

BATH SALT ZOMBIES (2013)

Inspired by horrendous real world events, Bath Salt Zombies kicks off with a five minute animated opening sequence that's presented like one of those old timey anti-marijuana "reefer causes madness" shorts, but with a foul-mouthed and bloody bath salt twist.

Then it's on to the meat of the story, which is set in a "present day" New York City that's actually a "not too distant future" in which there has been a major government crackdown on the sale of bath salts in the United States. Shops were closed down, imports stopped. Dealers and addicts have been driven out of the southern and midwestern states, migrating to the northeast, NYC in particular.



Junkie Richie's dealer gives him a free sample of a new batch of bath salts cooked up by an enterprising young chemist. Disguised in cigarette form, this super strong strand is said to be "the filet mignon of designer drugs". Richie becomes the first person to smoke it... and in the time it takes his pal Mona to strip to a song, Richie transforms into an out-of-control bath salt zombie and proceeds to rip his friend's face off.

Waking up covered with blood is enough to scare Richie into flushing his stash, but his addiction is greater than his fear and he's soon out to score some more of that new stuff. He even shares it with friends, who also become immediately addicted. Every time they smoke, they become rampaging, murderous maniacs.

As it turns out, the chemist made a major mistake when he was designing this strand, as he mixed in a stolen batch of methicathinone trioxin (there's a [Return of the Living Dead](#) reference in there), an experimental chemical that was developed by the military in the '80s and ultimately deemed too dangerous and inhumane to use against our enemies. Now it's being passed around on the streets of New York.



The Puppet Monster Massacre/Zombie A-Hole/Night of the Tentacles filmmaker Dustin Mills was commissioned to make this movie by producer Clint Weiler, who also provided a treatment for Mills to flesh out into the script. Weiler wanted a drug-fueled punk rock movie set in New York and to get it made he hired a filmmaker who, as Mill says about himself, knows nothing about drugs, punk rock, or New York. In fact, it was filmed in Toledo, Ohio, where Mills lives. Any shots of New York are either stock footage or second unit shots. Even though characters hang out in New York clubs, stand in front of windows overlooking the city, and there's a fight sequence set in the subway, they never actually set foot in those locations, they were green screened into them. That definitely looks odd, but the whole movie is so goofy and insane that it just fits in as part of the visual style. Some locations are entirely CG, like the military base that a CG Hummer arrives at early in the movie.

The scope of the movie strains the limits of its tiny budget, people who are so inclined could nitpick it to death for not being Hollywood perfect, but Mills did a good job with what he had to work with and fit in plenty of violence, some nice gore, nudity, a puppet creature... And yes, he works in characters named Iggy and Mona. They don't have sex in this movie, but Mona does get nude, and they do die.



There's even three separate massacres; one an action movie style raid, another a zombie feast, and the third a highly stylized sequence, sort of like a motion comic, in which Richie, his face deformed by the drugs, takes on an entire SWAT team single-handedly.

While the zombie horrors are going on, a lone DEA agent is out to put a stop to this trioxin bath salts business, and that agent is played by Josh Eal, who I was glad to see show up in this movie because he was awesome as the zombie hunting badass Frank Fulci in *Zombie A-Hole*. Eal's character is a badass in this one as well, decimating an entire gang of masked hoodlums as part of his introduction.



Some other actors who return from previous Mills joints: Brandon Salkil, who plays not only Richie but also every military soldier, gang member, and SWAT guy in the movie with his face obscured by masks or helmets and such. Ethan Holey, who voiced the lead character in *The Puppet Monster Massacre*, steps into a live action role this time. Jackie McKown plays a nicer character than in *Night of the Tentacles*. Dustin Mills and his dog Charlie both have roles. Notable new additions include Bella Demente, Dave Parker, who I recognized from his [YouTube channel](#), and up-and-coming actress Erin R. Ryan.

Bath Salt Zombies is an enjoyably wacky horror/action/comedy that's worth giving a watch if you're into this type of flick. I admire the effort that went into it, and even if you don't like it as much as I did, at least it won't take up too much of your time. It runs a brisk 64 minutes, followed by 6 minutes of slow crawl end credits.