

## Blu-Ray Review: Riveting 'The Last Exorcism' Gets Great HD Release

Submitted by [BrianTT](#) [1] on January 11, 2011 - 8:31pm

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CHICAGO – Lionsgate may have somewhat poisoned the horror genre by milking every drop of financial blood from the “Saw” franchise but they are still easily one of the best studios out there in terms of Blu-ray product for those who love their movies scary. Look no further than the excellent release of Daniel Stamm’s riveting “The Last Exorcism,” a very-promising genre debut with a weak final act but more than enough to warrant to a rental.



Blu-Ray Rating: **4.0/5.0**

Previews for “The Last Exorcism” linked it to Eli Roth’s career to try and draw on his name value but it is not the gore-fest that connections to “Hostel” might have you believe. “The Last Exorcism” is much more subdued, intellectual, and clever than you might think. In fact, it’s very low on actually horror set-pieces, playing like something closer to the work of Lars Von Trier ([who Stamm told me was an influence](#) [14]) than a typical 2010 horror movie. Stamm’s movie is one in which the sound of a crying baby in a home where you know there is no child is the tool of horror more than flying body parts. “The Last Exorcism” draws on classic archetypes of the exorcism genre while also feeling fresh. Horror fans should definitely not miss it and even those who don’t usually rent the genre should take a look.



The Last Exorcism was released on Blu-Ray and DVD on January 4th, 2011.

*Photo credit: Lionsgate Home Video*

The great Patrick Fabian ([who Matt Fagerholm interviewed last week](#) [15]) stars as Minister Cotton Marcus in this faux documentary. The set-up is not dissimilar to a magician revealing the secret of his tricks in that Marcus is ready to reveal that he’s something of a charlatan. He can insert anything, even a banana bread recipe, into a sermon if he sells it in the right way.



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*Photo credit: Lionsgate Home Video*

For years, Marcus has been conducting exorcisms complete with fake smoke, sound effects, and other tricks to make them feel genuine. He knows he’s just putting on a show but the film raises an interesting point — if the “afflicted” feel better, does it matter? If Marcus is providing something that clears people of the demons that haunt them, even if those demons are purely the part of mental or emotional problems, why shouldn’t he continue to do so?

Of course, when Minister Cotton randomly picks a letter from the stack on his desk, he stumbles into the exorcism of his life. He’s contacted by Louis Sweetzer (Louis Herthum), a loving single father who has totally lost control of his daughter, Nell (a great Ashley Bell). The poor, possibly-deranged teen has been waking up covered in blood. Farm animals are being gutted. Can Cotton save Nell? Is it a tragic case of psychological damage or even physical abuse or something much darker?

Daniel Stamm wonderfully finds the horror in simple locations like a barn or a girl’s bedroom. Most of the best horror movies of all time have not taken place in a far-off location but in a place that feels familiar. The idea that horror can come home is the genesis of most true fear. And he assembled a remarkable cast led by Fabian and Bell. If they gave horror Oscars, they would be easy nominees in their individual categories.

The end, which even Mr. Fabian suggested was problematic, kind of falls apart. It’s such a confident work that the lack of certainty in the ending doesn’t fit. Despite the flaws of the finale, the majority of “The Last Exorcism” is riveting. And the HD transfer from Lionsgate is one of the best horror transfers of the year. The video is perfectly balanced and the audio, a key part of Stamm’s approach, is fantastic.

The special features are wonderfully-extensive with two commentaries and featurettes about not just the making of the film but real-life exorcisms. If, like me, you were hoping for an alternate ending, you’ll have to keep hoping, but what it is included here is often fascinating. It’s a wonderful collection for one of the best horror films of 2010.

#### Special Features:

- o Audio Commentary with Producers Eli Roth, Eric Newman, and Thomas A. Bliss
- o Audio Commentary with Director Daniel Stamm and Actors Ashley Bell, Patrick Fabian, and Louis Herthum
- o Witness to an Exorcism: Rare Audio Commentary with Former Exorcism Participants
- o The Devil You Know: The Making of The Last Exorcism
- o Real Stories of Exorcism: Interviews with Actual Victims and Participants
- o Actor’s Audition Footage with Ashley Bell, Patrick Fabian, Caleb Landry Jones, and Louis Herthum
- o 2009 Cannes Film Festival Teaser Trailer
- o Protection Prayer
- o Theatrical Trailer
- o Lionsgate Live - BD-Live Menu System That Lets You Access Special Content, Special Offers, Ringtones, and More!
- o BD Touch and Metamenu Remote Enabled for iPhone/iPod/iPad Interactivity

*“The Last Exorcism” stars Patrick Fabian, Ashley Bell, Iris Bahr, Louis Herthum, and Caleb Landry Jones. It was written by Huck Botko & Andrew Gurland and directed by Daniel Stamm. It was released on Blu-ray and DVD on January 4th, 2011. It is rated R and runs 87 minutes.*



[16]

By [BRIAN TALLERICO](#) [17]

Content Director

HollywoodChicago.com

[brian@hollywoodchicago.com](mailto:brian@hollywoodchicago.com) [16]**Source URL (retrieved on Mar 28 2024 - 9:30pm):**<http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/13079/blu-ray-review-riveting-the-last-exorcism-gets-great-hd-release>**Links:**[1] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/users/briantt>[2] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/ashley-bell>[3] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/blu-ray-review>[4] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/brian-tallerico>[5] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/caleb-landry-jones>[6] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/daniel-stamm>[7] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/eli-roth>[8] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/hollywoodchicagodotcom-content>[9] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/hostel>[10] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/iris-bahr>[11] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/louis-herthum>[12] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/patrick-fabian>[13] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/the-last-exorcism>[14] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/11633/interview-daniel-stamm-finds-devilish-inspiration-in-the-last-exorcism>[15] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/13022/interview-patrick-fabian-conducts-the-last-exorcism>[16] <mailto:brian@hollywoodchicago.com>[17] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/about#BRIAN>