

Til Death Do Us Part
A *Over Your Dead Body* Review
By: Adam Dombrow

How does that age-old adage go: “who hasn’t fantasized about killing their spouse every once in a while”? *Over Your Dead Body* takes that premise and really runs with it, to hilarious effect.

Jorma Taccone (best known for The Lonely Island music trio, or for the hilarious *MacGruber*) crafts a movie that is funny, smart, and surprisingly Hitchcockian in terms of thrills. You add in a perfect cast, along with some gloriously gnarly practical effects, and you have yourself a recipe for a disastrously fun time!

The cast of *Over Your Dead Body* is really where we must start to discuss this movie’s strengths. The cast is relatively small in this one—maybe 6 major parts—but man, does each and every one of them make it count!

Jason Segal is an actor I love—the man can do no wrong in my book—and he is excellent here playing Dan, a character comparable to the one he played in *Forgetting Sarah Marshall*, except that character chose violence instead of sadness. Early on in the film, when Dan’s (poorly thought out) plan to murder his wife is revealed, I kind of thought *crap, he’s going to be irredeemable and unlikeable in this movie...* Totally not the case though, as Segal brings the exact right amount of self deprecating charm and likeability that he does to seemingly every role he plays!

Samara Weaving is already horror royalty at this point—which is well deserved praise—but what I’ve always liked about her is that she has great comedic timing, and that timing is on full display here with her character Lisa. The interplay between Segal and Weaving really is the crux

of what makes *Over Your Dead Body* so fun, but the film also requires that switch to be flipped where you feel like the stakes get raised and everything gets real, and Weaving is perfect at being the catalyst for that switch at the end of the film's first act.

Timothy Olyphant is an actor who is at his best when he is allowed to show off how brilliantly he balances his comedic chops with an underlining sense of malice. While he isn't given as many zingers as the rest of the cast here, his facial reactions to the unfolding events provide just as many laughs. Once the time for jokes and hilarity is over though, there are very few actors who play a better malicious villain than Olyphant!

Keith Jardine (the "Dean of Mean" for my fellow fight fans) is tasked with holding his own here amongst some pretty heavy hitters, but he does a great job! Jardine's Todd is the perfect combination of goofy and vicious, and he plays off the rest of the cast wonderfully. I'd like to see more outings similar to this one from Jardine in the future.

Juliette Lewis, for my money, is one of the most criminally underrated actresses of our time; she stays busy though, and it seems like she only takes projects that interest her, regardless of how "high profile" they are. Lewis' Allegra might be the most unhinged of the entire group here, and she hits that exact sweet spot which will make you question whether she has just been manipulated into being so crazy, or if her character had this mean streak in her all along.

Aside from the acting being fantastic, *Over Your Dead Body* is pretty smart in terms of both the narrative structure, and in terms of its use of practical effects. Although I haven't seen the original film *I Onde Dager* (*The Trip*) that this is a remake of, I can say that writers Nick Kocher and Brian McElhaney did a great job crafting a Hitchcockian thriller with well set up twists and turns. The disjointed narrative structure here does an adequate job revealing the

character's motivations, and enhances the offering, which is so important to nail for the pacing in a film like this.

Maybe the biggest kudos I can give concerning this movie though belong to Steinar Kaarstein's special effects! *Over Your Dead Body* is *shockingly* gory—ultra realistic gore too—and all done using practical effects. I cannot emphasise enough how much the use of practical effects will (in my opinion) *always* elevate a production, and Kaarstein and his team deserve all of the praise for the work they did on this one!

Over Your Dead Body is a smart, fiendishly funny black comedy thriller driven by an impeccable cast, and features incredibly realistic practical effects. It's a great date night movie, if your date can stomach a little gore!