I imagine THE AMERICAN SCREAM will be an immensely personal experience for all audiences, but horror/fans of the macabre, especially.

I consistently alternated beaming and welling up tears throughout the entirety of Michael Paul Stephenson's THE AMERICAN SCREAM. And you're likely to, as well. His second documentary work, following the TROLL 2 actor's portrait of that film's legacy, THE AMERICAN SCREAM shares a host of BEST WORST MOVIE's best qualities. That's to say, it's a wonderful look at community and serious, DIY passion.

I fell early in THE AMERICAN SCREAM, particularly during a montage of main subject and Massachusetts home haunter Victor Bariteau building his annual haunted house as his wife takes the voiceover. She describes Victor as someone who never loved sports, or a litany of other traditional pastimes. This is what he cares about. This is what he's good at. And he built this with his hands. It's nothing, if not inspiring to see it all take shape, and moreover to see Bariteau's wife and two young daughters support his yearly endeavors.

Just down the block from Victor his fellow haunter Manny Souza, and not far from them is father/son duo Richard and Matthew Brodeur. While this could be spun into a KING OF KONG-like situation, that's just not what THE AMERICAN SCREAM is about. Obstacles are met at every home, from budget to know-ho to financial stability, but envy or competition is never one. Stephenson's focus on the specificity of these haunters, in such close proximity of this town in Massachusetts, creates a universal embracing of community and passing on of character. One of Victor's daughters takes a special interest in their tradition and watching her not only help, but collaborate with her father on a "monster under the bed" scenario is one of

the sweetest onscreen moments of the year.

THE AMERICAN SCREAM is also gorgeous and absolutely hilarious. Each haunter throws themselves wholesale into their respective haunts and a host of missteps, ordeals and plain eccentricity soon follow. The Brodeurs, in particular, are a natural comedy pair. From the onset of “white lung” due to clown makeup, to the prolonged journeys of their Alien and see-saw creations, to David Lee Roth renditions, the film is nowhere lacking for heart or laughs. People are sweet, funny creatures; something Stephenson previously took an immense shine to in BEST WORST MOVIE and continues to incredibly do so here.