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Jamie Marks is Dead

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Jamie Marks is Dead

Abstract

This is a film review of *Jamie Marks is Dead* (2014), directed by Carter Smith.

Author Notes

Jodi McDavid is an instructor in Folklore and Gender & Women's Studies at Cape Breton University. She earned her BA at St. Thomas University (New Brunswick) and her MA and PhD from Memorial University of Newfoundland. Her PhD dissertation was on anticlericalism in folk and popular culture. Her current research interests include vernacular religion, the folklore and folklife of children and adolescents, and gender and women's studies.

Jamie Marks is Dead
(2014)
(Directed by Carter Smith)
US Dramatic

Who killed Jamie? This is the superficial question.

But "What does the death of an adolescent do to those it leaves behind?"



and, "How do teenagers explore death and the afterlife?" are the more complex questions explored in *Jamie Marks is Dead*.

Jamie's body is found, and no one knows how he died. What

follows is a self-examination by his schoolmate Adam, as he reflects on Jamie's short life, and his own mortality.

Jamie was a high school boy who clearly was bullied. It's possible his family was devoutly Christian, we learn he wore a Boy Scout uniform to school frequently, and that his mother had a year round nativity scene on display.

Adam wonders what he could have done differently, and clearly feels guilty about Jamie's death, so when Jamie approaches him from beyond the grave, he feels compelled to help. It's not immediately clear what Jamie wants. He seems to thrive on the attention he receives from Adam. Undoubtedly, other reviewers

will draw out some homoerotic tensions between the two characters, however, there's more to it than that; fraternal love is what Jamie craves.

The construction of masculinity is clearly a focus in the film, from locker room bullying, to Adam and his brother who are taking different paths as they embrace their "maleness." This film explores a touching relationship that develops between Adam and Jamie, something that they could not have in life.

Jamie needs help negotiating his next steps, and through this Adam also explores his attitudes towards mortality, murder, suicide and sexuality.

— Jodi McDavid