

Indie Horror Films

All genres of suspense, terror, and horror will be reviewed by Richard Gary. His address to send preview copies supplied upon request to rbf55@msn.com.

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DVD Review: Bad Meat

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Bad Meat

Directed by Lulu Jamen

MVD Visual

Jingai Films

92 minutes, 2011 / 2013

<http://en.wordpress.com/tag/bad-meat>

www.MVDvisual.com

I truly had high hopes for the proudly self-proclaimed heavily flesh and fluid film that is *Bad Meat*. After all, it was filmed around Winnipeg. But alas and alack, it wasn't meant to be.

Indie horror films, even bad ones, can be a joy, sometimes because of how bad they are. Then there is something like this one. Before I wrote this review, I actually did something I never do, which is read other people's reviews. I'll explain why in a bit.

Shades of the original *The Hills Have Eyes II* (1984), this project was started and not really completed first time around, under the helm of Robert Schmidt. The budget either was pulled or ran out, or studio interest waned, and the project was pulled after being mostly put in the can. After the relative success of some of this young cast, it was decided to be revived. Stories vary whether it was Schmidt who sewed it together with some new footage, or gave up and the studio did it. Either way, Schmidt didn't want his name on it, and they put the imaginary Jamen to it.

While there are definite problems with the initial storyline, it still had a lot going for it. The plot centers around six teens (who for once actually look like teens), three males and three females, who are dumped by their parents at a motivational camp for various "crimes," such as fire fetish, lesbianism and letting the frogs loose from the school's biology lab. Hardway is not so much an *Outward Bound* as a hard labor camp. All that's missing is the metal balls chained to their feet. Running away isn't an option because it is too far in the middle of nowhere (okay, no Winnipeg jokes here).

The camp is run by a physically and emotionally sadistic leader (scene stealer Mark Pellegrino) who is obsessed with Nazis (e.g., he has a chessboard where the "king" is Adolph), and he is shown reading a book about the Final Solution (*Death Camp: The Josef Mengele Story*) and laughing. His

Blog Archive

- ▼ 2013 (18)
 - ▼ June (5)
 - DVD Reviews: Iron Doors
 - Two DVD Reviews: A Day of Violence; Slice
 - DVD Review: Bad Meat
 - DVD Review: Strawberry Cliff
 - DVD Review: The CareTaker
 - May (3)
 - April (3)
 - February (4)
 - January (3)
- 2012 (27)

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underlings include an *Ilsa*, *She Wolf of the SS* type, her lover/co-"counselor" is an equally sadistic huge black man, with the last being a bar bell boy that could be Larry the Cable Guy on steroids.

All of them abuse the young six, as well as the hired cook. The latter takes some tainted dog meat and serves it at dinner, before quitting and taking the only vehicle on the property (of course). The young charges are forced to eat a potato while the bullies have the, well, bad meat, thereby unintentionally saving them from it. After a night of a lot of puking on a *The Family Guy* Ipecac level, the four leaders become guttural, sex-obsessed cannibals.

The story is shown in a series of flashbacks by the sole survivor (I'm not giving anything away here since that is explained in the first few minutes), who is wrapped from head to toe in bloody bandages that continually weep red.

The gore effects are mostly top notch, relying totally on appliances, models and make-up rather than digital enhancements. They are beautifully done and appropriately gross with lots of vomit, blood and body parts

All of the actors playing the teens are solid in their parts, having made their way through multitudes of recurring parts in various television series. And some even have famous siblings in real life (Dave Franco, brother of James, and Tahj Mowry, brother of twins Tamera and Tia). But I digress... There isn't much chance for character development because they obviously filmed some of the harder scenes first, probably leaving that to the end of the shoot.

And there lies the problem with this film. Because of the disruption to shooting and the slapdash way it was put together, there are way too many gaps in the story. I'm not talking about a question here and there, but rather entire scenes missing. I thought the DVD had skipped, and that's when I went to other reviews to see what I had missed. Apparently, everyone had the same comments. Characters disappear and reappear as just a jaw bone being chomped. Another, who is given the impression of being the lead, is tossed away in a cage and we never see him get out (or die). In fact, more than half the characters are still alive in the flashback when the final shot is shown in the present.

Whether Schmidt gave up trying or he was booted for going over budget (the film does have a wonderful and mainstream look), this is a sorry case of *caveat emptor*, because this sounds like it should be a great film, and it really could have been, but it's not all there, like your money when you purchase it.

Posted by **Robert Barry Francos** at 12:01 AM

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