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DVD Review: 'Caesar and Otto's Deadly Xmas'

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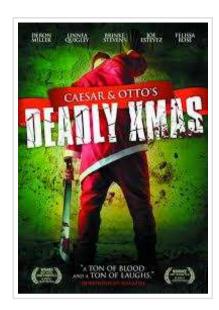
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This holiday season I've had the opportunity to review two horror-themed Christmas movies making their home video debut. One was the cult classic *Silent Night*, *Bloody Night*, which deserved remastering and an official DVD release after years in the public domain. The other, not so much. According to the trailers section of the menu, *Caesar & Otto's Deadly Xmas* is part of a trilogy (while the Wikipedia page claims there are five features) that no one has heard of. Featuring two of the most obnoxious protagonists I've seen in a while, I have no idea how these two characters have run amok in two previous installments. But if the quality inherent to *Deadly Xmas* is of any indication, I'll never bother with them again.

It's Christmas time for our moronic duo Caesar (Dave Campfield) and his half-brother Otto (Paul Chomicki). Desperate for money, the two wind up auditioning for Santa positions — even though Caesar is scared of Santa after his awful Grandpa (Lloyd Kaufman) tells him that Santa only wants to cut his penis off with a chainsaw — while another fellow Santa (Deron Miller) decides he has a vendetta against the two. Subplots involve Otto's pining for a long lost love Allison (Summer Ferguson) and Caesar taking on directorial duties of a Christmas horror movie. Meanwhile, the bodies of Caesar's Thanksgiving dinner guest list start dropping like flies including his agent Donna (Linnea Quigley) and Drew (Avi K. Garg) who's just lost both arms to the axewielding killer after he just had one replaced.

As far as special features go, this disc is packed! Not that the features are any more fun than the movie's crew think it is. A 6-minute "Behind the Scenes" shows the cast and crew having a jolly good time in front of and behind the camera. They talk about how much fun they're having making the movie while not having a budget. No budget filmmaking is something I'm very familiar with, but *Deadly Xmas* is never as much fun as they think it is. You could call this *Bob & Tom: The Movie* as they seem to think everything they do is the funniest thing ever and laugh hysterically at their own incompetence.

A 5-minute collection of "Alternate Scenes" is every bit as bad as the final product and *three*(!) audio commentaries are included: the first featuring director Campfield; the second consisting of Campfield, Chomicki, Miller, and more; while the third includes producers Joe Randazzo and some special guests. A couple of additional short films



are included: *Piggyzilla* runs just over one minute long and is about a guinea pig mutated with dinosaur DNA running the streets eating the cast. A 52-second "Makings Of" is included. *Otto's First Job* is about Otto falling asleep at a security gig and *The Perfect Candidate* is a surprisingly more entertaining 14-minute piece starring Joe Estevez (Martin Sheen's younger brother). Audio commentaries feature one from the director and one with the producer.

Featuring Lloyd Kaufman, creator of Troma Films, could give you an idea of what to expect, but even his own productions feature far more entertaining films that this. Being released on DVD from Wild Eye Releasing (who also released the far superior and genuinely funny *Mold!*), I expected some no/low budget absurdity, but *Caesar & Otto's Deadly Xmas* only amounts to a deadly amount of time wasted on a horridly unfunny Christmas horror film that I will probably wind up being one of few who will ever see it. While it has raised some small acclaim around the independent film festival circuit, apparently anyone who praised it has never seen a good no-budget film. *Deadly Xmas* isn't Sundance, or even Slamdance worthy. If there was a NoDance Film Festival, that's where it would play best.

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About Cinenerd

A Utah based writer, born and raised in Salt Lake City, UT for better and worse. Cinenerd has had an obsession with film his entire life, finally able to write about them since 2009, and the only thing he loves more are his wife and their two wiener dogs (Beatrix Kiddo and Pixar Animation). He is accredited with the Sundance Film Festival.

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