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Assault of the Sasquatch (2010)

by Matt Wedge, Managing Editor

Each week some of the strangest films ever thought up are released straight-to-DVD and we're committed to finding the craziest ones out there. They aren't all going to be winners, but with DVD Insanity, we will strive to bring some attention to the most boundary-pushing, unusual, and just plain wacky films available.

In 1973, John Landis directed his first film, a creature feature spoof called *Schlock*. It was about an ape-like missing link creature that goes on a rampage through the suburbs of southern California. It's not a great movie, but it has the sense of infectious fun that Landis brought to his best films. I bring this up because I kept thinking of Landis's film while watching *Assault of the Sasquatch*. I couldn't get past the fact that the missing link costume in a movie almost forty years old, that was made to look intentionally cheesy, could look more realistic than the Sasquatch suit in a modern film. Yes, I realize that the filmmakers had next to no money to shoot their Sasquatch magnum opus, but when featuring the creature so prominently, they could have spent at least a little money on a suit that didn't look like a gorilla suit at a cut-rate costume shop.

In our inaugural *DVD Insanity* column covering *Bad Biology*, I wrote about the importance of a director who understands the craft of filmmaking. It doesn't matter how low the budget, how stupid the story, or how low the expectations are, a director who is not able to get proper coverage for the editing process is screwed. In the case of *Bad Biology*, the director, Frank Henenlotter, was an experienced filmmaker who understood how to put a film together. Andrew Gernhard, the director of *Assault of the Sasquatch*, exists at the other end of the spectrum. If his work on this amateurish film is any indication, he doesn't even have the skill set to qualify as a hack.

A bear poacher (Kevin Shea) captures a Sasquatch in a nature preserve. After getting the creature locked away in the back of his truck, the

Directed By: An Gernhard

Written By: Joh

Produced By: A Gernhard, M. Sn

Cast: Kevin She Nutcher, Sarah J Cristina Santiago Sáenz, Alex Exu

MPAA Rating: N

Runtime: 84 min

Review Date: N 2010

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poacher is arrested. The officers (Greg Nutcher and Cristina Santiago) transport the truck to the nearest police precinct in "the city" (it's never made clear what city it's supposed to be). There, the Sasquatch escapes and divides its time between terrorizing the people trapped in the nearly abandoned police precinct and killing random passerby.

In the no-budget world of DTV filmmaking, the one thing that is unforgivable is a bad script. It's the one component of preproduction that doesn't cost the producers any extra money. Even with a clueless director, no money for decent effects, a cast of mostly bad actors (Santiago being the exception), and fuzzy digital video cinematography, a good script could have turned the film into an entertaining comedy. Unfortunately, the script by John Doolan is a mishmash of clichés, rote dialogue, and illogical decisions by a cast of forgettable characters.

When combined with all the other problems, the lack of fun on display is the final nail in the coffin. You can't create campy comedies on purpose. They only work when the filmmakers are completely clueless to their own incompetence. *Assault of the Sasquatch* would seem like a perfect example for this dubious honor. But the film even fails on that front. The rampage of the creature is largely dull and bloodless. With the exception of a scene in which the Sasquatch rips the arm off a violent pimp and slaps him with it, there is a lack of any entertainment value on display.

Finding the bottom of the barrel of the DTV world is a depressing discovery. But it's nothing compared to the horror of realizing that 84 minutes of your life has been wasted on something as terrible as *Assault of the Sasquatch*. Avoid it at all costs.

Matt Wedge is a writer and film critic currently doing time in the suburbs of Connecticut.

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