

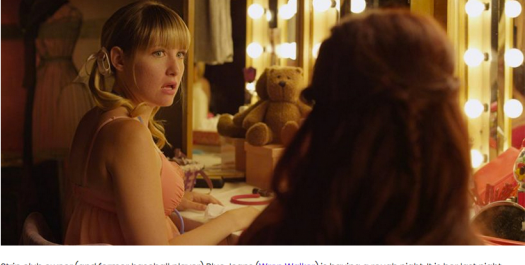


## "Peelers" (Wreck Havoc 2016): Stripper Horror Comedy With Brains In Its Head (And Plenty On The Wall, Too)

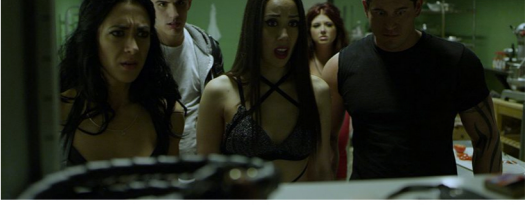
November 2, 2018 | Paul Cardullo | 0 Comments

Life as a stripper must be rough, especially when you have to spend a goodly portion of your time fighting off zombies and other monsters. At least, that's the message one gets from films in the stripper horror sub-genre. Most of the time, those films are not much more than low-budget exploitation fare. (No? Really?) Occasionally, one runs across a stripper horror film that is a bit more intelligent. Showing at the second annual **Wreck Havoc Horror Film Festival** in Greensboro, North Carolina on the weekend of 2018 September 30 - October 1, the Canadian independent stripper horror comedy **Peelers** (Wreck Havoc 2016) gleefully shows off its boobs and brains, and I do not mean just the ones smeared across the floor.

A strip club owner, her staff, and her dancers find themselves under siege when their patrons become infected with something that turns them into killers. Can they fight their way out without being killed and without getting infected themselves? The filmmakers combine smart dialog and sympathetic characters to deliver a better film than expected from the sub-genre. That is not to say that the film is not raunchy or funny; on the contrary, tasteless jokes and dark humor abound. Plenty of blood and grue is spread around by the end of the film, satisfying those that like their movies messy. Boobs, blood, brains (literal and figurative), and baseball skills are all on display, making for a funny, sexy, goopy good time.



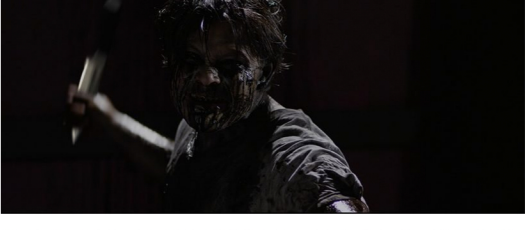
Strip club owner (and former baseball player) Blue Jeans (Wren Walker) is having a rough night. It is her last night running her beloved business, a small mining town strip club, after somewhat reluctantly selling the bar to a sleazy competitor. She has mixed feelings, as she cares strongly for her employees, but she just needs to make a change and get out of town. To add to the stress, her stepson Logan (Madison J. Loos) is hiding in the back after stealing a police cruiser, the jealous ex-boyfriend of her new dancer may show up and make trouble, one of her dancers (Kirsty Paters) is nine-months pregnant and could go into labor at any moment, and her cook is threatening to quit. To top it off, a quartet of workers from the local mine stop off at the club after work. Unfortunately, they bring something "else" with them from the mine, mutating them into nearly invincible homicidal zombie/demon things now killing her patrons. Can Blue Jeans use her brains and her baseball skills to keep her friends and workers alive and to escape?



Writer/director **Sav&C Schelenz** and cowriter **Lisa Devita** fill **Peelers** with clever plot points and sympathetic characters. Wren Walker's Blue Jeans provides a strong and sympathetic emotional core to the film. A former stripper herself, Blue Jeans cares for her employees and does what she can to help them and protect them. She is torn by her decision to sell the bar, but feels it is something she has to do. The audience wants to see Blue Jeans come out on top and to be able to lead her people to safety. Even though it is a horror comedy, there are a number of serious and touching moments sprinkled throughout. These do not seem out of place; instead, they help raise the stakes for the audience and increase the impact of both the horror and the comedy. The plot itself is well crafted, which is more than can be said for most stripper horror flicks. There's no randomness to who gets infected and how - it actually makes sense, though one does have to keep a close eye to catch when and where transmission occurs. The plot threads are set up and come together nicely. In addition to **Chekhov's gun**, the filmmakers also include Chekhov's chainsaw and baseball bat.



While it has its heartfelt moments and well crafted characters, **Peelers** still manages to be a wellspring of raunchiness and black, black humor. Taking full advantage of the setting, the filmmakers do not shy away from dirty jokes and humor of questionable taste - and this adds to the fun. The early scenes in the strip club (pre-outbreak) allow the filmmakers to play with dancers who cater to various fetishes to humorous effect. **Queef** serenades and golden showers are not exactly **Noel Coward**, but somehow, in hands such as Schelenz and Devita's, they reach just the right level of raunch without becoming trashy. Not all the humor is raunchy, such as a cute visual reference to Winnie the Pooh that slips in amongst the mayhem. The movie is not afraid to go dark with its humor either. One of the final gags can have some members of the audience questioning if they really "went there" - they did, and it is very funny - very sick, but very funny.

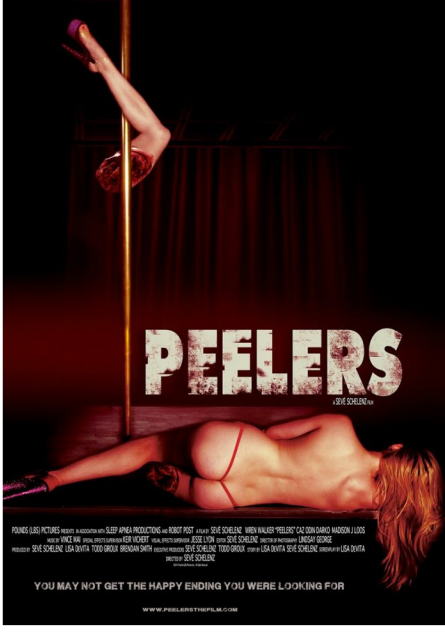


This is one goopy movie - gorehounds will not be disappointed. The infected drip, ooze, vomit, and blood nasty black "oil" from nearly all orifices, giving them an effective and creepy look. Stabbings, beheadings, and disembowlements are plentiful. Implements of mayhem include a chainsaw (yes, they work that into the strip club somehow), an office desk, and Blue Jean's beloved baseball bat. Sometimes, the filmmakers play hide-and-seek with the grue, with the results of the mayhem hidden until just the right moment, making it all the more impactful. Cinematographer **Lindsay George** takes full advantage of the darkened interior of the strip club, knowing when to keep the gore in the shadows and when to show it in all its glory.



**Peelers** is a funny, goopy, sexy, scary, and smart entry in the stripper horror sub-genre. Well written and with sympathetic characters, it keeps the audience engaged and entertained. Smart and filled with witty dialogue, it proudly lets its freak flag fly, as well. The filmmakers are not afraid to get raunchy nor do they shy away from going really dark with their humor. Blood, brains, grue, and "oil" fill the screen, to the delight of gore aficionados. Those looking for a smart and entertaining film full of blood, boobs, brains, and baseball should seek out **Peelers**.

**Peelers** ★★★★★ (4.3 / 5)



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