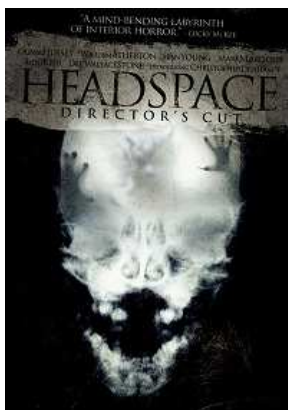




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## Headspace

REVIEWED BY: Matt Posted on 17/09/2012



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Headspace is a bit of an oddity. Many horror films have an intriguing set-up that lends itself to assorted creepy goings-on, but then the reveal of what is behind it all is so pedestrian that it derails everything. With this film, however, the reveal is excellent. It is everything else that is the problem.

Alex (Christopher Denham) is a young man plagued by headaches and a strange affliction – he seems to be getting increasingly intelligent. Soon, he can read books in seconds, play chess like a grandmaster and know things he cannot possibly know. But, as always, these powers come with a cost. In this case, the cost seems to be that everybody he comes into contact with is later found dead.

This is Andrew van den Houten's first film as a director, although he has experience as a producer. That shows in particular in a terrific cast that is far stronger than normally found in such a low-budget indie. Shrewdly, the lead roles are populated by newcomers (although Denham has gone from strength to strength since this film, appearing in the likes of *Shutter Island* and *Sound of My Voice*) while the minor roles play out like a who's-who of genre character actors.

They probably only had a day or two's filming each, but on board are Sean Young, actor/director Larry Fessenden, Udo Kier, William Atherton, Dee Wallace Stone and Olivia Hussey. Also present is Pollyanna McIntosh of *The Woman* fame – although here she is seemingly only around to show off her impressive physical charms in a lengthy and utterly gratuitous sex scene.

Unfortunately, the directing part of van den Houten's job is a something of a let down. The scare scenes, such as they are, completely lack tension and are repetitious. This is not helped by a laboured script that has good concepts, but no sense of narrative structure. The story devolves quickly into Alex simply wandering from one person's home to another.

The finale becomes a messy, incoherent jumble and the reveal of the antagonists is awkward because the designs are somewhat silly. The lighting on them does not help, either, and the result is the least scary monsters imaginable.

An interesting central idea and some excellent performances end up in vain as *Headspace* becomes a stumbling, badly-realised horror movie.

The DVD comes packed with extras. Some are a bit spurious, like a gallery of pixelated, low-res photos of the make-up FX process, but there is a nice 'making of' featurette that gets around most of the key players and a commentary that fills in a few holes. In addition, there is a conversation between the baby-faced van den Houten and his leading man Denham as they reflect on *Headspace* and what it has meant for their careers subsequently.

One neat extra is audition footage of the lead actors. It is easy how Denham was cast, given an excellent, twitchy performance in this that reflects what he ultimately essayed in the film. Some of the others seem to struggle a little, despite being solid in the movie itself. It is an interesting look at the raw choices of the actors prior to any rehearsal time.

### DISC DETAILS:

DIRECTOR(S): Andrew van den Houten | COUNTRY: USA | YEAR: 2005 | DISTRIBUTOR(S): MVD Visual | RUNNING TIME: 84 minutes | ASPECT RATIO: 16:9 | REGION: All / NTSC | DISCS: 1

### EXTRAS:

- Fractured Skulls: The Making of *Headspace*
- Filmmakers' Commentaries
- "Headspace Revisited" Featurette
- Deleted, Extended and Alternate Scenes
- Auditions
- FX Journal Photo Gallery
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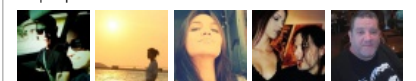


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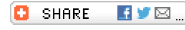
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