

Steven's Sick Picks: Goth Kill (J.J. Connelly, 2009) DVD Review

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GothKill

(GothKill: The Soul Collector)

DVD Release Company: Music Video Distribution (<http://mvdb2b.com>) & Wild Eye

(<http://www.wildeyereleasing.com/>)

Language: English

Length: 75 Minutes

Image: Color

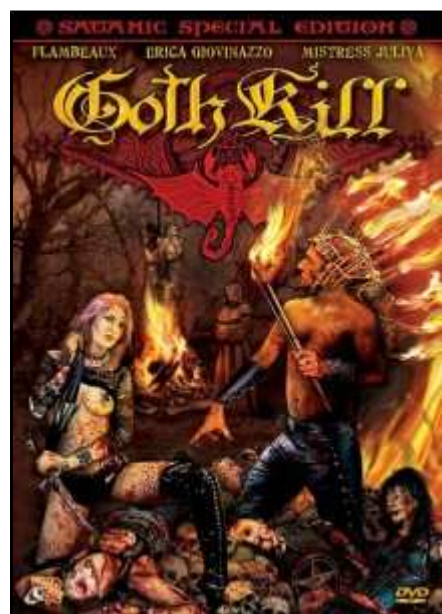
Year: 2009

Rated: Unrated (Contains Nudity, Language, Violence, and Torture)

Release Date: May 12, 2009

"Who do you think I am? Some kind of spiritual Robin Hood?" — Nick Dread (Flambeaux)

MOVIE REVIEW



Meshed with witty, blunt dialogue, a thirst for unconditional violence and a stellar performance by the flame breather Flambeaux, **Gothkill** is everything that micro-budget film making should be all about. Instead of a driven focus on the effects, this satanic underground cult hit relies on the influences of Roger Corman - violence, non-sense out of commonsense and naked women.

During the time of Inquisition, Catholic Priest Nicholas Dread forced two innocent women to confess themselves as being witches against God and his disciples. Learning of the town's envious truth to conspire against the women for their wealth and the Catholic church's greed of their land, Nicholas upholds his part as a good man of the cloth. The church turns on Nicholas, burning him at the stake to shut him up but before he burns, he makes a pact with the Lord of Darkness himself. Nicholas wants his

own kingdom in Hell but his agreement with Satan costs him to return to mortality and claim 100,000 souls to fill his crown. Wrapping up murderous rampage in 21st century New York City, Nick must die and return to Hell but what awaits for him isn't his Kingdom - its nothing. Through the body of an innocent college girl named Annie, Nicholas, set on revenge, finds himself among a group of goth vampire ritualists, about to reap the innocence of Annie and her friend Kate.

At first glance and for the good first half, there is an overwhelming sense of Hot Topic fashion and a bleak stereotypical feel of goth people. If you are able to raise the depth blinds to those two cringe factors, you can see that **Gothkill** director J.J. Connelly is being more sinister than trying to fill his movie with the Marilyn Manson mainstream fad, in fact; it is quite the opposite. His mockery of the goth individual and their party/movement scene is satanically satirical. I believe in his mind, he gives them what they devilishly deserve. Okay, I'll stop with the very bad alliteration adjectives. Crap! This movie asks the questions of what will really happen if a group of goths came face-to face-with a supernatural? A real vampire? A real satanic devotee? Comically, Connelly doesn't stray from the usual course as he invokes what any normal person would do - run like a sissy girl and scream for their life (Let me apologize to all the sissy girls out there. I didn't mean to compare and offend).



Nicholas Dread and two beautiful disciples.

There is always at least one portion I like to take away from the film as being the best part. Flambeaux, hands down, takes that spot and runs with it. This Scottish born entertainer has an ability to direct dialogue quickly and to deliver a keen sense of evil in his mannerisms. It also helps that you can breathe fire as well - that's pretty intimidating. He is Nicholas Dread. His character, sporting a thick mohawk and tattoos, dominates every single scene, which really isn't difficult because the rest of the cast lacked. This could be due to Flambeaux being an actual entertainer in real life because, as we all know, a performer's show sells with an act. But with a yang in performance there also has to be a yin. That bad performance, or yin performance, belongs to the female lead who just happens to be the hottest woman in the entire movie. Annie, played by amateur actress Erica Giovinazzo, is the college girl next door. She moves in with friend goth friend Kate (Eve Blackwater) and they become entangled in this mess because of the Scorpio Club, aka the fake-vamps. Unfortunately, Giovinazzo doesn't have 1/100th of the believability that Flambeaux possesses as a psychopathic Luci-worshiper. I can believe her as an innocent and confused bystander, but pretending to be confused and innocent isn't difficult. Pretending to be bad, however, takes a bit of work to make your audience believe that you're willing to torture and kill anyone or anything to get what you want, or Nicholas's case - deserves.



Annie getting her ill-fated tarot read.

The concept of making a pact with Satan isn't something new to us, but the concept of a once holy mortal ruling his own kingdom of a 100,000 souls in hell, being betrayed by the promiser and then being reborn only to be given your kingdom after the sacrifice of the Scorpio Club is a unique one to say the least. It is a concept that could have been explained more because there are no intentions for the audience to "make up" their own conclusions of a justified sort. The story itself isn't solid. The way plot point transitions happen are too loose for comfort. It doesn't drastically effect the story to where it makes the film unbearable to watch because of constant questions but it is a bit of an irk to not know why Nicholas returns or why he needs the Scorpio Clan to get his kingdom. I feel these questions are important, yet they are not answered.

Budget elaborate underground club sets with a hard metal score bring that mock of the goth satire into full blown overdrive. The vision of hell as being absolutely nothing but darkness with little light is unsettling than the image of fire and brimstone. At least fire and brimstone would be rockin' to look at while I suffer. There isn't too much I can say about the sets because for the budget, they're wisely chosen and fit perfectly. Directional and editorial technique is also as important because without them, the sets and the actions mean absolutely squat. The transition between scenes is smooth and not so cut and dry usually prone to indie films. The voyeuristic camera view of a person in hell has this ominous advantage - a well executed device. There are real no beefs here with anything pre-, post-, or during production related. Of course, various special effects were a bit cheesy...campy as well. For instance, the duplications of Dread's massive clump of naked and suffering disciples in hell had me rolling my eyes but I told myself that I can't complain about that because of the budget and if you're not looking tentatively, you won't notice it.



Scorpio club

The overall review of **Gothkill** ranks moderately high for being an indie project. Usually with modern indie pictures, they feel rushed and underdeveloped. With **Gothkill**, there is still much that can be explored but there is just enough of a taste that can fill our hunger and, with the right cast, I can see this being remade into something bigger and better. This isn't a "gore-lust" film for the "gore-lustees" but being an official selection of 2008 Coney Island Festival and the 2009 Evil City Festival, it does rank as a hellishly fun experience.

DVD REVIEW

The MVD and Wildeye single DVD release has a love/hate trade off. Though shot in a full screen 1.33:1 ratio, complexed with constant changing stereo sound and plagued with instances of pixel distortion, **Gothkill** delivers a fair amount of extras. If you want to understand the minor cult following of **Gothkill**, the "Gothkill live performance chronicle" takes you into the cast held club parties and the performances of the scored bands. I need to hit up one of these clubs for the music and naked dancing women - mainly the naked dancing women. The Q&A with J.J. Connelly is a real treat for anyone who wants to learn the hardships of micro-budget film making. Other extras include Video Commentary featuring Connelly, Flambeaux and Eve Blackwater, **Gothkill** images and **Gothkill** original trailer.

The overall review of the DVD is moderately low. The extras are the peak of what this film has to offer. The DVD cover art is excellently detailed - I've enjoyed studying the cover art for it's artistry. Though, those are nice perks for **Gothkill**, it just isn't enough to give it a better ranking. What really murders the release is all the technical details. Full screen, or "*fool screen*", is cheap but there is much of the scene the audience is missing with it. The stereo sound is also another cheap trick but the constant changing in volume wreaks havoc on dialogue, making it unheard at times while score tracks are obnoxiously loud. The pixal distortion is a big, big concern - especially when it happens mostly over the beautiful naked women dancing just for the sake of the scene.

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