

Zombie gives horror fans a treat with realistic *Halloween*

Despite the presence of a few tricky horror movie clichés, the reimagined story of Michael Myers' first killing spree is chilling



filmreview

Halloween

Now Playing
Written and Directed
by Rob Zombie
Starring Daeg Faerch and Tyler Mane

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Rob Zombie is an insane genius. Only a madman would dare remake John Carpenter's classic *Halloween*, restrain the amount of gore and deaths, make it realistic instead of exaggerated, cast complete unknowns in leading roles, release it on 31 August, and expect it to be a financial success.

With so little marketing potential, the movie could only hope to make money if it was so creepy, horrific, and fantastic that it didn't need any advertising to begin with. Against all odds, Rob Zombie took the simple story—a young boy named Michael Myers (Daeg Faerch) kills people, then grows up into an adult (Tyler Mane) that does the same—and created one of the greatest horror movies of the decade.

Zombie's decision to utilize less gore and go for a very realistic horror film was completely justified. While that choice made the death scenes less spectacular than those found in the *Saw* series, they leave a much deeper psychological impact. One victim is beaten to death over a five minute period, and while that time isn't particularly gory, the screams of the soon-to-be-deceased and Myers' dead, expressionless face will make even veterans of horror films cringe.

Zombie's recreation of Michael Myers was another risky decision that ended up paying out in big scares. He spent a lot of time rewriting Myers to fit the profile of real-life psycho killers in an attempt to make the character seem real—and he pulled it off. The movie's star has lost the supernatural powers he enjoyed in other *Halloween* movies, but he's become more believable—and infinitely more terrifying—because of it.

Most of the clichés of horror victims running into a graveyard or trapping themselves on the second floor of their homes are absent. In this film, the characters make decisions real human beings would make if placed in their situation. People actually run to the bathroom and lock the door; if they have a weapon they try and use it on Myers—and they even phone 911.

However, *Zombie* shows how little these things matter when a killer like Myers is on the prowl. That lock on the bathroom and the front door will break with enough pressure. If you have a huge knife and fight an unarmed Myers, you're not necessarily going to win when he's twice your size. Guns aren't that useful when you have no training, are panicking, and have mere seconds before he gets to you. A police response time of five minutes might seem fast, but it might as well be a lifetime when a psychopath is hunting you. The point *Zombie* makes is that your survival is based on luck more than on what actions you take.

Still, even this horror movie suffers from some problems. *Zombie* couldn't resist leaving in a few horror movie trademarks—bloodied naked women running for their life, a seemingly bullet-proof killer, and a host of plot holes—that regrettably all serve to detract from the realism he set out.

The last half of the movie felt rushed, ironically, because the first part was so brilliantly done. In remaking *Halloween*, *Zombie* should have taken one more risk: dropping all clichés and extending the movie by half an hour so that he could take it from brilliant to perfection.

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The adult Myers is much larger than any of his other incarnations, making his overpowering physical feats seem plausible. In contrast, the young Myers doesn't look like a threat, but Faerch's excellent performance prevents him from coming off as silly, and therefore manages to be more horrifying than his adult counterpart. All of these factors transform Myers from just another slasher villain into a real and tangible threat.

But *Zombie*'s masterstroke is the way he instills terror while keeping an air of

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