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DVD Review – Bong Of The Dead

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Bong Of The Dead



Tagline: There will be bud.

Directors: Thomas Newman

Cast: Simone Bailly, Jy Harris, Mark Wynn and Barry Nerling

Distributor: Left Films

Release date: 16th April 2012



Review

Bong Of The Dead was reportedly made on a production budget of \$5000 by Thomas Newman who is credited as director, writer, producer, cinematographer and editor. Producing any feature on such a small budget is an achievement, there will have been a lot of time, effort, sweat and pain that went into this production. Hopefully reviews like the one that follows will not dissuade Newman from continuing his career, and moving on to bigger and hopefully better things.

The film opens with an extended dialogue-free pre credits sequence in which meteorites fall on the earth. One such alien rock lands in the garden of an elderly couple, cracks open, and zombifies the husband. The pay-off to this sequence is spectacularly disgusting. The action then zips forward to a post zombie apocalypse America in which two stoners inadvertently discover that zombie pus makes great fertilizer for their weed plants. The zombie fertilised bud is stronger than militarised super skunk, leading to the two titanicly toasted twazocks smoking their entire stash. This sends the less than fabulous freaks on a mission into the zombie zone to find more pus fertiliser for their next crop. On their epic meandering quest they smoke lots, meet a talking fascist zombie and hook up with a kick-ass female gas station attendant.

You don't go into a film called **Bong Of The Dead** expecting a great deal of plot, but even so this is extremely thin and at 98 minutes is stretched into a membrane mere molecules thick. For quite a large proportion of the running time, nothing really happens, you are just subjected to lame stoner humour. Well, if you can call lines like "I'm so stoned I can't feel my legs" humour. Woody Allen has called getting a laugh from a stoned audience a cheat, **Bong Of The Dead** falls into the grim class of stoner comedy one suspects is aimed at a uselessly ripped audience with a subscription to *High Times* because the writer lacks the ability to get a laugh from a non herb assisted audience.

The film is also a clear example of one of the blights of modern no-budget horror films. It is predictably stuffed with a lot of cheap-ass digital effects. While these help cut costs, unless in the hands of someone who really knows what they are doing (Gareth "**Monsters**" Edwards take a bow) they almost always look shit. Crappy effects are just one of the many ways **Bong Of The Dead** is inferior to equivalent films of the seventies and eighties that it references. The likes of **Evil Dead** and **Bad Taste** are obviously classic films, but even **The Deadly Spawn** looks a whole lot better. Before the advent of cheap-ass digital effects, this sort of stuff had to be done practically, requiring imagination on the part of both directors and FX artists. Now you can hire someone with a college degree and a laptop and just say, "give me a tentacled hell beast right there please" and SHAZAM it's done. It looks shit. But it's done.

Despite the production's obvious cheapness, Newman is not without talent, mounting at least a couple of interesting sequences. For instance a scene where the two stoners and kick-ass female spark up the bong and party hard. This is shot from a fixed camera and in super fast motion. Sure this is hardly original (it's cribbed from **A Clockwork Orange**) but it is quite well done. Also most of the gore is practical and fairly wet, although after the gruesome opening, there isn't all that much of it.

It's obvious **Bong Of The Dead** is a labour of love, but it really brings nothing new to either Zombie films or stoner comedies. The talking zombie thing will annoy the hell out of zombie purists. The stoner comedy is sub sub sub Gilbert Shelton. It would have played better as a 5-10 minute short on You Tube, as a feature it is a tiresome experience. It's no fun to stick the boot into a film like this, but equally it is 98 minutes of your time that could be better spent grouting the bathroom.

Rating: 1 star



Stuart Barr



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