



STRANGE THINGS ARE HAPPENING

BATH SALT ZOMBIES

DVD, MVD.

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You might remember the sensationalist headlines from last year, when it seemed that a zombie apocalypse was underway as crazed lunatics under the influence of designer drugs known as bath salts were going on cannibalistic rampage across America, chewing off their victims faces while shrugging off gunshot wounds. Of course, the facts of the stories proved to be rather less clear-cut, but the headlines, for a while, were astonishing. So well done to Dustin Mills and Clint Weiler for spotting the filmic potential in the reports and quickly coming up with **Bath Salt Zombies**.

Mills, of course, is something of a master of making something out of nothing, as fans of **Puppet Monster Massacre** or **Zombie A-Hole** can attest. Just as well, as the budget for this film was a whopping \$5000. Bearing that in mind, it's hard not to admire this movie, a satirical, self-consciously cheesy tits 'n' gore fest that wastes no time (the film is 70 minutes long, but over five minutes of that are taken up with the slowest closing credit scroll you'll ever see).

The film opens with an animated pastiche of drug awareness films that is suitably amusing, before getting into the story proper. As the clampdown on bath salts has closed off traditional markets, new York is now the home for dealers and users, and a new, ultra-potent strain has just hit the streets courtesy of a renegade chemist (played by Mills). Unfortunately, this instantly addictive brand has some rather nasty side effects, turning the user into a deranged cannibal killer. Street punk Ritchie is the guinea pig for the new drug, and before long, he's a deranged, mutated flesh-eating maniac. Worse still, he's been sharing his supply with his friends. As the slaughter spreads, only a renegade DEA agent can stop the spread of the zombies...

With a soundtrack that includes The Dwarves, American Speedway, The Meatmen, The Murder Junkies and other bands associated with MVD, **Bath Salt Zombies** thunders along cheerfully, throwing in gratuitous nudity, cheesy splatter movie effects (including the world's most unconvincing spot of fellatio/castration), some decidedly questionable CGI and acting that ranges from the scenery-chewing to the stilted. All of which makes it surprisingly good fun. There's no pretension of art here, this is just cheerfully trashy zero budget horror. But as anyone who has seen a lot of this stuff can tell you, making that sort of thing entertaining is not easy, so Mills and Weiler deserve credit for making something that is not just watchable but actually good fun.

DAVID FLINT

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