

## Long Live the New Flesh: "HELP WANTED"

Written by David Pace  
Saturday, 09 July 2011 09:29

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I'm writing this week's column from a beach on Lake Erie where my family and I are on a brief holiday. Now some might wonder how you write about horror from a sunny beach. Kids playing in the surf, the smell of suntan lotion and the chip stand in the air.

I'd remind those people what the distinctive and often subtle smell beneath everything else at the beach is: the smell of decay, dead vegetation and marine life washing up. You don't smell it when you get far enough out on the water, you only smell it on the shore, and it lingers underneath everything else. Oh, everything might be bright and sunny, but there is an undercurrent of entropy that is always just beneath your senses.

To me this is where the real scares are. The ones that are just around the edges of the places we feel safe and threaten to invade them. I love catching glimpses of the dark things that are just under the veneer of civilization we've set up around ourselves. I find the banality of evil to be one of the most frightening things about evil.

After all, Joseph Mengele drowned at a pristine beach in Brazil. If the Angel of Death himself can kick back at the beach, who else is tanning under those umbrellas? Think about that next time you see an old man in a Speedo.

True evil, the most awful evil we have known yet as a species, has mostly been born in dull conference rooms over pitchers of ice water and leather portfolios. In the Gulag Archipelago, the most harrowing account of the Soviet prison camps, we find that camp commanders didn't commit the worst atrocities because of their evil natures. They tended not to see the Soviet state itself as evil either. Who really does consider themselves evil? No, they did it to reduce costs, increase efficiency and to get a good Dacha for their retirement.

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*That* is truly scary. That our worst inhumanities to each other can be driven by nothing more than a paycheck and a memo from upper management to make X more widgets by the end of the quarter.

Which brings us to this week's film.

Waylon Bacon's *HELP WANTED* (watch it below) is a darkly comic and unflinching stare into the banality of evil. It's like taking a peek into the *GRAND THEFT AUTO* universe for 18 minutes. Murder and mayhem are casual things. The poor protagonist is the only one who seems shocked by all this. Granted, the others are clearly touched by what is happening around them, but it has also become routine to them. It's a smart, funny film with a lot of Big Ideas about the consequences of violence and our relationship to it.

Makeup and gore FX are used extremely well in *HELP WANTED*, as is the excellent sound design. I understand there was quite a crew involved in the making of this piece, and it shows in the professionalism of the finished product.

In the world we visit in *HELP WANTED*, we catch glimpses of that classic Stalin sound bite: "One death is a tragedy. A million a statistic."

PS: I wanted to leave a note to remind everyone that I am accepting submissions, so if you want your film or know of a film that belongs in this space, email me at [dave.pace@fangoria.com](mailto:dave.pace@fangoria.com) and I will take a look.

{youtube}4Zqwl8V3UWc&{/youtube}