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CAMP BLOOD FIRST SLAUGHTER (2014)

Published by [David Carter](#) on 2014/9/14 (56 reads)

Directed by Mark Polonia
Review by David Carter

BUY IT

Released by MVD Visual
Running Time: 85 minutes
Rating: Not Rated
Color format: Color
Audio/Subtitles: 2.0 Stereo English
Region Code: 1, NTSC
Aspect Ratio: Widescreen
16:9 Enhanced: Yes
Special Features: None
Trailer Online: [Yes](#)



Short Version: Shot-on-video slasher

When the first installment of Brad Sykes' direct-to-DVD CAMP BLOOD appeared on video store shelves in 1999, it was part of a new wave of ultra low budget horror films from amateur directors. Consciously or not, Sykes was following in the footsteps of a number of filmmakers who had made their first forays into the movie business in the early eighties with the first wave of shot-on-video horror films. The technology had changed significantly by 1999, but the overall aesthetic had not, so Sykes' CAMP BLOOD bore a striking resemblance to many of the early SOV horror films.

Things have a funny way of coming back around to the start sometimes. It's now 2014, and the latest installment of the CAMP BLOOD series has been directed by Mark Polonia, one half of the Polonia Brothers, pioneers of the SOV horror movement. CAMP BLOOD FIRST SLAUGHTER aka CAMP BLOOD 3 is the first in the series to be made without Brad Sykes but fans will have trouble telling the two men's work apart, since the earlier entries of the series closely resembled Polonia's work.



CAMP BLOOD FIRST SLAUGHTER begins with a pair of teens who ignore the warnings about Camp Blood and find themselves victims of the notorious clown-masked killer. The film then makes the first of many direction changes as the homicidal clown is himself murdered by another machete-wielding masked killer. This new development is unknown to Professor Mallory's urban legends class, who are at the moment discussing the existence of the fabled Camp Blood killer. Their debate intensifies after watching alleged footage of the killer, and Mallory tasks them with journeying to Camp Blood and returning with evidence for or against the legends.

Things get off to a bad start when car problems leave the group stranded as soon as they arrive. Investigations in the area turn up little useful information, so the kids decide they will be safe to make camp and pick up the hunt again in the morning. Unfortunately for them, Camp Blood's newest resident is there, machete in hand, to make sure they don't last through the night. When the killer is finished, there's nothing left of the college students except for their camcorder footage, which is shown in its gruesome entirety on the local news.



CAMP BLOOD FIRST SLAUGHTER steals a trick from CAMP BLOOD 2 by shifting

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into a "found footage" film during its second half. Though a familiar technique, it is used in an interesting manner here. Rather than presenting it as some type of mystery, *FIRST SLAUGHTER* announces that all the kids are dead before beginning the found footage, even going so far as to show "previews" of their deaths. This method separates the film from other found footage works, and distills the slasher genre to its essential elements. Polonia assumes the viewer is watching for the kill scenes only, so he lets you know in advance what you're getting. Narratively, the film doesn't have much going on except for the stalk-and-slash scenes until the very end when it attempts to contextualize the otherwise mindless slaughter. The final plot twist is well-thought out and not immediately obvious, but still falls short of redeeming much of the preceding film.

MVD Visual's disc of *CAMP BLOOD FIRST SLAUGHTER* is a barebones but watchable affair. Those of you familiar with Polonia's output will find that it compares favorably to his other works in terms of production quality. One note to clear up a confusing aspect of the film: There is actually another *CAMP BLOOD 3*. In 2005, Brad Sykes released *WITHIN THE WOODS*, which is the third part of his original series. *WITHIN THE WOODS* and *FIRST SLAUGHTER* share a producer (David S. Sterling), but the connections between the original films is in name – and clown – only.



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