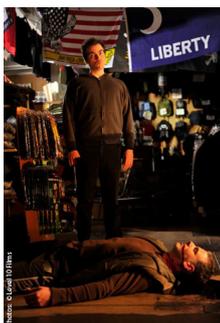


“SOME GUY WHO KILLS PEOPLE” (Film Review)

Written by Michael Gingold
Thursday, 09 June 2011 12:17



The title of *SOME GUY WHO KILLS PEOPLE* suggests an anonymous villain, but it's the achievement of director Jack Perez and writer/producer Ryan Levin that the film showcases one of the more distinctive antiheroes in recent serial-killer cinema. Ken Boyd (Kevin Corrigan) may be one of those people whom life barely seems to notice—when it's not beating him down—but he's bound to make an impression on audiences.



Currently making its U.S. premiere at the [Brooklyn Film Festival](#) (where it has its second screening tonight at 10 p.m.), *SOME GUY* deftly mixes low-key character study with explicit splatter. Ken, who has recently spent time in a mental institution, now works in an ice cream parlor with what appears to be his only friend, Irv (Leo Fitzpatrick), and still lives at home with his mom (played by Karen Black... 'nuff said). He's scarred facially and mentally, and as revealed in early flashbacks that both establish the source of Ken's pathology and elicit immediate sympathy for him, Ken was once brutally abused by a local gang of louts. Comic-book fan Ken deals with his emotional issues by drawing in a sketchbook, but when he's forced to work a birthday party (in an embarrassing ice-cream-cone costume) for one of those past tormentors, the bad memories become too much—and the next night, the guy winds up with a hatchet in his head.

Something more positive does come from the party, though; Ken meets Stephanie (*SHAUN OF THE DEAD*'s Lucy Davis), who takes a shine to him. While working the street in that same outfit, Ken also has a chance meeting with a young girl, Amy (Ariel Gade from *DARK WATER* and *ALIENS VS. PREDATOR—REQUIEM*), whom we and then he learns is his daughter with a woman who doesn't want the girl having anything to do with him. Amy has other ideas, though, and as Ken begins to bond with her and date Stephanie, Perez and Levin eschew playing the tentative relationships for easy laughs at Ken's expense. His awkwardness around them is treated sympathetically, which makes it easier to believe that both woman and child would want to be part of his life. Davis is spirited and sweet, and Gade's performance is remarkably self-possessed and strong-willed yet completely free of cloying/obnoxious kid-performance clichés; her strong resemblance to Corrigan also works to the movie's advantage.

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But this is supposed to be a horror/comedy too, right? And as such, it doesn't skimp on the gore as Ken's enemies are beheaded and otherwise mistreated, in setpieces vividly staged by Perez. The murders are investigated by local sheriff Walt Fuller, played by Barry Bostwick, who turns out to be the movie's secret weapon. The lawman who takes an irreverent view of the crimes he investigates is hardly a new idea, but Bostwick breathes fresh and hilarious life into the standard, delivering Levin's funny, off-the-cuff lines with perfect deadpan and maintaining an amusing rapport with Eric Price as his deputy. The juxtaposition between the realistically gory tableaux (courtesy of makeup FX supervisor Yvonne Wang) and Bostwick's sardonic observations gives *SOME GUY WHO KILLS PEOPLE* its biggest laughs.



Yet the movie's focus remains squarely on the guy, not the killed people, and Corrigan—who's made strong impressions in varied supporting roles ranging from one of Ron Perlman's sidekicks in *THE LAST WINTER* to a dorky Fango fan in *WALKING AND TALKING*, and violent types in *SUPERBAD* and *PINEAPPLE EXPRESS*—proves more than capable of holding the center in a leading role. He's credibly emotionally damaged, just as convincing in his hesitant forging of connections with Stephanie and Amy and also believable as a man who, despite his essential goodness, could be capable of meting out grisly vengeance to those who have wronged him.

Perez does a nice job of balancing Ken's personal story with his occasional gruesome activities, though potential viewers should be aware that they're just that—occasional. The director's overall unemphatic approach to material that could have gone over the top into outrageousness pays dividends in terms of engagement with the story, though it does mean that the pacing becomes placid at times. And even as *SOME GUY* comes to the expected violent climax, its resolution lacks that final punch one might expect from a dark comedy about a serial killer. Yet in the end, that's not really Perez, Levin and co.'s goal. They're out to get you and keep you on Ken's side even as he indulges in mayhem, while punctuating the proceedings with wicked laughs, and in that they wholeheartedly succeed.

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