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## Bong of the Dead (2009)

### – DVD Movie Reviews

By [The Vocabulariast](#) on Wednesday, 22nd June 2011



Bong of the Dead is the perfect movie for those who wish Cheech and Chong made zombie flicks. For most other people, it will probably be a middling experience with moments of sheer genius, set among a cannabis-fueled miasma of pot humor. The best aspect of the film is the potential that Director Thomas Newman exhibits. His blood-soaked romp is uneven, but the best parts of the film are truly awesome and definitely merit a watching of his indie pot-zombie opus.

The film takes place in a world encumbered by a post-zombie apocalypse. Meteors from outer space have transformed parts of the world into zombie playgrounds. When Tommy, a bikini brief-wearing stoner, discovers that zombie brains make killer weed, he and his buddy head out to the forbidden zones to score some zombie fertilizer. Of course, being that Tommy and his buddy are barely functional potheads, you know they're in for some bad times... and some surprisingly good ones. After getting kidnapped by a zombie overlord, escaping, and making their way to a seemingly abandoned gas station, the two stumble across a sexy, shotgun-toting babe. Since their car conveniently breaks down, they are forced to stay with her, smoke bud, and fantasize about getting in her pants. When their would-be captor shows up with an army of the dead, including the always welcome topless zombie babes, they must gear up, kick ass, and litter the world with

buckets of zombie blood. The plot is a little slow-moving in the beginning, but the finale is amazing and worth the price of the film.

Director Thomas Newman does an admirable job for a first feature. Filmed in only two months, *Bong of the Dead* oozes with detail. Newman clearly knows the zombie genre, and the amazing finale of the film will cause most horror fans to fondly reminisce about the end of *Dead-Alive*. Special effects-wise and creativity-wise, Newman is rocking the house. Unfortunately, the film's flaws will prevent this one from reaching a wider audience. Its reliance upon pot humor inherently turns this film into a niche flick. The pacing is off, as for most people, watching two burnouts smoke weed and giggle for an hour isn't worth sitting through. The writing isn't as sharp as it could have been, and with a little tweaking, some toning down, and some goring up, *Bong of the Dead* could easily fall into the category of cult classic. I'll be interested to see where Director Thomas Newman goes from here. Will he stay within the zombie genre and refine his skillset, or will he branch out in a different direction?

The cast of the film is another bit of a hiccup. For a low-budget film, the cast is actually solid, but for those of you used to watching more mainstream actors, they'll take some getting used to. Mark Wynn takes a while to hit his stride as Edwin, the lead of the film. He's got the look, but he doesn't actually come off as a heroic or sympathetic character until the film's last fifteen minutes. If he wasn't such a bumbling twit for the first hour, things may have been different. Jy Harris isn't nearly as compelling as Wynn. Harris plays Tommy, a character who is essentially in the film to do stupid things and smoke pot. If Edwin had a pet dog rather than Tommy, it would have been more interesting. The real star of the film, other than the topless zombie boobs, would be Simone Bailly. Bailly is extremely likeable, and she lucks out as she plays the only character that could be considered a functioning member of the human race.

The special effects in the film are interesting to say the least. There are some cool zombie make-ups, fantastic practical effects, and a mishmash of digital effects which vary in quality. There aren't nearly enough zombie kills and human deaths through the first hour of the film, as Newman seems to have put his eggs all into one basket, namely the film's gore-soaked finale. Most horror fans and indie enthusiasts will get a kick out of this stuff, but the dearth of cool shit in the film's middle is somewhat of a turnoff.

Overall, *Bong of the Dead* is more than you'd expect from a movie entitled *Bong of the Dead*. It shows a lot of promise, and if you love to support indie films, and the indie zombie economy, then you should definitely seek out a copy of it.

Final Synopsis: The film's ending makes the movie worth watching. Check it out if you're an indie horror fan.

Points Lost: -1 for some of the less impressive digital effects, -1 for too much pot-smoking and pot humor, -1 for a middle that drags compared to the beginning and the ending, -1 for the character of Tommy, -1 for being called *Bong of the Dead*... when there is no *Bong of the Dead*






Bonus Points: +1 for the awesome ending. Check it out.

Lesson Learned: Zombie brains make superweed!

Burning Question: Why not go the full distance and name the main character Cheech?

*Bong of the Dead*

6/10

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