

AGENT 69 JENSEN - IN THE SIGN OF SAGITTARIUS

(A.k.a. AGENT 69; AGENT 69 JENSEN I SKYTTENS TEGN)

In this more ambitious sequel to AGENT 69 JENSEN - IN THE SIGN OF SCORPIO, spies from the world over are directed by their bosses to Tangiers. The reason being, some important blueprints have been stolen by Albanians. Secret agents from China and Russia seem desperate to be the first to lay their hands on them.

For his part, the Intelligence Agency's boss (Poul Bundgaard) calls his top man, bungling idiot Jensen (Ole Soltoft) - presently working undercover in a hot dog stall.

However, when the boss fails to get through to Jensen (on account of Jensen's secret transmitter accidentally ending up in a punter's bun), he sends agent Arnold (Soren Stromberg) out on the mission to Tangiers instead. Arnold, inept as he is, is further burdened by the task of taking along new recruit Knud (Andre Chazel) for the experience.

Arnold and the middle-aged stud Knud follow a lead to a bar where they are entertained by nude dancers until a fight breaks out when some double-crossing takes place backstage. It transpires the Chinese agent Madame KomPhur (Lee Fong Wong) and the Russians have also made their way to the bar, and are similarly aware that the blueprint is being held somewhere nearby.

Amid the confusion of the ruckus, the blueprints go missing once more. The next thing the spies know, the blueprints are said to be on their way to Copenhagen. Master criminal Hans Hivert (Karl Stegger) is enraged by this news and decides to make his own way there, along with a crate of his favourite spirits and his mob - including dastardly henchman Krassnikoff (Torben Bille).

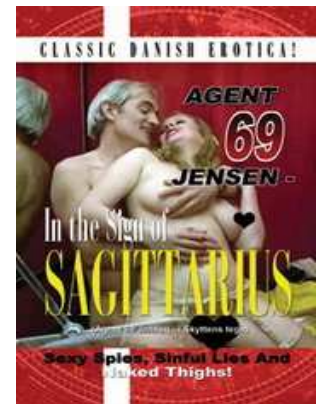
When Knud and Arnold finally arrive at Copenhagen, arriving on the same flight as the other spies, they meet up with Jensen - and events become increasingly sillier, as the plot becomes more convoluted.

SAGITTARIUS is again an odd mix of silly comedy, oompah music and softcore frolics. Once again, it's briskly paced and occasionally spiced with hardcore inserts.

While staying true to the pastiche of spy movie conventions that the previous film abided by, it's fair to say SAGITTARIUS overreaches itself. It tries to be too clever, and develops unwillingly into a muddled mess of half-successful ideas. The jokes are thinner on the ground this time around, further suggesting more was being attempted by director Werner Hedman and his screenwriting partner Edmond Jensen. But they're hardly competent when it comes to fashioning a convincing espionage plot, and as a result SAGITTARIUS very quickly falls apart.

But following the plot (or trying to) is not really what's called for. In fact, if you're to be in with a chance of enjoying this curiosity, it's best to disregard the storyline altogether. Focus instead on the affable, madly energetic male performances. Then savour the wildly attractive female cast.

From there on, there's loads of really bad humour to lap up - in the best possible way, of course. As I mentioned above, the film isn't as much fun as its predecessor - it tries too hard to outdo it, and falls as a consequence - but that's not to say it doesn't still proffer its own quota of fun.



And then there's the titillation. Warm, cute, sexy, tame - aside from those hardcore scenes. Again, these are quite limited in relation to the film's overall running time (88 minutes). As with SCORPIO, this is due to the hardcore footage being a mixture of scenes inserted for European audiences and the occasional porn footage shot by peripheral cast members (in particular, Chazel).

Elsewhere, we get the already familiar buffoonery of Jensen and Arnold (who gets to wear ridiculous disguises here), and those tried-and-tested Carry On-style nods on the soundtrack. Very "nudge and a wink", I must say.

SAGITTARIUS is another affable film, then. It's weak in relation to its predecessor and it's not hard to understand how, in 1978, this film effectively spelt the end of the Danish sex comedy genre as the country moved towards more blatant fuckfests to boost its celluloid economy. But having said that, there's still plenty to enjoy here - the hot women and a larger role for Bille, for a start.

At the end of the day, it's amazing to see SAGITTARIUS in an uncut, English-friendly DVD release. Especially one that looks so fine (see below). Distributors Smirk must be commended for both their sterling efforts and their conviction to releasing such relatively unknown stuff at a time when some are beginning to question the future of DVD as a whole.

The film is presented uncut in its original 1.78:1 aspect ratio. As with its predecessor, the enjoyably madcap AGENT 69 JENSEN - IN THE SIGN OF SCORPIO, the picture quality is great. Images are incredibly smooth and clean considering the film's age and obscurity, and are enhanced for 16x9 TV sets. Flesh tones are accurate, blacks are solid and detail is pleasing. Whenever images are soft, it appears an intention of the filmmakers (the lovemaking scenes, chiefly). As with Scorpio, the transfer is to be applauded.

Audio is provided in the original Danish mono track, which holds up very well indeed. There's no hiss or dropout to speak of, and the mix is a well-balanced, loud affair. Optional English subtitles are provided.

Smirk's disc offers an extremely arresting animated main menu page, allowing for a colourful montage of hardcore sex clips set to bopping spy music.

From there, an animated scene-selection menu is equally easy on the eye, and offers access to the main feature via 12 chapters.

The only extra on the disc is a well-edited gallery of stills that runs its natural course in two-and-a-half minutes. Again, the focus is largely on the hardcore sex footage. The gallery is set to more great music that wouldn't sound out of place in a lift.

Another sterling effort from newcomers Smirk who, on the strength of these early releases, are making a name for themselves as releasing fun obscure erotica in stunning presentations.

Review by Stu Willis

Released by Smirk

Region 1 - NTSC

Not Rated

Extras :

see main review

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