

## Film Review: Exit 101 Halloween Party Massacre (2011)

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### SYNOPSIS:

*7 friends uncover a long forgotten deadly military experiment in the small rural town of Lakeshear.*

### REVIEW:

“Exit 101: Halloween Party Massacre” was such a frustrating experience. There was much to enjoy if you are a fan of retro cinema and mid-80’s output from Troma. At the same time, this was a movie that was far too fat and needs some serious trimming. If the film had been close to forty or so minutes, it would have made a huge difference. As the movie stands, if you think you can put up with long sections of nothing much happening to get to the goods, then “Exit 101” may be just what the doctor ordered for you. Still not sure if it was something meant for me.



When Caleb and his group of college friends are hanging out with nothing to do, they decide to mess around the

old missile that is left in town. One of them collects some sludge and dares Caleb to drink it. At first, it seems like he is fine. Then slowly over the course of the next day or so he begins to grow sick, spit blood, then eventually killing a pizza delivery guy. In doing so, he unknowingly spreads some sort of virus that begins turning the town folks into flesh munching zombies. He and his friends band together at the big Halloween party to fend them off and try to learn the secret behind it, while trying to find a cure to help save Caleb.

As much as I enjoyed portions of "Exit 101", it really just felt like it was a never ending experience. I have a personal belief that if you're working in the low budget horror arena, keeping things short and sweet makes for a much better film. It may not always be true, I'm sure there may end up being a rare exception somewhere, but overall I think this is a fair assessment. When there is not a single recognized face in the cast, amateurish acting, and a homemade look, it's best to strike fast then get out. There are long scenes that never really move the story forward. One example is an extended musical performance by some band. If they were performing while intercutting with some sort of action, then it would be fine. That wasn't what was going on. Trim the fat and moving at a break-neck pace. That would have saved the film.



On the other hand, the film never takes itself too seriously and has some fun with the situation. The gore is laughable, but it made me laugh and appreciate it. There are plenty of moments like this, they were just spread way too far apart. The cast (though inexperienced) is highly likable and those darn southern accents are just so charming. The sound design was killer, many of the sounds were cringe worthy. There is some effective use of music and it was shot really well.



So that leaves me stuck in the middle here. I really did enjoy much (if not most) of "**Exit 101: Halloween Party Massacre**" enough to give it a very moderate recommendation. There is enough entertainment value to do so, only if you're a fan of low budget horror comedy. If you have trouble being patient, then might I suggest skipping this one (or at least keep your finger on the fast forward button so you can skip the drawn out scenes which are plenty). The films' director Doug Cole (he also served as editor on the project) may be his own worst enemy if he can't make the tough editing decisions that are required to make a tighter film. If he can't edit himself, then maybe he should get a different perspective to help him make the cut. As a first feature, it isn't all bad, just really long winded. Approach this one with caution. "Exit 101" shows promise, it just needs an unbiased hand to tinker with the parts in order to make it a success. A noble effort \*\* (out of 5)

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