

Destination: Outer Space

A Film by

Christopher R. Mihm

From the DVD promotional statement:

With "Destination: Outer Space," writer/director Christopher R. Mihm brings us another out-of-this-world, as-authentic-as-possible science fiction tribute to "1950s drive-in cinema!"

During a test flight of Earth's first faster-than-light-speed rocket, an unexpected incident throws test pilot Captain Mike Jackson (Josh Craig) halfway across the galaxy! Lost in deep space, our intrepid hero must use all his wits and derring-do to survive! Trying to find a way back to his home world, Captain Jackson embarks on an epic adventure full of perilous space travel, mysterious alien planets, strange creatures, ancient robotic lifeforms, beautiful space pirates, an alien race hell-bent on galactic domination and much, much more!

Presented in glorious, era-appropriate black and white, and featuring special effects that would make Ed Wood proud, "Destination: Outer Space" is a classic thrill ride even modern audiences can't resist!

Being a newcomer to the Mihmiverse, and viewing the films of Christopher Mihm in relatively rapid succession, it has been easier for me than most of Chris's fans to observe the honing of his skills from one film to the next. In *Destination: Outer Space*, his fifth feature film, it is very noticeable that Chris is comfortable with what he is doing and is now an accomplished filmmaker. His films are more involved and there is now an established history to the people of the Mihmiverse.

This film took much longer for him to produce than the others. The previous films took less than a year while this one took more than a year. There was a greater intensity as there were more sets, locations and actors to deal with. Chris commented that it was very hard to make and coordinate this film. Most scenes contain at least one special effect and they are very well done. Chris could be a Hollywood special effects artist if he chose to do so.

The story begins at Phantom Lake, Camp Mukwonago, Wis., in the distant future of 1992. (In reality Carver Lake, Woodbury, Minn.). We see Captain Jackson, once again portrayed by Mihmiverse veteran Josh Craig, recalled from enforced retirement by a man-in-black named Gustav, (M. Scott Taulman). Soon, we find the good captain traveling alone through the Mihmiverse on a dangerous mission, bringing to mind the old *Twilight Zone* episode, *The Long Morrow*, which starred Robert Lansing and Mariette Hartley. In that episode, Lansing's character was taking a solo 40-year space voyage.

It has been fun for me in doing this series of articles to consider what I am reminded of when viewing a Mihm film, for, a little later on I am reminded of the bar room scene from the original *Star Wars*, (Chris pays heavy homage to *Star Wars* and *Star Trek* in this offering. The lens flair in the opening scene was a tribute to the 2009 movie *Star Trek*). Even later on we meet the robotic character named A.D.A.M who reminded me of Robby the Robot from *Forbidden Planet*.

The story is presented as a three-act play, although I prefer to think of it as a mini-serial. In Act One, or Chapter One if you prefer, we are with Captain Jackson as his spaceship becomes damaged and is forced to crash land on a strange planet. Chris uses the often used and very nostalgic trick of having the ship crash-land behind a mountain. In the second part, Captain Jackson is captured by the evil Yureena, played very over-the-top by Catherine Hansen and who is reminiscent of Boba Fett in *The Empire Strikes Back*. The bar room scene in this segment, taken from *Star Wars*, is in my opinion Chris's best work yet. Captain Jackson, who by now has skillfully fought and defeated numerous space villains, escapes Yureena and meets up with the super-intelligent robot A.D.A.M in the third part.

I do not wish to detail the story too thoroughly. As always, it is for you to view the DVD or see it in a theatre if you can up in the Minnesota area where Chris resides. I will say that Captain Jackson, who began the story in disgrace and forced retirement, spans the length of the story seeking personal redemption and thus experiences a noticeable personal growth, particularly after meeting A.D.A.M. It is pleasing to see that the dangerous mission and association with the thoughtful robot have given him back his purpose in life.

The film runs 94 minutes and includes many actors from the casts of previous Mihmiverse stories, plus a few new faces. I count a cast of 26 when reviewing this film on the IMDb – a huge number for a Mihm film. I would like to make special mention of Anthony Kaczor and Sid Korpi, in real life husband and wife, who make their first appearances here as the Eh-Donish man and woman and would go on to appear in the next two Mihm films, *Attack of the Moon Zombies* and *House of Ghosts*. This is the same Sid Korpi who is providing valuable assistance in preparing these articles.

So now, I come to my favorite part of review articles – random impressions. I hope you find them fun and interesting.

Once again, I say that Christopher Mihm is the Roger Corman of his generation. Who else gets as much mileage from duct tape, cardboard and chocolate sauce (a very effective blood substitute in black and white films)?

The image of the alien spaceship was based on one used in *Plan Nine from Outer Space*. I am pleased to say I noticed it before Chris mentioned it on the

audio commentary.

The fight scenes were choreographed very well. It is amusing to see Captain Jackson as a highly skilled combatant. He never loses a fight and barely flinches when taking a hard punch.

Chris made it a little easier for reviewers to document his futuristic scientific devices. This time, the gee-whiz machine was simply a hand-held "Knowledge Transfer Device," which downloaded encyclopedic knowledge to Captain Jackson in a matter of seconds.

One of many impressive fight scenes was when Captain Jackson had to defeat the eyeball creatures, or Oculons, which fired lightning-fast death rays from their eyeball heads. They were taken from a movie named *Planet 51*, which I had never heard of. I thought I knew them all.

Chris mentioned in the commentary that in 1950s films, there was no ambiguity. All good guys and villains were well-defined in black and white, good guy vs. bad guy (or gal!) roles. For the most part, there were no shades of gray and little time was spent on anguished, moral choices. That wasn't always the literal truth, but it is an excellent point. A perceived simpler time produced simpler storylines.

Chris is always very gracious in thanking fans and supporters. He lists all of the associate producers in the credits and states, "*Special thanks . . . to all of the fans and supporters of the Mihmiverse who keep it rockin' and rollin'!*"

And finally, it is wonderful to know that the reigning leader of the Mihmiverse has a conscience. The credits also state, "*No alien creatures of any kind were harmed in the making of this film, except Michael Kaiser. He was unintentionally whacked on the head a couple of times. Sorry, Michael.*"

Stay tuned, for next up is film number six in Chris's body of work titled, *Attack of the Moon Zombies*.