

Unlucky Days: A Tribute to the “FRIDAY THE 13TH” Series, Part Ten

Written by Professor A. Griffin
Friday, 01 April 2011 14:28



I think it's important to try and remember that it all started with an 11-year-old boy who really just wanted to swim.

It all started with a mentally deficient child (a sweet boy according to his mother) who needed special care and attention, but instead was left to drown in the cold, cold waters of Crystal Lake.

Tragedy became a nightmare of loss, exploding in bloody fury beginning with a mother's wrath, thunder and lightning, and the deep dark forest at night. The nightmare continued with numerous sharp weapons, screams, vicious attacks, axes, a hockey mask and a killer so violent, so brutal, that he could almost be classified as a force of nature.

The FRIDAY THE 13TH series has covered it all... revenge and anger, lust and fear, supernatural power and the living dead...

It spawned countless imitators and was often referenced in mass media. Most of the references were jokes, of course, and mainstream media responded to the series with countless insults. Mockery by critics and condemnation by morality groups were common, but the filmmakers had laughed all the way to the bank. The original FRIDAY THE 13TH was made for just under \$500,000 and made \$37 million!!! Recent figures place the profit for the entire series to be in the vicinity of \$315 million.

And it all started with a boy—Jason Voorhees.

Unlucky Days: A Tribute to the “FRIDAY THE 13TH” Series, Part Ten

Written by Professor A. Griffin
Friday, 01 April 2011 14:28



Jason Voorhees was last seen being dragged into hell by the giant hands of demons in 1993's *JASON GOES TO HELL: THE FINAL FRIDAY*. A supernatural spell book and mystic words recited by his niece sent Jason away apparently forever. All this was courtesy of New Line Cinema who bought the *FRIDAY THE 13TH* series (characters and story) from Paramount and now finished the career of Jason Voorhees just as it had finished off Fred Krueger.

In the the horror film genre, the supernatural was coming back with a vengeance. Monster movies were being made again (*INTERVIEW WITH A VAMPIRE*, *THE MUMMY*, *GODZILLA*), and the days of hack and slash killers on the big screen were apparently over.

But everything comes around, so it seems.

Jason-ites started fan clubs, wrote fiction and wore homemade costumes; designed web sites theorizing time lines and character motivations. Fans drew pictures of the Crystal Lake Killer and painted model kits of Jason by Screamin' (I still have mine). Jason action figures appeared, as well as Jason plush dolls! (Who wouldn't want to snuggle up to a rotting Jason Voorhees circa *JASON GOES TO HELL*?) A cheap plain white plastic hockey mask became common in fun shops and costume stores (especially around Halloween). Plastic machetes, axes and hatchets also appeared, as well as rubber Jason masks (his head, not just the hockey mask).

But where was Jason in all this? New Line must have noticed the constant attention the series was getting on home video and at fan conventions. And so, after seven long years, New Line decided to reopen up the gates of hell...he was coming back.

Once the shimmering blue jewel of the galaxy, humanity's former home is now a contaminated planet abandoned for centuries—a world of violent storms, toxic landmasses and poisonous seas. Yet humans have returned—not to live but to study. In the remains of the Crystal Lake Research Facility, an archaeological class has discovered two frozen ancestors—a beautiful

Unlucky Days: A Tribute to the "FRIDAY THE 13TH" Series, Part Ten

Written by Professor A. Griffin
Friday, 01 April 2011 14:28

woman and a hulking, rotted carcass wearing a strange mask. Their cryo-storage disturbed, the two bodies are taken to the students' ship: The Grendel.

Forget what has gone before. Welcome to the future of horror.

-Promotional copy for JASON X

Jason Voorhees (once again played by the man who will forever be identified with Jason, Kane Hodder) was revived by screenwriter Todd Farmer and sent out into space. When rumors of this film's concept started to circulate, I was astonished...and indeed a bit shocked. It had been a very long time since I'd thought about Jason Voorhees, and honestly NEVER expected to see him on the big screen ever again. However, the track record of horror movie monsters out in space wasn't very good (Leprechaun, Pinhead). And that fact made me very nervous. Would I see it? Yes. Was I excited about it? Strangely, no. Maybe I had too much happening in my life since JASON GOES TO HELL: THE FINAL FRIDAY to be excited about Mr. Voorhees' return. I lived in a new city, married the love of my life and was planning for a family. There was no room for a new Jason film to give me thrills. In truth, my lack of enthusiasm made me secretly depressed. I believed that the film would be horrible and would be just another nail in the coffin of a film series that I once truly immersed myself in. Nothing good lasts forever.



JASON X went in front of the cameras on March 6, 2000 and shooting was completed on April 30, 2000. The film was shot entirely on digital video and then blown up to screen size. I learned from FANGORIA magazine that the film's release date was pushed back time and time again and finally ended up in the limbo of films the studio doesn't know what to do with. 2001 was the official year of completion, but still no release date.

Another really bad sign.

Unlucky Days: A Tribute to the "FRIDAY THE 13TH" Series, Part Ten

Written by Professor A. Griffin
Friday, 01 April 2011 14:28

I wrote it off as a direct to video release. Direct to video??? A FRIDAY THE 13TH movie going direct to video? Absurd! Impossible! Freddy Krueger never went straight to video. Even the pathetic HALLOWEEN: THE CURE OF MICHAEL MYERS had a limited theatrical run! Jason lumped in with other direct to video horror series like HELLRAISER, HOWLING and LEPRACHAUN?? That was wrong, and again, I was depressed.

Jump to April 2002. I was watching television when suddenly the New Line symbol appeared and the trailer for JASON X played before my eyes accompanied by a heavy metal thrash hit.

"Let the Bodies Hit the Floor! Let the Bodies hit the Floor! Let the Bodies hit the Floor!"

-"Bodies" by Drowning Pool.

I couldn't believe it. There he was before my eyes...Jason. Back again. Moving, hacking, swinging, punching, attacking...all set to Drowning Pool's hit song. What a perfect song for the trailer! What a perfect song for the Sultan of Slaughter! All at once my heart raced, and I felt it. I felt a surge, a thrill, a rush of excitement, the kind I hadn't felt since the good old days. The television trailer thrilled me and for the first time in a long time, I said to myself, "Oh I've got to see that opening night!!!"

And by God, I did. My brother James joined me and we loaded up his pick-up truck with blankets and lawn chairs, picked up a bucket of fried chicken some beer and drove out to the one place that would do this film justice, the drive-in.

I had not seen a FRIDAY THE 13TH film on the big drive-in screen since 1980 and that was the original. It seemed very appropriate. The moon was full and the broad Texas night was clear and full of stars. A gentle breeze blew and the Mission IV Drive-In Theater in San Antonio was about to open JASON X!!!!

We unloaded and got set up for a memorable night.

Unlucky Days: A Tribute to the "FRIDAY THE 13TH" Series, Part Ten

Written by Professor A. Griffin
Friday, 01 April 2011 14:28

TO BE CONTINUED

{jcomments on}