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GOREZONE

THE ULTIMATE MONTHLY HORROR MAGAZINE

ISSUE #28 ONLY £3.50/\$8.99 FEB '08

SKINWALKERS
 Critically mauled
 Financially clawed
 Publicly savaged



WRONG TURN 2

Christa Campbell bares all

GOREMATE OF THE YEAR

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GIRLS GORE

MUTANTS

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"I think it's always hard to pinpoint why a film or a film series catches on with fans. If we really understood that, it would be easy enough to mint out films. I've never heard anyone discuss remaking the original *Sleepaway Camp*. If *Berserk* happens to catch on with the fans, certainly anything is possible in terms of more stories."
Michael A. Simpson

ANGELA'S BACK!*

THE FRANCHISE THAT GAVE MEANING TO THE TERM "CHICKS WITH DICKS!"

SLEEPAWAY CAMP

WORDS by Christian Sellers

Sleepaway Camp has had a troubled history!

The first movie was released at the end of 1983, just as the original slasher cycle was coming to an end. For the last four years, cheap exploitation flicks like *Friday the 13th* and *The Burning* had become big money, with every major and independent studio jumping on the teenage slice-and-dice bandwagon. But the public's interest in the 'sex and gore' formula was starting to wear thin and box office figures began to dwindle.

The film lacked an iconic villain (by then both Michael Myers and Jason Voorhees had become a recognisable part of pop culture), the violence was relatively tame compared to recent controversial features like *Maniac*

and *The New York Ripper*, and there was a homosexual subject that would not normally be found in a mainstream horror.

By the time the sequels arrived a few years later, even Freddy Krueger (the most commercial bogeyman of the '80's) had lost his appeal. The proposed fourth entry, *The Survivor*, was abandoned after only a few days of shooting and *Return to Sleepaway Camp*, which went into production almost a decade later, still remains unavailable, seemingly lost in distribution Hell.

The first movie was directed by twenty-five year old Robert Hiltzik, before being replaced by Michael A. Simpson for *Sleepaway Camp II: Unhappy Campers* and *III: Teenage Wasteland*, both filmed back-to-back in late 1988. Hiltzik would return to the series ten years later for *Return to Sleepaway Camp*, a movie

which ignored the previous chapters and considered itself to be the first true sequel.

Hiltzik is rumoured to be intending on completing his trilogy with *Sleepaway Camp Reunion*, though no cast have been confirmed and no plot details have been announced. Meanwhile, Simpson intends on bringing his own series to a close with *Berserk*, which will contain not only supernatural elements but will also explore Angela's descent into madness.

But which movie will be released first, or whether or no they will both slip into obscurity like the last two installments, remains to be seen, but one thing is for sure... you can't keep a good transsexual killer down!

GoreZone: What kind of audition process did you have to undergo >>>

RETURN

to win the part of Angela in *Sleepaway Camp*? Were the producers nervous about casting an actress so young to say what the character would be subjected to and were there any special rules laid out as you were a child actress?

FELISSA ROSE (Angela): "We met with Robert Hiltzik and he had us do a series of improvisations. They were fun and he was really easygoing. I remember how well we got along. I walked out of the audition feeling like the role was mine! I don't think they were nervous but they told our parents about the ending at the second call-back. There were a lot of rules because we were underage. No nudity, no using my hands for the murders, no bad language... The usual stuff."

If there was one thing that made *Sleepaway Camp* so notorious when it was released on the 18th November, 1983, it was that ending! Throughout the last eighty minutes, the audience has watched as thirteen-year old Angela has been constantly bullied by the other kids at Camp Arawak, while her cousin Ricky has tried to protect her, only for them to turn up dead later.

But in the film's last moments, it is revealed that not only was the killer really Angela, but in fact she is really her supposedly dead brother (in a disturbing full-frontal shot that was clearly an inspiration for Neil Jordan's Oscar-winning *The Crying Game*), who was forced to live as a girl by her deranged aunt.

GZ: How much controversy did the ending of the movie cause, as Felissa Rose was only thirteen at the time? How was the effect achieved and do you think that without that shocking twist the movie would have been so



successful?

JONATHAN TIERSTEN (Ricky): "Well, she wouldn't wear the fake penis. I remember that was a huge issue. It wasn't so controversial back then. This country has gone so ass backwards for the last 25 years. It would be hard, no scratch that, impossible to make this film today. There is no way it would ever get passed the small, evil-minded people who now run this corporately infested country. Their 'morality' robs us of our independence and creativity. That being said, of course the ending had a lot to do with the film's success. But there is 90 minutes they have to sit through before that and as I read recently from an old reviewer, there is just something about that film that makes you very nostalgic. Oh, and the effect was created by shaving a college student's whole body and putting a Felissa mask on his face. He was destroyed with Jack Daniels and was weeping the whole time. He is not mentioned in the credits."

consensual. Boys are always attracted to girls, and vice versa. The one movie that did feature a gay character being murdered, *A Nightmare on Elm Street Part II: Freddy's Revenge*, was later accused by various critics as being homophobic, yet the motive for the murder was never explained as being sexual.

In fact, there are so few gay characters in slasher movies that it is almost impossible to mention one that really stands out. Gender bending is also another taboo, with Norman Bates being the most famous example, though this is justified by the revelation that he is schizophrenic. *Sleepaway Camp* was one of the few horror movies of the era to tackle the subject, and the fact that the protagonist in question was only thirteen was certainly a daring move.

80'S BOX ART



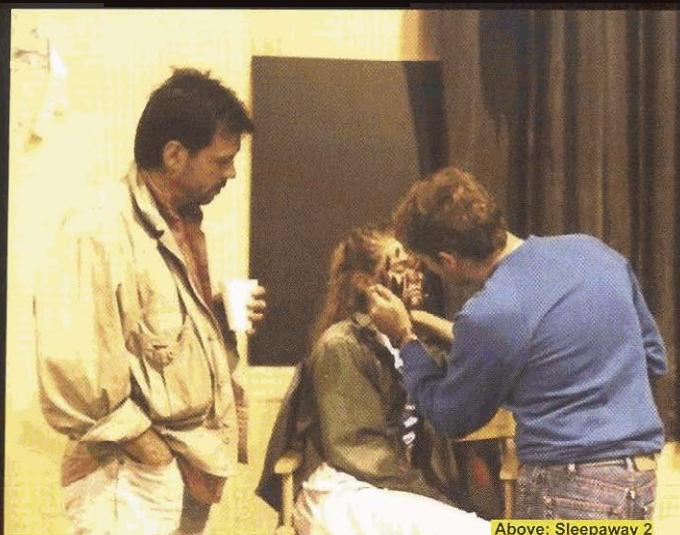
Whilst many critics have commented on the sexual content of slasher movies, they almost always walk a very safe line around it. Teens are punished for their slut-like behaviour, but the act of sex is

Aside from the fact that Angela is really a boy, and has been forced to charade for the last few years as a girl in order to appease her aunt, there is also the relationship between her and Paul, a boy of a similar age who seems strangely attracted to her. This sub-plot raises issues regarding homosexuality in children, not really the subject matter for what seems on the surface to be just another dumb slasher film.

GZ: Some writers have attempted to examine the homosexual subtext within the movie. What is your take on this?

FR: "It definitely has homosexual undertones. The father scenes alone give it a whole dimension of interesting subtext. The suggestions are great because they're eluded rather than flat out explained. After seeing the film there are many questions and that's what made it stick out in people's memories, I think."

If the 1980's have become infamous for anything, it's excess. And nowhere is this more evident than in horror



Above: Sleepaway 2
Below: Sleepaway 4

cinema, where a hit movie became a lucrative franchise, with the likes of *A Nightmare on Elm Street* even becoming responsible for the birth of successful studios. So it became inevitable that at some point a *Sleepaway Camp* sequel would emerge.

Surprisingly, though, it took until near the end of the decade for Angela to return; this time with a tongue firmly in cheek as the role was taken over by Bruce Springsteen's sister, Pamela. Not only was Felissa Rose absent, but Hiltzik had decided to decline the chance to return, and the task of continuing the series fell to Michael A. Simpson, who had built up a résumé mainly on the small screen.

Whilst *Sleepaway Camp* had attempted to deal with serious issues such as child abuse (the aunt forcing the young boy to cross-dress) and paedophilia (the camp's cook has a taste for children), the first sequel, *Unhappy Campers*, had no such agenda, instead mocking

the genre and concentrating more on the comedic aspects of the story. Angela was no longer a confused young girl, but had grown up into a confident yet homicidal woman.

GZ: Were you conscious about trying to out-do 'that' scene when you made *Unhappy Campers* and was it ever a problem not being able to re-cast Felissa Rose in the role? Was casting Bruce Springsteen's sister good for the publicity of the movie?

MICHAEL A. SIMPSON (director): "I think one of the really unique turns we made with *Unhappy Campers* was the transformation of Angela into a transsexual. As far as I know she was the first TS serial killer in screen history. The change felt organic to her character and a logical step forward. It really is the only way that you could have a woman play Angela as an adult. I mean, just because you were made to wear a dress as a kid doesn't make you sprout breasts or have a high-pitched voice, or give you



feminine features. However, sex reassignment surgery and hormone treatments would. So you have to deal with that issue if the character of Angela is going to have any logic. Just trying to hide an actress behind a moustache or something won't work. I never considered Felissa for the role so recasting wasn't a concern for me. I didn't discover that Pam was Bruce's sister until after I cast her. I'm sure it helped generate publicity. *Unhappy Campers* got a good deal of press at the time for being a small film."

The plot once again asks the viewer to accept a rather improbable scenario; this time being that after the previous

massacre, Angela has been released from an institution, had a sex change operation and has now become a camp councillor working for her uncle. Angela now has embraced the spirit of the summer camp, so much so that anyone who defies her rules is brutally slaughtered. This gives Simpson ample opportunities for his cast to parade around topless in between the kill scenes.

80'S ICONS



Freddy Krueger
New Line Cinema
A Nightmare on Elm Street
1984



Jason Voorhees
Paramount Pictures
Friday the 13th: 2
1981



Michael Myers
MGM/Dimension
Halloween
1978



Leatherface
New Line Cinema
Texas Chainsaw Massacre
1974



Angela
Blue Rider Pictures
Night of the Demons
1980



Pinhead
Dimension Films
Hellraiser
1987



Chucky
Universal Pictures
Child's Play
1988

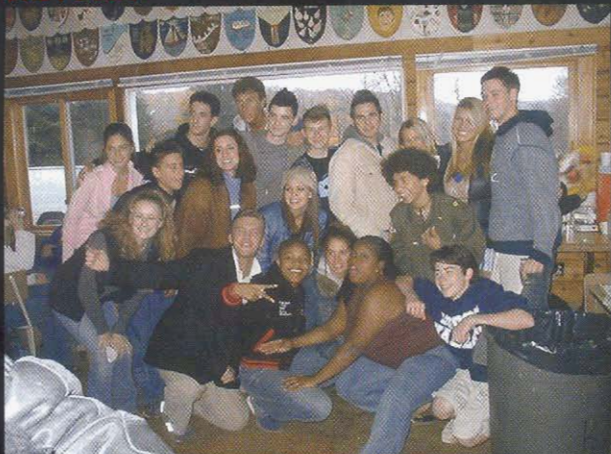


Tallman
Embassy Pictures
Phantasm
1979



Ed Harley
United Artist
Pumpkinhead
1989

Unhappy Campers interesting casting decisions, with most of the young actresses being the siblings of more successful stars; aside from Springsteen these include Renée Estevez (sister of Charlie Sheen). *Brat Pack* fans will be eager to note that



most of the characters are named after young actors of the era, such as Phoebe (Cates), Demi (Moore), Ally (Ringwald), Judd (Nelson) and Emilio (named after Renée's brother Emilio Estevez).

GZ: Despite the film proving to be a modest hit, you declined the chance to return for the sequel. What was the reason for this and do you regret your decision at all? What was your opinion on parts 2 and 3 and Pamela Springsteen's portrayal of Pamela?

FR: "I was a teenager and I wanted to go to college. I never regretted it. I'm glad it worked out the way it did. I love Pamela Springsteen in the sequels, she's great. The tone of the sequels are very different so I think it worked out better to have Pamela in it. She was very funny."

Barely six months after *Unhappy Campers* came the third entry *Teenage Wasteland*, a movie which was even more outrageous than its predecessors. Filmed on the same location and using the same crew, the movie was released long after the public had lost interest in the slasher cycle, with only the shameless franchises still releasing entries (*Friday the 13th Part 8*, *A Nightmare on Elm Street Part 5*, *Halloween 5* and *Silent Night Deadly Night 3*, to name but a few).

By the early '90's horror had become unfashionable. The slasher movie had made way for the critically acclaimed 'psychological thriller,' such as *The Silence of the Lambs*, *Cape Fear* and *Single White Female*; which followed the same basic template but in more suburban surroundings, centred around professional adults instead of

promiscuous teens. Freddy was dead, Jason was about to go to Hell and audiences were tired of the stalk-and-slash formula.

It was into this new climate that the *Sleepaway Camp* series returned, as the fourth installment *The Survivor* went into production. Set five years after the events of *Teenage Wasteland*, the story tells of Alison, who is haunted by the memories of a summer camp

the pivotal role of Alison, very little footage was actually shot before production was shut down. *The Survivor* is a bitter subject matter for fans of the series, as not even a script has been made available for the public. To date, only footage from the first day's shoot has so far been released (which was shot with the intention of piecing it together as a trailer); on the 2002 *Anchor Bay* box set *Survival Kit* (now deleted). It would be another ten years before fans get word of a new *Angela* movie.



massacre. She is advised to revisit the grounds in order to confront her fears, where she encounters a park ranger and a young couple. But Alison becomes convinced that she is really *Angela*, and soon after she finds the ranger brutally murdered. Eventually, it is revealed that the young girl is in fact *Angela* and Alison is forced to face her past once and for all.

Slated to direct the project was Jim Markovic, who had worked in an editing capacity on such cult classics as *Nightmare in a Damaged Brain* and *Zombie Holocaust*. Working from a script by first-timer Tom Clohessy, and starring unknown *Carrie Chambers* in

As interest in the series began to wane, two fans who met over the internet decided to create a site together dedicated to the movies. Jeff Hayes and John Klyza eventually went their own ways, with Hayes setting up the official site for the original movie and Klyza running the site for the sequels. Thanks to their devotion, a new generation of slasher fans has discovered *Sleepaway Camp*, which has led to conventions, further movies and even their contributions on DVD releases.

GZ: How much input and support do you have from the filmmakers and stars of the series and how much persuading did it take to convince them that you were worth their time?

JOHN KLYZA (website moderator): "Michael Simpson has been an ongoing inspiration and someone to bounce ideas off. He's the biggest helper I've had in regards to getting access to contacts and memorabilia from the movies. He likes to keep in tune with what the fans are after. One of the musicians, John Alyn was really impressed with the site and decided to create new *Sleepaway Camp* music tracks for us. I remember having lunch with Desiree Gould in New York City, she played *Aunt Martha* in the original film and she was so incredibly sweet and supportive, like a real Aunt. The list goes

on and on. Most cast and crew members are either incredibly perplexed these movies have a following or incredibly amazed they have a following. It's usually the latter. For most of them it was just a movie they did years ago before moving onto other jobs, some outside the industry, so learning of the cult fan base can be really encouraging for them."

If *The Survivor* was a blow to the fans, then *Return to Sleepaway Camp* was a good hard kick in the balls! As the movie went into production in 2002, no one involved could have predicted that five years later it would still remain unreleased. And it seemed so promising as well; director Robert Hiltzik and leads Felissa Rose and Jonathan Tiersten back together again for the first time in two decades.

Hiltzik decided to ignore *Unhappy Campers* and *Teenage Wasteland* and instead designed *Return to Sleepaway Camp* as a sequel to the first film. Despite principal photography ending in 2003, there have been various re-shoots and delays, reportedly due to the producers being unsatisfied with the CGI effects that had been integrated

Berserk. Yet another upcoming movie has been listed on IMDb entitled *Sleepaway Camp Reunion*, to be directed by the original's Robert Hiltzik. So what does the future hold for the franchise?

MAS: "For now, *Berserk* is an interactive story experience being developed for the web in concert with John Klyza and his great site sleepawaycampfilms.com. Whether we move forward beyond that is really up to all the campers. That's one of the things that makes the experience so fun and exciting is getting to connect with the fans that way. I know it's been close to five years now or something but I think all the campers look forward to Robert's RTSC whenever he is able to finish the film and find a distributor for it. I know everyone hopes for the best, that it will be something new and fresh. My guess is that he would probably want to finish that movie before announcing another sequel but you would have to ask him."

Berserk will mark Simpson's first involvement with the series since *Teenage Wasteland* back in 1989, and is set to be far darker in tone than his previous films. Set at a camp that was once Rolling Hills

hinted that there may be more than one) but also against nature. And *Berserk* will see the return of Angela, though it is doubtful that Springsteen will reprise her role as she has since retired from acting. The character is now close to middle age (in her 40's, which would set it thirty years after the first movie, which would logically make the year around 2013).

Whilst the character delivered frequent one-liners in Simpson's previous scripts, Angela here is quite disturbing, a far cry from her goofy performance in *Unhappy Campers*. Perhaps this is due to the involvement of crime writer Fred Willard, author of the best seller *Down on Ponce*. The project was first



into the prosthetics. The movie also saw the return of Ronnie (Paul DeAngelo) from the original movie, in a plot that echoed *The Survivor*, with the now adult Ronnie being plagued by nightmares of the Camp Arawak slaughtered twenty years earlier.

GZ: According to sleepawaycampfilms.com and My Space you are to direct the next installment, *Sleepaway Camp*

(the camp from the second movie, later renamed *New Horizons* for the third), a bus-load of teenage delinquents are brought in for some Kum Ba Yah-style rehabilitation. Amongst these is the disturbed self-harmer Amanda, who is set up as the probably final girl, as her character is written in a more sympathetic way than her fellow teens.

Described by Klyza as more survival horror than mere slasher, the protagonists must battle not only with the killer (it is

announced on the *Sleepaway Camp* sequels site when Klyza was given an exclusive read of the script.

GZ: Being the first person to read Michael Simpson's screenplay for *Sleepaway Camp Berserk*, what can you reveal about it and do you think this one will ever see the light of day after the troubled productions of the last two movies? What new aspects would you say it brings to the series-

(Continued page 49)

FUTURE SCREAMS



Issue 29

If your newsagent doesn't stock Gorezone please ask them to order us from their wholesaler.

Issue #29 will give you first news on Rob Zombies all new feature film venture. That's right the musician turned director will turn his short Grindhouse (Werewolf Women of the SS) trailer into a feature length movie. Zombie has assembled quite a cast for his mini-movie, including Udo Kier(Blade) and Sybil Danning (Howling 2), B-movie character actors Bill Moseley (TCM 2) and Tom Towles(Firefly), plus his wife, Sheri Moon Zombie (Devils Rejects). Best of all, however, is an appearance by Nicolas Cage (The Whickerman) as Fu Manchu.

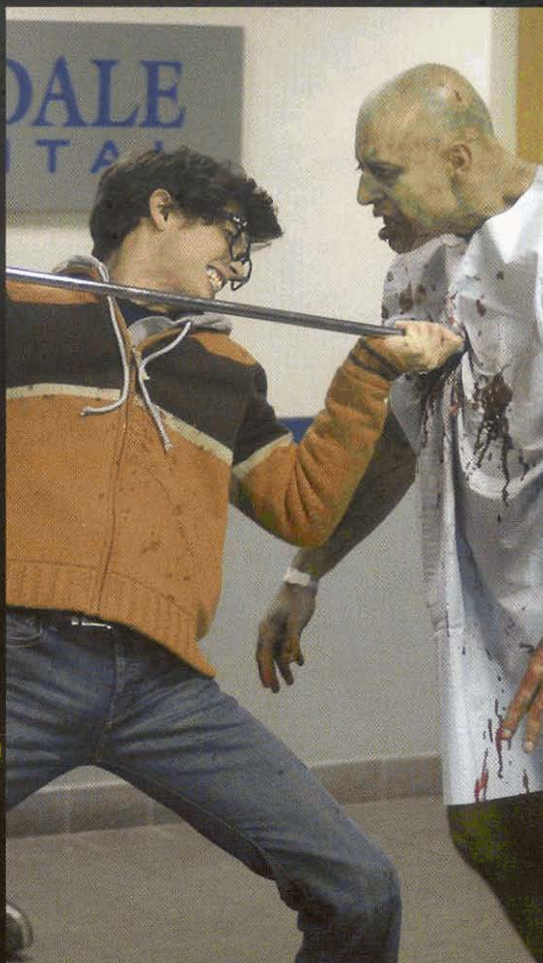
How exactly one gets from Nazi scientists to topless leather clad women and machine-gunning werewolves to Fu Manchu remains delightfully obscure in the trailer, and that confusion is not only intentional but, as Zombie explains, a tip of the hat to the exploitation convention which soon will become one of celluloid's most bizarre horror movies of all time...if all runs smoothly.

Also next issue we have part 2 of Pig Hunt and a piece on Christa Campbell.

IN STORES 14th FEBRUARY

GOREZONE FEBRUARY 2008 49

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 14



Lord knows there are tons of films out there that could use some major tweaks and adjustments here and there to make things work a bit better but how much change is too much change? Who is today's slick, ultra-bloody genre cinema really being aimed at? The fans or the average bystander with an hour or two to blow between their kid's soccer match and a meeting with the washing machine repairman?

Changing a film based solely on the opinions of people that wouldn't normally even watch "that type of movie" is a definite cause for concern and something all upstart filmmakers should be aware of. The fans will blame you.

Harsh. I know.

It's the truth though. You will be blamed for that cop out ending...those missed opportunities to build characters and the dreaded "cut away" kill sequence. While you may find yourself rather pleased with a positive test screening for your horror film, ask yourself this, "Were there any real horror fans in this screening?"

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 40

and the slasher genre in general?

JK: "I had no idea he was working on it, so it was a complete surprise. The script surprised me more – Michael has again taken the concepts of the series and turned them on their head – he doesn't even repeat the tone of his own sequels. It's more of a living nightmare than any of the others have ever been. For example, there was an animal killing I objected to because well, I'm against animal cruelty on film, but the damage inflicted upon the campers this time around generated an equal reaction. What he does in the Berserk script is fill in back-story to the Angela character and why she keeps killing around the same location. There is also a supernatural aspect introduced which the way it's written, doesn't seem so out of place when put in context of several events in the previous chapters."

"I think one of the saddest parts of the SC franchise is the silly bickering about the original film versus the two sequels I did," stated Simpson on the official site. Yet it seems an obvious choice that Berserk would follow on from his own movies, as Teenage Wasteland was the last Sleepaway Camp movie that was actually finished and released. As for Berserk, Klyza's enthusiasm for the project went as far as him designing storyboards based on the script and posting them on his site. His script review, which can also be found online, has caused a stir among the fans online, eager to once again see Angela up to her old tricks.

In an industry that has begun to rely heavily on remakes, it's reassuring to note that Sleepaway Camp may have one, of not two, new movies lined up for the future, with yet no talk of a pointless 'reworking' (stay away, Michael Bay!). While the possibility of Berserk ever going into production lies on fan interest, there's no denying that this could be the best Sleepaway Camp movie since the original. And what fan wouldn't get excited at that? **GZ**