

Rating: «««« out of «««««

Running Time:
87 minutes

This feature will be available for streaming Aug. 28 on Amazon Prime.

Laughs may be hard to come by these days, so it’s wonderful whenever a flick seemingly arrives out of the blue to provide some chuckles. Such is the case with the British title *Get Duked!*
, which melds horror movie tropes and narcotic-related humor. This is a small film that may not go down as the greatest comedy of all time, but does provide some entertainingly idiotic shenanigans that will more than likely bring a few smiles to the faces of genre fans.

The film opens with teacher Mr. Carlyle (Jonathan Aris) showing a film on the Duke of Edinburgh Award trek, a multi-day excursion into the Scottish Highlands. It’s a challenge that requires teamwork, foraging and orienteering skills to accomplish. Delinquent students Dean (Rian Gordon), DJ Beatroot (Viraj Juneja) and Duncan (Lewis Gribben) face expulsion if they don’t complete the journey. They are joined by a strait-laced homeschooled teen named Ian (Samuel Bottomley), who hopes to pad his university application with a completion certificate.

After heading out on the trail, the youths catch sight of The Duke (Eddie Izzard), a rifle-toting figure who resembles the Duke of Edinburgh. This villain terrorizes the quartet and states that he wants to hunt and “cull the herd”, wiping out youngsters that he deems beneath his personal standards.

The movie gets down to business quickly, with the teens and the threat clearly established within the first ten minutes. Initially, there is teensy bit of conflict and tension within the group as well as a bizarrely comical backstory involving the students burning down a lavatory. However, all four kids quickly make an entertaining and engaging impression. It soon becomes clear that the so-called wrongdoers are far from mean-spirited and their bad behavior is nothing more than ineffective posturing to try to make themselves look impressive.

Ian earns some laughs trying in vain to keep the group focused and goal-oriented. But the immediate task becomes the least of their issues after the sinister hunter starts firing upon the panicked group.

As events progress, there is a great deal of amusing material from DJ Beatroot. Some gags are derived from the character’s concern over getting mud on his fancy and completely inappropriate duds. The figure also earns some yuks rapping and rhyming his way through the conflict. In fact, every character gets a moment to shine and the slow shift among the protagonists from bickering to camaraderie becomes funnier and funnier as things become more outrageous.

There are also effective gags featuring officers at a nearby police station who use a board with increasingly ridiculous placards to detail the criminals and threats occurring in the area. Even Mr. Carlyle gets the opportunity to deliver an effective observation involving teenagers being allowed to participate in such a dangerous activity before he suffers some outrageous mishaps.

This is a stoner comedy, so the boys do take part in some trippy psychotropic experiences involving the use of drugs. The movie gets a lot of mileage out of heads expanding and warping onscreen after some illicit substances are consumed. Admittedly, not all of the hallucinogenic visions or gross-out gags involving bloodshed and scatological humor are hysterical, but a lot of snappy comments and bizarre sights do earn a laugh. And amid the gory slapstick, the movie ties things up nicely and effectively satirizes upper class elitism and snobbery in the UK.

The Scottish accents are thick and it certainly isn’t high art, but *Get Duked!* is a lively comedy featuring some likably knuckleheaded young leads. The end results will undoubtedly deliver a pleasing buzz to genre fans who favor humor over horror. This is a low-budget flick that hits the spot and takes viewers on an entertaining trip.

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By Glenn Kay
For the Sun