

“REVENANT” (2012; Movie Review)

Written by Staci Layne Wilson

Thursday, 08 November 2012 17:07



Derek Cole’s REVENANT is a little film that hopefully won’t get lost in the shuffle. It’s nothing at all like the recent vampire/zombie/horror/comedy/thriller thingie THE REVENANT; it’s actually more akin to SINISTER, as a writer moves into a haunted house, scary stuff ensues and a mystery must be solved in order for the writer to survive. But REVENANT is its own beast, and deserves the chance to stand alone.



This super-low-budget (under 10K) independent feature stars its writer, Stephen Twardokus, as onscreen writer Paul. Paul’s unemployed, on the skids and looking for his next big break when he purposely rents a notorious residence that’s not only rumored to be haunted, but literally out for blood. Paul figures that if he can live there and figure out the source of the haunting, he can write all about it and cash in with a best seller. He and his girlfriend Stella (Liesel Kopp) are excited about the prospect of being ghost hunters—so much so that they even dig up newspaper photos and redecorate the abode as it once was in its evil heyday. Way to make the ghosts feel right at home!

The renters’ giddiness and excitement quickly fade once they realize it’s no joke. Paul digs deeper and deeper into the crime that supposedly sparked the ire of the underworld—a father murdered his whole family there—and as he gets closer to the truth, his life becomes that much closer to its end. But Paul’s mind, heart and soul are ensnared; he won’t give up, even going so far as to tease the phantom by throwing bedsheets over it and tossing out challenge after challenge. It takes a while, but the “revenant” finally loses its patience, and its temper. Let’s just say, this ghost ain’t so friendly.

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This isn't a CGI showcase or superscares kind of horror film; it's more about the tension that permeates the very particles in the air, and Paul's dogged determination to succeed in his quest. REVENANT's atmosphere is aided in no small part by its, er, haunting score by Kevin MacLeod and H. Anton Riehl. The music augments, but never gets in the way of or manipulates, the classic jump-scares or the slower, more sinister moments of suspense.

REVENANT isn't the second coming of THE HAUNTING, but it's a very well-crafted feature by an unknown director...for now. Remember the name Derek Cole.

