

BONG OF THE DEAD | May 29, 2012 | [ADD A COMMENT](#)

## Review: Bong of the Dead (2012)

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From the title, it is obvious that this is not a movie which was intended to be taken seriously. Having said that, *Bong of the Dead* appears at first glance to be *Up in Smoke* meets *Zombieland*, going as far as having a quote from Tommy Chong on the cover, saying "This is a sure winner!"

The film opens with an old man (Vince Laxton) who seems to have the hobby of touching up lawn gnomes with make-up. Overhead, three meteorites enter the planet's atmosphere, one of which landing a mere five feet away from the guy as a fiery ball in a smoking crater. What does the man do? Well, as anyone who has seen *The Blob* or *Creepshow* may have guessed, he pokes it until it cracks open, revealing a gooey green mess inside. Of course, he does what any rational person would do next: he reaches in to touch the stuff, getting the sticky glop all over his fingers. I was half-expecting this yahoo to stick his fingers in his mouth and give them a taste, but instead, he gives them a big

**Zombie**  
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sniff, and passes out for six hours, waking up as a zombie. His TV-addicted wife pays no notice, and makes him a plate of food, kissing his open sore filled head, and goes back to her shows. The newly risen man is not satisfied with the food in front of him, but finds what he's craving sitting oblivious across the room. What we see next gives new meaning to the term "TV dinners", and the Zombie Apocalypse officially begins.

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Next, we meet Edwin and Tommy (Mark (*Supernatural*) Wynn and Jy (*Dead Like Me*) Harris, respectively), stoner roommates who smoke the wacky tobacco out of a pipe which resembles a zombie head. Edwin shows Tommy his new discovery: liquefied zombie brains make great fertilizer for growing super-potent marijuana in a ridiculously fast amount of time. He demonstrates this fact, and pretty soon, the boys are in a crazy music video montage, and before they know it, they're out of both pot and zombie brains. They decide to go on a road trip to find "The Danger Zone" in hopes of harvesting more zombies for their own personal use. Along the way, they run afoul of evil zombie mastermind Alex (Barry Nerling), who wants nothing more than to create an army of undead soldiers to take over the world, yet only has three or four inept pushbags (one of which doesn't even have eyes!). After escaping, they find themselves at a gas station run by sexy survivor, Leah (*Battlestar Galactica's* Simone Bailly). She can fix a car, handle a firearm, and drink shots of vodka like Karen Allen in *Raiders of the Lost Ark*.

Written, directed, and edited by Thomas Newman, rumor has it that the entire film was made for \$5,000. Newman, whose previous work was as special makeup effects for *The X-Files*, *Millennium*, and *Lake Placid*, used most of the money for feeding the unpaid cast and crew, learning how to use Adobe After Effects, and creating the special effects makeup. His style of filmmaking for me was hit-or-miss, with some scenes being extremely well done. For example, the entire opening scene was a wonderful homage to Peter Jackson in his *Bad Taste/Dead Alive* phase, yet some montage scenes seemed unnecessary and silly.

As for the acting, it was again hit-or-miss for me. Wynn and Harris do show a decent chemistry with each other, but it always seems like one is waiting for the other to set up a punchline. Granted, Jy Harris is a real-life stand-up comedian, it just seems that some of the timing is off when they play off of each other. However, I felt that both of the boys played great off of Bailly, who kept it as deadpan as Clint Eastwood the entire time.

The writing, I felt, was the weakest thing about the film. For instance, there's talk of a human-run "Safe Zone", which has a human calling out for other survivors on a radio. I thought that it was going to be a trap from the infected, luring in new meat, but the plot gets ignored completely. There's a scene which has Tommy wake up to spy on Leah in her Flintstones-like shower, only to go back to the couch and be spooned by Edwin. The main plot is chock full of holes, too. How in the world does Edwin figure out that drying out zombie brains and mixing it with water will grow "super weed"? He must have been extremely bored that day. There is some dialogue which will make you groan, like a scene in which the villainous Alex delivers a line to Leah, and you can almost see the actor grit his teeth under the rubber latex appliance. The script isn't all bad, though. There are some jokes that truly had me laugh out loud, like when the boys are listening to the survivor in the radio, and he's desperate for other survivors to meet up with, "Unless of course, you're a ginger. Sorry, but no gingers allowed", to the dismay of red-haired Tommy. To me, the comedy was less like Cheech and Chong, but more like The Fabulous Furry Freak Brothers, and I'm guessing that a lot of the pot humor was lost on me, as I don't smoke the stuff.

The special effects were also a mixed bag for me. The rubber and blood stuff looked great, and there's one scene which used 800 gallons of the fake blood! The opening scene is a fun little scene of disgustingness, and don't get me started on the last act; remember *Dead Alive's* lawnmower scene? Multiply that by three. However, there was also a few scenes of CGI blood which I can always spot and always frown upon (its overuse is the reason I do not enjoy the cable TV show, *Spartacus*). Granted, I understand why Newman chose to use it. He succeeded in making a \$5,000 budget movie look like a \$5,000,000 one; it's just one of my pet peeves.

All-in-all, despite its flaws, *Bong of the Dead* is still a fun little movie that you can tell is a labor of love by everyone involved. Distributed by MVD Entertainment, you can buy the movie as a \$2.99 download or in 1 and 2 disc DVD versions at their website:

<http://www.bongofthedead.com/blog/bong-of-the-dead-dvd-downloads/>  
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I give this film three stars.

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Bill Cassinelli has been a horror movie fan since the age of 3, when his mother took him to the movies to see "The Exorcist." Since then, he has written, done special effects makeup, and has acted in several feature films. He lives in Bangor, Maine, and can be contacted at [Bill.cassinelli@gmail.com](mailto:Bill.cassinelli@gmail.com).