If you're like me, you're wondering "why all the hype" for Snakes On A Plane? The movie raked at the box office this weekend, and generated as much hype as any flick this year. So we dispatched the talented Mitch Cyrus to the theaters for the straight skinny on this film ... and as always, Mitch delivers a solid review.

They are on a plane, poisonous, badly animated, and pissed as hell. And that's just the actors. The snakes are also there, and the mixture gives us THE most over-hyped film of the last several years. So does the film measure up to the hype? No…but I'm not sure anything short of another "Rocky Horror Picture Show" could measure up to a hype machine that was touting this as The Greatest B-Film EVER! On the other hand, it is an entertaining piece of way over the top shock and gag violence combining the components of all those disaster films of the 1970s ("Airport", "Towering Inferno") with creepy-critters phobia.

I normally don't like giving away much of the film, but if you've read the title, you already know what's going on. Super cool FBI agent Flynn, played by Samuel L. Jackson in exactly the style you'd expect, has commandeered the entire first class section of a red-eye 747 from Honolulu to Los Angeles to take a murder witness to LA to testify. The bad guys, as usual, are smarter than the cops, and have stowed away hundreds of poisonous snakes to take care of all the passengers, spraying pheromones to make all these male snakes aggressive, and wanting to attack everything with a pulse.

And do they ever. We are shown a few little snippets of dialog at the airport of a few of the

future victims, not that you'll remember much about any of them, except for the fact that you don't like them, and won't really mind when they die horrible deaths. It's Stereotyping 101 here, with the spoiled rich girl and her obnoxious little dog, a snobby Brit with bad hair plugs, a germaphobic rap star with his two fat bodyguards/assistants, a plucky single mother and her baby, a fat drunk in a muumuu, a stoner couple wanting to join the "Mile High Club", two young brothers traveling alone, and a flight crew made up of the prototypical older, wiser pilot, a male chauvinist co-pilot, a resourceful chief flight attendant (Julianna Margulies), a bimbette flight attendant, an older flight attendant on her "last flight", and a possibly gay male flight attendant.

I am sure Wes Craven was in the theater taking notes for his next slasher film regarding new and gross ways to have people die. You have snakes biting a woman's bare silicone enhanced breast, a man's exposed organ, an eye, a tongue, and other people just getting bitten multiple times in multiple places by multiple snakes. Not content with that, we also get to see people killed in panic stampedes getting away from the snakes (the guy getting a heel from a shoe imbedded in his brain through his ear was exceptionally nauseating). And just to be fair, there is one non-poisonous snake onboard, a giant python that gets to crush and then eat a passenger. Yum.

For the most part, the movie does play out like the standard Disaster Flick, with close calls involving children, bravery and sacrifice, planes plummeting towards the ocean, and lots of jump scares and gross outs. But it all works. Jackson plays the role dead-on serious, and even his famous line of "Enough is enough! I've had it with these mutheafuckin' snakes on this muthafuckin' plane!" doesn't come across as phony...just damn funny in the context he's giving it. Margulies also plays the role totally straight as the Heroic Flight Attendant that is always required in an action/adventure film involving a plane. For the rest of the cast? Totally forgettable, with the exception of how they croak…although Todd Louiso does a good job as the geeky snake expert in LA working with Jackson's FBI colleague to find out what snakes are onboard so they'll have the right antidotes ready if/when they land.

All in all, the story and action keep up at a good pace, and there are enough surprises and twists (other than the jump scares and twisting snakes) to keep you interested in 'what happens next', rather than just waiting for the next over the top killing. Just leave all your cynicism at the door, or else you'll hate it (OK…you might want to leave logic, and compassion at the door as well…and you might want to consider not eating a meal that might unsettle your stomach before going in).

The one good thing that has come from all the hype was the reported re-shooting of several scenes to put a little more edge to it, giving it an “R” rating. I think without that edge it would have slid too much into the realm of parody. But this movie is Camp with a capital “C”…of that there is no doubt…entertaining Camp that doesn’t seem to take itself that seriously. I doubt that Samuel L. is picking out his tux with snakeskin boots for Oscar night…but he’ll probably pick up a couple of MTV Movie Awards Golden Popcorn statues next year.

My Rating: Bill Nelson (2 ½ footballs)

Review Key:

Otto Graham: Over 4 Footballs. HOF quality movie

Bernie Kosar: 4 Footballs. Excellent

Brian Sipe: 3 ½ Footballs. Very Good

Frank Ryan: 3 Footballs. Good

Bill Nelsen: 2 ½ Footballs. OK. Well worth seeing.

Kelly Holcomb: 2 Footballs. Disappointingly inconsistent but some bright spots.

Tim Couch: 1 ½ Footballs. Poor. Had potential, but lack of support led to an overall stinker.

Jeff Garcia: 1 Football. Horrible. All hype; no performance.

Mike Phipps: ½ Football. “We gave away Paul Warfield for THIS?” level of suck

Spergon Wynn: No Footballs. UberSuckitude personified.