

FACE RIFF: THE SEQUEL - THE RE-RIFFING

Written by Jeff Tuttle

Thursday, 11 November 2010 13:32



[Ed. Note: This is a bit late on Fango's part, but we love Jeff and his blogs, so take your mind back about 10 days or so and get back in the Halloween spirit for a few minutes!]

Any horror fan worth his or her weight in gore considers October the true giving season. October is a month-long celebration replete with more good tidings and cheer than December could ever offer. During this time, DVD distributors fill the role of St. Nick by releasing their heavy-hitters. Both new releases and, more importantly, many never before released classics and special editions come wrapped in their cellophane-makeshift wrapping paper begging to be torn open and played with. And who really needs Christmas when you have Halloween? It's the one time a year the nation allows itself to loosen its collective necktie and even the "normals" get with the horror program. Oh what a joyous occasion it is.

For the past five years, Halloween season has been host to another annual holiday. In the true spirit of giving, Halloween has left under its naked autumn trees the gift of the SAW films. Wrapped in bloody flesh and topped with an intestinal bow, these movies make their way down the chimney of virtually every theater in the country with enough gore to fill Santa's sack.

2004 not only gave birth to the almighty Jigsaw, but also laid the groundwork for the rebirth of the horror franchise - for some, the ultimate gift-that-keeps-on-giving, but to others, the zombie that just won't stay in its' grave. If the past has taught us anything it's that 1. 'Zeppelin rules and 2. horror franchises usually end horribly. They may fly high at inception but they inevitably dive-bomb like Icarus shortly thereafter. Freddy, Jason, and Michael may have killed hundreds of victims, but each suffered a much slower and painful death instigated by irrelevance and incoherence. Their maiden voyages may be horror classics (with HALLOWEEN even ranked as the top-grossing independent film for nearly two decades), but the success of their respective broods became quickly marred by their resemblance to a roller-coaster ride - at their peak you're screaming and waving your hands in excitement and terror, but once you've reached the bottom you just want to get off and ride something else.

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In theory, a never-ending saga featuring my favorite monster or killer would be a wonderful nightmare come true... in theory. Something always seems to go terribly wrong. Like squeezing blood from a stone, the studio kitchen seems to become flooded with too many greedy cooks whose eager hands squeeze every drop of possibility from virtually every facet of the source material. Ever wondered how Jason ended up in space??? Maybe this is your answer. Normally, we horror fans aren't particular about where our blood comes from; we just love to see it flow. However, even we have our limits. This sanguinary milking ultimately leads to a dry and withered script that would look like the bathtub lady from THE SHINING if it could sprout legs and walk around the room naked.

SAW 3D came out October 29th and, as a shameless horror addict, I'd be lying if I said I was anything less than ecstatic (due to tour commitments, I'll be waiting til I hit home and can see it with my wife). Although it sometimes seems that some of the sequels function as the duct tape patches that plug the gaping holes left by previous entries, this franchise still manages to achieve a semblance of cohesiveness and character unlike most others. Whether you like these films or not, you have to at least respect that they have tried to retain a sense of legitimate story telling. At the end of the night, that's all we horror fans want; many of us just simply long for the days when movies had a story arc and a proper ending. I have fond memories of movies featuring monsters whose extravagant deaths preempt the rolling of credits and a warm feeling of closure in my gut. It's a cause and effect relationship that is sorely missed and deserves a bit of Herbert West's Miskatonic re-animation.

So seasons greetings to all the loyal horror fans out there. Do your best to avoid being a Halloweiner. Go out and see a movie. Pick up some new flicks at your favorite store. Dive into the latest issue of FANGORIA. There is no better time than October to celebrate the murderous and the macabre. May your spirits be high this truest of giving seasons. In closing i will leave you with one last Halloween/Christmas allusion - May bodies be hung from a meat-hook with care in hopes that feeble will sooner be scared. I promise I'll stop now.

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