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## Bong of the Dead (2011)

 Published December 21, 2011 |  By [CouchZombie](#)

### BONG OF THE DEAD: STONE COLD CRAZY ZOMBIE CUSH



Since the 50's horror movies have been an easy way for film makers and aspiring film makers to get their foot in the industry's door. This is because they can be cheaply produced. They do not require big name actors nor a lot of money. The prolific Roger Corman had a successful career using this model. Corman produced some donkeys but he also produced great examples of low budget film making that worked, **Humanoids from the Deep** for example. 30 years later technology has come to low budget film making. Computers have changed the way we look at low budget film making in the new mellenium. While CGI work on a movie like Avatar is costly, a skilled and creative individual can work miracles in a low budget situation. Noboru Iguchi of **Machine Girl** and Yoshihiro Nishimura of **Tokyo Gore Police** are creating a new film making paradigm using CGI techniques to take low budget cinema to another level, one that is heavy on imagination, creativity and onscreen campy violence. This brings me to **Bong of the Dead** written, directed and edited by Thomas Newman. **Bong of the Dead**, I believe, is following in the footsteps of Iguchi and Nishimura and creating something different using anything and everything to produce something over the top and and insane with a small budget and all from Canada.



**Bong of the Dead** opens as an old coot puts the finishing touches a newly made garden gnome. Proud of his work, the old coot moves to the backyard to place his new gnome in a place of prominence. Suddenly meteors begin falling from the sky. One crashes right into the garden gnome putting the old guy on his butt. Stunned, the old man moves to investigate the meteor. It cracks open and spews gasses. The old guy wisely touches the gooey center of the meteor and then calls it a day. The old guy begins to develop sores and pustules that he tries to pop in front of the mirror like a zit. He finally turns into a zombie with glowing eyes and proceeds to munch on his oblivious wife. We then cut to the home of Edwin and Tommy, two post apocalyptic survivors that have only one interest, weed. Edwin quickly shows Tommy something that he has discovered. Edwin has turned zombie brains into fertilizer that makes Edwin's weed plants grow quickly, right before your eyes quickly, and the resulting bud is quite potent. There is only one problem. The government has cleared the neighborhood of run amok zombies and relegated them only to the Danger Zone. Edwin and Tommy decide to fetch some zombies from the Danger Zone to create more fertilizer for their super bud. Thus begins the journey into the Danger Zone.



Right out of the gate I want to say that it is obvious that for Thomas Newman **BotD** was a labor of love. **BotD** is too wacky and over the top to think otherwise. Also, there are references to other fan loved films for **BotD** to not be a labor of love. The opening of the film is very reminiscent of the Stephen King (actor) story, The Lonesome Death of Jordy Verrill, in 1982's **Creepshow**. It even has comic book scene transitions similar to **Creepshow**. The first time we meet Edwin and Tommy is similar to the introduction of the Simon Pegg and Nick Frost characters from **Sean of the Dead** (2004). Finally, the killing of zombies en masse using lawn mowers was first seen in **Dead Alive** aka **Brain Dead** (1992). I'm not calling Newman out for this, more power to him. I'm just trying to make the point that Newman knows the genre and peppers his film with little references to it. I would do the same. Pay homage to those that came before.



I want to get in a quick mention about the opening credits. Easily one of the most interesting and fun titles sequences I have ever seen especially for a film like this. **BotD** is all about fun and the opening credits sequence is a great example of this. **BotD** is a film that does not take itself seriously, especially with a name like **Bong of the Dead**, it has to have its tongue firmly in jammed into its cheek make no mistake about it. Even though it is not taking itself seriously, it still is going balls out for maximum effort. Little details like dropping frames to make the zombies move unnaturally similar to the jerky movement we saw in **The Evil Dead**. Even though Newman is giving us a horror comedy, while watching **BotD** I so wanted it to be serious and not a comedy. Leah's effective flashback about her family was so good that it made me wish I was watching serious zombie flick sans comedy. Also the weed elements of the elements of the film seemed forced give stiff dialogue. Kinda felt like a weed film stuffed against its will into an apocalyptic zombie film. Don't get me wrong I enjoyed **BotD** very much but I can't help wonder what Newman could have created if he went 100% serious like Leah's flashback.

**BotD** moves at a nice pace for the most part. There are two moments when it kind of drags. One is when Edwin and Tommy are just shown jumping around and fighting one another on the roof of their building. This sequence has no dialogue and no value and should have been omitted. The second is when Edwin and Tommy meet Leah. Leah lets them spend the night and all they do is jump around to music and could have been edited down to move quicker because it ends up just being an empty sequence. Beyond that, there are lots of little things to like and enjoy that by the time you get to the end you sigh to yourself and say "That was kinda fun".



**BotD** is definitely a splatter film. The opening CGI meteors falling and glowing eyes are cool but all would be for not if the practical effects are not splatterly good. I really enjoyed the practical effects and saw them as standouts. Beyond being standouts they are also very clever. Clever set pieces like the aforementioned 3 lawn mowers strapped to the front of a truck and the zombie powered shower that is also worked into story as an important plot device are great examples of the kind of creativity that you need to make low budget film making stand out. The zombie powered shower was such a clever set piece that that alone is worth the price of admission.

One negative that I can throw in the film's direction, is the way the recording of the dialogue was handled. It was done in the same fashion as the Italian movies from the seventies. Film the movie and when done go back and add the dialogue in after the fact in a studio. It was obvious and distracting. Another big negative is the acting. It is just plain bad. Nuff said.

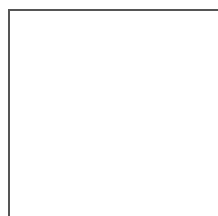
In the end, **Bong of the Dead** is a really fun low budget movie that somehow manages larger budget entertainment. Although **BotD** fails in the comedy department, it succeeds in the special effects and the make up effects department and that's more important in a film of this type. The spectacle can some times be more important than the substance when it comes to low budget cinema. Thomas Newman also manages to infuse the **BotD** with some style and creativity. Leah's flashback and the zombie shower are great examples of this. Thomas Newman also manages to prove that CGI has a place in the indie market, something that Sy Fy works everyday to prove otherwise. The low budget arena and can generate a fun and interesting product and **Bong of the Dead** is a testament to that assertion. I'm a believer.

P.S. Don not give up on the film too soon there is more movie after the credits. A small tease for a future sequel that made for a small bonus morsel of fun. Great way to leave them wanting more.

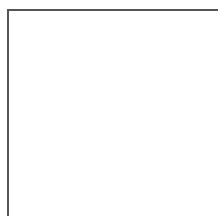
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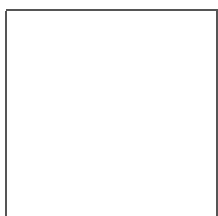
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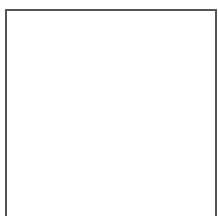
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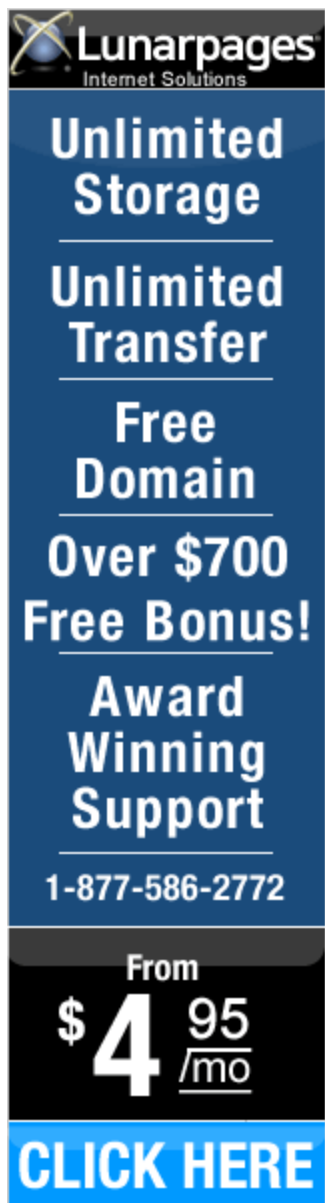
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