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Highway 61 (1991)



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Bruce McDonald's **Highway 61** (1991) is a road movie that is supposedly part of some road movie trilogy, but we can only go by this film and though it is not bad, one wonders if the other two could possibly offer more than he comes up with here. The film stars Don McKellar and Valerie Buhagiar as a young couple who take a crazy ride across The Bible Belt (a pre-Katrina New Orleans in a 1963 Ford Galaxy 500) and meet with a devilish idiot and other persons of interest.

There is nothing supernatural here, though this can be funny and has some sense of humor that works. The good news is that it is ambitious enough to be worth a look, but it still has too much we have seen before and better, plus does not know if it has a Rock attitude or not. The case even talks about burying the music genre, but if he though he was making the last road film, why a trilogy? That gives you an idea how confused and lopsided the film is, made in Canada it seems. That never stopped Michael Moore or David Cronenberg, so that is no excuse for the awkward results.

One should not have to see the other films for it to make more sense either.

The letterboxed 1.85 X 1 image is very soft, though it is apparent it is shot in film and the color range is not bad despite detail and depth limits. The Dolby Digital 5.1 mix is weak and is derived from older Dolby A-type analog surround which was more affordable at that point with digital on the way and Dolby SR its advanced analog successor. Yes, this is a little better than Ultra Stereo, but the weakness suggests this too might be second generation material. The combination is playable. Extras include two TV trailers, text cast/crew bios, shorts picked by McDonald and a commentary by McKellar and critic Geoff Pevere.

- Nicholas Sheffo

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