

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.

Tuesday, October 1, 2013

DVD Review: Bath Salt Zombies

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Images from the Internet



Bath Salt Zombies

Directed, shot, edited and scored by Dustin Wayde Mills
MVD Visual

90 minutes, 2012 / 2013

www.Facebook.com/DustinMillsProductions

www.Aggronautix.com

www.MVDvisual.com

Am I a bit *tetched* in the *haid* because I enjoy films directed by Dustin Mills [HERE, HERE, and HERE]? They tend to be cartoony, about goofy characters doing absolutely ridiculous things, with lots of unrealistic gore, but from beginning to end, they tend to be an enjoyable ride through the land of giving up a level of disbelief.

The plot revolves around a junkie named Ritchie (Mills' stalwart actor / music / partner Brandon Salkil) who becomes addicted to "military grade" bath salts, which is explained to be a designer drug that looks like bath salts, hence the name. I'm sure this also has relative relevance to an apparent new real trend of getting "high" by inhaling Epsom salts (how stupid and desperate is that?; as moronic as swallowing a dry teaspoon of cinnamon, another new trend...but I digress...)

However, this particular "bath salt" is extremely addicting (once is enough), and has a propensity to make its user not just hyper, but insane, stronger, feel no pain, and, of course, hungry for human flesh to be ripped by teeth or hands.

The government, who is on to this situation, shown in total by Josh Eal (who also co-starred with Salkil in 2012's *Zombie A-Hole*), playing a G-man agent. Eal is great in a straight-man, "serious" as-is-possible character role here. He almost always has his sunglasses on, even while in a major fight and getting punched in the face. Again, suspension of disbelief is called for in buckets, but worth it. He plays his personality pretty flat, but in a good way, kind of like Eastwood or Bronson (d. 2003), rather than the blandness of Steven Segal or van Damme. Being just shy of a black belt when this was filmed (he has since achieved it, if I understood correctly), he choreographed the fight scenes, which often involved him and Salkil and Salkil and Salkil, etc. (will explain shortly).

Of course, as Ritchie's use progresses, so do the effects of the drug, until his overdose turns him into a raving and deformed maniac (see the cover artwork). Now, let me talk about Salkil a minute here, as he has the most screen time, in many different ways. In a previous review, I mentioned how much he

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reminds me of Bruce Campbell in his role as Ash Williams (if you need to ask who that is, you probably need to see more horror cinema). In this film, he brings to mind more of a Jim Carrey vibe, with the rubbery way he moves his body and face. Also, as in *Zombie A-hole* (2012), in a way he plays twin characters. There is the everyday, pathetic-yet-sympathetic junkie, and then there is charged up Ritchie, the bath salt "zombie" (of course, technically, he's not a zombie, but rather just a live flesh-eater... we need a new term for a living flesh foodie, such as in *28 Days Later*... but I digress again). He apparently finds it pretty fluid to go from straight, to manic, to maniac, and it works. I can see him on a hit sit-com at some point.

Amusingly, with one exception, every masked character is embodied by Salkil, including all of both the drug gang and the SWAT team. Ya gotta love being able to overlay images; it gives me an ache when I think of what Cronenberg had to go through just to get two Jeremy Irons in 1988's *Dead Ringers*. In one scene, Salkil kills a bunch of himself in the form of the SWATers.

Playing Ritchie's girlfriend Rita, much as she did in *Night of the Tentacles* (2013), is Jackie McGowan, a tattooed and pierced everygirl (meant complimentary), albeit a junkie. She is both fierce and kinda brittle, and plays that well as it seems to be her specialty in Mills' releases. Also joining in as Ritchie and Rita's friend is Mr. (Dave) Parka, who is better known for his video review vlogs [\[HERE\]](#).

Through the connections of the producer, Clint Weiler, there is a killer soundtrack with nationally known punk acts like the Murder Junkies (sans GG Allin, of course), the Dwarves, Antiseen, the Meatmen and the Gaggers.

One aspect of Mills I truly enjoy as a filmmaker is that he runs the gamut to simple cheezy puppets, to some highly stylized visuals. With each progressive film, and he is quite prolific, his technical ability improves. I hope he doesn't lose much of the kitsch factor the way some have, like Cronenberg and Craven.

When you watch this, you may just say, hunh, lemme see this again with my buddies. Not exactly a date movie (unless you're with the coolest girl in the world who loves these kinds of films!), but definitely a safer high than, well, bath salts.

Unrelated bonus video:

Posted by [Robert Barry Francos](#) at 12:01 AM



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