



2005
Rated: Unrated
Genre: Horror Thriller Mystery Short
Directed By: David Covarrubias
Running Time: 27 Minutes
Review by: Felix Vasquez Jr.
Review Date: 2/15/06
DVD Features: <i>Trailer</i> <i>Stills</i>
If you like this, try: Night of the Living Dead, Night of the Living Dead (1990), Evil Dead, Children Shouldn't Play with Dead Things, Dawn of the Dead, Dawn of the Dead (2004)



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THE DIARY

The Good: "The Diary" plays out a lot like a story from "Creepshow". It's short, to the point, but also very creepy, and much like "Evil Dead" there's your monsters, hapless victims, and a cabin in the middle of the woods. "The Diary" is a very creepy and taut zombie horror film with two narratives about one plot element that takes a toll on our characters with the same inevitabilities. Being a hardcore horror fan since before I could walk, I love to see what indie filmmakers can offer, and "The Diary" is an offering for any horror fan to see. It's recommended.

The plot is understandably simple, but the film itself never Bogart's on the blood and gore featuring a couple truly gross feasting scenes. A happy young couple on vacation rents a cabin in the woods, and upon a hike discover a couple of people strapped to a tree. They unhook them and basically unleash undead cannibals. Don't you hate when that happens? The story is told in flashbacks through a repairman reading the victim's diary while he and his supervisor begin to perform some repairs on the cabin for upcoming buyers. Stephen Leclerc's writing is very tight with perfect balancing of the two stories both leading up to some very creepy climaxes, particularly our main Jonathan's struggle to fight off the dead and keep his wife from turning.

It's all very much in the spirit of "Evil Dead" and Romero with that sense of isolation and dread and the characters waiting for death while struggling to stay alive and find their way out. Covarrubias' direction has a distinct sense of nuance and atmosphere with some great set pieces, and accentuates the murky and grimy setting. You can almost smell the rotted flesh and death within the confines of the woods. "The Diary" also sports some truly gruesome and utterly morbid zombie effects that harkened back to the original "Night", including a particular scene that was a clear homage to the climax of the original Romero classic. "The Diary" ends on a truly twisted high note that really does convey its flair for storytelling. It's a very tense throwback to Argento that I ate with a spoon.

The Bad: One caveat in an otherwise satisfying horror flick is the immensely over the top performance by John J. Zacchino who really doesn't convince me that he's a man whose wife is dying, and he's in the middle of nowhere without an exit and now is seeking a way out, or die trying. I was never really interested in Jonathan's developing central plot because Zacchino didn't bring me in to his character.

Summing up: At least there's still some people who know how to make a good zombie flick. "The Diary" is an utterly creepy, and morbid horror short that really should be seen by hardcore horror fans and the like. With good performances, a very fascinating story, and gorgeous gore and make-up effects, it makes me re-think my stance on current zombie films.

Movie Note/s:

- Learn about "The Diary" and how to purchase this, at its official website:
<http://thediary.cammotion.net>



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