

“MEETING EVIL” (DVD Review)

Written by Vivienne Vaughn

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MEETING EVIL is a suspense thriller from NIGHTSTALKER and S. DARKO's Chris Fisher (now on DVD from Sony Pictures Home Entertainment) with a surprisingly decent cast and an unsalvageably faulty script. Luke Wilson stars as John, a simple, mild-mannered family man who is married to Joanie (Leslie Bibb from MIDNIGHT MEAT TRAIN) and appears to be having a streak of unusually bad luck.



The film opens with John as he is greeted by a stack of unpaid bills in the mailbox and a foreclosure notice on the front door of his house (for obscure reasons, he is unable to sell the family's ostentatious home, despite being a real estate agent himself)—and we find out later that this is *after* he has just lost his job. There's no doubt that John's life has taken a series of unwelcome, unexpected turns, but this increases exponentially after he finds himself somewhat reluctantly climbing into a car with psychopathic serial killer Richie (Samuel L. Jackson) and unwillingly accompanying him on a gruesome murder spree. It quickly becomes evident that John and Joanie's marriage is perhaps not as stable as it initially seemed (Peyton List plays Tammy, the woman John has been conducting an extramarital affair with, who coincidentally also finds herself along for the ride). We find out that despite Joanie's uptight-housewife facade, she has been having her own affair with the pool boy, and their sham of a marriage only continues to deteriorate as the film progresses.

MEETING EVIL lulls on as we follow our passive protagonist from one ridiculous situation to another as John continually makes laughably poor decisions under these tense circumstances. He watches Richie murder people left and right, leading the police on a game of cat-and-mouse

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and killing everyone who gets in his way, but it is only after Richie threatens his own family that John takes any initiative. The twists and turns of Fisher’s script (based on Thomas Berger’s novel) are enough to keep one engaged, but only mildly so; among the movie’s few highlights is Marvin V. Rush’s cinematography, which is aesthetically pleasing with a few interesting, unique shots sprinkled throughout. The film does succeed in raising a few interesting points (for example, how we have a tendency to blindly trust anyone in uniform), the overall bleak, misanthropic undertones are appreciated and Jackson’s performance is fun to watch.

None of this, however, can distract from the fact that the overall premise is weak, silly and simply implausible, and the dialogue is excruciatingly expositional, which serves to strip the stars of any appeal they may have. The conclusion is unsatisfactory and anticlimactic; the movie makes a feeble attempt at a twist ending, but it only results in leaving several gaping holes in the plotline. It’s best to avoid meeting this less than mediocre, formulaic thriller, which has been given the bare-bones treatment on Sony’s DVD.

