

## 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 – ***My Bloody Valentine 3-D*** - February 2009

Another new year, another horror movie remake... Here we are in 2009 and the good folks at Lions Gate Films (now one of the biggest champions of the horror genre) are ushering in the large slate of fright flicks to come this year with a redo of the cult 1981 slasher movie ***My Bloody Valentine***. The original was made during the heyday of 80's slasher films, with the story taking place in the small rural mining town of Valentine Bluffs, Nova Scotia. Twenty years ago a group of miners were killed in the mine because supervisors left their posts to attend the annual Valentine's Day dance. The sole survivor of the tragedy was a guy named Harry Warden. Dressed from head to toe in standard mining gear and carrying a big pick axe, Harry Warden goes on a revenge killing spree a year later on Valentine's Day, violently murdering the supervisors and warning the town never to celebrate the holiday again. He is then apprehended and put in a mental institution. However the small town is left with haunting memories and a local legend that may never be forgotten. After an opening murder scene featuring a sexy blonde meeting her demise at the hands of a masked miner (and after the opening credits) we flash-forward twenty years later where local officials have reluctantly decided to bring back the long-banned Valentine's Day dance. However mysterious threats start arriving warning against the festivities, including a candy box with a human heart in it, and pretty soon the murders begin again. Town officials of course cancel the dance, which doesn't sit well with the local teens. So a group of these young adults decide to have their own private Valentine's Day party despite the town cancelling their plans. The guys, many of whom now work in the mines, take their girlfriends down for a tour and all hell breaks loose as the masked killer picks them off (no pun intended) one by one. The question then becomes whether Harry has come back, or whether someone else has now become a copycat masked killer. Two of the prime suspects are local guy Axel (Neil Affleck), and former local T.J. (Paul Kelman), who has returned to the town after being gone for many years. It's also possible one of them may have an axe to grind, given that they are vying for the attention of the lovely Sarah (Lori Hallier), who cares about them both but is torn over who she wants to be with.

I must say this was another remake announcement I wasn't initially too excited about, partially because of my mixed feelings about horror movie remakes in general (which I won't get into yet again here), and partially because the original ***My Bloody Valentine*** is one of those cult films I have a certain fondness for. (In other words I was dismayed at the thought of yet another cherished horror classic being butchered by greedy film producers). As mentioned it was made in the heyday of the 80's slasher film era, and as such really is a product of that time, following most of the usual trappings of the genre. I've always enjoyed these types of films, perhaps because I have a soft spot for the simplicity and straightforwardness they offer, and I've always enjoyed ***My Bloody Valentine*** as a fun, suspenseful little movie with the unique twist of being set in underground mines. Since it was a reasonably popular movie, I was surprised a sequel was never made, especially considering the plethora of successful follow-ups to such other 80's slasher icons as ***Friday the 13<sup>th</sup>***, ***Halloween***, etc. Now however, twenty-eight years later, that oversight has been rectified with ***My Bloody Valentine 3-D***. So let's take a look at this new incarnation and see if they succeeded in bringing us a worthwhile update to a cult classic.

***My Bloody Valentine 3-D*** is a fun, engaging horror movie from start to finish. The film has all the key elements that make a good horror slasher picture - namely lots of action, sex and bloody on-screen carnage. This is an over-the-top movie in all those regards, thus making it very effective in keeping audience interest and being entertaining. The visceral moments are non-stop in this briskly-paced film, with the incredibly menacing masked killer racking up an impressive body count and spilling buckets of blood and gore in the process. For those who are fans of this particular horror subgenre, the film consistently delivers in those respects. And as far as the sex element goes, I have to say I can't recall having seen a more extended nude scene since the famous Barbara Crampton tied-down-on-the-table sequence in ***Re-Animator***. \* In ***My Bloody Valentine 3-D*** a woman has sex at a hotel and then runs naked out into the parking lot to try and get back the video her lover just made of them. She then watches the guy get an ax through the head before being chased back into the building by the masked maniac. This long but still fast-paced, suspenseful scene had the audience I was with hooting and hollering, no doubt providing a treat for exploitation film fans. \*\* And most effective of all was the constantly impressive 3-D employed continuously throughout the proceedings, rather than just in the shock sequences. From the beginning when the Lions Gate logo (normally visually impressive in its own right) came out into the audience, to the final end credits, the 3-D was some of the best I've ever seen. In fact a much-promoted shot where the killer throws his pick axe at the audience made me recoil back in my seat just like in the promotional ads. \*\*\* I highly recommend that fans see this movie in a theater if only for the 3-D wizardry on display.

Generally when I write movie reviews I analyze all the pieces in-depth and give as comprehensive a look at the film as I can, which often means a few more paragraphs. With this movie however I think what I've said above about sums it up. \*\*\*\* ***My Bloody Valentine 3-D*** is a film where the aforementioned elements have been touted in all the ads, effectively promoting the picture for just what it is - namely a fun 3-D thrill ride with lots of sex, violence and scares. As they say it's the perfect date movie. \*\*\*\*\* Beyond that the acting was what one might see in a soap opera (which isn't necessarily a bad thing); however the movie doesn't get bogged down in lengthy dialog anyway. And for those wondering how it compares to the original 1981 film, let me just say they stick to the same basic story while fiddling with a few small plot details here and there and ratcheting up all the previously mentioned slasher film elements. So my verdict in that regard is that they did the first picture justice in terms of a modern-day update. And in typical slasher movie tradition things were left wide open for a possible sequel. Perhaps the legend of Harry Warden will continue on into the coming decade? One can only wait and see...

\* A friend tells me Betsy Rue, the actress playing Irene in the extended nude scene, has become quite the sensation among horror fans. And it's worth noting that she's prominently featured in the trailer, where she's wearing a bra and panties (probably from alternate takes) that disappear in the actual movie.

\*\* This movie was only shown in 3-D in select theaters having the capability to play it that way. Other theaters showed it in standard format and advertised it as ***My Bloody Valentine 2-D***.

\*\*\* Admittedly the last 3-D movie I remember seeing was 1991's ***Freddy's Dead: The Final Nightmare*** (where only a small portion of the film was in 3-D), and it would stand to reason that since then the technology would've improved.

\*\*\*\* A YouTube video promotes these elements and features kudos from director Wes Craven and several web writers, bloggers and fans alike.

\*\*\*\*\* It was nice to see genre veteran Tom Atkins in this film. It's cool that he's still in the business after all these years.