



FILM: **BLOW THE MAN DOWN**

FDG RATING: 3.6 ☺☺☺☺○

Film Discussion Group (FDG) Scale is 1-5 (5 is best)

Danielle Krudy and Bridget Savage Cole: *writer/director team*
Sophie Lowe: *actress, Priscilla*
Morgan Saylor: *actress, Mary Beth*
Margo Martindale: *actress, Enid*

DATE: October 18, 2020

DISCUSSION SUMMARY: **BLOW THE MAN DOWN**

The campy, stylized nourish film, *Blow The Man Down* pushes the envelope of familiar film genres. (One discussion participant suggested alternative titles to capture the mood: *Olive Kittredge Doesn't Live Here Anymore* or *The Cohen Bothers Maine Vacation*.) Picturesque Easter Cove, a fishing village on the rugged Maine coast becomes the setting for three grisly murders that Mary Beth and Priscilla, two 20ish young sisters, try to cover up with the help of the "sisterhood" of older Irish Catholic women friends of their mother, Mary Margaret Connolly, whose funeral the town folk are attending in the opening scene. One woman, not at the funeral is Enid Devlin, (a flamboyant, eccentric "madam", close friend of Mary Margaret) who runs a bed, breakfast and "more", complete with a candy dish of condoms in the foyer.

The sisters have polar opposite personalities. Spirited, impulsive, Mary Beth, can't wait to break free from the town. Priscilla is reserved, thoughtful, and wants to stay and make a go of the family seafood market, although her mother's only legacy is debt. The evening of her mother's burial Mary Beth goes out on the town, to the local bar, and lets a local dirt-bag take her to his place. Accidentally, the trunk of his car opens and Mary Beth sees what looks like the clothes of a woman who was murdered. When the guy makes lecherous advances, a struggle ensues, resulting in her grabbing a harpoon and skewering him. Putting petty sibling squabbles aside, Priscilla agrees to help her sister dispose of the corpse (I won't go into the gory details).

The film balances amusing with purposely exaggerated horrifying. The girls are both befuddled and desperate. But the older women, know exactly what to do. Evidently, they have been attuned to one another for years, managing whatever needs to be done in their town, and once they decide to act, they slide effortlessly into their roles, as they always have, taking care of things, cleaning things up. As one critic described them: "These formidable females pull fast ones on the town's generally ineffectual males, with funny deftness". This is definitely a satisfyingly, female driven film. The supportive "sisterhood" bond was especially notable and appealing.

We loved the way the small fishing town was portrayed. Many discussion participants commented that the film made them want to visit Maine. Most of us also liked hearing the salty, burly fisherman singing the sea shanty, *Blow You Man Down*, in the opening scene as well as in other scenes really adding to the salty ambiance. (He had a wonderful trained, deep operatic voice.) The tune is a constant refrain in the film. One resident reviewer commented that the music was beautifully integrated. Another pointed to the dark, "how did we get in this mess, and how are we going to get out of it?" conundrum, also appreciating the way the movie was shot, the camera angles, the perfect amount of tension.

Blow The Man Down should be viewed tongue-in-cheek and not taken too seriously. The colors in many scenes are also overly saturated for effect, intensifying the campy, noir style. Those who were not put off, and could sink in, really enjoyed the original, suspenseful plot as well as the relationship of the sisters. They gave the film high scores that were drowned out by a couple low ones, resulting in a rippling 3.6.



See you at the movies!

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