

It Came From Another World

A film by:

Christopher R. Mihm

If this film, the second by Christopher Mihm, does not remind you of the 1950s science fiction classic, *Killers From Space*, none will. Most of you, I am sure, are familiar with the bug-eyed aliens and the trouble they caused the good Dr. Martin, capably portrayed in that film by the late and great Peter Graves.

It is very evident that Chris was more comfortable in directing this film than he was his first, which is not surprising.

There were a surprising number of people in the cast. The main players were:

Josh Craig as Professor Daniel Jackson
Shannon McDonough as Julie Ann Saint Marie
Mike Mason as Dr. Frank Frasier
Michael Cook as Canoe Cop Gustav
M. Scott Taulman as Canoe Cop Sven

Deanne McDonald, whom I'd loved so much in the first film, was back as Elizabeth for one very amusing scene.

For the wedding scene near the film's end, which I will comment on later, Christopher, Stephanie and Elliott Mihm appeared as the pastor, organist and a wedding guest, respectively. Several other persons appeared as wedding guests.

It Came From Another World is in glorious black and white. It is 93 minutes long.

The film is introduced with the bold statement, "Based on a True Story." The story begins when Frank, (Franklin Fawnsworth Frasier, skillfully played by Mike Mason), camping alone, sees a meteorite fall near him. Investigating, a strange thing happens to cause him to go

into convulsions. The scene switches to Professor Jackson at home as he takes a call to investigate. (Josh Craig is back in this film to reprise his role as Professor Daniel Jackson).

The Canoe Cops, who enjoy a greater role in this film, take Professor Jackson to the site of the meteorite. It seems the meteorite has also caused a seismic disturbance that only someone as eminent as Professor Daniel Jackson can fathom. When they meet up with Frank, he is acting strange. He has lost track of time and is exhausted. When the professor and Frank make it home, Frank's sleep is troubled. We see his eyes enlarge and he arises menacingly from his bed. Next we see him getting up early in the morning in the bed of a strange woman. The strange woman was Deanne McDonald as Elizabeth. I have become a fan of hers and wish Elizabeth had enjoyed a greater role in this film.

Daniel Jackson and Frank Frasier are old friends and the professor goes all out to help him. Visiting the professor in his home, Frank is placed in a sub-atomic demonaculator. The machine finds nothing wrong with him. However, we see that he goes in and out of being bug-eyed. The self-proclaimed "King of the Universe, Ruler of all Cosmos" is taking control of his body. It was in the meteorite and somehow entered Frank's head. He tells Frank that his queen is still trapped deep in the meteorite and must be retrieved. He reveals they were imprisoned in the meteorite 10,000 years ago and he wants Julie Ann's (Shannon McDonough as the professor's girlfriend) body for his queen to inhabit.

Frank, now overtaken by the Monster, goes to the professor's house and hypnotizes Julie Ann and threatens the professor. World domination and ruling the universe are his aims.

In desperation the Canoe Cops are called back in. They hint at having seen this phenomenon before. We have learned previously around an evening campfire when rescuing Frank that the Canoe Cops are much more than they seem. They speak cryptically of their involvement in some very top-secret events, including their role in breaking up a plot to overthrow the United States government. They speak for several minutes and Gustav fears the professor has learned too much of the truth concerning their darker exploits. The

professor is lucky he did not wind up under the bottom of the canoe, never to be seen or heard from again!

But, Gustav and, especially Sven, are excellent trackers and, in their hands, canoe paddles are as deadly as Samurai swords.

So, back in the woods near the meteorite, a showdown ensues. Professor Jackson uses an asychogenic induction despectonalyzer to block the alien's psychic powers. It is only partially successful, as the professor and alien in command of Frank's mind duel with canoe paddles to what will surely be the bitter end.

I am tempted to give away the ending but will not. You must obtain a copy of *It Came From Another World* on DVD or catch it at a drive-in or indoor theatre in the St. Paul area near Chris's home.

This is a sneaky way to seque into commenting on the DVD. It contains a blooper reel, photo gallery, deleted scenes, commentary by Chris and Josh Craig plus an introduction by Dr. Ivan Cryptosis.

Allow me to offer a few comments, in no particular order as pertains to the story:

I loved the "home movie" of the professor and Julie Ann's wedding at the end of the story. Chris's placement of it onscreen gives it the look and feel of a 1950s one-reel home movie. It is very nicely done. (Hmm – gave a little bit away there, didn't I?).

Josh Craig once again sounds like he is on valium but that only adds to the atmosphere and charm. I love the way he plays his absurd role so straight-faced.

Shannon McDonough as Julie Ann St. Marie was very over-the-top as the professor's love interest. How did she become the professor's girlfriend? We are told by the professor that his previous girlfriend, (Miss Yates in the first film), died -- and that was it!

The hand-held radio metric spectro-meter looks like small box with TV rabbit ears attached. Chris makes cool looking stuff out of odds and ends parts from very ordinary things.

Once again the group just happens to have musical instruments for a sing-along around the campfire. "Paddlin' Along" is a song by Chris Mihm, who is also by himself the singing "group" Echodriver. I like Chris's choice of public domain music for other scenes in the story. There is also use of public domain film footage in one scene.

I also love the exaggerated affectations and pauses that are the trademark of Chris's early films. Christopher Mihm is a very talented and unique guy with an interesting style. I doubt anyone but he could make this sort of thing work so well.