

being hunted by a regular bear, and when the animal strikes, there's no heroic struggle, just an indifferent predator feeding and the full horror of that realization – slammed home with some unflinchingly hideous gore effects.

The filmmaker also performs some clever misdirection with his characters and casting choices, as just the mere presence of the recognizable Balfour (*The Texas Chainsaw Massacre* remake, *Skyline*) encourages certain expectations. It's all in service of a climax steeped in white knuckle bear terror... or *bearror*.

Now, do you still feel like reading *The Teddy Bear's Picnic*?

DAVE ALEXANDER

## SPLASHER MOVIE

### THE DROWNSMAN

Starring Michelle Mylett, Caroline Korycki and Ry Barrett  
Directed by Chad Archibald  
Written by Chad Archibald and Cody Calahan  
Anchor Bay

It's not easy to make a horror icon. For every Pinhead, Michael Myers and Freddy Krueger, horror fans suffer through countless unmemorable villains from forgettable movies. After all, it is not the filmmaker but the audience that ultimately decides which movie monsters enter horror history and which wind up on the direct-to-video dung heap.

Give credit to *Drownsman* co-writers (and Black Fawn Film principals) Chad Archibald and Cody Calahan for trying to come up with a new horror antihero. Unfortunately, with Sebastian Donner – a.k.a. The Drownsman – they don't create much of a splash.

Michelle Mylett (*Antisocial*), plays Madison, a young woman who develops a phobia of water after a near-drowning leaves her with visions of a water-logged behemoth. One year later, her frustrated friends stage an intervention involving a medium. That turns out to not be such a good idea, as that hulking boogeyman, a supernatural serial killer named The Drownsman (Ry Barrett, also of *Antisocial*), starts stalking Madison and her friends.

The victims are thinly-written characters portrayed by young, inexperienced actors who die in inventive ways, thanks to Archibald (who also directs) and Calahan's idea that the Drownsman can use any form of water – even a small spill – as a conduit to grab his victims.

As to the Drownsman himself, Barrett's immense physicality is impressive; he has the heft of a monster, and comes across like a water-logged Swamp Thing with the silent menace of Michael Myers. The hint of a cool back story (Donner, we are told, was in the womb for eighteen months and drowns his victims to recreate the experience) makes for an intriguing sequel idea, if there's still, ahem, water in the well after this.

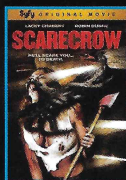
SEAN PLUMMER



## OVERLOOKED, FORGOTTEN AND DISMISSED

### THIS ISSUE: LANCE GOES FORWARDS AND BACKWOODS

#### I AM NOT GROOT



### SCARECROW

Cinedigm

Writer/director Sheldon Wilson has been on my radar since 2007 when I came across *Kaw*, his movie about a farming community attacked by ravens. This time, he takes us to a town where some kids on weekend detention are doing grunt work on a farm that's reportedly haunted. Before you can say "Molly Ringwald," the backwoods breakfast club is attacked by a CG-rendered creature that looks

like a cross between Groot and Ghostface but nothing like an actual scarecrow. Made for the SyFy channel, it has some decent gore sandwiched between scenes featuring the heaving breasts of Lacey Chabert (*Black Christmas* remake). Too bad *Scarecrow* is missing one key thing... an actual scarecrow!

BODY COUNT: 15

BEST OFF-SCREEN KILL: Cutie crunched by a combine

#### SQUATCHER IN THE WOODS



### EYES OF THE WOODS

Central Film Company

With all the hillbillies, cannibals, escaped prisoners and Sasquatches roaming the countryside, I'm surprised anyone goes in the woods at all, let alone stays overnight. But that's just what the five idiots in this film must do after their van breaks down. They decide to hump through the hills looking for help and find themselves the target of a creature that preys on backpackers, hunters and

B-movie actors. Though it boasts some solid creature FX, the plot, dialogue, camerawork and sound editing are horrible, probably because there were three different directors here, each with a different vision. The next time these guys go into the woods, they should hope Bigfoot shows up with a map!

BODY COUNT: 24

BEST OFF-SCREEN KILL: Topless blonde girl gored to death

#### HARM-PIT



### JUG FACE

Modern Distributors

Seldom do I get to gush about one of the movies in this column, I hardly know where to start. *Jug Face* follows a beautiful girl named Ada who's a member of a backwoods community that shuns modern society and willingly give their lives as sacrifices to a pit filled with murky liquid. Pregnant with her brother's baby and about to be married off to one of the local yokels, she discovers that she's the next sacrifice. Sexy, scary and intelligent, this film is a wholly original, beautifully shot masterpiece written and directed by Chad Crawford Kinkle, in his horror feature debut. Let's just hope he stays away from the SyFy channel!

BODY COUNT: 7

BEST OFF-SCREEN KILL: Pop pulled apart in the pit

LAST CHANCE LANCE