

- **Mold! DVD Review**

Mold! is a fun combination of low-budget horror and comedy, in which a group of scientists working for the government creates a special lethal mold that is to be used as a weapon. The horror film starts with a real horror – a shot of Ronald Reagan railing against drugs.

Yes, this film takes place in 1984, the year of *Sixteen Candles*, *Footloose* and Madonna's *Like A Virgin*. And of course it was right in the middle of that horrible Reagan administration. (The film's set dressing includes several Reagan posters, including a campaign poster that says, "Make My Day – Elect Me President," a detail that I totally appreciate.) Also during the 1980s there were lots and lots of crazy horror films that had elements of comedy, and *Mold!* is working within that vein, complete with lots of goo and gore and pointedly funny lines like "Dr. Kane had a lot of guts," which in context is so over-the-top ridiculous that I couldn't help but laugh.

In a laboratory a scientist accidentally breaks a beaker, and panics, desperately rushing to leave the room. He immediately becomes ill, and military men in gas masks kill him. Three days later, Dr. Matthew Kane (Rick Haymes), the new project manager gives a presentation before Congressman Blankenship (James Murphy), the congressman's assistant, Sgt. Brisco (Mike Keller) and a man referred to only as The Colonel (Edward X. Young). Kane tells them of the new strain of mold that the government plans to use against drug-producing countries as part of their wonderful war on drugs. (By the way, he mispronounces the word "forte," saying it as if it had two syllables, a common mistake. "Forte" is actually pronounced the same as "fort." Just so everyone knows.)

The congressman's assistant is named Rhodes, and that is to allow for one joke. Kane leads the group to the lab for a demonstration of the mold, and someone asks, "What about Rhodes," leading to the line, "Rhodes? Where we're going, we don't need Rhodes." That is a line from the

end of *Back To The Future*. Of course that movie was released in 1985, a year after this film takes place, but no matter.

The group puts on special hazmat suits, and Kane explains, “*No moisture, no danger.*” The spores are microscopic, but if you turn on a certain light, you can see them. That doesn’t quite make sense to me, but that doesn’t really matter either. What matters is that the mold manages to get onto the congressman because his suit wasn’t secure. We learn this is in a deliciously over-the-top scene where he goes to the bathroom and does several lines of cocaine (subtly hinting at possible hypocrisy in the government’s war on drugs). As I can only assume is true of all diseases and infections, this one starts with a politician’s cock – yes, he’s got mold on his member.

A little later he has returned to the group, sees a bit of mold on his hand, and so – naturally – goes to the sink to wash it off. It is then that Kane, speaking to the others, decides to repeat what he’d said earlier, “*And when these spores land on a moist surface, they begin to grow. No moisture, no danger.*” It’s kind of obvious, but also kind of wonderful. The whole idea of this mold is that it would spread incredibly quickly, so it’s only moments before the congressman is covered and then dead.

And things get worse for our heroes from there, as they learn not everyone in the laboratory is to be trusted. Who will survive? How will they get out of the laboratory while still containing the mold? Will Roger and Julia rekindle their romance? When will the actors be allowed to shave those mustaches? By the way, at the end there is a green splotch on the bottom left corner of the green. It is there so briefly that it seems like a mistake or a glitch, but if you pause the DVD, you can see that it actually says, “*To be continued...*”

One other thing I have to mention. In the main body of the closing credits Sgt. Brisco is spelled out as “Sargent Brisco” (Whoops! For those who are curious, it should be spelled *Sergeant*).

Mold! was directed by Neil Meschino. This is his first feature-length film. It stars Lawrence

George, Ardis Campbell, Edward X. Young, Mike Keller, Rick Haymes, James Murphy, Chris Gentile and Nicholas Russo.

Special Features

The *Mold!* DVD has a few special features. The first is a commentary track by director Neil Meschino and director of photography Robert Fattorini. Neil says that a lot of the props and set dressing came from his grandmother's house. They talk about the difficulty in blocking, with so many characters in so tight a space, and the danger of crossing the line in one scene. They also point out another 1980s reference in the film that I did not catch the first time around: the code to get into the laboratory is 8-6-7-5-3-0-9. (The only female character in the film is named Julia, not Jenny, however.)

There is also a twenty-five-minute behind-the-scenes feature which includes interviews with the cast, and footage shot during production. Some of the behind-the-scenes footage near the beginning of this feature is presented as a montage with some annoying, repetitive music playing. But eventually it settles down. This feature includes a sequence showing extensive makeup being put on one of the actors.

The special features also include the film's trailer.

Mold! is scheduled to be released on May 21, 2013.

<http://www.thekansan.com/article/20130509/BLOGS/305099956/196/features>