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**'Alien 2 On Earth' - Blu-Ray Review**

The debut release from cult distributor Midnight Legacy has nothing to do with 'Alien,' on Earth or otherwise.

BY WILLIAM BIBBIANI
MAR 13, 2011

Ah, the European Knockoff! What a proud tradition it is. Take a popular American film, make something kinda similar, and release it with a similar name. Or better yet! Just release it with a '2' on the title, and make your countrymen believe that it's the official follow-up! It sounds disingenuous – because it is – but it doesn't have to be a bad thing: Lucio Fulci's **Zombi 2** is a classic, and only ostensibly a sequel to George Romero's **Dawn of the Dead** (which was released in Italy under the title **Zombi**). There's also **Troll 2**, one of the most watchably bad movies ever made, which was an Italian production shot in America. Next week **Alien 2 On Earth** makes its premiere on Blu-Ray from new distributor **Midnight Legacy**. The film was released only one year after Ridley Scott's **Alien**, and despite the title has nothing whatsoever to do with it. Is this one of the European Knockoff classics or just a schlocky gore-a-thon?

Eh... It's a schlocky gore-a-thon, but we should really put the word 'gore' in italics. Schlocky *gore-a-thon*. Yeah, that's the ticket... Hardcore horror geeks will find something to love here, or at least something to poke gentle fun at, but unless you own at least two books by Joe Bob Briggs you might want to look elsewhere for your entertainment. It's a slow film, and not a very good one, but it's just the kind of midnight madness some of us are looking for.

Belinda Mayne stars as Thelma, a geologist and – and psychic, for some reason – who goes on a spelunking mission just as a space shuttle returns to Earth. While driving to the cave Thelma and her crew pick up a strange rock and take it with them because... hey, that's a strange rock. They delve deeper and deeper into the cave before the rock breaks open and out spews one of the more disgusting aliens in the history of cinema. It looks like meat: raw, sinewy, bloody meat, like the filmmakers just stole the entrails from the dumpster behind a butcher shop. The meat pounces around the film onto the heroes' necks, decapitating them and burrowing inside them and occasionally even taking control of their bodies. It's up to Thelma, whose psychic abilities make her immune (or something) to try to save the day.

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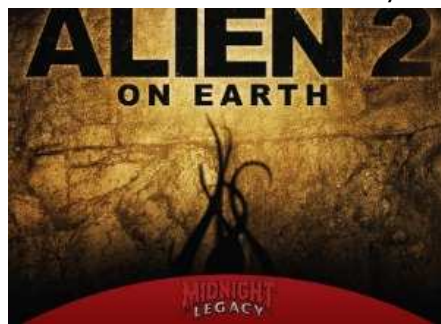
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Alien 2 On Earth is as poorly plotted as the cemetery from **Poltergeist**. The story doesn't make a lick of sense and it takes forever to get going, which is admittedly a lot like complaining about the small portions at a restaurant specializing in poo. The monster doesn't really attack until about 50 minutes into the film, and until then we're stuck with an extended prologue filled with stock footage (which the movie constantly calls attention to, almost like it's apologizing), bizarre setups like a guy who goes out of his way to buy Italian candles from a roller skate shop, and a psychiatrist who lives on a boat, rows out to our heroine on the beach, and assures her that she's crazy but also that the monsters she sees in her visions may be real for all he knows. (Thanks, Doc. You're a big help.) It's also extremely unclear how the monsters even get to Earth in the first place, or at the very least how they got to a truck stop in the middle of the desert. The film spends a lot of time telling us about that space shuttle landing but no direct association is actually made with the alien menace. It's weird.

But the gore effects are genuinely grotesque once they get going, and for hardcore horror aficionados – the obvious target audience of a releasing company called **'Midnight Legacy'** – that may be enough. It's a damned sight better than that *other* spelunking monster movie from 1980, **The Strangeness**, which is just as slow but never ever delivers the goods this spectacularly. **Alien 2 On Earth** has a fairly impressive transfer given its age in this Blu-Ray presentation: all the stock footage looks terrible but the actual movie itself is crisp and brightly colored. The fine detail won't make you put on your spectacles but it's hard to imagine a film this old and cheap and crass looking any better. The sound is lame but come on, it's a badly dubbed Italian horror movie from 1980, not **Speed Racer**. The special features are appreciated but not mindblowing, and include an outtake reel (neither funny nor illuminating, but in high-definition for any serious enthusiasts) and what is apparently the only remaining trailer from the film, culled from a Dutch VHS. It gives away just about every good part of the film but is entertaining in a very trashy way.

Alien 2 On Earth is a perplexing film. Even the title confuses me: since the alien attack takes place almost entirely in a cave, shouldn't it be called **Alien 2 In Earth**? But then I guess that's indicative of the amount of thought that went into this production. It's a gross film, a bad film, and it could be just what you're looking for if you're a cult movie geek who thinks they've seen everything. It's an impressive debut from **Midnight Legacy**, but it ain't no classic.

Crave Online Rating (for Horror Geeks): 6.5 out of 10

Crave Online Rating (for Everyone Else): 3 out of 10

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