

There's plenty to work with in the source material, but key to turning *Dark Days* into a feature is really developing Niles' characters further, which writer/director Ben Ketai fails to do. Outside of Stella, we could give a coffin-shaped shit about her love interest (Rhys Coiro), the other vampire hunters or the posturing, mugging vamps themselves. Without back stories or believable dramatic choices, the whole thing plays out like a video game, where stock characters go to different locations to complete missions. Quick! Use your new weapons to fight your way out of the abandoned factory so you can head to the wharf to face the Big Bad.

Aw crap! This is supposed to be a movie. Game over!

DAVE ALEXANDER

BETTER OFF DEAD

AFTER.LIFE

Starring Christina Ricci, Justin Long and Liam Neeson

Directed by Agnieszka Wojtowicz-Vosloo

Written by Agnieszka Wojtowicz-Vosloo, Paul Vosloo

and Jakub Korolczuk

Anchor Bay

One of the first lessons of Storytelling 101 should be Know the Tale You Want to Tell, but it seems the folks behind *After.Life* were sick that day or maybe playing hooky. The result of this unadvised truancy is a film that's either about a mortician who reluctantly guides the dead through the confusion brought about by their sudden loss of life, or about a mortician who can see "dead people walking" and must deliver them to the grave serial killer-style. Confused yet?



Here's what I can tell you... After much really frickin' obvious cinematic foreshadowing (i.e. blood red hair dye circling down a drain), Anna Taylor (Christina Ricci) allegedly dies in an automobile accident. This is all brought into question, however,

when she awakes on Eliot Deacon's mortuary slab. Eliot (played by Liam Neeson in truly unsettling fashion) explains to Anna that she's dead and has three days until her funeral to come to terms with her situation and do what she must. But is she really dead? Or is Deacon a psychopath bent on burying her alive? The rest of the story is thick with red herrings, but few – if any – truly definitive answers. There's another person who can see her, a young boy, which seems to add credence to the serial killer theory (as does the fact that Eliot drugs her before her funeral), but if that's the case, then why doesn't she have any physical needs (food, bathroom, etc.) during her three-day confinement? And what about that out-of-nowhere séance scene with the mouthful of maggots? Surely, that suggests otherwise.

This movie is a headfuck, and an annoying, poorly scripted one at that. Not even quality thespians such as Ricci (who spends the majority of the movie butt naked), and Neeson can make the unconvincing dialogue sound natural. *After.Life* could have benefitted from its ever-twisting premise, but the writers' inability to make solid narrative decisions or adequately plug any of the gaping plot holes results in a nonsensical, forgettable mess.

MONICA S. KUEBLER

OVERLOOKED, FORGOTTEN AND DISMISSED

THIS ISSUE: LANCE STARES AT SWIMWEAR

DEBBIE DOES BLOODBATH



BIKINI BLOODBATH CAR WASH

Brightly Entertainment

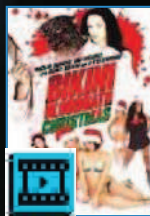
Back in *RM#78* I had the pleasure of reviewing a silly little slasher called *Bikini Bloodbath*, a film about a bunch of girls slaughtered by a chef with a penchant for slicing up sexy babes in hot tubs. It wasn't a great movie by any stretch, but it did star my favourite Canadian scream queen, Debbie Rochon. Thankfully, Debbie returns in this half-baked sequel to play a pervy lesbian car wash owner who is forced to battle the chef's reanimated corpse.

Yes, this is a campy splatterfest replete with fart jokes and lame-ass, frat-boy humour, but it still has some half-decent gore, *Playboy* model Rachael Robbins (*Terror Firmer*, *Vampire Lesbian Kickboxers*) and a scene inspired by Michael Jackson's "Beat It," which make it worth the purchase price alone!

BODY COUNT: 13

TIME 'TIL FIRST TOPLESS GIRL: 01:23

HO HO HO



BIKINI BLOODBATH CHRISTMAS

Brightly Entertainment

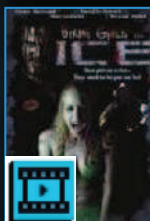
It's hard to believe that a movie that didn't even deserve a sequel would somehow get expanded into a trilogy, yet here we are with the third installment in the *Bikini Bloodbath* series. Picking up shortly after the events of the previous outing, Chef Death returns to stalk the bikini-clad employees of two retail stores that are battling each other for strip mall supremacy during the Christmas holidays. Both Debbie Rochon and Rachael Robbins return

to reprise their roles in this funny, clever movie that features a pair of wrestling Santa Clauses, flaming crossbows, eggnog foot soaks, a wacky cameo from Troma tyrant Lloyd Kaufman and more blood, boobs and bongs than the first two outings combined.

BODY COUNT: 14

TIME 'TIL FIRST TOPLESS GIRL: 02:41

KILLER UP!



BIKINI GIRLS ON ICE

BGOI Films

Though the title might conjure up images of bathing suit-clad babes poorly performing pirouettes, you'll definitely want to give this Canadian entry a chance, as it ratchets up the tension right from the start. After a young woman drives into an abandoned gas station and gets hacked up by a maniacal mechanic, the movie shifts gears to follow a gaggle of giggling girls who open a bikini car wash at the station. The killer then knocks 'em off one by one in some surprisingly ferocious killi scenes. Low on nudity but high on suspense, don't let the title fool you into thinking it's just T&A. *Bikini Girls on Ice* has a lot more production value than you'd expect from a direct-to-DVD release.

BODY COUNT: 11

TIME 'TIL FIRST TOPLESS GIRL: 29:19

LAST CHANCE LANCE