



Jug Face (2013)

MVD Visual

DVD Released: 10/15/2013

All Ratings out of 

Movie: 

Video: 

Audio: 

Extras: 

Review by Mike Long, Posted on 10/25/2013

If you've read only a few of my reviews, then you know that I'm always clamoring for originality in movies. If you look at other forms of media – books, comic books, etc. – there are so many fresh ideas out there, but Hollywood seems content to keep giving us the same movie over and over again. Any the once fiercely-independent independent cinema scene has been sorely lacking in truly new and raw movies as of late. **Jug Face** may not be completely original, but it does enough with its material to create a twisted story which I've never seen before and that's certainly a good place to start.

Jug Face focuses on a group of people who live in the backwoods. The unofficial leader of the group is Sustin (Larry Fessenden), who lives with his wife, Loriss (Sean Young) and their children, Jessaby (Daniel Manche) and Ada (Lauren Ashley Carter). The people live off of the land, but Sustin does go into town, where he trades moonshine for goods. They worship a pit which, they believe, controls their destinies and has healing properties. From time-to-time, the pit demands a sacrifice. The one chosen for the sacrifice is transmitted psychically to Dawai (Sean Bridgers), who, while in a trance-like state, will sculpt a jug with the doomed person's face on it. Ada is friends with Dawai and while visiting him one day, she notes that a jug with her face is in the makeshift kiln. She takes the jug and hides it in the woods. As Dawai has no memory of making the jug, he doesn't realize that it's gone. Soon, several of the group are found murdered and it's assume that the pit has unleashed a terrible wrath. Ada knows that her actions are at the root of this, but she doesn't want to die, and she's also guarding a terrible secret.

Again, when it comes to my reviews, movies gets points for originality and **Jug Face** wins big in that regard. At it's core, the story is reminiscent of Shirley Jackson's classic short story, "The Lottery". Also, we've seen plenty of movies in which people who live off of the beaten path have some weird religious ideas. But, beyond that, Writer/Director Chad Crawford Kinkle is throwing some wacky stuff at us.

Obviously, the most original aspect of the film are the face jugs, which, according to Kinkle, are based on real folk art. The jugs themselves are pretty creepy looking, especially the one of Ada, which reflects Carter's large eyes. The fact that these works of art are used to choose a victim for the pit is a unique concept, as is the notion that the shy and awkward Dawai is an unwilling puppet who plays a hand in condemning his neighbors to death. (Which is probably why they avoid him.) The story also contains some very human elements. Despite the fact that Ada has been raised in this culture and fully understands the rules, the notion that she doesn't want to die makes her very relatable, even when everything happening around her is so weird. In addition, Ada's father has made her part of an arranged marriage and we get why she balks at this. Being a supernatural horror movie, there are some

twists, but the biggest shock is related to something which Ada has been doing the secret she's hiding from her parents.

There are elements of **Jug Face** which illustrate the pros and cons of low-budget horror movies. Unlike many films of this ilk, the acting is particularly good. Carter gives a brave performance, and she easily communicates the emotional roller coaster she experiences in the story. Bridgers, who played sociopath in [The Woman](#), gives a very understated performance as Dawai. And Fessenden, perhaps the oddest multi-hyphenate working in horror films today, is very believable as Sustin. However, despite all of the positive elements of the film, it can't overcome its budgetary restraints. The pit is simply a hole in the ground – one in which we can easily see the bottom – and there's nothing scary about. This approach may work for some, but it made me question why anyone would worship a slightly deep mud puddle. The forest locations are put to good use, as there aren't many sets in the film.

While **Jug Face** isn't perfect, it must be applauded for trying something different. Kinkle does need to work on his pacing, as the film gets off to a good start, but the second half drags somewhat. And, being a nitpicker, I would have liked some backstory on the pit and how the group came to live there. Still, the movie offers a unique premise and enough DIY energy to make it a must-see for those who have been looking for something different from independent horror movies.

Jug Face made me wonder if Sean Young ever regrets having been Sean Young on DVD courtesy of MVD Visual. The film has been letterboxed at 2.35:1 and the transfer is enhanced for 16 x 9 TVs. The image is sharp and clear, showing no distracting grain and no defects from the source materials. Kinkle has chosen a decidedly Earth-tone pallet for the film, so we don't get many bold colors, but those which do appear look fine. The image is never overly dark or bright. The depth is adequate, but the image is somewhat soft at times. The DVD carries a Dolby Digital 5.1 audio track which provides clear dialogue and sound effects. The track makes good use of showing off the various sounds in the woods, and we get some detailed stereo and surround effects from this. The pit scenes deliver mild, but effective subwoofer action.

The **Jug Face** DVD contains a handful of extras. "The Story of **Jug Face**" (28 minutes) is a detailed documentary which examines the production of the film. We get a great deal of on-set footage (including time-lapse photography of the creation of the pit) and comments from the cast and the filmmakers. The piece looks at the production and the casting. The look of the film and the vibe on the set is also examined. The DVD also includes "Organ Grinder" (6 minutes), a short film from **Jug Face** Director Chad Crawford Kinkle. That is some wacky stuff. The final extra is the TRAILER for **Jug Face**.

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