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SCREAM PARK (2012/2014)



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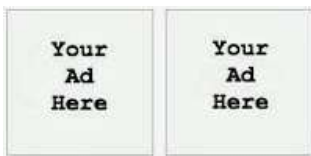
SCREAM PARK - Official trailer 2014 - Doug Bradley from Wild Eye Releasing on Vimeo.

Anyone who knows me knows that I love amusement parks. I have a particular affinity for Disney World down in Orlando, Florida. Mrs. Joshua and I make at least one trip there every year and if we are lucky, two or three trips. That being said and despite my enslavement to the Disney machine, I still hold a special place in my heart for those small independently owned places that dot the landscape of rural America. Here in the northeast, we had Rye Play Land, Lake Compounce in Bristol, Connecticut and countless others, I'm sure if you, the trusty reader, thought about it you could name any number of cool little amusement parks in your general vicinity.

The cool thing about these smaller parks was, unlike the pristine presentation say a Disney owned, or even Six Flags would give you, the smaller parks would look a bit rough. They had lived. Even if you were here on the first day of the season they looked a little worse for the wear sometimes. Fast forward to the end of the season and the bombed out streets of Baghdad often looked safer than some of the rides. Needless to say, these small independent parks have become the muse for many a horror film. The latest film to throw it's proverbial ball at the milk jugs is Cary Hill's Scream Park.

At Fright Park (yeah, it's annoying...just call the film Fright Park or the park, Scream Park), an entire amusement park dedicated to scaring the hell out of you, the only actual scary thing is the lack of customers coming through the turnstiles. In fact, we pick up with our group of nameless/faceless teens as they close up shop on the last day the park will ever be open. With Fright Park closing for good, the stick up his ass boss decides to take the stick out a bit and let the 6 or so folks that operate the entire park have a party. The booze arrives (fun drinking game. Drink every time the type of beer or alcohol changes...needless to say liquor continuity is not this film's strongpoint) it looks like we will be in for one of those stereotypical, only in movies, parties. But there's one small problem. as folks wander outside for all the reasons we've come to know and love, they start disappearing. With the cannon fodder stereotypes bumped off, it's down to girl next door Jennifer and her undocumented sex offender boss, Marty to figure out who is doing the killing and why.

I certainly can appreciate what writer/director Cary Hill is trying to do with Scream Park. There's been a bit of a trend the last few years or so of trying to make "old school" 80's style slasher pics. While some of them have worked to a certain extent (Hatchet, 1,000 Maniacs) most just seem to be falling into the same tropes that killed the slasher genre in the first place. Unfortunately, Scream Park is another one of those films. Which is a shame because the concept behind Scream Park is a really good one. It could have been a film steeped in social commentary and the profitability of notoriety. Instead Hill drives the film down the road we've all been down before.



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nature of my reviewing. I usually ...

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As with any low budget horror film (this one was made for 40,000 dollars, raised mostly through an indie go go campaign) there is a plethora of differing acting abilities. Doug Bradley shows up for a pivotal scene and really only serves to remind us that the rest of the film could have used Doug Bradley. There is a cool little Hellraiser nod though, so points for that. The park workers acting chops range from "dear god no" to "meh." The only exception being rock star turned actor Kevin Ogilvie (Repo! The Genetic Opera) as one of the killers in the park. He chews scenery like any good psychotic killer should. He could play the crazy in my film any day.

You've seen Scream Park before, probably at least a dozen times. You can figure out who's going to live and who is going to die withing the first 5 minutes of the film. And despite some well meaning intentions by writer/director Cary Hill, Scream Park feels like he just sat and copied script beats from several more successful slasher films. It's not bad, it's just familiar and not in that "I love the way my girlfriends hair smells familiar" either. It's more like the "if I nod off I'll still be able to figure it out" familiar.

Scream Park hits DVD and VOD on April 22nd. Check it out if you are looking for something that's not found footage and can't find any of the myriad of other films that feel like this one, or if you are a Doug Bradley completest (which you should have stopped being after Wrong Turn 5). While Scream Park certainly is not as bad as that film, it's certainly not everything it could have been.

** stars out of *****

As always thanks for reading, and "enjoy every sandwich."

POSTED BY MISTER JOSHUA

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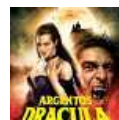
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