

FREDDY vs. JASON vs. ASH #3 COMMENTARY



Participants:

Jason Craig (JC)
Jeff Katz (JK)
James Kuhoric (JAK)
Thomas Mason (TM)
Scott Peterson (SP)
Joe Rybandt (JPR)

Prepared by James Kuhoric

There's a fresh coat of snow and blood on the ground, so that must mean its time for another session of the Freddy vs. Jason vs. Ash "directors' commentary." While Elm Street kiddies are off dreaming of a white Christmas, our favorite movie slashers are upping the ante and raising the body count. The last issue left our boy Ash traipsing through the old Voorhees house digging up the Book of the Dead while Jason was nailing some of the obnoxious oversexed teenagers from town. Arriving in time to save the hot chick and get the hell outta Dodge, Ash and Bree found out the hard way that a thirty year old car turns over less than a nun in a whore house.

Ohhh...not gonna touch that one, huh? I don't blame you. That's why we invited our cast of crazy contributors to give you even more behind the scenes insight into the Freddy vs. Jason vs. Ash original movie pitch, the comic book, and the upcoming trade paperback collection. Join Jason Craig (artist), Thomas Mason (colorist), James Kuhoric (writer), Scott Peterson (executive editor / Wildstorm), Joe Rybandt (executive editor / Dynamite Ent), and Jeff Katz (Original FvJvA writer and Fox VP) as they share their personal thoughts about every aspect of the comic book and how it would have translated into movie format. This "directors' commentary" is a way for all the creators involved with the collaboration to talk directly with the readers about our opinions of the story and what led us to this point.

Grab a copy of the Freddy vs. Jason vs. Ash #3 comic and join our bloody book club as the creators take you page by page through the rising body count and fill in the blanks on how this mega event became a reality.

**Page 1
Panel 1**

JAK: So you find the book, save the girl, shoot the hockey-masked “Deadite,” and get away, right? Not quite. It’s the dead of winter in a lake town. Ash’s car is...erhm...“vintage.” And by vintage I mean it’s a piece of sh#t. I had a car like that once. It spent more time parked at the shop than on the road. Might be time for those new wheels you been planning on getting, Ash...

Panels 2-3

JAK: Another beautiful sequence by Jason Craig. You can feel the kinetic energy of Jason’s machete as it flies at the reader in this “3D homage” to Friday III. Though Jason Voorhees’ tiny pea sized brain may not get it yet, he’s not fighting some 70s shorts wearing camp counselor here. This is Ash Williams – the time traveling, Deadite stomping, Chosen One. He’s not going down without a fight.

JPR: More nice work from our art team here, from the reflection in panel 1 to the motion in panel 2 and the “catch” in panel 3, bravo!



JC: I would like to kick off this commentary by saying a few words. I love Horror. I would eat sleep and drink it if I could. Truth is, around issue #1 I had a whole slew of personal issues to health issues come up and we got behind schedule. The long and short of it is, once a book is solicited, that date is set in stone, and my problems screwed that up. I will say as a fan to the fans reading this book, I had opportunities to skip issues and walk away to let the book be drawn by someone else. That would give me a chance to move onto another issue of the series, to get ahead, or to use an assistant to get caught up. The problem is, this project has been my baby. In a lot of ways I’ve kind of taken over the project in some areas from being such a major horror fan boy. Meaning, James, Scott, Thomas, they can all tell you I have called them at all hours of the day or night with a, “Jason doesn’t do that” or “this is what Freddy would say” concern. With that kind of ‘Anal-ism’ going on, I couldn’t lose an issue (it takes a real man to use the word anal around these guys, I see that twinkle in your eye Thomas....back off).

JAK: He said “anal-ism”...heh.

JK: Is that a technical term?

JC: Since the facts proved only 2 options, skip or help, and I had to have the book drawn in under 17 days, I chose back door number 2. lol I’ve never had an assistant or worked with help so to speak, but let me say especially, looking back, Rick Burchett really helped me in a jam, and proved himself invaluable in a tight spot, especially pages 1-8 where I really leaned hard on his services. With that said, fasten your seat belts, hold on tight, and we now return to the commentary.

JAK: Jason brings up two good points here. One...he and Thomas have a very unnatural relationship and two...that Rick Burchett was an immense help in getting us back on track with the issue. Rick’s layout work was inspired and Jason’s finishing details – unrivaled. These two are a fantastic team and have really done the story right. Good job, boy-os.

JK: “Anal-ism?” “Back door?” “Tight spot?” Paging Dr. Freud.

Page 2
Panel 1

JAK: This is one of those jump out of your seat moments in the movie version of Freddy vs. Jason vs. Ash. You see Jason through the windshield approaching in his usual slow and unstoppable style and then...BAM! With inhuman strength he demolishes the hood of Ash's car! How much was that deductible again...? We originally envisioned this splash from a different angle. In the script we called for Jason to be the central focus of the shot and to have his double fisted hammer blow literally be right in front of the readers as the metal car hood buckled up on the left and right of the panel. It was adjusted to this view to allow us room to show Ash and Bree diving for cover as Jason puts the jalopy out of its misery.

JC: Assisted or not, I love drawing cars....lol. Being a gear head myself, and loving to race cars and motorcycles (not in the professional sense.....or legal...coughs..Anyway...) I worked many, many years drawing anything from NASCAR designs to car clubs from all around the world, and so you will notice in issue 2, Bree's car or anywhere else I get a chance to draw a vehicle, I have fun with it. I don't know who takes a harder beating in this series, the boys or their toys. Poor Ash's Delta does take a beating.

Page 3
Panels 2-4

JAK: We really needed a little more room to do this scene justice. Jason Craig can expand on this, but if we were directing the shots you'd see a similar methodical approach by Jason as he scoops up Ash from the frozen lake and prepares to punch our favorite wage slave's ticket for good. As we focus on the "death blow" to come, the headlights from Caroline's SUV would play across the scene giving us a momentary foreshadowing of the vehicle impact just before it plows into Jason. I love the fourth panel as Jason shatters a dying tree from the impact. Nice!

Panel 5

JAK: "Come with me if you want to live..." Yeah...a little Terminator influence here. But everyone knows Ash could totally kick the Terminator's metal ass. Take that, Arnie!

JC: Yea, the biggest problem with making comics to actually making films, is what stays, and what goes. Hopefully when the trade paperback comes out, we will have a director's cut with expanded scenes, but in situations like this you have to decide, do I want to use valuable page space on a fight here, and take away from one somewhere else. Honestly it works because it gets the story moving pretty quickly without a lag, but deep down you always crave a chance to add a cut scene of Jason(Voorhees) doing what he loves to do.

Page 4
Panel 4

JAK: Screech! Nearly naked smokin' hot chick! I love this book.

Panel 7

JAK: This is the start of another awesome nightmare sequence inside Jason's head. When we put the script together, we imagined this scene as being a sudden and jarring switch from the escape sequence to a full screen shot of Freddy's face screaming. It would be a shock and a jump out of your seat moment leading into a really fun scene.

Page 5
Panels 1-3

JAK: The "Professor Kruger" sequence is a classic Nightmare on Elm Street moment. Freddy is still manipulating and torturing little Jason deep in the monster's subconscious. I love some of the little

touches that Jason Craig filled in here – check out the flying papers, the little red and green bow tie on Mr. Krueger, and my favorite, the chalk equation on the black board. Jason + Necronomicon = happy Freddy. It was in the script, but seeing it on the actual chalk board looks even better than I imagined it. I think I had this teacher for a few classes back in school. It certainly would explain some of my grades...

JK: I love this scene. You guys just nailed it here. The bow tie is totally Elm Street 5. Bon appetite, bitch!

JC: Yea giving credit where credits due, Rick had this little Jason + Necronomicon = happy Freddy, and I thought, cool, but where's the wind blowing for no reason or the sheep walking through a scene for no reason (Thomas I see that twinkle again, stop it, we have company here) lol. In this case no sheep, but I did try to sprinkle in Freddy-isms here that were used to seeing in a Nightmare on Elm Street.

Panel 5

JAK: Um...when I wrote this scene it didn't seem quite this dirty...hahaha.

JC: Yea, this was a scene that jumped out at me, and I saw clear in my head, or in this case, Little Jason's head. (That didn't sound right either considering)

JK: This is the dirtiest director's commentary in recorded history.

Panel 6

JAK: I've got that very S-Mart name tag hanging from my computer monitor. Just one of the many goofy Evil Dead and Army of Darkness props I've got.

JC: Sigh...me too...

JK: I have the Italian Army of Darkness poster in my living room.

JPR: Another great page from script to final, I particularly like panels 4 and 5 where Freddy performs a crash course in brain surgery on poor widdle Jason.

Page 6 Panels 1-3

JAK: Meanwhile, back at S-Mart... Heh, this scene clues us in a little more on the Housewares boys and who they are. Jason really drives home the "Scooby Doo" angle of these kids. They're likeable smart-mouthed goofballs...but you know what happens to those characters in stories like this.

JC: I don't know James if you were making a Scooby Doo reference to the scene, or the kids hanging out in the 'mystery machine' smoking dope? (Shrugs) Doesn't matter I guess considering we all know both apply to Scooby Doo.

JAK: Um...Shaggy doesn't smoke dope in the van. He...um...cooks Scooby burgers, dude. Lol.

JK: "This aggression will not stand, man."



Panels 4-5

JAK: What is it with kids today? No respect for their elders or a healthy fear of Deadite possession.

JPR: "Cassa-numb-nuts" Ha!

Panel 6

JAK: Ash lets an important tidbit slip here. He's got the Necronomicon and has seen a possessed monster kill a bunch of kids. In his head this is clearly a Deadite he's dealing with. When you think about the ties to the Necronomicon in Friday the Thirteenth, Ash might not be that far off. Not exactly a Deadite, but from the same school of supernatural influence for sure.

Page 7

Panel 3

JAK: Damn...who gave the naked chick some clothes? I didn't ask for that! Heh.

Panels 4-5

JAK: I spy with my little eye... Is it just me or is Ash sporting the Rock's trademark eyebrow arch here? Hahaha.

JK: It DOESN'T MATTER what Ash is sporting! If you smell what I'm cooking.

Page 8

Panel 1

JAK: I would love to see this sequence on film. We would follow the stares and heads as they turn in sequence to the front of the store where Jason stands among the holiday discount shoppers. In my head I hear some cheesy elevator music version of a Christmas standard and the collective gasps of the shoppers as the Friday "Ch-ch-ch-ah-ah-ah" plays over it at the end.

JK: This scene was just an obvious one and one of the earliest ideas I had when I first set the story at Christmas. The idea was for it to sort of mirror the purpose of the rave slaughter in FvJ but in a much bigger, better way. It's such a natural environment for Ash action while also giving Jason a locale he's shockingly never been able to play in. It was really a missed opportunity in the film series if you think about it. To then be able to jab at Christmas consumerism on top of that, it just offers you a lot to play with creatively.

JPR: Great opening panel on this page, they need to take Jason down to the washing machines and dose him in some oxi-clean to get all that blood out. Boy looks a mite rough, wouldn't you say?



Panels 2-4

JAK: As the surreal sequence of Jason stalking through the department store continues, I imagined it being deathly quiet with just the shuffling of his putrefying body making noise until he comes up to the woman standing in his path. As this yuletide shopper is forced to face the fact that Jason is real and the

residents of the town can't just pretend all those killings never happened, the real fun begins. She mumbles his name three times in growing volume with the last utterance sounding more like a scream than a statement. And that, my friends...is when the killing starts.

JK: This was very effectively paced and presented.

Page 9 Panel 1

JAK: OK...I dare you to tell me you haven't imagined doing this to someone that really got on your nerves. Jason Craig got the inspiration from one of our extended talks about horror movies where I expounded upon the differences between the possessions in Evil Dead I & II...um...maybe I shouldn't have brought that up after all.

JC: "Clean Up in Aisle 9." This is was the page I really started to jump on full swing, and what better place to do it then in a scene were as James says, Jason Voorhees gets to "take out his holiday shopping frustrations."

Panel 2

JAK: This panel was originally going to be a two page splash to start the S-Mart "rave" killing (ala the cornfield rave in FvJ). I still see it having that kind of focus in a film version with a spin around camera angle catching Jason killing all the shoppers around him in a vicious circle of carnage. But alas, we just ran out of room here and had to condense it down to a ¾ splash. What can I say, Jeff just packed this story with cool stuff and we needed to show as much of it as possible.

JK: Your check is in the mail!

JAK: Oh, one more thing...I love how Jason still has the body of his first kill stuck on his left forearm as he slashes another shopper in two. That is classic.

JC: It was warm? Maybe its "therapeutic," Arthritis gets you down? How about 'Severed head on a hand' just 20 minutes a day to sooth those aches and pains.

JPR: How many bisections are we up to in this series? This one's a good one... "whoosh" indeed...

Page 10 Panel 1-2

JAK: And now the killing starts in earnest. When we were writing the script we were kicking around crazy ways to kill people in a department store. How could we use what was sitting around there to show some new classic F13 kills? I loved the idea of "cheese grating" an old man with a metal grocery cart. I had no idea it would look so much like ground beef. Nice job, Jason. I'm kinda hungry for hamburger now.

JC: I thought I needed help, James....although a hamburger, does sound good.

JPR: I think this may be the only time in recorded history someone has been killed in this fashion. What a way to go!

JK: Actually, sadly, my grandfather went the same way. Tragic.

Panels 3-4

JAK: Not quite as original, but just as much fun was the pegboard crucifixion. Maybe it's just me...but I think she gets "the point." Nice little plug there for Wildcats too. Product placement, baby, that's the name of the game! □

JC: Hey, I got to draw my office...lol. If anyone has seen my office, I hung peg board and have Toys hanging up 4 deep and 3 high the full length of it. Toys and Movies are my 2 vices....

JAK: Yeah...those are your "two vices," Jason. Hahaha!

JK: We're all whores. Look out for a sequence in issue six where Ash wears a Booster Gold t-shirt and Jason kills people with Snakes on a Plane and Shoot 'Em Up DVDs!

Page 11
Panels 1-3

JAK: This sequence is old school Army of Darkness for sure. Ash assesses the situation and bolts for the door. "Wait...you're the Chosen One..." Yeah, chosen to get the \$#@\$ outta here.

Panels 4-5

JAK: Oh, no...Reggie...don't wave the clipboard around...

JPR: I got an argyle sweater for Christmas... full on, not a sweater like Reggie here, but Argyle is making a come back, you heard it here!

JK: Argyle is the new black.

Page 12
Panels 1-2

JAK: Ouch! Even though Reginald was a weenie...he didn't deserve that. Why...it was almost like watching that duckweed former boss get his. I don't know why but I can't wipe the smile off my face right now.

JPR: ...and another bisection! This time, not a full body blow, but DAMN, heads up!

Panel 3

JAK: Man, Jason Craig does it again. Check out poor Reginald's head still stuck to the wall while the rest of his body slid away. That would be such an awesome visual in the movie.

JC: I think the bigger joke is that the Head looks to be on Sale. Half off?

JAK: Groan...damn...he beat me to that one.

Panels 5

JAK: Ash is back! And he brought his little friends – Mr. Chainsaw and Senior Boomstick. For the AOD / ED fans, this next sequence is exactly what we'd like to see. Ash brining the attitude and the whoop ass. At least for now...

JPR: Classic moment here as our man Ash gets his gear on and takes the fight back to the freaks! "Hail to the King, baby!"



Page 13
Panel 1-4

JAK: Perfect job on this part of the action. Ash dives in taking the fight to Jason with the saw. I love how Jason Craig intensifies the violence of the third panel by breaking the barriers with the image making you almost feel the vibration as Ash rips the diamond tipped blade into Jason Voorhees' rib cage. Groovy.

Panel 4

JAK: D'oh!

Page 14
Panels 1-4

JAK: I chuckled out loud at this sequence. Here's the thing – if you make the movie, can you see anyone but Bruce Campbell making this scene work? His brand of physical acting and rubbery comedy is a must for this to come off right. Jason totally nailed the look and feel of the scene – especially in the fourth panel when Ash is about to go for the ride.



JC: You can definitely see that look on Bruce Campbell's face...lol

Page 15
Panel 2

JAK: Man...face first through the break room wall and through the "Safety First" poster. That is so perfect for AOD. We need to have a Sam Rami angled shot as his face breaks through the plaster and the poster to give it the full effect.

Page 16
Panel 1

JAK: The script called for Caroline to stab Jason in the back with a large kitchen style knife with a tag still on it. Check out how she is holding the knife and the way it's illustrated. It looks a little bit like the bone knife from Evil Dead II. Nice touch.

Panels 4-5

JAK: "Clean up in aisle three." We didn't really have enough room to show the ending sequence the way we wanted to. It was meant to be a parallel to the beginning of the S-Mart rave where only the surreal holiday music is playing as he stomps out of the bloody carnage of the store with the Necronomicon tucked under his arm like his own little piece of shopping treasure. If it was done right on film, this could be a really nice shot. We'd follow Jason's bloody foot prints out the front of the store as we pan across the heaps of dead bodies.

JPR: Jason's got such good posture, juts look at that shiny spinal column in panel #4.

Page 17
Panel 2

JAK: The script called for Bree's death reveal to be a shattered neck with her head titling unnaturally to the side. Jason upped the ante here to a real classic F13 kill by having Jason Voorhees not only break her neck but actually pull her tongue and esophagus out in the old "necktie" style. Nasty...

JPR: The old "Colombian" necktie, nice!

Panel 3

JAK: Does this mean Ash is "head over heels" for Caroline? Groan...careful Ash, she's only about 19 or so...

JK: That's legal.

Panels 5-6

JAK: This scene sets up Freddy's return to the land of the living. Jason recovered the Necronomicon and brings it back to the cabin. I actually laughed out loud imagining how the scene would look on film. In trudges Jason, thunks the book down hard on the table open to read, and then turns Freddy's severed head so the open dead eyes can scan the pages. That's gold, people, pure gold. Look at the expression on Freddy's dead face. I love it!

Page 18
Panels 1-2

JAK: This scene is Jason Craig at his best. Inside Jason's subconscious Freddy starts to read the book. The posture and the theatrics of the sequence nail Robert Englund's portrayal of the nightmare monster. He has a certain style and panache that comes across clearly at certain points in any Nightmare film and this is it captured on paper.

JC: This was probably one of my favorite pages in the book. I really wanted to make it something you would see in the film.

JK: You guys totally nailed this one. My favorite single page of the series so far. I can't compliment Jason's work enough, because he's almost literally bringing Robert Englund to life on the page. It's just dead solid perfect and the book feels uniquely authentic as a result.

Panel 4

JAK: Welcome back, Freddy!

Page 19
Panels 1-3

JAK: I love how casually Freddy tries to worm out of his part of the bargain. He has the book and now he plans on getting started with his revenge. Jason doesn't factor into those plans...best just to let the shlub go hack up some teens and do his thing far away from Elm Street. But wait...seems Jason remembers the words of mama and wants his part of the deal.

JK: I cracked up at this. Freddy's turning into a bit of a mensch in his old age.



Panel 6

JAK: Hey...if you had a metal hand you'd put logs right on the fire too, you got that!?

Page 20

Panel 1

JAK: "Sam I Yam," gotta love Dr. Seuss meets Popeye. Nice one, Ash.

Panels 5-6

JAK: Sweet dreams, Ash...

Page 21

Panels 1-6

JAK: Jason Craig gets all the credit in the world here for bringing in some classic elements to this sequence. First he put Ash in a recliner at Bree's house to really make an obvious transition to the dream sequence. When Ash snaps "awake" in the rocker from the ED / AOD trilogy, you know right away he's in for some trouble. And what's this...his hand is back? But not for long...it's a new kind of "bad hand" for our boy this time.

Panels 2-5

JAK: One other note. I thought Jason did a great job of trying to capture the elasticity of Bruce Campbell's expressions in this sequence. If you've watched his master class on facial expressions, you know Bruce would sell this scene like Satan selling a glass of water in Hell.

JC: Visually I really wanted a break in the scene. I was pretty locked off on the angle I had, but I needed to show a big change. I knew the scene I was going pay homage to so I kind of went backwards. If on page 21, he's going to look like this, then page 20 needs to be different slightly. That way we go 'Ruh Roh Shaggy, something's wrong' when we see page 21 (since Scooby Doo is still in the air)

JPR: Great moment in panel 5 and the only way you'll ever see it is in this comic, how cool is that?

Page 22

Panel 1

JAK: Wow. What can I even say? I wanted this dream reveal to be dramatic and a great way to end the issue, but damn, Jason made this into the best of two combined franchises. Classic Ash and beautiful spectral Freddy make this one of the most dynamic pages of the entire series.

JK: I have to say this is almost shot for shot how I imagined this scene in the first place. Jason's sense for this is just incredible. And the echoes of Evil Dead 2 are spot on, per usual. This was another moment that seemed obvious from the get-go. Freddy and Ash are both so defined by their hands it seemed like this was something that just had to happen.

JAK: Most of the creators I've worked with know I'm an amateur original comic art collector. I like doing it because you really can't get a more unique collectible than having the original drawing from one of your favorite books, characters, or artists. In my case, I like to get one or two pieces from every project I work on and then have the artists personalize it. I have to tell you, for horror fans, this splash may very well be the most sought after original art piece from the entire book. What a phenomenal job!

JC: Thanks James for the kind words. I have to tell you, this page is close to being not one of my favorite pages in the book, but in the series. I have tried to really give all the franchised characters their own little nod in this miniseries. This was one of those shots where I really got to give a visual shout out to all the

ED/AOD fans and Nightmare on Elm Street Fans at the same time. (Jason now runs off to hide his original art pages..Lol)

JK: Kuhoric and I are breaking into Jason's house ASAP.

We'll see you in the New Year for the second half of Freddy vs. Jason vs. Ash!