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Creep Show

A&E | Vol. 4, No. 31, July 30, 2004
 (The Ugly Face of Domestic Violence)

by **Sam Baltrusis**

Demons Gone Wild

Poor Baron Mondo Von Doren. Armed with an arsenal of nefarious plots to take over the world—like creating the formula for the "New Coke" and orchestrating the comeback of Milli Vanilli—the minor demon just can't get any respect from the Underworld's "in crowd."

For those not in the know, Von Doren was initially sent to the physical plane to inflict misery upon all mankind. However, after teaming up with Mexican wrestler El Sappo De Tempesto and flubbing up in general as an earthly evildoer, Hell's cliquish inner-sanctum want nothing to do with the slacker attacker.

In fact, the editors at HELL-O magazine, the dark realm's equivalent of People magazine, labeled Pensacola's own demon tormentor as a "big ol' loser."

Von Doren's retort to HELL-O: "Whatever."

The minor demon's alter ego, Mike Ensley, plans to unleash an old-school spook show extravaganza at The Silver Screen Theatre to drum up some support for The Baron and his faithful sidekick, El Sappo.

The all-night event starting at 11:30 p.m. Saturday, July 31 is a throwback to the midnight shows of the '50s when costumed ghouls roamed the aisles and campy horror hosts wowed the crowds with onstage spook-show antics. Then there are the main features—campy flicks like "Dementia 13" and "Attack of the Monsters"—force fed to the hungry crowds.

Filmgoers beware. The Baron Mondo Von Doren will emcee the evening with his sad-sack sidekick El Sappo, played by Chip Chism. "Fat White Vampire Blues" author Andrew Fox will unveil his sequel "Bride of the Fat White Vampire" and "Shadows of the Dead" director Joel Robertson will introduce his short featured on Fangoria's "Blood Drive" DVD.

Ensley, a 35-year-old graphic designer during the day and host of the public access gore fest "Nightmare Theatre" at night, is tight-lipped about the 3D SpookShow's main feature. But he's eager to dispel the myths surrounding his red-faced evil half, the renewed interest in old-style horror and the Bible Belt's



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reaction to The Baron.

IN: With your 3D SpookShow are you trying to recreate the classic midnight horror screenings from the '50s?

ENSLEY: We're hoping so. The whole thing started in the '40s, and ruled throughout the '50s and '60s, and kind of died out in the early '70s. But the midnight shows back then usually had magicians or people sawed in half onstage or people dressed up as monsters who would abduct a woman in the crowd and take her screaming from the theater. We're gonna play on that whole experience with our 3D SpookShow.

IN: Will your event have a contemporary twist?

ENSLEY: Our show will be much more high-tech. All I can say is that we're going to touch on the whole spook show thing in a campy way. But, I don't want to give too much away.

IN: What's the story behind The Baron and El Sappo?

ENSLEY: We started the Nightmare Theatre show in 2001. Originally, The Baron was more of a ghoul at first and the character just wasn't working. My wife bought some devil horns for Halloween the year before and I stuck them on my head and I said, "This is it." There really hadn't been a demon horror host before, so the whole look worked. Our show is more about comedy anyway, so we came up with a wacky background to the characters. The Baron is a mid-level file clerk-type demon and not very powerful. His plans usually don't work out because El Sappo messes everything up.

IN: So, the demon's nefarious plans never pan out?

ENSLEY: The whole concept of the show is that we're trying to hoist these really bad movies on the public in hopes that we can mind-control—or numb everybody down—so we can take over the world. It never seems to work out.

IN: Is there a renewed interest in old-school horror?

ENSLEY: I think so. If you look at the movies that came out this year, most of them are remakes of the older horror films. If you look back a few years ago, "13 Ghosts" and "House on Haunted Hill" were both remakes of the classics from William Castle, who was the greatest showman of the horror genre. He was the mastermind behind "Emergo," where a skeleton on a string would come flying over the audience and "The Tingler," where the seats were wired up and people were given mild shocks throughout the film. That kind of stuff is coming back. Although, I don't think they are doing it well.

IN: Really?

ENSLEY: I don't think horror movies today are nearly as well constructed today as they once were.

IN: Is it because contemporary filmmakers ignore the horror classics?

ENSLEY: A good example of that is "Van Helsing," which came out this year. Steven Sommers took all the classic Universal monsters and just destroyed them. He didn't pay any attention to their heritage. The movie had a great two-minute opening, but the rest of the film was just trash.



opening, but the rest of the night was just normal.

IN: Speaking of trash, how does The Baron fare in the Bible Belt?

ENSLEY: I haven't had any complaints. I think the show is so campy that no one takes it too seriously. So far, no one has accused us of being devil worshippers, which we definitely are not.


IN: Do people recognize you on the street?

ENSLEY: The crowd we draw is so varied. My dad was giving blood awhile back and the nurse saw his name and said, "Do you know the guy who does that TV show?" My dad automatically said, "No." But I'll be at a flea market and people will run up to me. Or, I'll be at a record store and people will want to talk about the show. I may have makeup and horns as The Baron, but I still look the same.

EDITOR'S NOTE: The 3D SpookShow immediately follows IN's KISS-OFF! bash @ The Gutter Lounge, 8 p.m. Visit www.inweekly.net for details.

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