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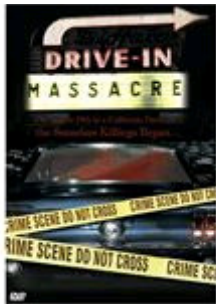
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DVD review



Drive-In Massacre, for all its talkiness, possesses a quaint charm. It's almost cute and harmless. Fuzzy and cuddly like. You want to pet it.

OK, so it's not a sweet movie and there are decapitations, a throat skewering and a double impalement. It's got its share of gore ...

... though said gore is interspersed between long passages of yakkety-yak ...

... yet the yak-yak doesn't impede the movie as much as you'd think.

Drive-In Massacre is half gore/slasher film, half whodunit police procedural.

Sure, the term "police procedural" is probably a little high falootin' for what passes for police work herein, but you get my drift, I think.

When somebody's not busy getting offed at the drive-in, usually after a lengthy conversation between whatever characters have been tossed onscreen for no other purpose than to get offed at the drive-in, a pair of frumpy gumshoes (who provide both intentional and unintentional comic relief) are on the case, interviewing the various weirdo suspects ...

... such as the asshole drive-in manager, the janitor who used to throw knives or something at a carnival that years before stood on the spot where now stands the drive-in, a pervert who comes to the movies just to spy on couples making out ...

... and so on ...

The film's pattern establishes itself pretty quickly. It's a cycle of sword murder (I kid you not), cop talk and interview of one suspect or another, sword murder, cop talk ...

... and so on ...

The detectives are endearing in a way I can't put my finger on. They're not insipid Keystone Kops, exactly ...

... I mean, they have a certain detective demeanor that helps them be taken at least somewhat seriously ...

... but they're so ... innocuous?

And yet they'll show their cop cojones if the right situation presents itself.

Somehow, even when they go undercover as a couple at the drive-in, with one of the cops - both of whom are big men - dressed as a woman, you can't not take them at least a little seriously, even while laughing at the self-deprecating jokes they make about their peculiar stake-out.

Come to think of it, it's possible Drive-In Massacre intended us to find amusement with the cops the whole step of the way, but at least they're not objects of total disrespect, such as with the rural coppers in Wes Craven's Last House on the Left.

There is a lot of talky padding between murders and the best murder is the first, but the film's charm (and short running time) help it not to wear out its welcome. A dash of bloody grue and some honestly interesting offbeat characters make Drive-In Massacre a dopey bit of drive-in fun.

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AUTHOR: Upchuck Undergrind



Upchuck Undergrind listens to a little bit of a lot of things - just note the eclecticism of his reviews. He also reads voraciously and loves movies. He is a very open-minded Episcopalian (and student of Buddhism and Hinduism) who thinks Slayer is one of the greatest metal bands. Ever. In addition to his work with Corazine - for which he has written since its inception (he is a Fishcomcollective veteran) - he also writes for DJFix.com.

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