

## ‘Shark Night 3D’ is Stupid Enough to Be a Cult Film

Submitted by [PatrickMcD](#) [1] on September 3, 2011 - 5:44pm

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Rating: **2.0/5.0**

CHICAGO – “Shark Night 3D” is at the top of the food chain when it comes to the people-so-stupid-they-lack-basic-survival-skills category of horror thrillers, and has so many wrong elements it nearly swings back to be right.

The biggest problem with Shark Night is that it’s deadly dull in spots, and strangely judicious in how they show the actual sharks. The 3D per usual is useless, unless you like chunks of fish goo floating around your eyes. Believe it or not, the acting is quite sincere (and over the top), and some of the dialogue is of the so-bad-it’s-good variety, nominating it for future cult status. The production would have been improved by excising the dull parts, but then again if they were thrown out the film would have been about 30 minutes.

In a nod to its classic predecessor “Jaws,” Shark 3D starts out with the promise of obscure nudity and comely girl shark attack. Oddly, it then cuts to Tulane University, where 45 minutes of college kids borrowing the parent’s lake house ensues. We meet Sara (Sara Paxton), the host of the house party, and her pals Nick (Dustin Milligan), Beth (Katharine McPhee), Blake (Chris Zylka), Maya (Alyssa Diaz), Gordon (Joel David Moore) and Malik (Sinquu Walls).



How Convenient: Sara Paxton as Sara Stands in Front of her Lake House Without a Phone in ‘Shark Night 3D’  
*Photo credit: Steve Dietl for © Incentive Film Productions*

As the merriment is about to begin, there are some menacing elements. Sara was involved with local boy Dennis (Chris Carmack) and an accident she caused scarred his face. He hangs around with Red (Joshua Leonard), who ogles the gals and files his shark-like teeth. The local lawman Sabin (Donal Logue) promises protection, but faster than you can say Steven Spielberg, Malik is hit by a shark attack (loss of his arm) while water skiing. Everybody is a target in this salt water lake, as every form of shark is laying low in the depths.

The 3D is terrible, and mostly shows off by the computer addition of floating debris, both natural and visceral, and adds nothing to the shark attacks. The film has the advantage of creating computer generated fish, yet saves their savagery until a full 50 minutes into the film. Oh, they come out to play afterward in many variables, but why the delay? Didn't we just pay five extra bucks for sharks in 3D? Hard body college students going on spring is not the basis for the extra 3D fee, nor a form of government.

The stops, starts and absurdities makes the film feel four hours long, and it's only 90 minutes. First off, of course, everybody is pretty dumb in the film. As soon as one shark attacks, there should be sirens, bells, whistles and Fox News descending on the area. Nope, nothing like that, more like 'let's go back in the water.' In a truly epic sequence, one-armed Malik (after we've been told he's too weak to move) goes back in the water with a spear, like Captain Ahab after his Great White. I guess the entrance standards at Tulane have sunk pretty low.

The plot motivations are pretty moronic, even for the least discerning among us. Old Scarface, the ex-boyfriend Dennis, is the source of the sharks, and the better movie is how he captured and contained them in a salt water in Louisiana. The character Red is straight out of a backwoods "Deliverance" style film ("squeal like a pig"). and the screenplay unfortunately takes him too seriously. He is about as menacing as someone dressed in a costume as Red, which is how Joshua Leonard plays it. Realistically, these guys would have been found out months before the Tulane kids came along, but with this film it's best not to analyze too much.



Stirring the Waters: Chris Cormack as Dennis, Katharine McPhee as Beth and Joshua Leonard as Red in 'Shark Night 3D'

Photo credit: Steve Dietl for © Incentive Film Productions

There are a couple parts that could give Shark Night cult status years from now. The sheer sincerity of the actors playing the college students, so sincere it's laughable, and the performance of scene stealer Donal Logue. The veteran TV and movie character actor chews the scenery as Sabin the lake cop, and spits out terms like "moral relativism" with a relish that says future Halloween costume. His final scenes are virtually the whole movie, he's like a Batman villain.

Alas, this is not enough to shell out the big bucks. There are plenty of bikini pin-ups, dumb acting and Shark Week on the web to satisfy all the thrills inherent in the film, and for empathy all you have to do is think of the stupidest thing you've ever done, and you'll feel all you need to know about the character motivations treading water.

*"Shark Night 3D" opens everywhere on September 2nd. See local listings for 3D theaters and show times. Featuring Sara Paxton, Dustin Milligan, Chris Carmack, Katharine McPhee, Joel David Moore, Alyssa Diaz, Sinqua Walls, Joshua Leonard and Donal Logue, Screenplay by Will Hayes and Jesse Studenberg, directed by David R. Ellis. Rated "PG-13"*



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