

## “TICKED-OFF TRANNIES WITH KNIVES” (DVD Review)

Written by Siobhan Greene

Wednesday, 15 December 2010 12:50

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The legendary blues singer Koko Taylor once recorded a song titled “I Can Love You Like A Woman or I Can Fight You Like a Man.” That could have been the theme song for this cool and gritty homage to both grindhouse movies and revenge flicks, written and directed by Israel Luna and available on DVD from Breaking Glass Pictures. When the film debuted, it set off howls of outrage from the transgender community who felt it misrepresented them. Well, to paraphrase one of the best lines from the very funny script, “Let’s get some balloons for your pity party, bitch.”

No one film represents a small group of people as all of the members of that group. Psychiatrists will tell you that the transgender community tends to be among the most passive in the world. But if you push anyone too far, well, it’s only a matter of time before someone is going to explode and fight back. Check your history: drag queens figure prominently in throwing the first punch at Stonewall and at the Compton’s Cafeteria Riots, so it’s logical that three such individuals would fight back after being raped, beaten and left for dead by a bunch of vicious thugs.



Personally, I consider TICKED-OFF TRANNIES WITH KNIVES one of the best movies I’ve seen this year. Luna’s script is tight, with wonderful bitchy lines delivered by the drag performers. If you’ve ever been privileged to be a part of the drag world, you’ll appreciate the

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real feelings these ladies conjure up in the dressing room, and later in a prolonged bar scene. The viewer can understand why they take the law into their own hands, and why they stick up for each other in the face of grave danger.

The three main trannies are played by Krystal Summers, Kelexis Davenport and Willam Belli, and are throwbacks to kick-ass ladies like Tura Satana and Pam Grier. The trio of villains are played at their slimy best by Tom Zembrod, Kenny Ochoa, and Gerardo Davila; Zembrod is truly frightening, and Ochoa and Davila have great nasty chemistry.

One note: If you are at all squeamish, be warned—the violence in this movie feels very real and very brutal. Knives and baseball bats are the weapons of choice, with only an occasional gun or high heel to break the rhythm. This is not a Peckinpah-esque bloodfest shot in slow motion to create a poetry of violence; this is TEXAS CHAINSAW MASSACRE time, where the brutality is gruesome and yet ultimately necessary for survival.

Special features on the DVD include a director’s commentary that also includes producer Tom Miller and actors Summers and Belli. Their deconstruction of the movie is a flat-out scream, with Belli proving to be absolutely hysterical. There’s also a making-of documentary that is almost as entertaining as the movie itself, and Luna also includes a segment that was cut out of the movie’s final release. While the scene isn’t totally necessary, it does shed light on one of the major characters, Fergus, played by Richard D. Curtin. Another fun bonus feature showcases Ochoa and Davila ad-libbing their way through various scenes, setting up a backstory for their characters. A handful of bloopers round out and make a nice ending for the supplemental package.

Luna is now one of my favorite directors; I’m as excited by his work as when I first saw Sam Raimi burst on the scene with THE EVIL DEAD. I can’t wait to see how he follows up TICKED-OFF TRANNIES WITH KNIVES.

MOVIE: 

DVD PACKAGE: 

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