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ARTICLE

DVD Review: The Scarlet Worm

by [Chris Delloiacono](#)

Published: April 18, 2012

"The Wild Bunch" and "The Good, The Bad, and The Ugly" are among my favorite films. I'm not just in it for the iconic films either, as I consider myself a patron of the form. The Western genre goes back to the earliest days of Hollywood and is vastly underrepresented in today's cinema world. When I toured Scotland a few years back our bus driver and I had a wonderful conversation about the Western and how he viewed it as the one purely American form of film. He stumped me on that one, but I guess he's essentially correct.

The awesome thing about the genre is that it doesn't necessarily take piles of money to film a spectacular western. Give a look at a low budget Blaxploitation type western like "Take a Hard Ride." It featured Fred Williamson, Jim Brown, Jim Kelly, and Lee Van Cleef. Sure, the film's a bit over the top and the acting may not always be award-winning, but it's spurs to the rump fun and excitement all the way through. I enjoyed last year's mega budget "Cowboys and Aliens" and I'm looking forward to the new "Lone Ranger" film that's starring Johnny Depp as Tonto, but each is an example of Hollywood's ludicrous handling of what should be a popular sub-genre. Just make some quirky characters, fashion an interesting plot, and get on with some dirty action but make sure the film doesn't cost upwards of \$150 million. It's not necessary and it needs to stop.









Enter writer David Lambert and director Michael Fredianelli who've fashioned a wicked bloodbath with a message. From my understanding the film was created for about \$25,000. That kind of money probably won't pay for Johnny Depp's face paint or hair dressing as Tonto. Considering the financial constraints, the film looks much better than direct-to-video caliber and features superior acting than most films that don't receive a major theatrical release.

The cast features actors with a vast array of screen credits like Dan Van Husen, Brett Halsey, and Ted Rusoff. Maybe they're not household names, but you've seen them a number of times if you've watched some movies. The cast also includes people with much smaller film resumes like Aaron Stielstra, Derek Hertig, and Kevin Giffin. The lesser known cast members are never overshadowed by their more known mates. In fact, it's a well acted film with little to quibble about.

Stielstra as the hired killer Print is the heart of the film. His character isn't exactly likeable, but you are interested in following him on his journey. The crux of the film comes down to Print attempting to wipe out a prostitution ring with extreme prejudice. Print goes about "executing" his plan by first joining up with the enemy. The film twists towards material I've never seen in an American Western with the usage of abortion by the proprietor of the prostitution ring. It's hard to find a more debated topic in modern society than abortion. This is a divisive issue that still inspires people to violence. The Old West serves as a welcome setting to further explore this topic and the ramifications for those involved.

David Lambert's script should be lauded for dealing with such a bristly topic in an effective way. Fredianelli's direction brings out a film that looks far more expensive than its microscopic budget. The usage of flashbacks, flash forwards, and montages advances the characters and the story along in an effective fashion. This is also a brutal film with squibs galore, nudity, and the downright grit.

There are several extras found on the disc as well as the main feature. You get a few commentaries and a behind the scenes look at the film as well. Considering the budget for the film (and I assume the supplements as well) this DVD set puts many Hollywood big budget films home video releases to shame.

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Rating: **UNRATED**

Country: USA

Release Date: April 24, 2012

Distributor: Unearthed Films

Director:

• Michael Fredianelli

Cast:

• Aaron Stielstra

• Dan van Husen

• Brett Halsey

• Derek Hertig

• Kevin Giffin

Related Sites:

• [IMDb: The Scarlet Worm](#)

Grade: B-



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