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2011

**OFFICIAL  
SELECTION**  
WANDERINGS FILM FESTIVAL  
2011



# REVOLTING

A Comedy of Tragic Proportions

**STARRING**

**William L. Kephart**  
**Julia Megan Sullivan**  
**Sharon Tipsword**  
**Eric Sizemore**  
**Leslie Boedicker**

**A FILM BY**  
**Michael Boedicker**

[revoltingmovie.com](http://revoltingmovie.com)

Title: *Revolting*

Genre: Comedy-Drama

Locale: Small town, U.S.

Period: Present

Tagline: "The play wrote itself. The playwright is not amused."

### **LOGLINE**

A prolific playwright struggles to write a sequel to his lone hit, but his imaginary characters revolt and won't let him.

### **SYNOPSIS**

Jeff is a playwright who made his name years ago with the smash comedy *The Madcap Murderesses*. Since then, he has channeled his efforts into more serious theater, producing a stream of critically-acclaimed flops. But now the theater that premiered *Madcap Murderesses* is in financial straits, and asks Jeff to write a sequel to his original hit. Jeff reluctantly agrees, not realizing that the characters he created will soon take on a life of their own -- and that some sequels are best left unwritten.

For a detailed synopsis, see page 5.

### **DIRECTOR STATEMENT**

By Michael Boedicker

The premise for *Revolting* came from the writer's cliché "The story wrote itself." Writers use this expression figuratively -- and always positively -- to describe a work that poured out of them; but what if the saying had a literal meaning? Would the loss of authorial control be a good thing?

Though *Revolting* is primarily a comedy, it sprang from a dark time in my life. In 2007, I experienced a deep depression unlike any I'd known before; I thought I was going crazy and didn't recognize myself. Jeff's predicament in *Revolting* became the metaphor that allowed me to explore this period, and making the film was my way of working through the problem.

*Revolting* is thus a very personal story, the kind suited to microbudget filmmaking. This is an exciting time to be a filmmaker, as digital technology lets us tell these personal stories with minimal resources. But working this way also means embracing certain realities: small casts and crews, existing locations, and contemporary storylines that favor character development over spectacle. We have to wear lots of hats, take our time, and solve problems with creativity rather than money. The rewards are great, though: the freedom to tell our own stories in our own way -- the definition of independent cinema.

### **PRODUCTION NOTES**

*Revolting* was created over a period of three years, since almost everyone involved had full-time jobs to accommodate. The script was begun in the fall of 2007 by Producer/Director Mike Boedicker, who completed a rough draft in early 2008. Boedicker then brought in writer Brian Wilson, and the two collaborated on all subsequent drafts up to the start of principal photography in Fall 2008. The bulk of filming took place on weekends that fall, with postponed scenes and re-shoots occurring throughout 2009. Editing of the rough cut began in the spring of 2009 and took six months. The rough cut was

screened for several tests audiences to solicit feedback before the final cut was started. The film was completed in May 2010.

*Revolting* was made entirely in East Central Illinois (primarily Danville and Champaign) using actors, crew, and musicians from the area. Boedicker selected most of the cast from actors he knew; two he didn't know, Bill Kephart and Eric Sizemore, he met through Champaign Movie Makers, a local film club. The crew was extremely small, and virtually the entire cast filled in as crew at some point. The film's score is predominantly classical music performed by local musicians, including members of the Danville Symphony Orchestra, a music instructor at Danville Area Community College, and a recent music graduate of the University of Illinois.

## CAST & CREW



### **Michael Boedicker** (Director/Co-Writer/Co-Producer)

Born in Huntsville, Alabama in 1967, Mike grew up in New York State and earned degrees in Communications and Library Science before completing his first feature film, *Show*, in 2005. In 2008, he formed Roselawn Productions Ltd. to further his goal of making low-budget feature films in his neck of the woods (Central Illinois). He's currently planning a new feature.

### **Brian Wilson** (Co-Writer)

Brian first collaborated with Mike Boedicker on the screenplay for the feature film *Show* (2005). He has written several comedies for the stage, two of which received workshop productions. A librarian, storyteller, and film reviewer, Brian lives and works in the Chicago area. And yes, the characters he created still taunt and haunt him, and take credit for all he has written.



### **William L. Kephart** (*Jeff*)

Born in 1965, Bill grew up in Chillicothe, Illinois, eventually moving to Champaign-Urbana, IL, where he's lived for the last 25 years to be close to family. Bill has a B.A. in English Literature, a teaching certificate that gathers dust, and one failed year of actor training in an MFA program. Though Bill has done some film acting, including a couple History Channel programs, *Revolting* is his first lead in a full-length movie.

**Julia Megan Sullivan** (*Penelope/Tanya*)

Julia earned a BFA in theatre with honors from New York University Tisch School of the Arts, and received the Artist and Scholar award and was recognized for Outstanding Achievement at the Lee Strasberg Theatre Institute. Julia explores the country as an actress and director including roles in regional theatres, on national tours and in independent films.

**Sharon Tipsword** (*Susan*)

Sharon has several degrees in theatre and feels very much at home "On The Stage." "In The Film"...not so much. She has spent many years in many places as an actress and as a playwright. She has survived without a facelift but sometimes yearns for capped teeth. Having returned to Illinois after 40 years, Sharon is lucky to have found so many talented and neat people with whom to play.

**Eric W. Sizemore** (*Frederick/Blaine*)

Eric is a dad, librarian, information consultant, instructor, actor, and on-air radio personality in Champaign, Illinois. He was the voice on Volition Software's *FreeSpace*, the follow-up effort to Volition's critically-acclaimed *Descent* space warfare video game. He continues to pursue acting in theater, independent film, TV, radio and videogames. *Revolting* is Eric's first performance in a feature film.

**Leslie Boedicker** (*Janice/Gwen*)

Leslie has worked in theater in many capacities for years, but *Revolting* is her first major foray in screen acting. She earned Bachelor's and Master's degrees in Theater and has worked for a decade with Illinois' Red Mask Players, where much of *Revolting* was shot. As for being cast by her husband, Mike, Les admits she won the part the old-fashioned way -- by sleeping with the director.

**ADDITIONAL CREDITS**

*Penny*: Jamie I. DeVore

*Greeley*: David E. Laker

*TV Host*: Ron McDaniel

*Theater President*: John Dowers

*Theater Treasurer*: Donna Sant

*Cop*: Ron Soderstrom

*Computer Geek*: Brian K. Morris

*"Morose" Actor*: Jason Asaad

*"Morose" Actress*: Lisa Richter

*Whispering Man*: Gary Gardner

*Whispering Woman*: Nancy Henderson

*Mrs. Bonebrake/Teasworthy*: Tobi Peck

*Theater Custodian*: Chad Myler

### ADDITIONAL CREDITS (Cont.)

Photographed and Edited by Michael Boedicker  
 Sound Recordists: Eric J. France, Chad A. Myler, Johnny Robinson  
 Continuity and Script Supervision: Matt Hester  
 Music of J.S. Bach & G.B. Pescetti performed by Eric Simonson  
 Music of Erik Satie performed by Stephanie Swearingen  
 Makeup: Chris Jacobs  
 Special Props: William L. Kephart  
 Visual Effects: Michael Boedicker, Johnny Robinson, Mark Moser  
 Additional Musicians: Carol R. Douglas, Linda Dietzen, Todd Gallagher, Stephen Lehman

Color

Running time: 81 minutes.

Not Rated; contains adult language and situations.

### DETAILED SYNOPSIS

In a shadowy laboratory, scientist FREDERICK and his assistant JANICE attempt to revive the lifeless body of PENELOPE, Janice's sister, with high-voltage electricity. In a last-ditch effort they crank the lever to the max and zap the body with 100,000 volts – and it works! As Penelope springs to life, the ecstatic revivers command her to speak. Penelope bursts into laughter, looks at “us” (i.e. the camera), and asks “How can you write this shit?” JEFF, a playwright, winces in response; he's sitting at a computer in his home office, typing the scene we've just witnessed. Regaining himself, he erases the “How can you write this shit?” line and types the correct lines: “I am back – I am alive – I am home!” In the laboratory, Penelope says the new lines, pauses again, looks at us again: “It's still shit.” Jeff looks at his computer in shock as we cut to the opening credits.

ONE MONTH EARLIER, Jeff attends the sparsely-attended premiere of his latest heavy drama, *Morose*, at the Castle Theater, a small community playhouse. With him is SUSAN, the Castle's longtime director. Afterward, a couple of audience members/Castle actors, TANYA and BLAINE (who are physically identical to the imaginary Penelope and Frederick characters seen in the lab) come backstage for a meet-and-greet, congratulating Jeff and Susan although the show is clearly a flop. Soon after, Jeff and Susan appear on a local talk show to promote *Morose*, but the HOST is more interested in discussing Jeff's lone hit, a comedy called *The Madcap Murderesses* produced several years before. *Madcap* was so successful it went to Chicago and New York and made the Castle Theater flush for years. At the time, Jeff was married to its lead actress, PENNY, who parlayed the big-city success of *Madcap* into a successful sitcom career in Los Angeles. Jeff, who had a similar opportunity, chose to stay in the small town, and the couple divorced. The Host asks Jeff if he'd ever consider writing a sequel to *The Madcap Murderesses* and if Penny might return to the Castle to appear in it. Jeff quickly dismisses both notions.

*Morose* closes, and the set is struck by several Castle regulars: Jeff, Susan, Tanya, Blaine, GWEN (an actress physically identical to the imaginary Janice character shown in the lab scene), and the theater's PRESIDENT AND TREASURER. Sitting around the green room after strike, everyone talks about the dismal season that just ended and wonders what can be done to draw more people next season. Tanya proposes a sequel to *Madcap Murderesses*, but before Jeff can reject it, the others chime in their support. The president suggests “bringing the old team back together,” with Jeff writing, Susan directing, and Gwen and Blaine reprising their original roles. Only Penny, the sitcom star, is no longer with the theater, but the treasurer suggests she might be enticed to return. Jeff shoots down their ideas, noting that he killed off Penelope in the original show, and that even if there were a way to revive the

character, Penny would never return to reprise the part. Tanya offers that she'd love to play Penelope if Penny won't. Jeff seems intrigued by her suggestion but says nothing. Soon after, alone in the theater, Jeff gazes at the empty stage, lost in thought. A few days later at home, studying a head-shot of Tanya, he's still pensive. A neat freak, he tidies up his already-clean office, procrastinating...when suddenly the sequel-writing begins. In a split screen montage Jeff is seen writing on one half of the frame, with the scenes he's imagining playing out on the other half. The more Jeff writes the more engrossed he becomes, culminating in his clever solution to the "Penelope is dead" problem: a scene (shown briefly at the beginning of the film and repeated here now, in more detail) of Frederick and Janice in a laboratory, reviving Penelope's corpse. Once again, Penelope breaks the fourth wall and talks back to Jeff, ridiculing his writing. Flummoxed, Jeff stops typing and buries his hands in his lap, but it's no use: the seemingly possessed hands force themselves to type against his will. Penelope is in charge.

Jeff meets Susan at a coffeehouse and tries to back out of the sequel, without telling her what's really happening. Susan counters that the theater badly needs a hit, and that Jeff owes the Castle for indulging his depressing pet projects for so many years. Jeff reluctantly resumes writing, fashioning a new scene with Penelope, Frederick, and Janice. This time it's Frederick who breaks the fourth wall, joining Penelope in criticizing the script and annoying Jeff to no end. As the three characters question Jeff about their appearance, he impatiently explains that he bases their physical attributes on actors he knows, and that furthermore the actors are superior to the characters because they're not mere figments of his imagination. The arguments continue until Jeff, tired of the chatter, goes to sleep. He's awakened in the middle of the night by the sound of typing. Stumbling in to his home office, he finds Tanya typing on the computer. Half-asleep, he asks Tanya what she's doing there, and is informed she's not Tanya but Penelope; the imaginary character has crossed over into the real world. Jeff's terror soon turns to anger when he learns Penelope is re-writing the sequel. He banishes her from his world – but the next day she's still there, watching as he writes, arguing with him about scenes, critiquing everything. Jeff finally tells her to sit down and shutup. Sulking, she sits and listens to a piece of music by J.S. Bach playing on Jeff's stereo. Reading his mind, she realizes it's his favorite piece and that she, too, likes it.

Jeff is a librarian in his day job, and he's at work one day when Penelope drops by to visit. Panicked, he asks what she's doing there, then quickly realizes she's not Penelope but Tanya. When she asks about the script-in-progress, he invites her to his house to read it. That night, Jeff waits for Tanya to arrive. Finally she does -- but Jeff realizes he's wrong again; it's actually Penelope impersonating Tanya. Disgusted, Jeff starts drinking and soon passes out. He has a strange nightmare in which the three imaginary characters, drunk because he is, discuss their predicament. Penelope tries to talk Frederick and Janice into a revolt, but before she gets very far, Jeff wakes up. He hears screams emanating from the living room and stumbles there to find Penelope – and now Frederick and Janice, who have also crossed over -- watching a horror DVD on Jeff's TV (the source of the screams).

Work on the sequel continues, slowly, miserably. While writing a scene in which Penelope is supposed to poison a man, she instead stabs the victim violently, shocking Jeff. Once again she and Jeff bicker about the script's direction until they're interrupted by Jeff's doorbell. It's Tanya, come to apologize for blowing off their date the previous night. Jeff invites Tanya in and she reads the script, unnerved by the character of Penelope. Jeff touches Tanya's shoulder as if to confirm she's really there.

Jeff meets with Blaine at a local bar, subtly questioning the oblivious actor to see if he's aware of the characters coming to life. Satisfied and relieved that Blaine knows nothing, Jeff is about to take a drink when he spots something awful: Frederick has entered the bar. Slamming his beer, Jeff asks Blaine to buy another round, sending Blaine away before Frederick ambles over. Jeff figures Frederick's appearance in a public place must mean Frederick is real, existing independently of his creator, and that Jeff is sane after all; still, he pleads for Frederick to leave, fearing what will happen if Blaine meets his double. Frederick scoffs, insists on meeting his alter ego, orders Jeff to introduce them, and ducks away in preparation for a grand entrance. Blaine returns with more beers, and as Jeff tries to

brace Blaine for the shock, Frederick, who can wait no longer, appears and thrusts his hand out to Blaine. But to Jeff's shock – and relief – Blaine can't see or hear Frederick. It turns out Jeff is crazy after all.

Jeff goes on a date with Tanya. They drive to a secluded lake, talk, seem to get along well. A cop pulls up, tells Jeff he's on private property and makes him perform a field sobriety test. Jeff passes with flying colors but is furious afterward and complains bitterly to Tanya once the cop has driven off. Tanya chides Jeff for whining, surprising him with her hard tone...and then Jeff starts putting two and two together, realizes the cop never acknowledged Tanya. Jeff becomes convinced that this is Penelope impersonating Tanya again and lashes out at her. Aghast, she exits the car and starts walking. Soon after, Jeff goes to Susan's house and tells her about the disastrous date, but vaguely enough that his madness isn't apparent; Susan merely thinks Jeff insulted Tanya. That night, Penelope shows up at Jeff's house as he eats dinner. Wearing a negligee, she sits close to him, explains that she and Jeff can finish the script without Frederick and Janice. She seduces him and leads him into the bedroom. The next morning, they sit on the floor in the uncharacteristically messy home office, papers and take-out food boxes strewn about, writing down scene ideas in accord with Penelope's twisted take on the script. Jeff is clearly on his way to fantasyland.

Susan shows up unexpectedly at the house to see how the script is progressing. Jeff takes her into the office where she marvels at the mess, then hands her a 500-page manuscript – five times the normal length. Alarmed by Jeff's demeanor, she stays and reads the hefty tome, which takes all day. That night they discuss it, and he is incredulous when she deems it mediocre and much too long. “You know what we have to do,” she tells him, to which Penelope, who has suddenly appeared, replies “Don't listen to her!” Susan is Jeff's reality check, a slap in the face, and he realizes she's right. A few days later, Jeff and Susan start revising the script, with Penelope (unseen and unheard by Susan) criticizing them the whole time. Jeff blurts out retorts, which Susan thinks are directed at her, but they manage to continue writing. Finally the script – titled *More Madcap Murderesses* and running a normal 100 pages – is finished. Susan congratulates the doubtful Jeff and asks him to make copies for a planned table read with the actors.

After Susan leaves, Penelope reads the revised script contemptuously. Jeff can't stand her snarkiness anymore, grabs the script from her, and burns it in his fireplace. As she continues watching, he then deletes the script file and the backup from his computer. The script seemingly gone for good, Jeff reverts back to his neat-freak self, launching into a cleaning binge around the house. While cleaning the bookshelves in his office, he comes across a scrapbook for the original *Madcap Murderesses* and reads it. Newspaper clippings and photos show him with ex-wife Penny and the rest of the cast, celebrating the show's success at the Castle, and in Chicago and New York. The phone rings and Jeff lets his machine answer; it's Susan, calling again to remind him about the planned table read and asking again if he's made copies of the script. Penelope appears and reminds Jeff he needs to tell Susan the truth about the destroyed script. But Jeff has other ideas. To Penelope's horror, Jeff hires a computer geek to recover the deleted script file from the hard drive.

Jeff shows up at the theater for the table read, armed with copies of the newly-recovered script. Susan directs the reading, which features the core cast: Tanya playing Penelope, Blaine as Frederick, and Gwen as Janice. All seems to be going well when a door opens and Penelope enters. Petrified but trying not to show it, Jeff watches as Penelope gets in Tanya's face and savages the oblivious actress's reading. Janice appears and likewise critiques Gwen. Frederick enters and blasts Blaine. Of course only Jeff sees and hears the imaginary characters, and he can't help but blurt out commands and pleadings to them, which makes the “real” people eye him oddly. Finally Jeff lashes out at Penelope, but because she's standing so close to Tanya the latter thinks she's being addressed. Jeff breaks down laughing – or is he crying? Susan takes him alone into another room and bans him from the theater.

Jeff is home that night cleaning when he hears his favorite Bach piece playing in the other room. He enters the foyer to find Penelope, Frederick, and Janice playing the music for him, live, on piano,

bass, and violin respectively. Soon after, they sit in the dining room before a lighted birthday cake reading “Happy 40<sup>th</sup> Birthday, Jeff”. Told by Penelope to make a wish, Jeff matter-of-factly wishes aloud that they would leave him, and for good. It’s time, he says, that he start dealing with real people, but Penelope counters that real people will only disappoint him while his creations never will. Jeff holds firm, and Janice and Frederick march off in a huff. Penelope stays, slinks closer to Jeff, blows out the birthday candles – then abruptly smashes her fists into the cake and licks the frosting from her hands.

Days later, Jeff is driving by the theater when he spots the custodian changing the marquee. Confused, he pulls over and sneaks inside. There he spies Susan rehearsing a scene from *More Madcap Murderesses* with Blaine and Gwen – and Jeff’s famous ex-wife Penny, who’s now playing Penelope. Jeff storms down to the stage, confronting Susan and Penny. Susan takes Jeff to another room and explains: Tanya quit the show after Jeff’s table read meltdown; Penny was available and agreed to step in. Depressed, Jeff exits the theater and runs into Penny standing at the stage door. They awkwardly exchange small talk, and Jeff attempts to reconcile with her, when the door opens again and out steps the TV Talk Show Host we saw early in the story; he wants to interview Penny. Jeff abruptly exits.

Holed up in his house, abandoned by friends real and imagined, Jeff wanders about aimlessly, half-expecting his creations to return. Finally *More Madcap Murderesses* premieres, and it’s sold out. On stage, Blaine, Gwen, and Penny play their parts well, and the audience seems to be enjoying the show. Jeff sits in the back row with Susan, starting to relax as the laughter grows. But then the back door quietly opens, and in steps Tanya – or is it Penelope? Jeff spots her, summons the courage to approach. He creeps over to Tanya/Penelope, Susan watching with concern. In a whisper, Jeff confronts Tanya/Penelope, demands to know who she is and what she’s doing there, his voice rising. Several nearby audience members look over. Tanya/Penelope says little, which increases Jeff’s anger, and he finally yells at her. Now the entire audience looks over, as does Penny, who’s rattled and trying to get through a scene with Gwen on stage. Breaking the fourth wall, Penny insults Jeff as one would a heckler, drawing his ire. Jeff mounts the stage and gives it back to Penny. Susan watches in horror. The audience doesn’t know if this spectacle is real or part of the show. Jeff calms down, launches into a confession, tells Penny and the audience that the Castle Theater is his whole life but sometimes isn’t enough. Addressing Tanya/Penelope in the back, Jeff says he doesn’t know who she is – or who he is. He weeps. There’s a moment of silence...then someone in the audience starts to applaud. This is followed by another, and another, and soon the whole house is clapping. Jeff looks around in confusion, Susan in relief. The applause becomes a standing ovation, the noise now deafening as the entire audience rises. Incredulous, Jeff eyes the three actors around him: Blaine, Gwen – and now in place of Penny, the “real” Penelope. An understanding passes between creator and creations. With a strange smile Jeff peers to the back of the house at Susan, who yells at him above the din: “IT’S A HIT!” Jeff stops smiling.