

# Grisly Canadian film uninspired production

## Valentine's dance turns into a bloodbath

In the remote, peaceful village of Valentine Bluffs, North America, the townfolk of the mining village are preparing for their first Valentine's dance in 20 years. The audience already knows, from the credit sequence, this festive event will be marred by murder and mayhem.

My Bloody Valentine is the latest entry in the horror film sweepstakes to focus on a homicidal maniac on the loose. This low-budget Canadian feature is a slick, uninspired and gratuitously gory production. Director George Mihalka and writer John Beard have done little more than transfer John Carpenter's thriller Halloween to the Nova Scotia mining district.

What exactly is amiss in Valentine Bluffs?

The ironically named bartender Happy (Jack Van Evera) tells a group of young miners how, 20 years ago, five miners were buried alive while the rest of the town was reveling at the annual Valentine's Day dance. After weeks of digging, one miner, Harry Warden, was found alive but obviously deranged. To survive, Harry had resorted to cannibalism.

Harry wound up killing the two supervisors responsible for the cave-in. He was institutionalized but the legend persists that he returns every year on Valentine's Day to wreak his vengeance on the townspeople.

Anyone who's ever gone to summer camp will be familiar with this type of horror tale. Not surprisingly, the young miners of the town laugh at the campfire story. Then, the mayor receives a box of chocolates with a threatening note and a bloody human heart inside.

After a quick call to the mental institution, the local police chief discov-



**Movies**  
Leonard Klady

ers Harry is no longer an inmate. Harry has either been released, transferred to another institution or died. To be on the safe side, the dance is called off.

The miners decide to hold a private bash at the mine. The uninvited killer arrives and quietly mounts a large body count from the assembled above ground and below ground party-goers.

Aside from the obvious distasteful story, My Bloody Valentine is a primitive, crude production. Technically, it is barely adequate apart from Rodney Gibbons' striking photography. The special effects range from competent to bargain basement.

The film-makers' attempt to flesh out the tale by introducing a love triangle is laughable. The two young miners, T.J. and Axel (Paul Kelman and Neil Affleck), who vie for the affection of the beautiful Sarah, are unsympathetic macho stereotypes.

There's no denying the fantastic market for cheap, crass shockers. A recent U.S. study reveals five cents of every movie dollar spent in North America back in 1970 was bought by patrons of horror movies. A decade later, this figure now stands at 39 cents on the dollar.

My Bloody Valentine is just another heartless effort to give moviegoers a cheap thrill.

### My Bloody Valentine

Directed by George Mihalka; screenplay by John Beard; cinematography by Rodney Gibbons; art

direction by Penny Hadfield; edited by Jean Lafleur; music by Paul Zaza; produced by John Dunning, Andre Link and Stephen Miller. A Paramount Pictures release. At Famous Players. Rating, Adult Parental Guidance.

T.J. Hamiger	Paul Kelman
Sarah	Lori Hallier
Axel Palmer	Neil Affleck
Hollis	Keith Knight
Howard	Alf Humphreys
Patty	Cynthia Dale
Chief Newby	Don Franks
Happy	Jack Van Evera
Wabel Osborne	Patricia Hamilton
Larry Reynolds	Larry Reynolds

The Canadian film industry was stunned earlier this week when Famous Players, Canada's largest chain of movie houses, announced it is suspending the activities of its movie production company on April 1, 1981.

Famous Players opened its production arm in September, 1980, to produce Touch the Wind, a family adventure film. Touch the Wind will be released next month by Paramount Pictures. Both Famous Players and Paramount are owned by the U.S. conglomerate Gulf and Western.

George Anthony, vice-president of production, was shocked by the announcement. Anthony says he was planning to produce five or six films in 1981 including film versions of The Book of Eve and Charles Templeton's Act of God.

The production arm was seen as a threat by several Canadian producers because they felt Famous Players-produced films would be given preference in its cinemas.

Another factor cited in the closure is a proposed federal film guideline expected in 1982. The new ruling would insist all movies qualifying for the 100 per cent tax write-off must be produced by a majority-owned Canadian company.

Famous Players is 51 per cent owned by Gulf and Western.



Cynthia Dale (left) and Lori Hallier desperately seek an escape route from the mine shaft.