

MST3K Recap: 1104, Avalanche



Mystery Science Theater 3000: Experiment 1104

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Directed by Joel Hodgson and Robert Cohen

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There's just something about some movies that just *screams* "Made For TV". Maybe it's the roll-call of special guest-er, featured players. Or the way an expensive production still manages to look cheap as hell. Remarkably, this week's experiment *Avalanche* was actually made for theatrical release: were it not for some gratuitous-bordering-on-desperate-nudity one would never guess.

We open as usual on The SOL, where the bots are busy workshopping their version of *Mad Men*. Quisp gets name checked; someone check and see if Tarantino has been ghostwriting for the series. Afterwards, we find out a bit more about Kingachrome, Forrester's liquid video format. Jonah demonstrates the Mouth Vacuum, which works exactly how you think it does. Unfortunately, there seems to be a problem with the filters... The Mads, meanwhile, have created a computer that takes any phrase and turns it into a movie title with appropriate font and everything. Turns out "A Lighthearted Neil Simon Project" is the perfect title for a balls-to-the-wall action movie. Who knew?

Avalanche (1978) was written & directed by Corey Allen (no relation to Irwen, surprisingly), and spends two thirds of the movie introducing this week's gues-sorry, there I go again. Introducing the characters and banging them against each other in various overly dramatic ways. David Shelby (a very tired Rock Hudson) is building a fabulous ski resort in...I don't know, the Rockies somewhere. Among the guests are his ex-wife Caroline (Mia Farrow) and Nick (Robert Forster), the requisite doomsayer who wants them to close the beach-er, shut down the resort. Also in attendance are Shelby's mother (Jeanette Nolan doing her Berthe-from-Pippin bit), various reporters, alleged celebrity athletes and so on and so on. When the avalanche does finally get around to happening, things do noticeably pick up, even if a majority of characters seem to suffer from Spontaneous Common Sense Failure. In the end, the place is a wreck, and Mia takes the big yellow taxi out of Rock's life for good, off to hook up with Woody Allen and star in some decent films for a change.

In the first host segment, the 'bots have got Rock Hudson Fever, Jonah patiently explains to them why 70's style, what-kind-of-man-reads-Playboy types are *not* romantic role models. Especially

when they're wearing yellow plaids. "He [Hudson] doesn't *know* what women want, and he doesn't *care*," proclaims Tom. Ah, dear, sweet, innocent Tom. Righter than you know.

In the second one, the SOL crew is playing Marco Polo while Kinga frets over her imminent visit from Neville LaRoy (Neil Patrick Harris), a "celebrity space magician" with whom she's been having a long distance relationship for some time. His spaceship arrives, and they sing a funny-sad paeon to online-only relationships. The song's pretty good, very 80's ballad, and even Max gets a look in for a verse. It's interesting to note that this is the second time a Kinga-focused segment has dipped into pathos. It seems to be developing into a thing, if it's not too early to say so. Also, turns out Felicia Day can sing. So that's cool.

In the third segment, Jonah & the bots have a Very Serious Talk with us about the dangers of bad-on-purpose "hybrid" B-movies (*Sharktopus*, *Piranhaconda*, *Sharknado* and so on). They're on it, though: they've decided to come up with as many bad B-movie titles as they can and lay claim to them, ensuring they never fall into the wrong hands (looking at you, *The Asylum*). So if you were wanting to create a monster opus named *Lemonado*, *Pugslide*, or *Three-Toed Blitzsloth*, you might as well forget it.

After the movie, Gypsy comes out and entertains the SOL crew with a lounge act, and also a slightly disturbing body hanging down from her neck hose. Still, she's got a pretty good act. Personally, I think she's ready for the Admiral Lounge at the Akron Holiday Inn. And the Mads agree.

Overall a good one. More time seems to be getting invested in giving the Moon 13 folks character depth and backstories. It's a bit different than what we're used to, but not in a bad way. This viewer is looking forward to seeing where they take us, actually. Another good song, even if it is a bit of a downer towards the end. One funny note: when watching the weekly batch of thank-you credits scroll by, this viewer noted not one but two Drforester's in the list. Also a goodly number of real, actual doctors. Not a surprise, really: this has always been a show that appealed to smart folks.

Avalanche is an opus of high-budget corn from Roger Corman, who as always manages to make the most expensive production look cheap. In an earlier review yours truly read while gathering material, someone lamented the fact that it had never got the *MST3K* treatment. Well, all I can say is, they sure called that one.

What do you think, sirs?

Kelly Luck went skiing once; it wasn't nearly this interesting. Her other SciFi4Me work can be read [here](#).

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