

# FROM SYRUP TO SHADOWS

THE JOURNEY OF  
A FETISH OF FLESH



## Introduction

Every horror film begins with a haunting, though not always the kind that lives on screen. For me, the haunting was an idea—a grotesque whisper that crawled into my head and refused to leave. *A Fetish of Flesh* was not born from comfort or safety. It clawed its way into existence through sleepless nights, blood-soaked daydreams, and the gnawing belief that horror had lost its teeth. I wanted to bring them back. I wanted to create something that did not flinch, did not pander, and did not apologize.

When TJ and I first started talking about this film, it wasn't just about making a movie—it was about carving open the genre we loved and dragging



something raw and bleeding into the present. We were tired of polished horror, the kind that fades from memory the moment the credits roll. We wanted to summon the kind of nightmare that festers in the back of your skull, the kind that follows you home and watches you from the dark corners of your bedroom.

But to make something like that meant embracing the nightmare behind the camera as well. Independent filmmaking is never easy, but *A Fetish of Flesh* was more than just a project—it was a ritual. We bled for this film. We endured cold nights in the woods, endless equipment failures, schedules that nearly broke us, and budgets that felt like traps closing tighter every day. Cast and crew pushed themselves until exhaustion blurred into madness. There were moments when even I wondered if we had called down something we couldn't control.

And yet, that was the point. Horror isn't supposed to feel safe—not for the audience, and not for the people making it. Every frame of this movie carries the weight of that obsession, that defiance, that hunger to create something unforgettable. The blood you see on screen was fake. The sacrifices behind it were not.

This book is my confession and my chronicle. Here, I will take you into the shadows of how *A Fetish of Flesh* was made—the ideas that sparked it, the demons we wrestled with during production, the rituals we endured to bring it to life.



You'll see the triumphs, but you'll also see the scars. Because the truth is, this film left its mark on me, on TJ, and on everyone who stepped into its orbit.

I can't promise you comfort in these pages. What I can promise is honesty—the raw, unvarnished account of how a nightmare became a film, and how making that nightmare changed us forever. Welcome to the making of *A Fetish of Flesh*. If you're brave enough, turn the page.



## Chapter 1: Birth Through Chaos: The First Steps into A Fetish of Flesh

Every project has a beginning. For *A Fetish of Flesh*, that beginning was a midnight brainstorm on April 10, 2005, scrawled on a ragged spiral notebook with more coffee stains than logic, and a cover that probably deserved a sinister backstory of its own. The notebook's metal rings had jammed on several pages, turning each flip into an exercise in frustration and finger pricks. Yet, within those worn pages lurked the first tentative breaths of a horror beast that refused to be ignored.

At the time, I was barely out of college and convinced I was the next Wes Craven. (Spoiler: Not yet.) The idea was simple, terrifying, but hilariously juvenile



— a man named Oswald Alan Tibbs, lurking in small-town shadows, visiting carnage with gleeful brutality. The script was my fever dream — lines that could make a cat cringe, plot holes big enough to swallow a VW Beetle, and kills that looked like a tween’s notebook monstrosity tossed on papier-mâché.

But glorious, glorious folly is the heart of passion projects.

Our gear was laughably sparse. The star was an RCA 8mm camcorder, a device that was less tool, more temperamental spirit. This wasn’t merely camera work — it was a ritual involving coaxing life out of dead technology. I recall the day it swallowed its batteries mid-gut-wrenching scene. We spent thirty minutes praying, then roughly banging the camera against a tree. Miraculous resurrection, followed by triumphant victory dances — which, in retrospect, look more like seizure struggles in a viral video.

The magic of *A Fetish of Flesh* truly was a blend of horrific creativity and pure dumb luck.

Rouge blood came from a gallon of chocolate syrup generously donated by Aunt May’s baking leftovers. The sticky concoction stained everything, promising visual delight but delivering odors that attracted ants like a sugary pied piper. On hot days, the ‘blood’ puddles became mini swimming pools, delighting local neighborhood children who mistook our set for the world’s grossest water park.



Our set mascot? A bandit-masked raccoon, whom we dubbed 'Bloodshot' for his habit of appearing sinisterly at the worst moments, stealing snacks, tripping lights, and rattling nerves. Bloodshot became an unofficial extra and the bane of our wardrobe assistant's sanity when he wore face paint.

Our brave cast were a motley crew of dreamers and accidental horror actors. The Sullivan twins, Ricky and Billy, were particularly memorable for their unwavering commitment and their uncanny ability to argue mid-scene without breaking character — a skill I still envy. Kevin would regularly lose his wig on cue, encouraged by Woodstock's (our curse and blessing) improvised screams of "Flesh! Flesh! Flesh!" occurring at unpredictable intervals. There was an unforgettable day when Darren, our practical joker, decided that drowning a scene in syrup would add realism, only to have the slippery liquid turn a slow-motion chase into a slapstick ice rink. Heather nearly sued for emotional damage when she discovered her luxurious hair was permanently infused with a syrupy sheen.

Filming was a Hobbesian struggle between patience and chaos, where bickering, laughter, and sweat formed a symphony of mayhem. More than once, we lost entire sequences due to storage failures, lighting flubs, and natural predators (namely mosquitoes with ambitions of their own). On the day we 'set fire' (safely) to the old barn's floorboards, an unexpected thunderstorm roared in,



soaking our set and forcing an impromptu sing-along around a campfire while we waited for the weather gods to forgive us.

In those nights, sleep was a luxury, and sanity a fragile concept. But the mission was clear: portray horror as truth — no filters, no compromises. We drenched the camera, the actors, and ourselves in sticky syrup and sweat, embodying the rawness of our vision.

Before the summer ended, I was consumed with version two of the script, having glimpsed the gaping maws of possibility and despair. The mythology started to unravel in darker, more compelling threads: Oswald was a fragment, a seed from which spawned the twisted lineage of the Blackwoods, a clan that embodied terror as ritual, purpose, and poetic justice.

Tales grew like vines — a town choking on its own sins, kinship stained with blood, evil whose shadow stretched across generations. Ideas that ranged from absurdly grotesque (secret carnivals, masked predators) to disturbingly poignant (family loyalty as the darkest curse). The mishaps weren't just unfortunate incidents—they became the peculiar heartbeat of the project, a testimony to what it means to make horror on a shoestring budget. Every disaster brought us closer, welded us with laughter and tears, and pushed the boundaries of what we could endure for art.



The day we loaded the precious gallon of chocolate syrup into the back of the van is still vivid in my memory. As the doors slammed shut, a forgotten loose cap gave way, and a tidal wave of sticky, sweet blood exploded forth, flooding the entire cargo area. What should have been a scripted scene of carnage became an unscripted struggle for cleanliness as we frantically mopped and cursed beneath a sky threatening rain. The remains of that syrup disaster haunted us until months after, a testament to both our passion and neglect.

“Bloodshot,” the masked raccoon that chose to make our set his battlefield, became an unexpected celebrity. The little menace appeared uninvited during takes, darting between actors’ feet and swiping snacks from the craft table. His persistent presence forced us to improvise around his shenanigans, and the cramped confines of our set ensured his figure blurred into the grainy nightmare footage. In time, “Bloodshot” earned a unique credit, the smallest star of *A Fetish Flesh*’s chaotic cast.

Our actor Woodstock’s commitment to the role was both commendable and unorthodox. His habit of yelling “Flesh!” instead of lines initially frustrated the crew but soon turned into a beloved hallmark of our footage. His passionate, if misplaced, ad-libs lent an eerie cadence to scenes otherwise threatened by forgetful dialogues and technical mishaps. What once was a liability became a spontaneous element of horror’s twisted charm.



Precious moments of filming faced sudden death when the venerable RCA camcorder ran out of batteries mid-scene. Moods shifted from focused terror to panicked dismay until relief came in the form of Darren's forgotten stash of additional batteries hidden deep in his jacket. That simple act preserved not just footage but the sanity of a team teetering on the edge of exhaustion.

On set, danger often lurked in unexpected forms. At least once, Autumn's careless step on an invisible layer of congealed syrup sent her flying in a spectacular stumble. Her cry of frustration became a source of comic relief, culminating in her insistence that the take was pure genius for its authenticity. Each slippery fall taught us the perils of creativity on a surface slick enough to serve as a hazard course.

In an act of misguided "realism," Darren's decision to drench Heather's hair with syrup sparked near mutiny. The suppression of theatrical tantrums was only achieved through strategic bribes involving pizza and ice cream, the true saviors of indie filmmaking morale. While the syrup left its adhesive imprint, our spirits reigned unbroken, a testament to the adhesive power of friendship and food.

The syrup was a lure not just for filmmakers but for local wildlife. Our stage became a battleground for a tiny army of ants, each drawn by the sugary landscape we created. Throughout many scenes, their swarming presence was a constant



threat, inspiring a dance of frantic swats and off-script screams. Nature, unbidden, cast its own shadow on the making of our nightmare.

Amid chaotic filming days, the forest also became a labyrinth of dread. On more than one occasion, our ragtag assembly of actors and crew wandered beyond planned boundaries, lost until sunset. Each rescue concluded in a circle of shared ghost stories around a sputtering campfire, camaraderie forged in fear and laughter beneath a canopy of indifferent stars.

The aging recording equipment seemed to breathe with supernatural unpredictability. During emotionally fraught shots, the camcorder would betray us with unexpected static and glitches, imparting an unintentional haunting that blurred the boundaries of reality and artifice. Cast and crew frequently whispered of a spectral presence inhabiting the device, turning technical failures into urban legends.

Years later, Jimmy's shoes still carried the lingering scent of syrup that ensnared them during countless takes. The pungency earned him the affectionate nickname "Walking Bakery," much to his chagrin. The smell was not just a byproduct of chemicals but a visceral badge of honor denoting trials faced and endured.

During a night of power outage, the crew turned to revelry to stave off despair. We sang grotesque parodies of classic horror themes around a flickering



fire, voices cracking amidst laughter and exhaustion. The bizarre mix of creative exhaustion and communal spirit infused the team with renewed resolve, however sticky or lousy the ensuing morning.

Woodstock's wig became a recurring character of its own, ultimately meeting a windy demise during a critical chase sequence. His bald, frantic dash following the loss of his coiffure unexpectedly heightened the intensity of the scene. From misfortune, art was born, a continual reminder of the beautiful accidents that shaped indie filmmaking.

Mystery and mayhem often went hand in hand. The sudden disappearance of our crucial chainsaw prop one night turned into an impromptu search party operation, humorously ending with its discovery hanging ominously from a tree branch, swaying in the dawn breeze like a sinister trophy.

Nature's fury often dictated schedule adherence. Fleeting moments of sun were lost to unexpected cleansing storms, halting production but offering unexpected visual poetry amid soaked costumes and dripping forests. Such moments underscored our battle with a Mother Earth seemingly determined to test our patience.

Wet earth and syrup conspired to create pits of despair, ensnaring actors in sticky mud. Attempts to chase monsters became slapstick attempts at traction,



eliciting genuine guffaws between takes. Amidst the horror, we found moments of levity born purely of survival.

Digital communication betrayed us in moments where clarity was crucial. A script supervisor's vital note describing a "head wound" morphed through autocorrect into a surreal "head bat," resulting in actors searching for a phantom creature mid-scene and generating late-night mirth.

Personal appearance often bore the scars of production chaos. Heather's costume, stained early and never cleansed, became a part of her character's visual identity. Compromises between vision and practicality defined our aesthetic as much as deliberate design.

Technological failures extended into lighting, where repeated power interruptions forced a reimagining of planned blackout scenes. The resulting footage, enriched by accidental light leaks and ethereal glows, became highlights of unintended eerie beauty.

Instances of overzealous effects led to physical mayhem. An ambitious attempt to simulate rising blood in a bathtub flooded our set, triggering alarms and panicked mop-up efforts that verged on slapstick disaster.

The abundance of syrup provoked unexpected interjections from wildlife, notably clouds of flies in our "haunted shack" interior shots. Bloated with chemical nectar, the insects provided an unplanned but vivid element of living horror.



Subtle acts of sabotage emerged amongst the ranks. The wardrobe assistant, perhaps motivated by unpaid overtime and syrup cleanup, executed quiet acts of rebellion by misrouted costume elements and missing accessories, keeping the cast on their toes.

Necessity bred innovation when missing voice-over equipment led Darren to craft impromptu narration in a mock radio DJ style, infusing the project with unplanned character and levity.

Logistical mishaps abounded, including the overnight trapping of crucial props in a freight elevator—a mishap resolved only through a heroic retrieval mission well into the night.

Effects planned as grand spectacles sometimes backfired spectacularly; a syrup fountain misfired, covering the director and sparking laughter that still echoes months later.

Post-production sound saw its own comedy when mismatched effects scored a gruesome scene, transforming horror into farce with a simple technical error.

Actor call-sheet errors introduced comedic relief, with misplaced calls prompting spontaneous warm-up sessions and improvisation that diffused growing production tensions.

Equipment failures extended beyond recorders, with the buggy camera dolly buried in mud and needing manual extraction, testing physical endurance and hope.



Costume calamities arose when a rogue run through the laundry dyed a dress an eye-searing shade of red; embraced for artistic impulse than discarded as error.

Set hospitality contributed unplanned drama. A breakfast Bloody Mary laced with questionable spirits left cast questioning their judgment and sobriety well into the day.

The final day's crescendo of nerves culminated in laughter, tears, and a collective exhalation as a weary company transitioned from frantic artists to triumphant survivors.

These moments, rich with laughter, loss, camaraderie, and perseverance, embody the beating heart of *A Fetish Flesh*—where horror was crafted not just in frightening images but in the shared chaos of unquenchable will.

Through the laughter, tears, and unending rewrites, I learned what it truly meant to fight for a dream in the wilderness of indie horror filmmaking.



## Chapter 2: The Evolution of the Nightmare

The days following the syrup-soaked madness of our initial shoot were ones of quiet intensity. The adrenaline of creation faded to reveal the true challenge: sculpting the raw material of our aspirations into a coherent, haunting narrative. The original villain, Oswald Alan Tibbs, haunted my notebooks and dreams, but with every read, I found him lacking the complexity and depth the story demanded. He was a slasher molded from teenage nightmares, a symbol too shallow to carry the weight of the world I envisioned.



In the low light of my cramped basement workspace, surrounded by teetering stacks of crumpled pages and stacks of horror VHS tapes, a new vision began to take shape. The idea of a lone, faceless killer gave way to something far darker: a twisted family, unbound by conventional morality, bound instead by blood and violence that transcended generations. The Blackwoods were born, an unholy brood who transformed mere murder into ritual—a sacred communion of pain and obedience.

As the drafts piled up, each iteration of the family added nuance and menace. They were no longer just predators; they were perverted apostles of suffering, their philosophy etched into every moment they graced on the page. This family was a character in itself, a living embodiment of the cyclical torment we humans enact on each other under the guise of loyalty or survival. Their dark creed gave the script a visceral heartbeat and a mythological spine.

My imagination ran wild. I chased ideas from pitch-black diners serving human flesh to underground carnivals hosting grotesque feasts, all painted with the brush of small-town malevolence. At moments, I wondered if I was penning a horror masterpiece or spiraling into complete madness. The beauty and curse of the creative process is that no dream is too grotesque, no idea too bizarre—even if it makes your loved ones question your mental health.



I recall a midnight session when the thought of a carnival of painted faces and manic rituals popped into the notebook. It felt electric and chaotic—a world far from the quiet, creeping dread I'd been nurturing. In hindsight, that moment proved prophetic, for it gestured forward to the jarring collision that would become Juggalo Junction.

The detour into Juggalo Junction was a crucible of creative tension and self-discovery. With TJ MacDonald's energetic vision colliding against my rural horror melancholia, we created a beast both exhilarating and unsustainable. The pandemic of colorful violence and manic energy overwhelmed the subtle dread I'd cultivated. Yet, it was during that chaotic period of fusion and collapse that I understood what *A Fetish of Flesh* truly needed: a return to primal fear tempered by focused storytelling.

The collapse of Juggalo Junction was both brutal and clarifying. It forced me to abandon extravagance for brutal simplicity, to strip away excess and expose the raw, bloody core I always sought. Emerging from that creative wreckage, *A Fetish of Flesh* was reborn as an uncompromising horror account—the ritualistic terror of a family whose love and violence were inseparably entwined, and the devastating effects on those who cross their path.

At the center of this evolving nightmare stood Kameron Blake—a character forged in script after script, draft upon draft. From reluctant inheritor to scarred



survivor, Kameron was the constant through chaos, the thread of humanity against the backdrop of madness. His journey carried the emotional weight and moral complexity vital to the story's soul. Crafting Kameron demanded patience and empathy, challenging me to explore themes of legacy, survival, and the horrifying cost of endurance.

Writing *A Fetish of Flesh* became an obsession. Days blurred into nights, pages rewritten, scenes reimagined, entire acts discarded and rebuilt. Every character's fate twisted and turned as I battled doubt and exhilaration. Horror classics served as both refuge and inspiration as I worked to craft a film that not only scared but lingered in the psyche—a psychological and philosophical descent through dread, layered with symbolism and raw emotion.

The Blackwoods themselves evolved from nameless killers into multifaceted embodiments of ritual and suffering. Their motivations were not merely bloodlust but a perverse devotion to a legacy of pain passed through generations. Each member was painstakingly shaped—not villains for villainy's sake but tragic figures steeped in mythology and brutal creed.

The script's tone shifted accordingly—from slasher spectacle to a slow, suffocating drain of fear. Scenes layered with foreboding symbolism, rites of passage into madness. The woods and rural setting became characters themselves, their oppressive quiet threatening and omnipresent. Inspired by folk tales and



natural horror, the world we built was not just the setting but a visible manifestation of decay, despair, and dread.

I struggled to balance brutality with artistry. Dialogue was refined to reflect the fractured psyche of protagonists, survivors battling both physical horror and internal collapse. The pacing transitioned from rapid kills to sustained, slow-burning menace. This was a horror meant to get under the skin and stay there, rejecting easy catharsis for profound disturbance.

A particular challenge was subverting the “final girl” trope. I wanted survivors who were deeply flawed, morally complex, sometimes terrifying themselves. This choice complicated traditional genre dynamics but enriched the narrative with realism and psychological depth. Moral ambiguity became a key theme, illustrating the terrible cost of survival.

Alternate endings were crafted as thematic explorations, challenging the notion of heroic resolution. Fate, complicity, and generational evil surfaced as core concerns, inviting viewers to wrestle with uncomfortable questions. These endings gave the film its philosophical spine and underscored the cyclical nature of the nightmare.

The resulting screenplay was a love letter and a challenge—dark, uncompromising, and deeply rooted in the oldest traditions of horror. It paid homage to past masters while carving its own cursed path through the genre.



Through years of work, passion, despair, and revival, *A Fetish of Flesh* grew from a frantic notebook draft into a layered, haunting script—a ritualistic testament to pain, family, and the horrors we fail to outrun.



### Chapter 3: Wrestling with the Muse... Crafting the Final Draft of *A Fetish of Flesh*

The journey of writing the final draft for *A Fetish of Flesh* was anything but linear. It was less a straight path and more a brutal wrestling match, one where the opponent was a phantom conjured from my own mind—restless, demanding, and sometimes cruel. The characters I birthed spurred me to insanity, chained me to my desk through countless sleepless nights, and forced me to confront not only narrative chaos but personal anguish. This chapter details the grueling process of coming to terms with the needs of my characters, the endless rewriting, the roaring



headaches, the humor that lightened the load, and the mental hell endured to craft a script true to the story's dark heart.

In those early months, I was obsessed with control—draft after draft, I sought to tame the sprawling horror tale into something manageable. Oswald Alan Tibbs, the monster from my teenage scribbles, offered little resistance then. But as new characters emerged, they demanded agency, backstory, desires veiled beneath layers of cruelty. I often felt like a puppeteer whose strings were fraying, the puppets threatening to pull free and lead the dance.

Kameron Blake was the first to descend from the page fully formed—reluctant, scarred, complex. His descent from reluctant heir to desperate survivor became my anchor. Writing his internal struggles consumed me; I found bits of myself in his silent questions and haunted gaze. Other characters pushed harder: Persephone's cold, ritualistic will, Briar's savage wildness, and the twisted family dynamic became not mere plot points but living, breathing presences.

Writing became a battlefield where each word was fought over. Scenes I'd loved would suddenly feel hollow and be ruthlessly excised during late-night rewrites. One particularly painful episode involved deleting an entire act at 3 AM because Kameron's motivations in it felt false. That loss was a blow, as if severing a limb, yet necessary for the script's integrity.



The process fed cycles of elation and despair. When words flowed, writing felt like a divine possession—pages turned golden and scenes sparkled with dark brilliance. But when the currents shifted, I faced paralyzing self-doubt, the cursor blinking on a blank screen becoming a cruel metronome of failure. Headaches would often climax into migraines, reminders that creativity was no mere pleasure but mental labor fraught with danger.

Humor surprisingly became a saving grace. During moments when despair threatened, my collaborators' jokes about Kameron being an embodiment of existential dread gave me pause. Briar's silent menace was less intimidating when I imagined him tripping over his own shadow. We laughed at the absurdity of arguing with invented characters who nonetheless felt infinitely real.

I kept diaries alongside drafts—chronicling frustrations, breakthroughs, and those ridiculous “aha” moments where a stubborn plot hole suddenly filled itself. In one note, I confessed to a friend that Persephone had “thrown me against the wall” in the script, a way of saying her power overwhelmed my control.

The ritual of rewriting became a grueling, meditative act. Each pass through the manuscript yielded discoveries but also necessitated destruction. Starting fresh felt like both a mercy and a punishment. Over the years, dozens of scenes were built, rebuilt, and sometimes abandoned—like long-forgotten scaffolding on a house never quite finished.



Every forced cut was a wound. Every rewritten character arc was a knifing open of personal fears. These emotional excavations bled into the film's bleak themes; art and anguish were inseparably entwined.

My relationship with writing software was fraught. Program glitches, lost files, and formatting errors sometimes added to the torment. One time, I lost a day's work due to a crash, sending me into a spiral of cursing and frantic recovery attempts that lasted hours.

Yet, despite these trials, writing remained an act of love. Returning to horror classics in search of inspiration re-centered my purpose. Reading Hooper's interviews or Carpenter's essays reminded me that great fear stemmed from honesty and boldness.

The Blackwoods' mythology deepened with each draft. They were no longer just killers but avatars of family trauma, cult devotion, and inevitable violence. Carefully crafting dialogue and rituals, I aimed to reflect the cyclical torment that haunts real legacies.

The rural setting itself became a character—a silent, watchful entity feeding the story with atmosphere and dread. The isolation, the dense woods, the decaying farmhouse—all were lovingly built, scene by scene.

Dialogue underwent constant pruning—aiming for brevity, subtext, and texture. Fewer words, more weight. Survivors' voices became raw, often broken.



The pace of the screenplay was reshaped—scenes of rapid terror tempered by slow, suffocating stretches designed to immerse the viewer in dread. I fought against the temptation to resort to cheap scares in favor of building atmosphere.

One of the most challenging aspects was redefining traditional tropes. I wanted survivors who defied easy morality, characters capable of both cruelty and vulnerability, breaking the archetypical "final girl" mold and inviting complex emotional responses.

Alternate endings were crafted not simply as options but as thematic contrasts—examinations of fate, complicity, and the inescapability of evil. These endings were debated endlessly, each representing a philosophical pitchfork held in storytelling's dark heart.

Completing the final draft felt like emerging from a long, harrowing pilgrimage—a bloody sacrifice yielding something as fragile as it was powerful. It wasn't a finish line but a checkpoint on a larger journey.

The process left scars—in mind and body—but forged a script that bore the full measure of my obsession and pain.

Sometimes, late at night, I read through passages and felt the raw pulse of the film alive beneath the ink—its breath ragged, its voice more ragged, but impossibly alive.



## Chapter 4: The Vanished: Shadows Before the Camera Rolled

Before the first camera clicked, before *A Fetish of Flesh* took shape, there were those who vanished without a trace—artists, collaborators, even friends—absorbed into the growing darkness that seemed to hover over the project like a malevolent specter. Their disappearing became whispered lore amongst those pursuing the nightmare, a grim roll call of lost souls whose absence formed an eerie prelude to the horrors we intended to capture on film.

They were not merely names on a forgotten list; each disappearance bore its own story—a late-night phone call that never found its answer, a friendship that slipped into silence, or a face vanished from gatherings as if swallowed by shadows. Some vanished within the insular horror film community, rumored to



have succumbed to personal demons exacerbated by obsession. Others were entangled in the project's unfolding chaos, their departures cloaked in mystery and pain.

As the film grew in ambition and darkness, so too did the weight of those who could no longer answer the call. Their absence haunted every production meeting, every rewrite, every hesitant step taken deeper into the Blackwoods' world. This chapter attempts to honor the vanished—a somber recognition of their imprint on the journey and a chilling reminder of the thin veil separating creation and destruction in the realm of horror.

What follows is not just a roster, but a meditation on loss—a prequel to the nightmare unfolding on screen, where reality and fiction blur into a shadowy limbo.

## **1. October 12, 1985 – The Athens Messenger**

### **"Teen Vanishes in Carrington Creek Woods After Bonfire Gathering"**

By Linda Keller, Staff Writer

Athens County authorities are searching for **17-year-old Mark "M.J." Johnson** after he failed to return home from a weekend bonfire near Carrington Creek late Friday night. Johnson, a senior at Athens High School known for his talent on the basketball court, was last seen by classmates around 11:45 p.m. heading toward the woods to relieve himself.

Sheriff's deputies combed the area throughout Saturday using volunteer search parties and bloodhounds, though the dogs lost the boy's scent near a thicket along the ridge. Johnson's car remained parked near the clearing, and friends insist he had not been drinking heavily.

"This isn't like him," said his mother, Karen Johnson, clutching a yearbook photo at the search site. "He promised he'd be home by midnight."



Deputies have not ruled out foul play. Sheriff Boyd stated that while it is possible Johnson became lost, the woods are “dense, treacherous, and unforgiving at night.”

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## **2. July 6, 1986 – Columbus Dispatch (Regional Edition)**

### **"College Student Missing During Holiday Hike in Carrington Creek"**

By Robert Linsey, Staff Reporter

The Fourth of July holiday turned grim when **20-year-old Ohio University student Lisa Haverfield** disappeared during a solo hike through Carrington Creek’s southern trails.

Haverfield, an environmental science major, had told friends she wanted to “sketch and clear her head” in the woods before summer classes resumed. Her 1978 Honda Civic was located at the public trailhead, its doors locked and her sketchpad on the passenger seat.

Search efforts over the weekend included mounted deputies and a helicopter flyover arranged through the State Highway Patrol, though dense tree canopy hindered visibility.

“We’re treating this as a missing person, but given the isolation of the area, anything could have happened,” Sheriff Boyd said Sunday.

Locals whispered about strange cries heard in the forest that night, though deputies dismissed the claims as “panic-driven rumor.”

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## **3. March 2, 1987 – The Athens Messenger**

### **"Hunter Fails to Return, Extensive Search Underway"**

By Carol Mayfield, Staff Writer

Authorities are investigating the disappearance of **34-year-old Darren Kilgore**, a Nelsonville factory worker and avid hunter, after he failed to return from a weekend trip into the Carrington Creek woods.

Kilgore, known to hunt deer and rabbit in the off-season, was last seen by his brother Saturday morning when he left carrying a .22 rifle and a rucksack. His brother reported him missing Sunday evening.

Sheriff’s deputies recovered Kilgore’s rifle near a hollow tree about a mile from the trailhead, though the stock appeared splintered. His rucksack was never found.

“We’re baffled,” Sheriff Boyd said. “It looks as if he set the gun down or dropped it in a hurry. There are no signs of a struggle, no tracks leading away.”



Dozens of hunters joined the search, but heavy snowfall has complicated tracking efforts.

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#### **4. November 14, 1988 – Chillicothe Gazette**

##### **"Truck Driver's Rig Found Abandoned Near Carrington Creek"**

By James Whitmore, Staff Reporter

The State Highway Patrol is investigating the mysterious disappearance of **42-year-old William "Bill" Radcliffe**, a long-haul trucker whose semi was found idling on a service road bordering Carrington Creek early Monday morning.

Radcliffe, based out of Dayton, was hauling produce to West Virginia when he radioed his dispatcher around 1:10 a.m., saying he was pulling over due to "strange noises" outside the cab. When authorities arrived two hours later, the driver's side door was open, headlights still on, and Radcliffe nowhere in sight.

Inside the cab, deputies discovered his logbook, wallet, and half-finished thermos of coffee. Tire tracks suggest the rig had not moved from the moment he pulled off.

"He wasn't the type to just up and vanish," said Radcliffe's wife, Sharon. "Something happened to him out there."

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#### **5. May 9, 1989 – Athens Messenger**

##### **"Local Girl Missing After Bicycle Ride Through Carrington Creek Trail"**

By Linda Keller, Staff Writer

Authorities and volunteers are searching for **14-year-old Holly Price** of Athens after her bicycle was found lying along a path in Carrington Creek woods late Monday afternoon.

Price, a freshman at Athens High, had left home after school to ride her bike with friends but chose to take the wooded shortcut home alone. When she did not arrive, her parents alerted deputies.

The bicycle was discovered around dusk with one wheel still spinning, according to investigators.

"This has shaken our whole community," said Principal David Harmon. "Holly is a bright, sweet girl who loved choir and softball."

Bloodhounds tracked her scent into the woods but lost it after several hundred yards. Deputies say they have no suspects at this time.



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## 6. August 17, 1990 – The Plain Dealer (Cleveland, Regional)

### "Young Couple Disappears on Camping Trip; Tent Found Torn"

By Daniel Reese, Staff Correspondent

Authorities are investigating the disappearance of **Brian Holloway, 23, and his girlfriend, Cynthia Lowe, 21**, after the pair vanished during a weekend camping trip in Carrington Creek.

Friends reported them missing Sunday when they failed to return from their two-day excursion. Deputies later located their tent deep in the forest. The canvas was slashed open, sleeping bags unzipped, and belongings scattered.

Sheriff Boyd described the scene as “disturbing, though not immediately indicative of foul play.” No blood was found, though overturned lanterns and a crushed cooler suggested a struggle or frantic flight.

“This is unlike anything we’ve encountered before,” the sheriff said.

The disappearance of two people at once has rattled Athens County residents, who fear the woods may be unsafe for recreation.

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## 7. February 3, 1991 – The Athens Messenger

### "Fisherman Disappears Beneath Frozen Carrington Creek"

By Carol Mayfield, Staff Writer

Local authorities are searching for **52-year-old Ernest “Ernie” Mallory**, a retired millworker and avid fisherman, who failed to return from an ice-fishing trip at Carrington Creek over the weekend.

Mallory’s pickup was found parked near the creek bank Sunday morning. His fishing gear lay scattered on the ice, with one line still in the water. A jagged hole in the ice about twenty feet from shore suggested he may have fallen through.

Divers from the Athens Fire Department combed the icy waters but found no sign of a body. Sheriff Boyd said the currents beneath the frozen surface are “deceptively strong” and could have carried Mallory downstream.

“He’s been fishing this spot since I was a kid,” said neighbor David Kent. “He knew these waters. Something doesn’t add up.”

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## **8. October 29, 1991 – Dayton Daily News**

### **"Teenage Boy Disappears While Collecting Firewood"**

By Nancy Dillard, Staff Reporter

A Halloween celebration turned tragic in Carrington Creek after **16-year-old Jason Myers** vanished while gathering firewood with friends late Monday night.

Myers, a junior at Logan High School, had gone into the woods with three friends to collect brush for a bonfire. The others returned to the clearing, but Myers never came back.

Searchers found his flashlight on the ground, its beam shining upward into the trees. His jacket was later recovered snagged on a branch.

"It's like he was plucked off the earth," said one search volunteer.

Sheriff Boyd's office has urged parents to keep children out of the woods until further notice.

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## **9. April 19, 1992 – The Columbus Dispatch**

### **"Young Mother Missing; Toddler Found Alone in Car"**

By Robert Linsey, Staff Reporter

Authorities are investigating the disappearance of **25-year-old mother, Angela Brooks**, after her toddler was discovered alone in the family station wagon parked near a Carrington Creek trailhead Sunday afternoon.

A passing hiker noticed the crying child and alerted deputies. Brooks' purse, keys, and jacket were still inside the vehicle.

"She was supposed to meet her sister for lunch," said Angela's husband, Kevin. "There's no way she would leave our little girl alone like that."

A search party scoured the woods into the evening, calling her name. Deputies say they discovered shoe prints matching Angela's leading down a narrow deer path but could not trace them further.

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## **10. December 27, 1992 – The Athens Messenger**

### **"Local Brothers Missing in Carrington Creek During Hunting Trip"**

By Linda Keller, Staff Writer



Authorities say **brothers Kevin and Jimmy Sullivan**, aged 19 and 21, disappeared during a post-Christmas rabbit hunt near Carrington Creek.

The Sullivan boys, well-known around town for their playful rivalry and love of the outdoors, left home early Sunday morning with rifles and a beagle hound. When they failed to return, their father launched a search.

Deputies located the brothers' hound wandering near the road at dusk, whining and scratched. No sign of the young men was found, though hunters later reported hearing what sounded like two gunshots followed by a long, echoing scream.

"We don't scare easy," said family friend Tom Redding. "But I won't be hunting there again."

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## 11. August 13, 1993 – The Cincinnati Enquirer

### "Hiker Reports Strange Encounter Before Companion Vanishes"

By Mark Reynolds, Staff Writer

The Athens County Sheriff's Office is investigating the disappearance of **Darren Kvintus, 22**, after his hiking companion reported that Kvintus "wandered into the trees" and never returned.

The companion, whose name has not been released, told deputies the two men were resting along a trail when Kvintus said he heard something "calling his name" from deeper in the woods.

"He just got up and went," the friend told reporters. "I thought he was joking until he didn't come back."

Deputies found Kvintus' backpack propped against a rock near the trail. Inside were granola bars, a trail map, and a cassette Walkman with the headphones still tangled.

Sheriff Boyd acknowledged the case had "peculiar elements" but declined to elaborate.

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## 12. March 6, 1994 – The Athens Messenger

### "Boy Scout Leader Disappears During Weekend Campout"

By Carol Mayfield, Staff Writer

Authorities are investigating the mysterious disappearance of **38-year-old scoutmaster William "Billy" Sullivan** (uncle to Kevin and Jimmy Sullivan, who vanished in 1992) after he failed to return from a camping trip with his troop near Carrington Creek.



According to the boys, Sullivan left the campsite after dark to check on a noise in the woods. He carried only a lantern and a pocketknife. When he did not return after thirty minutes, the senior scouts alerted a nearby ranger station.

The troop was escorted out of the forest, shaken but unharmed. Deputies later found Sullivan's lantern extinguished in the mud about a quarter-mile from camp.

"This family has suffered too much loss already," said Sheriff Boyd.

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### **13. November 19, 1995 – The Athens Messenger**

#### **"Teenage Girl Missing After Walk With Boyfriend"**

By Linda Keller, Staff Writer

Authorities are investigating the disappearance of **17-year-old Heather Heim** after she vanished during a Saturday evening walk with her boyfriend along Carrington Creek's trails.

The boyfriend, whose name is being withheld, told deputies the pair stopped to sit by the creek. Heather reportedly left briefly to "find a place to use the bathroom" but did not return.

Her shoes were later found neatly placed on the creek bank, though there was no evidence she entered the water.

Heather's parents described her as a bright student with plans to attend Ohio State in the fall. "We just want her home safe," said her mother, Susan Heim.

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### **14. July 8, 1996 – The Athens Messenger**

#### **"College Student Vanishes on Summer Hike"**

By Robert Linsey, Staff Writer

Authorities are searching for **19-year-old Chantalle Ford**, a college sophomore from Cincinnati, who disappeared Monday during a solo hike in Carrington Creek.

Ford, home for the summer, told friends she planned to spend the day sketching landscapes in her art journal. Her car was later discovered at the Pine Hollow trailhead with her sketchbook inside, open to a half-finished drawing of the forest canopy.

Search dogs followed a scent trail for nearly half a mile before losing it abruptly at a clearing. Deputies said there were "no obvious signs of a struggle."

Her father, Harold Ford, described Chantalle as "an independent spirit, but careful."



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## **15. October 3, 1997 – The Columbus Dispatch**

### **"Young Man Missing After Camping With Friends"**

By Mark Reynolds, Staff Writer

**21-year-old Joshua Diatley**, of Toledo, was reported missing Sunday after a weekend camping trip near Carrington Creek.

According to his companions, Diatley left camp before dawn to collect firewood and never returned. His friends assumed he had gotten lost, but search efforts yielded no trace.

Deputies later found a bundle of neatly tied sticks near the trail, believed to have been dropped by Diatley. His flashlight was discovered thirty yards away, still flickering.

“He wasn’t the kind of guy to spook easy,” said friend Aaron Lewis. “Something scared him bad enough to make him drop everything.”

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## **16. May 22, 1998 – The Athens Messenger**

### **"Man Disappears During Morning Jog"**

By Linda Keller, Staff Writer

**24-year-old Derrick Shaw**, a fitness instructor from Columbus, has been reported missing after failing to return from an early morning jog through Carrington Creek.

Shaw was training for an upcoming marathon and often ran long-distance trails. His running shoes were found on the path’s edge, laces untied, with a small digital stopwatch lying beside them.

Despite extensive searches, no additional clues have been discovered. Sheriff Boyd stated, “This is not a case of someone simply running off. Something happened to Mr. Shaw out there.”

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## **17. January 15, 1999 – The Athens Messenger**

### **"Couple Vanishes After New Year’s Camping Trip"**

By Carol Mayfield, Staff Writer

Deputies are investigating the disappearance of **Brian Keller, 28, and his fiancée, Melissa Drury, 27**, who failed to return from a New Year’s camping trip in Carrington Creek.



The couple's tent was discovered intact but empty, with sleeping bags laid out as if they had been occupied. A half-cooked pot of beans still sat over the campfire, now cold.

Friends say the pair were planning their wedding for the summer. "They were so excited for the future," said Melissa's sister. "They wouldn't just walk away."

Sheriff Boyd admitted the scene "gave investigators chills."

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## **18. September 4, 1999 – The Columbus Dispatch**

### **"Hunter Reported Missing; Rifle Found Abandoned"**

By Mark Reynolds, Staff Writer

Authorities are searching for **42-year-old Gary Mullins**, a deer hunter from Zanesville, after he failed to return home from a Labor Day weekend outing in Carrington Creek.

Mullins' truck was located near the south trailhead. His rifle was later discovered propped against a tree, fully loaded, with his orange hunting vest draped over the stock.

Fellow hunters said Mullins was experienced and would not have left his gear behind willingly. "It doesn't make sense," said hunting partner Dale Richards. "Gary respected the woods, but he never feared them."

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## **19. April 16, 2000 – The Athens Messenger**

### **"Local Schoolteacher Vanishes on Nature Walk"**

By Linda Keller, Staff Writer

Authorities are investigating the disappearance of **31-year-old elementary school teacher, Rachel Coleman**, who vanished Sunday afternoon while walking the trails of Carrington Creek.

Coleman, a beloved teacher at Carrington Elementary, had told colleagues she often found peace walking the forest paths to prepare lesson plans. Her car was discovered at the trail entrance, doors locked.

Deputies found her notebook lying on the ground, with a page that read only: "*The woods feel different today.*"

Students left flowers and drawings at the trailhead Monday. Sheriff Boyd called the case "deeply troubling."

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## **20. November 2, 2000 – The Columbus Dispatch**

### **"Local Family Reports Man Missing After Bonfire Gathering"**

By Robert Linsey, Staff Reporter

**34-year-old Michael Harris**, of Carrington Creek, was last seen Saturday night at a bonfire gathering with friends. According to witnesses, Harris wandered into the woods after an argument and never came back.

The group searched briefly before assuming he had gone home. When his truck was still parked near the site the next morning, his family contacted authorities.

Deputies recovered Harris' jacket snagged on a low branch about fifty yards into the woods, but no additional evidence has surfaced.

His brother, Gavin Harris, spoke to reporters: "This isn't like him. Something took my brother from us, and I won't rest until we know what."

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## **21. June 11, 2001 – The Athens Messenger**

### **"Teenager Disappears During Summer Hike"**

By Carol Mayfield, Staff Writer

Deputies are investigating the disappearance of **16-year-old Lacy Gray**, who was last seen hiking with friends on Carrington Creek's Whisper Ridge Trail.

According to her companions, Gray lagged behind the group near a bend in the trail to take photographs with a disposable Kodak camera. When the others returned to check on her minutes later, she was gone.

Searchers found the camera lying on the ground. The last image developed showed only tree canopy, blurred as though the camera had been jolted mid-click.

Her parents pleaded for information in a press conference Monday. "Lacy is bright, strong, and careful," said her mother. "We just want our daughter home."

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## **22. February 18, 2002 – The Columbus Dispatch**

### **"Truck Driver Vanishes During Overnight Stop"**

By Robert Linsey, Staff Writer



Authorities are searching for **39-year-old Thom Delong**, a long-haul trucker from Cleveland, who disappeared during an overnight stop at Carrington Creek.

Delong pulled his rig into a gravel turnout on Route 47 to rest. A passing motorist later reported seeing the truck still idling at 3:00 a.m., lights on, driver's door open.

Deputies discovered Delong's thermos of coffee still warm in the cab, along with a half-finished logbook entry. His jacket and boots remained inside.

Search teams canvassed the nearby woods but found no trace. Sheriff Boyd described the case as "baffling and abrupt."

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## **23. September 14, 2002 – The Athens Messenger**

### **"Local Musician Reported Missing in Carrington Creek"**

By Linda Keller, Staff Reporter

**26-year-old Brian Hargrove**, a local guitarist known for playing open mic nights across Athens County, has been reported missing after a weekend hike in Carrington Creek.

Hargrove told friends he planned to "write new songs in the woods." His guitar case was discovered neatly closed beside a fallen log, with his harmonica lying on top.

Deputies found no signs of a struggle. A campfire circle nearby had burned out, leaving only ash.

Friends organized a candlelight vigil at the town square Tuesday evening. "Brian's music filled this town," one said. "Now it feels quiet."

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## **24. July 29, 2003 – The Columbus Dispatch**

### **"Brothers Go Missing on Fishing Trip"**

By Carol Mayfield, Staff Reporter

**Zack and Jeff Hammond, ages 22 and 24**, vanished Sunday after a fishing trip at Carrington Creek's south fork.

The brothers' tackle boxes and cooler were discovered on the riverbank, but no boat or signs of departure. Nearby brush showed no signs of disturbance.

Their father, a retired firefighter, said the boys were experienced outdoorsmen. "They grew up in these woods. For both of them to vanish — it doesn't add up."



Deputies have extended searches along the creek's waterways. Sheriff Boyd admitted the case "is among the most troubling yet."

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## **25. October 5, 2004 – The Athens Messenger**

### **"Local Mechanic Reported Missing"**

By Robert Linsey, Staff Writer

**29-year-old Kyle Iler**, a mechanic from Nelsonville, disappeared Monday evening after telling coworkers he planned to hike the Shale Cut Trail before nightfall.

His vehicle was located at the trailhead with his toolbox inside. A single work glove was found about thirty yards down the path.

Despite ground searches and helicopter sweeps, no further trace has been discovered.

A coworker described Iler as "a tough guy, but loyal. He wouldn't just walk out on people."

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## **26. March 17, 2005 – The Columbus Dispatch**

### **"Day Hiker Vanishes; St. Patrick's Outing Turns Grim"**

By Linda Keller, Staff Writer

Authorities are searching for **34-year-old Lance Garrett**, who failed to return from a planned day hike in Carrington Creek on Thursday.

Garrett left his home in Athens County wearing a green ball cap and carrying a new digital Sony camera. His car was discovered at the Whisper Ridge entrance.

Search teams later recovered the camera wedged between two rocks. The memory card contained only one image: blurred streaks of green and black.

Investigators described the case as "deeply unsettling."

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## **27. May 28, 2006 – The Athens Messenger**

### **"College Friends Reported Missing After Memorial Day Hike"**

By Carol Mayfield, Staff Writer



Two Ohio University students, **Mason Franks, 21, and Alyssa Chen, 20**, vanished during a Memorial Day hike in Carrington Creek.

Their friends said the pair left the main group to take photos by the creek but never returned. Hours later, the others searched and found only Alyssa's scarf snagged in a branch.

Both their phones were discovered inside a backpack, zipped and leaning against a tree, as though intentionally placed.

Deputies continue to comb the woods. Sheriff Boyd stated, "We're treating this as an active missing persons case with no evidence of voluntary disappearance."

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## **28. September 22, 2007 – The Columbus Dispatch**

### **"Local Farmer Reported Missing"**

By Robert Linsey, Staff Writer

**52-year-old George Whitaker**, a corn farmer from nearby Vinton County, disappeared while scouting hunting grounds near Carrington Creek.

Whitaker's truck was found parked in a field access lane. Inside were his shotgun, lunchbox, and a handwritten note that read: "*Saw tracks. Going in further.*"

Search parties located partial boot prints leading into dense underbrush but no exit trail.

Neighbors described Whitaker as "dependable, rooted in the land." His wife tearfully told reporters, "George never wandered off in his life."

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## **29. April 19, 2008 – The Athens Messenger**

### **"Photographer Goes Missing After Sunrise Shoot"**

By Linda Keller, Staff Writer

**30-year-old Emily Sanders**, a wedding photographer from Columbus, was reported missing after failing to return from a sunrise shoot at Carrington Creek.

Her tripod and camera bag were discovered near the Huckleberry Overlook, but her primary Nikon camera was missing.

Search teams noted unusual scratch marks on the overlook's railing. Investigators have not determined whether they are related to the case.



Friends held a vigil Sunday, releasing balloons in her honor.

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### **30. November 3, 2010 – The Columbus Dispatch**

#### **"Hunter Missing in Carrington Creek"**

By Carol Mayfield, Staff Reporter

**41-year-old Daniel Cross**, of Marietta, was reported missing by his wife after failing to return from a solo deer hunt in Carrington Creek.

Deputies discovered his truck and hunting gear abandoned near the south ridge trail. His rifle was leaned against a tree, fully loaded.

Sheriff Ingram, who took over after Sheriff Boyd's semi-retirement, said: "This is not an isolated case. We're seeing patterns."

Cross leaves behind two children.

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### **The Cincinnati Enquirer – July 3, 2011**

**Headline:** *Ohio Couple Vanishes After July 4th Camping Trip*

LOGAN, OH — Authorities are searching for **David and Kelley Jackson**, ages 37 and 34, who failed to return home from a July 4th weekend camping trip in Carrington Creek.

The couple, both teachers from Dayton, were last seen by friends on July 1 when they set out for a three-day hiking excursion. Their car was located yesterday at a trailhead parking lot, keys and wallets still inside.

Sheriff's deputies, aided by volunteer search crews, scoured the area with dogs but found no trace of the couple. Sheriff Ingram described the disappearance as "suspicious" and urged caution: "Two healthy adults don't just vanish without a sign."

Residents fear the case may add to the Creek's long line of unsolved vanishings, which now span nearly three decades.

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### **The Logan Daily News – October 18, 2012**

**Headline:** *Hunter Found Dead in Carrington Creek; Cause Unclear*

NELSONVILLE, OH — Deer hunter **William "Bill" Rawlins, 52**, was discovered dead under unexplained circumstances in Carrington Creek this week.



Rawlins, a retired steelworker from Ironton, had set out alone on October 14. When he failed to return, his brother alerted authorities. Search crews located his body seated against a tree, his rifle laid neatly at his side.

The coroner ruled the cause of death as “undetermined.” Sheriff Ingram noted: “There was no sign of a struggle, no animal attack. It’s puzzling.”

Locals are shaken, as Rawlins was an experienced woodsman. His death reopens community debate about whether something sinister stalks the Creek.

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### **The Carrington Gazette – April 8, 2013**

**Headline:** *Community Stunned as Dylan Blake Vanishes in Carrington Creek*

LOGAN, OH — The disappearance of **Dylan Blake, 41**, has rattled Carrington Creek and reignited fears of the forest’s grim history.

Blake, a mechanic and outdoorsman, moved to the area after his fiancée, **Chantalle Ford**, disappeared in 1996 while hiking. He became a familiar local figure, often guiding neighbors through the woods while quietly conducting his own investigations into the Creek’s mysteries.

On April 6, Blake left his home telling friends he was “headed for one last deep search.” His truck was discovered at a southern trailhead, keys in the ignition. Despite extensive searches by deputies, dogs, and helicopters, no trace of him was found.

“If anyone could survive out there, it was Dylan,” Sheriff Ingram said grimly. “The fact that he didn’t come back scares us all.”

Residents describe Blake’s disappearance as the most unsettling of all, a man consumed by the Creek’s legend who ultimately became part of it.

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### **The Athens Messenger – September 14, 2014**

**Headline:** *College Freshman’s Camping Trip Ends in Mystery*

ATHENS, OH — University of Ohio freshman **Megan Carter, 18**, vanished during a weekend camping trip in Carrington Creek.

Carter was with classmates when she left to collect firewood Saturday evening. She never returned to camp. By morning, her friends alerted authorities. Deputies found her cellphone, its battery dead, inside her tent.

Rescue dogs lost her scent less than a mile from camp. Officials admitted little progress: “It’s as though the forest swallowed her whole,” said one investigator.



The case has renewed concern among students and parents, some calling for the university to discourage recreational trips into the Creek.

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### **The Cleveland Plain Dealer – June 19, 2015**

**Headline:** *Paranormal Investigator Becomes Part of the Legend*

CLEVELAND, OH — Paranormal investigator **Daniel “Danny” Morales, 29**, disappeared in Carrington Creek while filming for his online series on haunted sites.

His crew reported that Morales left camp alone after hearing “strange noises.” Hours later, when he failed to return, they began searching and discovered his abandoned gear. Authorities later recovered his camera, but the final minutes of footage were corrupted and unrecoverable.

Sheriff Ingram urged restraint against wild theories: “We don’t know what happened. We only know he’s missing.”

The loss of Morales — who had ironically hoped to document the Creek’s reputation — adds another chilling chapter to the forest’s lore.

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### **The Columbus Dispatch – December 22, 2016**

**Headline:** *Hunter Found Butchered in Woods; Sheriff Calls Scene “Horrific”*

NELSONVILLE, OH — Authorities are investigating the brutal death of **Robert Ellis, 44**, whose remains were discovered in Carrington Creek this week.

Ellis, an electrician from Lancaster, had gone missing during a December hunting trip. Searchers eventually located his body, which officials described as “gruesomely mutilated.” Sources close to the case suggested a possible ritualistic element.

Sheriff Ingram would not confirm details but warned: “This is unlike anything we’ve seen before. We urge extreme caution for anyone entering those woods.”

The grisly discovery marks one of the most violent incidents in the Creek’s modern history.

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### **The Dayton Daily News – October 5, 2017**

**Headline:** *Young Couple Disappears During Engagement Trip*

DAYTON, OH — **Ethan Marsh, 26**, and **Rachel Flynn, 24**, vanished while celebrating their engagement with a weekend getaway at Carrington Creek.



The pair had told family they planned to camp for two nights. When they failed to return, deputies found their tent still standing and belongings inside — but no trace of the couple.

Friends describe them as inseparable, with wedding plans set for next spring. “They were so excited to start their lives,” said Flynn’s sister. “It’s unthinkable that they’re just gone.”

Sheriff Ingram called the disappearance “deeply concerning,” noting no signs of a struggle at the site.

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### **The Toledo Blade – July 14, 2018**

**Headline:** *Experienced Outdoorsman Vanishes Without a Trace*

TOLEDO, OH — **Harold Jenkins, 58**, an avid hiker and former Boy Scout leader, vanished during a solo trek through Carrington Creek.

Jenkins’s wife reported him overdue after he failed to call home by the evening of July 12. Deputies found his vehicle parked at a trailhead, but extensive searches yielded nothing.

Neighbors described Jenkins as a cautious man who often lectured youth groups about survival safety. “If something could happen to Harold,” said a family friend, “then no one’s safe out there.”

The Sheriff’s Department has yet to announce new leads.

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### **The Cincinnati Post – March 9, 2019**

**Headline:** *Sisters Vanish During Weekend Retreat*

CINCINNATI, OH — Sisters **Nancy and Theresa Collins**, ages 30 and 28, went missing during a weekend retreat in Carrington Creek.

The pair checked into a cabin rental on March 7 but failed to meet friends as planned the following day. Their car was still parked outside the cabin, their luggage unpacked inside.

Search teams combed the surrounding area for days, but no trace was discovered. Sheriff Ingram described the case as “eerily similar” to past vanishings, noting the absence of tracks or signs of departure.

Friends of the sisters have organized vigils, demanding answers from authorities.

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### **The Carrington Chronicle – March 12, 2019**

#### **Headline: Hunter Vanishes in Northern Woods**

CARRINGTON CREEK, OH — **Thomas Reed**, 42, an experienced hunter and lifelong resident, disappeared while tracking deer near the northern section of Carrington Creek Woods. Reed left early Saturday morning, but never returned home. His truck was found at the trailhead with hunting gear neatly arranged inside.

Search parties, including police and local volunteers, combed the area for several days without success. Sheriff Ingram described the disappearance as “unsettling given Mr. Reed’s familiarity with these woods.” Family and neighbors continue to appeal for information or sightings.

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### **The Carrington Gazette – August 5, 2020**

#### **Headline: Evening Jogger Missing Along Creek Trail**

CARRINGTON CREEK, OH — **Julia Simmons**, 29, vanished while jogging along the south trail of Carrington Creek Woods. Witnesses reported hearing a scream around 6:45 PM, though no one could locate her. Simmons was known for jogging alone but always informed friends and family beforehand.

Authorities launched an immediate search using dogs, flashlights, and local volunteers, but found no trace of the missing runner. Sheriff Ingram called the case “disturbing” and asked the community to report any unusual activity in the woods.

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### **Carrington Times – November 21, 2023**

#### **Headline: Photographer Disappears Amid Fall Foliage**

CARRINGTON CREEK, OH — **Henry Calloway**, 37, a local amateur photographer, went missing while photographing autumn foliage in Carrington Creek Woods. His camera and backpack were later discovered abandoned near a creek crossing.

Police conducted extensive searches with tracking dogs, but have uncovered no further evidence. “Henry knew these woods better than most,” said a family friend. Sheriff Ingram noted the disappearance fits a troubling pattern of unexplained vanishings in the area.

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### **Carrington Chronicle – July 9, 2024**

#### **Headline: Teen Camper Missing After Weekend Trip**

CARRINGTON CREEK, OH — Seventeen-year-old **Emma Dalton** disappeared during a weekend camping trip in Carrington Creek Woods. Dalton reportedly wandered off from her friends to collect firewood and did not return.



Search efforts included law enforcement, volunteers, and aerial teams, yet no trace has been found. “Emma is responsible and experienced outdoors,” said her mother, Lisa Dalton. Sheriff Ingram warned residents to remain cautious in the woods, citing a history of disappearances.

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**Carrington Gazette – May 14, 2025**

**Headline: Experienced Hiker Missing in Northern Woods**

CARRINGTON CREEK, OH — **Michael Torres**, 44, an experienced hiker, failed to return from a solo day hike in the northern portion of Carrington Creek Woods. Torres’ family reported him missing after he did not check in as planned.

Authorities conducted ground searches and deployed tracking teams, but no evidence has been located. “These woods have claimed too many already,” said Sheriff Ingram. Officials urge hikers to exercise extreme caution and report any unusual activity immediately.

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## Chapter 5: Casting the Shadows: Finding the Faces of *A Fetish of Flesh*

Casting *A Fetish of Flesh* was a delicate dance between creative vision and the right human embodiment of its harrowing characters. Every actor brought a unique energy and personal story that deepened the haunting world we sought to build. This chapter details the biographies of key cast members, linking their personal journeys to the potent roles they inhabited.

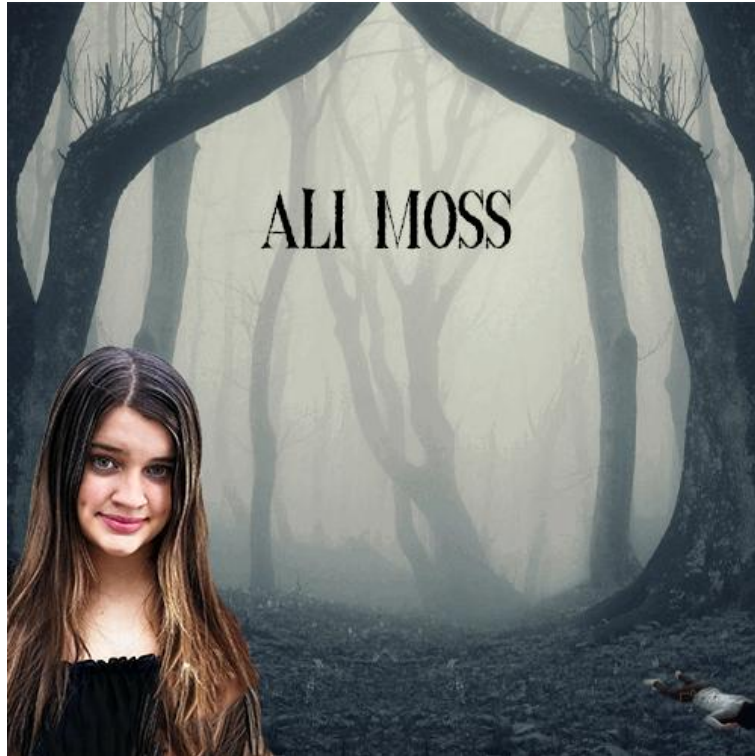




*Naten Davis as Kameron Blake*

Emerging actor Naten Davis was cast as Kameron Blake, the reluctant heir to the Blackwood family nightmare. Davis, a rising star in the indie horror scene, expressed enthusiasm for the role, acknowledging it as a significant milestone in his career. Though still early in his career, he channeled Kameron's reluctant strength and emotional complexity, anchoring the film's narrative. His performance is poised to captivate audiences with the depth and nuance that belie his relative newness to the screen.





*Ali Moss as Lindsay Roberts*

Ali Moss hails from Akron, Ohio, renowned for her versatility as an actress and dancer. Trained in professional theater and experienced in haunted attractions and film, Ali was known for her dynamic performances that blend physicality and emotional depth. Lindsay Roberts, as portrayed by Ali, is a character of layered strength and vulnerability, which Ali richly embodies. Besides acting, Ali pursues studies to become a pediatric nurse, showcasing a dedication to empathy that informs her craft.





*Eli Payne as Eric Dunlap*

Columbus native Elijah Payne brings a mix of improv skill and dramatic intensity to Eric Dunlap, the film's comic-relief-turned-survivor. Elijah's prior roles in independent projects showcased his range and commitment, aligning perfectly with the film's tonal requirements. His personal mission to uplift through storytelling imbues Eric with both humor and pathos, deepening the audience's connection.





*Sarah Jane Montemayor as Hayden Decker*

Montemayor comes to the project as a recognized independent film performer, producer, and makeup artist. She is known for roles that demand emotional grit and creative versatility. As Hayden, she delivers a haunting portrayal that balances fragility and fierce endurance, essential for the psychological depth the film requires. Off-camera, Sarah contributes rich creative input, reflecting her multidisciplinary background.





*Jessica Correll as Serenity*

Jessica Correll is a young actress and athlete whose quiet and observant nature lends itself well to the unsettling character of Serenity Blackwood. Her background in film enthusiasm and competitive sports forged in her resilience and discipline, qualities vital to her role. Jessica's approach to Serenity reveals layers of innocence shattered by fanaticism.





*Crow Werner as Hatchet*

Known for his intense and unpredictable performances in underground scenes, Crow Werner hurls himself into the violent and sadistic character of Hatchet Blackwood. His research into psychological profiles of tormentors informs a chillingly authentic portrayal. Crow's energy on set contributed to the film's dangerous unpredictability.





*Angela Vaughn as Persephone*

With a lifelong passion for photography and acting, Angela Vaughn brings a poised and icy menace to Persephone Blackwood. Balancing artistic calm with cold violence, Angela's performance is supported by personal commitment and deep study of folklore and trauma. Her mature presence anchored the family's dark rituals in the screenplay.





*David J. Paul as Briar*

David J. Paul's multifaceted talent as actor, writer, and producer enriched his portrayal of Briar Blackwood. His experience across genres and roles allowed him to craft a performance of silent menace and brutal energy shaped by a complex character history.

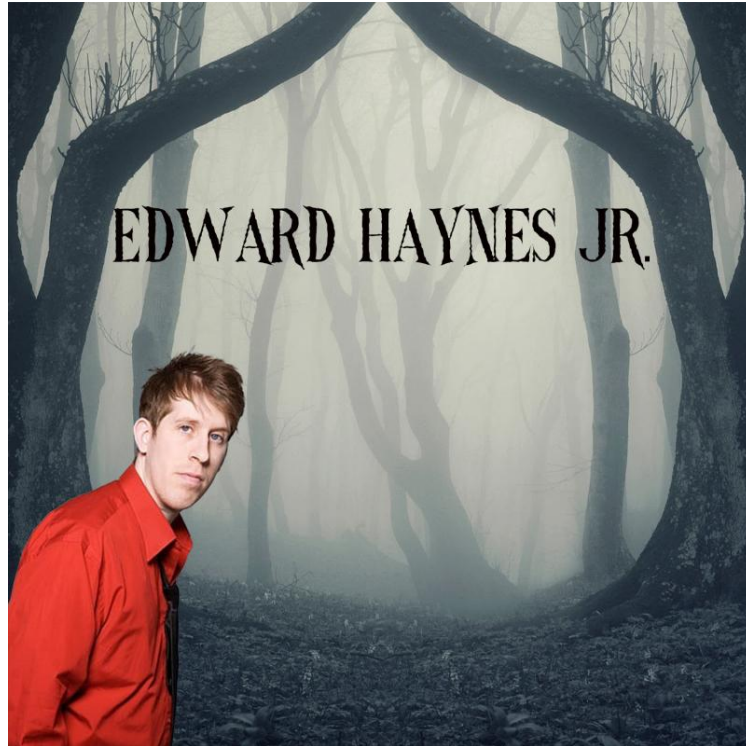




*Michael Haase as Sheriff Charles Ingram*

Actor and stunt performer Michael Haase leverages his athleticism and screen presence to bring life to Sheriff Charles Ingram, the county's weary lawman caught in the nightmare's web. His background in safety on set and art direction lent professionalism and physicality to his nuanced role.



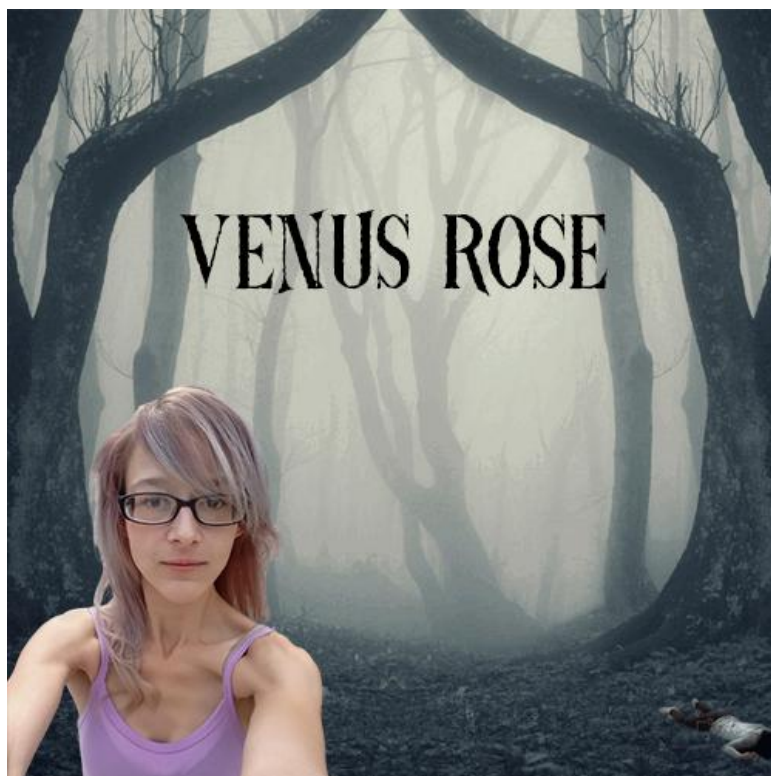


EDWARD HAYNES JR.

*Edward Haynes Jr. as Deputy Aaron Billingsly*

With over a decade of experience in independent horror and fantasy, Edward Haynes Jr. plays Deputy Aaron Billingsly, bringing intensity and reliability. His previous standout roles prepared him to portray law enforcement caught between loyalty and terror with authenticity.





*Venus Rose as Stacy*

Venus Rose, a lifelong practitioner of Wiccan spirituality, brought a poignant and visceral depth to Stacy, a victim whose ordeal echoes through the film's dark corridors. Her spirituality and passion for storytelling found sharp expression in her unforgettable performances.





*Vicktoria Forgrave as Abigale Freeman*

Vicktoria, or Tori as she likes to be called, is a young aspiring actress and singer showing great promise. Daughter of Angela Vaughn and stepdaughter to producer Timothy MacDonald, she is growing within the Demented Media family, preparing for her breakout role in this intense production.





Drea Nicole as Cayla MacLeod

Drea Nicole showcases extraordinary versatility both behind and in front of the camera, serving as the film's special effects makeup artist as well as portraying the compelling character of Cayla MacLeod. Her mastery of practical effects will bring *A Fetish of Flesh's* visceral horror to life with vivid gore and haunting transformations that ground the film's brutality in tactile reality. As Cayla, Drea hopes to deliver a performance charged with moral ambiguity and emotional complexity, navigating the tension between outsider and survivor in a story rife with betrayal and terror. Her intimate involvement in shaping the film's physical and narrative textures made her a linchpin of the production, intertwining artistry with fearless acting.



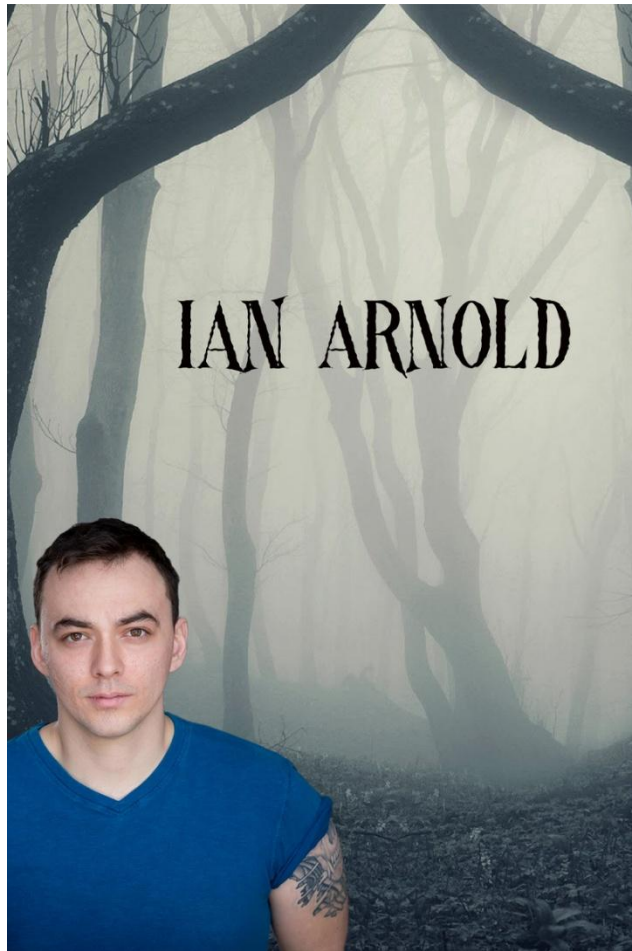
Each cast member, from leads to supporting roles, became a living thread in the nightmarish tapestry of *A Fetish of Flesh*. Their personal histories, commitment, and artistry transformed pages of tortured script into a vivid, unsettling world. They are not just actors; they are the beating heart of this dark ritual.



## Chapter 6: Behind the Shadows: The Crew of *A Fetish of Flesh*

Every nightmare needs architects—those invisible hands that breathe life, shape vision, and keep chaos from swallowing creation whole. *A Fetish of Flesh* owes its existence to a dedicated crew whose collective grit, talent, and passion forged the dark reality lurking on screen. This chapter pays tribute to the fearless individuals who braved cold forests, endless rewrites, and logistical nightmares to build this unsettling world.





*Ian Arnold, cinematographer*

Our cinematographer, Ian Arnold, was the visionary who translated shadowy scripts into visceral imagery. His eye for texture and atmosphere turned Wayne National Forest from a mere location into a looming, breathing character. Ian's background in genre filmmaking and mastery of gritty, handheld camerawork enabled him to capture the eerie authenticity that defines the film's visual identity.





*Drea Nicole, SFX Make-up*

Special effects makeup and actor Drea Nicole embodied dual roles, shaping the grotesque physical realm with artistry while giving life to the enigmatic Cayla MacLeod. Her ability to blend practical effects with emotive performance brought brutal physicality and whispered menace to the screen. Drea's multidisciplinary talent elevated every scene where flesh and ritual colluded.





*Laura Kressler, Wardrobe*

Laura Kressler, our wardrobe and costume designer, layered characters with clothing that speaks—a blend of rural austerity and haunting symbolism. Her attention to detail in distressed fabrics and haunting textures underscored the family’s fractured legacy and helped ground the film’s rural gothic aesthetic.

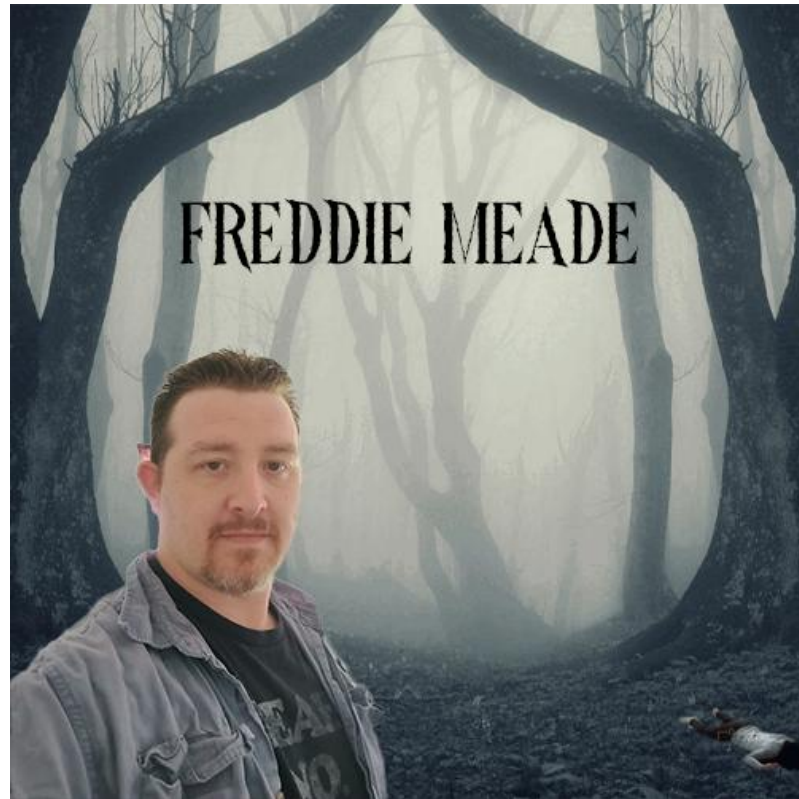




*Bobby Carra, Composer*

Bobby Carra's haunting soundscapes are the soul beneath the skin of *A Fetish of Flesh*. As our composer, Bobby has crafted a soundtrack that breathes life into shadows and tension into silence, weaving an auditory tapestry that supports and amplifies every moment of dread and revelation. His ability to blend eerie ambient tones with sudden, jarring motifs heightens the film's emotional and visceral impact, immersing viewers in the unsettling atmosphere. Bobby's musical artistry is essential to translating the film's nightmare into an experience that resonates long after the credits roll.





*Freddie Meade, Writer/Director*

As the driving force behind *A Fetish of Flesh*, I poured not only countless hours but my very essence into this project. From the earliest scribbles to the final draft, I have wrestled with the story's dark heart—pushing boundaries, reimagining scenes, and navigating the maddening chaos of indie filmmaking. Producing and writing this film has been a rollercoaster of inspiration, frustration, and relentless determination. Each challenge—whether funding shortfalls, location issues, or creative battles—has only strengthened my commitment to bringing this brutal, raw vision to life. This film is not just a story for me; it is a ritual, a passage through darkness that demands everything from its creators.

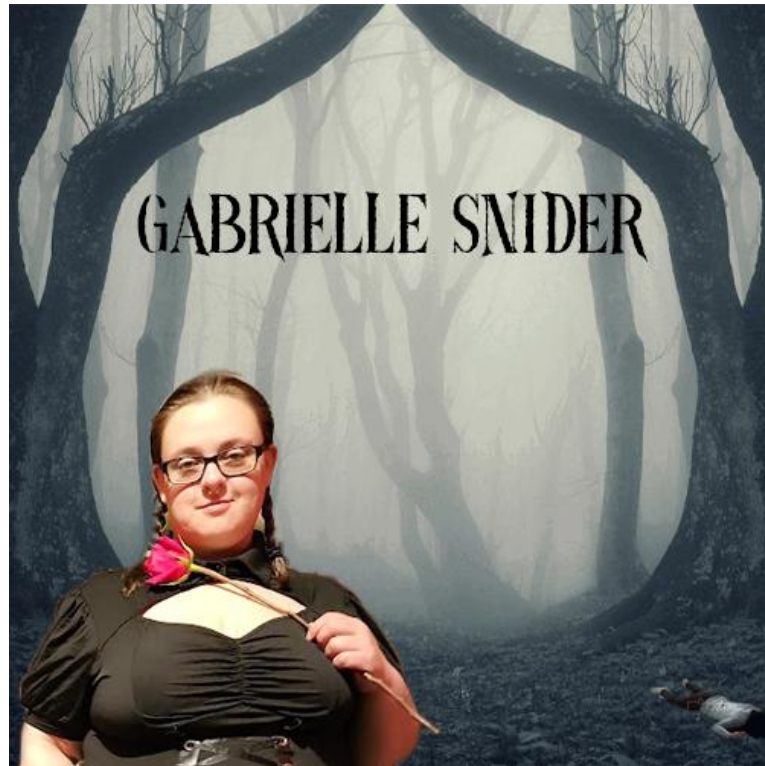




*TJ MacDonald, Music Supervisor*

TJ MacDonald brings a unique energy both behind the scenes and as a creative partner. With a background steeped in independent film and genre passion, TJ's contributions have been essential in production coordination, creative brainstorming, and keeping morale vibrant amid stress. His candid humor and inventive thinking make him indispensable in our collaborative process.





*Gabrielle Snider, Set Photographer*

Gabrielle Snider plays an essential role as associate producer, managing logistics and bridging communication between departments. Her razor-sharp organization and empathetic approach maintain balance within the sprawling production web. Gabrielle's leadership ensures that creative vision stays aligned with practical realities.





*Amanda Kay Clark, Set Design/Hair and Make-up*

Amanda Kay Clark's artistry as a production designer and set decorator breathes life into the unsettling spaces our characters inhabit. Her eye for eerie detail transforms the mundane into motifs of dread, enabling the locations to reflect the internal and external decay central to the film's mood. Amanda's dedication to immersive environments has been vital to creating the haunting rural gothic atmosphere.



The cast and crew bond extends beyond the set. We are actively engaged in talks with Tom “Woodstock” Lee, the executive producer known from Andy Copp’s *The Mutilation Man*. His experience and fierce passion for genre filmmaking promise to deepen the project’s impact and expand its reach.

In an exciting development, we are planning a podcast titled *Beyond the Mask*, designed to pull back the curtain on the making of *A Fetish of Flesh* and delve into the minds of its creative forces. The podcast will explore behind-the-scenes stories, creative struggles, and the broader world of indie horror—connecting fans and creators in a shared dialogue about fear, art, and survival.

Together, this crew pushes past limitations and shadows to create not just a film, but a ritualistic experience—each member a guardian of the nightmare, a storyteller, and a silent witness to the horror wrought in blood and shadow.



## Chapter 7: The Ordeal of Pre-Production: Crowdfunding, Chew, and Early Struggles

The journey into pre-production for *A Fetish of Flesh* started with dreams bigger than our wallets—and a schedule packed tighter than a clown car at a circus. We faced enough problems to fill a horror marathon, but through it all, humor and relentless hardship became our survival tools. The crowdfunding campaign was both our lifeline and an endless source of frustration, an unpredictable rollercoaster that made even seasoned gamblers sick.

Launching the campaign felt like shouting into the void. We crafted exclusive incentives—signed props, VHS tapes, and the chance for backers to



appear as extras—and then watched as the internet delivered either massive support or digital silence. The support was glorious, but every slow week was met with a rising tide of desperation; we became master manipulators of social media, begging and bribing with memes and obscure horror references. Watching your crowdfunding goal fluctuate like a heartbeat on the monitor was enough to cause genuine nausea, but with each dollar, we believed the nightmare could survive.

Meanwhile, assembling the crew was no better. We needed crew members willing to brave Ohio’s brutal winter, relentless schedules, and the promise of blood, sweat, and syrup. The crew comprised a few veterans, mostly volunteers, and a handful of adventurous amateurs who thought “horror film” meant a few makeup effects and some fake blood. Our cinematographer, Ian Arnold, was a true professional with an eye for gritty textures—the kind of guy who could make a rotten farm look beautiful, or at least disturbingly organic.

Every new hire was a gamble. Our makeup effects artist, Drea Nicole, was a wunderkind with a kit full of weird props, but she also doubled as Cayla MacLeod, bringing the story’s outsider to life with a mix of charm and noir menace. Her days were spent transforming faces into suffering canvas, often covered in blood, gore, or mysterious green goo that didn’t quite wash out. Every day, I feared she’d sneak toxic paint into her bag—turning the entire cast into a living, breathing horror gallery.



Locations were the next chaos. The blackened, decaying farmhouses, the dense woods, and abandoned buildings whispered of nightmares long unconscious. Yet securing these sites proved almost as difficult as convincing talent to join us. Paperwork delays, permission pitfalls, and the curse of unpredictable weather threatened to cancel entire sequences. One day, a local landowner refused access, citing “superstitions about the Blackwoods”—which coincidentally matched our script’s theme. We struggled to laugh without crying, our mugs filled with terrible coffee and worse hopes.

The hilarious part? During one location scout, we accidentally got caught in a pigsty, muddy and half-clad, while trying to find a hideous, forgotten graveyard. It was like an episode of a horror reality show—if the producers had no money and the cast didn’t mind losing shoes and dignity. Our efforts to find the perfect setting turned into a comedy sketch—mud pies and dirty tricks, cursed locations, and the surviving cast covered in mud and blisters.

The logistical nightmare extended to equipment. Old cameras, shaky tripods, and an abundance of duct tape kept us afloat, but every shoot was a gamble. One evening, just as we prepared to film a critical scene, the generator sputtered and died harder than a cursed voodoo doll. We stared at the darkness, with only the dim glow of a cell phone flashlight, wondering if the blackened sky was a sign to pack up and run.



Costuming became another battleground. We had iconic, makeshift outfits—some borrowed, some hand-sewn from thrift store horrors. A particularly memorable day involved a “blood-drenched dress” that turned out to be a badly dyed tablecloth. No matter how many times we tried to clean or hide the stains, it looked more like a murder scene than costume design. The cast joked that it was now part of the film’s “psychological realism.”

Our greatest enemy, however, was Ohio’s weather, which refused to cooperate. Sunny mornings turned into rainstorms that washed out scenes faster than you can say “blood moon.” Our outdoor sequences became mud wrestling matches—cast struggling to stay upright while rain poured down and wind threatened to rip apart costumes. We all joked that Mother Nature must have been a Blackwood sympathizer, because her attacks intensified as the film neared completion.

The crowdfunding campaign wasn’t just a financial effort, but a test of mental resilience. Each donation was a small victory, but the slow days with no support made us feel like a horror show—unscripted, uncontrollable, and relentless. We resorted to guerrilla marketing tactics—stirring social media, sending out late-night emails, and creating absurd teaser videos featuring the cast dressed as grotesque family members. It was humiliating, hilarious, and vital.



As we pushed ahead, the process became a relentless cycle. Script revisions, location scouting, equipment repairs, and endless meetings drained us physically and mentally. The headaches grew worse from the hours hunched over computers, eyes glazed, mind racing through scenes of torture and ritual. Every failed shot or broken prop was a reminder that we were making blood and terror not in a studio but in a warzone where everything that could go wrong, did.

Yet, amidst the chaos, moments of humor emerged like bright sparks in a dark night. During one shoot, a sudden gust of wind knocked over a blood-soaked prop—covering the set and forcing us to stop, reassemble, and laugh at the absurdity. Our crew trained themselves to see disaster as an opportunity—the unplanned chaos adding a raw, visceral texture to the project. We joked about turning Ohio’s relentless weather into an inescapable character more terrifying than any family.

And then there was the funding, which started to feel like a living organism—sometimes aggressive, sometimes dormant. We learned to adapt, to ask for help, and to embrace the imperfections. Every dollar raised was a small but vital flame that kept us from succumbing to despair. Behind every successful support pledge was a story: a horror fan on the other side of the country, trusting us with their hard-earned money for a bare-bones, blood-soaked nightmare.



The road to funding *A Fetish of Flesh* wasn't paved with gold but rather strewn with shards of five crowdfunding campaigns, each ending without hitting traditional success markers. If you had asked me during those campaigns whether failure felt like defeat, I would have laughed bitterly. Our journey was anything but a failure—it was a masterclass in perseverance, community-building, and the raw spirit of independent filmmaking.

Each campaign brought its own lessons and heartbreaks. We pitched the film over and over to an audience that sometimes seemed captivated and other times, indifferent. There were moments when the diploma of rejection seemed stamped with a cruel irony. But even when the graphs flattened and the countdown alarms ticked down mercilessly, we found value beyond simple currency—backers who stayed, fans who grew into family, and strangers whose faith fortified our resolve.

Five campaigns taught us that crowdfunding isn't just about money. It's about building an ecosystem of belief, cultivating a tribe willing to share your vision, celebrate your victories, and weather storms. With each “no,” our core community grew stronger and closer. They became our relentless cheerleaders, marketing force, and midnight counselors in moments of doubt.

Some of our earliest backers, who contributed modestly on the first campaign attempts, stayed with us through thick and thin. They became avatars of hope, receiving exclusive rewards, behind-the-scenes access, and a genuine seat at



the table. They believed in *A Fetish of Flesh* not because it was certain to succeed but because they saw in it something raw and uncompromising.

We began referring to this core as our permanent backers—a tribe that would not abandon us despite setbacks. They embodied the true spirit of indie horror fandom: loyal, passionate, and engaged beyond expectations. Whether sending messages of encouragement, sharing our socials tirelessly, or simply recounting our struggles, they infused the project with lifeblood.

The campaigns also forged the production family—the shared struggle for funding galvanized artists, actors, technicians, and creators into a collective asking not for fame or fortune, but for survival of a dream. The film family endures today as the vital core of *A Fetish of Flesh*'s ongoing saga, from crowdfunding crises to completing the nightmare on screen.

We learned to find joy and humor in the chaos, to celebrate small victories—a single pledge, a kind word, a retweet by an influencer. Those moments were life rafts, keeping us afloat amid seas of doubt. They reminded me that art, especially hard-edged horror, is never meant to tread safe waters but challenge the currents beyond comfort.

Five campaigns without traditional success hammered home the stubborn truth of indie horror: it is a labor of love, not guaranteed reward. It's a brutal marathon requiring thick skin, tenacity, and a touch of madness. But those who



share the journey—backers and creators alike—become an unbreakable family, united not by checks signed but by shared passion.

Our crowdfunding odyssey wasn't a sequence of failures but a testament to resilience and deeper connection. The money may have been scarce, but the creative community, the belief, and the film family that emerged are riches beyond measure.

Through the flood of setbacks—equipment failures, location mishaps, equipment sabotage (sometimes intentional)—we learned patience. The real horror wasn't just in the film's subject matter but in trying to do it all with little money and even less time. Every inch of progress was hard-won, and every moment of doubt was met with a stubborn laugh and a promise to survive another day.

The professional crew, the talented cast, and the underdog spirit all fueled this madness. They fought valiantly against every obstacle—props breaking, actors slipping into mud, cameras freezing just as the horror was about to unfold. That relentless fighting spirit turned our suffering into a montage of gritty resilience, waiting for the culmination of all our sacrifices: the bloodcurdling nightmare that would be *A Fetish of Flesh*.

All these hardships forged more than just a film—they forged a mantra: “Keep bleeding.” Whether it was physical pain, creative exhaustion, or the



emotional weight of making something so unrelenting, we kept going, driven by a shared obsession that refused to die.

With every scene shot and every obstacle overcome, I understood that horror isn't just about the monsters or the gore. It's about enduring suffering and transforming it into art. Our pre-production was a crucible where the story was shaped, stretched, broken, and reassembled—blood, sweat, and tears in every frame. And even now, as I look back, I realize that the fight to bring *A Fetish of Flesh* to life was the real nightmare—one that I never wanted to wake from.



## Chapter 8: Into the Woods: Filming Plans, Locations, and the Trials of Bringing the Nightmare to Life

Our plans for filming *A Fetish of Flesh* will be as ambitious as they are daunting. Central to our vision is the sprawling Wayne National Forest—an ancient and dense expanse of Ohio wilderness, filled with twisted trees, hidden trails, and an atmosphere steeped in eerie stillness. This forest will be both a blessing and a challenge, a perfect natural setting rich in raw, primal beauty yet a punishing environment to navigate during production.

We envision the forest's tangled shadows and relentless stillness as more than scenery—it will become a character itself: silent, menacing, and ancient,



providing the perfect backdrop to the ritualistic horrors and psychological torment at the film's core. Shooting among its gnarled trees and moss-covered ground will immerse viewers in a setting unmatched in authenticity.

Alongside Wayne National Forest, we plan to utilize several other small, locally sourced locations—a dilapidated farmhouse, an abandoned church, and a roadside diner—that will collectively ground the film's rural gothic tone. Each location will bring its own quirks—aging structures, challenging permissions, and unexpected conditions that we must be ready to face.

However, we already face the reality of financial hurdles. Despite multiple crowdfunding campaigns with passionate backers, our fundraising goals have not yet been met. This shortfall will turn our dream into a trial, forcing us to dig deeper into resourcefulness, stretch every dollar, and prepare for creative compromises.

We anticipate battling environmental unpredictability in the forest—sudden thunderstorms that may sabotage crucial scenes, biting insects that will consider our cast a moving buffet, and temperatures swinging unpredictably between cold and damp. Our schedules might unravel under weather's whims, turning tense scenes into unexpected mud-slicked escapades.

Securing filming permits will demand patience and diplomacy. We respect that landowners may be wary of our project, perhaps even citing superstitions similar to themes in our film, adding a layer of irony we will have to navigate with



care. We aim to honor boundaries and be ready to adapt locations quickly whenever necessary.

Logistical challenges loom large. Moving cast, crew, and equipment over winding forest paths filled with potholes and loose stones will test our endurance and patience. Rigging temporary power and lighting without compromising safety or scene integrity will require creativity and perseverance.

Yet, we are determined to maintain our sense of humor. We expect numerous moments where actors might slip into mud puddles mid-chase, or wild animals may steal unintentional cameos. Equipment failures at critical moments could become legendary, and we plan to embrace those moments with laughter and teamwork.

Our budget constraints will breed ingenuity. We expect to lean heavily on natural lighting, handheld cameras, and practical effects crafted with everyday items—proving that sometimes, less truly is more in horror. We foresee creating tension and fear without relying on expensive CGI or elaborate sets, focusing on texture, tone, and raw authenticity.

Wayne National Forest's oppressive silence and haunting beauty will be a demanding but essential partner—offering us authentic atmosphere impossible to replicate in studio settings. We anticipate long nights in the cold under the canopy, swirling mists, and the eerie stillness helping us capture the film's soul.



We will learn firsthand that horror is as much a lived experience as a scripted one. The physical hardships of mud, chill, and fatigue will layer every scene with visceral realism. Our actors will become survivors, not just characters, embodying endurance alongside terror.

Our camera will capture not only story but struggle—the sweat-drenched faces, trembling hands, and exhausted eyes that together tell a story beyond any scripted line.

When setbacks occur, as they surely will, our film family will bind together. Shared laughter, support, and impromptu rituals will keep morale alive during taxing days—the moments that take blood, sweat, and tears but also forge bonds stronger than the darkest woods.

While crowdfunding hasn't fully materialized into the money needed, the community we've built—the permanent backers and enthusiastic supporters—will be our foundation. They will be our cheerleaders and reminders of why this nightmare must live.

Every obstacle—from weather to wild animals, permits to equipment failures—will become a thread woven into the fabric of *A Fetish of Flesh*. The forest itself will test us, demanding respect, resilience, and grit.

And though the trial will be arduous, with every muddy step and every frantic fix, we will bring the nightmare alive. Our passion, persistence, and the



unbreakable spirit of our film family will ensure that *A Fetish of Flesh* is not just made, but forged—a living, breathing nightmare pulled straight from the shadows of the Ohio woods.



## Chapter 9: The Unfolding Nightmare: Filming and the Future of *A Fetish of Flesh*

The making of *A Fetish of Flesh* is only the beginning of a far larger vision—a trilogy that will delve deeper into the dark legacy of the Blackwood family, their blood-soaked rituals, and the unrelenting nightmare they represent. The film's completion will mark the dawn of a saga fueled by horror, mystery, and a brutal meditation on family and survival.

*A Fetish of Flesh*, the first chapter, introduces a group of indie filmmakers inheriting a secluded farmhouse, eager to use it as the setting for their next horror project. However, the woods surrounding the house are not empty. The Blackwoods, a family of cannibals who are as theatrical as they are brutal, soon reveal themselves, turning art into terror and creativity into captivity. As carnage unfolds, the story culminates in a horrifying question: who among them will survive the night?



The second film, *The Harvest of Blood: A Fetish of Flesh 2*, expands the mythology and the stakes. The lone survivor remains trapped in a medically induced coma while rumors of the Blackwoods ripple through true crime forums, conspiracy theorists, and urban legends. The narrative pivots to a rogue podcaster and a trauma victim—two unforgettable characters who team up to unearth the sinister truth beneath the folklore. As they peel back layers of ritual and history, they discover a frightening network far older and more organized than the isolated horrors seen in the first film.

The final installment, *A Fetish of Flesh 3: Blackwood*, promises to bring the story full circle and test the limits of bloodlines and secrets. As law enforcement officials and vigilantes encroach deeper into the woods, the remnants of the Blackwood family prepare for a final, desperate stand. Lindsay, now awakened and recovering from her coma, becomes a fierce force seeking answers and justice. This last chapter will explore the brutal philosophy that drives the Blackwoods—the obsession with legacy, consumption, and control—and pose the ultimate question: will this twisted congregation be extinguished or reborn?

The *Fetish* trilogy promises an evolving mythology where new members of the Blackwood clan surface with each installment deepen the horror and the complexity of this cursed family. These introductions will expand the narrative tapestry, revealing hidden facets of the Blackwoods' philosophies, rituals, and



inner demons. Each new character will bring fresh terrors and new dimensions to the sprawling family saga, heightening both personal and ritual stakes.

The trilogy's arc is designed to escalate—each film more violent and brutal than the last. The first film lays the foundation: slow-building dread punctuated by shocking moments, a grim introduction to the Blackwoods' world. The second film amplifies the horror, pushing into psychological terror and wider conspiracies, immersing audiences in a denser, more claustrophobic nightmare. The final chapter promises the purest and most savage confrontation—raw, visceral, and unrelenting, where the very fabric of family, loyalty, and survival is stretched to breaking.

From a production standpoint, each film builds on the last not only narratively but technically. The second film will deploy more ambitious practical effects, complex set pieces, and innovative filming techniques to heighten immersion. The final film will push boundaries further, harnessing the full range of independent horror's capacity for visual and emotional shock to deliver a crescendo of terror.

Casting strategies will evolve alongside the story. While the core of returning cast ensures continuity and emotional resonance, strategic additions embody new clan members and antagonists, injecting fresh energy and challenges for our leads. We plan to cultivate actors capable of embodying the volume, grit, and nuance required by this increasingly brutal saga.



Marketing the trilogy is as much about honoring horror traditions as cultivating a fiercely dedicated fanbase. We will leverage our growing film family—formed through previous crowdfunding and community-building efforts—to introduce exclusive content, interactive fan experiences, and behind-the-scenes insights that deepen engagement. Social media campaigns will emphasize the escalating intensity and dark mythology, generating anticipation tied to each installment’s unique place in the saga.

Yet, beneath the layers of production and marketing, the trilogy’s heart beats strongest in its story: a relentless exploration of human darkness expressed through the Blackwoods—their blood-soaked genesis, evolving and fracturing loyalties, and fateful dance with violence and legacy. Each film’s amplified violence is not gratuitous but woven tightly into narrative purpose, reflecting the escalating stakes and the inexorable pull of the family curse.

With every script drafted and scene captured, *A Fetish of Flesh* aims to redefine independent horror—combining tradition, innovation, and raw emotional power. The journey we embark on promises not only to terrify but to haunt deeply, ensuring that the Blackwoods’ legacy will not only be felt but feared for years to come.

The trilogy is designed to be more than a series of horror films—it is a saga that probes the darkest aspects of human nature and society’s obsession with myth,



survival, and the cyclical nature of violence. Each film will build on the last, expanding the world, deepening characterizations, and challenging the audience to confront enduring nightmares.

While the journey ahead is a monstrous undertaking fraught with logistical, financial, and emotional challenges, the passion fueling the project remains undiminished. The making of the first film laid a brutal but vital foundation, drawing a committed cast, crew, and loyal fans ready to follow *A Fetish of Flesh* into the forest's darkest corners.

As the trilogy develops, it will push boundaries, explore new mythologies, and continue to redefine independent horror cinema. The promise is a relentless, immersive experience—both terrifying and thought-provoking, honoring horror's roots while forging new ground.

The nightmare will live, grow, and haunt anew.