Zombie gives horror fans a treat with realistic *Halloween*

Despite the presence of a few tricky horror movie cliches, the reimagined story of Michael Myers’s first killing spree is chilling.

**Film Review**

*Halloween*

**New 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*, maintain the amount of gore and dialogue, 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 realistic horror film was completely justified. While that choice made the death scenes less spectacular than those found in the TV series, they leave a much deeper psychological impact. One victim is beaten to death over a five minute period, and while that tone isn’t particularly gory, the scenes of the soon-to-be-drowned-and-Myers-dead, expressionless face will make even veterans of horror films cringe.

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

The adult Myers is much larger than any of his other incarnations, making his overpowering physical form seem plausible. In contrast, the young Myers doesn’t look like a threat, but Faerch’s excellent performance presents him from coming off as silly, and therefore manage 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 masterpiece is the way he instills terror while keeping an air of realism. Most of the cliches 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 and human beings would make if placed in their situation. People actually run to the hallways and lock the doors, if they have a weapon they try and use it on Myers—and they even phone 9-1-1.

However, Zombie shows how little these things matter when a killer like Myers is on the loose. That lock on the hallway and the front door will break with enough pressure. If you have a huge knife and fire an assault weapon, you’re not necessarily going to win when he’s wearing your shoes. Guns aren’t the only useful thing you have on you, not panicking, and how mere seconds before he gets you. A police response time of the 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—bloody naked women running for their life, a seemingly bullet-proof killer, and a host of plot-holes—that regularly all serve to detract from the experience he set out to create.

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 time to develop all cliches and extend the movie by half an hour so that he could take it from brilliant to perfection.