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THANKSKILLING (2009)

Published by [David Carter](#) on 2011/11/27 (258 reads)

Directed by Jordan Downey
Review by David Carter



Released by MVD Visual
Running Time: 66 minutes
Rating: Not Rated
Color format: Color
Audio/Subtitles: 5.1 Dolby Digital English
Region Code: 1, NTSC
Aspect Ratio: 1.33:1
16:9 Enhanced: No
Special Features: Commentary, blooper reel, photo galleries
Trailer Online: [Yes](#)



Short Version: Horror finally makes it home for Thanksgiving.

BLACK CHRISTMAS and HALLOWEEN were huge successes, but it wouldn't be until 1980's FRIDAY THE 13TH that the horror genre would begin its love affair with holidays and special dates in earnest. One version of that film's history states that director Sean Cunningham came up with the FRIDAY THE 13TH title before he had a script or even a story. While that may or may not be true, there is little doubt that future holiday-horrors were "name-first, story-second" efforts. APRIL FOOL'S DAY, GRADUATION DAY, MOTHER'S DAY, NEW YEAR'S EVIL...the list goes on forever. Until now, the only holiday spared the horror treatment has been Thanksgiving. Barring Eli Roth's short from GRINDHOUSE, Jordan Downey's THANKSKILLING marks the first time that America's day of gratitude and overeating has been besmirched by horror cinema. That's got to count for something, right?

THANKSKILLING begins in 1621, where we see a young woman get axed by a foul-mouthed turkey – pun most assuredly not intended. Flash forward to present day where an excited quintet of college students is heading home for Thanksgiving break. Between the five of them we have our entire horror film stereotype bases covered, so it's doubtful that their trip will be incident free. Meanwhile, a hermit's dog accidentally awakens Turkie, the villainous bird from the intro and he wastes little time resuming his murderous ways. Turkie is animated by the spirit of a vengeful Native American named Feathercloud, and will relentlessly hunt down the first whites he sees after his resurrection. As luck would have it, our college kids' jeep breaks down not far from Turkie's rebirth, and he immediately begins stalking them.



The teens actually manage to make it home before the carnage begins, surprisingly enough. The calm doesn't last very long, however; within minutes, Turkie has murdered most of their families. His evil scheme is helped considerably by the fact that his prey are five of the least intelligent college students on earth, and it isn't long until their number dwindles to three. The three remaining kids luck out and find a book detailing how to kill the invulnerable Turkie, but that's easier said than done.

THANKSKILLING is part of the horror subgenre I like to call "calculated to be bad cinema," meaning that any flaw or shortcoming in the film was likely included on purpose to solidify the film's "bad movie" status. Production companies like Troma and Low Budget Pictures are synonymous with this style of horror, but it is becoming more common for first-time filmmakers to try to their hand at it as well. Calculated to be bad cinema is both an acquired taste and an acquired skill, because it can at times be irritating and I'll begrudgingly admit that there is an art to making a bad movie on purpose.

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When you consider that THANKSKILLING was made this way on purpose, I have little choice but to consider it to be "successful." It is as bad as the filmmakers hoped it would be, certainly, but it may not be endearingly bad enough for all viewers. It falls well short of the "new cult classic" mark that it was aiming for, but successfully lands in the realm of entertaining one-time viewing. Lasting only an hour, THANKSKILLING never wears out its welcome and things progress quickly enough that it is unlikely that you'll have time to get bored.

MVD Visual's DVD of THANKSKILLING looks good and contains a few nice bonus features. Since you'll find this out on your own if you Google the film, you can watch the entire film on IMDB if you so choose. I'd recommend picking up the DVD if you enjoy it, because it'll kick a few bucks the filmmakers' way and keep MVD Visual in business. If you love intentionally bad movies, THANKSKILLING is right up your alley. If you don't understand any of this – like the people who wasted precious minutes of their lives putting up lists of the film's many flaws on IMDB – find a friend to explain it to you before you watch.



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