

# *Attack of the Moon Zombies*

A film by:

Christopher R. Mihm

From the DVD promotional statement:

*"Attack of the Moon Zombies," Christopher R. Mihm's sixth fabulous foray into the realm of 1950's drive-in style cinema, is a rollicking combination of science-fiction, horror and fun!*

*Twenty years have passed since Dr. Vincent Edwards (Mike Cook) battled a certain radiation-mutated bat creature and is ready to retire. While training his replacement on the Jackson Lunar Base, the two stumble upon a seemingly impossible discovery: alien plant life of the surface of the moon! Unfortunately, exposure to the spores of this otherworldly flora cause instant death. Even worse, those killed don't stay dead and instead, want nothing more than to replicate!*

*This era-appropriate black and white masterpiece features amazing "state-of-the-art" special effects and a strong cast, while packing an emotional wallop that may surprise you!*

I have allowed myself to develop the lazy habit of using the DVD promos to explain what Chris's films are about. I have done this for a simple reason: he does a much better job of it than I would!

The film runs 99 minutes in length and the DVD options include an alternate Esperanto language track. Now, THAT is something I have not seen before!

It has also been a lot of fun for me to recall which of the classics Chris has drawn from for his new offerings, for I am certain that what I am reminded of is not what he had in mind when writing the scripts. For this film, I am reminded of 1979's *Alien*. To me, this story is *Alien* but not really, which would not make sense anywhere else but makes perfect sense in the Mihmiverse. A better comparison would be *Alien's* inspiration, *It! The Terror from Outer Space* from 1958 and a member of the 1950s cycle of science fiction films which Chris honors so well.

Chris narrates the audio track solo this time, and this is something I enjoyed very much. He offers a lot of interesting information and insight into the making of this, his sixth feature-length film. He offers a great deal of insider information, and I am certain the fact that no one was with him to distract played a large part in this.

What I have come to appreciate about Chris Mihm so very much is his genuine love and respect for the 1950s B-horror and science fiction films, which

he discusses in detail. I truly appreciate and admire that his body of work as a film maker is an ongoing salute to an era many of us older viewers recall with a great fondness. As one who lived in the 1950s, I can testify that his knowledge of that era is excellent, and I believe all of us can agree that he puts a lot of heart and thought into his stories.

The story is set in the far-off future of the late 1970s. It is not easy to make a serious story concerning killer vegetation on a lunar base with such a limited budget but *Attack of the Moon Zombies* contains many serious, poignant moments, another indication of Chris's growth and development as storyteller and film-maker. In this story, many of the main characters are killed by the deadly plant spores. At one point late in the film, Dr. Vincent Edwards, (portrayed by the much underrated Mike Cook), recites the 23<sup>rd</sup> Psalm during a tense and emotional moment. In viewing this, I was reminded of the physical violence between monster and man in *Terror Beneath the Earth*. Sometimes, Chris is a little too good, given the context of what he is doing. Even so, Cook's performance in that scene brought to mind the ending to 1953's *War of the Worlds*, where God is given credit for answered prayer.

At 99 minutes, the film is a little too long but that will not bother members of Chris's Mihmiverse family of fans. There are frequent insider jokes, (for instance, there is a cook-book in the story titled, "To Serve Man", which viewers familiar with Rod Serling's original "Twilight Zone" television series will appreciate), to enjoy and in this, the sixth film of the seven Chris has completed to date, there is an impressive array of historical-to-the-Mihmiverse references interspersed throughout the film. Other nice touches include the photo of "President Jackson" displayed prominently on the wall, complete with his trademark pipe set firmly between clenched teeth; a vintage record player with an old vinyl disc playing "A-Rockin' and A-Rollin," (music from a previous Mihm film); and perhaps my favorite of all: a photo of Chris's father, George, on the label of a whiskey bottle. The elder Mr. Mihm was portrayed as the founder of the brand, and this is a neat way to emulate Alfred Hitchcock's famous cameo appearance in *Lifeboat*, where he appeared in a newspaper weight loss ad. Last, but not least, Chris himself appeared in *Attack of the Moon Zombies* as Ripley's husband.

The film's ending is not totally sad but not altogether happy. I will not give it away here. As I have said throughout this series, view the film on DVD or in a theatre if you can.

I have learned a lot about Chris in listening to his various audio commentaries. He has an easy give and take with his guest commentators. He will sometimes make fun of them but is also quick to make fun of himself. Chris admits that not everyone understands what he is doing as evidenced by some of the recent hack mail he has received. He is very complimentary to his casts and crew members. In his comments for *Attack of the Moon Zombies*, he singled out Michael Cook and Sid Korpi, in her first major role for Chris, for special praise.

Sid was very good as “Administrator Ripley.” (Hmm, if you know your movie history, you will see another insider joke here. HINT: see page one). Chris gives Sid credit for defining her role and she really got into it. (Sid apparently got into it a little too well when she mistakenly hit her husband, Anthony Kaczor, a little too hard when he was dressed as a Moon Zombie readying to attack her! If I have gauged Chris’s personality correctly, he is probably still teasing her about this). Another actor singled out for special praise was Shannon McDonough as Dr. Hackett. Chris claims she is a great actress for 1950s films and has a nice scream. That may sound amusing in a derogatory way but is not. To be a 1950s scream queen was a career-making honor back in the day.

Now to my favorite time in these writings: random comments.

The moon zombies were an impressive creation in themselves, each designed and created by the very talented Mitch Gonzales. Chris’s monsters only get better with time.

Husband-and-wife team Anthony Kaczor and Sid Korpi furnished many of the 1950s props and cast members furnished many of the photos displayed.

I have learned, since becoming a member of the Mihmiverse, that I am not the only one drawn to what Chris is doing to uplift 1950s horror these many years later. Most of his cast members seek him out, wishing to help any way they can.

Shannon was quite a trooper in sporting a blonde wig you must see to believe and I will not say anything about Sid’s hairdo, lest she refuse to assist further with editing these articles! (Before I get in trouble, look at photos of these ladies out of costume. They are very attractive women).

And finally, my favorite gee-whiz gadget in *Attack of the Moon Zombies* was not his 1980s Apple PC, but rather the “interositor” video viewing screen. This triangular shaped viewer was first seen in the excellent *This Island Earth*. If Chris could truly invent some of the things he comes up with for his stories, the patents on them would be worth millions!

Happy viewing. The next, and last, in this summer reading series will be a review of *House of Ghosts*, released only a couple of months ago as I write this. *House of Ghosts* is a bit different, as it was filmed mainly inside the 126-year-old home of Anthony Kaczor and Sid Korpi.