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The Deadly Spawn: Millennium Edition

published February 13th, 2012 | article by [Kevin Pyrtle](#) | posted in [Blu-ray](#)
Tags: [Do Not Buy This Disc](#)



Blu-ray details:

released February 7, 2012 by Elite Entertainment
disc: **dual layer BD-25** | Region A (B, C untested)
video: **1080i** | AVC | 1.33:1
audio: **16-bit LPCM 2.0 monophonic English**
subtitles: **none**

supplements: *introduction by Ted A. Bohus, commentary with Ted A. Bohus and Marc Harwood, alternate opening, casting tapes and gags, bloopers and outtakes, local news segments, take one The Deadly Spawn interview, visit with The Deadly Spawn, theatrical trailer / TV spot, slideshow, comic book preview*

Available for purchase through [Amazon.com](#), though we humbly recommend the [Synapse DVD](#) instead. Read on to find out why.

It's not often that a release crosses my path that's so unforgivably atrocious that I have trouble even finishing it, but such is the case with Elite Entertainment's Millennium Edition Blu-ray of *The Deadly Spawn* - a film I adore, and have [covered elsewhere](#). Synapse Films released a robust DVD of the title in 2004 (appropriately enough on my birthday), and the addition of a few new superfluous extras aside this freshly-released blu-ray really does nothing to improve upon it. Indeed, as this review should show, it's actually quite a bit *worse*.

In an odd change of pace I'll get the audio out of the way first here, as I have little at all to say about it. Reproduced in 16-bit LPCM 2.0 (mono), the blu-ray of *The Deadly Spawn* sounds, to my ears, exactly like the Synapse DVD - relatively flat, but clean and perfectly acceptable given the low-low-budget 16mm film it represents. As with the earlier edition, there are no subtitles.

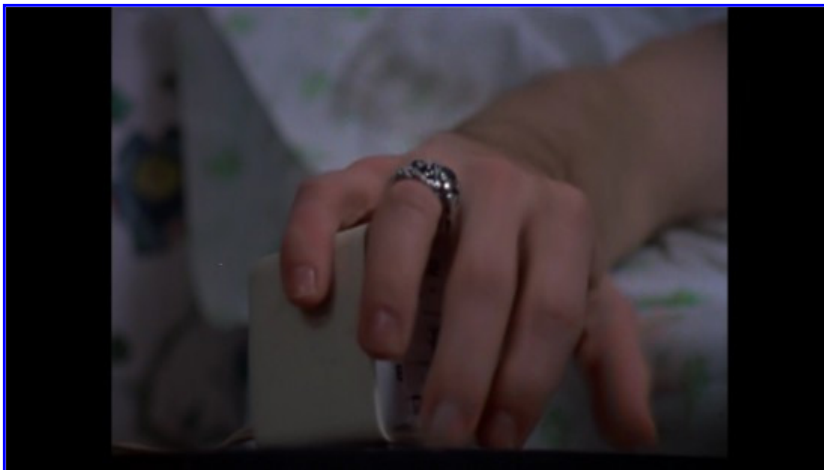
In terms of the visuals, this new *The Deadly Spawn* may be the worst high definition image I've ever reviewed. Presented in 1080i (yes, that's an "i") at the original aspect ratio of 1.33:1 and supported by a paltry AVC encode at a low average bitrate of 13.7 Mbps, this just plain looks *bad*. Worse than that, none of the deficiencies of the Blu-ray image have anything *whatever* to do with the limitations of the original production. No, the problems here are all the result of a particularly disgusting brand of modern home video magic.

Much as I try to avoid the can of worms that saying "it's nothing but an upscaled DVD" can open, I'm hard pressed to find any other explanation for what I'm seeing with this transfer. In this case the results are actually *inferior* to what a simple blowing up of the earlier Synapse SD transfer might have provided. Most notable off the bat is the digital video noise reduction that has been so judiciously applied here, effectively obliterating any inkling of natural texture from the proceedings - some of the close-ups have a aesthetic quality not all together unlike that of fresh mozzarella cheese. In motion the effect is positively ghastly at times. While the wholesale plundering of the grit and grain inherent to productions such as this one is lamentable enough, I feel that the DVNR efforts here were towards a more nefarious purpose still - an attempt to hide the ugly bi-products of a shoddy SD to HD upscale job. To that end the effort fails rather badly, as this new *The Deadly Spawn* presents with gross instances of aliasing (see the band of the alarm clock in comparison set 6, or the siding and shutters of the buildings in the next to last set) that just don't jive with the idea that this is native HD. Tack on some occasional banding and ghosting, and the digital encoding artifacts expected from such a paltry encode, and you have one of the most unpleasant video presentations I've ever seen.

Blu-ray screenshots were captured as full resolution .png in Totem Movie Player and compressed to .jpg at a quality setting of 97% using the ImageMagick command line tool. DVD screenshots were taken as full resolution .png in VLC, scaled up to HD resolution in GIMP for ease of comparison, and compressed to .jpg using the same method as above. The Synapse DVD's windowboxing has been retained.

I know it's hard to believe, but [DVD screenshots appear first](#), followed by their Blu-ray counterparts. Frame matches are exact.





















Supplements replicate most, but not all, of the content previously available on the Synapse edition, and the biggest news of this Blu-ray may be the *exclusion* of that disc's commentary tracks. New to the mix is a fresh commentary track with producer Ted A. Bohus and editor Marc Harwood, as well as 40 minutes of VHS-sourced local news segments, a 24-minute VHS-sourced episode of *Take One* dedicated to the production, and an absolutely dreadful introduction to the film from Ted A. Bohus and a monster puppet. Under better circumstances I might have been more excited about the new content, but given the pathetic state of the feature presentation I can't be bothered to care.

There's been a bit of a kerfuffle brewing over why Elite Entertainment (I thought they were dead?), and not Synapse, have released *The Deadly Spawn* to blu-ray, with plenty of input from producer Ted A. Bohus on the matter. I don't really care about any of that, but it seems obvious that Synapse (who already have a healthy track record with the new format) might have done better by the material if they'd had the chance. But I digress – Ted took his film elsewhere, got his paycheck, and we fans are stuck with the results. The bottom line unfortunately is that this disc just plain *sucks*, and, like a bad dream, deserves to be forgotten. Stick with your DVDs folks as there's nothing to see here.



...unless you were really looking forward to seeing Ted Bohus introducing the film with a hand puppet that only makes the title monster look even *more* like a mutant cock.

6 Responses to “The Deadly Spawn: Millennium Edition”

1. *Christopher D. Jacobson* says:
[February 13, 2012 at 6:56 pm](#)

Don May revealed that their DVD transfer was taken from the 16mm OCN. What an unfortunate missed opportunity that we now don't get to see a new scan of the OCN in HD. Hell, even their scan from 2004 slapped onto Blu-ray would've looked infinitely better than this tripe.

2. [Kentai](#) says:
[February 14, 2012 at 7:11 am](#)

Thank you, Kevin. You saved me \$13, and quite possibly an early death by brain hemorrhage. The fact that they weren't even clever enough to IVTC the feature and make it a progressive upscale is just the sort of thing that makes me want to stab out my own throat with a dulled q-tip.

I know it's quite a tall order to pick "The Single Worst Blu-ray Of All Time", but I think we've *at least* come up with a top five contender here.

3. [Kevin Pyrtle](#) says:
[February 14, 2012 at 10:26 am](#)

At the very least this one has "Worst of the Year" written all over it. It's legitimately mind-boggling just how much WORSE this looks than the DVD... I'm still having some trouble believing it.

4. [david](#) says:
[February 14, 2012 at 2:19 pm](#)

oh my god just read the review for the bluray release of the deadly spawn and i have to say what a disappointment to read that the dvd release actually fares better than the bluray release. the bluray is on the way to me and i dread its arrival. was so looking forward to watching it again in hi-def but i may give the dvd a spin instead. no doubt curiosity will get the better of me and i will end up watching the sucker in hi-def.
image entertainment if you read this PLEASE GO AWAY.....FOREVER

5. [Kevin Pyrtle](#) says:
[February 14, 2012 at 3:38 pm](#)

I share the sentiment, but just to be clear Image had **nothing** to do with this release. It's all the work of the recently resurrected Elite Entertainment, who clearly deserve to go the way of the dinosaurs... again.

6. [Bill G](#) says:
[February 20, 2012 at 10:17 am](#)

Returned my unopened blu-ray, paid the 3 bucks for shipping, and ordered the Synapse DVD instead. Happy with it. It cost me more in the end (the DVD is actually slightly more expensive than the blu-ray) but I thought I needed to make a point. Releases that take effort need to be rewarded.

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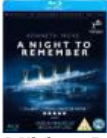
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Header image from Richard Lester's post-apocalyptic black comedy *The Bed Sitting Room* from 1969.