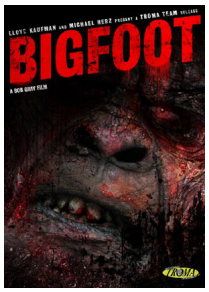
BIGFOOT has just been released on DVD by Troma, but it wasn’t produced by the company—and might have wound up more fun if it had been. A Tromatized take on the legendary man-monster holds all kinds of amusing possibilities; perhaps he could invade the New Jersey Pine Barrens and get into a turf war with the Toxic Avenger (this Sasquatch’s growls even sound like Toxie’s). As it stands, BIGFOOT, which was made five years ago, would have to date back a few decades more to seem like a fresh take on this subgenre.

The disc case bears a quote calling the film “reminiscent of JAWS,” and that certainly can’t be disputed. A small community is being stalked by a predator that has begun claiming human lives, and the local sheriff teams up with a military veteran to try to put a stop to it. In this case, the former soldier is the key protagonist: Jack Sullivan (Todd Cox), who has returned to his Ohio home town with his preteen daughter Charlie (Brooke Beckwith) following a court-martial over an incident that never really has any impact on anything else in the story. When first deer and then people start turning up dead with their livers torn out (Bigfoot likes livers—extra protein!), solving the monstrous problem falls to Jack and his childhood pal Sheriff Bob Perkins (Bob Gray, who also wrote and directed), assisted by park ranger Sandy (Liza Foster), who takes a shine to Jack and delivers the necessary exposition about Bigfoot, his dietary habits and calorie intake. A bunch of local yahoos also set out to kill the beast, but even though this bunch loves their guns, they don’t seem to know how to use them when the situation calls for it.




Gray’s script and direction and most of the acting are competent in the manner of many regional genre flicks, with many familiar beats (right down to the coroner who eats a sandwich while inspecting a corpse) and lacking much extra spark. It’s never really scary or suspenseful—we get too good a look too early at makeup artist David Greathouse’s monster, which is pretty good under the low-budget circumstances, for that—and there are a few dramatically questionable turns in the final reels. The death of a key character is followed by a town-parade sequence in which no one seems overly troubled by his demise, and the final tussle between Jack and

Bigfoot awkwardly mixes in borderline slapstick physical moves and one-liners.

Originally set for home release a few years ago by Leo Films, BIGFOOT was shot on video and given an uneven filmlooking, but overall the fullscreen image on Troma’s disc is decent. Bonus features include a modest collection of behind-the-scenes photos, assorted Troma trailers, a 10-minute making-of segment and audio commentary by Gray, who in the latter two emphasizes the sense of family during the shoot (which represented a homecoming for him as well). Everything from the community to the weather apparently cooperated completely, which was certainly a boon for Gray and co. but doesn’t leave him with many good stories of low-budget challenges overcome to tell.

Mostly, his talk track is made up of revealing the cast’s backgrounds and describing the onscreen action, with a friendly vibe broken only when he recalls haranguing one actress to get her to cry on screen. A few fun anecdotes are provided, some of them in both extras—like the fact that Charlie was a boy in the original script until a suitable young male actor couldn’t be found—but the overall tone of these supplements, like that of BIGFOOT itself, is more down-home pleasant than exciting.

MOVIE: **

DVD PACKAGE: **

{jcomments on}