



Yorkton Film Festival

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ZOMBIES: WHEN THE DEAD WALK

Reel Time Images

Category: Documentary: Point of View

Producer: Donna Zuckerbrot

Director: Donna Zuckerbrot

Running Time: 47:30

How can you ever go wrong with a film about zombies? Even the worst zombie flicks are worth a laugh for their corniness.

On the other hand how often do you see a serious film on the subject of the walking dead? Rarely, to be sure, although *Zombies: When the Dead Walk* is one excellent exception. Donna Zuckerbrot, producer and director of this film, does a nice job of taking us beyond the Hollywood myth of the zombie to get to the roots of where the idea of zombies comes from, the island of Haiti.

In Haiti, zombies are not something of film and pop culture but are instead something rooted in the island's history and religion. There is more to a zombie story in Haiti than make-up and this film takes the viewer into that cultural experience.

Information in the film elaborates on the situation. "In Haiti, Zombies are an integral part of the island's cultural and religious roots. Outlawed by the government, zombification is said to be performed secretly in the countryside. It's meant as a punishment for crimes against the community. The culprit is magically killed, resurrected and enslaved."

Through footage from Haiti, interviews with experts in the field of cultural study, and a look at the history of the country, we begin to better understand where the idea of the walking dead comes from and why it exists. The film then goes the next step to show how the zombie shambled its way to Hollywood where it has been a staple of the horror film genre for decades. While a serious documentary, there is a definite sense of fun here too. How could it be otherwise given the subject matter?

In Haiti there may be a cultural element where the idea of zombies is used to keep people in line in terms of community law, but for the rest of the world the zombie is a Hollywood horror staple. Even the best of the genre is often rather silly when viewed in anywhere other than in a dark theatre when you're in the mood for a scare.

If you are a fan of zombie flicks this is a must to understand what lies behind the Hollywood version of the undead. If you are simply interested in a unique look at a mysterious aspect of another culture, this is still a doc for you.

Well done and highly enjoyable. Check it out at www.reeltimeimages.ca

By Calvin Daniels