



OSCAR'S BIGGEST MISTAKES

by The SOS Staff



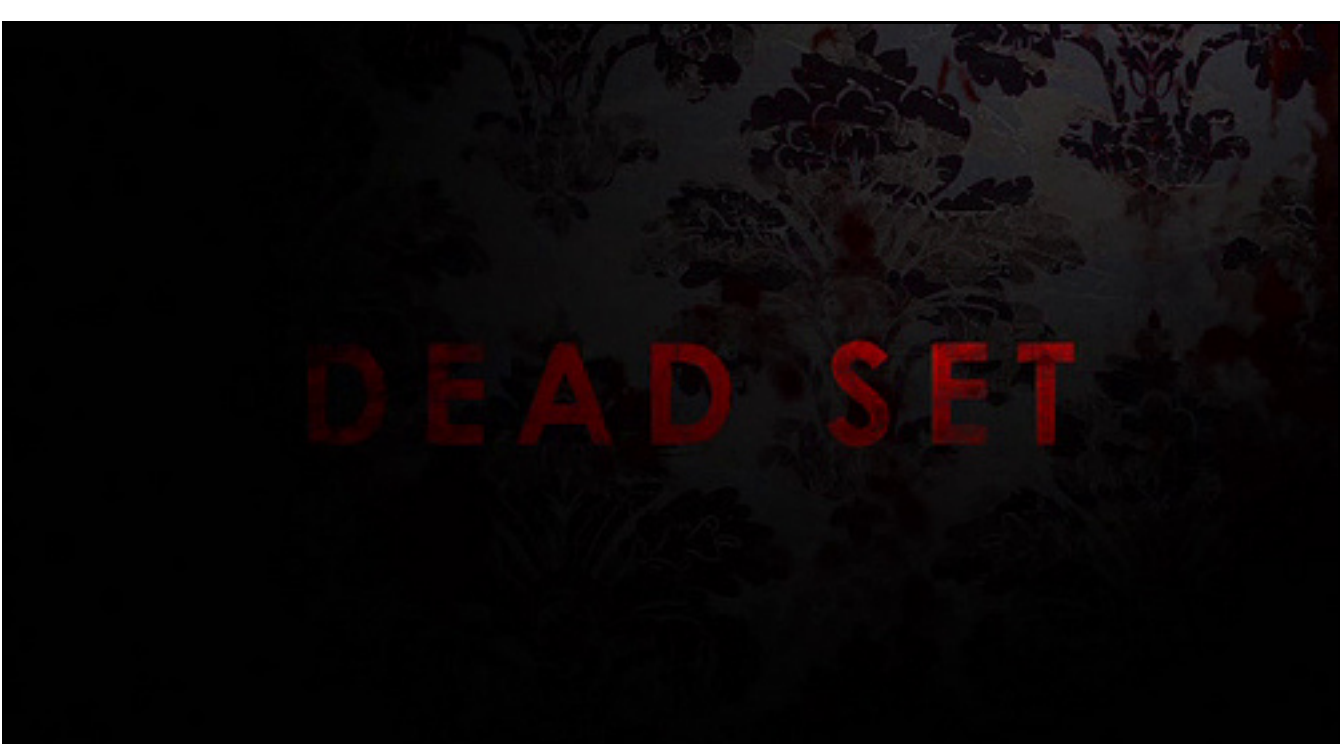
We are not the venerable UK film mag. Stop sending us their checks.

Home Blog Bonus Material Features Film Fests Reviews Podcasts Videocasts Spotlight Trailers TV RSS

Dissecting the Miniseries: It's no surprise Big Brother's watching 'Dead Set'

PUBLISHED ON FEBRUARY 21, 2012 BY TOPE IN DISSECTING THE MINISERIES

TAGGED: DEAD SET



Dead Set

(141 minutes, 5 parts)

Directed by Yann Demange

Written by Charlie Brooker

2008, UK, Channel 4

Dead Set is a damn good zombie film. Correction: *Dead Set* is a damn good zombie film in five half-hour parts. Or perhaps more accurately, *Dead Set* is a damn fine zombie miniseries that could have easily been assembled into a pretty good zombie movie but was kept nonetheless as a miniseries for whatever reason. Either way *Dead Set* is a pleasure to watch, to use the word broadly. As far as miniseries go, this is on the short end of the spectrum duration-wise, clocking in at 141 minutes including credits and episode recaps. Yet it is quite possibly this economy, this unyielding brevity that accords it such a visceral, brutal quality.

This British series premiered on Channel 4 in the tail-end of 2008, in late October, coinciding with Halloween, one could speculate. In fact, all five episodes were aired successively on the last day of October that year, like a movie. Penned by *The Guardian* columnist Charlie Brooker, the show itself was met with wide acclaim and Simon Pegg himself, thespian-scribe of horror-comedy gem *Shaun of the Dead*, wrote a lengthy piece in *The Guardian* itself in which he praised the series on most fronts while bemoaning the demise of the traditional "slow zombie" immortalised by George A. Romero in his touchstone pictures, replaced now by a speedier, more aggressive breed of undead: zombies on speed, the Running Dead. The kind of rabid beasts seen in Danny Boyle's *28 Days Later*. The Gen Y of zombies. Perhaps this is where Big Brother comes into play.

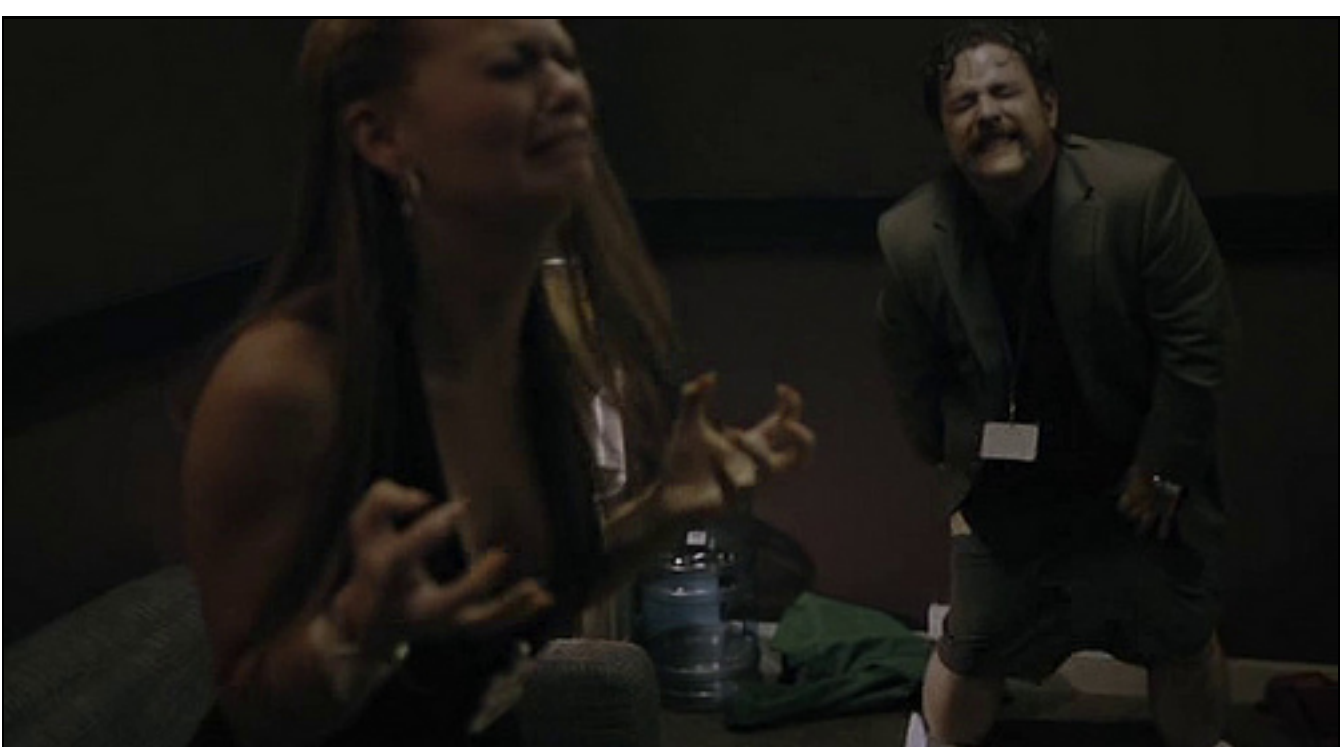


It is eviction night at the Big Brother house. A crowd of fans is gathering outside and the atmosphere behind the scenes, behind the two-way mirrors, is frenetic. The tubby producer sneers, cusses and dishes insults with relish, and one is immediately certain that this man will suffer a horribly merciless death at some point. A whole host of production staffers, most of whom will be dead before the night is done, put in their best to ensure a successful and entertaining eviction. Real-life Big Brother UK host Davina McCall plays herself and – it must be said – makes for a hard-headed and career-driven zombie. A strained romance is quickly established between a baby-faced young staffer and her boyfriend as they converse over a mobile phone. He is stranded at a train station in the middle of nowhere and the train is nowhere to be seen. She is meanwhile distracted by a co-worker she is crushing on and the work that is at hand. Then there are the volatile personalities at the centre of it all, the remaining housemates, chatting inanely and being generally unruly, none of whom are particularly articulate or respectable, but all of whom are wholly compelling (it must be said that this show cares little for audience attachment).The evictee is named, the tension is broken, and all hell breaks loose.

Little is known about the source of the outbreak responsible for the resultant chaos, and little effort is made to explain or even speculate on it throughout the five episodes. The only thing of importance is that the situation is dire and that survival is key. The protagonist of the show, Kelly, develops from a doe-eyed intern into an utter badass. On paper this sound trite, but Jaime Winstone plays the part with a conviction and intensity forgivable, even laudable, in a genre piece. Her boyfriend Riq, *Four Lions*' Riz Ahmed, is at the centre of a parallel and slightly less gripping but still engaging storyline, trekking through zombie infested marshland in order to reunite himself with Kelly, his raison d'être.



The breed of zombie Pegg bemoans might very well be central to the concept of *Dead*. Yet, whether or not they are a too obvious comment on the borderline aggression of celebrity culture, the mindlessness of mainstream television programming or the sheer speed and relentlessness of modern popular culture, the zombie has always been an subtle allegory and this miniseries follows in that tradition. As would be expected, the housemates living on this island are not privy to the apocalyptic happenings taking place outside the house and their moment of realisation is a highlight of the series, one which underscores the enormity of being a miniscule pocket of humanity in an ocean of inexplicable rabidity. But what makes this show interesting as a genre exercise is its sheer grittiness and naturalism, accentuated by tense and confrontational camerawork. Zombie films tend to exist in a slightly heightened state, possessing an element of the paranormal, however minor. Here, the brutal realism lends proceedings a doubly depressing, doubly disturbing and doubly exhilarating atmosphere. The gore and grime is quite frank, the effects convincing, and the atmosphere saturated with nihilism but also odd ounces of hope. A recent, bleaker English film in a similar vein, though arguably superior, would be *Kill List*.



Whether or not the ending comes across as affected or neither here nor there, *Dead* is thoroughly entertaining and a must-see for any horror lover or zombie fanatic. Miniseries or serialised feature, biting social commentary or trite social observation, *Dead* is great genre filmmaking stocked with colourful characters, wintry English dread and dry English humour, and gore and terror galore for those so inclined. Nonetheless one can't help but wonder why on earth this thing was produced as a miniseries.

- Tope Ogundare



2 Comments

Tope says:
February 24, 2012 at 6:16 am
Let me know what you think of it. I remember it being very good.

Reply

Stainslaved says:
February 21, 2012 at 7:57 pm
Zombie? Mini-series? Good!?!? Say, Hello Netflix Queue!

Reply

Leave a Reply

Submit Comment

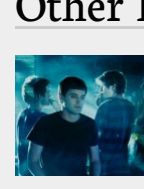
About Tope

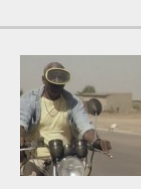
WEBSITE | TWITTER | 8 POSTS



Nigerian-Australian Sydney-based med student, film enthusiast and fledgling writer. Also a soccer fan and filmmaker in-utero.

Other Posts by Tope

- 

'Wasted on the Young' might be an understatement
- 

'A Screaming Man' would be sumptuous with a little salt

Search Sound On Sight: Search

Recent Posts

'The Snowtown Murders', a strong directorial debut, showing great promise for a first time filmmaker

PUBLISHED ON MARCH 2, 2012 BY RICKY

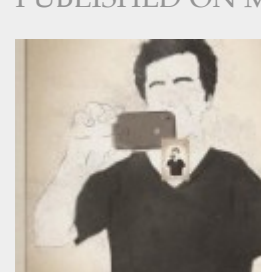


The Snowtown Murders Directed by Justin Kurzel Screenplay by Shaun Grant 2011, Australia First-time director Justin Kurzel and screenwriter Shaun Grant, using pointers from the books

The Snowtown Murders and Killing for Pleasure, tell the story of John Bunting, Australia's ... [\[Read the Rest\]](#)

'This Is Not A Film' chronicles Panahi's creative imprisonment

PUBLISHED ON MARCH 2, 2012 BY LOUIS GODFREY



This Is Not A Film Directed by Mojtaba Mirtahmasb & Jafar Panahi Written by Jafar Panahi 2010, Iran When the Iranian government moved last year to formally ban Jafar Panahi from writing or directing any future films for the next ... [\[Read the Rest\]](#)

Why Kathryn Bigelow Should Direct 'Captain America 2'

PUBLISHED ON MARCH 2, 2012 BY MICHAEL RYAN



At the risk of starting an infinite inspiration loop, I was reading Bill Mesce's amazing list Ten Terrific War Movies You Probably Never Heard Of (itself inspired by Edgar's review of The Front Line and our twitter debate about that ... [\[Read the Rest\]](#)

The Women of Downton Abbey: Downstairs

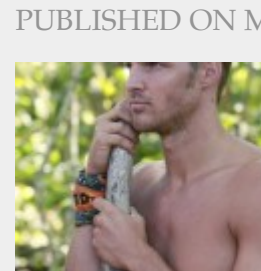
PUBLISHED ON MARCH 1, 2012 BY ERIK BONDURANT



"Spoilers ahead" While class separates the women upstairs from the women downstairs at Downton Abbey, and this class difference intersects with gender in various ways, they ultimately do share a common gender. Such is the uniting potential of shared social ... [\[Read the Rest\]](#)

Survivor: One World Ep. 24.03, "One World is Out the Window": The chickens rule the roost

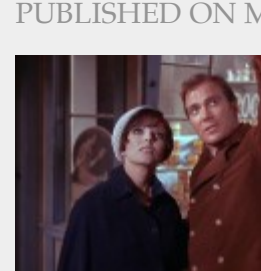
PUBLISHED ON MARCH 1, 2012 BY DAN HEATON



Survivor: One World Review, Season 24, Episode 3, "One World is Out the Window" Airs Thursdays at 8pm (ET) on CBS After only three episodes, it's clear that much of this cast have seen very little of Survivor's illustrious past. ... [\[Read the Rest\]](#)

Doing the Time Warp: 8 Great Time Travel Episodes

PUBLISHED ON MARCH 1, 2012 BY KATE KULZICK



In honor of leap day, those extra 24 hours we get every four years, a time travel list seemed in order. One of the most consistent and popular tropes of genre fiction, time travel opens up worlds of possibility and, ... [\[Read the Rest\]](#)

Sketchy Episode 4 - 'Mary and Max'

PUBLISHED ON FEBRUARY 29, 2012 BY RYAN CLAGG



Sketchy is the cartoon podcast from Sound on Sight. This week Matt and Ryan discuss 2009's Mary and Max, a claymation feature that examines the unlikely friendship between two outcasts. Enjoy! Listen on iTunes! Follow Sketchy! Twitter Facebook

Tumblr Round-Up: 'Neighborhood Watch' - 'Midnight In Paris' - 'Memento' and more

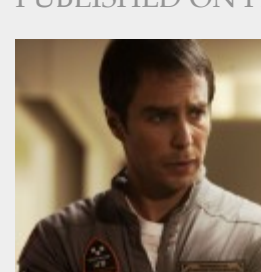
PUBLISHED ON FEBRUARY 29, 2012 BY RICKY



The Tumblr round-up is a compilation of images, links, posters, stories, videos and so on, taken from the Sound On Sight Tumblr account. We simply do not have the man power nor time to write articles on every interesting movie ... [\[Read the Rest\]](#)

Oscar Injustice: 4 Great Performances Ignored by The Academy

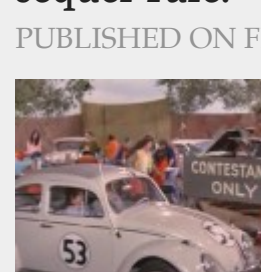
PUBLISHED ON FEBRUARY 29, 2012 BY SCOTT PATTERSON



With the Oscars finally concluded and cleared up for another year, with familiar lessons learned and perturbing trends set for the rest of the year, time comes for evaluation and discussion, thoughtful or otherwise. And one thing is clear: if ... [\[Read the Rest\]](#)

'Herbie Rides Again' deliberately breaks the sequel rule.

PUBLISHED ON FEBRUARY 29, 2012 BY MICHAEL RYAN



Herbie Rides Again Written by Bill Walsh, based on the novel Car, Boy, Girl by Gordon Buford Directed by Robert Stevenson USA, 1974, IMDb Listen to the Mousterpiece podcast about Herbie Rides Again or read Josh's extended thoughts about the film! ***** "The first rule of all drive-in sequels: ... [\[Read the Rest\]](#)

[View More Recent Posts...](#)

404 Not Found

nginx

Recent Comments

"Well, I'm not sure whether or not it qualifies tec..." by Carl Abudephane on Doing the Time Warp: 8 Great Time Travel Episodes

"I decided to see Snowtown at the Philadelphia Film..." by Mario in Philly on 'The Snowtown Murders', a strong directorial debut, showing great promise for a first time filmmaker

"Nice choice. You both get to the heart of this com..." by Mario in Philly on Sketchy Episode 4 - 'Mary and Max'

"Justified - Right now I'm still going with season..." by Mario in Philly on The Televerse #26- Spotlight on Luck/Deadwood with Previously On

"Kate, no, you don't understand, Rick's ultimate li..." by Ken from Chicago on Sound on Sight Walking Dead Podcast #19: "18 Miles Out"

"No No she needs to stay away from this movie..." by Anonymous on Why Kathryn Bigelow Should Direct 'Captain America 2'

"Very interesting article. You make a great point..." by Jammin on Why Kathryn Bigelow Should Direct 'Captain America 2'

"[...] second half of my special series on Downton ..." by Sound on Sight #7: The Women of Downton Abbey - Downstairs « The Movie Review Warehouse on The Women of Downton Abbey: Downstairs

"lol, re-Chicago/ Triggerfinger. I hear where you..." by Kate Kulzick on Sound on Sight Walking Dead Podcast #19: "18 Miles Out"

"First, Simon, I hoped you enjoyed your trip to Chi..." by Ken from Chicago on Sound on Sight Walking Dead Podcast #19: "18 Miles Out"