

## Long Live The New Flesh: "NAZIS AT THE CENTER OF THE EARTH" (Review)

Written by Dave Pace

Wednesday, 23 May 2012 11:48

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It looks like the inmates are taking over The Asylum, as visual FX supervisor Joe Lawson is given the opportunity to helm his first feature-length film, NAZIS AT THE CENTER OF THE EARTH. The company seems to thrive on negative attention, and in making a film which features a ghoulish Dr. Joseph Mengele (played convincingly by Christopher Karl Johnson) looking to unlock the secrets of genetic regeneration to bring on the Fourth Reich they've certainly gotten it heaped on them. The question is, do they deserve it?

NATCOTE follows the story of a team of scientists on an Arctic expedition led by Dr. Adrian Reistad (Jake Busey), an obsessive researcher who's willing to risk his team to make breakthroughs. If movies like THE THING have taught us anything, it's that Arctic research is dangerous stuff indeed and all kinds of horrors lurk beneath the ancient ice. Scientists at Dr. Reistad's station seem to go missing at an unusual rate and it's not long before we learn why; the station is situated near an entrance to the fabled hollow Earth, and who is waiting for them down there?

Nazis.



In particular, the aforementioned Dr. Joseph Mengele, known to many as the Angel of Death. His truly horrifying experiments in the Nazi death camps could inspire enough terror and revulsion to fuel the next million years of genre cinema. Is it perverse to use someone who has inflicted so much real world horror upon the world as a pulp villain in a B movie? Sure it is. It's

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in extremely bad taste. How Mengele is handled by Lawson and writer Paul Bales always pushes the boundaries, but manages to remain just slightly within the bounds of simple bad taste without going into fully offensive territory (despite some very close brushes with it). I'd say it takes some skilful work to pull that off!

So how is Mengele still alive, especially considering he was found dead in Brazil in 1979? Nazi super-science of course! You see, Mengele and his cadre of Aryan super soldiers have been experimenting with genetic regeneration and immortality, which unfortunately requires them to have human subjects to harvest genetic material from. So now we know why so many scientists are going missing! Naturally, it is up to the team to rescue what remains of their colleagues and thwart Mengele's attempt to resurrect (literally) the Third Reich.

If all of the above sounds ridiculous and offensive to you, well it kind of is so I can't really help you on that front. Here's what else it is though: awesome fun. Yes, a movie about Joseph Mengele resurrecting Nazi soldiers is fun in the same way playing Wolfenstein on my friends computer was fun when I was 14.

Nazi mythology was just plain whacko, and it makes excellent fodder for this kind of outing. It's not like the writer of NATCOTE made this up whole cloth, there were Nazis who really did believe in a hollow Earth and in the mythical Spear of Destiny (the spear used by a Roman soldier to pierce the side of Jesus Christ at the crucifixion) and a whole host of other totally whackadoo stuff that just cries out to be made into genre trash.

This is how you have to take a movie like NATCOTE. It's really an exploration of all the weirdest pet obsessions of the weirdest Nazi thinkers. Imagine living in a world where Nazis actually hid in the hollow Earth (as Nazi Admiral Karl Donitz claimed was possible at Nuremberg!) and were lying in wait to unleash the flying saucers? Horrors of the Nazi regime aside, that's a fun premise!

Only a company like The Asylum could make a picture like this and get away with it though, and I applaud them for letting Lawson take the director's chair and giving Bale a break from writing Hollywood knock-offs to really let some creativity loose. Asylum movies have never looked better than they do here and I've never had as much fun watching one as I have with NATCOTE. It goes from outrage to outrage merrily, straight to a climax that has to be seen to be believed.

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Is the film flawed? Sure it is, but if a battle against Nazi-ghouls armed with thinly disguised Nerf guns that includes flying saucers and a mecha-surprise of Wagnerian proportions doesn't put a smile on your face, I don't know what will.

People often question why studios like Asylum and other B-movie producers exist, and the answer can be found right here. The A studios would never touch a movie like NATCOTE. To me, that is the primary function of the B, C, D and so on industries – to tell stories and take risks that no one in the mainstream field would ever have the guts to attempt. B movies are where you get to experiment, where you get to do things they say you can't do and Lawson wields that power impressively here.

I strongly encourage fans of exploitation fare, fans of games like WOLFENSTEIN, lovers of weirdo mythology and anybody who just wants to have a good time to check their sense of outrage at the door for a little bit and enjoy this movie. The progress Asylum is making in the quality of their productions is really encouraging - from 2012: ZOMBIE APOCALYPSE (which was actually quite good) to NAZIS AT THE CENTER OF THE ARTH, I'm happy to see them taking these risks and I hope it's a trend that continues for them. Joe Lawson is a rising talent in genre films and I eagerly look forward to his next picture. Make it happen Asylum!

