

Terrifyingly Gnarly: Listen, I'm Excited for "SCREAM 4"!

Written by Samuel Zimmerman
Tuesday, 15 June 2010 10:06



Yesterday, another casting announcement (actor Nico Tortorella) and character breakdowns were released for next spring's return to Woodsboro. I thought with that relevant news I'd finally give a voice to the brainwaves that tell me, against my better judgment in a horror climate rampant with terrible studio output, I'm unabashedly excited for SCREAM 4.

I'll start by putting this in a little bit of context. I know SCREAM, regardless of age, is highly regarded (as it should be), but for me it's also something special. The film, with its incredible mix of horror and snarky humor, was released as I turned 9 years old. As most genre fans will attest, the ages of 9-13 can be crucial. That's often when horror is most dangerous, equally delightful and terrifying and something you could be easily punished for sneaking a glimpse of. My mother, as wonderful as she is, is not an admirer of the powers of the genre, so thank God for a father and brother willing to indulge. While already on the path to avid film fan by that age, SCREAM was the first movie I watched with slightly older eyes, and the first one that made such a strong impression, I instinctively knew I had to be involved with cinema one way or another.



And in many ways, SCREAM is an excellent "that first film." It taught me the (for all intents and purposes at the time) rules of the genre and name-dropped enough prior influences and horror classics to get me going. It's when I crossed the threshold of geek, writing down titles I had to seek out at the local video store (even learning who Wes Craven was and what he meant was an undertaking), and it was the first film I ever viewed with a commentary—it was the first time I had even *heard* of a commentary (my brother later gave me the special VHS pack including a second copy of SCREAM with Craven and Williamson teaching me mind-blowing details about the making of this masterpiece). I started rattling off trivial details about its production to friends at school (I'm sure they really gave a shit that Skeet Ulrich's heart condition made his pain in the final moments all too real), and I'd quote the hell out of it, incessantly.

So there's that aspect—my sentimental attachment to the catalyst of my genre fandom—which

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probably is the most important component and the biggest reason why, no matter what, I'll see any subsequent SCREAM movies. I'm sure many of you can relate with your own franchises.



But SCREAM 4 also means a few other things. It means a do-over for Williamson, who very noticeably was unable to write the third entry, and since no one amazingly crucial to the mythology was killed off in part trois, we can pretend like it never happened (even more than we already do). It also means—and here's what I'm excited about—a catharsis for our frustrations as a horror community. What the first film did so well was craft an effective horror film while mocking and discussing the conventions that had grown so tired. Right now, the genre's fans and filmmakers are exhausted again.

Assuming Williamson is putting his all into this and not just looking for a cash grab, the next entry in the SCREAM franchise should prove incredibly intriguing and possibly even more snarkily meta than the first. We live amidst a constant stream of sequels, reboots, remakes and knockoffs, and SCREAM 4 very much qualifies as the first two. I'm terribly interested to see how Williamson and Craven will address a third sequel in a series which, at least on surface level, has become what it set out to lovingly dissect.

As far as horror trends and knockoffs go, it has been 10 years since the last SCREAM, and thanks to violent terrorism-related atrocities, a national disaster and an incredibly depressing war, our outlook has been bleak and famously given way to films about torture and life postapocalypse. As recycled versions of SAW and HOSTEL were churned out and many beloved older films destroyed by updated incarnations, horror fans haven't found a proper channel to release their anger and frustration (aside from fuming and writing on-line tirades, of course). The idea of Williamson writing a means for us to laugh away 10 years of irritation and pessimism is something I can really get down with.

Is this how it's all going to happen? I honestly don't know, and if I'm wrong, I can assure you I'll be the most bummed. But I'd love for it to work out that way. I'd love for SCREAM 4 to be the second best, if not the best of the bunch, and really, I'd love for Wes Craven to prove he's still got it.

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{comments on}