



NEWS, REVIEWS, AND INTERVIEWS

Welcome to our news, reviews, and interviews page. Other sites have the news covered, we want to be different. Our interviews will focus on the creators, artists, and lunatics that make our genre something special. We'll also post reviews of creepy films we like (or don't), and have poster or mask related topics.

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Hellarious - Mixing Horror and Humor in a new anthology

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Ghastly and I love Horror Anthologies. Any typical Halloween season will see us watching any number of them in The Haunted Cinema, however, just like any movie or anthology, some are great, and some are not so great. That can also be said of Horror-Comedies, when they work, they are amazing. Films like *Abbot and Costello Meet Frankenstein* (1948), or the more recent *Shaun of the Dead* (2004) get both the scares and the laughs right, it's a rare, hard thing to do for a filmmaker.

We were obviously intrigued and a little worried when we were asked to do a review of the new Horror-Comedy Anthology, *Hellarious*. *Hellarious*, is the brainchild of Writer/Director Jason Tostevin, and was produced by Jason and Torin Scott. They set out to assemble a series of short films by a variety of writer's ad directors that not only will shock, but also make you laugh and from our point of view they largely succeeded.

The anthology is made up of seven chapters. The only complaint I have about the format (and it's a minor one), is that there is no wrap around story to bind the films together, as you see in films like *Asylum*(1972), *Creepshow* (1982), or the more recent *Nightmare Cinema* (2019). I would guess that from the nature of the production, this simply wasn't possible. As I said, it's a minor complaint and easily forgiven once I dived into the content, and that's where this film shines.

As mentioned, the stories are in the form of chapters, with each chapter representing a different filmmaker's attempt at blending the dark with the humorous. Among them are stories about grocery store, shopping, carts gone crazy, reverse werewolves, demented lunch ladies, inept Satanists, a cursed guitar, husbands murdering their wives, and a man under siege in his mobile home by a crazed Chupacabra.

Chapter one kicks off the show with a funny, gory tale called *Killer Karts* this tightly crafted, well-acted tale by Writer & Director James Feeney, tells the tale of what happens when shopping carts have had enough abuse and turn the tables on shoppers. The subject may sound absurd, but remember, Horror history includes Killer Tomatoes, zombie beavers, and even an unstoppable demon tire. The way that the Director handles the absurd set-up, elevates this story to a fun, bloody ride.

A Chupacabra siege of a mobile home is the plot of the second story, *Horrific*. This short was written and directed by Robert Boocheck and centers on a simple, stereotypical redneck just trying to enjoy his beer and porn until his pleasure (meant in both the figurative and literal sense) is interrupted by a vengeful, monster. This film delivers on the gags and the mayhem.

'Til Death, one of my two favorite stories in this anthology tells the tale of four beset and unhappy husbands who, over a beer, decide to kill each other's wives. Burying the bodies on an old witch's property turns out to be a mistake that they will come to regret. This film was written by Randall Greenland and directed by Jason Tostevin.

To what lengths would a person go to become a "Rock god" is explored in the 4th chapter story, *Death Metal*. Written and Directed by Chris McInroy, the tale follows a down and out, wannabe musician, playing Heavy Metal music in a local park for tips. He stumbles upon a cursed guitar, presented to his grandfather by Satan, himself, that has a very specific set of rules that must be followed. When the rules are inevitably broken, the gore and laughs commence.

Lunch Ladies, written by Clarissa Jacobson and directed by J.M. Logan is my other favorite story in this set. It's a dark, fairytalish story about the lengths two hapless High School lunch ladies will go to realize their dream of being Johnny Depp's personal chefs. Word of advice watch this one on an empty stomach. The story is simple and fun, and the visuals are amazing.

Horror films have long explored the werewolf tale, and by now I had thought that I had seen about every possible version, including Were-marsupials (*The Marsupials: The Howling III*), I was wrong. *Bitten*, by writer, director Sarah Reimers, is a smart twist to an old tale. I won't spoil the twist, but trust me, you have never seen a werewolf film quite like this one.

The final story, *Born Again*, by the same team that made *'Til Death*, centers on a group of Satanists eagerly trying to bring Satan into the world (aren't they always), but are plagued by an inept follower and a mistake in the ceremony. This episode is funny, and a bit shocking. If you're easily offended, you have been warned.

Like any anthology, there were chapters that I thought were stronger than others, however, all of the short films presented here are enjoyable and worth the watch. This was a perfect blend of films that achieved the goal of bridging horror and humor and should be on everyone's Halloween watchlist.

You can preorder the limited edition Bluray by following this link: <https://horrorpack.com/store/hellarious/>

It will be available on VOD in November.



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