

their ship reroutes them for Earth, and takes them back to the devastation that has been caused. As they begin to rediscover their home planet, they soon realise that the post-apocalyptic world is uninhabitable, providing you're prepared to fight to the death and survive off the flesh of other humans.

The premise of DEF-CON 4 is exceptionally strong, which is how it draws the audience in to watch this 1986 film from director Paul Donovan. What's interesting about him is that he has a clear passion for science fiction, as he studied physics and then went on to graduate from the London Film School. It's clear that he combined two of his interests in order to create DEF-CON 4. The premise combines the much-loved apocalyptic setting which can be dark and hideous at the best of times with the stark space element, both of which when combined set the film up in just the right way.

There's everything you could want in this film from space scenes to apocalyptic nightmares to a tribe of cannibals that want to cook the crew for dinner. Yet DEF-CON 4 never fully utilises the best parts of itself, instead intent on focusing around a prison setting that seems really out of place amongst the whole concept of the film. It's disappointing that Donovan decided to take this approach to the film when there were so many other disturbing and interesting paths that it could have led down.

Another fault that the film has is the characters themselves. Although not entirely despicable, it's hard to really emotionally connect with any of them, which therefore leaves the audience feeling a little empty. Even some of the prisoners are made out to try and make the audience forgive them for their sins, which is something we most certainly don't want to do. Again it seems like a missed opportunity as everything at the beginning of the films sets them up as potential characters that we can get on board with and understand.

The film does have some decent cinematography throughout and the scenes in space aren't bad when compared to a lot of films that try to portray similar aspects. The set design works quite well and does present an apocalyptic setting, but they could have done much more with this considering it's set on land and they didn't need a crazy amount of special effects to achieve what they wanted.

DEF-CON 4 might be loved by the right audience, and will be the perfect low budget independent sci-fi thriller

come action movie for those, but it just loses so many points for not enhancing on the creative and imaginative storyline that it presents to the audience.

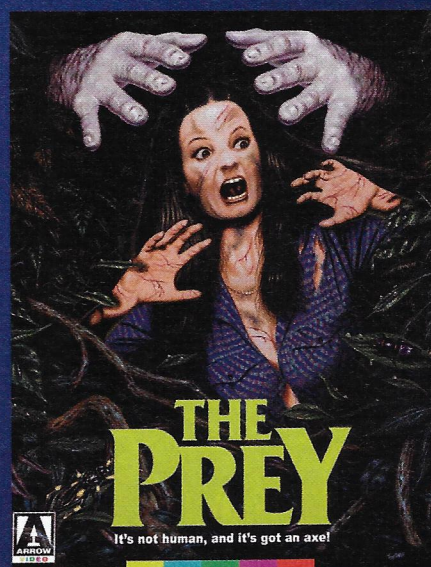
Rating: 🧠🧠🧠🧠

SPECIAL FEATURES: Extras on the disc include an interview with some of the cast and crew, however it still doesn't add anything new to the film. It is a shame that they didn't explore more of the topics involved in the film, and try to add some more excitement through the special features on this release.

Rating: 🧠🧠🧠🧠

*DEF-CON 4 is out now on **UK Blu-ray** and **Amazon Prime Video** courtesy of Arrow Video.*

REVIEWED BY ZOE SMITH



THE PREY

THE FILM: In *The Prey* a group of young campers head off to North Point, but are soon killed off in a very gory fashion by god-know-what or who. It's a slasher story that you've all seen and heard before and, unfortunately, *The Prey* adds very little to the genre it steals so much from.

This is a watered down Friday the 13th or Halloween that fails to inject any amount of tension or fear in its by-the-numbers story of young folk getting butchered. It ticks every box to establish itself as a horror film, but offers no amount of creativity or fright that should come with a genre that has so much to offer. The kills are gory and gruesome, but aside from a few impressive deaths, *The Prey* is suspense-free and entirely forgettable.

There are strange additions of stock footage that attempt to add a little flair to this otherwise lacklustre endeavour, but they feel so outside the narrative it does little more than interrupt the flow of a film that is already slow-paced and

tiresome. It's only 80 minutes long, but by the time *The Prey* ends you'll feel as if you've run a marathon.

The characters are clichéd and one-dimensional; they're those typical youngsters you'll be glad to see the ends of. We're given no time to get to know them, so their deaths will trigger no ounce of emotion from a watching audience. It's a shame that *The Prey* offers no fun or fright, but it's no surprise that this horror film has been left ignored when we consider the great slasher films from the '80s and before. Boring, tedious and horrifically put-together, *The Prey* is best left sitting on the shelf to gather dust.

Rating: 🧠🧠🧠🧠

SPECIAL FEATURES: The special features offer a great bunch of behind-the-scenes interviews and even a re-visit to the film's isolated, mountainous location. If you're one of the few people that enjoyed *The Prey* and are dying to know more about its production and those that brought it to life, then you'll not be short of ways to further delve into its slasher story here.

Rating: 🧠🧠🧠🧠

*THE PREY is out now on **UK Blu-ray** courtesy of Arrow Video.*

REVIEWED BY JESSY WILLIAMS

THE HOLE IN THE GROUND

THE FILM: Motherhood has not been this scary since *The Babadook*. *The Hole in the Ground* is an excellent debut from Lee Cronin and he treads similar ground to Jennifer Kent's 2012 psychological monster tale, exploring ideas around the pain and difficulty of raising a child alone.

After her young son Chris goes missing and re-appears around a mysterious hole in the ground, single mother Sarah is soon traumatised by the belief that he is no longer the boy he was before. With no one in the town to turn to and her own sanity slipping, Sarah is forced to investigate alone to put an end to her waking nightmare.

It's a familiar story in many ways and plenty of films deal with the idea of a woman going possibly insane, but *The Hole in the Ground*'s true strength is in its performances. Led by the outstanding Seana Kerslake, who perfectly encapsulates the fear and terror associated with losing a child, she brings Cronin and Stephen Shields' writing to vivid life. The young James Quinn Markey, who rivals Gage Creed as one of the creepiest kids in cinema, is also brilliant and the pair's on-screen to-and-