

## "FRANKIE" (Short Film Review)

Written by Dave Pace

Wednesday, 07 November 2012 11:03

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Horror short anthology THE COLLECTIVE VOLUME IV (available now from JABB Pictures) was a bit of a motley mix of success, failure, ambition and some baffling choices in curating. We've previously looked at the collection as a whole, but the time has come to explore the individual films. It's fitting then, that we start at the beginning and with one of two films in the package that come from JABB-meister Jason Hoover: FRANKIE.

Each film in the anthology is intended to represent an emotion. FRANKIE is awash in grief and spins the tale of a husband (Justin Forbes) and wife (Justine Dalcantone) kidnapped by two thugs (Jason Hoover and Mitchell Thomas). We're dropped right into the action as they awake in a basement, tied back-to-back, and start to confront their captors. As it turns out, the husband has a bit of an unsavory past and managed to kill the brother of one of their captors. Hence, the kidnapping and torture.

"Tied up in a basement and tortured" is now kind of beyond cliché in indie filmmaking, so in going there, one should be prepared to bring something new to the table (like this year's superb IN THE HOUSE OF FLIES). Hoover makes a bold move here in how he uses the camera to tell this tale, constantly circling the prisoners like a predatory animal waiting to strike.

It's an interesting technique, one that could work in moderation but when it's the only shot in the entire film the effect ultimately drains drama. Some use of the camera to highlight action or reaction would have been vita, but instead we get the same circling movement for the duration.

There are also issues with the performances. The actors start out on such a high emotional level there is little room to go bigger and the script provides little opportunity to be more understated. As a result the whole thing plays out on a very small emotional range and dramatic impact is lost.

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On a final note I'm not sure how well the film represents grief. It's understood, of course, that the motive for the kidnapping is the death of the kidnapper's brother. So, yes it's clearly rooted in grief but there isn't much of a sense of grief from the character. There is plenty of anger, but some real grief and humanity behind that anger would have been powerful.

The collection begins on a bit of weak note sadly, but not all is lost. There are great shorts to follow and Hoover makes a comeback with perhaps one of the strongest of the pack later on. It's pleasing to see the experiment in cinematography here, through. It's at this level of filmmaking that these real risks can be taken and lessons learned.

