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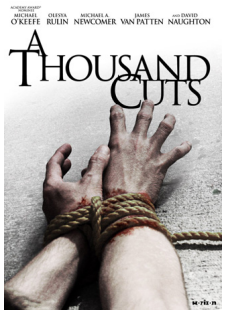
As a reviewer, there is a level of professional integrity one must consider when reviewing a film whose quality beckons for a complete analytical annihilation. However, my responsibility is to you, the reader and potential customer, who may be drawn in by the DVD or Blu-ray cover that egregiously misuses such phrases as “all star cast,” “unrated director’s cut” and “edge-of-your-seat,” and shows off bound hands and bloody knives.

But no phrase is more unfitting for A THOUSAND CUTS (Horizon/Kino Lorber) than the declaration that “A THOUSAND CUTS is a thriller filled with grudges, gore and a whole lot more!” This statement is unfair to customers and critics alike, as there is no gore to be found, and even less substance.



A THOUSAND CUTS tells the story of a torture-porn director whose idyllic lifestyle is interrupted by a man whose daughter was killed in the exact style of the filmmaker’s debut feature, also titled A THOUSAND CUTS. After the opening credits, which consist of extreme close-ups of disorienting images and camcorder-quality footage, the film treats the viewer to a borderline unbearable party sequence, including a scene where AN AMERICAN WEREWOLF IN LONDON’s David Naughton cameos to watch a man do an impression of Christopher Walken as Han Solo. Nevertheless, the barrage of nameless, one-dimensional characters at this party sequence cannot prepare your for the leads, Michael O’Keefe and Michael A. Newcomer, whose performances are borderline unacceptable for a visual medium.

O’Keefe, a one-time Academy Award nominee for THE GREAT SANTINI, struggles through an odd Southern drawl for the entire movie with all the passion of a discouraged high school guidance counselor as the vengeful dad, Frank. Director/co-writer Charles Evered tries to build an intense atmosphere around O’Keefe’s performance, and winds up with talky, embarrassing results. Newcomer doesn’t fair much better as Lance, the director who appears to be more of an alcoholic than a high-profile playboy. Newcomer’s performance seems to derive from the pages of the 1980s cinematic-douchebag handbook, which is particularly grueling considering that Lance is supposed to be the sympathetic character in the central conflict.

Most of A THOUSAND CUTS’ problems start with the script, written by Evered, Marty James and Eric Barr. As past films have shown, it’s not very hard to make a millionaire playboy likable and a villain relatable, especially if they’re regretful of their lifestyle. But the characters in A THOUSAND CUTS are far from deep and morally complicated, not once bothering to engage the audience into figuring out their motivations. Furthermore, any kind of intellectual conflict between Lance and Frank feels like dull filler as the same argument is repeated again and again. And horrorhounds who want a bloody good time from a film called A THOUSAND CUTS will be shocked when almost no blood is spilled for the entire 87-minute running time.

The experience of watching A THOUSAND CUTS is not one I would wish upon anyone who considers themselves a fan of horror films or cinema in general. It’s abysmal, plain and simple, and the bare-bones discs offer only a trailer and a still gallery as supplements. The one thing I can compliment this film on is the unintentional aptness of its title, since watching A THOUSAND CUTS is a truly torturous experience.