



January 2024

Krazy House

Christopher R. Deacy

University of Kent at Canterbury - U.K., c.deacy@kent.ac.uk

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.unomaha.edu/jrf>



Part of the [Christianity Commons](#), and the [Film and Media Studies Commons](#)

Please take our feedback survey at: https://unomaha.az1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_8cchtFmpDyGfBLE

Recommended Citation

Deacy, Christopher R. (2024) "Krazy House," *Journal of Religion & Film*: Vol. 28: Iss. 1, Article 39.

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.32873/uno.dc.jrf.28.01.39>

Available at: <https://digitalcommons.unomaha.edu/jrf/vol28/iss1/39>

This Sundance Film Festival Review is brought to you for free and open access by DigitalCommons@UNO. It has been accepted for inclusion in Journal of Religion & Film by an authorized editor of DigitalCommons@UNO. For more information, please contact unodigitalcommons@unomaha.edu.

Krazy House

Abstract

This is a film review of *Krazy House* (2023), directed by Steffen Haars and Flip van der Kuil.

Keywords

Blasphemy, Parody, Christianity

Creative Commons License



This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/).

Author Notes

Chris Deacy is Reader in Theology and Religious Studies and former Head of Department of Religious Studies at the University of Kent in Canterbury, UK. His PhD (University of Wales, 1999) was in the area of redemption and film, and Chris has published monographs which include *Christmas as Religion: Rethinking Santa, the Secular, and the Sacred* (Oxford University Press, 2016); *Screening the Afterlife: Theology, Eschatology and Film* (Routledge, 2012); and *Screen Christologies: Redemption and the Medium of Film* (University of Wales Press, 2001). Chris also writes regular film reviews, is writing a book about nostalgia and religion and has been hosting a podcast since 2018 called *Nostalgia Interviews with Chris Deacy*: <https://audioboom.com/channels/4956567>



Krazy House (2023), dir. Steffen Haars and Flip van der Kuil

Krazy House more than lives up to the name of the title, and at a packed screening in Sundance at least ten per cent of the audience walked out before the film had concluded. It starts as a satire of classic 90s US sitcoms, giving us families with absurd dialogue and inane lines treated by the audience as if these were the funniest things anyone had ever said. But this satire swiftly takes a different direction, with characters and dogs having their heads blown off and blood splattered on the walls, and there are demented religious flourishes too, including the father of the household being crucified and pleading with Jesus to take him down, and then, when Jesus approaches, a blade is stuck through his head and his body then falls on a burning woodpile.

We also see corpses of babies burned and thrown around as a weapon, and the teenage daughter (whom we first meet sucking bubble gum) ends up spewing out a baby, sired by one of the Russians who have ransacked their home. There is no subtlety here as *Krazy House* defies and parodies every politically correct dynamic, overtly offending anyone likely to be upset at bad taste,

and it relishes the slaying of any and all sacred cows. The family's surname is Christian, and as the name suggests this is a family of Christians, in which stay-at-home father Bernie (Nick Frost) plays the organ in his living room and expects his wife and children to sing along in an ode to the Lord. His son prefers science to faith, and has a chemistry lab set up in his bedroom, which also becomes the catalyst for the denouement where Bernie renounces God in favor of science, literally throwing his Savior out onto the fire.

The fourth wall is broken early on, and this reaches a crescendo when we see towards the end that as the Christians fight back against their Russian invaders with a score to settle, the sitcom audience has also been massacred, with a pile of bodies scattered across the TV studio. There is an attempt to play on the kind of trials that Jesus experienced in *The Last Temptation of Christ* (1988) in which the dutiful and humble Son of God of traditional Jesus movies and biblical epics is challenged to forsake his pre-determined path and renounce his status. Here, Bernie snaps and renounces the very faith which has sustained him, perhaps best exemplified by a scene in which he sticks a figurine of the Virgin Mary up the backside of one of the Russians and tells him that Jesus is now within him.

My problem with the film is not so much the sheer lack of etiquette as the fact that this is offence for the sake of offence. It knows that it is going to alienate audiences, but it does so for the sake of ostracizing a certain demographic for the simple reason that it wants to. There are no great messages here, no channeling of the Death of God movement of a previous generation. This is offence for the sheer hell of it, and while its free spirit is at times a breath of fresh air, it is not as clever or even as offensive as it thinks it is as there is nothing to undergird it beyond the drive to package offence as entertainment. Maybe, as Neil Postman lamented in the mid-1980s, we really are, through pop culture, amusing ourselves to death.