



### The Blood Shed



I was so prepared to hate this that I don't know what prompted me to rent it. Amateur comedy-horror, cheap digital video, overly quirky backwood yokels...typically all pins in my pain receptors. Strange then that I ended up watching it twice in a row. Anyone familiar with the



looming stacks of unwatched DVDs on my coffee table knows what a high honor that is.

One can't help but think "Divine!" at the first sight of writer-producer-star Alan Rowe Kelly as Beeftena Bullion. Gaining 50 pounds for the part, the 40-something Kelly plays the baby girl of a family of creepy inbred hillbillies. (S)he would inspire terror simply skipping through most neighborhoods. A great running gag has the oversized tot dreaming of a modeling career. The Divine comparisons are mostly on the surface, as Kelly really brings a wide range of nuances to what could have been a one-joke role.

Fans of 1968's *Spider Baby* will immediately see its madcap influence in the Bullion clan. The wild, bald-headed Butternut could be Sid Haig's little brother. Chunky Beeftena and spunky cousin Sno-cakes make the most fascinating female duo since *Baby's* Howe sisters. In fact the real draw of this mock-horror is their natural (if extremely over the top) repartee. I haven't thanked Heaven this much for two little girls since *Ginger Snaps*.

Another similarity to *Spider Baby* is the noticeable range of acting styles throughout the cast. The actors are great in their parts, they just all seem to be making slightly different movies. Characters mix like jellybeans — the results are unexpected but almost always tasty. Somehow it works in context, adding even more flavor to an already surreal atmosphere.

Kelly and crew know how to make the most of a near-zero budget. The attention to detail on certain sets could have come from an autistic packrat. The commentary track explains how a potentially disastrous camera malfunction was turned into a successfully eerie effect. Sure, there's the requisite bucket of blood, but it wouldn't stick without the crazy creativity behind most scenes.

Don't let the convenient horror comedy tag influence your expectations. There's no easy way to categorize this oddity, but Kelly's bravery in pursuing his unique lowbrow vision pays off. Definitely a party pleaser.



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