

jared mobarak's film reviews blog

film reviews, as soon as they are seen

BNFF 09: I locked myself out of my bathroom ... Boppin' at the Glue Factory

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I should have known from the moment I sat down for my second screening at the Buffalo Niagara Film Festival that I was in for a good time. Three of the filmmakers were seated behind me, conducting an impromptu interview about the creative process that drove them to make [Boppin' at the Glue Factory](#). With good-natured quips, funny jabs at each other, and an overall jovial demeanor—at one point it was asked how the title was decided on and [Hector Maldonado](#) couldn't remember the notebook with hundreds of ideas, just the alcohol and late night, where upon the interviewer refreshed his memory and said to tell that story once he reloaded the film, even though Hector still didn't recall it—I should have expected the humor injected craziness about to occur at the convalescent home onscreen. Revolving around a junkie nurse who had just gotten away with boxes of Dilaudid from the city's County Hospital to be injected into his arm, we experience his slow deception at his new place of work. Taking over the night shift to “care” for the elderly, he bides his time in order to get the medicine room key, all while making a deal with an old jazz saxophonist, allowing him to play and smoke his Mary Jane in exchange for the patient's extra Dilaudid every evening.



[Henry Dittman's](#) Eric is pure gold. He is a conman above all else with a smile that no one can resist. Quick on his feet to turn any event to his favor, Eric cons his way into the home with a vague resume and awkward sayings such as wanting “the reward of caring for the elderly because it is just so ... rewarding”. Everyone eats his story up save for the Russian taskmaster and head nurse Vladimir, (a funny turn from [Charles Santore](#) with perfect facial stoicism and Soviet coldness), and old Mary LeDoux, ([Mews Small](#)), a perceptive resident that uses her shrill voice whenever possible to get her way and make sure she and her friends are not being taken advantage of. Hospital manager Shirlee, played by [Jossie Thacker](#), is the most gullible, creating an Employee of the Month award for her new “star” employee, despite the residents dying on his watch and the fact that he gets high, watches TV, and sleeps each night, ignoring every patient's buzzer.



It is a role that reminded me of [Ron Livingston](#) in *Office Space*. So cool and stress-free, Eric just goes with the punches, always improvising and conniving to get one step closer to the mother-load of barbiturates. At first I wasn't quite sure if I should be laughing as hard as I was, whether the intent of the film was to show his antics or his downfall. All those reservations disappeared once [Rance Howard's](#) Walker Bill makes his second appearance. Out of sorts and confused in his first scene, he becomes more coherent and progresses his joke telling skills after receiving a bottle of water from Eric. Water has been rationed to the point of non-existence by Vladimir to try and stop the many "accidents" causing slipping and messy cleanups on the floor. All it takes is a little H₂O to win over the residents, (as well as a little senior porn on the television for Mary), and make them turn a blind eye towards his obvious junkie tendencies—they all know. In exchange for the fun they have each night, they don't mind Eric's lax behavior or take notice of the death every night due to his ambivalence and drug induced slumber. Well, all except Walker Bill who writes "Who's Next" on the dry erase board as the new quote as well as telling the joke, "Why did the old man cross the road? ... To get away".

There are a lot of supporting roles that add levity and charm to the proceedings. I especially enjoyed [Ski Carr's](#) Zen using—and what we can only assume ex-con—nurse, Santore's Vladimir, and [Stephon Fuller's](#) Joe Tones the security guard. Fuller is the only person at the home late night besides the residents, and could ruin Eric's plans except for the fact he brings his wife in to have sex while on the clock. What then starts as an innocuous quip from the paramedics, who are always asking how his "pretty young wife" is, becomes the blackmail line that quiets him down when a midnight birthday bash is thrown. Even the paramedics are great in limited roles. They recognize Eric from his County days and ask if the guy ever got caught, (for which we can only assume is him, having stolen the meds and high-tailed it out), and tell him they will give a reference if he needs one. My favorite line by them was upon a bogus call of distress, after they had picked up dead bodies the last two nights, where once they declare the old man fine, say "It must have just been a panic attack; he'll think twice about doing it again once he gets the bill".



Director [Jeff Orgill](#) infuses some nice style as well with a well-orchestrated dissolve from a men's room sign to Eric on the toilet after an injection among others. I also liked the color transition from muted colors when our lead is without a means for drugs to the vibrant palette when the opportunity for free Dilaudid crops up. But you really have to credit Dittman's handle on the script as well as the words themselves crafted by Orgill, Maldonado, and [B. Scott O'Malley](#). This is a very funny screenplay that adds humor to a world you would generally only see onscreen as a subdued downer, the elderly being neglected and left to die. Instead, Eric and [Conrad Roberts'](#) jazz man Tharin Sanders inject some much needed fun and excitement, deciding to throw the rules out the window, get high, do as little as possible, and somehow get rewarded for it every time. Slackers around the world would be proud.

Boppin' at the Glue Factory 7/10

photography:

[1] Eric LaBudde (Henry Dittman) talks the escaping Tharin Sanders (Conrad Roberts) back into the car. photo by Christian Miglio.

[2] Vladimir (Charlie Santore) looks for Eric when he finds a patient dead and the nurse log empty. photo by Cynthia Petrovic.

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