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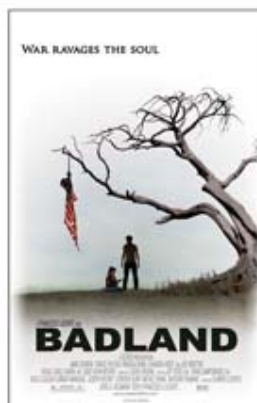
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Movie Review #5 - Badland



[Mood] cynical]
[Song ♪] Brian Littrell – Over my Head]

Actually we stumbled over this movie just by accident and were aiming to watch something entirely different. Sometimes I'm glad that things just don't turn out they way they were supposed to – this is one piece of a jewel! It is about an American soldier unable to cope with the realities of daily life after he returns from his tour of duty in Iraq. I'm sure this movie will stay with me for at least several weeks, with its searing pain and a wrecked, unforgettable beauty. It is harrowing and emotionally draining, certainly packs a punch.



To quickly give you an insight with as less spoilers as possible - it is an excellent film about the traumatic and dramatic results of war on the psyche and life of American soldiers when they come back to the States. We already know that war is physically devastating, but what "Badland" shows us is the devastation it has on the soul. Jerry is an American soldier who has tremendous difficulties to adjust to normal life again. To make matters worse, his wife thinks he is an f***ed up a**hole, they live in a sordid home and environment with three children and a fourth one is in the womb. Jerry commits something tragic (*not saying what ... would be a spoiler*) and as a consequence, engages in a drama-laden trip in his homeland with a constant refusal to accept full redemption leading to a tragic end for the only thing that could have saved him from himself (*can't say what again; -*).

I can only say that this should be a MUST for everyone, not only for those with origins or relations to America. Jerry: Honestly, I have never ever heard of Jamie Draven before, but he plays the anguished and desperate man with such a superb intensity, that I'll connect him with this role forever. He's able to portray the atmosphere of claustrophobia and desolation throughout the movie at just the right amount. Many of his scenes are quite spine chilling, but incredibly deep... All the inherent pain and guilt is deafening, brilliantly played out. Even after what he did, he still manages to capture the audiences sympathy. The relationship between him and Max says more about current war than any overtly political statement...

Celina: Grace Fulton truly is a wonder, wise beyond her years! She gives a tender and lighthearted relief to her bleak circumstances, performs exceptionally heartbreaking. I was immersed in feeling both, her physical and emotional pain.

Two Glitches. One so minor that I won't even spill it out here. The other - what actually happened to Jerry in Iraq is disclosed too late in the film. It seems of little consequence compared with the mess he's made of things since...

Writer/Director Francesco Lucente has given dramatic voice and a (rare) classic take on America's current "war of choice". You will think about the context of this film and it will make you want to take another look...

For the indecisive amongst you, another trailer:



Overall a spellbinding movie and I'm sure you cannot watch and **not** be affected by the emotional impact it has long after leaving the theatre. If you have considered watching "In the Valley of Elah", this movie is an even better go. It leaves you wondering just how bruised and broken the vets who come home truly are...

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