

## “THE RIG” (DVD Review)

Written by Tim Janson

Tuesday, 19 October 2010 08:41

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THE RIG (now on DVD from Anchor Bay) wants to be ALIEN in the worst way...and unfortunately succeeds. Instead of a spaceship, we have the crew of an offshore oil rig hunted by a creature that was released when the team was looking for a new drilling spot.

Most of the personnel have been evacuated due to an oncoming tropical storm, leaving only a skeleton crew consisting of the rig's boss Jim (William Forsythe), his daughter Carey (Serah D'Laine) and a half-dozen other nondescript and completely forgettable crewmembers. The critter begins picking off the crew one by one in rapid-fire succession; in fact, it happens so quickly that you suddenly realize there's still an hour left in the film, and THE RIG grinds to a halt faster than a drill hitting granite as the remaining members band together to hunt the creature and try to kill it. With most of the action taking place within that first third while the last two-thirds are spent developing the “characters” (until they get killed anyway), there's a feeling that the film is upside down.



If you're prone to nodding off, don't worry: You can catch 40 winks and not worry about missing any action. One of the characters is apparently an ex-Special Forces soldier, and naturally he leaves the group to find a weapon he can use—which turns out to be a spear gun. A spear gun on an oil rig? Does the crew like to go deep-sea fishing during their down time? Still, it is an upgrade over the lamp he was hauling around.

The slowdown in the action exposes the characters as wooden and one-dimensional. Scott Martin, playing “hero” and Carey's love interest Dobbs, has one expression throughout the film—disinterested. He meanders about the rig, leading the rest to their eventual dooms in lethargic fashion. D'Laine seems to be the only one who wasn't on board solely for a quick paycheck. As for the monster, THE RIG is a throwback to low-budget creature features of the

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1980s: You get fleeting glimpses when it attacks...the slash of an arm, the glint of a fang. But it's all shot in such low light conditions that you never get a good look at the critter, just enough to know it's a guy in a suit rather than a CGI-created beastie. Even at the climax, you don't get the big reveal you've hoped for. (This might actually be for the best, once you watch the DVD's behind-the-scenes featurette and finally get a good look at the monster.)

The one thing THE RIG has in its favor is that first-time director Peter Atencio was able to shoot the film on an actual abandoned rig located in the Gulf of Mexico. If nothing else, it's a fairly unique location for a horror film and provides a degree of authenticity. These rigs are even larger than you might think, and Atencio utilized a number of areas on board effectively. On an audio commentary he shares with producer James D. Benson, Atencio discusses the difficulties of shooting within the locale's tight confines, and how they decided to use it anyway because it lent an air of realism (much-needed, as it turns out) to the film.

The lively commentary has the pair going over every scene in detail, including a lot of interesting anecdotes along the way, and is honestly more entertaining than the film itself. One interesting note is that people who viewed early test screeners asked where the creature came from, inspiring the filmmakers to add the opening sequence showing the rig drilling into the ocean floor and releasing a purple mist. Atencio also talks about working with veteran screen heavy Forsythe, who was apparently a bit intimidating to the director as well as his fellow castmembers.

There's also a short behind-the-scenes featurette that includes no narration or interviews, just a random series of shots of the cast and crew at work. However, it does provide the only opportunity to see the creature in the full light of day—which is probably the only terrifying element of THE RIG.

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DVD PACKAGE: 🍷👁️👁️👁️

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