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Scales of Justice

Video:	95
Audio:	94
Extras:	88
Acting:	85
Story:	80
Judgment:	83

Perp Profile

Studio: [MVD Visual](#)
Video Formats:

- 1.78:1 Anamorphic

Audio Formats:

- Dolby Digital 2.0 Stereo (English)

Subtitles:

- None

Running Time: 83 Minutes
Release Year: 2012
MPAA Rating: Not Rated
Genres:

- [Christmas](#)
- [Comedy](#)
- [Horror](#)
- [Independent](#)

Distinguishing Marks

- Commentaries
- Alternate Scenes
- Featurette
- Short Film

Accomplices

- [IMDb](#)
- [Official Site](#)
- [Facebook Page](#)

Case Number 26632



Caesar & Otto's Deadly Xmas

MVD Visual // 2012 // 83 Minutes // Not Rated
Reviewed by Judge Gordon Sullivan // November 29th, 2013

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All Rise...

Judge Gordon Sullivan's Deadly Xmas involved sour eggnog, an ugly sweater, and a Chipmunks album.

The Charge

'Tis the season to be screaming.

Opening Statement

Navigating the stormy waters of parody is a difficult job. Cleave too closely to the source material, and you risk a simple rip-off. Stray too far, and you risk inventing something entirely new and untested. It gets even more complicated when filmmakers start messing with cross-genre parodies, and the diminishing returns of the [Scary Movie](#) franchise say more than I ever could about the dangers of pop culture parody. However, writer/director Dave Campfield is unafraid. He took his low-budget smarts and created [Caesar and Otto's Summer Camp Massacre](#), a gentle parody of the camp-slasher tradition that won points for its great one-liners, clever in-jokes, and use of famous faces. It demanded a sequel, and **Caesar and Otto's Deadly Xmas** makes its way to home video. It's not as amazing as the first time out, but fans of Campfield's off-kilter sense of humor won't be disappointed.

Facts of the Case

Caesar (writer/director Dave Campfield) and his half-brother Otto (Paul Chomicki) need some quick cash. Since Caesar is a struggling actor they decide to play Santa and his elf. However, this reveals that Caesar has some lingering issues surrounding Jolly Saint Nick, and they don't get any better when a crazy man starts killing people while dressed as Santa.

The Evidence

It's hard for me to talk about **Caesar and Otto's Deadly Xmas** without making it look bad in comparison to **Summer Camp Massacre**. The earlier film was well-nigh perfect, with great lines, a lean plot, and plenty of gags for those familiar with camp slashers. **Deadly Xmas** has a bit of a tougher hill to climb. The problem starts with the fact that Christmas-themed horror films aren't as uniform as camp slashers. It's easy to parody a camp slasher with a simple plot about killing in the woods. **Deadly Xmas**, instead, has no model, so the plot is built almost from scratch. That means we get a lot of fluff about Caesar and Otto, and their past, and the crazy company they end up working for. This lack of consistent through-line gives the film a bit of a schizophrenic feel, like scenes are just piling up rather than following a consistent plot.

Campfield and company struggle mightily against this difficulty, and largely succeed in offering another homage/parody film that keeps the laughs and surprises coming. Those who saw the first **Caesar and Otto** horror film will be pleased to see that almost the entire cast returns for this outing as well. It's fun to watch as some actors change sides—from villains in the first film to heroes here, or vice versa. The returns include all of the B-movie actors and actresses that made the first film so much fun. So expect appearances from Joe Estevez, Brinke Stevens, and Felissa Rose. Add to the list Linnea Quigley, who plays a version of herself here.

The nods to previous horror films are also here, both in terms of plot/characters, and those moments when characters will call out a particular film. Campfield's **Caesar** is especially good at making fun of the conventions of indie films, especially indie horror. Campfield isn't above skewering himself and his films to get a laugh or two. It's especially fun to see Linnea Quigley playing an agent, since she's over forty and can't be expected to act anymore (which is only one of many jabs at Hollywood littered throughout the film). Also expect callouts to fan favorites like [Silent Night, Deadly Night](#) as well as parodies of people in the media like Dr. Phil—here rendered as Dr. Feel. Certainly if you don't like (or don't recognize) one reference or parody, you just have to wait a few seconds until another one comes by; eventually you'll find a few you like.

Dave Campfield knows how to keep his audience happy, so he's released an excellent DVD edition of **Deadly Xmas**. The 1.78:1 anamorphic transfer does a fine job giving the film a bright, clean appearance. The film has a shot-on-digital sheen to it, and there are no serious artefacts marring the image. Black levels stay consistent and deep. There's really nothing to complain about with the image. The stereo audio keeps dialogue clean and clear, well-balanced with the film's score.

Extras start with three commentary tracks. Campfield goes solo for the first track, dishing a lot of info about the film's history and how it came to be in its present form. The second track is a collection of pieces from the cast and crew cut to the film, mostly focusing on the difficulties of indie filmmaking. The third is a moderated discussion mainly between blogger Adolph Acosta and producers Joe Randazzo and Sean Steffen. We also get a short behind-the-scenes featurette, along with a pair of alternate scenes. This production is the kind that keeps things lean, so there's not a lot of extra stuff hanging around. However, fans of Campfield will be happy to note that an additional short has been provided, "The Perfect Candidate." It's a spoof of Joe Estevez's non-notoriety, playing like a twenty-first century [Network](#) spoof.

The Rebuttal Witnesses

Caesar and Otto's Deadly Xmas is a very particular kind of film; it feels very much like a love letter to fans of the first **Caesar and Otto** horror film. The basic structure between the two films is the same—a killer unmasked eventually through a kind of dumb luck—and the recurring characters/actors make this film feel almost like a retread. That's not a bad thing for fans, but those new to the franchise or expecting something radically different will be disappointed.

Closing Statement

Caesar and Otto's Deadly Xmas is a fine little love letter to fans of Dave Campfield's demented creations. It doesn't quite have the broad appeal of [Caesar and Otto's Summer Camp Massacre](#), but the consistent zaniness and random cameos keep it from ever being dull. Certainly worth a rental to anyone who's enjoyed the pair's previous exploits, and curious viewers should seek out **Summer Camp Massacre** before diving into this one.

The Verdict

Not guilty.

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Did we give **Caesar & Otto's Deadly Xmas** a fair trial? [yes](#) / [no](#)



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