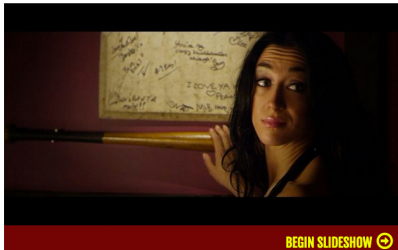


# Peelers Review

MOVIE NEWS PEELERS STRIPPERS ZOMBIES

BY CHRIS ALEXANDER ON JUNE 20, 2017

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## Peelers: Zombie stripper saga is a smart, sexy and bloody blend of lurid comedy and horror

It's arguable that hanging out at a strip club is a zombie-esque experience in and of itself. Not that I go to them. Actually, I've been a few times in my curious younger years and I concur with my opening statement. The way the dancers write and the patrons drool, dead-eyed and bleary, pining and lusting, I always found them uncomfortable. That energy, so aimless and more than a bit sad. A perfect venue for a horror movie. And indeed, there are plenty of horror movies whose action goes down at these "gentleman's clubs," from **Vamp** to **From Dusk Till Dawn** to **Zombies Vs. Strippers**. **Peelers** is the latest in this long, lurid line and, despite its low budget, lowbrow concept and tawdry marketing campaign, it's a really rather clever romp. And unlike the real deal bump and grind establishments, there's plenty of go-for-it action all over the place.

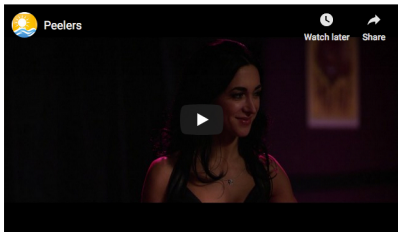
The film opens with a nice dose of hospital-set gore followed by a James Bond-esque opening credits sequence with dissolves and big fake boobs and writhing tattooed hips while a rather fetching pop song plays. We then move into a Scorsese-styled tracking shot that drags us into the a grubby little strip bar, where a rogues gallery of horny rednecks gather to watch their typical slew of comely dancers shake their stuff while tacky electro music plays. Such affinity for cinema's past reveals what level director Seve Schelenz (whose previous work includes (gulp) the puppy-spliation flick **Santa Buddies!**) is operating at and that's refreshing. Here is an indie filmmaker saddled with a quickie potboiler but refusing to let it just be another slab of flat, cash-grabbing junk. But his cast is also game, as is the witty script by Lisa DeVita that humanizes every one of the ding-dong dudes out to catch an eyeful. We like most of these characters, which makes the horror — when it hits — feel urgent and real.

And the horror does hit, almost as hard as its heroine Blue Jean Douglas (**Wren Walker**, who is great) does. She's a former baseball player turned small town strip club owner who is on the cusp of closing down her greasy little skid row dive and moving on to greener, less grimy, pastures. But as Blue Jean (don't call her BJ!) charms the patrons and trots out her sexy stable of girls (one of whom dresses like a baby and urinates on stage...yeah, it goes there), a fun loving gang of Mexican coal miners show up with the intent of blowing off some steam. Instead, the poor dudes are carrying a virus that turns them into vomiting, cannibalistic ghouls and the people they kill get up and kill. It's up the bat-wielding Blue Jean to bash-in the bloodsuckers skulls and save the day.

What we have here is a sexed-up remake of Lamberto Bava's **Demons** in a sense, with the movie theater being replaced by stage and decorated by an endless parade of gyrating female flesh. And man is it gory. Heads roll, torsos are torn, bile leaks out of every orifice, blood sprays on boobs... it's an endless supply of money shots from stem to stern. But DeVita's screenplay keeps reeling it back in with a delicate balance of humor and horror (watch out for the dancer named Thunder C\*\*nt doing her thing while ghouls tear people up backstage), which never tips too far in either direction. And the fact that a woman has indeed written the film means that the female leads are never cartoonish, with Walker's Blue Jean serving as a savvy, tough, sensitive and resourceful heroine. It takes a smart person to write something this dumb and real talent to stitch it together and make it this effective.

This critic watches plenty of awful indie horror and this film is not among that lot. **Peelers** is a fun, innovative, hot and bloody bit of mayhem, professionally made with flair. Here's hoping Schelenz and DeVita team up for more stuff.

**Peelers is available on VOD now and hits Blu-ray and DVD on July 4th.**



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