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[Event Reviews](#)

[Interviews](#)

[Music Reviews](#)

[Print Reviews](#)

[Screen Reviews](#)

Screen Reviews

[Assault of the Sasquatch](#)

[Johnny Winter: Live Through the '80s](#)

x-Reference

[Horror](#)

[low budget](#)

[Sasquatch](#)

[police drama](#)

[gore](#)

[blood](#)

[nerdy guys.](#)

Assault of the Sasquatch

directed by Andrew Gerhard

starring Kevin Shea, Greg Nutcher, Sarah J. Ahearn, Jason Criscoulo

Synthetic Cinema International

People worry more about the rights of a Chicken McNugget than they do over our hairy mouth-breathing cousin with his highly developed sense of honor. Out in the chilly woods of New England, Terry Drake (Shea) poaches bears. Gall bladders sell well to the horny Chinese market, but one night he traps more than he bargained for and nabs a full-blooded Sasquatch (Criscoulo). Drake's unnamed and soon-to-be-dead assistant drags it into the van, but the operation is busted by local cops Krystle (Santiago) and Ryan (Nutcher). They haul the van into town where the Sasquatch escapes while everyone is busy booking Drake. Meanwhile, two of the most annoying Public Access nerds since *Wayne's World* are out cruising for Sasquatch sightings. It's Don (Shawn C. Phillips) and Murph's (M. Kelly) lucky night, not only do they film a topless girl in the shower, but they get killed by Mr. Squatch personally. This raised my opinion of the monster enormously as I was ready to reach through the screen and strangle Don myself. I've never seen geek comic



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relief overact as badly as he did, and I've never seen a low budget film where they let a guy like him hang around on camera for so long, unless he wrote the check. Thanks, Mr. Squatch, I think you're ready to hold public office now.

As low-budget slashers go, this one had a decent script, decent acting (except for that Don guy) and respectable effects. Shea as the grizzled old poacher was the best; he exuded that sort of leering criminal confidence that made you cheer for him even when he was doing truly awful things to women. Nutter and Morin were OK as cops, but they felt more like real cops reading lines than actors -- they were earnest, off book, and a bit thuggish, yet their romance made you feel "yeah, cops need love, too, but don't show me any details." Andrea Sàenez as Amy Steel was the cute cop with a perky body and gorgeous hair. She battled Sasquatch Roman-style with *Flash Dance* tights, a Plexiglas battle shield and a switchblade. She got her butt kicked and looked great doing it. Later she died nicely, with Sasquatch biting off both her legs and leaving her to crawl up to the camera in a very convincing effect. Criscoulo as Sasquatch did what he could as an actor in a rubber suit, and since they filmed this on a see-your-breath-cold night, I'm sure he was comfortable as he made you respect this mysterious creature in its bitter battle with uncaring fate.

I've seen better, I've seen worse, and that is the dilemma in *Assault of the Sasquatch*. The story and storytelling were solid but uninspired; some actors stood out but most dropped out of mind the moment they were off camera. The gore effects offered the occasional surprise, but never made you rewind and watch it again. A flash of gratuitous nudity was just that, a flash, and never enough to paper over the rest of the film. Both I and the cast hung around until nearly everyone was dead, and then we watched the nifty credits. But credits don't make a film, and all I can offer is damnation by faint praise.

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Carl F Gauze

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