

FREDDY vs. JASON vs. ASH #1 COMMENTARY



Participants:

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

Prepared by James Kuhoric

Welcome to the Freddy vs. Jason vs. Ash “directors’ commentary.” One of the best features on most new DVD releases is the directors’ commentary, where actors, producers, and directors can reflect on the film and add their own personal insight to the movie you are watching. There is no better way to really get the whole story of a movie than by hearing what the integral contributors to its creation have to say about the events and final takes that made it into the film. Some of the behind the scenes information is hilarious and some is tragic, but all of it is interesting. I remember listening to the Freddy vs. Jason commentary and hearing in Robert (Freddy Krueger) Englund’s own words what scenes he felt were the best and where they had to make changes to the production to accomplish certain shots. It was fascinating and really added to the overall movie experience. After viewing it, I felt closer to the movie than before...dare I say, like an insider.

It was this very feeling that led us to add a number of “extra features” to the Freddy vs. Jason vs. Ash comic book experience. All of us involved with FvJvA are total horror film nuts, and the idea of creating a commentary that combined our thoughts on the story and production seemed like something fans could really enjoy. We wanted to provide comic book fans the original theatrical experience down the smallest detail. We even went a step further and developed some “deleted scenes” for the series that expand upon sequences that had to be kept brief or shortened to fit the available editorial space. Now all the contributors – Jason Craig (artist), Thomas Mason (colorist), James Kuhoric (writer), Scott Peterson (executive editor), Nick Barrucci (editorial director), and Jeff Katz (Original FvJvA writer and Fox VP) – are giving us their personal thoughts about every aspect of the comic book and how it would have translated into movie format.

You’ll see all of these features down the road when our FvJvA collection comes out. We promise the package will be one of your favorites and can be racked right next to your favorite horror DVDs. For now, with the first FvJvA issue coming out in November, we wanted to give fans a little something extra to enjoy. 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.

Page 1

JAK: I think of Jason Craig as more than the artist of the book. He's like the director of our comic book movie. While he is working from the screenplay by Jeff Katz and the script by me, it really is his interpretation of the events and translation into the art we see that communicates the story. It's a well known fact that Jason is a Friday the Thirteenth nut. And in the opening sequence we really see this influence. You can easily imagine watching the establishing shots of the Crystal Lake development as an opening act for the movie version.

JR: Beautiful color work on this page, it really comes alive and works so well to open the issue.

TM: Jason has so much Friday the Thirteenth stuff in his office I'm waiting for him to open his own museum of horror!

JC: One day that museum will be open. Everyone should have a life size replica of Pamela Voorhees' head , actual blue sweater under it (with candles), Freddy Vs Jason Hockey Mask prop from film, Freddy's Metal glove , 'Real' fedora hat, and sweater.....don't get me started on all the stuff in that room. Every kid needs his play ground. Or just say what Jeff Katz says.....and call me a nerd.



JC: This page was the page I wanted to really set or sell the visual style of the book. Use wide screen shots like you're watching a movie, and there's no 'money shots' of action so to speak, but a lot of detail was put into the backgrounds. I want a visual scope, but more than that, these background are characters in the book. Me personally I love horror, but more than that, I want to direct one day, and so my whole life I've taken notes of what's right, and what's wrong with films. Horror Legend Tom Savini (Friday the 13th Pt 1) made a comment that I will probably butcher the quote on, but he said if you can first sell the realism of the shot, then it's that much more scarier and believable. Tom said on Friday the 13th PT 1 for example before you see the woman take the axe to the head in the shower room, have the axe head hit the light first, you will hear and see it's a real metal axe, then 'WHAP', it hits her head, and you don't see a plastic Axe, you see a real Axe buried in the woman's head. It was that thinking I carried throughout the books, make it real. I believe it was Friday the 13th Pt 6, Writer Director Tom McLoughlin first introduced the idea of Crystal Lake changing their name to Forest Green, I really tried hard to pay homage to the past films, all of them, but in this case I made a subtle change. Two reasons behind it, ten plus years has passed, so things update, and really besides that, I wanted to pay homage to the original Friday the 13th and bring back the Indian head to the design.

On a side note this was the beginning of me making Tom's life miserable in regards to the colors. Tom did an amazing Job, absolutely the best out there, and he really brought the book to life. I saw this 'film' in my head. I knew the color palette, effects, tone, all of it. I love the story idea Jeff Katz came up with, and James to me made one of the best scripts for a horror project that I had seen or read. James really understands horror. With that, the colors, are a part of the art work. Since I was looking at this as a film not a comic, I wasn't separating job titles. Tom and I were a team working hand in hand, and it was going to be our combined vision that would hopefully live up to the amazing writings of Katz and Kuhoric.

TM: Jason, you were making my life miserable long before this book...LOL! Jason truly is the visual mastermind behind all of this. We often fight like a married couple over some of the ideas he has, not because they are bad ideas... but because I will have no clue on how to do them. It all pays off in the end. We are all trying to push the envelope here and after what we've gone through the last year or so it's

great to finally be working with a group of people who communicate and listen to everyone's ideas and incorporate everyone's input... this truly is a dream project!

JC: Honey, Where did you leave the remote?!.....LOL

JAK: You guys are too much. LOL In all honesty – the success of this book as a fan pleaser goes to both of you. Everyone on the project has a passion for horror and these three mega franchises, but you two in particular (to an unhealthy degree) really made it something special with amazing art and cinematic colors. Hats off, boys – you done good.

Page 2-3



JAK: This opening two page spread is our flashback to the events of the Freddy vs. Jason movie. If you didn't see it, stop what you are doing and go watch it. It's easily the best mixing of two classic horror movie properties ever made. Simultaneously paying homage to both movie libraries, it truly provides a vision that is true to each franchise. The splash hits on a few of the high points of the movie. Jason clearly had fun drawing this sequence. His enthusiasm shows through in each inset panel framing the awesome Freddy and Jason melee in the middle.

JK: James, your check is in the mail...

TM: How many times have we heard that line... LOL!

JC: This page for me has one memory. The page was basically a series of screenshots. James had pretty much described the scene in the script. The only real part that was all me, was the middle shot which was showing Freddy for the first time. Freddy has a way of walking, gestures, etc, and it was that in mind that set this page as the beginning of trying to choreograph Freddy's moves. This page in particular was being worked on during the San Diego Comic-Con 2007. I crashed at the show with good friend and actor Zack Ward. Zack for you Freddy Vs Jason fans, will know Zack played Marks brother in the bath tub scene in Freddy Vs Jason. One day I was talking out to Zack how I wanted to capture Freddy presence on page.

Zack 'ah, that's easy, it's all in his dance moves or Fosse moves when he walks. Not really understanding, he told me how that on the set of Freddy Vs Jason, Robert Englund (Freddy Krueger) pulled him aside and went through all the walks and moves of Freddy since Zack had to immolate Freddy in a scene of possession. Freddy doesn't just walk like you or I, he walks almost in a Fred Astaire side step glide. A light bulb went off in my head. A couple days later I remember being in the WildStorm offices, actually editor extraordinaire Scott Peterson's office, acting out the page trying to see what the technical stance of Freddy would be. I wanted it to really look like these two horror legends going at it, and not a typical comic book action scene, these guys aren't super heroes. (Even though Freddy seemed to have learned Martial Arts in Freddy Vs Jason)

TM: The one thing for me on this 2 pager was it was cool to be able to use shots from Freddy vs. Jason in this book. We tried to capture the feel from those scenes and match them up color-wise so that the readers actually could see the film on paper. The only panel that didn't really work on is the panel where Freddy jumps out of the water. In the movie that scene is all red... well with there being a lot of reds on this spread that panel kinda got lost. Then I remembered the original trailer for FvJ that scene was all blue. So I went online and found the original trailer and matched this panel to the original so that we still kept true to the movie.

Page 4

JAK: Welcome back Will and Laurie. FvJ fans will recall that the only two people to survive the movie were Jason Ritter (Will) and Monica Keena (Laurie). It's a little known fact that both actors agreed to come back for this sequel back when it was being kicked around for production. Sad to say...their parts in this fright flick are kinda short. They really should blame it on themselves, I mean what kind of morons go back to Crystal Lake after they survived Freddy and Jason's rampage? Dumb-asses...

JK: Including Laurie and Will again in the opening was something we really wanted to do as a tip of the hat to the Nightmare and Friday tradition of killing off previous survivors. Both Monica Keena and Jason Ritter were excited to do it, even knowing they'd be getting slaughtered early on. I remember as a kid loving watching Adrienne King get it in Friday 2 or seeing Joey and Kincaide finally meet their maker in Nightmare 4. In fact I remember being angry as a fan when Lisa Wilcox as Alice survived both Nightmare 4 & 5. To me that was like breaking a classic tradition. If Nancy Thompson or Kristin Parker couldn't survive twice, Alice shouldn't either. The only character that gets a pass on this from me is Tommy Jarvis in the Friday series. He's cool in my book.

JAK: Jason and Thomas did an amazing job here with the reflections in the car windows and mirrors. The overlay of picture and color in the reflection is incredibly cinematic. It really captures the essence of the scene.

For you fans of DVD extras we have a special treat coming up in trade paperback. We're trying to put together some "deleted scenes" in some areas where we had to tweak the story or cut out parts for space constraints – you know, like a real movie. This scene was actually supposed to be our first peek at the usual mind-screw that Freddy lays on all his victims. Even squirreled away inside the black hole of Jason's rotted brain, he manages to influence Laurie's subconscious as she returns to Crystal Lake. The script called for Laurie to be reminded of Freddy Krueger as she viewed a scruffy repairman fixing a vandalized road sign during the long trip back to the site of FvJ. On the fifth panel we see the real world reflection of the worker and realize that Freddy's influence was just a mirage. New Line felt the reveal of Freddy's influence was a little too soon so the reflection we planned was changed. We're going to try to add the original deleted scene to our trade paper back extras and let me tell you – the original reflection Thomas put in the window looked so freakin' real, I was blown away when I saw it. More on that to come...

JC: Those reflections. Tom and I have this great collaborative way of working. He calls me with ideas he wants to do, or I call him and talk out the look that I want, and we figure out how to do it. So remembering some effects I had done in my past using overlays, Tom and I sat and figured out what would look cool, and how to do it.

I love the last panel too...Freddy's influence is seen even during the hunt down sequence. Screeeech! From the darkest corner of Jason's subconscious, Freddy reaches out to scratch his wicked claws across the framework of the building. Just a little reminder that he is still there...pulling the strings.

Page 9

JAK: The chase is on! As Laurie runs through the building, Jason grabs into some steel construction rods and uses one as a makeshift spear. FvJ fans will recognize these materials from the construction showdown between Freddy and Jason in the movie. Just another little nod to the movie continuity.

JC: Let me just add, like the construction scene detail on page 7(which is where you see the rebar for the first time, again setting the scene for things to come), I never thought much of drawing all this detail on the rebar until I realized how many times it was going to be seen.

TM: I hate rebar now...LOL!

Pages 10-11

JAK: Laurie's escape sequence is so true to the classic flight scenes in the F13 movies. You can't look at these widescreen panels without seeing the scene play out in your head. The hair on the back of my neck prickles just watching Laurie's frantic flight for life pit against the stark unrelenting advance of Jason. Jason (Craig) is totally inside Jason (Voorhees) head and nails his mannerisms with amazing accuracy.

The angles of the stair chase are really incredible. You can see the camera in our movie swinging into the different views as Jason advances into Laurie's last stand. These are "AOD" angled sequences. By that we basically tried to get into a "Sam Rami" state of mind and pick some of the most innovative angles to shoot from. No one can frame a scene like Sam and we tried in our own way to pay homage to that in several key sequences throughout the story.

The last panel with Laurie holding the "Skilsaw" is perfect – the close up of the battery powered circular saw and Jason in the foreground, sets our scene for the coming melee action.

SP: I believe you mean "Kilsaw."

JC: Yes, it was Kilsaw....actually that again was an intentional joke. I remember seeing a saw one time all beat up, and I thought that's what it said. With that said, I have always sighted Sam Raimi as one of my influences in comics. I will go so far as to say, and back what I said earlier, I have always studied film. I really began to take notice of Raimi and his placement of the camera. It always just seems to be the perfect place to capture the moment and yet really pull you into the moment. I really loved the chase of page 10, but I was really proud of page 11, capturing that moment of being chased, ending in the reveal, that we the readers see, which is the saw, in camera, and where we see the words 'Kilsaw'.



TM: Panel 4 is another one of those "shocked" panels we wanted to convey. Having her turn and look down the stairs and know Jason is coming up right behind her we felt it needed that extra something to convey the suspense of it all.

JK: One of the great things about the work that Jason and Thomas have done here is really accurately suggesting the feel of these franchises visually. Watching Laurie's frantic escape from Jason here, it looks, feels, and smells like a classic FRIDAY stalk scene. It's really impressive and I think that's directly related to the obvious love these guys have for these characters. This entire enterprise has been handled by people with such great respect for what's come before them and I'm very hopeful that that comes through on the page. We love this stuff. All of us. And bringing this three-way dance to life in this form is a dream come true at some level for everyone involved.

SP: I think you august gentlemen are missing the true genius of this scene: the fact that even as she takes a buzzsaw to her would-be killer, we can see her choice in lingerie. Brilliant!

TM: "ITSA NICE!" (in lame ass Borat voice...LOL!)

JC: Yes, I'm a guy, and a country boy at that. It's the little things in life that get me going. In all these books you will see me have the women wear or do things that they have done to me in the past to drive me nuts. That can be either how they dress, or the mannerisms and gestures they do.

Pages 12-13

JAK: Laurie's attack sequence is one of my favorite pages in the entire first issue. The sheer desperation and kinetic energy of the saw strikes are incredible. All the frustration, fear, and pain that built up at seeing her friends and lover inexorably killed before her eyes is let out in a raging torrent.

Looking out the window, Laurie sees the twisted corpse of Jason below. She's not taking any chances. Rushing down the stairs she intends to make sure Jason is dead. I'm thinking a power saw decapitation may be forthcoming...

Page 12 Panel 2

JR: Ah, the "vreen" effect! Working on the AOD books, we know it well (what with the chainsaw and all), nice to see it branch out and get some play on this page.

Page 14

JAK: Yikes! Poor Laurie...turns out her part in this epic is just a cameo. Meeting her at the door is Jason and his trademark machete. The original script called for an "upper cut" slash that leaves Laurie's face vertically split in two from chin to temple. Jason (Craig) tweaked it to be the reverse and with brilliant results. This is a Friday the 13th execution in true Voorhees style. I love the way we create a bigger scope to the sequence by breaking the panel barriers with Laurie's head and Jason's machete hand.

JC: Another one of those moments where if you did a Friday the 13th moment in a director's cut, you would have her drop to her knees and fall forward sliding down the machete still stuck in her head, for all your Friday the 13th pt 4 fans out there.

JR: Nice bit of the ultra-violence here in this shot.

Page 15

JAK: The killing is done (for now) and Jason moves off to do what he does (collect the bodies). From his little place inside Jason's mind, Freddy pops in to watch his handy work. Jason will help him again. And this time, he'll do more than take out his vengeance on the children of Elm Street...

JC: This was a page that was actually the beginning of my Joy and Tom's Nightmare. I really had this vision of two things. One, it's winter, I wanted to see all fresh wounds and blood steam. This again was something I remember from my past, I'm a country boy, I own a 4wd, I have guns, ATV's, I like to hunt, fish etc, and I remember field dressing a deer one winter, it had to have been 10 degrees outside, and I saw that the wound was steaming. When this page came up I thought, man, its winter, its cold, I want to see steam coming off the open wounds.

The second thing, and the real nightmare for Tom, I wanted to see a 'Blood Snow Cone' as we call it now. When blood hits snow, its hot, it soaks into the snow, it will steam, but it won't have this solid wet look, it will look like a snow cone. Tom began trying to figure out how to do this effect. It really helped that he had colored page 22 first, again, picking his battles of learning new effects, and he was able to take some of what he learned on that page, and apply it to this page, but we will talk about that, when we get to it.

TM: A nightmare doesn't even come close to what I felt about doing the effects on this page... I think I cried many tears over this one. This is one of those times where Jason's vision really comes to haunt me. Even having tackled page 22 and figuring out how to do certain effects, this one gave me the most trouble. How the hell are you supposed to make blood look like a damn snow-cone on a comic page? After many many attempts, I finally figured it out (and it's so simple now it makes me mad...LOL!) and I think it may be one of the most authentic effects in the book.

JC: I'm sorry, what did you say, it kinda sounded like its one of the most authentic effects in the book.....hrrmmm....and to think I still hear grief over that shot, and the steaming blood.....at least I know how you really feel dear....lol

JR: A lot of artists wouldn't work as hard on the details of the shoes and soles, but look at that extra mile our team went to on this page...

Pages 16-17

JAK: Welcome to the Super Mega Ultra S-Mart House Wares Department – slackers, jackasses, and nitwits, aisle three. This is our rag-tag crew of high school retail clerks: Jarvis, Raoul, Dave, and Caroline. Everyone knew these kids growing up – the pot head, the street hood, the nice guy, and the dreamer chick.

And of course...Reginald, the Assistant Night Manager. Oh yeah, you know this guy. If you ever worked retail or had a "company man" boss, then you know this fine fellow. I worked for this guy for a long time...now it's these guys turn. Can't take credit for the "nickels and dimes" speech that one is a real and believe it or not, I still hear it regularly from the brass at the day job. Only now, I can smile a little broader when I hear it knowing that I've shared it with a new batch of wage slaves. And who is this "hot shot Senior House Wares Domestic Engineer" from the Detroit store? I think you know, baby, I think you know...

JK: It's really fun seeing these teen characters – i.e., meat for the grinder – brought to life all these years later. Jarvis is absolutely a shout-out to Tommy Jarvis of Friday fame. Raoul was actually designed as a role for Kal Penn of Harold & Kumar fame, which New Line was developing at the time I wrote the treatment.

Page 18-19

JAK: Jason shuffles through the snow taking his bloody prizes back to the old Voorhees shack where he resides. Sitting on the altar with the severed head of his mother rests Freddy's own decapitated noggin (as last seen in the FvJ movie). Turning to the noise behind him Jason notices that the heads are missing... As Freddy's laughing rings in Jason's ear we pull back deep inside the mind of Jason. The last panel on the page really draws you into the reflection in Jason's good eye. We're about to get a nasty look at the cruelty of Freddy's twisted grasp over Jason.

TM: Of all the panels in this book I'd have to say that the last panel with Jason's eye is my favorite in the book.

JK: Once we severed Freddy's head in Freddy Vs. Jason it was inevitable that we'd find him a place of honor on the mantle next to Pamela Voorhees. It was just too obvious and too cool a visual to pass up. Seeing it realized like this is too cool for words.

JC: I really felt it an honor to get to draw the scene with Freddy and Pam Voorhees side by side on the mantle.

JC: Another moment I kind of looked at in a Raimi style was Laurie and Will being dragged to the cabin. The script made it sound like the two lovers making their final journey together. I chose the first shot of that page to not show Jason, but to just focus on Will and Laurie, and in a 'cute' way, show their blood in the snow almost making a heart around them. Lovers Lane?

JR: Another flawless pair of pages from script to finished art. Just a perfectly crafted scene here...

Pages 20-21

JAK: Appearing in an outlandish mockery of the original Camp Crystal Lake, Jason relives some of the events that led to his original demise. When he spies a cabin literally "a rockin'" he moves in to the lure of the kill. But he doesn't find teenaged counselors making out...AAhhh! My eyes bled the first time I saw the page with Freddy and Pamela Voorhees. Man...that's just wrong. Jason (Craig) called me when he was drawing the page to ask about the...er...placement and exposure of certain naughty bits. Talk about an uncomfortable conversation.

JK: I need a cigarette just talking about this.

JC: All I can say is that I can chalk this page up as a first and possibly the only time in comics you will see a scene like this. It both makes me proud and weirded out that I can pull a scene out of my head like Freddy having sex with an old dead woman.

TM: When we first got the script for issue 1 this was the scene that stuck out in my head... I loved it... it was crazy! Then i read that line by Freddy..." I'm riding you like a two dollar bus to screwville, Bitch!"... I almost died laughing on that one and i couldn't wait for Jason to draw it!

JC: Yes, a little unknown fact about me is that I have trouble reading because of a brain injury I sustained (among others), (Short story: I was in a near fatal car accident, and my frontal lobe sustained severe injuries and I was in a coma. My short term memory was effected and when I read, I have to make little 2-4 word description notes after 3-4 lines so it helps me remember what I read, so I read scripts in like 5 page increments.) I remember the first day, I had read the first few pages, and started laying them out, and Tom calls me in hysterics....."You gotta read this page....."

JAK: I love that it got that kind of reaction from you guys. If you can hear Freddy saying the dialogue – there is no bigger compliment you can give to a guy who works in licensed comics.

SP: This may very well be the least erotic sex scene ever. Kudos to all involved!

JR: This scene is wrong in every sense of the word.

JAK: I love Freddy blowing the Necronomicon smoke rings. The Book of the Dead is an essential part of our story. F13 fans will remember that the book makes an appearance in Jason Goes to Hell and is part of the both movie mythos. More on that later...

Page 22

As our first issue comes to a close, Ash makes his first appearance. He's on the way to his new assignment at the Super Mega Ultra S-Mart and has no idea what he's walking into. The Necronomicon has been manipulating Ash since his days at the old cabin and it is drawing him inexorably closer to the coming storm. As Ash's old jalopy pulls into a parking spot, a familiar hockey masked sentry watches and waits...

Coming up next issue – one chainsaw, one machete, one razor glove, and a whole lotta dead bodies! Hail to the king, baby!

JC: I was proud of this page, Tom and I battled on the colors of this page easily for 2 days which is waaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaay too long to spend on colors of a page. Tom has his way of coming up with these great ideas, and he shows me, and I love the idea but not the execution, which then drives Tom to do it again, and this was that page. You name it, the ice on the window, the snow on the ground, to the reflection in the window, this page had it all, and as I said earlier, he colored this page early in the game, and used it to conquer a lot of demons to come. I will say I'm particularly proud of one thing most people probably won't notice. In panel 2, you see a reflection of the S'Mart. In that reflection, if you look around the newspaper area in the scene, you will see the front doors to the S'Mart. If you look close you will actually see Ash's car in the reflection of the store doors. It's a reflection of a reflection.

TM: I think I'm gonna cry again! No really... I think it did help the rest of the book out by coloring this page as early as I did. It helped us set the visuals for the rest of the book. Like Jason said, the snow and ice, the reflection and the layered focus blur on the last panel really help us figure out the kinds of things we wanted to show effects-wise. It was definitely worth all the extra time we put into it! I hope everyone else likes it too!

