

BLEAK FUTURE (1997)

Category : DVD REVIEWS (A-C)

Published by Guest on 2006/12/5

Directed by Brian S. O'Malley

Review by David Carter

Released by Cinema Epoch

Running Time: 72 minutes

Rating: Not Rated

Color format: Color

Audio/Subtitles: 2.0 Stereo English, English, French, German, Italian, Arabic, Portuguese, and Pig Latin Subtitles

Region Code: 1, NTSC

Aspect Ratio: Widescreen

16:9 Enhanced: No

Special Features: 7 Behind-the-scenes, outtakes, deleted scenes, image galleries, two commentaries, production sketches, cast and crew bios, interactive map, DVD-Rom features

Trailer Online: [Yes](#)



Though there are many films that deal with life after the apocalypse, they almost always have the same vision of the future. Post-apocalyptic cinema started in earnest in the 1950s, and with the spectre of nuclear annihilation hanging over the world's head practically all films dealing with the subject have used atomic destruction as a central theme. George Miller's MAD MAX set the tone for latter 20th century post-apocalyptic cinema as evidenced by the fact that the future is most often depicted as a wasteland scattered with relics of the past civilization. In 1997 young filmmaker Brian S. O'Malley put a comedic spin on the dystopian future in his cult film BLEAK FUTURE.

Starting in 2009, the world began down a path to peace that led to global unification in 2012. The peace was short-lived, however, and a nuclear war completely destroyed the majority of life on the planet, save for small pockets of humans and a large number of mutants. It's in this world that Slangman, self-proclaimed World's Smartest Man, makes a living selling his knowledge and the few artifacts of the past he finds. Slangman is hunting for "The Source," a place he believes holds all of

the past world's knowledge. A mute Scotsman he dubs "Atlal" offers to guide him to The Source and protect him from the hordes of mutants in their way. Along the way the pair picks up a ditzy actress named Femme and run into a strange hippie who warns Slangman that finding The Source will mean destruction. As the motley crew draws closer, they find that they aren't the only ones searching for The Source and they have a fight on their hands when they finally reach it.



BLEAK FUTURE positions itself as an offbeat comedy in the style of Monty Python or The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy. It doesn't live up to that high standard, but it is pretty funny for a low budget sci-fi comedy. Other elements of the film far outshine the comedy, however, particularly the well done and interesting plot. The short sequences from a historical filmstrip inserted at various points are the film's bright spot; these display an intelligent humor that is usually non-existent in indie comedies. Especially of note though are BLEAK FUTURE's special effects. The mutant make-up effects are not only better than the average low budget film, but I'd go as far to say that they are comparable to most Hollywood productions. The effects are so good that they have the added benefit of making the entire production seem to be of a higher quality by association.

Cinema Epoch has brought BLEAK FUTURE to DVD on one of the most impressive discs in recent memory. Cast and crew reunited to rerecord the entire dialogue of the film and the print has been color corrected and improved from the initial release. In addition to the technical improvements to the film, there are several hours worth of bonus material on the DVD and several DVD-Rom features. Fans of the film will want to take the time to check out the deleted scenes and outtakes, which have the same brand of humor as in the feature. The disc boasts what is probably a record eight subtitle options, including Pig Latin which makes for an interesting viewing experience.



BLEAK FUTURE seems to be tailor made to become a cult hit on DVD. Somewhat similar to the acclaimed indie film SIX STRING SAMURAI, BLEAK FUTURE actually predates that film, though it received far less attention. If you're a fan of indie comedies it's definitely worth a look. As with most cult films, you'll either love it or hate it, but it seems likely that film will appeal to a large segment of science fiction audience.