

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: A look at the Evolution of Underground Digital Cinema - A discussion of some of my experiences, insights and perspectives - Part 11 – July 2009

(Note: See the October 2007 Thoughts For The Month for Part 1 of this continuing column, the November 2007 TFTM for Part 2, the December 2007 TFTM for Part 3, the February 2008 TFTM for Part 4, the March 2008 TFTM for Part 5, the April 2008 TFTM for Part 6, the September 2008 TFTM for part 7, the November 2008 TFTM for part 8, the May 2009 TFTM column for part 9, and the June 2009 TFTM column for part 10).

This month I'll wrap up the discussion on underground digital cinema company W.A.V.E. Productions by taking a look at their 1997 horror movie ***The Archer***. Released under the Sinister Cinema banner and starring New Jersey scream queens Tina Krause and Deana, ***The Archer*** tells the tale of two young women set upon by a couple of redneck-types. The story begins on a summer day with the two beauties packing their car and heading out to a quiet spot in the woods by a secluded lake for an afternoon of sun bathing. After a bit of a drive the two arrive, set up their beach towels and strip down to sexy bikinis. Upon returning to the car to grab a new tape for the radio Alex (Tina Krause) is subdued by one of the rednecks, stripped and fondled. Her friend then comes looking for her and is quickly captured as well. The two unconscious ladies are carried back to the guys camp where they are tied to trees and used as archery target practice (hence the name of the movie). Specifically, their bellies are painted as targets and each guy aims to prove his marksmanship by putting an arrow right through the center. Their terrible fate then befalls more bikini-clad lovelies unfortunate enough to stumble into the same backwoods area.

If this scenario sounds rather straightforward, that's because it is. Like the previously discussed ***Revenge of the Necktie Strangler*** (also directed by GW Lawrence), ***The Archer*** is in line with the company's established exploitation style, and moves far away from the complex whodunit plot seen in their first movie ***Sisters*** (see the May 2009 column). As mentioned, the women quickly strip out of their already skimpy short shorts and t-shirts to don string bikinis, providing plenty of eye candy right from the get go. Tina Krause in particular puts on a show, dancing around and gyrating in her thong, giving viewers plenty of butt shots. Additionally, the movie

veers heavily into fetish territory by having the ladies opt for knee high, shiny black leather boots as their footwear of choice for walking through the woods. * The boots and bikinis combined no doubt give the women a definitive dominatrix look; and this fetish theme is extended further when they are subdued, tied up, gagged, and carried over the shoulder by the guys. As mentioned in a previous column, fetish themes such as lifting and carrying are often a part of underground digital cinema movies, especially those in the horror genre. The movie also takes inspiration from such cult horror shockers as ***The Last House on the Left*** and ***I Spit on Your Grave***, with its storyline revolving around innocent young women under attack from psychos out in the middle of nowhere. Indeed the two hunters, named Bobby Ray and Billy Joe, fit into this overall cinematic category pretty well.

Besides all the topless shots, nudity, and general exploitation, ***The Archer*** also features many underground digital cinema production elements one might expect from an indie movie of its type. These include the use of buyout production music (stock music from various companies), and quite a bit of handheld camera work. Also employed is the use of simple locations such as woods, as well as extended driving shots. Additionally, it's worth noting this movie really strikes an indie chord early on in the scenes of the women bantering back and forth by the lake. The dialog sounds like improvisation and seems very natural, making the horrors to come that much more shocking. ** All in all ***The Archer*** is right on the mark (no pun intended) in its aim to put forth a simple tale of exploitative horrors in a backwoods setting (in this case the woods of New Jersey). Stay tuned for the next installment of this continuing column series...

* In Part 5 of this column series I examined the admittedly tenuous correlation between some underground digital horror cinema and underground wrestling (of the mixed and female vs. female variety). ***The Archer*** is an underground horror movie that does indeed have similarities to such wrestling videos in its scenes of OTS (over-the-shoulder) lifting and carrying.

** W.A.V.E. Productions made a sequel called (not surprisingly) ***The Archer: Part 2***.