



fro makes for some of the film's strongest and scariest moments.

The Hole in the Ground offers more than a few moments of unsettling dread; with an atmosphere reminiscent of classic gothic horror. There may not be any ghosts here, but there is an eerie and otherworldly strand running through this story that will keep you on a knife edge, never truly certain of the truth, but knowing it deep in your heart. It's a gorgeous looking film, where moments of tension are played out unbearably intricately. It's a masterclass in suspense, where every scare is delivered in classy fashion, rather than solely relying on boos and jump scares. Although it's not going to keep you awake at night, shivering in terror, it'll certainly be appreciated by those that prefer psychological horror to grisly gore.

It manages to be equal parts scary and heart-rending, successfully bridging a gap between the horrors of reality and fantasy. Sarah's hidden internal anxieties around coping without Chris' father and being able to support her small family alone, are made physical in the horrifyingly magical realism of her son's sinister swap with... with what? Who knows their son better than a mother? But when he looks identical on the outside, how easy is it to prove he's not the boy she raised? This conundrum is at the heart of The Hole in the Ground – quite literally – and paves the way for scenes where Sarah's anxiety will be mirrored by the audience.

Prepare to meet a new nightmare child with The Hole in the Ground; an intense and unsettling examination of parenting, madness and paranoia. Lee Cronin's feature debut is a monstrous one; striking and sinister, if not truly as nightmarish as it could have been.

Rating: 🧟🧟🧟🧟

THE HOLE IN THE GROUND is out now on **UK DVD** courtesy of Universal Pictures.

REVIEWED BY JESSY WILLIAMS

A RECORD OF SWEET MURDER

THE FILM: Kôji Shiraishi's A Record of Sweet Murder is taught thriller that relies on solid performances and gut-wrenching horror to wrap audiences in a living nightmare of pure terror.

The plot of the film follows a journalist and her cameraman as they pay a visit to an abandoned apartment building with the purpose of interviewing an escaped murderer. On their arrival, the couple continues the interview only to discover the murderer is on a mission to kill 27 victims and he only needs two more to complete his task.

Although it is largely a single location-based thriller, Shiraishi presents A Record of Sweet Murder as a found footage film. However, where other found footage films are commonly let down by improvised storylines and over the top acting, Shiraishi's efforts here are anything but. Engaging but equally as harrowing, the storyline is well thought out and comes with many unexpected twists and turns along the way.

As a whole, I was impressed with A Record of Sweet Murder. Shiraishi makes the most of the single location and he inspires some fantastic performances from the cast. However, it's not all good news. I had a real problem with the level of violence portrayed in the film. In fact, Shiraishi goes a little too far for my taste. So, if like me, you can't stand to watch violence upon women, you might want to approach this one with caution. Otherwise, if you have a strong stomach

for violence or a penchant for character-led thrillers, you'll have a blast.

Rating: 🧟🧟🧟🧟

SPECIAL FEATURES: Disappointing. Aside from a still gallery capturing key moments from the film, there's nothing to enjoy here except for a collection of Trailers for other films released by MVD Visual.

Rating: 🧟🧟🧟🧟

A RECORD OF SWEET MURDER is out now on **US Blu-ray and DVD** courtesy of MVD.

REVIEWED BY JON DICKINSON

3 FROM HELL

THE FILM: It's been 14 years since Rob Zombie's The Devil's Rejects was unleashed on to our screens and, considering the events at the climax of that 2005 film, it was certainly a surprise to learn that the Firefly family would be returning for another murderous outing. The big questions on everyone's lips are: is 3 From Hell worth the wait? Does it justify its place in Zombie's filmography? I would argue "yes" to both.

In this anticipated follow-up to The Devil's Rejects, the infamous Firefly family escape from prison after spending 10 years incarcerated. Not unlike real-life serial killers Ted Bundy and Charles Manson, the clan have accumulated somewhat of a cult following with "fans" demanding the Firefly family's freedom and showing support for the killers who have murdered over 75 people. The mind boggles, but these kinds of people do exist. It would have been interesting to see the film explore this idea of serial killer fan culture further, but aside from a few moments in the beginning, there is little else.

In expected Rob Zombie fashion, 3 From Hell is grimy and dirty to look at, reflecting the grim story that is unfolding on screen. This is another raw and hellish rollercoaster that features a similar amount of violence, blood and mayhem that comes with any of Zombie's feature efforts. Where 31 failed to offer anything remotely gripping or gruesome and, instead, drowned in over-stylisation, 3 From Hell is a return to form for a director that is associated with bringing the dirty underbelly of society to the surface.

As with their portrayals in the previous Firefly features, Bill Moseley, Sheri Moon Zombie and Sid Haig are wickedly delightful as Otis, Baby and Captain Spaulding. Sadly, this is now Haig's last on-screen performance and it is safe

