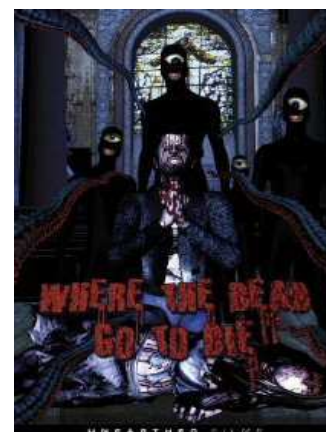


## WHERE THE DEAD GO TO DIE

Oddities are nice to come across now and then. Especially after what sometimes feels like a lifetime of watching nondescript slashers and poorly dubbed Euro pot-boilers. Jimmy ScreamerClauz's WHERE THE DEAD GO TO DIE is a genuine oddity. Even if he does have the worst genre alias since Creep Creepersin.

This animated feature film is graced with a cast of faces (well, voices) that will be familiar to those who are au fait with contemporary no-budget genre fare: Ruby LaRocca, Linnea Quigley, Trent Haaga, Joey Smack – if you know the names and have seen any of their individual output in the last half-decade, you'll have a fair idea of the audience this one aims itself at.



It all begins with greasy youngster Tommy fleeing his wasted parents as they argue – again – over who's responsible for their unwanted child. In the street, Tommy runs into the talking dog Labby. From their conversation, it becomes clear they've met before ... and that Tommy has killed for Labby in the past.

Here, Labby (who sounds like a stammering version of the whispering male voice in the intro to At The Drive-In's 'Enfilade') claims to have been sent by God to rid the world of Tommy's soon-to-be-born baby brother, on account of the child being evil. All Labby needs is Tommy's assistance ...

Cue extreme bloodshed and sexual violence. And that's all within the opening ten minutes.

This first segment of WHERE THE DEAD GO TO DIE is entitled "Tainted Milk", and is perfectly indicative of the film as a whole: gleefully explicit, wholly nightmarish and soaked in the kind of twisted surrealism made famous by Dali. Coupled with an evocative, churning soundtrack and some frankly bizarre vocal work from the aforementioned cast, it all makes for quite a jarring experience. So much so that it's almost not surprising when this segment ends with a child butt-fucking a dog over the fresh corpse of his mother. Almost.

Next up is "Liquid Memories", in which Tommy stumbles upon the grounds of a foreboding church and is confronted by a junkie who claims "I killed myself the other day". When the druggie expands upon this statement, we're taken on a mind-melting sci-fi trip that falls somewhere between the tentacled weirdness of Manga and the memory theft paranoia of STRANGE DAYS. With added gore, profanities and perversions, naturally.

"The Masks That The Monsters Wear" is an altogether more troubling beast. It starts off looking like a darker but no more threatening variation of CORALINE ... but then descends, as does much of this film, into purest Hell.

By the time we're introduced to the plight of masked young Ralph, whose object of affection is the girl across the street who has been caught up in her father's child porn ring, we know the remainder of this film is not going to be an easy watch...

I have to hand it to ScreamerClauz: this is some achievement. His film is meticulously crafted, taking its deliberately primitive brand of computer animation and mixing it with psychedelic collages throughout to create a surprisingly consistent nightmare world. It never falters in tone:

it's all grim. Whatever humour there is, is cruel and twisted (usually from adults and directed towards children). It's a Hell on Earth, and it's all rather convincing for the most part.

If you're looking to expand your library of extreme cinema, the film certainly delivers on a visceral level too. In fact, it's fair to say that this film would not be viewable, had it been a live action affair. Even as an animated effort, it tries its best to shock ... and manages on occasion. There are, however, OTT aspects to the sex and violence that distance both from reality. I imagine this is intentional, given the exaggerated world these characters populate. Perhaps it's a blessing, taking into account the contentious subject matter of the final segment...

The film's style is undeniable. Its impact is admirable. But I'm not sure it stands up as great entertainment, as it outstays its welcome at 95 minutes in length. Also, there is very little emotional connection between the audience and the onscreen characters. It's all a bit too showy and self-consciously weird to be properly engaging.

WHERE THE DEAD GO TO DIE is presented uncut, unrated, in its original 1.85:1 aspect ratio and has been enhanced for 16x9 TV sets. A HD release is an option, but I viewed the film on DVD. It looked very good, I must say.

Despite some deliberately crude CG work, the graphics and their visual representation on this disc are hard to fault: sharp, focused, natural – it's a supremely good presentation.

English audio comes in 2.0 and 5.1 options, both of which are class acts.

Unearthed's DVD is playable worldwide and opens with a static main menu page. From there, a static scene-selection menu allows access to the film via 18 chapters.

Extras begin with an audio commentary track from ScreamerClauz. He begins with a certain persona but soon forgets himself and drops that character, favouring an agreeably honest and informative approach. It actually winds up being a good track.

I found the 18 minutes of video footage detailing the recording of some actors' voices a tad self-congratulatory and embarrassing.

3 minutes of deleted footage is interesting but only the first time you view it. It comes with non-optional director's commentary.

A subsequent 4-minute featurette must surely provide hope to aspiring filmmakers everywhere, with director ScreamerClauz admitting he has no idea what he's doing while attempting to get his mates' motions converted to movie animation gold via an X-Box Kinect.

ICE CREAM SUNDAY turns out to be an early, shot-on-video 18-minute film of some promise on a superficial level. Read: it's better than what I can do, but it's still boring. It's window-boxed, if that matters. It also comes with an optional commentary track from ScreamerClauz.

WHERE THE DEAD GO TO DIE is an interesting concept. It's pretentious, it wants to offend you (even if it doesn't quite manage it) and there aren't many films out there that it can be accurately compared to.

In many ways, it's worthy of admiration. As is the DVD that Unearthed have graced it with. But, for me, the film falls short of being essential, due to an overly self-conscious nature and a shortfall in the audience involvement department. I would, however, encourage people to give it the once over and decide for themselves...

Also available on blu-ray.

Review by Stuart Willis

Released by UNEARTHED FILMS

Region 1 - NTSC

Not Rated

Extras :

see main review

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