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PUEBLO SIN SUERTE

Boomshadow Pictures, Inc.

by *L. Rob Hubbard*
and *Jason Pankoke*

1 Set in an unnamed west Texas town, **PUEBLO SIN SUERTE** is a moody, low-budget *noir* that ultimately promises far more than it actually delivers, just like all of the characters that inhabit this town. The film is set into motion by the murder of two women drifters, attracting the attention of numerous unsavory characters – basically, most of the town’s population – including one Sheriff Ross Sullivan (Webb Wilder), a disgraced lawman who sees this case as his big chance to make his name.

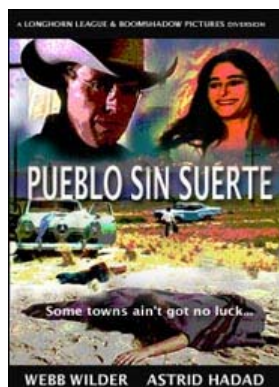
Like most things in Texas, **PUEBLO SIN SUERTE** aims big. It gets a lot of mileage from the atmospheric visuals, photographed by Clyde Aly, and a lot of its tone is influenced by **TWIN PEAKS**. The residents of the town are a collection of quirky, oddball characters, and pretty much everyone speaks in cliché-ridden, pulpish dialogue. The performances are pretty good all around. Wilder acquits himself nicely as the shady lawman, while Mexican performance artist Hadad is memorable as the *femme fatale* who may be helping or hindering Sullivan’s efforts. Despite all of this, the film comes up just a bit short; a little too much atmosphere and not enough story equals disappointment by the time the end credits start to roll.

The movie is presented in letterbox format on the DVD, which helps the appreciation of the cinematography even though some scenes become rather dark towards the conclusion. Two songs performed by Nick Lowe, “Failed Christian” and “Faithless Lover,” are featured prominently in the film, along with a score by Lee Brooks. No major extras are included, except for a short film (apparently made by the same people behind **PUEBLO SIN SUERTE**) called **POSITION OF THE BODIES**, set to a song by Patsy Montana and thematically complementing the feature. (*rh*)

2 My exposure to Webb Wilder isn’t really through his albums but a series of comedy-*noir* short films that he starred in while attending film school. Directed by Steve Mims and collected a decade ago on the out-of-print video **CORN FLICKS**, they helped build a cult following for Wilder through festival play and exposure on **NIGHT FLIGHT**. Rough around the edges with a backbone of droll humor, the trio – **AUNT HALLIE**, **PRIVATE EYE**, and **HORROR HAYRIDE** – at least demonstrated that his weary-eyed alter ego had some potential.

I’m convinced that a great opportunity to do right by the self-described “Last of the Full Grown Men” escaped the makers of **PUEBLO SIN SUERTE**. Apart from furnishing our eyeballs with some striking desert vistas, this would-be murder mystery challenges our patience with a toxic mix of creaky cliché, dust-bowl existentialism, unappealing characterization, and a nonexistent story hinging on the most fragile of red herrings. Certainly, the selfish spin doctor of a sheriff that Wilder plays here fits the hoary proceedings, but, *dang...*

Maybe Wilder purposely took the part in order to push himself as an actor, although watching him spill gallons of piss, vinegar, and spit while raking murder suspects over the proverbial coal is almost as misguided an attention-grabber as is listening to June Lockhart or Betty White swear up a storm in middling horror movies. Hopefully, other producers and directors will be smart enough to tailor-make roles that would benefit from the fella’s idiosyncratic qualities. Then, maybe, we’ll rest a little bit easier knowing that there’s justice in the entertainment world, even for those of us who wear glasses if we need ‘em. (*japan*)



PUEBLO SIN SUERTE
(TOWN WITHOUT LUCK)

An Eclectic DVD/Fly By Night Releasing video release
of a Longhorn League/Boomshadow Pictures diversion
2002, 35mm, Color, 75 minutes

Directed by Beau Gillespie

Produced by Addie Gillespie and Deborah Shapiro

Written by Charles Gillespie

*Starring Webb Wilder, Astrid Hadad, Clayton Gillespie, Michael Dawson, John Ryan, W.C. Weir,
Jeff Miller, Mikie Kelly, Ximena Cuevas*

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