

Indie Horror Films

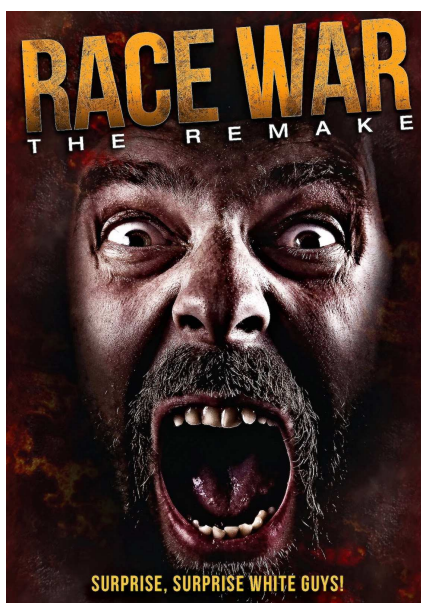
All genres of suspense, terror, and horror will be reviewed by Richard Gary. His address to send preview copies supplied upon request to rbf55@msn.com.

Wednesday, January 22, 2014

DVD Review: Race War: The Remake

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Race War: The Remake

Produced, written and directed by Tom Martino

DWN Productions

Wild Eye Releasing

95 minutes, 2013

WildEyeReleasing.com

MVDvisual.com

The only other film I can think of that had the added "The Remake" was Bill Zebub's *The Worst Horror Film Ever Made* (2008). Batting a thousand.

Okay, let me say right off that bat that I am not one to use the "N-word," even if it's with the rapper-used "a" at the end of the word, rather than the more well-known phrasing, so I'm using going to use the term "N" for this review; know that even then, I am not comfortable.

Much as *The Wolf of Wall Street* is now known as holding the record for the use of "fuck," this must hold a similar title for using N. Makes *Blazing Saddles* look like *Mary Poppins*. They throw it around like surfers use "dude." Seriously, most conversations by the three main characters (two African Americans and the Creature from the Black Lagoon – a tall guy in a rubber mask – known slangily as just "Kreech") use it as they talk to each other, such as "Hey, N, how you doin', N? Let go get the N, and show him what these N are talkin' about, N." Now, that isn't a quote, just an example of *how* the term is used. Bill Cosby would be turning in his grave. Still alive? This'd kill 'im.

So, two crack dealers, Baking Soda (Howard Calvert) and G.E.D. (Janelle Kent), who wear stereotypical black sleeveless tight tees, neck chain and do-rag, are upset because someone is cutting into their business. Interestingly, both Baking Soda and G.E.D. appear in another, unrelated upcoming film, *Lars the Emo Kid*. They get their friend Kreech (Danny McCarty), some high tech weapon from another pal, Mahoney (Kerryn Ledet) who begins each and every sentence with an exasperated, "Motherfucker!", and they go after the competition.

And what rivals: it seems a racist good old boy from another planet is selling red crack that turns its users into flesh eating zombies and/or slaves. Along the way, our "intrepid heroes" will meet up with incredibly drug dealer bigoted characterures such as a Chassidic Jew (named Jewboy) who has a southern accent (my guess is portrayer Coady Allen couldn't do a proper one), a Chinese guy who

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says things like "Ding dang wang pork fried rice dong ding dong lo mein," etc., and then there is an Arabic bar owner who is a Lambchop puppet with antlers and a cap, and is also a terrorist. If there is a way to be offensive, they're going to find and exploit it.

Oh, did a mention every time you see G.E.D. smiling and nodding his head, you hear the sound of a chimpanzee screeching? Wow.

This is definitely a film by pseudo-macho guys for pseudo-macho guys. There is a lot of anti-gay humor, though most of the characters are just that. In fact, you even get to see one of the main character's testacies after someone mentions that he can "see you're/your nuts" (didn't they use that same joke in *The Kentucky Fried Movie* ("Catholic High School Girls in Trouble" sequence) way back in 1977? At the end, you do get to see some female nudity, but only from the neck to the waist. The entire film is one big racist / genderist joke.

Part of what makes this funny, actually, is that as you can tell from the title, they are exploiting the racism and mocking it, as much as, yes, promoting it. They're calling it the new "Blaxploitation." I don't know if that is true, but in today's world of indie horror films, anything is game if you make it a comedy. And in many ways, surprisingly, this succeeds. They're not out to make a Great American Film. Heck, they're not even out to make a later Adam Sandler film. What they're going for with some success is to make you sit there with your mouth open, not knowing whether to be laughing your ass off or be shocked by the sheer audacity.

There are a lot of really good few-second jokes or bits that run through the film that make it for me. For example, when Kreech is on screen, there's a short musical sequence of a bar or two from the original *Black Lagoon* film that is played over and over, and when he speaks, you hear a tape of dolphins and there is a caption underneath that translates what he says. Then at some point there is suddenly a title card letting the reader know that it's time for the 3D glasses, and for a few seconds, the screen is tinted green and red (though I haven't tried glasses to see if it actually works). My favorite, though, is you hear barking as you see a finger shadow of a dog on the wall in the corner, again, just for one shot. There is nonsense like that through the whole thing.

Another is that one character (in blue and blackface; I think he's supposed to be Jamaican by the dreds) talks in music, through an autotune, with musical notes coming out of his mouth. More than once the film turns into a video game, including a first-person shooter that reminds me of *Wolfenstein*. The other is an old-fashioned martial arts fight-off.

Like most of the historical Blaxploitation films, this is directed by a white guy, which still bugs me (the only African-American Blaxploitation director I can think of is Sean Weathers, who also hosts a horror-related radio show, but I digress...).


The film takes place through guerilla shooting in and around Houston, Texas, with lots of interesting sites, including the inside of the Darke Institute's Phobia Haunted House. There is a lot of blood and gore, some of it looking really cool and sticky, and some of it looking, well, like sock puppets. There are appliances as well as digital, an example of the latter being someone's face blasted off. The ending of the film explains some of the weirdness and exploits quite well, in a "gotcha" kind of way.

As for extras, there are some Wild Eye trailers, a coming attraction for Martino's next film, *Cheeseballs* (which looks like it relies heavily on the Troma style, including an appearance by Lloyd Kaufman, who seems to be everywhere lately), a decent gag reel, and a mixed gore and "making of" mash-up.

Last there is a commentary track, which must be one of the worst I have ever heard. Some of the crew and most of the main cast (which overlaps) sit around the mic with beers and just diss each other and everybody else for the entire time. There is possibly 5 minutes of anything worth listening to on it. What I find bothersome is that while the film's racist language and crude bathroom humor is a directive, on the commentary it sounds like these people are as dumb as stumps, and are living everything they seem to mock in the feature's subtext. If I wanted to listen to a bunch of drunken boobs yacking about absolutely nothing, I'd watch a Kevin Smith commentary ("Hahaha, Jay fell over!").

You are certainly going to need a strong stomach and tolerance for racial slandering to watch this, that's for sure; but I will tell you that you will either have a hoot with it, or want to use the disc for skeet shooting practice, with little room in between. I leaned more towards the owl.

Posted by Robert Barry Francos at 12:01 AM

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