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## Friday Night Frights: The Deadly Spawn Millennium Edition Blu Ray Review

March 3, 2012 No Comments

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When a space slug hitches a ride on a meteorite that crashes to Earth, it soon manages to quench it's massive appetite by eating a pair of campers in the nearby woods. Having developed a taste for humans, the slug-like creature soon lays siege to a nearby house and attempts to eat everyone inside, including a young boy who is obsessed with horror movies and special effects, much to the chagrin of his psychiatrist uncle. Soon the boy and his uber-nerdy older brother find themselves trapped in the house with a pair of the older brother's friends. As the slugs continue to grow in size the 4 must find a way to defeat the monsters and avoid their gaping mouths full of razor sharp teeth.

Care to guess when this movie came out? That's right, it's the 80s! The cover of the case will no doubt remind you of trips to your local video store back in the day as cases of similar low budget straight to VHS horror titles lined the store.

The story itself should sound quite familiar and on its own would no doubt be a snooze fest. You will see some stuff that really reminds you of other movies. Heck the whole thing feels like it and *Night of the Creeps* could be twin movies. In addition, there is a chest bursting scene reminiscent of *Alien* and a blender scene not unlike *Gremlins* mixed with *Dead Alive's* pudding meal. Also present is a *Night of the Living Dead* inspired sequence near the end as people walk the fields wrangling stray spawn. I was going to do a little research and see which came first but honestly, it doesn't really matter. The real point is that despite the low budget, director ... went crazy with the oozing, gaping mouthed monsters and had some great death scenes scattered throughout the movie. Not to mention the final scene of the movie, which is just classic. There is a lot of B movie cheese to choose from and it's all good.

Here is what I love about *The Deadly Spawn* and about a lot of 1980s Horror movies (this is a bit of a spoiler but, hey), it's the concept that the parents and the smarter older brother can't save the day, it's the horror movie loving kid who comes through and stands up to the monster. Just like in *Monster Squad*, *Halloween 3* and countless other movies from that time. *Super 8* tapped into this but it's not the same these days. Sure, partly because I am now the clueless adult instead of the goofy, horror lovin' kid but *The Deadly Swarm* was a nice reminder of that period in movies.

The Millennium Edition Blu Ray features a 1080i High Definition transfer of the movie. There is a surprising amount of damage to the transfer, including a portion at the end where the movie goes white and the sound drops out momentarily. I get that this is a no budget release that does not warrant a ton of money but it still is surprisingly rough. Colors are decent with the exception of black levels. Certain scenes in the basement are all but black screen as the shadows eat up everything being shot. Detail levels vary but are generally dull and unrefined, leaving certain backdrops fuzzy and slightly out of focus. In the commentary track the crew readily acknowledge this and, given the original 16 mm prints were probably resting in a barn or garage for the last several years, it is overlookable. Sure, *Blue Underground* or *Synapse* could have done a full restoration and release of the movie but do you really want to pay \$25 for a copy of *Deadly Spawn*? In perspective, I am just happy to have the movie in my collection to watch whenever I want, I really don't need a museum quality transfer.

Special features kick off with a short intro to the movie from producer Ted A. Bohus. It's a rough piece that looks like it was shot impromptu in his basement but it is worth it because the viewers get to see the latex model for the largest *Spawn* after all these years. Ted steps right back up to the mic for a commentary track that features him and Editor Marc Harwood discussing the low budget classic. Yes, I am going to officially call it a classic. They do a sound job of talking about the problems the movie ran into and their often creative solutions. I enjoyed the pair's reminiscing quite a bit. There is an alternate opening that really is not quite as good as the final cut included for those wanting more *Deadly Swarm* goodness, along with bloopers and outtakes. The casting portion is interesting as it includes some readings for the movie but the VHS quality of the piece feels kinda voyeuristic, like we really shouldn't be watching this or like a cheap 70s porno. Anyway, there is a great featurette with John Dods, who created the creatures as he discusses his effects. Finally (and I am amazed that it survived) is a 40 minute local public access channel show featuring editor Marc Harwood discussing the movie with the hostess. I usually leave out commercials and trailers for other things as they are not really extra but the preview of the upcoming *Deadly Spawn* comic is going to be the exception as I really dug the artwork and will probably be picking up an issue based on the included digital pages of art.

This bit of 80s splatter is a fun throwback to the days where the horror movie lovin' kids beat the monsters when everyone else failed and practical effects filled the screen. The Blu Ray transfer is not that pretty in all honesty, but in my collector mentality, that's what I want to own. It is very close in price to the DVD of the movie so if you find it for a good price, there you go. If you see the DVD for much cheaper then that may be your best option as I cannot see the Blu Ray being a huge leap in quality. For fans of 80s horror such as *Night of the Creeps* or *Basket Case*, *The Deadly Spawn* is a perfect addition to your Blu Ray collection.



## Recommended

The Deadly Spawn is available on Blu Ray and DVD now, courtesy of Elite Entertainment and MVD Releasing.



- [Creep Creepersin's Corporate Cutthroat Massacre DVD Review](#) (0.731)
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