is an image near the end of 'Cigarette Burns' - involving Udo Kier and a film projector - that has stuck with me for the 13 years since I first saw the episode. It might be the most striking and horrifying image yet in all of Masters of Horror."[8] In 2020, the pop-culture website The Avocado praised the cast, calling Reedus "impressive" with "a wonderfully reactive presence," and Kier "terrifying" and "so charismatic onscreen that his sudden shifts in demeanor are as shocking as a murder in a slasher film." Overall, the reviewer called it "an incredibly theatrical work."[3] Guido Henkel of DVD Review lauded Carpenter as "the master of suggestion, creating horror in the viewer's mind by not showing us details." Here, however, "he sidestepped this technique and gives us remarkable graphic shots and one of the most memorable death scenes of any horror film," producing "a surprisingly gory and overtly violent film for John Carpenter."[13] Describing the movie as "In the Mouth of Madness meets Ringu," Henkel deems the episode "dark, disturbing and unsettling," highly atmospheric, and "a thoroughly enjoyable and suspenseful film."[13] "A standout from the first season of Masters of Horror." Sam Reader of Tor Nightfire wrote in 2022, before focusing on the film-within-a-film aspect. "Rumored to cause insanity and death at every screening, La Fin's presence is felt throughout the movie, as even searching for it or seeing it at a distance causes hallucinations, nightmares, disfigurement, and death. Carpenter's always been good at making things seem ominous and sinister even at the best of times, and the way the film alters anyone who's ever heard of it — from the crazy fan who directs snuff movies to the film critic who's writing a House of Leaves-style review to correct a perceived mistake — plays on this wonderfully, giving La Fin a sense of doom even before the movie shows up." Analyzing what he sees as a metacinematic style, Reader wrote, "Cigarette Burns also seems at times like a sendup, playing with the art/horror-noir touches while pushing them just far enough (blood sacrifices being an important ingredient in filmmaking, some effects that seem to blur the line between film artifice and "reality") that it plays on the border of the absurd. However you interpret it, it's a tight, twisty suspense film from one of the best genre directors out there, and worth the short time it takes to watch."[19] Ask the publishers to restore access to 500,000+ books.