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THE SAVAGE PLANET

BRIAN KEENE'S DARK HOLLOW

SCOTLAND'S WORLD FAMOUS FRANKENSTEIN PUB

As for how such an inept film got made in the first place, I'm guessing *Catacombs* is actually some kind of a clever financial ruse for the folks at Twisted to hide all that *Saw* dough.

Oh yes, there will tax dodges...

Dave Alexander

HYBRID MOMENTS

ALIENS VS. PREDATOR: REQUIEM

Starring Steven Pasquale, John Ortiz and Reiko Aylesworth
Directed by Colin and Greg Strause
Written by Shane Salerno
Fox

Remember when the *Alien* and *Predator* movies were the shit? Remember how exciting the prospect of *Alien vs. Predator* was? Remember how that movie sucked, and almost single-handedly nailed the coffin closed for both franchises? Keeping that in mind, one goes into a screening of *Aliens vs. Predator: Requiem* with more than a little apprehension.

It picks up where the original *AVP* left off, with the Predator ship leaving Earth and the Alien-Predator hybrid bursting out of the dead Predator's chest. From there it goes on a killing spree, forcing the ship to crash-land somewhere in the Colorado mountains, where it spews its cargo of alien facehuggers. A Predator "cleaner" arrives shortly after to hunt down the aliens, which are multiplying rapidly as they prey on the local townies.

Though it hits the ground running, *Requiem* soon flips between frenetic, action-packed fight scenes and a formulaic horror story centering around a group of clichéd nobodies who look like they walked out of a subpar slasher flick. It's not a complete write-off, though, as it does feature some top-notch special effects and a terrific score by Brian Tyler (*Bubba Ho-Tep*). The creature costumes are awesome, hearkening back to the original *Predator* and *Alien* designs, and the PredAlien hybrid is quite original and exceptionally menacing [*sez you, Lance - Ed.*]. It also scores big for never shying away from the blood and gore, and offers a few truly disturbing scenes, including the depiction of a child killed by a chestbuster and the hybrid's visit to a maternity ward (in order to plant its offspring).



Aliens vs. Predator: Requiem: The hybrid monster is a special effects highlight.

Overall, this feature debut from the Strause brothers is entertaining despite its many flaws

and – as evidenced by the more than \$100 million it's earned worldwide – is, at the very least, keeping the hybrid franchise on life support.

Last Chance Lance

ENTER THE STABBIN' CABIN

THE BLOOD SHED

Starring Alan Rowe Kelly, Terry M. West and Joshua Nelson
Written and directed by Alan Rowe Kelly
Heretic

Missing persons reports are piling up right where the backwoods meets suburbia, and the townfolk accurately suspect the abhorrent Bullion clan have something to do with it. Led by proud Papa Elvis, the brain-dead Bullions – brothers Butternut and Hubcap, hanger-on Sno Cakes and their "little sister" Beefeena (played by writer/director Alan Rowe Kelly, who reportedly gained 50 pounds to fill out the role, in Shirley Temple drag) – have killed off a few too many "townies" lately, violating their father's first rule: "strangers are tops but neighbours bring cops." A vile and revolting romp of deviant death dished out by hillbilly swine follows, as people start poking around the

inbred cannibal family's non-negotiable way of life. Building to a wicked birthday party crescendo to which most of the guests didn't know they were invited, the reprehensible constitution of *The Blood Shed* will have you rolling in the aisles – albeit dirty, sticky ones where the three-second rule certainly wouldn't apply.

The gene pool of this comedic cult horror flick may be tainted but the talent pool certainly isn't. Despite a rough presentation, the directing, acting, set decoration and costuming of this movie one-ups Rob Zombie's *House of 1000 Corpses* with probably one percent of the budget. Even with the thin plotting and admittedly fewer torture scenes, *The Blood Shed* makes more sense than Zombie's similarly themed, bloody messcapade and it's just plain-out more fun. Kelly's crew knows the devil is in the details and it's a concept that comes through laughingly loud and clear in the sublime performances and stomping ground they created for the rollicking, cantankerous Bullions. That isn't to say the family never gets down to business. When Beefeena's not getting felt up by her kinfolk, she's an old hand with the gardening shears, and one scene involving a pair of pliers and a crucified cop makes darn sure cherry tomatoes will never taste the same again.

There's an allure in using your limitations to your advantage and coming from an honest place to contribute to a genre that you



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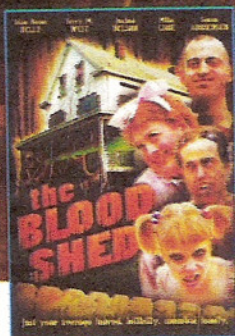
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A low-budget hillbilly horror that outdoes *House of 1000 Corpses*.

obviously adore. As Papa Elvis says, "What happens in the shed, stays in the shed."

Trevor Tuminski

MORE LIKE "FLACCID"

LAKE PLACID 2

Starring John Schneider, Sarah Lafleur and Chad Collins
Directed by David Flores
Written by Todd Hurvitz, Howie Miller and David E. Kelley
Fox

Just in case you missed the original *Lake Placid*, which hit theatres back in the summer of 1999, it was about a gigantic crocodile that was munching on the local tourist trade of a lakeside town in backwater Maine. And if you watched the movie right to the end you would have seen four little baby crocs swimming in the water just as the credits rolled.

Eight years later, those baby crocs are all grown up and start attacking anyone who sets foot in the water. It's up to the new sheriff (John Schneider: Bo from TV's *The Dukes of Hazzard*), who teams up with an obnoxious big game hunter and a sexy game warden, to either defeat the crocs or get chomped.

Other than the crocs, the only connection to the original movie is psychotic Sadie Bickerman, sister of Betty White's hilarious

Delores character, played by 81-year-old Cloris Leachman. Turns out that, like her sister, she's been feeding the crocs a growth hormone and helping them feed on anyone who threatens their existence.

Shot in Bulgaria for the Sci-Fi Channel, it could have been a semi-cool movie, except for the fact that it suffers from CGI effects so outrageously bad that I almost felt ashamed to be a horror movie fan while watching it. Director David Flores is apparently trying to become the Uwe Boll of giant animal movies, as he was also behind the godawful *Boa vs. Python*.

The best part about the DVD is that if you only have nine minutes to waste, there's a "gnawed up" version in the extras that fast forwards right to the topless babe and gory, croc-chomping scenes. Check it out before committing to the entire movie – you can thank me later.

Last Chance Lance

POSTMODERN COMPOST

HACK!

Starring Danica McKellar, Sean Kanan and Juliet Landau
Written and directed by Matt Flynn
Allumination Filmworks

It is early in the year as I write this, but I'm already convinced that I've just seen the worst horror film of 2008. No, really, if I have to sit through a worse one before December, I will kill myself and take at least one editor with me [best avoid Catacombs then, John -Ed].

At one point, postmodern horror cinema was da bomb. That point was about eleven years ago, but – if I may quote *Aliens*, 'cause that'd be, like, all postmodern and shit – apparently writer/director Matt Flynn hasn't been keeping up on current events. In a set-up that would give Kevin Williamson (*Scream*) a hernia, Flynn presents us with a largely thirtysomething cast playing a group of twentysomething college students – all horror fans – who attend a weekend retreat on a small island to improve their grades (!?!), unaware that their hosts plan to use them in a feature-length snuff film with each murder scene lifted from a classic horror movie. Said cannon fodder is comprised primarily of standard issue Central Casting jocks and sluts, rounded out by a gay guy (Justin Chon), a black guy who keeps reminding us that he's black by beginning every second sentence with "yo" and ending every third one with "dog" (Daryl J. Johnson), and a pigtailed, bespectacled nerdy chick (hot wee Danica McKellar of *The Wonder Years* and *The West Wing*) who makes her entrance stumbling and dropping her books (ooh, adorable).



Familiar faces rounding out the supporting cast (and likely plotting revenge on their agents) include Kane Hodder as the opening sequence victim (ooh, ironic), Burt Young as the crusty captain of the charter boat Orca (ooh, a *Jaws* reference) and William Forsythe as a crusty Scottish groundskeeper named Willie (ooh, MAKE IT STOP!!!). On the off-chance that any viewer may be too irony deficient to get all the genre references, Flynn has named other characters Carpenter, Stoker, Bates, King, Roth (Eli, you've finally arrived!), Argento and Mary Shelley. All this might be idiomatic (if not forgivable) in a *Scary Movie*-type full-on parody, but in this stale *Scream* knockoff it's just more rancid mayo on a shit sandwich.

According to IMDb.com, Flynn played rugby in college, and therefore could probably knock my sorry ass into next week. No matter, I'll take that chance, because this is the worst horror film of 2008... I hope.

John W. Bowen

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