

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: Fangoria's Weekend of Horrors 2005 convention highlights
The famous Fangoria convention returns triumphantly to the East Coast at a new venue – October 2005

As a frequent attendee of the *Fangoria Weekend of Horrors* convention here on the east over the last ten years I've enjoyed close to a dozen shows and seen and met horror luminaries such as Robert Englund, Heather Langenkamp, Wes Craven, Kane Hodder, Danielle Harris, John D. Lemay, Betsy Palmer and Corey Feldman, just to name a small handful. The good folks at FANGORIA magazine have always put together fun and exciting conventions, and their most recent outing (on September 24th & 25th) at the Crowne Plaza Meadowlands in Secaucus, New Jersey was no exception. Below is a rundown of some of the highlights.

After the traditional greetings from Creation Entertainment Co-CEO Adam Malin and *Fangoria* editor Tony Timpone, we were treated to a lineup of movie trailers for upcoming genre films. * This is always one of my favorite parts of the show because I'm a big movie trailer aficionado. The trailer that I thought stood out the most this time around was the upcoming remake of **John Carpenter's The Fog**. This one has some cool visuals and what looks to be a younger cast than the original, including Selma Blair in the Adrienne Barbeau role. We can only wait and see what they've done with this spooky revenge-from-beyond-the-grave tale.

Two of the most well-known guests at the show were directors John Landis and Mick Garris. Mr. Landis is famous for directing the horror classic ***An American Werewolf in London***, as well as comedy classics like ***Animal House*** and ***The Blues Brothers***. Mick Garris has directed many of the Stephen King television mini-series such as *The Stand* and *The Shining*. ** These gentleman came to talk about the upcoming Masters of Horror series, which begins airing on the Showtime cable network this October. The

series consists of 13 hour-long horror tales and also features episodes helmed by genre veterans such as Dario Argento, John Carpenter, George A. Romero and Larry Cohen, to name but a few. Rather than go into a long description about how exciting I think this project sounds, I'll just say that I found it to be somewhat surreal sitting outside in the lobby eating lunch while Mr. Garris and Mr. Landis were standing a few feet away from me chatting. I don't often get star struck any more, but these two guys are certainly two greats in their field, and in this case I couldn't help but feel a bit in awe.

Another interesting guest was Emily Perkins, star of the ***Ginger Snaps*** movies. *Fangoria* presented a video tribute to Emily and her films, which was followed by a question and answer session with the young actress. Emily was very friendly and cordial and answered a slew of questions concerning every detail of the making of the trio of werewolf movies. It was also nice at the end when she was handed not one, but two *Fangoria* awards. One was for being a winner the in annual *Fangoria* Chainsaw Awards competition, which is decided upon by readers of the magazine, and the other was an achievement.

Another exciting panel was presented by the talent behind FANGORIA TV. Simply put, the good folks at *Fangoria* magazine are endeavoring to start a 24-hour horror cable channel which will feature classic horror films, original series and independent/cutting edge horror, among other things. Panel members included rocker Dee Snider, company president Tom DeFeo, and ever popular actress Debbie Rochon. The video promo they showed looked very impressive and talked about how *Fangoria* was aiming to have a presence in movies and television as well as online and in print. Everyone seemed very passionate about the project and I really hope that it comes to fruition. I've often thought about how great it would be to have a channel devoted to the horror genre, one that horror fans and people in the business alike could embrace. With the popularity of the horror genre in print, in theaters and online, a cable channel is all that is missing. What was so exciting for me was that some of the things presented in the promotional video, such as profile pieces on people in the horror genre, were ones that I've often thought of when envisioning such a channel. I would concur with the notion that if anybody can get such a channel off the ground *Fangoria* can. We will have to wait and see how things develop.

A final convention highlight for me was the discussion by executive producer James Wan and scripter Leigh Whannell on the upcoming sequel ***Saw II***. These guys were very personable and enthusiastic in the discussion of their film. Now I have to admit that I wasn't as thrilled with the original ***Saw*** as many other people seem to have been. While I felt it was somewhat interesting and suspenseful, I wasn't raving over it and never thought about a sequel. But apparently others did, and judging from the sneak-peek footage we were shown, it looks like they may have come up with something good. I won't give anything away, but let me just say that the footage I saw made me feel queasy, and any movie that can do that can't be all bad. I guess I'll be heading to the theater after all when this movie opens.

One last thing I'd like to mention about this show is the change in venue. For years I've been heading to New York City for the *Fangoria* shows, however this time they held the *Weekend of Horrors* in New Jersey. This was a refreshing change and I really liked the hotel and thought the convention setup was good. There was a large hallway which provided ample room outside the main convention hall for check-in and for tables piled with free movie posters and other assorted free gifts. Kudos goes to *Fangoria* for

outdoing themselves with the free giveaways. There was also food for sale outside in this lobby. A short walk down a hallway brought my friend and me to the dealer room, which was large enough so that people weren't too crowded in when walking through. And as always the dealer tables offered a wide variety of merchandise for horror collectors. (I snagged a couple nice DVD's at good prices). My hat goes off to Tony Timpone, Michael Gingold, Adam Malin and everybody else at *Fangoria* magazine and Creation Entertainment for another memorable show.

* Whenever I go to the theater to see a film I always try to get there early enough to see the trailers, and I always hope to see some cool horror movie trailers. This is sometimes the case and sometimes not and usually depends on the type of film I'm seeing, and what rating it carries. There is more chance of seeing horror trailers before R-rated films and/or horror films than PG-13 films and/or non-horror films.

** The day I was there a camera crew from the Showtime cable network was in the dealers' room interviewing horror fans about their dedication to the genre. My friend and I gave the interview a go, so with any luck we'll be included when the documentary airs on Showtime in the near future.