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Scream Park (2014) Review

March 28, 2014

By Matt Molgaard - Staff Writer

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Release Date: April 22, 2014 (DVD)

Directed By: Cary Hill

Written By: Cary Hill

Starring:

Nicole Beattie as Missi

Doug Bradley as Mr. Hyde

Kailey Marie Harris as Carlee

Dean Jacobs as Tony

My father once told me a story about his military days. I'll now relay that for you, truncated. He told me that the men were allotted a very short number of minutes (this could have been six, could have been eight; I can't quite recall that detail) to eat their lunch during boot camp. Their lunch, to the surprise of no one, was a heaping portion of disgusting mush (at least back in the late 60s, when troops were being prepped for an often one-way trip to Vietnam) that was either eaten, or not. It was the same shit, every day. My father (he's always been a ballsy one) one day got

smart with a superior in regards to the quality of the food. "I told him I didn't want to eat that mush," he told me. And his superior offered a sound piece of advice that still sticks with me today, despite not filling out my father's shoes in regards to military service, I can completely relate: "Don't matter where you go, or what you do boy, it's mush everywhere. You're gonna eat it, and if you think you're not, well you ain't gonna eat again."

I shit you not, I'll never forget it. That's the quote my father delivered, verbatim.

I kind of liken this movie to that statement in general.

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Scream Park is mush, and mush is never going anywhere. Being a diehard genre junkie, I'm also resigning myself to the fact that no matter what, with the immense amount of hours I invest in horror, I'll never escape those appearances from the dreaded... mush. *It's not going anywhere, dammit!* Whoever that man was who likely gave my old man a proper ass rippin', he was 110-percent correct.

That's what I call wisdom.

See, *Scream Park* is supposed to be another carny slasher. And you know what, as unoriginal and uninspired as these kinds of flicks can be, they typically touch a tender part of my soul. I love those absurd amusement park shocks, and that love has stretched all the way back to 1985 when *The Goonies* was released. *The Goonies* was neither a carny film, nor a horror film, but it reminded me of carny film (probably thanks to Mouth), and it had a few moments that really sent chills down my young, still-growing spine. My love for these films hasn't vacillated since. From *Funhouse* to *Clownhouse*, *Something Wicked This Way Comes* to *Dark Ride*, these movies just work for me. To be blunt as all hell, *they're fuckin' creepy!*



Well, most are. *Scream Park* isn't. It isn't even close to a frightening piece of work, and it never for once even feels like a carny pic. Hell, *Big* feels more carny than this heap. *Scream Park* is just a bland flick with bland set pieces (what is that... a recreational area with a few outhouses?) and a story that promises to lead absolutely nowhere. As viewers we never give a damn about any of the characters. They're all cardboard cutouts, imitations of other characters from other films that were far more engaging. Even the conflict itself feels generic. The villains aren't frightening, the death sequences aren't particularly stimulating. Any thought of mystery can be dispelled instantly.

Scream Park is one of the roughest micro flicks I've seen in some time. But here comes the really, really twisted part about the whole thing. I think the crew put in a lot of effort. I believe they genuinely *tried*. I don't think they wanted to make a terrible movie. I think they wanted to make an independent treasure. The fact that they missed that goal by such a staggering margin is utterly unfathomable. How do you invest everything you've got and still fail on all levels? That's got to be some astoundingly discouraging business.



Before I cruise off into the sunset here, I do have to speak on one single quality of the film that left me quite pleased. It's also the reason this one isn't being branded a half skull rating. *Scream Park* totally and completely looks like a throwback 70s film. It looks like it was shot in 35mm with a little frantic editing worked into the equation. It's charming, and I love vintage aesthetics. *Scream Park* got that right. It has the look of a pic shot in 1975, and for that, I nod my head and bump the rating up just a tad.

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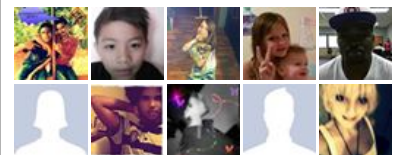
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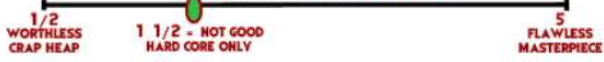


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