

Remake of classic splatterflick repeatedly relies on eroticized violence as entertainment

Written by Film Review by Kam Williams



I must have missed something, because I don't exactly remember the Eighties being the Golden Age of Entertainment. Nonetheless, in lieu of coming up with some original ideas, Hollywood has decided to revisit a number of mostly underwhelming offerings from the decade as a source of cinematic inspiration.

Consequently, 2010 is likely to be remembered as the year of the Eighties remakes, with *Clash of the Titans* already in theaters and new versions of *The A-Team*, *The Karate Kid*, *Red Dawn*, *Tron* and *Wall Street* all to follow.

Back in 1984, Wes Craven's introduced the world to Freddy Krueger in *A Nightmare on Elm Street*, the grisly slasher flick which would spawn seven sequels before ostensibly petering out in 2003. Now, award-winning, music video director Samuel Bayer has revived the franchise, making a most-inauspicious feature film debut with this dreadful remake loosely based on the initial installment in the series.

The film stars Jackie Earle Haley as Krueger, an infamous, horror genre villain readily recognizable by his badly-disfigured face, striped sweater, brown fedora and the lethal glove equipped with long, razor-sharp blades used to hack his victims to death. The script's fatal flaw is that it launches the killing machine headlong onto a bloody murder spree without establishing a premise or bothering to devote any attention to character development. Thus, because the audience hasn't yet invested emotionally in the ensemble of fresh young faces serving as his prey, it's impossible to feel much as they proceed to get picked off one by one.

What the production presumably is banking on is a basic familiarity with the original's storyline, which is only revealed in piecemeal fashion for the initiated. In 25 words or less, Krueger is not

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human but a disembodied ghost who was burned alive a dozen years ago by a mob of parents whose preschoolers had accused him of sexual molestation. Today, Freddy seeks revenge by slaying each of the almost-grown kids twice, once by frightening them in their sleep and then for real while they're awake.

Hence, an annoying plot device which wears out its welcome in the first five minutes (although it is repeated for the duration, ad nauseam) is that you never know whether what you're watching is actually transpiring or just a dream sequence. This means someone might appear to be knocked off, only to sit bolt upright in bed in a cold sweat.

Worse is how the cast is cluttered with way too many teenagers to keep track of. Splatterflick fans might argue that keeping score is sort of besides the point, anyway, since the idea here is simply to delight in the messy, senseless, highly-eroticized vivisection. To each his own.

It doesn't get any worser than this.

Poor (0 stars)

Rated R for profanity, terror, disturbing images, and graphic bloody violence.

Running time: 96 Minutes

Distributor: New Line Cinema

To see a trailer for *A Nightmare on Elm Street*, visit:

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=97h_Oj6PotM