

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: DVD Horrors Movie Review: ***His Name Was Jason: 30 Years of Friday the 13th*** – April 2009

Last month I reviewed the 2009 remake of ***Friday the 13th*** (see the March 2009 Thoughts For The Month Column), and this month I'd like to talk about the incredible new DVD documentary ***His Name Was Jason***, which was released concurrently with the new film. It really is amazing how long the ***Friday the 13th*** franchise has gone on, and watching this production drives home the point that the longevity has been a result of the efforts of many dedicated individuals who have contributed their various talents to the films over the years, as well as to the loyal legions of horror fans who have supported the series. The depth and breath of coverage and the insights presented are nothing short of spectacular, and the producers should be commended for getting so many people to be a part of this. Much to the chagrin of harsh critics and those who loathe the ***Friday the 13th*** movies, ***His Name Was Jason*** is a testament to the enduring appeal of these films (and to the horror genre in general for that matter). And love it or hate it, the fact is the numbers can't be disputed; the series now consists of a dozen films, all released theatrically, which is no small feat. Now let's take a closer look at what this documentary has to offer.

The first DVD of this two-disc set is hosted by legendary makeup guru Tom Savini, the guy responsible for the bloody over-the-top effects on the first ***Friday the 13th***, as well as countless other popular horror films. He proves an entertaining guide, and I thought the bit with a scream queen running through his sets was quite amusing. However the real information and insight comes from the countless interviews and video clips. The filmmakers gathered together producers, directors, effects artists, actors, internet writers and more to cover every aspect of the films. It was cool to listen to some of the well-known personalities such as Kane Hodder, Betsy Palmer, Lar Park-Lincoln, and Fangoria editor Tony Timpone give their unique insights. Producer Sean Cunningham (who also was Executive Producer of this documentary) is especially engaging when talking about the original movie. It's clear he had no idea of the phenomenon he was going to be creating. What I found most interesting though was hearing some of the lesser-known actors talk about their experiences on set, which ranged from smooth

to incredibly difficult. For devoted fans who know every scene of every movie by heart, some of these revelations will be priceless.

As good as the first disc was, I liked disc number two even better. Being an independent filmmaker myself, I really appreciated the extended interviews with the majority of the Friday the 13th movie directors. Each one had a unique vision for their entry in the series, and it was enlightening to hear how each approached the job at hand. And the same type of extended interviews are done with the Friday the 13th screenwriters as well. There are also some extra bits on the disc which provide some amazing revelations. For example Adrienne King describes in some detail, and with quite a bit of emotion, how a real-life stalker affected her life and kept her out of the movie business for quite some time. She then reveals how much the fans supported her when people learned of it. This is not something I would have expected to hear about; the producers should be commended once again for getting these kind of personal interviews with people who contributed so much to the franchise. (And kudos to Adrienne for being able to get through such an ordeal and make a comeback in the film industry).

It would just take up too much space to describe all of what is covered in His Name Was Jason. Suffice it to say for fans of these movies, or the horror genre in general, this documentary is a great addition to one's DVD collection. Being one of those ***Friday the 13th*** fans, my thanks go out to the producers, Anchor Bay Entertainment, and everyone who participated in the production.