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## Jug Face

2013

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The horror industry is one which went from having major studios produce memorable scares to finding that independent filmmakers were the ones who were best at conjuring new nightmares. I don't feel the need to once again rehash the list of greats who emerged during the 70's and 80's and made names for themselves. Many have stayed in the genre, or at least attempted to, but few have managed to retain the hold they once had whereas others have gone on to do other things. There will always be a new generation of independents attempting to do what others had although presently it's a rare thing to find a movie which actually seems to have some originality and inventiveness behind it.

*Jug Face* is a film which ironically I was putting into my Netflix queue one day, then looked at the stack of review DVD's sitting on my shelf and found that it was waiting right there for me. Ada (Lauren Ashley Carter) is a teenager who lives in a very isolated, rural community. She's recently been told by her father that's she's been promised to Bodey (Mathieu Whitman) so the two can be married, an event which is coming up very soon, but Ada has a very dark secret. While her parents are convinced that she's remained a virgin this isn't the case at all. She's been sleeping with someone and that happens to be Jessaby (Daniel Manche), her brother, and to complicate things she's also found that she's pregnant.

Those living in the community also have a strong religious faith but it isn't derived from anything most know of. Deep in the woods there is a pit which is the dwelling place of an unknown entity. Dawai (Sean Bridgers) is the potter who makes jug faces that tell who the next sacrifice is to keep the beast in the pit content and one of his most recent ones was that of a baby. Ada already knows that she's the one that is wanted in the pit and she's doing everything she can to keep this from happening including allowing others to die in her place. Dawai is discovered to have been making fake jug faces and is sentenced to be given to the pit but after Ada is punished when the truth about her pregnancy is revealed she runs away, taking Dawai with her. But the pit wants what the pit wants and Ada's freedom is short lived.

In most movies where there's any backwoods type of setting the general depiction is a group or family with strong ties but who also happen to be inbred or driven to such a state of insanity that they've become murderers and often cannibalistic. Somewhere deep in the South or the Appalachian Mountains tend to be the more common locales for such movies but I would actually argue that the setting could be virtually anywhere. Even here where I live in Portland, Oregon if I drive five or

ten miles outside of the city down the rural roads you hit farm country and the further you get, things tend to look a little less like home and in some cases there are definitely spots that look right at home as part of a horror movie.

*Jug Face* never pinpoints exactly where it is set but I do feel that it's safe to surmise that in fact there are very tight knit communities like this out there. The one seen here could almost be considered like a cult. They worship their own god, they marry within the community, they make their living selling goods to others who live nearby, and it seems that no one ever leaves. Their entire belief system is built around the pit. Sacrifices are to be made to keep the creature living there content and they have such a strong devotion that it's even used to heal the sick. *Jug Face* only gives very brief glimpses of what lurks within. Instead much of what occurs is seen through the eyes of Ada who shares a connection with the creature.

The horror however runs much deeper than just some unknown entity lurking in a pit. The backwoods mentality of Ada's family and the others really seems to be more of what people should be frightened of. It's not just the incestuous relationship between brother and sister but the actions taken by her family. She's burned with cigarettes, after being caught running away she's whipped until she bleeds, and overall we see that the community really has a tendency towards violence. It's another cult type approach although I feel in this case it's much more intense. *Jug Face* also throws in a supernatural element concerning a boy who was wrongfully sacrificed and this is one of the few points in the film where the effects aren't very good but other than that, there is a fair amount of gore.

The disc offers one extra which is related to the movie, *The Story of Jug Face*. This features an interview with Chad Crawford Kinkle as well as behind-the-scenes footage of the movie. It's about 30-minutes long and is put together decently; it doesn't feel like the EPK type of material you find on most Hollywood releases. There is also a short film, *Organ Grinder*, as well as the trailer for *Jug Face*.

As often as I've complained about the indie horror scene, *Jug Face* is actually the type of movie that I've been hoping to run across. It's a well thought out, small budget horror film that has enough of a mythology and back-story developed that while *Jug Face* stands well enough on its own, it does feel as though it could have a sequel, even a prequel, which goes even deeper into the story. With so many less than memorable horror movies coming from bigger studios, *Jug Face* is a rare indie that might have its flaws but still shows a great deal of talent from up and coming director Chad Crawford Kinkle.

-mike-

Directed by:  
Chad Crawford Kinkle

Written by:  
Chad Crawford Kinkle

Cast:  
Sean Bridgers  
Lauren Ashley Carter  
Kaitlin Cullum  
Larry Fessenden  
David Greathouse  
Katie Groshong  
Scott Hodges  
Daniel Manche  
Jennifer Spriggs

DVD Features:  
Widescreen: 1.85:1  
Audio: English 5.1 Dolby Surround English  
Subtitles  
The Story of Jug Face  
Organ Grinder (short)  
Theatrical Trailer

Marvin Starkman  
Mathieu Whitman  
Sean Young

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