

# TERMINAL CINEMA

Pacific Cinematheque  
April 1<sup>st</sup>, 2008

- Dave Bertrand

**April Fool's Day and I'm at the Pacific Cinematheque for Terminal Cinema**  
a punchy new underground movie par-tay. Totally local, DIY, unprofitable, old-school (even analog!), just-for-the-heck filmmaking; no DGC sponsors here, no sir. Just films. For fun. I spoke with moustachioed, rail-thin co-organizer Blair Dykes, but my trusty, archaic mini-cassette recorder went fuckity and devoured the tapestock. Arrrgh!! So I'll paraphrase – this 'festival' exists by (and for) a bunch of film-making/loving dudes/girls and them alone, devoid of industry shmoozing, shoulder-checking and crew jackets. A continuation of the spirit that kinda died with the Blinding Light!, the 24 Hour Film Contest and ReelFast – of which the Bloodshots 48 Hour Horror Filmmaking contest is a rare survivor.

Our Master of Ceremonies tonight was the Taboo Revue's Bernie Bombay, looking and acting like a drunken Shriner impersonating the Amazing Criswell. He soon quieted. Of 13 films, highlights were many: *Surplus*, an overly long, twisted tale of awkward Gus living inside the army surplus shop on Broadway (guarded by gorilla!). A beautiful woman with a snake leg-tattoo has steamy sex in a gas mask. *The Experience*, by Dan Rocque. A hoser in the woods has to cope with the sudden corpse of a drinking buddy. The camera is cold and vérité. Paranoid. Loved it. 8mm artist Kevin Scromeda's *So Many People in the Neighborhood* sets a collage of war footage, burn victims, and other fun stuff to a demented Ween song. @\$&%^! Kryshan Randal's *The Bully Solution* is the most revered & successful of Bloodshots films. A sick, sick after-school special with an ominous onscreen countdown and child-to-child violence. Throughout, an audience member laughed loudly, horribly, recalling my first stoned viewing of Don Hertzfeldt's *Billy's Balloon*, where a gal in hysterics shouted, "I hate children!" No less warped was Morgan Hirtle's *Cake Benedict*, a silent, crackly tale of a disturbing horse-headed private dick. In an obscene bit of programming, *Cake* followed immediately after Peter Kepkay's *Voices*, a long, slow, PBS-styled doc about the decrepit, AIDS-ridden ghettos of Mawali, set to the sounds of a church choir.

And the top film? *Frog Jesus*. Most short films are looong. Here's a masterpiece at 70 seconds, looking like found footage from a 1960's British PSA. Ben Peters' super-8 weirdfest follows young Colton Boreen (a regular of director Jamie "Patterns" Travis) crucifying a frog.

A perfect line-up is impossible in a short film fest, and *Terminal Cinema*'s themeless collection was no exception. But this *rocked*. Since when does jaded Vancouver support grassroots filmmaking? On a Tuesday? Turnout was huge, entry was free, the donation jar crammed full. The afterparty, inside the gorgeous Cineworks backroom, featured marvelous on-set photog work from contributing filmmaker Ariel Kirk-Gushowaty. We drained a keg. God bless good people for putting on stuff like this. It's hard work and pays nothing. Aside from some peculiar projection issues, this no-budget, no-hope "festival" was a complete success. There just might be a future for Vancouver indies. More please!!!