

[← Back to Original Article](#)

Movie review: 'Creature'

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Perhaps the best thing that can be said about "Creature" is that it has no illusions about what it is: a down-and-dirty, breasts-and-blood, creature-horror exploitation picture that seems more from the time of late-night cable and clamshell VHS boxes than an era of mobile downloads and VOD.

A group of kids — some are related, some are dating and two of the guys are just out of the military — are taking a shortcut through Louisiana bayou country on their way to New Orleans. After getting a little lost, they hear of a local legend about a man who, after his love was eaten by a white alligator, transmogrified into a creature that now rules the swamps and is worshiped by its denizens. Except it's not just legend, and the kids soon find their campfire party of dope, booze and getting it on is well and truly over as they now must fight for their lives.

Directed by Fred M. Andrews and written by Tracy Morse, the film apparently had such earlier working titles as "Blood Is Blood" and "Lockjaw," and one wishes the filmmakers had really just gone there and called it "Gator Man." (Now that would be truth in advertising!) Either adding to or maybe in part responsible for the film's throwback vibe, it is produced by veteran filmmaker Sid Sheinberg and his sons Jon and Bill. With dependably creepy character actor Sid Haig to goose things along as leader of the locals, "Creature" is delightfully dopey.

"Creature." MPAA rating: R for bloody violence, grisly images, some sexual content, graphic nudity, language and brief drug use. Running time: 1 hour, 35 minutes. In general release.
