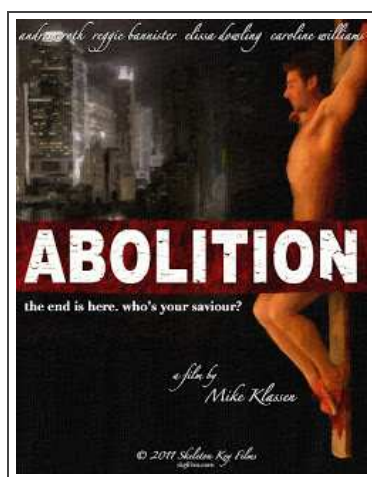


NOV 29, 2012

REVIEW: ABOLITION



The idea of the anti-Christ has been a huge part of the genre, at the very least, since the Christian timeline. Obviously I don't just mean mass media, but in culture itself. This idea that the son of the devil is out there, or will be out there, and will bring about the end of times, has always been a powerful presence in the Catholic faith. It has extended itself to classics like *Rosemary's Baby*, and more directly, *The Omen*. It would seem that *Abolition* is the next step.

Playing out more like a sequel to *The Omen*, *Abolition* (meaning "the end") is about a lowly anti-Christ named Joshua (Andrew Roth). He is not outwardly evil, nor is he purposely amassing followers to bring about the apocalypse. No, it turns out the anti-Christ is a lowly and dour maintenance man, born of what I suppose should be called demaculate conception. After the building in which he works and lives is condemned, he finds himself living on the street amongst those others who were displaced. He begins to amass followers without even trying, and flipside shades to biblical stories are presented; there isn't just the aforementioned scene of virgin conception, but the story of Jesus breaking five loaves of bread to feed thousands of people is also re-interpreted as Joshua begins to hand out sliced bread to the indigents surrounding him. There's nothing miraculous to be seen here—instead, the indigents begin to claw at each other like animals, desperate to satisfy the hunger in their stomachs. The scene soon grows so violent that Joshua ends up fleeing.

After a near-deadly altercation with a street hood, Joshua collapses on the steps of a church, where he is found and cared for by Matthew (Reggie Bannister, in an atypical role). As the two become more acquainted, Joshua explains that he used to be the maintenance man at another building, so Matthew invites him to oversee maintenance in the apartment building that he owns. One of this building's inhabitants, Mia (Elisa Dowling), is presented as a conflicted but potential love interest for Joshua after he saves her from a rape attempt. Filling out the cast is Caroline Williams as Joshua's mother, aka the woman in the opening of the film who goes to bed, has a bunch of nightmares, and wakes up preggers. Seeing as how she's



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the mother of the anti-Christ, she's got a few...problems.

Much like anything having to do with religion, shit eventually hits the fan.



There is a good idea somewhere in Abolition. I like the idea of the anti-Christ not really being that bad of a dude. I like that he's conflicted and depressed, not because he knows what he is, but because that's just his personality. I like that he's not painted to be a generic villain, but that instead great attempts were made to actually make viewers feel...sympathy for the devil? (So, so sorry.) The problem is the film just doesn't do enough with this concept, and so much of the running time is spent meandering along that when things start to get interesting, we're only ten minutes away from closing credits.

Andrew Roth as Joshua gives a performance that, after a while, becomes exhausting. Viewers can only spend so much time with a broken-down character before it starts to take its toll. At least that's the case for me. Roth is competent enough and carries all the scenes he's in, but after a while, it somehow manages to feel like way too much as well as not enough.

As previously mentioned, Reggie Bannister gives a good performance as Matthew, which is propelled by the decidedly more serious tone of the film. While Reggie will always be best known for the Phantasm series as the guitar-plucking, 4-barrel-shotgun-wielding, skirt-chasing ice-cream man, his career has mainly extended primarily to bit parts in direct-to-video garbage. While nice to see him in something more grounded, it's a shame the film itself wasn't better.

Abolition unfolds at a pace that will seem downright punishing to even the most patient of viewers. I can't say the film was ever boring, but you spend so much time waiting for the big pay off that when it comes, you're nearly furious that you're not given more to go with.



I will always give credit to filmmakers who wish to tell a story with less flash and gimmick. It's evident here that co-writer/director Mike Klassen believes in his story, enough that he's confident his particular pacing is worth the journey. I'm not sure I'd agree with the method.

Like that age-old belief, "How do you know that homeless man asking you for food isn't Christ himself?," Abolition asks, "How do you know that lowly maintenance man you disregard on a daily basis isn't going to bring about the end of everything?"

Unfortunately, in this case, you'll find it hard to care.

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 - CHOPPING MALL
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 - CRAZY FAT ETHEL 2
- DEATH BED: THE BED THAT EATS
 - FOR YOUR HEIGHT ONLY
 - HALLOWEEN: RESURRECTION
- INVASION OF THE BLOOD FARMERS
 - JACK-O
- JASON GOES TO HELL: THE FINAL FRIDAY
 - JAWS: THE REVENGE
 - JAWS 5: CRUEL JAWS
 - NAIL GUN MASSACRE
 - THE RAVEN
- SILENT NIGHT, DEADLY NIGHT: PART 2
- THE SLUMBER PARTY MASSACRE
- SORORITY HOUSE MASSACRE 2
 - UNDEFEATABLE
 - THE UNDYING
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 - LAKE MUNGO
- THE MOTHMAN PROPHECIES
 - THE NIGHT FLIER
 - RAVENOUS
 - STIR OF ECHOES



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