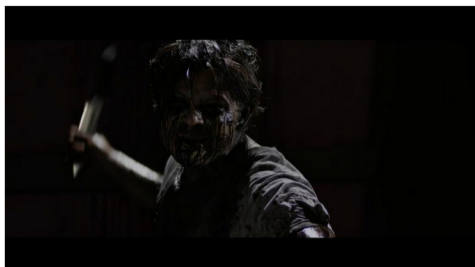


## ENTERTAINMENT

## 'Peelers': Horror film is inspired by two iconic flicks and a 'crazy' incident at a strip club [Exclusive interview with director Sevé Schelenz]

By Karla Tecson @iamkarlatecson on March 14 2017 4:15 PM



"Peelers" tells the story of a former baseball player turned small-town strip club owner who suddenly finds herself trying to put an end to a horrific blood bath. [See Schelenz](#)

With its fair share of blood, gore and nudity, "Peelers" is expected to hit a home run among fans of the genre. Apart from taking influences from "Evil Dead" and "From Dusk Till Dawn," the horror indie film is said to be inspired by real events in a Las Vegas strip club.

Director Sevé Schelenz revealed that "Peelers" was inspired by a crazy incident that happened to the movie's screenwriter, Lisa DeVita, at a strip club she visited in Las Vegas. Schelenz also described the film as a "beast" compared to his 2011 found footage film "Skew."

"Peelers," which will premiere in the US on Video On Demand (VOD) on March 28, follows the story of former baseball player Blue Jean Douglas. The small-town strip club owner, who's on the verge of shutting down her business for good, suddenly finds herself trying to put an end to a horrific blood bath. When a group of coal miners infected with a deadly contaminant spreads destruction, she has to step up to the plate and save her club, her strippers and her own life.

International Business Times Australia had the opportunity to interview the "Peelers" director and talk to him about the movie, the struggles of an indie filmmaker, his next project and the horror flick that "scared the crap out of him."

### International Business Times Australia: What is it with horror films that draws your interest into the genre?

**Schélenz:** I definitely love all genres of film, but you can have so much fun with horror. What drew me to the horror genre is the challenge to come up with something that really scares people. Everyone has a fear of something and while some fears are universal, others can be very particular. I wanted to delve into my own fears and see if others shared them as well. Which is why I chose to do a psychological horror rather than an all-out gore fest with my first feature film "Skew." All-out gore doesn't scare me at all, but mess with the psyche and I'm looking for the light switch and checking under the bed. As for "Peelers," I wanted to do a more traditional style horror film, take it back old-school and emulate the horrors from our youth and just have fun with it. And from the reactions we've been getting from audiences I think we did what we set out to do, and that's make a movie that people just really have a good time watching while being grossed out and shocked on occasion.

### IBT AU: How was making "Peelers" different from the first horror film you made, "Skew"?

**Schélenz:** "Peelers" was a beast compared to "Skew." "Skew" was made with a very small crew and an even smaller cast, whereas "Peelers" had a massive cast and crew as well as lots of extras. "Skew" was much more intimate and involved more guerilla style filmmaking. While "Peelers" definitely had its guerilla moments, we had to be extremely organized with all areas of production. The amount of camera equipment, lighting, props, etc. on "Peelers" was massive, on "Skew" we had a hand-held camera and used natural light for the most part. While I definitely prefer the smaller, more intimate production of "Skew," "Peelers" afforded me tons of new experiences and knowledge on the entire filmmaking process and that has been invaluable.

### IBT AU: Apart from directing "Peelers," you've also co-written, produced and edited the film. How did you come up with the movie's concept?

**Schélenz:** My sales agent on "Skew" suggested I make another horror film because they're easier to sell in the indie market. His only two requirements were that it have more blood and more nudity. I was definitely on board for having more blood and gore, but while I'm all for nudity in general, I just didn't want to make a film with gratuitous boob shots. So I thought, where can I have a horror film take place where nudity is the norm? And the location for "Peelers" was born. I then approached Lisa DeVita (DeVits), whom I played baseball with and I knew she was working on her own screenplays and pitched her the idea of writing a horror script that takes place in a strip club. DeVits used to live in Las Vegas so she had lots of source material and she jumped at the chance to write the script. In fact, the story for "Peelers" was inspired by a crazy incident that happened to DeVits at a strip club she visited in Las Vegas. You'll have to ask her about the story as she tells it the best. Anyway, we both have the same sense of humor and we worked really well together so it turned out to be an amazing director-writer partnership where one person is a little nuts (the writer) and the other person reels it in and edits for structure and focus (the director).

### IBT AU: What approach did you take when making "Peelers," which is basically a stripper horror film?

**Schélenz:** We lived by three mantras while making "Peelers" and they were: Just Do It. Let It Go. Never Give Up. When you're an indie filmmaker you have to do everything yourself. And I mean EVERYTHING. Things you didn't know how to do, you learn pretty quickly how to do them, so you just have to suck it up and do it. No whining, no complaining, no sleeping, no eating. Just do it.

You also learn pretty quickly that no one really wants to help you (unless they can somehow make money off of you) and that the word "No" is the most common word heard in your daily grind. But for every hundred NOs you get one YES and that "Yes" can mean you just got permission to use a song by Duran Duran or you found that perfect shooting location. Either way, big or small, it's a victory, so you have to let all the other negative crap go. Don't hang on to it and don't take anything personally.

Let all the bad stuff go so you can invite the good stuff in. Which leads to the last mantra: Never give up. You just have to keep going no matter what. No matter how many times the door gets slammed in your face, soon enough, that one door will open and it's the only doorway you need. Once you set your mind to do something, sure enough the world conspires to help you get it done. It may take its time at first but slowly and surely, it'll come together, but that's because you keep working at it and you never give up. There's always a way. You just have to have the conviction and stamina to find it. And that's the approach that helped us make "Peelers."

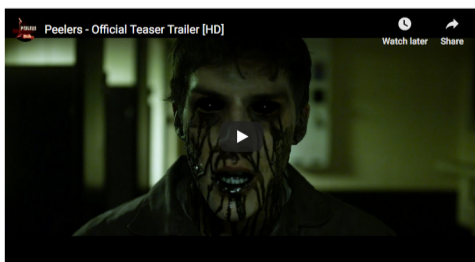
### IBT AU: Who and what are your influences in film making, particularly in the horror genre?

**Schélenz:** My major influence for my first film "Skew" was definitely "The Blair Witch Project." It was something so different and new at the time, which made it exciting; and at the same time it scared the crap out of me. That film lingered for a long time after it was over. As for "Peelers," influences came from "Evil Dead" and "From Dusk Till Dawn." I'm a huge Tarantino fan. His films give you such a cinematic electric shock. I also just love the old-school horrors like "Halloween" and "The Omen." That slow building sense of dread is achieved so beautifully in these films. I love it.

### IBT AU: What can we expect from you next? Are you in the process of making another horror film? Are you planning to venture to another genre?

**Schélenz:** I'm currently working on my version of the Spider-man movie that I actually want to see ('cuz it hasn't happened yet). Kidding. I wish! Well, I think after some time spent doing absolutely nothing and resting from this 24-7 experience, we'll see which one of our next projects grabs us. We've got quite a few of them at different stages of development and across all genres (i.e. a family comedy, a sci-fi, a drama) so we'll have to decide what's the best project to move forward on. The writer and myself come from more of a comedic background so we'll see if that's a direction we want to go. And people have been pestering us about "Peelers 2..." But we won't talk about that.

"Peelers" stars Wren Walker, Caz Odin Darko and Madison J. Loos. "Peelers" will be available in the US on Video On Demand (VOD) on March 28 from Uncork'd Entertainment.



Source: YouTube/Peelers The Film

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