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Gunheavy

[MVD Entertainment Group](#) // Unrated // December 9, 2008

List Price: \$19.95 [Buy now and save at [Amazon](#)]

Review by [Kurt Dahlke](#) | posted April 1, 2009 | [E-mail the Author](#) | [Start a Discussion](#)

Gunheavy:

It certainly takes something heavy to claim your movie has 'more firepower than any other film in history' while naming it Gunheavy. When you're operating on a budget so micro your cast of extra enemy combatants numbers two, you need to pull out all the stops. With the aid of some nice locations, devilish trickery and a style-over-story aesthetic, Gunheavy comes out blazing. While it's no action-packed sci-war masterpiece, Gunheavy cranks up some serious post-apocalyptic atmosphere for truly enjoyable ride.

Plot is near boilerplate: civilization collapses, a machine-obsessed military junta manages to take over the world, while a small band of insurgents fight back. They've got a hugely uphill battle, and only 65 minutes of screen time to fight it.

Right off the bat, Gunheavy smoothly subverts expectations. Of course the problem in reviewing movies like Gunheavy is finding that balance in explaining quality without giving away the trick. Yes, Gunheavy subverts your expectations - expectations that are probably pretty easy to guess - but how does it do it? (Not going to tell you.) And why, and is it any good anyway?

In this case budget is a clear culprit. Studio BrinkDVD touts micro-budget movies; Gunheavy boasts post-apocalyptic war with



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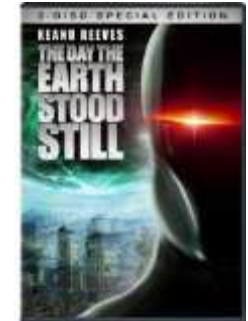
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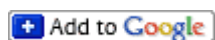


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robots. It's a tricky combination, finding director Angelo Lopes stretching his budget tighter than Joan Rivers' forehead, while calmly focusing only on the strengths of what he's got. Awesome locations are part of it; deserted aircraft carriers, metal fabricating warehouses and abandoned bunkers by the look of things. Simply and elegantly composited mattes make up the rest, and - bam! Instant dystopia, peopled by a few woozy but impassioned rogue grunts, creepy military bureaucrats and soldiers with green eyes.

Exposition and plot intricacies are more complicated than you'd expect for an hour-long shoot-em up, (and if you're not paying close attention) by the time guns start blazing you may have lost track of which camouflaged grunt is which, but you probably won't care. Plenty of jittery camera work and Saving Robot Ryan-style action ultimately satisfies those looking for an ordnance onslaught, but for those of us expecting a low-budget unintentional laugh-festival (hint, don't watch the extras first) the real pleasure comes from admiring just how stylish, moody and effectively crafted Gunheavy turns out to be. From the hypnotic synth-score to seat-of-the-pants special effects, Lopes and crew have crafted a sturdy sci-fi yarn that goes down easy while proving the cast and crew have real talent and persistence. After watching the extras and commentary, this movie looks to be about ten times better than it has any right to be, good show, Lopes!

The DVD

Video:

Our Gunheavy anamorphic widescreen image enhanced for 16 x 9 TVs is fairly decent. As mentioned many times, this is a very low budget release, but the image is very crisp, if not a little bit too 'digital' looking - some aliasing appears, and background details don't quite hold up. Employing a restrained, washed-out palette, Lopes goes heavy on the greens and grays, with just occasional splashes of blood on the camera to liven things up.

Sound:

Stereo Audio enhances the Gunheavy experience by placing the stylishly moody synth soundtrack upfront, while keeping it from overwhelming dialog and sound effects. Overall, a nicely balanced mix with a decent dynamic range is enough to ask for, and we get it.

Extras:

A **Director's Commentary Track** plays like a beer-infused gab session between Lopes and some of the crew. While dismissive of their work, in joking fashion, they underscore how good everything turned out in the end, while pointing out each and every mistake they can find. Budget filmmakers will love listening to these stories from the trenches, but any good movie fanatic will garner just as much enjoyment. **Behind The Gun** is a 13-minute string of behind-the-scenes clips sans narration (but with informative titles) that point up the wonkiness of pretty much every effects sequence - funny and informative in a low-key way. **Jack Of Bullets** is another 13-minute bonus, this time a short, similarly themed film.

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English and Danish Subtitles are also available.

Final Thoughts:

You'd never expect Gunheavy to be as good as it is knowing the myriad challenges director Angelo Lopes faced during filming - not the least of which was a tiny-ass budget. Ostensibly an assault rifle loaded sci-fi action picture, Lopes wisely holds back on the action at first, measuring out style through cool music and thick atmosphere. When guns start blazing you might have already forgotten who's shooting whom, but by that time you'll just be happy to be watching. From very humble origins Gunheavy emerges as a smart, exciting and hypnotically entertaining sci-fi programmer. **Recommended.**

"I would like to thank my mother, and Jim Davis."

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