

Jeff Kirkendall's Thoughts For The Month Column

Thoughts, Opinions, Reviews, Commentary & More!

Hello and Welcome! My name is Jeff Kirkendall and I'm an independent filmmaker and actor from the Upstate New York area. This is the section of the Very Scary Productions website where I write about topics related to independent filmmaking, digital video production, acting, movies in general, horror movies in particular, my own indie movies, as well as anything and everything related or in between.

I decided to create this commentary page because I find that I often come across things that either interest me, excite me, intrigue me, or maybe just bug me. Any topic related to movies and cinema is fair game, from the most mainstream to the most controversial. For example I'll often read about movie projects that I have a strong interest in or opinion on, for one reason or another. This page gives me a forum to discuss these things. It's all about discussion and furthering understanding of our pop culture. Anyone who has feedback concerning what I have to say here, feel free to contact me (see the contact link at <http://www.veryscaryproductions.com/>).

I'd also like to point out that the following is just my opinion, and everyone is free to agree or disagree with what I have to say. Enjoy, and to all the Indies out there: Keep on Filming!

SUBJECT: Actor profile: Crispin Glover - A genre comeback - April 2003

In the new movie **Willard** - a remake of a 70's cult film - which was released last month, it's *all* Crispin Glover. The actor appears in just about every shot of this quirky, dark little picture. Willard is a social misfit with a domineering mother. He is ostracized and tormented at work by a cruel boss. His life takes a strange turn when he gains command of an army of rats, which he uses to exact revenge on those who have wronged him. People who have seen the movie will probably agree that while it's not what you would call "straight horror" (it's only rated PG-13), it's nonetheless twisted and disturbing mainly due to Glover's performance. He makes Willard a twitchy, nervous, angst-ridden, and highly unstable fellow, in a deliciously over-the-top performance which is further intensified by many tight close-ups on his face. Many scenes - especially those between Willard and his overbearing mother* - are quite creepy and unsettling to say the least. This movie highlights what is so interesting about Crispin Glover: mainly, that he is just that - *interesting* to watch. **Willard** also serves as Glover's welcome return to the fright genre.

The first horror film I remember seeing Crispin Glover in was 1984's **Friday the 13th The Final Chapter**, which was the fourth installment in the never-ending slasher saga. According to his credit list on the Internet Movie Database, this was in fact his first genre film. In the movie he played Jimmy - a teen who goes partying with some other teens up at (where else) Camp Crystal Lake. Now while characterization in these movies is never really a top priority, Glover's conversations with a pal named Ted (played by Lawrence Monoson from the 80's teen comedy **The Last American Virgin**) is hysterical to watch. Jimmy is a nerdy type who moans and whines to his friend about having been dumped by some girl who he insists he "treated right". His friend Ted (supposedly a ladies man) keeps making fun of him by pretending to tap all the available facts about the situation

into his invisible “computer”. His results say that Jimmy is a “dead f*ck.” Glover’s Jimmy has some hilarious reactions to this, trying not to be bothered and angrily insisting that there is no computer. However it’s obvious his friend is getting to him. (As anyone familiar with these films can probably guess, his friend’s banter should be the least of his worries.) The fact that I remember Glover’s character in a **Friday the 13th**** movie just goes to show how he can draw a viewer’s attention. Glover has a presence and unusual delivery style that can make all but the most rigid and straight-laced roles unpredictable and interesting to watch. It’s obvious however those geeky or nerdy characters are his particular specialty. He reminds me in many ways of Christopher Walken, another actor that seems to excel in strangeness in most of his roles.

Looking again at the IMDB, one can see that Crispin Glover has worked steadily in films throughout the 1980’s, 1990’s, and 2000’s. Some standout movies I distinctly remember him from are **River’s Edge** & **Back to the Future**. However there are many other movies on his resume that I know I saw, but don’t really remember him from. I believe this is because Crispin Glover is one of those actors who has always been prominent in film, but at the same time has usually remained off the celebrity radar, thus making him less visible to people. In other words, Glover is what you would call a true character actor as opposed to a movie star. Conversely, in recent years, he seems to be standing out more prominently in many of his roles. An example of this would be **Charlie’s Angels**, a totally forgettable film whose only saving grace was Glover’s martial arts hair fetishist Thin Man. Once again the actor’s unique presence was visible in a film filled with big name movie stars. Since Glover is now top-billed in **Willard**, it’s possible that he himself could soon become one of these big names. Wouldn’t it be something if, after three decades, it were a genre film that made Crispin Glover into a household name.

* These scenes between Willard and his mother immediately bring to mind Norman Bates and his mother in **Psycho**. Can’t you just imagine Crispin Glover playing the role of Hitchcock’s famous inn keeper?!

** It’s interesting to note that it’s often been said the only actor to emerge from the **Friday the 13th** movies and have a notable career was Kevin Bacon. However this is not really the case. Besides Crispin Glover, another actor to appear in **Friday the 13th The Final Chapter** was a young Corey Feldman as Tommy Jarvis. And let us not forget Betsy Palmer (who already had a career before her *Friday* appearance) in the original **Friday the 13th** as Mrs. Voorhees (Jason’s mother).