

Film Review: Barry Levinson Jumps Into Found Footage Genre with ‘The Bay’

Submitted by [BrianTT](#) [1] on November 9, 2012 - 12:00pm

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Rating: **3.0/5.0**

CHICAGO – Perhaps the last person I would have expected to leap into the found footage genre made so popular in films like “Paranormal Activity” is the director of character-driven pieces like “Diner” and “Avalon” and yet here’s Barry Levinson’s “The Bay,” opening today, November 9, 2012 at the Music Box Theatre in Chicago. Levinson’s understanding of character elevates what could have been an absolute disaster but can’t save the film from its genre failures and lack of tension. It’s interesting but forgettable and sometimes frustrating.

The conceit of “The Bay” is that we’re watching a film cobbled together by a journalist and a team who want to expose “what really happened” in the small seaside town of Claridge over the Fourth of July weekend in which hundreds of residents died in gruesome ways. Using news reports from the day, home movies, and footage shot by a pair of Oceanographers who stumble across the genetic anomaly of the century buried in the water, “The Bay” has an interesting structure even if the set-up often fails the “why would they be filming this” test of found footage films. (It also fails the “why would they cut this together like a horror movie with slo-mo and loud music” test.)



[Read Brian Tallerico’s full review of “The Bay” in our reviews section.](#) [10]

“The Bay” is pretty simple – there are parasites in that water and the steroids that have been given to the chickens in the town of Claridge that have then run off into the water through their droppings have made those little bloodsuckers into man-killers. There may have been warnings for months; warnings ignored by the Mayor and other people in power. However, there are no warnings for the locals. One minute, they’re having a crab-eating contest and enjoying the dunk tank on a beautiful holiday. The next minute, said crab eaters are throwing up their insides and the dunk-ee looks like she’s melting. Levinson and his team spare nothing in terms of the ick factor. “The Bay” will gross you out.

At its best, “The Bay” works because of Levinson’s understanding of “average people in an average town.” The scenes of people trying to communicate with loved ones over Skype or through their smartphones have a palpable sadness. These seem like real people who become increasingly aware that their situation is not going to have a happy ending. Watching a girl communicate with her friend about the lesions growing on her body or footage of a doctor talking to the CDC about an epidemic for which they are clearly not prepared has a deep sadness that is often a missing ingredient in horror.



[Continue reading for Brian Tallerico’s full “The Bay” review.](#) [10]

“The Bay” stars Kether Donohue, Kristen Connolly, and Christopher Denham. It was written by Michael Wallach and directed by Barry Levinson. It opens in Chicago at the Music Box Theatre on November 9, 2012.



The Bay

Photo credit: Roadside Attractions

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