

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 – ***The X-Files: I Want to Believe*** – August 2008

*Note: The following movie review of ***The X-Files: I Want to Believe*** may contain plot details which could be considered spoilers.*

The X-Files: I Want to Believe heralds the triumphant cinematic return of former FBI agents Fox Mulder (David Duchovny) and Dana Scully (Gillian Anderson) when they are asked by the Bureau to help in unraveling the case of a missing agent. The movie is the second big-screen adventure for the duo, following the 1998 feature ***The X-Files: Fight the Future***, and was directed by *X-Files* series creator Chris Carter. Of course the original *X-Files* television series was a cultural phenomenon back in the 1990's, which makes this a much-anticipated film. In this tale the two former agents venture back into dark territory as their investigation of the missing agent also involves a disgraced priest claiming to have psychic visions, vicious kidnappers, and a grisly trail of human remains, among other things. The case forces Mulder and Scully to deal with their personal relationship and their own inner demons along the way as well.

One thing that struck me about this movie early on is how the film is really geared towards *X-Files* fans and those intimately familiar with the show. These two characters have a history, and that history really makes up a big part of this movie, which is like a longer version of an *X-Files* television episode. When we first meet Dana Scully here she is at work as a medical doctor, treating a boy with a terminal disease. She is asked to get in contact with Fox Mulder, to which she replies she doesn't work with Mulder anymore (a line prominently featured in the television trailers for the film). Of course she does then reluctantly go and relay the message to Mulder, who is in a self-imposed seclusion and not eager to reemerge and help the government. (It should also be noted his office space is almost an exact replica of his former space at the bureau, complete with the "I Want to Believe" poster on the wall). From there on in, and throughout the rest

of the film, the lives and feelings of these two people at this point in time are explored more deeply. And although one unfamiliar with the series should be able to understand the characters well enough, fans will undoubtedly get much more out of the material than the uninitiated. This is of course because fans know where these people have been prior to this and how they got to this point. Anderson and Duchovny fall back into their famous roles with ease, and we instantly pick things up along with them at this later point in their lives. For those who have watched the show it's like catching up with old friends not seen in years, and the dramatic interplay between the two characters in itself makes the movie compelling.

As far as the story of this movie goes, it's interesting enough, although not exceptional as compared with some of the classic *X-Files* episodes fans have come to know and love. Billy Connolly gives a convincing performance as the former priest dealing with all the bad things he has done in the best way he can, while the usually attention-getting Amanda Peet is put in a rather standard role as Dakota Whitney, the agent who summons Mulder and Scully back into action. And Mitch Pileggi appears briefly as old friend and colleague Walter Skinner, which I thought was a nice touch. While the plot is multilayered and complex, something one might expect from *The X-Files*, anyone expecting a giant action film with continuous explosions and gunplay will probably be disappointed. As I said, this movie is more about characters and people than things blowing up, although there are some intense sequences in the movie. And it should be noted that at least some of this intensity comes from the grim subject matter. I think it's safe to say this film isn't for the squeamish, given the amount of visceral images (namely body parts) on display, despite its PG-13 rating. In fact, there's definitely enough grisly material in view to wonder if Carter was a bit influenced by the recent trend of movies like **Hostel** and **Saw** to go for the extreme. This type of thing is not entirely out of place in *The X-files* universe however.

When all is said and done ***The X-Files: I Want to Believe*** is a competent film which is definitely a worthy edition to the series, if not extraordinary. It's great to see these fine lead actors again and watch them continue the tale of two somewhat tired but still strong and enduring people. Fans of the show will definitely want to catch this movie, as well as those looking for something deep and thought-provoking. I highly recommend this film.