Written by Professor A. Griffin
Friday, 25 February 2011 15:58

The year was 1986, and Jason Voorhees, the terrifying deformed killer from the FRIDAY THE 13TH series of horror films, was about to return from the grave! (Our JASON LIVES discussion began in Unlucky Days, Part Four here .)

There was a slight problem; this was not our old friend Jason of the past. This was a different Jason in a different time. I could sense the restrictions and could see the cuts (and not the good kind) on the screen. The return of Jason Voorhees came at a time when the MPAA was REALLY going after horror and the dry minimum is what made it to the screen. Still the filmmakers had some fun with the concept and added some nice elements.

Tommy Jarvis was back as well, (played now by Thom Mathews from RETURN OF THE LIVING DEAD) and ironically enough, the guy who put Jason in the ground, is the one to bring him back to life.

Tommy and a fellow mental patient Allen Hawes (former Sweathog Ron Palillo) drive out to Jason’s ill kept grave in the town of Forrest Green. Yeah that’s right, Forrest Green. It seems the locals, for some reason, dislike the name Crystal Lake. Tommy and Allen are on their way to the grave with Jason’s original hockey mask in tow, some shovels and a can of gasoline. “Jason belongs in hell, and I’m going to see that he gets there!” says Tommy. It’s really the ultimate kind of therapy. Dig up the body of the man that’s haunting you, see it, confirm that he’s dead and then destroy it utterly.

When Tommy opens the decrepit casket, we see Jason again for the first time since 1984, and he doesn't look good. The body of Jason Voorhees lies twisted in a grotesque position, covered in maggots and still sporting all the battle scars and wounds that we remember. Just in case you don't however…

BATTLE SCARS OF JASON VOORHEES

Chainsaw wound to right arm, machete in shoulder.—PART 2

Stabbed in left hand, stabbed in right knee, log smashed into head, shovel smashed into head, hung from rope, axe in left side of head.—PART III

Hammer claw in neck, TV smashed on head, deep machete wound to left hand, machete wound to chest, machete wound to left side of head all the way to the center of his head, destroying his eye, (KILLING BLOW) and then multiple machete wounds to back and body.—THE FINAL CHAPTER

Yes, our boy is a mess.

Upon seeing the rotting corpse, Tommy hears Corey Feldman's voice screaming, "DIE! DIE! DIE!" again and goes ballistic. Ripping a long metal pole off of a fence in the graveyard, he leaps in the grave and stabs the body repeatedly, jostling the corpse and tossing maggots everywhere. After Tommy calms down, he prepares for Jason's conflagration, LEAVING THE METAL POLE IN THE BODY!!! Well, that was a mistake, for this is a FRIDAY THE 13TH movie, and storm clouds are always brewing. Lightning suddenly strikes the pole, filling the grave with an electric neon glow, and JASON'S GOOD EYE POPS OPEN!!!

Jason (C. J. Graham this time) rises from the grave, and Tommy watches in stunned horror as Jason punches Allen's heart from his chest, drops his body face down into his casket and turns to him. Tommy quickly doses him with the gas and lights a match…but then the downpour

begins. Jason stands in the rain (a very poetic rebirth/baptism into the rain-filled night, once again as the maggots wash off him), facing the man who put him into the grave.

Tommy does the only logical thing. He runs screaming in terror.

Jason then very calmly reaches for something recognizable, his hockey mask and places it on over his rotting face. Next he puts on the yellow leather workman’s gloves that Tommy also left behind and grabs the sharp, melted, metal pole that gave him life, then whirls around to face the audience. The camera jumps zooms into a closeup of Jason’s good eye… and then the film becomes a parody.

We are treated to a rather hilarious but nevertheless out of place James Bond (!) spoof as Jason does a calm, cool walk across the screen and then turns quickly to whack his victim (us?) with a machete filling the screen with blood and the title sequence. This was the first sign that something was wrong. After that very atmospheric (albeit improbable) opening sequence bringing Jason back to life, director and screenwriter Tom McLoughlin, decide to fill the film with self-referential humor.

Horror fans wanting to see Jason return at his goriest were disappointed.

It seemed like Jason LITE with a minimum of on-screen butchery nudity, and a haunted house blue-light slickness that was a far cry from the black, grainy, deep woods horror that Jason elicited once upon a time. Regardless of the lack of familiar elements, FRIDAY THE 13TH PART VI: JASON LIVES is a lot of fun, and best of all, Jason Voorhees is back!!

Jason can now officially be classified as UNDEAD. Interesting to note, in his entire movie career up until this point, no one has ever shot Jason with a gun. However, in this film, the undead Jason is shot eight times in the chest with a revolver, three times in chest with shotgun and one time in the head with a revolver. Sadly it’s all too little, too late.

There must still be some thought process going on inside Jason’s brain, because he instinctively goes back to Camp Crystal Lake (“No matter what you call it, it’s still Camp Crystal Lake to him!”) and begins murdering the seemingly endless hordes of people wandering in HIS woods.

At local Camp Forrest Green, a group of sex-crazed counselors (is there any other kind?) are trying to deal with the real horror of a summer camp… kids. That’s right, for the first time in ANY FRIDAY THE 13TH movie; children are actually present at the camp. This makes for some interesting moments as the undead Jason becomes fascinated with the kids and regularly pays them midnight visits to stand and stare at them. Does Jason still have the childlike memories of his days at summer camp? Is he fighting the urge to kill, just wanting to play and have fun? It’s interesting, but definitely there.

Up to this point, Jason’s body count is 35, but with Allen Hawes’ murder, the count is up to 36 and away we go! Jason racks up an impressive 18 victims in his return film, bringing the total up to 53!! Using machetes, sickles, throwing darts, hunting knives and his newest weapons, his bare hands. Jason’s new undead rebirth by lightning must have also given him amazing new strength. Not that he needed it. In this film, he pushes a victim’s head through the metal of a camper, rips off arms, snaps Sheriff Garrett (David Kagen) in two like a twig and in one of the most chuckle-inducing deaths, tears off Sissy’s (Renee Jones) head and (if the off screen sound effect was any indication) punts it like a football!

Tommy Jarvis, meanwhile, has a pathetic plan; to destroy Jason, he must return him to the place where he originally died. OK, that would be the Jarvis’ living room from THE FINAL CHAPTER. No, Tommy theorizes, it’s Crystal Lake where Jason drowned as a boy!

[redacted]