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DVD Review: Penance

6 January 2010 One Comment



Penance (2009)

Studio: IMD Films

Release Date: November 17, 2009

Directed By: Jake Kennedy

Cast: Mariah Delfino, Graham McTavish, Michael Rooker, Garrett Jones & Eve Mauro.

Review By: Annie Riordan

Okay, now what did I JUST say? No. More. Torture Porn Flicks! GodDAMMIT! I can't take much more gritty snuff film footage and soundtracks consisting solely of agonized screams. Of all the sub-genres that horror has – supernatural, suspenseful, demonic, etc. – can't Netflix add a new one? You know, something along the lines of Tamp Down Your Bile, or perhaps Scrub Your Brain Out With a Wire Brush and Industrial Grade Bleach Afterwards? So I'll stop ordering the fucking things by accident?

Penance is by no means anywhere near as excruciating or as filthy as Korea's The Butcher, a thoroughly unpleasant little import that made me feel like dry heaving for about a week afterwards. But it's also not the sort of movie you want to watch with a group of friends on the couch with a bowl of popcorn, either. Filmed almost entirely on handhelds, Penance is the shaky, nasty and farfetched tale of Amelia, a reluctant stripper who accepts the wrong assignment one fateful night.

Amelia never wanted to be a stripper, but she also never wanted to find herself deeply in debt and a single mom to a daughter with a severe medical condition. Amelia needs money. A lot of money. And she needs it now. So, under the tutelage of her friend Suzie, Amelia starts stripping for cash, working seedy bachelor parties and lugging her friend Will and his handheld along with her for security reasons.

But when Suzie suffers a brutal beating at the hands of a customer, Amelia very reluctantly agrees to take her place at a posh assignment. It's \$5,000 cash for twenty minutes of work, shaking her shit for a rich Arab...or so she's told. However, upon arriving at an abandoned asylum, being ordered to dance without music in front of a German prison matron, and finally finding herself face to face with Michael Motherfucking Rooker, Amelia realizes that something is seriously awry. Bingo, sweetie! Once the knockout drugs wear off, Amelia finds herself imprisoned along with several other girls, held captive by a deranged doctor with a twisted God complex.

Surprisingly, Penance is very well filmed and acted. It's even amusing during its introductory first twenty minutes or so as the very likable Delfino awkwardly learns the tricks of the trade... and yes, there's plenty of tit-jiggling and booty-shaking to keep the horniest among you erect and at attention. But man...when Tony Todd shows up at your door, you just know bad shit is gonna go down hard and fast. It's motherfuckin' Candyman, honey. That's never a good thing.

What follows is a harrowing hour of humiliation and torture, culminating in a twat's eye view of a cliterectomy without anesthesia. I spent the next 24 hours walking around with my thighs squeezed together so hard I could have cracked walnuts with my adductor muscles, thank you movie. However, in a bid to be fair and balanced, Penance doesn't forget to brutalize a few boys along the way as well.

You know a movie is gonna be grim and harsh when Michael Rooker provides the bulk of the comedy relief. Its plot is perhaps a tad too derivative of the recent French shocker Martyrs, it's not what you'd call a pleasant viewing experience, and the ending flat out sucks. But it's worth a view for the cast...if you have the stomach for that sort of thing.



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- [Oh Snap! WTF Clip of the New Year: Penance | Brutal As Hell](#) said:

[...] got the balls... enjoy. Oh – and don't forget to check out Annie's review of the film that we just posted [...]

6 January 2010 at 7:02 pm

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