

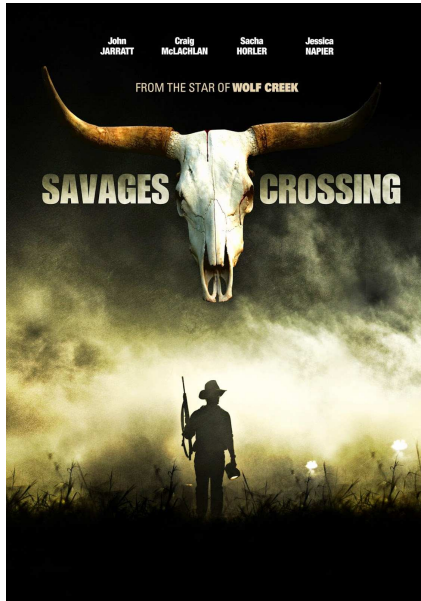
Indie Horror Films

All genres of suspense, terror, and horror will be reviewed by Richard Gary. His address to send preview copies supplied upon request to rbf55@msn.com.

Wednesday, September 10, 2014

DVD Review: Savages Crossing

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Images from the Internet



Savages Crossing
Directed by Kevin Dobson
Winnah Films
Jingai Films
84 minutes, 2011
www.winnahfilms.au
www.mvdvisual.com

I'm surprised they didn't use the Sly & the Family Stone song: "It's a fam'ly affair..."

The film is co-written by husband and wife team John Jarratt and Cody Jarratt. It stars John and his son (from a previous), Charlie. It's produced by Winnah Films, an Aussie production house owned by John. Oh, and did I mention that John is also known as the killer in the classic Outback thriller / slasher that quickly rose to fame called *Wolf Creek* (2005)? Supposedly he doesn't like horror films, but his association with them is definitely strong.

But as far as families go, let's not stop there. The central focus is on another father / mother / son combo. John Garratt plays a dad who is just out of a lock-down rehab after seven months where he was incarcerated against his will for his many vices (alcohol, prescription drugs, gambling, and anger management). His wife (Angela Punch-McGregor) is on the run for fear of her life, along with their university age son, Damien (Charlie Jarratt).

In the words of Noah, "It's gonna rain," and pour it does, leaving this trio stranded at an isolated gas station / restaurant at, yep, *Savages Crossing* [side note: I am not comfortable with this name, as I think it refers to the indigenous people of Queensland, Australia, where it is filmed; perhaps my sensitivities have been raised since the whole "Redskins," etc., names have been under scrutiny of late.] Add in a couple of young women on a road trip (Sacha Horler, Rebecca Smart), the cowboy owner of the station and farm around it (Craig McLachlan), and restaurant manager / cook / wait staff (the fetching Jessica Napier, who I doubt is any relation to Charles Napier of Russ Meyer fame), and obvious future love interest. Then there is the crooked cop with nefarious motives (Chris Haywood).

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The basic premise of a group of strangers trapped in an isolated location such as a restaurant, with a murder (or more) is hardly new. Who is on the side of “good” and who is on the side of “bad” is always in doubt, and that’s part of the paradigm as well. The question is, what do the Jarratts do with it that makes it *their own*?

I’ll be honest, I didn’t find many surprises in this as nearly everything is telegraphed. There is a mild twist at the end, of course, and it’s not the most brilliant, but I will say it is effective. That being said, I was pleasantly surprised at the level of suspense that is managed to be brought to the table of this oft told tale.

For me the biggest suspense, however, deals with a topic brought up by Carol J. Clover in her brilliant book, *Men, Women and Chainsaws: Gender in the Modern Horror Film* (1993). This film proves part of her theory, that in slasher movies, the men are, well, stupid, especially the “heroes.” You knock the bad guy out, you don’t just leave them you asshole, you tie them up, especially after they’ve proven they are not afraid to kill *anyone*. Especially when... well, I don’t want to give too much away. In another scenario, a couple being hunted hides in a place that not only has only one door (in the direction of the person hunting them), but it has a wall made of chicken wire (in the direction of the person hunting them). Damn. That’s just a couple of examples.

The acting ranges on a wide scale. Being his first role, Charlie has a bit of training to do. However, both Horler and Jarratt senior act the pants off the rest, especially in a key scene they have together in the third act.

The only extras at two trailers, including one for this film.

The monster(s) in this film is the human kind, but it wears many skins and styles. It’s a good film with some mild blood and no nudity, so while you may not want to choose to watch it with your elderly auntie, it’s pretty safe for most.

Trailer: [HERE](#)

Posted by Robert Barry Francos at 12:01 AM

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Labels: Australian cinema, Indie Horror Films, Jessica Napier, John Jarratt, Kevin Dobson, MVD Visual, outback, Richard Gary, Sacha Horler, Savages Crossing, slasher, Winnah, Wolf Creek

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