

## 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: Horror Movie Remakes - More ranting & raving! – August 2010

I recently received word through a horror news group update that the cult classic ***An American Werewolf in London*** is being looked at as a possible candidate for a remake. The group writer sounded disheartened relaying the news, noting that this surely must hurt most horror fans, something I agree wholeheartedly with. ***An American Werewolf in London*** is no doubt a treasured movie to a large number of fright film fans, me included. \* Of course regular readers of this column already know that for me the recent remake of ***A Nightmare on Elm Street*** was an incredibly hard pill to swallow, despite the fact that the new version (in my opinion) turned out to be well-made. \*\* Regular readers also know that I have written about my feelings in general regarding remakes many times throughout the history of this column. People who study personal development will recall the philosophy that anything one continually gives attention to persists, whether you like it or dislike it, while anything that is not given attention dissolves away. So I probably should stop writing about horror remakes and help contribute to their decline. But this recent ***An American Werewolf in London*** news annoyed me enough to make me want to write what I hope will be my last essay on the subject. So here goes...

First, I don't believe the idea of remaking a movie is always, without question, a bad one. There are some movies that are good candidates for an update. For example movies that are outdated because of when they were made, are not beloved classics to countless fans, and/or haven't been seen by many people, may benefit by a new version. For instance, the upcoming monster movie ***Piranha 3D*** is perhaps a good example of a film fitting those criteria. But when classic titles like ***Psycho***, ***A Nightmare on Elm Street***, ***The Fog***, ***Halloween***, ***Black Christmas*** & ***The Monster Squad*** are unceremoniously remade, it is nothing but a slap in the face to countless horror fans. You see, for those who are unaware, horror fans are among the most loyal type of movie

fans. We value our fright classics greatly. If Hollywood movie studios really cared about the horror crowd, they would survey people ahead of time asking what they thought about remaking this film or that film. But of course they don't do that for the classics (or anything else, for that matter), because they know the response would be an overwhelming "NO, leave it alone!". So instead they simply announce it's going to be done, and then go ahead and do it regardless of what anybody thinks. And they hope they will get that big opening weekend, comprised mainly of indiscriminate mainstream moviegoers looking to see anything, along with some weary horror fans drawn in by the curiosity factor, or by the fact that there is no original horror playing in theaters.

Second, beyond angering longtime horror aficionados, these remakes certainly aren't doing younger fans any favors. Put simply, many young viewers probably think these movies are brand new, when in fact they are simply rereads of something from the past. After all, in the general marketing of these films, it is not pointed out they are remakes. (Personally I think that the phrase "The Remake" should be mandated on these titles, or at least the year - as in ***A Nightmare on Elm Street (2010)***). Also, I certainly wouldn't want my generation being defined by redone movies from a previous generation. And this idea of course stretches beyond the horror genre as well. A remake of ***Footloose*** - what is that all about?!!

I'll wrap by saying I understand the obvious, specifically that money motivates all decisions regarding remaking films, despite what artistic or altruistic reasons producers and directors may give to the contrary. (Again, if it's not just about the money why not survey the very loyal horror fans and simply ask "would you like to see this remade?" And if the answer is "no", consider another potentially profitable project). And I'll readily note that the movie business is, by its very nature, a (sometimes uneasy) balance between artistic and financial considerations. And I'll also point out that there have been many, though not a majority by any means, remakes that have been quite good. However, the countless parade of redone movies (both horror and otherwise) is, as I noted earlier, disheartening to say the least. I'm a filmmaker who produces my own original micro-budget movies. If one day I ever do rise to the level of Hollywood Director, and if I am ever offered the job of helming a remake of a horror classic, I'd like to think my answer would be a resounding "no", despite what I was offered to do it. (Or at least I might ask if perhaps a sequel to the existing franchise would be a better idea). But for now I say stop the insanity!!!

\* To read my review of ***A Nightmare on Elm Street (2010)*** see my May 2010 TFTM column.

\*\* My past writings on horror movie remakes include the September 2002 TFTM column, and the November 2003 TFTM column. I've also reviewed many remakes throughout the many years I've written this column.