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**Storage (2009)**

By: [Julian](#) on January 24, 2010. [Share](#) [Comments \(1\)](#)



Anchor Bay (Australia). Region 2 & 4, PAL. 1.78:1 (16:9 enhanced). English DD 5.1. 90 minutes

**The Movie**

Cover Art



Credits

Director: Michael Craft  
Starring: Matthew Scully, Damien Garvey, Saskia Burmeister, Robert Mammone  
Screenplay: Michael Craft  
Country: Australia

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Make no mistake: **Storage** is a sleeper hit. It doesn't have the international marketing hype that surrounded the Great Behemoth that was **Wolf Creek**, nor does it have a few token Yanks to make it easier for that demographic to swallow, but don't be fooled: this is one of the best Australian films I've seen this side of **The Proposition**, and it's likely to be among the noughties' best locally made thrillers. It's an incredibly tight and well-paced piece of work and makes writer/director Michael Craft, who says his film was loosely based on the horrific Snowtown murders, a name to watch out for.

Matthew Scully plays Jimmy, a young man who watches a mugger stab his father to death for ten dollars on the way home from a late night screening of **Death Wish II**. At the funeral, uncle Leonard (Damien Garvey) asks Jimmy to work at his storage facility for a bit of a change of pace. Jimmy accepts and, under ex-SAS man Leonard's tutelage, he is shown the ropes of the dank underground building and is told the cardinal rule: what a customer puts behind the plain yellow doors of the storage rooms is their business. "If it's something really dodgy," Leonard adds, "come and see me and I'll sort it out".

Dodgy stuff comes through but most of it is of petty ilk: a muscle-bound tattooed drug dealer housing kitchen implements for his backyard meth lab, or an insolvent storing his furniture to avoid them being used as liquid assets. However, one particular client Francis (Robert Mammone) raises the ire of Jimmy, particularly when the young lad peeks into the man's storage unit and notices

a gun. Jimmy is caught, and this sets in motion a fatal series of events that require Jimmy and his beautiful co-worker Zia (Saskia Burmeister) to play detective.

A film that this one can immediately be compared to is Alfred Hitchcock's **Rear Window**: the viewer hasn't seen a murder be committed, and we're relying entirely on Jimmy and Zia's gut-feelings and circumstantial bits of evidence to identify Francis as **Storage**'s antagonist. The acting is solid: Matt Scully and Saskia Burmeister were both fairly good but Damien Garvey and Robert Mammone simply shine in their respective roles as sympathetic father figure and snarling bad guy.

In the making-of featurette on this disc, Michael Craft said inspiration for the film came after he helped his partner move property into a storage facility and it dawned on him that a horror film could be made in this sort of confined area. I think **Storage**'s narrow scope does it wonders: the budget was obviously tight and, save for a few sequences, this really is a one-location picture and Craft's intentions to give the location itself a malevolence of its own (see: the Overlook in **The Shining**) were very successful. **Storage** works because it uses the subtle, pervading menace that so often elude horror directors and most of it is down to the claustrophobic, limited location. Craft absolutely nails it. Interestingly, I found the only times **Storage** lost steam were when it moved away from City Storage though thankfully, these were few and far between. This is surely a testament to Michelle Sotheren's terrific production design of the storage facility, housed within the beef and cattle pavilion in Brisbane's RNA Showgrounds.

I don't think it's entirely right to talk about **Storage** as being a horror film. It's a thriller, and a particularly taut and intense one at that, but it has its own distinctive character. I wrote earlier, in passing, that **Storage** was devoid of a "token Yank" but I'll qualify that statement a bit more: the film is very local but not self-consciously so. Nothing here is going to tease out any cultural cringes, nor will it make you feel Craft is just trying a bit too hard to define his picture as quintessentially Australian. These are characters that are, on face value, quite regular to suburban middle Australia and it makes **Storage** all the more impactful. In sum, **Storage** is a rock-solid Aussie thriller, buoyed by a terrific pair of performances by two incredibly versatile character actors and a brilliant debut by Craft.

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## Video

Picture is presented in 1.78:1. It's fine, and that the film looks dearer than its budget is owed to Tony Luu's cinematography and some nifty editing by Geoffrey Lamb.

## Audio

A sole English 5.1 Dolby track. No complaints.

## Extra Features

Just a making-of, but it's very good. Michael Craft speaks in depth about his influences and inspirations (Hitchcock and Polanski's "pressure cookers" and Snowtown, unsurprisingly, chief among them) and the task that was shooting *Storage*.

An aside: it's nice to see Anchor Bay putting some cash behind local, low-budget productions such as these. A top effort.

## The Verdict



As I write this review, I'm reminded of another Australian thriller released this year, [No Through Road](#). Perth expatriate Sam Barrett's film shares a lot with *Storage* by way of execution: both films are low-budget and clearly Australian, are mostly confined to one location and are top examples of what's right with local genre cinema. This comes

wholeheartedly recommended from me.

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Toad on 01/24/2010 @ 21:55

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Some of the pacing (and for mine a touch of over-acting in spots would have knocked a few points off, but that said it's a terrific Aussie genre entry.

See this film.

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