



Iron Doors

Dir: Stephen Manuel

Star: Axel Wedekind, Rungano Nyoni

"I wasn't expecting *that...*" So goes the final line in this film, and it's safe to say, it's a sentiment with which the viewer will likely agree. A man (Wedekind) wakes up after a night on a town to find himself, inexplicably, inside what appears to be a locked bank vault. In there is a fluorescent light, a locker (also not accessible) and a dead rat. No food, no water - and, inevitably, no cellphone reception. As the hours go by, it becomes increasingly apparent that this is not the prank by his friends which he originally suspected, and that if he's to survive, he is going to be entirely thrown on to his own resources. It's likely best not to say any more, as the unfolding of the plot is basically the sole pleasure to be had here. It's not an insignificant one, but it falls apart simply because of the complete lack of motivation. The ending provides little in the way of explanation, and what it does just doesn't gibe with what we've seen before. There needs to be a great deal more logic, given the resolution, and the film's complete failure in this department damns it, to the extent that it feels as if the script was turned over to an eight-year old - albeit an imaginative one - for the final few pages.

It's a difficult task to pull off, holding the viewer's interest with what is basically one character (one intelligible one, anyway) and one location for the duration of a feature. I'd venture to suggest it's near-impossible, in fact, and it was probably about 30-40 minutes in here, before I started looking at the time. Wedekind isn't bad, sporting a nifty pseudo-Irish accent and with a hint of Adrien Brody about him. However, the not-so internal monologue which the restrictions of the plot require him to spout is too obvious for it to work, and there are a number of unquestionably cheap get-outs, such as when a loophole opens, for no other reason than it's necessary to the plot. The sheer concept is good, largely explaining how the film just about



manages to avoid sinking into tedium; you take note of the little elements in the hope it's going to come up with some kind of meaningful explanation to make you go, "Ah-ha! So that's what it was all about. I see now: everything makes perfect sense." The opening sentence of the review should clue you in to the fact that nothing so satisfactory is included in the pay-off.

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