

# STACK'S ULTIMATE ZOMBIE GUIDE

Zombies are everywhere these days – on cinema screens, on TV, on gaming consoles and even on city streets, where thousands of participants dress up for annual 'zombie marches' across the globe. They've even shambled their way into classics of literature – Jane Austen is surely turning in her grave at the existence of *Pride and Prejudice and Zombies*. The living dead have been a longtime staple of popular entertainment, from the 1932 film *White Zombie* and 1943's *I Walked with a Zombie*, to George A. Romero's seminal *Night of the Living Dead* and the Italian zombie splatterfests that followed in its wake. Even scientists and governments are now taking the possibility of a zombie virus and its apocalyptic consequences seriously, and so too is STACK, with this informative guide to the living dead in all their rotting, flesh-eating incarnations.

## ZOMBIE FACTS



**THEY BITE.** Zombies increase their numbers this way, passing on the infection that triggers reanimation. Sometimes a mere scratch is all it takes. The victim slowly succumbs to the effects of the bite and passes away, returning as one of the living dead after a period of time (which is variable). There is no cure, however immediate amputation of the infected area may prove effective in some cases.



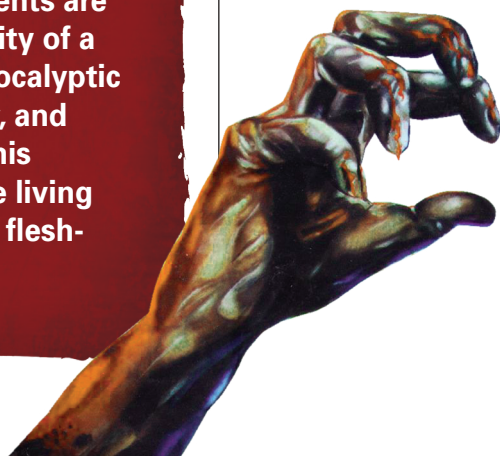
**THEY EAT.** Zombies possess a craving for human flesh, and are particularly fond of internal organs and brains. Although often described as cannibals, technically they're not; zombies do not feed on each other, only on humans, and the living dead can no longer be considered human.



**THEY LURCH.** Zombies are generally shuffling, lumbering, mindless creatures, which makes escaping their clutches a lot easier. But they are a formidable force when congregating in packs, and more modern day zombies – like "the infected" variety – often possess the speed of Usain Bolt.



**THEY DIE – AGAIN.** How do you kill something that's already dead? Shoot it in the head! Destroying the brain with a well-aimed bullet (or sledgehammer) is the only surefire way of keeping zombies down for good. Fire is also effective, as is severing the head from the body. However, unless the brain is turned to mush, the head can still deliver a fatal bite.



“WHEN THE EARTH  
SPITS OUT THE DEAD...  
THEY WILL RETURN TO  
TEAR THE FLESH OF THE  
LIVING.”

– *Zombie Flesh Eaters* (1979)



# ZOMBIES ON SCREEN

## THE DAWN OF ROMERO

George A. Romero's hugely influential, low budget, black and white 1968 film *Night of the Living Dead* changed the zombie movie forever – and the horror genre as well. Moreover, Romero pioneered the concept of using zombies as metaphors for social issues. Its simple plot – a group of people in an isolated farmhouse under siege from the living dead – has since been interpreted as an allegory for race relations, the Vietnam war, and social revolution. But ultimately, NOTLD is a good old fashioned monster movie, where the monsters are grotesque versions of ourselves. The source of the zombie outbreak is kept deliberately vague – something about radiation from a disintegrating space probe – and was only added to the script after Romero realised the audience would demand some kind of explanation. “They keep coming back in a bloodthirsty lust for HUMAN FLESH” screamed the poster’s tagline, drawing in drive-in crowds by the carload and making NOTLD a huge success. Today it ranks among the all-time great midnight/cult movies, and its indelible impact on zombie cinema cannot be ignored.

Ten years later, Romero brought the dead back to life once again in sequel *Dawn of the Dead* – the second in a proposed trilogy and the first film to really explore the consequences of a full-blown zombie apocalypse. Romero now had colour and the services of makeup master Tom Savini at his disposal, and the film’s explicit gore shocked both audiences and the ratings board (it was extensively cut in Australia



Land of the Dead

until its release on video during the '80s). *Dawn* expanded the scope of the zombie epidemic begun in *Night* and this time the social commentary was more obvious, with the zombies gravitating to places they remembered from their past life – in this case an indoor shopping mall (these days the dead would most likely be texting or tweeting). As a satire on rampant consumerism, *Dawn of the Dead* is as biting as its resident zombies, who come in all shapes, sizes and creeds, from nuns to Hare Krishnas.

Romero's third zombie film, *Day of the Dead* (1985), is a darker and more downbeat affair, with the living dead having now overrun the planet and outnumbering the living 400,000:1. Attempts by civilian scientists to find a solution to the outbreak (including domesticating the dead) are hindered by an arrogant military in an underground missile silo hideaway. Once again Savini's meaty effects were the star, alongside Bub – a “friendly” zombie with a personality, and perhaps a soul.

The success of Zack Snyder's 2004 remake of *Dawn of the Dead* allowed Romero to embark on a second trilogy. *Land of the Dead* (2005) furthered the zombies' evolution, with the dead simply “trying to survive in the world” by forming an army to attack the humans, who are living in a fenced-off region of Pittsburgh. *Diary of the Dead* (2007) went back to the beginning, presenting a handheld/found footage account of the zombie outbreak; and the cheekily titled *Survival of the Dead* (2009) took place in an island community divided over the rehabilitation or destruction of their dead relatives.





## ZOMBIES ON SCREEN

### SPAGHETTI SPLATTER

The European version of Romero's *Dawn of the Dead* was re-edited by Italian horror master Dario Argento, released under the title *Zombi*, and became a huge success. Consequently, opportunistic Italian filmmakers climbed aboard the zombie bandwagon and knock-offs of Romero's classic multiplied faster than the living dead. Leading the Italian zombie movie boom was Lucio Fulci's incredible *Zombi 2* (1979) – aka *Zombie* (US) and *Zombie Flesh Eaters* (UK & Oz) – which was marketed as a sequel to the Romero/Argento film, despite being mostly set on an island and having no connection whatsoever.



It's undeniably the best of the Italian zombie "gutbusters" – explicitly gory, beautifully shot in widescreen, and using old school voodoo as a means of resurrecting the dead. Fulci would use zombies as supporting characters in his subsequent spaghetti splatter classics *City of the Living Dead* (1980) and *The Beyond* (1981). The prolific Italian

zombie movie cycle includes some of the most crazy, ludicrous, astonishing, badly dubbed, revolting and just plain awful B-movies you'll ever have the (guilty) pleasure of watching. Worthy of a feature unto itself, we've singled out a trio incomparable in their sheer insanity. Marino Girolami's *Zombi Holocaust* (1980) steals the plot, location and international star (Ian McCulloch) of Fulci's *Zombi 2* and splices them to the cannibal movie sub-genre for a gore-soaked jungle romp. Andrea Bianchi's wildly incompetent *Burial Ground*



(1980) sees the living dead crash a party at a country mansion, and features a zombie child (played by a middle-aged dwarf!) who adds a new meaning to the term 'breast feeding' – WTF! Last, and definitely least, is Bruno Mattei's *Hell of the Living Dead* (1980) – aka *Zombie Creeping Flesh* (UK) and *Night of the Zombies* (Oz) – which rips off the score and SWAT scene from *Dawn of the Dead*, plus lots of National Geographic stock footage, as zombies overrun New Guinea after being reanimated by a toxic cloud from a chemical plant. The film suggests a simple solution to the problems of Third World famine and overpopulation – let them eat each other!



*The Beyond*

## ZOMBIES ON SCREEN

### THE LAUGHING DEAD

Zombies, with their shambling gait and taste for guts, are perfect material for comedy; consequently, the zom-com has become a popular offshoot of the genre. Edgar Wright's cult favourite *Shaun of the Dead* (2004) has pretty much become the benchmark for zombie comedies, thanks to the director's love of the genre (and the George A. Romero film its title affectionately spoofs) and its quintessentially British sense of humour. Simon Pegg's slacker shop assistant finally finds his calling in life when the living dead overrun his neighbourhood, dispatching them with makeshift weapons like a cricket bat and a Dire Straits LP before seeking refuge in (where else?) the local pub. Ruben Fleischer's *Zombieland* (2009) is an equally inspired zom-com, set in a post-apocalypse American wasteland where college nerd Jesse Eisenberg and cowboy Woody Harrelson argue over the rules of surviving a zombie attack and the lack of available Twinkies. In Peter Jackson's jaw-dropping splatter comedy *Braindead* (1992), mama's boy

Lionel Cosgrove and his trusty lawnmower are Wellington's best hope of surviving a living dead outbreak, after Lionel's mum is transformed into a slaving zombie by the bite of a Sumatran Rat Monkey. Dan O'Bannon's cult classic *The Return of the Living Dead* (1985) is another brilliant zom-com, set in a kind of parallel universe where the Romero movies are based on fact and the zombies from *Night of the Living Dead* are stored in barrels at a medical supply warehouse. Of course they break out, but these gangly, goofy ghouls are less obsessed with scoffing entrails than the consumption of human brains, which they procure in increasingly hilarious fashion ("Send more cops!"). And let's not forget the self-explanatory *Zombie Strippers!* (2008), which sees the eponymous girls charging an arm and a leg after a zombie virus invades a gentlemen's club; and the recent appearance of the rom-zom-com in *Warm Bodies* (2013), which gives Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* a living dead twist – scar-crossed lovers?



*Shaun of the Dead*



*Zombieland*



*Warm Bodies*



## ZOMBIES ON SCREEN

### THE INFECTED

Viruses can be instrumental in raising the dead, as demonstrated by the *Resident Evil* franchise and the recent *World War Z*. However in some cases, "the infected" (as they are known) can exhibit zombie-like behaviour but are not true members of the living dead. A zombie, by definition, is a reanimated corpse, but the infected hordes in films like *28 Days Later*, *28 Weeks Later* and the *REC* trilogy are simply suffering from the effects of mysterious diseases which resemble zombiism. They do not eat human flesh and more importantly, they are not dead. Both *28 Days Later* and *28 Weeks Later* depict an apocalypse brought about by the release of a highly contagious 'Rage Virus', which is spread via contact with infected blood. The disease rapidly transforms its victims into mindless, murderous "zombies". The Spanish handheld horror *REC* (and its two sequels) features a virus that has a similar effect; only this one turns out to be diabolic in nature, making the infected closer to genuine zombies than Rage Virus sufferers. Moreover, unlike the traditional shambling gait of the living dead, the infected in these films can move with astonishing speed, making them an even more terrifying foe.



28 Weeks Later

“ WHEN THERE'S NO MORE ROOM IN HELL, THE DEAD WILL WALK THE EARTH. ”

– Dawn of the Dead (1978)

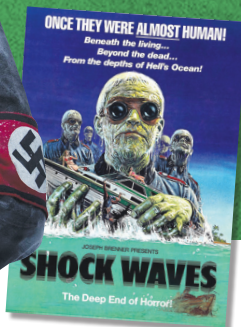
## ZOMBIES ON SCREEN

### NAZI ZOMBIES

The Third Reich rises again in one of the more curious niche genres of zombie cinema. The idea of Nazi zombies proves more terrifying than the living dead soldiers themselves (and could never compare to the real-life atrocities committed during World War II), but as an exploitation movie device it's a winner, despite their handful of screen appearances to date being somewhat underwhelming. Nazi Zombies are best served by the Norwegian zom-com *Dead Snow* (2009); British horror *Outpost* (2007); and the granddaddy of them all, *Shock Waves* (1977), in which SS Commander Peter Cushing creates an army of amphibious living dead. Special mention must also go to the dire '80s Euro-shockers *Zombie Lake* and *Oasis of the Zombies*, which share virtually the same plot and bargain basement makeup effects.



Dead Snow



Zombie Lake



Tombs of the Blind Dead

## ZOMBIES ON SCREEN

### KNIGHTS OF THE LIVING DEAD



The quartet of 'Blind Dead' films from Spanish director Amando de Ossorio rank amongst the strangest and creepiest of the cinematic living dead. The Blind Dead are the reanimated corpses of the Knights Templar, an order executed for practicing witchcraft and whose eyes have been plucked out by birds whilst swinging from the gallows. These hooded, skeletal creatures sport wispy beards and ride zombie horses, locating their victims by sound – scream and they will find you! The Knights Templar made their debut in *Tombs of the Blind Dead* (1971), rising to pursue those who dare to tread on their burial ground, and slaughtering the passengers of a stationary train. *Return of the Evil Dead* (1973) provided a better look at these mummified monsters, as they attack a town celebrating the 500-year anniversary of the Knights' vanquishing. *Horror of the Zombies* (1974) saw the series beginning to sink, relocating the Templars aboard a "Ghost Galleon". And finally, *Night of the Seagulls* (1975) added a Lovecraftian element, with the Blind Dead sacrificing their victims to a fish-like idol in their castle above the beach.

While most definitely zombies, the Templars have more in common with vampires – possessing a thirst for human blood and rising in the dead of night from the Gothic, crumbling monasteries and castles which serve as their tombs. They are a unique and frightening addition to the pantheon of the living dead.



## ZOMBIES ON SCREEN



## THE WALKING DEAD

Attracting consistently high – and often record-breaking – ratings with each season (the fourth is scheduled for broadcast in October), this superb TV adaptation of Robert Kirkman's comic book series has been hugely instrumental in both consolidating the zombie's position as a modern day pop culture icon and creating a wave of zombie mania across the globe. *The Walking Dead* begins in the aftermath of a zombie apocalypse, with lawman Rick Grimes (Andrew Lincoln) awakening from a coma to discover the world has been overrun by the living dead. Once reunited with his wife and young son, Rick leads a band of survivors to whatever safe havens still remain: an isolated

farmhouse, an abandoned prison, and even the Centres for Disease Control, where the chilling reason behind the zombie outbreak is revealed. Freed from the time constraints that govern zombie movies, this sprawling series brings home the true horror of a zombie apocalypse and its impact on the remnants of society, and doesn't shy away from some gut-busting gore. Unsurprisingly, the desperate bands of human survivors encountered by Rick and his companions often prove more dangerous than walking dead.

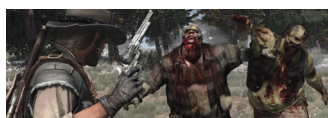


## THE VIDEO GAME DEAD



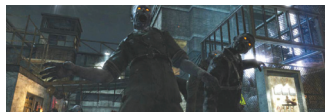
**The Last of Us** – Quite possibly the best game to feature on the PS3, Naughty Dog's compelling post-apocalyptic action-adventure tells the tale of a deadly parasitic fungus that turns the world's populace into shuffling zombies in varying levels of infection. Unmissable.

**Red Dead Redemption: Undead Nightmare** – Populating the West with a new breed of living dead, *Undead Nightmare* finds protagonist John Marston and his six-shooter pouring lead into hordes of cowboy zombies during a frantic search for an antidote to the apocalyptic plague.



**The Walking Dead** – Released in episodic form, *The Walking Dead* is based on the comic book series that kickstarted the hit TV show. The quality storytelling focuses more on the characters and their emotions than mindless slaughter, making *The Walking Dead* a thinking person's zombie game.

**Left 4 Dead 2** – If you want to take on the zombie masses with mates, *Left 4 Dead 2* is where you'll find the action. In this first-person shooter, players use just about anything to kill the living dead, including a cricket bat, a katana, a chainsaw, and even a frying pan.



**Call of Duty: World at War - Nazi Zombies** – A mini game slotted at the end of *World at War*. Players holed up in a house must fight incessant waves of Nazi zombies with upgradeable weapons, whilst trying frantically to board up windows to stop the living dead breaking through. It's tense.

## REAL ZOMBIES



Zombies do exist, but unless you're in Haiti and the Caribbean, you're unlikely to encounter them. These zombies aren't the dead flesh-eaters seen in the movies but rather living humans who have been rendered mindless, walking shells through the administration of a toxic potion consisting of tetrodotoxin (derived from pufferfish) and bufotoxin (from toads). In the right amounts these poisons can lower body temperature and blood pressure, creating the semblance of death. Additional ingredients used by the voodoo priest – or *bokor* – include material from a corpse (such as bones), freshly killed blue lizards, and a dried sea worm, which is wrapped around a large *bufo marinus* toad. The addition of *datura stramonium* (an hallucinogenic herb) ensures obedience, allowing the *bokor* to control the "zombie", who is ultimately driven insane by the process. Typically, the zombified person is buried for up to eight hours while the toxins take effect, before being exhumed. Harvard scientist and ethnobotanist Wade Davis made an extensive study of the zombification process and published his findings in the book ***The Serpent and the Rainbow***, which was adapted into a film by Wes Craven in 1985 (albeit with considerable creative license). Davis was particularly intrigued by the case of Clairvius Narcisse, a Haitian man who claimed to have been turned into a zombie in 1962 and put to work in the sugar plantations. According to Haitian folklore, a person can be freed from the zombified state through the ingestion of salt, or being shown the ocean; the latter releasing the subject's mind from the witchdoctor's control.



• **NOTE:** STACK strongly advises against attempting to create a zombie at home using the aforementioned process.

## Living Dead Daily

# ZOMBIE APOCALYPSE NOW! COULD IT HAPPEN?

### EXCLUSIVE REPORT

The end of the world by zombies provides a terrific big screen spectacle, but could it actually happen in real life, and should we be concerned?

A string of vicious, flesh-eating attacks in Florida during 2012 sparked fears of an impending zombie apocalypse, but fortunately the attackers were found to be suffering from drug-induced psychosis. However, the combination of these isolated incidents and the current saturation of the living dead in popular culture got people thinking about the possibility of a zombie outbreak actually occurring. Since then, the Centres for Disease Control (CDC) have posted a 'Preparedness and Response Guide' on their website should the unthinkable become a reality. And if we look to entertainment for tips on how best to stay alive during a zombie apocalypse, TV's *The Walking Dead* offers perhaps the best survival guide; while the Romero films suggest that having a helicopter at your disposal can be a lifesaver.

Once we rule out the supernatural, radiation from a space probe and toxic chemical spills, a zombie epidemic is most likely to be triggered by a virus of some sort, be it a mutation of nature or a product of genetic engineering. The former is more likely, given neurotropic viruses such as rabies cause violent, zombie-like behaviour and can be passed on through a bite. Harvard psychiatrist Steven Schlozman



has speculated on the etiology of zombiism using a hypothetical zombie virus he calls Ataxic Neurodegenerative Satiety Deficiency Syndrome (ANSDS), which basically eats away most of the brain, resulting in constant hunger, impaired mobility and uncontrollable aggression. Sound familiar? Then there is the nightmarish, parasitic *Cordyceps* fungus – the basis for video game *The Last of Us* – which creates zombie-like behaviour in ants, and can control the actions of its host. So perhaps we should be just as concerned about the *Cordyceps* making the jump from insects to humans as we are with the threat of bird flu.

Mathematical and epidemiological models based on the spread of real viruses indicate that in the event of a zombie apocalypse, survival prospects aren't good. But until it actually happens, all we can do is remain alert, watch *The Walking Dead* and zombie movies to prepare ourselves, and keep calm.



## STACK'S ULTIMATE ZOMBIE GUIDE



## BRINGING BACK THE DEAD WITH...

### AGRICULTURAL MACHINERY



***Let Sleeping Corpses Lie*** (1974) An experimental device that kills crop pests via ultrasonic radiation also reanimates the dead.

### AN ANCIENT INDIAN BURIAL GROUND



***Pet Sematary*** (1989) If you decide to use this Micmac Indian graveyard to bury pets and loved ones, just remember: "Sometimes dead is better."

### A FLUORESCENT REAGENT



***Re-Animator*** (1985) Mad scientist Herbert West's yellow goo is equally effective on both dead bodies and body parts. Unless the dosage is too high!

### RADIATION FROM A SPACE PROBE



***Night of the Living Dead*** (1968) There's more to fear from a returning Venus probe than invading Venusians.

### THE BITE OF A SUMATRAN RAT MONKEY



***Braindead*** (1992) A nip from this Skull Island native will turn you into a drooling, pus-spurting zombie. Now where's that lawnmower?

### TOXIC CHEMICAL VAPOUR



***The Return of the Living Dead*** (1985) A fog of poisonous gas brings back the dead, who want to eat your "brainnsss".

### A VIRUS



***Resident Evil*** (2002) The genetically engineered T-Virus escapes from a lab and turns Raccoon City into a zombie playground.

### VOODOO



***The Serpent and the Rainbow*** (1988) There's more than earthquakes and Third World conditions to worry about when visiting Haiti.