

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: Movie Review - ***Snakes on a Plane*** – September 2006

I have to admit I initially missed the boat on this film. By that I mean I wasn't aware of all the internet hype, buzz, or whatever one wants to call it, about ***Snakes on a Plane***. Sure the movie trailer looked interesting, but not enough to have me talking endlessly about it before the film was released. However I'm happy to say that despite it not being a movie I was highly anticipating, I found the film to be a fun and (if I may say so) pleasant surprise.

In ***Snakes on a Plane*** a young man named Sean Jones (Nathan Phillips) witnesses the brutal murder of a prosecutor at the hands of the ruthless Eddie Kim (Byron Lawson). When Mr. Kim sends men to assassinate Sean, FBI agent Neville Flynn (Samuel L. Jackson) comes to the rescue. He later boards a plane with Sean headed for Los Angeles where Sean will testify against the villain. However Mr. Kim has other ideas and manages to get crates on board the plane containing about 450 dangerous, poisonous snakes. As one can imagine things get pretty ugly for those aboard the flight when the snakes, which are being driven crazy by pheromones, are released. Other characters on board include a rap music star and two members of his entourage, a kick boxer, a couple young boys taking their first flight alone, and some resourceful stewardesses, among others. The majority of the movie focuses on snake attacks and Agent Flynn trying to find a way to save people and keep the plane from crashing.

The person I went to see this film with was expecting it to be a serious crime drama because the newspaper we looked at discussed the aforementioned crime element in the description. However despite this plotline taking up a small portion of the beginning of the movie, once the plane takes off the film definitely moves in a different direction. For me the direction became clear as soon as they showed a shot from behind of a sexy young woman in tight pants and clearly visible thong panties rushing to the bathroom to

smoke and make out with her boyfriend. Once thong panty woman and her beau strip and go at it we enter horror film territory, as the snakes also arrive to (of course) spoil all the fun for these two lovebirds. Following this scene total chaos ensues as the snakes begin attacking everyone in sight. Surprisingly the movie offered up quite a bit of blood and gore, along with some cringe-inducing scenes of snakes getting up-close and personal with peoples' private parts. The nasty creatures were quite convincing and scary, probably because the shots were a nicely-done blend of real snakes, mechanical snakes, and CGI, which overall was seamless even though I knew some shots were just too dynamic to be real. The tension is ratcheted up as the surviving characters are forced to barricade themselves into a small section of the plane and the craft veers hopelessly out of control because of the damage the critters have caused to some circuits. At the same time however, a slight element of camp is woven throughout the film due in part to the colorful b-movie characters and dialog. Besides the now famous line by Samuel L. Jackson which he yells when he becomes frustrated by the whole situation, there are many other lines that had me laughing hard. None of it is stupid dialog, but rather dialog that is perversely funny given the grave situation the people are in. Overall ***Snakes on a Plane*** successfully manages to slither (pun intended) between action, horror and comedy, while thankfully never quite crossing over into total camp. I thoroughly enjoyed this film because it managed to make me jump out of my seat, laugh out loud, and (almost) cry. Put simply, ***Snakes on a Plane*** is one of the most enjoyable b-movies I've seen in a long time. Kudos to Samuel L. Jackson for picking a fun project like this, and kudos also to the goods folks at New Line Cinema for proving once again that they haven't totally lost their independent spirit.