

# Indie Horror Films

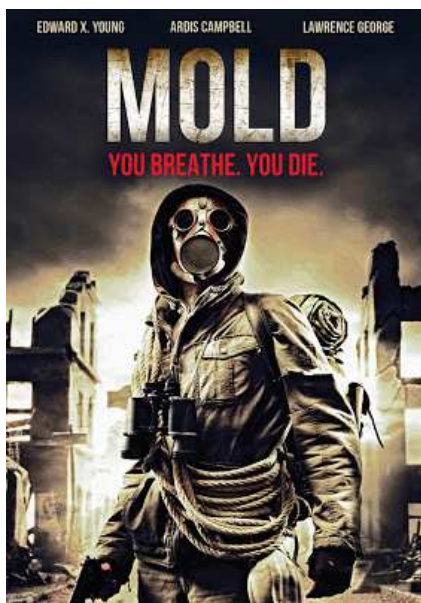
All genres of suspense, terror, and horror will be reviewed by Richard Gary. His address to send preview copies supplied upon request to rbf55@msn.com.

Thursday, May 16, 2013

## DVD Review: Mold!

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Images from the Internet



### Mold!

Directed by Neil Meschino

Wild Eye Releasing

86 minutes, 2012 / 2013

[www.wildeyereleasing.com](http://www.wildeyereleasing.com)

[www.MVDvisual.com](http://www.MVDvisual.com)

With the exception of some opening and closing visuals in an Arizona desert shot on grainy 16mm, this was filmed in HD at a factory out in Ronkonkoma, Long Island. That's one point in *Mold!*'s favor, already.

Taking place in 1984, during the Little Ronnie Reagan "Say No to Drugs" push, and most likely inspired by the U.S. Government's failed use of the herbicide poison paraquat on pot plants south of the border, the flick's action takes place in a secret lab sponsored by the War Department. Four scientists are giving a demonstration to their sponsors, namely a General and his soldier aide, and an obnoxious Senator and his scardy-pants aide on the possibility of using their mold to take out the South American coca fields, and possibly be used as a biological weapon of war.

Of course, to no surprise or there would be no film, the highly fast-growing spores soon take over the joint, and it's a matter of how to escape, if that's possible of all. This leads me to my first question. If the mold (or mould to you Canadians who suck up to the Brits...I kid because I love...) is that highly dangerous to both plants *and* to humans, whether inhaled or simply dabbed, how could it possibly be used in the field (both figuratively and literally) without causing worldwide devastation. This is especially true in this case because when it comes to the antidote...well, I won't give it away.

What we are presented with is essentially a pissing contest between, well, nearly everyone. Well, the men, anyway. There is a single female among the group, Dr. Julia Young, and of course she is the closest to a voice of reason, or liberal thinking at least. She's upset that her research is being coopted by the military, but is powerless to do anything about it. She is also the only likeable character of the bunch, which makes it so much easier as one by one they fall victim to the rapacious spores. Played by unconventional beauty Ardis Campbell, she is justifiably

### Blog Archive

- ▼ 2013 (12)
  - ▼ May (3)
    - DVD Review: Mold!
    - Short Film Review: 15-05-08
    - DVD Review: The Holy Sound
  - April (2)
  - February (4)
  - January (3)
- 2012 (27)

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intense and incensed by all the masculinist stupidity around her (though it's never verbally phrased that way).

All the men are macho idiots, and while I have no idea if that's what director Neil Meschino had in mind, it's blatant that it is the result. Even the male lead, Dr. Bolton (Lawrence George) is an arrogant prick, though I think they may have been going more for the Alan Alda / Hawkeye Pierce snarky than the self-righteous (and jealous) guy you really wanna punch in the nose. But at least I think his moustache is real.



Ardis Campbell

Unlike Borat look-alike Chris Gentile (playing Dr. David Hardy), who is Boston's foil, and whose moustache looks like horse hair stuck on with a glue gun (my apologies if it is real [the director has informed that two of the moustaches in the film were real, and two fake, with this being one of the latter]). Hardy is the Dr. Zachary Smith (*Lost in Space*) in the picture, always trying to look good to others when he's not, mixed with a bit of buffoonery. I supposed he's intended as the comic relief, but everyone in the cast shines in that way at one time or another.

When describing this film, one constant theme is that it is a throwback to the '80s style of direct-to-video films that we all enjoyed, all while pointing a finger and laughing at it. Well, that is quite accurate. It certainly is one of the high points (and there are actually many). This is enhanced by the over-emoting of the characters (which definitely helps in the humor department), in what I call the Anne Rice syndrome (every sentence sounds like it should have multiple exclamation points after it, no matter what the action level at the moment). Part of what gives this the VHS feel is the lack of CGI. Rather they rely on appliances and make-up, which I've always preferred anyway. Sure, sometimes it means a character grasping at a rubber mask (such as when one character's insides are sucked dry), for example. Hey, I say this is one of the wonders of low budget horror (or sci-fi, depending upon who you talk to about it), and part of what attracts me to it.

That and the goopy gore that picks up steam as we delve into the story, until it's solid green (mold!) and red (blood...duh). Sure, some of the liquefied mold looks like it was left over from some Nickelodeon game show, but so what. The gore certainly makes up for the lack of gratuitously exposed female body parts (though you do see a real part of a green peen).

All in all, there are moments that are clichéd, such as the [*\*rec*] / *The Crazies* don't-let-anyone-out motif, and the overarching white-haired comic bookish supervillain Edison Carter (David Pringle) – named after the *Max Headroom* character – who feels like he could have been out of the X-Files, but there is a lot to also recommend here. For example, there are many different ways the mold effects people, and that not all the exposed guts have to do with the titular, microscopic nasties.

Other than some wonderful Wild Eye Trailers, the two extras are a lengthy behind-the-scenes documentary and a commentary by the director and set designer. Both have interesting moments mixed in with mundanity, but if you're like me, you'll learn stuff in the good bits.

This is obviously a labor of love, and everyone in the cast really seems to be having fun (mostly, when not getting green shit pouring into their faces), which comes out in the tone of the film. More camp than serious, as a '80s-style film should be, it is mostly a joy ride that is worth taking.

Posted by **Robert Barry Francos** at 4:48 AM

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