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THE DEADLY SPAWN (BLU RAY) (1983)

Published by David Carter on 2012/4/5 (93 reads)

Directed by Douglas McKeown Review by David Carter

Released by MVD Visual Running Time: 81 minutes Rating: Rated R Color format: Color

Audio/Subtitles: 2.0 Stereo English Region Code: 1, NTSC

Aspect Ratio: 1:33:1 16:9 Enhanced: No

Special Features: Introduction by Producer Ted A Bohus, Commentary track, promotional still gallery, comic book

preview, casting footage, gag reel, "Enhanced" opening sequence, TV news coverage

Trailer Online: Yes

Short Version: Low budget masterpiece

Life at the top of the food chain can be pretty lonely. It can also be frightening at times, and one of mankind's most persistent fears has been slipping down a rung or two and becoming dinner for a lion or other alpha predator. Maybe it's just a lingering collective memory from the times when man was still a meal-time choice for many animals, or perhaps it is a premonition of a time in the future when we'll be food again. Low budget masterpiece THE DEADLY SPAWN addresses the second proposition. Subtitled "Earth vs. the ultimate eating machine!" the film examines what happens when hungry aliens invade Earth via New Jersey. THE DEADLY SPAWN is now available on Blu Ray from MVD Visual/Elite Entertainment.

Our unexpected visitors crash into a New Jersey forest and waste little time eating two intrepid campers who go to investigate. The creatures - which look like worms with row after row of fangs - then make their way into the basement of a nearby home, also making short work of homeowner Sam and his wife. Fattened up after a few meals, the spawn lie low in the dank, wet basement for a while, giving birth to hundreds more of their kind for their eventual domination of the planet.

Meanwhile, it's business as usual upstairs. Sam and his wife were planning to leave early to go out of town, so their in-laws and sons don't think anything of their absence. Monster-kid Charles watches horror movies and devises new ways to scare his aunt and uncle, and older brother Pete studies for a biology exam and makes plans to see his friends later. The suburban serenity doesn't last long, however, as an electrician becomes the spawn's next meal. Charles discovers the creatures downstairs and barely escapes with his life. At the same time, Pete and his friends vivisect one of the creatures to find out what it is, unaware of the horrors that await them downstairs. It's up to one of the two boys to save the house and possibly the world. Who will it be: Pete and his scientific know-how or Charles and his encyclopedic knowledge of B-movies?

THE DEADLY SPAWN is very similar to the B-movies Charles loves, so the plot itself is nothing new. Much of the film's lasting appeal has been due at least in part to how well the film was realized on such a miniscule budget; reportedly \$25,000. Keep in mind that we were well into the era of big budget horror "blockbusters" by 1983, and you'll be able to appreciate just how much of an achievement this film truly was. Most impressive is the fact that THE DEADLY SPAWN doesn't use any filler scenes and there are no dull moments, problems that can plague any film regardless of budget. The action keeps going at a brisk pace throughout, including several memorable gore scenes. I'd wager that a good chunk of that twenty five grand went towards the extra-bloody special effects, which would be standouts in a big budget film and are thus positively awe-inspiring here.

MVD Visual's Blu Ray of the film looks great. This print has the correct aspect ratio for the film, 1.33:1, and therefore there are black bars on either side of the frame, but you'll get used to it pretty quickly. There are a metric ton of bonus features, so if you're a DEADLY SPAWN super fan, you're going to go nuts over this disc. There are features from the making of the film (casting footage, gag reel, TV news coverage) as well as new items made for this Blu Ray (Introduction, commentary, comic book preview). Fans of eighties low budget horror will certainly be interested in this release, as will those of you with a soft spot for the "invasion" films of the fifties. Recommended for anyone who prefers conventional special effects to CGI.



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