

Blu-ray Review: Werner Herzog's 'Into the Abyss' Demands to be Seen

Submitted by [BrianTT](#) [1] on April 13, 2012 - 4:59pm

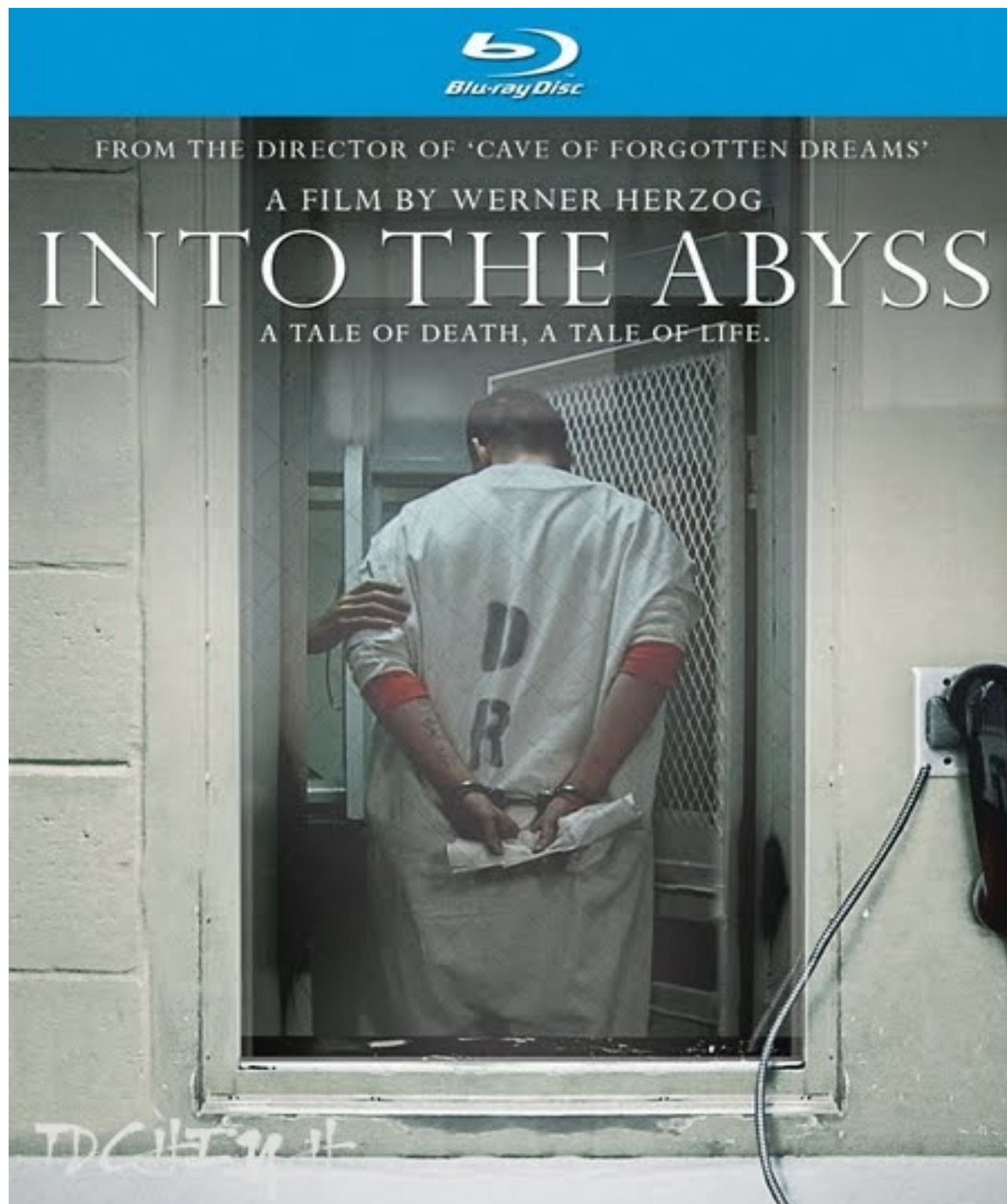
- [Blu-ray Review](#) [2]
- [Brian Tallerico](#) [3]
- [HollywoodChicago.com Content](#) [4]
- [Into the Abyss](#) [5]
- [Werner Herzog](#) [6]
- [Theater, TV, DVD & Blu-Ray](#) [7]

CHICAGO – No matter which side of the capital punishment debate you fall on, Werner Herzog's "Into the Abyss" is a masterful documentary, one you simply must see. It brilliantly reflects the complexities of one of the most divisive issues of our time. Herzog is vocally against the death penalty but he doesn't present a case that would help solidify his arguments. He could have made a film about someone wrongly convicted. Instead, he dares to tell the story of someone who arguably deserves to die and then makes the emotionally difficult case that he still should not.



Blu-ray Rating: **4.0/5.0**

"Into the Abyss" is a complex, somber, daring film, easily one of the best documentaries of 2011. And Herzog's visual eye makes it a great fit for Blu-ray, something that doesn't always happen with "smaller" Sundance Selects films, and so it was nice to hear that the work was coming out on the HD format. Sadly, the release includes no special features. See this incredible film but if you're looking for more information on the case or the people involved (which really would have been easy to do in the form of a special feature), you'll have to go online to find it. The film is a 5/5, one of my favorite documentaries of a very good year for the form, but the Blu-ray rating is lowered due to the complete lack of bonus material, something that's simply unacceptable in 2012.



Into the Abyss

Photo credit: MPI

Synopsis:

In his fascinating exploration of a triple homicide case in Conroe, Texas, master filmmaker Werner Herzog (Cave of Forgotten Dreams, Grizzly Man) probes the human psyche to explore why people kill-and why a state kills. Through intimate conversations with those involved, including 28-year-old death row inmate Michael Perry (scheduled to die within eight days of appearing on-screen), Herzog achieves what he describes as "a gaze into the abyss of the human soul." Herzog's inquiries also extend to the families of the victims and perpetrators as well as a state executioner and pastor who've been with death row prisoners as they've taken their final breaths. As he's so often done before, Herzog's investigation unveils layers of humanity, making an enlightening trip out of ominous territory.

"Into the Abyss" was directed by Werner Herzog. It was released on Blu-ray and DVD on April 10, 2012.



[8]

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