

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: **Zombieland** - October 2009

*Note: The following review of **Zombieland** may contain plot details which could be considered spoilers.*

In the new horror-comedy **Zombieland**, the world has been overrun by zombies and only a few scattered humans remain. We are first introduced to Columbus (Jesse Eisenberg), a geeky introvert with a laundry list of phobias, many of them pre-dating the zombie infestation. Before too long he joins unlikely partner Tallahassee (Woody Harrelson), a tough, no-nonsense zombie killer who is determined to find the last edible Twinkie on earth or die trying. After they meet and are outwitted (a couple times) by street-smart sisters Wichita and Little Rock (whose real names we eventually find out), the four wind up traveling together through one barren city after another in search of lost family members. They also meet legendary comic actor Bill Murray (playing himself) along the way!

Zombieland at its heart is a straightforward action-buddy movie set in a world barren of humans and overrun by zombies. I call it straightforward because it's not a movie heavy in social commentary like one of George Romero's zombie films, and it's also not a serious virus outbreak film such as **28 Days Later**. In fact, there is little explanation given about the beginnings of the infection-contamination beyond noting where it started, or the bigger implications for the world or humanity (the "bigger picture"). It's simply about two guys and two women, each of whom deal with the situation they are presented with in their own unique way. And for the most part this simplicity works quite well. The characters are all easy to identify with, the story moves along at a brisk pace, and the zombie action (while definitely not as intense or prevalent as the above-mentioned movies) is fun to watch. And there's probably enough blood, guts and flying zombie parts to satisfy most gore hounds, while at the same time enough action and

comedy to appease more mainstream audiences. All in all, **Zombieland** presents a nice mix of sensibilities.

Some things I particularly liked about the movie include the narration of lead actor Jesse Eisenberg (who has a delivery very similar to Michael Cera), the graphic “rules” that accompany it, and the scene involving Bill Murray. (In this scene our heroes break into Murray’s house and have an encounter with the actor that’s quite funny - although I must admit I guessed how it would end ahead of time). Put simply the performances are all good with Eisenberg and Harrelson contributing a lot of humor throughout. Their characters make a good buddy team in an “Odd Couple” sort of way. The movie also has some cool pop culture references (such as its use of the **Ghostbusters** theme song), the ending is simple but satisfactory, and although **Zombieland** may not change the world of horror films, it’s certainly a pleasant enough way to enjoy around 80 minutes.