
special effects hair dye Retrospective: Judge and Jury (1996)

Posted by Richard Scheib - 2010/02/09 16:17

JUDGE AND JURY USA. 1996. Director/Story - John Eyres, Screenplay - Eyres, John Cianetti & Amanda I. Kirpaul, Producers - Eyres & Gregory Vanger, Photography - Bob Paone, Music - Jonathan Flood, Computer Animation - C.O.R.E. Digital Pictures, Miniatures - Glacier Entertainment, Special Effects - Larry Roberts, Production Design - Ron Mason. Production Company - Nu Image/EGM. Martin Kove (Michael Silvano), David Keith (Joseph Meeker), Paul Koslo (Lockhart), Thomas Ian Nichols (Alex Silvano), Kelly Peribe (Roland), Laura Johnson (Grace Silvano) Plot: Wanted killer Joseph Meeker is sent to the electric chair after being caught during a liquor store holdup. But Meeker returns from the dead, taunting and pursuing Michael Silvano, the former cop who apprehended him during the robbery, determined to obtain revenge for Silvano's accidental shooting of his girlfriend during the holdup. 'Judge and Jury' is a variant on the killers-back-from-the-electric-chair mini-theme that was briefly the in-thing around 1989-90 with the likes of 'Shocker', 'The Horror Show' and 'The First Power'. All of these were forgettable B-movies and, unlike the recent 'Fallen' which gave this mini-genre its first respectable treatment, 'Judge and Jury' is no different to any of these others. Its' major difference over its predecessors is its treating the exercise as less of a horror film than as a sort of supernatural action film with villain David Keith pursuing hero Kove amid car chases and lots of explosions, with his principal weapon being a shotgun as opposed to any ghostly arsenal of tricks. The film is made by John Eyres. Eyres has previously made such direct-to-video efforts as the 'Project: Shadowchaser' films and 'Monolith' (1994). To say that 'Judge and Jury' is Eyres' best film to date does not come as any great recommendation - certainly it is never a film that rises above the wholly average in any way. Eyres pays even less lip service than most action directors to the nominal need for a plot to connect action sequences together. The 'Project: Shadowchaser' films are astounding for the completely minimalistic motivation with which the proceedings are conducted. 'Judge and Jury' is a marginal improvement with Eyres at least paying some attention to character (or at least actor-driven scenes) at the beginning - there's a nice scene with Keith taunting a priest who reads him the last rites. Although the rest of the film is like a single 90 minute chase sequence without any stops for plot, character development, or anything. Eyres has improved stylistically as a director to a certain extent, with some sequences being occasionally evocative rather than the mindless brutalizing action of earlier Eyres films like 'Project: Shadowchaser II'. (Although there is one very contrivedly silly sequence which requires hero Kove to kick a goal with a flaming football). On Eyres' side is David Keith who has never appeared to be having more fun in a role than he is having here, playing wildly over the top while getting to dress as everything from an Elvis impersonator, a French chef (with an accent and mustache that both seem to be competition to be the most outrageously false), a biker with a flaming orange hair dye job, in drag, a bespectacled academic in a tweed jacket, a clown and a stand-up comic. _____ Get Your Private, Free Email at <http://www.hotmail.com>

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