



'Creature' review: A bizarre killer lurks in the by-the-numbers retro thriller

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Stephen Whitty/The Star-Ledger

By



Bubble Factory

B-movie vet Sid Haig adds trashy authenticity to "Creature."

There have been a bunch of movies called "Creature" over the years, including the made-for-TV Peter Benchley story, a sci-fi schlocker with Klaus Kinski and an indie documentary about a transgendered kid from North Carolina.

So, for future reference: This new arrival is the one about ragin' Cajuns, incestuous siblings and an alligator man.

Whether those details make you turn away in disgust or make a note to add this to a future Netflix queue depends on your taste for trash. Because "Creature" serves up a

lot of it, deep-fried and with the slightly retro atmosphere of '70s drive-in films.

Within one minute of the opening credits, an anonymous starlet has stripped naked for a dip in a very murky swamp. Within two, she's become screaming chum. You could almost imagine old Roger Corman himself smiling at the efficiency of the exploitation.

Our story then quickly switches to three young couples out for a vacation drive to New Orleans — and the script, wasting no time, begins piling on the de rigueur Never a Good Sign plot developments.

For example, first the young people take a shortcut and get lost (uh-oh). Then they stop at a strange old shack to ask for directions (not a good idea). Then the owner pops out — and he's mad old chrome-domed trash-film icon Sid Haig.

At which point, anyone who has seen anything from "Spider Baby" to "The Devil's Rejects" would know to run for the hills.

Instead, of course, our young heroes take his advice and head for the bayou, where they find out that the legend of an inbred, reptilian maniac isn't a legend at all — but a hungry two-legged lizard who must have a mate! Or at least a meal.

It's all nonsense, of course, but there's something sort of appealing about its no-nonsense approach.

This is a movie which prefers honesty to irony, and it honestly knows what it is. No better than it should be, it reliably provides some nudity, gore or gory nudity every 10 minutes or so, and wraps things up within an hour and a half.

Most of the actors are as vague as their own Southern accents — although Mehcad Brooks as that horror-film rarity, the African-American hero, is probably the best of them. And Haig adds a grungy, trailer-park vibe to the whole enterprise.

It is in no way a great movie. But it is a great reminder of what used to be so much fun about bad movies.

Ratings note: The film contains nudity, gore and violence.

The film contains violence, substance abuse and strong language.

Creature (R) Bubble Factory (95 min.)

Directed by Fred Andrews. With Sid Haig, Mehcad Brooks. Now playing in New Jersey.

TWO STARS

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