



# DVD REVIEW: THE PUPPET MONSTER MASSACRE

By [Eric Thomas](#) · 02.17.2012 · [Home Video](#)



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**STUDIO:** Music Video Distribution

**MSRP:** \$13.49

**RATED:** Unrated (puppet violence and nudity)

**RUNNING TIME:** 70 minutes

**SPECIAL FEATURES:**

- 2 different commentary tracks
- Deleted test footage

**The Pitch**

It's a horror movie pastiche with an all puppet cast.

### The Humans

Dustin Mills, Ethan Holey, Jessica Daniels, Steve Rimpic, Bart Flynn, Erica Kisseberth

### The Nutshell

Puppets

### The Lowdown

Remember *Team America: World Police*? Of course you do. Well that was a puppet action movie that cost 30 million dollars and had a hard R-rating all but guaranteeing that even if it made a profit it would be labeled a 'fascinating failure' or 'cult classic'. Well here is another R-rated puppet movie, but this time the genre is horror instead of action and the budget is about 31 million dollars less. The box touts the film as a "wild and raucous love letter to the monster films of the glorious 1980's" but I find that claim highly dubious.



Mind your fingers

It's easy to jump on the bandwagon of bashing big expensive movies. But the inner geek in all of us feels guilty for criticizing labors of love, shoestring budget features, up and coming talent making a name for themselves. So it is with the proper amount of regret that I tell you this movie is a piece of shit. It's boring and stupid. It's only 70 minutes long and it took me two weeks to watch it twice. In between those two viewings I had to

cleanse my palette by reviewing a celebrity reality genealogy show. Which was far better. After those two viewings? I discovered there were two different commentary tracks. So I watched this fucker two more times which took two more weeks. And it's boring and stupid.



Yeah this won't get old

The puppets on display here look crappier than just about any puppet I've seen on film. The craftsmanship is somewhere in between the Fandango paper bags and the Sifl & Ollie Show. But that's nothing; the voice acting is so terrible that it inspired me to write this groan-worthy quip: "the puppets might be felt but their voices are wooden." A movie should not make you think of something like that. Every single actor sounds like they are reading their lines for the first time, which puts the quality somewhere between Sega CD games and poorly dubbed anime.

Despite only being seventy minutes long, the tone manages to vary wildly, and not in the good way that a horror movie or psychological thriller might, but in the bad way that a poorly conceived boondoggle would. Some scenes are played straight, and the comedy comes from the fact that you're watching puppets instead of people, but other scenes would work the same either way, which is to say that they would not work. I'm a snob when it comes to pants-crapping jokes (only the very best will satisfy my sophisticated tastes) so when one of the characters experiences an unplanned bowel evacuation for 25 seconds all I could think about was that amount of time is like almost 1% of the movie.

This could not feel more like a short film concept that was unwisely expanded into a "full-length" feature. Then I listened to the director's commentary which confirms this.

Say something good about it? There's a shout-out to the underrated George C. Scott spookfest *The Changeling*. Anything else good about it? It's possible that you could watch it with lots of friends and lots of beer and have a good time riffing, but I fucking doubt it. It's not so bad it's good, it's so bad that it's boring.



Wet puppets must smell terrible

Dustin Mills says on one of the two commentary tracks that he conceived of this film as a 20 year old Ball State college student in 2005 so I guess my comparison to *Team America: World Police* was also pretty accurate. Some of us just enjoyed that particular film, but Mills was inspired to create his own puppet film. Kudos to him for that, but I hope his next project is considerably different. In the mean time, viewers in search of R-rated puppet hijinks should probably stick to the aforementioned *Team America: World Police* or move on to graduate level study with Peter Jackson's *Meet The Feebles*.

### The Package

You can watch two very short test footage clips of an unused monster puppet that looks better than anything else in the film.

There is a commentary track with director/writer/puppeteer/pretty-much-everything-else Dustin Mills which reveals my joke about the budget was actually completely accurate; Mills said he charged the film's \$3500 budget to his credit card and his mother built many of the simpler puppets. Most of the track is heart-breaking when you realize just how much love and thought went into this project, but much of it is hilariously ironic; you can listen to Mills describe no-budget features as "boring as hell... they go on

forever and ever and ever” and suggest that his film would be “good [to] waste some time.”



This would make a good album cover

**Rating:**



/Out of a Possible 5 Stars

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