

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: A look at the Evolution of Underground Digital Cinema - A discussion of some of my experiences, insights and perspectives - Part 10 – June 2009
(Note: See the October 2007 TFTM for Part 1 of this continuing column, the November 2007 TFTM for Part 2, the December 2007 TFTM for Part 3, the February 2008 TFTM for Part 4, the March 2008 TFTM for Part 5, the April 2008 TFTM for Part 6, the September 2008 TFTM for part 7, the November 2008 TFTM for part 8, and the May 2009 TFTM column for part 9).

As mentioned in the previous column, W.A.V.E. Productions went on to produce a whole series of movies with characters similar in nature to their **Sisters** killer The Valley Strangler. In this installment I'll continue the discussion of this New Jersey-based indie company by taking a look at their 2002 release **The Revenge of the Necktie Strangler**. This digital movie, which runs just over 30 minutes, follows the events which took place in the previous W.A.V.E. production **The Go-Go Strangler**. The story follows a killer (G W Lawrence, who also Directed & Edited) whose M.O. is strangulation using a necktie, and who is hot on the trail of newlyweds Charice (Barbara Joyce) and Jeffrey Holmes (Dean Paul).

In **The Revenge of the Necktie Strangler** we are clearly in digital video territory, with the technology being put to good use in some bright, scenic shots at the opening of the aforementioned newly married couple on honeymoon in Las Vegas. Set to romantic music, the loving couple stroll around near some picturesque fountains and casinos and watch an impressive fireworks display along with a huge crowd of people. However following this tranquil beginning the proceedings quickly take a dark turn as the thought-to-be-dead Necktie Strangler awakes from the morgue and goes on a killing spree on his way to get revenge on the young couple. Hapless female victims falling by his hands include a morgue attendant, a friend of the couple, and some cute women hiking in the

woods. The climax of the movie features a showdown between a traumatized Jeffrey Holmes and the killer.

In this movie the strangler character takes center stage and the mystery-whodunit plotline prominent in ***Sisters*** is jettisoned in favor of a more basic, stripped-down, killer-on-the-loose story. The scene of the killer laying on the mortuary slab and then waking up to dispatch the (female) attendant is reminiscent of slasher franchises such as ***Halloween*** and ***Friday the 13th***, where sequences of the thought-to-be-dead killer jump start sequel after sequel. * ***The Revenge of the Necktie Strangler***, like most of W.A.V.E.'s productions following ***Sisters***, also leans heavily into exploitation film territory with its use of a lengthy topless scene - in this instance provided by indie starlet and frequent W.A.V.E. actress Tina Krause (billed as Mia Copa). Here Tina is tied up and stripped down by the killer before being forced to give information about the couple's whereabouts and finally dispatched. Nudity is a key selling point for ***The Revenge of the Necktie Strangler***, as is evidenced by the front and back DVD box covers prominently featuring shots of Tina Krause topless. Additionally, the DVD features an extra short called ***At The Wrong Place, At The Wrong Time***, which is a tale of a woman who comes between her friend and a killer. This movie features an abundance of topless shots, in addition to drowning, strangling, gunplay and wet t-shirts (also noted on the DVD box). The wet t-shirt element was something discussed in the introduction to the ***Sisters*** DVD (see last month's column), and it appears W.A.V.E. continued on with this theme in future productions such as this one. (Their website promo even features an actress wearing a W.A.V.E. Productions wet t-shirt.) And the other exploitation elements in ***At The Wrong Place, At The Wrong Time*** are ones often featured prominently in underground horror movies, as well as being reminiscent in basic style to elements of cult classic, extreme shockers such as ***The Last House on the Left*** and ***I Spit on Your Grave*** (also discussed in last month's column).

On the technical side this digital production features familiar elements of low-budget indie movies of this type such as buyout production music, lots of handheld camera work, and basic locations (such as the woods). It's also worth mentioning that W.A.V.E., like many other underground video companies, has a regular stable of actresses populating their productions. For those who read the previous columns discussing POP Cinema (formerly E.I. Cinema) and Seduction Cinema, I noted that actresses such as Misty Mundae, Darian Caine and Ruby DeLarocca appear in movie after movie. Similarly, ***The Revenge of the Necktie Strangler*** stars W.A.V.E. regulars Barbara Joyce, Laura Giglio, Debbie D. and Pamela Sutch, along with the aforementioned Tina Krause. Put simply, filling underground horror movies with beautiful, scantily-clad women (or scream queens) often proves to be a major draw for audiences. Stay tuned for the next installment of this continuing column series...

* It is noted prominently on The W.A.V.E Productions web site that their videos are inspired by the horror and exploitation movies of the 40s, 50s, 60s, and 70s.