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Sludgemaster: The Underground Experience

Review by Dr. Jack Fritscher. Photos by Sludgemaster

Maybe too many so-called video critics watch too much footage on fast-forward. Hey, only a hack can review an hour's worth of footage in eight minutes flat. I spent six months viewing Texas director Scott Baker's primetime *Sludgemaster* in real-time at night with dick in hand, because in fast-forward, I would have missed the grunting sound, the stud-slinging mud-slinging, and the ballsy solidarity of masculine men living sex lives just the other side of devolution where the good old boys enjoy some really bad habits.

Sludgemaster is erotica plus combustion-engine attitude. You shoot because of what you see; you cum because of what you're thinking. *Sludgemaster* is bimbo-free underground filmmaking that is, well, really under the ground: The sex-mechanic axxtion happens in sewers, septic systems, basements of offshore oil rigs, and masculine spaces that exist only inside the male psyche. "There ain't none of them pretty little blond gymbody boys from El Lay in the blue-collar, rough-neck world where the Sludgemaster rules!" Shit, howdy, dude, Scott Baker's *Sludgemaster* may take you yourself six months to watch if you treasure good footage so much you stop watching after you cum, and rewind back about 10 minutes so you can pick up the next night where you left off.

Sludgemaster is a four-hour epic of industrial-strength man-to-man episodes of sperm, motor oil, gushing gunk, butt snacks, bar brawls, greasy gas station dicks, lube jobs up the butt, picnics at the dump, sweaty sex in dark places, and white trash workers who live in a world where piss itself drains down—as it does in the opening sequence—from the sewer grates of New Orleans' streets to the

mouth of a rubber-booted, -gloved, and -suited filthy sewage maintenance worker.

Sludgemaster is oil-rig sex and cigar discipline in a muddy creek bed on some female-free Texas ranch where the men are uncut and never heard diddly-squat about sex politics. If you're squeamish or if you act more like your mom than you act like your dad, don't dare look at this video unless you want to study several very degenerate new takes on ways to be an American male in the



mondo cane underworld where men do things that are, in fact, the very subterranean texture of masculine animal nature. Psychologically, *Sludgemaster* is Hercules' trip to the pop underworld of gladiator movies as much as it is Dante's classic descent to hell and gone. Director Baker has structured *Sludgemaster* like the *Iliad* and like the *Odyssey* where you, the interactive sex viewer, become Ulysses making his/your long, adventurous, episodic journey home to the very ground zero of the male psyche where your cock and your brain intersect. (Never think that homo smut can't have true human value while you're longdicking yourself.)

Sludgemaster can make a masculine-identified man's dick hard and his head very happy, but the real kick is that—in addition to great sex—*Sludgemaster* dares to get down into the male psyche where desperado truckers, and drifters, and cowboys, and carnival roustabouts, and sex outlaws live perfectly wonderful white-trash lives uncomplicated by table manners. In fact, in Sludgeworld, a man, who leaves his trailer park mobile home to

drive his truck to small towns way off the four-lane interstate has to be careful when he sits down at the roadside coffee shop where The Very Last Thing they do with the food is eat it!

Don't even ask how *Sludgemaster* is an incredible psychological profile of some men's Freudian tastes for everything polite society runs from. If you have to ask, you won't get it. If you get it, you don't need to ask because you'll be spanking your monkey. *Sludgemaster* is that kind of male action-adventure movie. It's a whole new genre: "The Slop Epic." No video since the Gage Brothers in the '70s has put so much actual manstuff up on the screen: a big cast, great locations, hot blue-collar action, sizzling sex, and the best sets ever created especially for an all-male video. This is Texan Scott Baker doing Texas-size filmmaking. You won't find any West Hollywood soundstage kitsch like a statue of David or a swimming pool. *Sludgemaster* onscreen is like the best time I ever had in a real beer joint where the cook called me to his kitchen and we came on a contractor's hamburger while we watched the contractor sitting at the bar waiting for that hamburger which we also rubbed around on our armpits and buttocks because he was so big and handsome and his calloused hands were so beat up, and, well, it was like connecting souls with him as he ate our spermburger while we shot the shit with him about his construction company. Is the gestalt of *Sludgemaster* coming through yet? (Been there? Done that? Got the T-shirt?) If yes or if not, if you have a taste for sperm without tears, you choose how much beer and lube you want to consume while you watch *Sludgemaster*.

Director Scott Baker said when I interviewed him for *Powerplay*: "I admire video makers who shoot erotic videos. Film is my career. I've made both filmed movies and industrial videos professionally for any number of accounts and corporations, but making *Sludgemaster* sure was different. Really different. I spent 15 months making the video—that's one year and three months—to get all the right actors and secure all the right locations from Mardi Gras to the oil rig. I shot more than 40 hours of hot action. It was fun and it was tough. I'm an independent filmmaker. I don't work for some Hollywood porn czar. So not only was it all directly money out of my pocket for all expenses, but I was accused of breaking up three relationships, causing numerous brawls in clubs, and pinpointed as the reason homosexual men are 'degraded.' Shoot! Talk like that makes my cock swell up."

Sludgemaster is multiple epic episodes of diverse length and intensity. "Manhole" unfolds in a New Orleans sewer which looks nastier than the scuzzy basement rooms at New York's fabled Mineshaft. "Manhole" is a kind of "Filth Overture" running 25 minutes and featuring three horny men (two hardhats and one very handsome mustached man with full rubber gear and a gasmask), tit action, cocksucking, pit-licking, and slop swallowing while getting very wet and dirty. These *Les Miserables*, hairy and pierced, segue into a 15-minute fantasia titled "Worms" wherein a hot, greasy, isolated oil rigger slugs Dos Gusanos Mescal and shoves the infamous worm down the WD40 slit of his big long cock while Mexican border radio carries the viewer into sex rhythms that are so disgusting that they made me so shocked and outraged that I came. Oh! And did I mention Baker's truly excellent camera work and editing: like the close-ups of the Dream Driller chewing up the agave worm?

Like you do—every time you have a new sex partner—*Sludgemaster* re-invents itself each episode. "The Bayou" is a kind of 18-minute remake of writer James Dickey's famous river movie *Deliverance*, but with rough sex, mud, dis-

cipline, humiliation, buckets of mud poured over the head, slog-fighting, mud thick as plaster in great thick moustaches, with cigar work as the duelists fight their epic way downstream. Director Baker ain't doing "Moonglow and Theme from Picnic." In this very real on-location shoot, after the mud bucket goes down over the head, after the clothes are ripped off, the only flesh color showing through the gunk of mud is the pink head



of a cock when the foreskin is pulled back. (This revelation of the pink tip of male flesh is how God must first have pulled Adam from the mud of Eden.) In a brilliant finale of man-to-man struggle, a beautifully weird gasmask enters the sex play (immediately evolving the natural sex into industrial power sex) as "Cain" shoves "Abel's" head by hand and boot under the surface of the mud for breath control. Baker's awesome filmmaking acts out the edgy rituals of some men's actual fantasies to say nothing of a powerplaying re-enactment of the biblical book of *Genesis*!

Actually, Baker goes for hard on-screen entertainment and leaves the subtext

messages to Western Union. His ensemble group of actors consists of real guys who are really in to the trips they perform on camera so passionately. What you're watching is fiction, insofar as Baker arranged the shoot and filmed it, but what you actually get is a documentary of the things men do. Your dick, without leaving your IQ behind, believes the erotic images and action onscreen.

Like Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*, the episodes unfold with a filmmaker's hand as sure as Pasolini or Derek Jarman. Each episode, story, or tale sucks, I think, even resistant viewers into the video. Even if just out of curiosity. For instance, in the "Hard 'n' Greasy" sequence, Baker gives you re-verb on James Dean (in the Texas-movie *Giant*) covered with oil, slimed with oil, which Baker lifts up over the top of the polite Hollywood version to its logical conclusion of a young man who is so turned on by hitting the jackpot of black gold he jerks off his uncut meat next to a hard-pumping oil well. In the Chaucerian "Clipped," the tale of the hillbilly boy tied up and shaved by a cigar-smoking tough guy, Baker invests this duo scene with serious sex tension of palpable humiliation. In "Vortex," the tale of the buttock of a bear, and in the tale, "Greg's Grease Rack," wonderfully shot in black-and-white, a solo precedes a duo that becomes a three-way with saliva and cum running down a motorcycle gas tank. The face shots are so intense that they equal the formal face portraits of what Robert Mapplethorpe himself at least attempted to capture. In *Sludgemaster's* world, when mechanics go bad, they get dirtier than Daddy when Mommy liked him least! This is a lusty man's world of dripping crankcases, beards, oil, spit, pits, peckers, and screwdrivers down a dickhead. *Baker's men are men whose work is their sex!*

In "Fire Hose," two beefy bears—one leatherman and one fireman—with twin goatees turn a cocksucking *pas de deux* that makes a Power Player think about the real philosophical implications of cocksucking as a ritual act. I mean: *a man doesn't eat sperm because he's hungry*. So what is this thing called *love*? Direc-

tor Baker is really quite subversive in his masculinist underground video. On one hand, I'd say, "Buy all the gay videos you can before conservatives get them," and on the other, that *Sludgemaster* so transcends the usual gay fuck genre that with its acting, sets, and photography *Sludgemaster* could be released in Germany with French subtitles as an art documentary of American men. Hell, it could play Cannes! Baker is actually a better storyteller than Quentin Tarantino who only plays at tough-guy talk and the tough stuff men do—and Quentin's the best overground Hollywood writer making gritty men's movies like the ultra-hip *Reservoir Dogs* (1992) and *Pulp Fiction* (1994). *Pulp Fiction's* basement scene featuring a dirty, greasy Bruce Willis bound, gagged, and sweaty with sex-tension is next door to the basement rooms of *Sludgemaster*.

To keep artful perspective on the validity of homomale filmmaking, *Sludgemaster* must be compared with the accepted norms of contemporary-edge film art such as Abel Ferrara's extremely male film about men and mortal sin titled *Bad Lieutenant* (1993). The ever-studly Harvey Keitel stars as a New York cop who appears naked and jerks off into the driver-side window onto teenage girls in cars. This world of Ferrara and Keitel is street-level above Baker's even more honest industrial basements, urban sewers, and highway grease pits where the only things recycled are body fluids. Baker's *Sludgemaster* is the masculine grit that's going on under the postmodern streets of *Blade Runner* or *Batman Forever*.

In *Sludgemaster*, the very sexy accumulation of erotic images includes a completely furred Ultimate Golden Bear (jerking off in the sunset) as well as the two grease-monkey hobos having romantically drunken sick sex in an abandoned railroad tool shack in "Damaged Freight."

This tale of sex under the Southern Pacific track yard continues the *Iliad/Odyssey* theme of the journey. Men travel. Men travel for sex. If the viewer is familiar with Boyd MacDonald's *Straight to Hell*'zine or JD's *TRASH*'zine, then this

is familiar territory on the page, but is truly frightening onscreen, sort of the way rough trade onscreen is thrilling because while it calls you the way the Sirens called Ulysses (who had to have himself bound rigidly to his ship's mast to escape the siren call), you must tease yourself because, like the 1995 action in San Francisco's Hole in the Wall bar, you know you stand at the temptatious gates of what could be heaven or what could be hell. That very temptation, like loss of control, like bondage, like drugs, like taking a vow to live for the next 90 days of your life with hobos riding the rails, like danger itself, is a hard-on. *Sludgemaster's* "Damaged Freight" pulls no punches. You can fantasize while you're viewing it that you're one of these far-out bums or that you're the handsome uniformed cop who arrests such degenerate tramps who live scum-bucket sex lives in box cars and cover more real "man's country" in a year than a Marlboro cowboy.

Baker's camera angles are as low-down as the action. The filthy dirty get filthier. "Damaged Freight" is a buddy movie: two guys, passionate, fisting each other's drooling mouths, pouring cans of Mystik Disc Brake Wheel Bearing Grease on their Goodwill clothes, shining their tongues with black shoe polish to go spit-shining down on men's boots. Wilder than *Born to Raise Hell* (1972), this is classic far-out stuff with big ever-hard cocks, snot hockers, and forbidden tobacco-driven sex and whiskey-driven perversion. Hey! This ain't a 12-Step Recovery Movie; it's a Texas Two-Step Fuck Flick. I love its nonjudgmental, nontrendy ambiguity, because when I rechecked the footage to write this, I came again. These dudes live where never is heard a discouraging word

and everything's permitted all day.

I'm not sure some episodes of *Sludgemaster* can be released on an unsuspecting public. But it's great to know such footage of white male culture is being dramatized and chronicled with two-fisted conviction deep in the heart of Texas!

The two tales, "Trux Stop" and "Galactic Gunk," celebrate sex in a surreal diner and in a space ship sexier than *Star Trek* would ever dare. "Trux Stop" is a tale of, like, fucking hand-some hunks in Aisle 6 of the Safeway using bananas, beans, beer, Crisco, canned corn, marshmallows, waffle syrup, creme custard, and chocolate syrup. Finally, a sex movie that makes you hungry! Food is the fetish. Only in America! And biggest in Texas. Baker knows how to stage a *slop fuck* right down to the linguisa sausage.

The erotic food bath, with *Texas Chainsaw Massacre* tongue planted firmly in cheek, is an orgy where humans will work *as* food! "Galactic Gunk" ups the ante. Lights! Computers! Dazzling special FX! Space aliens with big dicks inject toxic-waste into a handsome space commander. He's naked—asleep like a handsome prince in a fairy tale—lying in suspended animation in his 2001 space tank when these Unidentified Life Forms fuck with him. It's the Greek god Pan having sex with the coma baby from 2001. Scott Baker dares to take the viewer whipsawing around into fantasies that border necrophilia.

Sludgemaster is, of course, from start to climax, a masculine romance of beautiful sex, doom, and ecstasy. It begins in the industrial sewer and ends up in the stars of surreal art. This is comic book adventure of the erotic kind. Splat! It's existential powerplaying. Absolutely 4-Star Entertainment.

For more information, write to: *Sludgemaster*, PO Box 541352, Houston, TX 77254-1352.