

Recap: "THE WALKING DEAD 307, When the Dead come Knocking"

Written by Dave Pace

Monday, 26 November 2012 07:49



As we get one step closer to the season three hiatus, what we find is a lot of groundwork being laid before the real action begins. "When the Dead come Knocking" isn't the strongest episode of the season. Throughout, it feels very much like hands on the reins keeping the show on course to fill out the hour, without diving headlong into the confrontation everyone is waiting for. In a series where more happened in a few episodes at the start of the season than in a big finale of any other TV show though, an episode is really only "weak" by comparison. "When the Dead come Knocking" remains a solid piece of business and the set-up work it does is necessary.

The opener is pretty much what we expected. Merle is preparing to torture Glenn, looking find out where Daryl and the rest of the party are. Michael Rooker just chews these scenes up as the menacing 'good ol' boy, delighting in the prospect of taking some revenge on the people who left him to die. For his part, Glenn proves to be one hell of a tough customer and resists well.

At the prison, Michonne is at the gates and Rick seems pretty content to leave her there to be zombie food. It's Carl who steps up and forces Rick's hand, rhetorically asking "Aren't we going to help her?" just as he opens fire on the walkers approaching her. His growth is really remarkable as a character, and you can see the future leader in him. It's very reminiscent of the character of the boy in Cormac McCarthy's *THE ROAD*, becoming a moral voice for adults who have succumbed to the often savage nature of base survival.

Michonne is rescued and after some tense introductions, she reveals what she knows about Woodbury, the Governor and the fate of Maggie and Glenn. In response, Rick forms a posse made up of himself, Daryl, Michonne and Oscar. It's good to see Oscar included in this and hopefully he isn't the proverbial cannon fodder here. His character seems like a decent guy, and it would be nice to see him develop some more.

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On their way out to Woodbury there is a good scene with Carl and Rick where they finally name the baby together (Judith) and we see Carl come out of his shell for a bit. It's warming to see that although the kid now has the thousand-yard stare, he retains his humanity after all.

Merle's torture session doesn't really go as planned and he ends up letting a walker loose on Glenn while he's bound to a chair. One would expect that to be it for poor Glenn, but he puts up the fight of his life and manages to take down the walker with a chunk of the arm rest. His triumphant scream at the end of the fight is as much filled with surprise at his own power, as it is victory.

Unfortunately, this failure to get Glenn to talk prompts the Governor to turn to Maggie and in a stomach-turning scene he has her take off her shirt and then he starts to violate her. We get all kinds of gore and horror in this show, we've seen the Governor murder people in cold blood even, but watching him do this to Maggie is the most loathsome thing yet. To make it all worse is to know it isn't at all about sexual gratification for him; it's about power over Maggie and hurting her in a way that is uniquely awful and damaging.

Maggie doesn't crack somehow and the Governor stops just shy of rape. It's a tough scene to watch and without question, the most revealing about his character. This is a man who will do and say anything to suit his agenda.



Meanwhile, the raiding party runs into trouble as they are outnumbered by walkers on the outskirts of Woodbury. Seeking refuge in a secluded cabin, they find a lone survivor who clearly isn't all there and threatens to call the cops. Rick explaining he is a cop doesn't seem to

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convince the guy. When he tries to break for the door and expose the party to the ravenous dead outside, Michonne runs him through with her sword without hesitation. They then callously use his corpse to distract the walkers and cover their escape, a move that Oscar objects to.

It was a weird scene. It felt very out of place and was probably the weakest part of the show, like they had to figure out something for the group to do prior to getting to Woodbury. It was a bit of a blemish on an otherwise well-written chapter.

Perhaps the most interesting thing about this episode was Andrea assisting Milton with one of his experiments. A citizen of Woodbury with cancer volunteered to take part in a test to see if any part of human consciousness remains in the undead. Milton prepared the man to make simple hand gestures to acknowledge some easy facts about himself—his name, a picture of his wife, etc—all rehearsed with one of the test subject's favorite records playing. It's a set up very reminiscent of DAY OF THE DEAD, but what impressed was how it incorporates actual recent innovations in Alzheimer's/dementia research where they found previously unresponsive patients suddenly becoming active when hearing a favorite piece of music. Of course, the experiment doesn't end well when Andrea has to put the subject down and Milton seems to need a change of pants.

After Glenn is threatened at gunpoint by the Governor and is seconds away from being shot, Maggie finally spills the beans on the prison and the number of survivors in their party. As Rick's raiding party stealthily arrives at the walls of Woodbury, the Governor, Merle and his other henchmen plan a raid of their own. It's all coming to a head next Sunday and it's going to get nasty.

THE WALKING DEAD goes on break following next Sunday's episode. You can bet "When the Dead come Knocking" put the pieces in place and 308, "Made to Suffer" is going to knock them all down.

You can chat about THE WALKING DEAD live as the show is broadcast every Sunday night starting at 8:30 p.m. EDT on FANGORIA'S [Live Dead Blog](#) hosted by Chris Alexander and Dave Pace. Come check it out!