

'Maniac' needs some work



By Jeremy Miller

"Maniac" is one of the quirkiest little horror flicks I've come across on Netflix. It stars Elijah Wood, Nora Arnezeder and America Olivo.

Frank (Wood) is a lonely mannequin shop owner with an oversized bag of issues (after all, he owns a mannequin shop). He's troubled mostly due to the fact that his prostitute mother wasn't really the best at keeping her occupation under wraps and he creepily watched her work most nights. The result was a pretty campy horror flick villain with an insatiable urge to kidnap and kill women, and shortly after he would scalp them and take the hair home and play dress up with his mannequin girlfriends.

At some point along the way he meets Anna, an up and coming artist who shows an uncomfortable interest in his shop. It becomes the subject of some of her photos. He develops a cliché stalker type crush on her and starts stalking her a little heavier than his ex-girls.



Now don't be too quick to judge him. He really tries to suppress this urge to scalp chicks and often we're exposed to inner conflict he has just before he does the dirty. It twists and turns and ends in a pretty insane climax.

What I liked about this one was that it was 99 percent first person. And I have to say, seeing women serial-killed through the killer's eyes is pretty unique and intense to say the least. There were times I was overly irritated at how cheesy and campy the dialogue became, and just listening to Elijah talk like a total creeper didn't feel as powerful as seeing him could have been.

The gore was pretty decent. It was well placed and realistic and never too much or too artificial. In fact, I thought there could have been more of it. To be honest, the first time stuff got real I was a little taken back, I didn't expect it to go that route.

I give it a mediocre rating simply based on the fact that sometimes it was just flat out stupid. Other times it was a successful horror flick that totally creeped me out. Most of the actresses were borderline talentless, but Elijah carried enough weight to keep the film afloat. Overall, it was decent. It was inventive, edgy and new. The script was as close to worthless as a major motion picture's script can be, but somehow I kept watching. With some more talent and a higher budget, some serious help on the script this thing could have been pretty wicked. I could see it scaring some for sure. I guess being a bit of a horror snob it takes just a bit more

than watching murder through Elijah's baby blues to get me terrified.

South Lake Tahoe resident Jeremy Miller has more movie reviews online.