

Tribeca film Festival 2008 - Day 3

Contributed by Joseph B. Mauceri
Sunday, 27 April 2008

— Saturday, April 26th, once again it is a gorgeous day in the City. Our day starts even earlier as we've got some time booked at the press office to take in some shorts, four feature films, and the New York Film Commission Party at the Target-Tribeca Filmmaker Lounge. In fact, a long day as we covered the Red Carpet for the World Premier of *Dying Breed*. The first feature of the day is *Killer Movie*.

KILLER MOVIE

Director/Screenwriter: Jeff Fisher

Producers: Cornelia Ryan Taylor, Michael Sanchez, Jeff Fisher, Russell Terlecki

Director of Photography: Dino Parks

Score/Music: James Brand, Ben Buchanan, Charlie Hurtin, Marshall Jones, James McCrea, and David Turnbow.

Special Makeup Effects Artist: Justin Meeks & Charles Robertson

Principal Cast: PAUL WESLEY (Jake Tanner), KALEY CUOCO (Blanca Champion), LEIGHTON MEESTER (Jaynie Hansen), NESTOR CARBONELL (Seaton Brookstone), ROBERT BUCKLEY (Nik), CYIA BATTEN (Lee Tyson), AL SANTOS (Luke), JASON LONDON (Mike), TORREY DEVITTO (Phoebe Hilldale)

- SYNOPSIS - Young director Jake Tanner, fresh off the cancelled reality show *Back to the Ranch*, is sent by his agent to replace a fired director on a heartwarming reality series about a White Plains, North Dakota, high school hockey team on an unlikely winning streak. First he has to deal with the spoiled Blanca Champion, who has been hired as a production assistant to gain a fresh perspective for an upcoming feature she hopes will earn her some credibility as an actress. In addition to all the other massive ego and borderline personality disorder that plague both the production and the townsfolk, there's one other little problem: the townsfolk are notoriously "accident-prone." Oh, and Tanner's crewmembers keep disappearing. As the body count mounts, the suspects narrow, and the question emerges - Who could the killer be? Jake Tanner is faced with the dilemma taking what's left of the crew back to Los Angeles or bring this demented killer to justice, and maybe saving his career.

- REVIEW - Given the current success of "tween" horror flick remakes like *When a Stranger Calls* and *Prom Night*, it makes sense that a film like *KILLER MOVIE* would show up sooner or later. The entire plot feels like a "Scooby Doo" wanna be that kicks it up a notch by adding in some grisly murders. The characters and the dialogue painstakingly aspire to that goal, rendering the suspense and tension ineffectual as we have deal with stereotypes and nothing remotely resembling realistic roles. In fact, the only thing missing in the dialogue were a few "zoinks" and "zhowies" at key moments. The adults are as deplorable as the high school kids, and if you end up rooting for anyone in this film it's the killer. Even his costume isn't scary or menacing, but in some respects it does feel like a nod to the villain of the "Scream" franchise. Still, I'm not sure if they're trying to compensate for the genuine lack of scares when the film pulls off a few scary misdirection moments. I was left with this nagging feeling that it was done for the laughs! At that's it in a nutshell, *KILLER MOVIE* feels like the filmmakers are winking at the audience and trying to show you how clever they are. They're trying to scare people and have it be funny. I was talking about the film to a fellow horror lover who felt it would probably go straight to video. Given the entire tone and timber of the film, and just a minor trimming of the effect sequences, I wouldn't be surprise if this showed up on the Sci-Fi Channel in the next six months and hopefully not your local cinemas. Ugh!

For Additional Festival Screenings Click: [KILLER MOVIE](#)

THREE KINGDOMS: RESURRECTION OF THE DRAGON

Director: Daniel Lee

Screenwriters: Ho Leung Lau and Daniel Lee

Producers: Taewon Chung, Susanna Tsang

Director of Photography: Tony Cheung Tung Leung

Composer: Henry Lai

Action Director: Sammo Hung

Principal Cast: ANDY LAU (Zhao Zilong), SAMMO HUNG (Luo Ping An), MAGGIE Q (Cao Ying), ANDY ON (Deng Zhi), QUANXIN PU (Zhuge Liang)

- SYNOPSIS - Based on "Romance of the Three Kingdoms", one of China's four greatest classical novels, and set during A.D. 190 - 280, the darkest period in Chinese history during which the country was torn asunder by civil war and eventually divided between three rival kingdoms, "Three Kingdoms - Resurrection of the Dragon" tells the story of a common-man, ZHAO ZILONG, who fights for his country's unity and peace and rises on wings of courage and battle prowess to become a hero known throughout China. Though Zhao has fought & won many battles and his heroism has become a legend, yet after years of battle, the war still rages on. Now in his later years, the valiant warrior struggles in leading his troops to win his last and toughest battle, in which he fights the enemy - from outside and within.

- REVIEW - After seeing The Forbidden Kingdom within the last two weeks, a wonderful primer for parents to introduce their children to the world of martial art films, I have to admit that THREE KINGDOMS blew me away. I'm sure the novel it is based on is more epic in scale, but I like the way the film narrative has been streamlined to give it more biblical feel of this warrior's quest for meaning in his war torn times. There are some interesting elements that come into play such as a trinity, a savior, betrayal, etc. I'm sure Joseph Campbell would have some fun with this film if he were still alive. In some regards the narrative does have more of a typical Hollywood approach in that it does not deliver really any background story to any of the characters we meet. One might wonder if the version of the film I viewed might not have been cut for a Western audience. Still, if the film is entertaining and awakens within you the curiosity to seek out the book then I think it has achieved even a higher purpose, and it has sparked it in me. Regardless of the limitations of the narrative, the fight sequences are truly epic, wonderfully choreographed, and breathtakingly shot. There are some exhilarating moments, and cinematographer Tony Cheung Tung Leung has a level of that in the more serene and quiet moments of the film. In addition to the excellent performances, the final icing on this cinematic delight was an amazing score by composer Henry Lai. There are so many wonderful little moments in the score that I often tried to distract myself from the visuals so I could enjoy the score more. This is defiantly one for all you soundtrack junkies out there. With no sex or nudity, but tons of battles and blood, THREE KINGDOMS is savored best on a big screen, not a DVD, and easily enjoyed by parents and their adolescent children alike.

For Additional Festival Screenings Click: [THREE KINGDOMS](#)

Official Site: www.three-kingdoms.com

THE OBJECTIVE

Director: Daniel Myrick

Screenwriter: Daniel Myrick, Mark A. Patton, and Wesley Clark

Producers: Zev Guber and Jeremy Wall

Director of Photography: Stephanie Martin

Composer: Kays Al-Atrakchi

Special Effects Supervisor: Conor Coughlan

Principal Cast: JONAS BALL (Ben Keynes), MATT ANDERSON (Wally), JON HUERTAS (Vincent Degetau), MICHAEL C. WILLIAMS (Trinoski), SAM HUNTER (Tim Cole), JEFF PREWETT (Sadler).

- SYNOPSIS - In a remote mountain region of Afghanistan, a team of US Special Ops forces is dispatched with the orders of locating an influential Muslim cleric. The team initially accepts this mission at face value. Shortly thereafter it

becomes clear that Benjamin Keynes, the dispassionate CIA officer assigned to oversee the mission, may have another agenda in mind. As it turns out, a CIA reconnaissance satellite picked up a radioactive heat signal coming from the mountains. The agency feared Al-Qaeda might have acquired nuclear arms. As Keynes gathers intelligence on the whereabouts of the cleric he learns from a local leader that within that sacred region something even more powerful-and more dangerous resides. As the team ventures deeper into the mountains, strange things occur, skepticism about a rumored curse in the region rapidly begins to fade, and the team begins to question the truth and rational behind their objective.

- REVIEW - Daniel Myrick delivers the goods and serves up some fine Sci-Fi Conspiracy that could humble even Chris Carter, the creator of The X-Files. Myrick does not hold back and just jumps into the thick of it raising the bars on tension, suspense, and paranoia. The tension is so thick you can feel it radiate right off the screen. He never gives the audience a chance to relax as his tale takes the audience along for the ride as he sets his tale among the sun-baked ruins of Afghanistan. Just when you think you might have an idea of what is going on he flips the story on it's head as the unbelievable begins to happen. The driving forces behind the film, simply put, are the amazing actors Myrick cast in this brilliantly crafted tale. You know these guys, these soldiers, and when their world gets turn upside down you go straight down the rabbit hole with them. The glue that keeps this all together is a solid performance by Jonas Ball. There is coldness, relentlessness, to his portrayal of Ben Keynes that just anchors the film. There is a tone here that rivals Heart of Darkness or Apocalypse Now, but this is a contemporary tale that is more than on a quest for the darkness within the human soul. It is a tale that is in search of ancient gods and chariots of fire. Myrick skillfully gives us little bits to peak our curiosity over the course of the film to keep us hooked. It's like watching the SCI-FI Channel show The Ghost Hunters where every so often you catch a glimpse of something that keeps you on the edge of your seat, keeps you believing, keeps you coming back for more. He takes you right up to the edge, leaves you mesmerized with a draw dropping scene, and hits you with a cinematic crescendo over the credit that has a similar emotional impact as the credit roll on Frank Darabont's The Mist. There are many things you can say about this film, but at its core this is what good science fiction is all about. Myrick takes the humanity, holds it up to a mirror and turns it ever so slightly in hopes of giving us a fresh take on the human condition. Regardless if you love or hate this film, you will be talking about this intense cinematic event with your friends long after you've left the theater.

For Additional Festival Screenings Click: [THE OBJECTIVE](#)

Official Site: www.objectivemovie.com

DYING BREED

Director: Jody Dwyer

Screenwriter: Michael Boughen, Rod Morris, and Jody Dwyer

Producers: Christopher Mapp, Matthew Street, and David Whealy

Director of Photography: Geoffrey Hall

Composer: Nerida Tyson-Chew

Special Effects Makeup: Justin Dix

Principal Cast: NATHAN PHILLIPS (Jack), LEIGH WHANNELL (Matt), MIRRAH FOULKES (Nina), MELANIE VALLEJO (Rebecca), BILLE BROWN (Harvey), KEN RADLEY (Liam)

- SYNOPSIS - Tasmania, Australia, the world's most isolated island is the setting for DYING BREED. Based on Australia's past as a British penal colony and the legendary true story of Alexander Pearce, an escaped convict known as "The Pieman," who claimed to have survived by eating his fellow escapees. Nina is a naturalist determined to prove the existence of the Tasmanian tiger-previously thought to be extinct and vindicate her sister's death, which happened eight years earlier in the wilds of western Tasmania. Along for the ride are her boyfriend Matt, his boorish friend Jack, and Jack's girlfriend, who'd rather be on a beach in Thailand. After crossing the Pieman's River they enter a peculiar little town populated by seedy group of characters, the Pieman's descendants. After a restless night, they strap on their backpacks and head out into the wild armed with little more than a crossbow, thanks to Jack. The four friends soon discover something far more murderous than a tiger lurks in the rain-slogged bush. The Pieman clan has survived and their need to feed and breed turns Nina, Matt, Jack and Rebecca into the next endangered species.

- REVIEW - Commercial director Jody Dwyer makes his feature film debut with a grisly, nasty tale of a nature expedition gone array that combines both visual and narrative styling suggestive of such films as Deliverance and Wes

Craven's 1977 *The Hills Have Eyes*. What makes this a refreshing plot is that Dwyer layers in the tension and suspense before he unleashes the horror in the third act. There are a couple of false endings that build upon the film's final climax that resounds like the death knoll of a hammer coming down on a steer's skull in the slaughterhouse. It's obvious that he is as concerned about taking the audience on this ride through character development and relationships, as he is about serving up the goods for the horror fans. Coming from a commercial background, the film is defiantly a tightly constructed tale, with some interesting quickly cut sequences employed as flashbacks from Nina's prospective. What becomes a mix of facts and her imagination quickly takes shape as their horrific reality. Dwyer does a stunning job of capturing the harsh beauty of the Tasmanian forest that adds an air of mystery and menace to the film. The cast delivers solid performances that elevate them above the typical American twenty-somethings running amuck in bloody nightmare. Actor and screenwriter Leigh Whannell, best know for his work in the *Saw* franchise, takes on the most physical role in the film as his character at one point ends up climbing up the side of cliff. Taken at face value, *DYING BREED* is well plotted, exquisitely shot, superbly acted, and skillfully edited film, the perfect primer for the horror novice or film junkie. I like the mythology behind the story, but overall I didn't feel it added anything to the genre or holds much for the die-hard horror aficionado.

For Additional Festival Screenings Click: [DYING BREED](#)

Official Site: www.dyingbreed.com.au