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Greencastle, Indiana · Monday, September 7, 2009

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Real life horrors revealed in *Boot Camp*

Posted Saturday, September 5, 2009, at 9:40 PM

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By CAINE GARDNER

Film Critic

The most disturbing aspect of Christian Duguay's *Boot Camp* is the fact that places such as that depicted actually exist. Places that promise rehabilitation for troubled youths that are nothing more than entities of torture that do more damage than good.

The film begins with a trio of youths who have pressed the wills of their parents to the brink and now are faced with the reality that they are being shipped away in hopes of a brighter future. The scenario is the same each time. Two military-type persons come in, ask the youths the identification and then the quick ties come out and they are on their way to the South Pacific. But where they are going is far from being a time for some fun in the sun.

Mila Kunis plays Sophie Bauer, a beautiful teen who's pressed the buttons of her new stepfather to the breaking point. She is the last of the trio to be rounded up while she's at party and shortly after she asks her boyfriend Ben (Gregory Edward Smith) that they marry so she can get out of her home situation.

When she wakes, she's on a small boat in the South Pacific heading for Camp Serenity, with little knowledge of where she is and why she's there. Once on the island, she's quickly explained the line of command: the black shirts are the newcomers, the yellow shirts are a step above and the white shirts are youths who are at the end of the program and help run the camp.

Camp Serenity is run by Dr. Norman Hail, a shrink whose past is as murky as the youth he intends to rehabilitate and who utilizes brutal means to bring about a "positive" change in the trouble youths in his charge.

Sophie also learns the style of confession the camp encourages is a far cry from the silent, spiritual act that takes place on Sunday mornings. Here, you are asked to confess your sins and if you hesitate, fellow "campers" humiliate the person into confession. It is during Sophie's atonement, the reality of her situation comes to light and reveals the true torment that was her life.

Determined to rescue Sophie, Ben develops his own demons, so to speak, in order to be sent to the camp. Once there, he is quick to find a way for the duo to leave the island.

After a botched escape attempt by Ben and Sophie, the camp is shaken by the death of a fellow youth, resulting in Hail being consumed by his work in the only fitting way possible.

There are a lot of nice performances in the film and the casting is spot on. Peter Stormare as Hail is the perfect choice for a man consumed by his past and one who has an inflated sense of destiny regarding his future. The story is a tidy paint by

Raising Caine
Caine Gardner



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Caine Gardner is a Master of Panic.

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numbers story, but one whose purpose is more to shed light on a subject, rather than to weave an intricate tale for the big screen.

Boot Camp is a bare bones DVD. The only goodies provided is the trailer for Dragonball: Evolution, a flick that came out a few weeks back. Other than that, you're going to have to get your thrills with the chapter selection menu.

Final Cut: Boot Camp is far from a great movie, but I found myself involved. It's not the greatest vehicle for Kunis to display her talents, but she has moments that are pure and reveal that in time, she could provide the big screen with some sizzle.

3 out of 5 stars

Boot Camp

Starring: Mila Kunis, Gregory Edward Smith, Peter Stormare

Director: Christian Duguay

Writer: Agatha Dominik, John Cox

MPAA Rating: Unrated

Run Time: 100 Min.

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