

# Indie Horror Films

All genres of suspense, terror, and horror will be reviewed by Richard Gary. His address to send preview copies supplied upon request to rbf55@msn.com.

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## DVD Review: Zombie Babies

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### Zombie Babies

Directed and screenplay by Eamon Hardiman

Independent Entertainment

112 minutes, 2011 / 2012

[Zombiebabiesfilm.com](http://Zombiebabiesfilm.com)

[AlternativeCinema.com](http://AlternativeCinema.com)

[MVDvisual.com](http://MVDvisual.com)

Okay, with a name like *Zombie Babies*, y'just know this is not only going to be a comedy, but one of a broad nature. And yes, there is no subtly here.

I'm not quite sure when the story is supposed to take place, but I'm guessing around the time Roe vs. Wade had just passed in 1973. This sets up the premise where redneck "discount late-term abortionist" (\$10 per) Dr. Burt Fleming and his less-than-able-and-not-too-bright assistant Teddy decide to fight against legit docs performing the deed, and decide to have a "Abort-a-Thon" and use the old Jewish vaudeville joke punchline, "Volume!" They send out invites to couples to visit their decrepit building, once a hotel and casino, to have their wombs vacated in a party atmosphere.

Four dysfunctional couples accept the offer. Most of the actors who play the roles have an amazing amount of credit behind them (and upcoming), most in the sexploitation horror genre (the kind of stuff in which the underrated Misty Mundae would appear; if you know who I mean, you know the genre I refer). Needless to say, though I will anyway, there are lots of tats on both genders, and a number of body piercings present. In no particular order the couples are:

There is hooker supreme Capri (Desiree Saetia) and her boyfriend, pimp, and Thurston Howell III wannabe - right down to the cap and accent - Reggie (Ford Austin, who has had quite the career, having been in every genre from *Happy Days* [1978] and a semi-regular in *Night Court* [1985], to the likes of *Showgirls 2: Penny's From Heaven* [2011] and *Aliens vs. A-Holes* [2012]), who perhaps is named after Reggie Mantle from the Archie comics. Austin doesn't seem to take this too - er - seriously, in that he seems like he doesn't want to be there, and is less memorable for it. Saetia, who also chews the scenery in her role, comes off a bit better, having a nice tour-de-force performance about half-way through the film.

Another is the weighty and sweating Lewis (Shawn Phillips), who somehow managed to knock up knock-out redhead Veronica (Ruby Larocca). Of course, she treats him like a doormat, and he is desperate enough to accept that role. Phillips plays the role with just amount of whine to make him

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both pitiable and annoying, definite a hard and fine-line to project without delving into one way or another. He actually has a number of credits in the genre, such as *Girls Gone Dead* (2012) and *Blood Orgy at Beaver Lake* (2012). As for Larocca, well, she's actually been in a number of films I've already reviewed, such as Bill Zebub's *Zombiechrist* (2010), and some of the voices on the animated *Where the Dead Go to Die* (2012; [HERE](#)). She was also in one of my favorite titled films that I've seen, *The Lord of the G-String: The Femaleship of the String* (2003). She is also frequently in films with Mundaë. It's not surprising her credit list is incredibly long, as she seems fearless, as well as tattooed. As with much of the cast, she also has a history of writing, producing, and directing within the genre. This may be a silly film with bizarre characters, but these are some smart-as-whips actors.

The third grouping is manipulative baseball groupie Jami Lynn (Missy Dawn) and professional athlete Jackson (Dean Stark). Perhaps by coincidence, both these paired actors have the least amount of credits to their name: Stark has this as his only listing, and Missy's menu is three films, all by this director. Stark, despite being a bit diminutive for a pro baseball player, nails the character's vain and aggressive behavior, even if it's a bit stereotypical jock (and I have found many jocks in my life have this same attitude, so this is *not* a criticism). The wonderfully moniker's Missy is way taller than him, and gives the right edge to someone who expected more than the Jackson character can give. However, she is also the most willing to hit the sack than of the others.

The last, and most central of the ensemble, is loser tee-shirt entrepreneur Kevin (Trent McKelvin, a pseudonym for the director, Eamon Hardiman), and the nagging (don't really blame her; she just wants someone reliable) yet adorable Leah (Kaylee Williams). Of course Kevin is a bit of a hero while still being a zero – directors can give themselves that role – while Kaylee comes across as the most naturally accomplished and natural actor of the troupe.

And, despite the low budget and genre, this cast is actually quite strong, if goofy as all get out. Even when the occasional scenery chewing occurs, especially by the good doctor (I'll get to that in a minute), it's so much freakin' fun that you just don't care.

The – er – good Dr. Burt is played waaaaaay over the top with much glee by Brian Gunnoe, who, like most of the cast, has appeared in previous Hardiman films (including the *Porkchop* slasher franchise). Gunnoe portrays him with southern hillbilly aplomb, dressed in a white tee covered by a red... well, it's either a robe or smoking jacket, I'm not sure. Though he plays a mean blues acoustic guitar, he's not necessarily someone you would want to trust with as delicate an operation as this one, especially since he performs the procedure using the cheap type of white hangers dry cleaners give out, not even the more solid, copper-colored ones.

Meanwhile, Roy Cobb plays Teddy rightfully understatedly. Again, it would be easy to make him a complete and annoying moron, but he comes across as more dazed than deranged. That makes the character more dangerous because he's misleading. Teddy also wears a fez, for some reason, and a white, sleeveless tee-shirt with nothing over it, with his belly hanging out under the shirt.

Oh, and did I mention that Dr. Burt was well over 100 years old (not looking a day over 40), thanks to some mystery moonshiney type of concoction that he mixes in the basement, next to the bloody pile of excavated fetuses? That's where the story goes... hell, it's already so joyfully off-the-wall that by the time the formula starts bringing the fetuses to murderous life, you've already said goodbye to any sense of levels of credibility. And rightfully so, because, well, I mean, hell, you're watching a film called *Zombie Babies*.

When the fetuses become zombified, they're not necessarily flesh eaters in the (now) classic zombie sense as much as revengeful mutilators out to kill their parents (and others) in revenge. How the parents recognize the fetuses as their own, and vice-versa, of course, is a head scratcher in itself.

The revitalized babies are way too big to be merely fetuses, even late term, and they sometimes look a bit like some of the main characters of Full Moon Studio's *Puppetmaster* (1989). Two different types of puppets are obviously used, one with the hand up the back and sticks to move the arms (like most Muppets), and other times marionettes. In true DIY, indie, low budget mode, there are some joyfully sloppy moments, where the strings are digitally edited out, but the scene is also zapped, so you see some white lines where the strings were before. And in one case, you can easily see the shadow of the hands holding the sticks, while the sticks themselves were clumsily taken out. And don't get me started on the green-screen debacle of when the couples arrive on the grounds of the abortion casino. While in a big budget film this would be terrible, in this film it's all part of the joyous fun and *woo-hoo* lets-make-a-movie mode. If this was trying to be a serious film, even indie, I would be annoyed by it. But this is the kind of film you have your friends over for, to watch and yell at the screen, so it becomes part of the fun.

By far the funniest part of the film is actually a semi-serious conversation on white-on-black violence. Part of what makes it a hoot is the out-of-context-ness with the rest of the dialog, which includes the very quotable "We gonna kill us some fuckin' babies!"

The gore level is pretty high, including garroting and beheading via umbilical cord, a hysterical gauntlet of flying zombie babies/fetuses, and of course, what would this film be without the classic baby in a blender gag?

I can see both sides of the abortion debate using this film, though probably not up there on their attention plane, as proving their point (as was done with *Juno*). The anti-abortionists can point out that, "See, them baybehs is ahlave. 'N look how disgustin' them abortionists aw, y'all! (sorry, I have to

do it in a Southern accent. If I may digress, as I am wont, comedian Steve Landesberg [RIP 2010] – aka “Dietrich” on *Barney Miller* – once said that Southerners aren’t necessarily more racist than those in the North, it just sounds so much better to say, “hayng hym”).

As for the pro-choice, well, in a similar vein, the use of coathangers and the disgusting unlicensed abortionists also can be used as symbols of why the procedure needs to be legal (the side on which I am strongly leaning, FYI).

With its high level of amateurishness (if that’s even a word... well Microsoft Word recognizes it so it *must* be), zany levels of gore and ridiculous plot that seems to be written during a bender, shit, I had a lot of fun from beginning to end. This just flies by between the gore effects, the gross-outs (don’t get me started on how Reggie kicks it), the ample amount of exposed and colored flesh and plot holes that are harder to put together than finding who committed the JonBeney Ramsey murder (sorry, again; I just recently rewatched *ThanksKilling*). What plot holes? Well, for one of thousands, the fact that just hours after having the abortion, nearly all the couples connubially combine with their significant other.

You can just tell the actors are having fun. Just that so many of them have appeared in a few other films by Hardiman shows that we are viewing a good time that extends beyond the set. Will this offend? Let me repeat slowly for ya: Z-o-m-b-i-e B-a-b-i-e-s. Get some of them buddies together and have fun talking back to the screen.

Posted by **Robert Barry Francos** at 1:51 PM

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