

## 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 – *I Am Nancy* (documentary) – August 2011

On my biography page I note how the 1984 horror classic *A Nightmare on Elm Street* was the movie that got me interested in the horror genre to begin with. And as such, it indirectly contributed to my going on to become an independent filmmaker who concentrates on the horror genre. \* In the past I've written extensively on the movie, and to this day am always glad to talk endlessly about it with anyone interested (or willing to listen). Of course I am not alone in my appreciation for the film, as its incredible success and that of the entire *Nightmare on Elm Street* franchise over subsequent years has demonstrated. However as we know, it is the character of Freddy Krueger that has gotten most of the attention. As a quote from *Wes Craven's New Nightmare* goes, "Every kid knows who Freddy is". Therefore the question becomes, have people forgotten about Nancy Thompson? Actress Heather Langenkamp's intriguing, enlightening, sometimes funny, sometimes poignant new documentary *I Am Nancy* attempts to answer this very question.

Directed by Arlene Marechal and produced by the actress herself, *I Am Nancy* focuses primarily on two things. One is horror entertainment culture, personified by horror conventions such as Fangoria's Weekend of Horrors, Monstermania and others, and the other is the aforementioned question about the importance of the character of Nancy Thompson. \*\* There can be no doubt just how prevalent the horror lifestyle (so to speak) has become, as evidenced by the large number of passionate, enthusiastic, and often colorfully-attired fans interviewed in this documentary. As a regular convention attendee I'm very familiar with these shows, and really enjoyed watching fans interact with the actress and other guests as they chatted about the film and displayed all sorts of interesting Elm Street merchandise for signatures. It was a familiar setting which highlights the sense of community shared by aficionados of the horror genre. And having had the pleasure of meeting Heather Langenkamp (and other Elm Street stars) this year at Chiller Theatre in New Jersey, I could totally relate to the enthusiasm of the interviewees.

As to the question of whether people have forgotten about Nancy Thompson, it is evident from their responses that they have not. In some funny sequences Heather searches the conventions for Nancy merchandise, and is disappointed to find out it is scarce, save for a few very unflattering figurines. As one might imagine though, she is constantly surrounded by Freddy merchandise of all shapes and sizes. However when guests are asked about Nancy they really open up and talk about the importance of the character and what she personally meant to them. Fans talk about her strength and resilience and often relate it to experiences in their own lives. And this is what I found most compelling, specifically because I too have always considered Nancy Thompson to be an important figure in horror film history. As much as I admire Robert Englund and his brilliant portrayal of Freddy, as well as his myriad other contributions to the horror genre, it was Nancy Thompson that I identified with in the original movie. She was the character who hooked me into the story and made ***A Nightmare on Elm Street*** such a compelling drama. And after all these years of the Freddy phenomenon it's great to see Nancy spotlighted in this new documentary. I might also add that ***I Am Nancy*** features some cool movie clips, fun graphics, revealing interviews with Robert Englund, Wes Craven and others, and the great new song *I am Nancy* (featured in a bonus music video), which nicely round out the documentary. \*\*\* All in all this is an excellent companion piece to the recently released ***Never Sleep Again: The Elm Street Legacy***, and a definite must-have for any ***Nightmare on Elm Street*** fan.

\* Just like one of the interviewees in the documentary, I too have written college papers about ***A Nightmare on Elm Street***.

\*\* See the July 2011 TFTM column for a discussion on horror movie conventions and cult movie stars.

\*\*\* See the June 2010 TFTM column for my review of ***Never Sleep Again: The Elm Street Legacy***.