

FILMMAKERLIFE



Special Edition 2023

Vol. 25

MY PET MONSTER

INDIE FILM SPARKS 80S
NOSTALGIA WITH ICONIC
CHARACTER REVIVAL

2024

WHERE THE
DRAGONS SLEEP

JAMES M. STORM

PASSION FUELS SUCCESS

EMBRACE THE JOURNEY

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Editor's Note

In every filmmaker's journey, there are the dreamers, and then there are those who turn their dreams into a remarkable reality. This special edition of FilmmakerLife Magazine is dedicated to one such cinematic maverick, a master of his craft, and an unwavering storyteller – James M. Storm.



This issue delves into James' remarkable professional and personal career, the challenges he's overcome, and the extraordinary feats he's accomplished. We explore the fascinating world of indie filmmaking through his eyes, where authenticity, passion, and sheer dedication guide his every frame.

Prepare to be inspired, captivated, and driven by the incredible story of James Storm. This is a journey of dreams, passion, and the relentless pursuit of cinematic greatness.

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to you and everyone who has played a part in bringing this issue of FilmmakerLife Magazine to life. It is our privilege to share with you a celebration of great artists and storytellers, individuals who not only shape culture but also foster empowering social change, all while magnifying the brilliance of our communities as we move towards brighter futures.

In our belief, artists are the true champions of their own narratives. They embark on journeys of love and truth, fearlessly reclaiming their histories and painting them with vibrant hues. Their creative expressions transcend borders and languages, weaving a universal tapestry of human experiences. Together, we possess the power to make history. By amplifying the creative wonders of FilmmakerLife's filmmakers and their visionary projects, we forge connections with a global audience. Through their lens, we discover new cultural threads, both our own and those of our beloved community members. Films have the incredible ability to open doors to uncharted territories of the heart and mind.

The FilmmakerLife Magazine



We invite you to embark on this exhilarating journey with us. In doing so, you become an integral part of our shared history, a history of inspiration, creativity, and the indomitable spirit of FilmmakerLife. Let your light shine brightly, and embrace your unique voice and vision. It is through your own contributions and creativity that you, too, become a part of this extraordinary narrative. Welcome to The FilmmakerLife Magazine, where inspiration finds its perfect canvas in creativity. May this issue inspire and delight you, just as our filmmakers have delighted the world with their exceptional work.

CHILDHOOD DREAMS TO CINEMATIC MASTERY: A CONVERSATION WITH JAMES M. STORM

Welcome to this exclusive interview with the multi-award-winning filmmaker, James M. Storm. His journey in the world of cinema began at the astonishing age of six, and today, he stands as a renowned figure in the film industry. We'll delve into his remarkable professional and personal career, and explore the fascinating world of indie filmmaking.

James, can you share with us what inspired you to start making films at such a young age, and how did that initial passion evolve over the years?

Most people, as I've experienced, have gone through some form of self-discovery to arrive at who they are and what they do. Fortunately for me, I never had to go through this process. Commandeering the family video camera and recruiting the neighborhood kids into my backyard movies was the most natural thing in the world for me. I've always been a showman and I've always known exactly who I was and what I was on this earth to do – and that's to tell great stories. I can trace my inspiration back to an early age in north Idaho where I spent my early childhood. With not much to do on those cold winter nights, watching movies on HBO became a family ritual. It was only a matter of time until I started emulating my favorite films and directors because that was my reality.

Launching J.S. Co. PRODUCTIONS Digital Video Studios was a significant step in your career. Can you discuss the vision behind it and how it has contributed to your creative endeavors?

Following high school I already had an impressive portfolio of indie films and stage performances. Knowing that I had to start my life and a career, I was disheartened watching my fellow artists stressing about getting into a respectable film school, getting jobs, etc. They would pack everything up and head to LA only to end up waiting tables hoping that one day they would get to make a movie. I didn't want that fate for myself. I knew that the only way I was going to be able to keep making my films was to launch my own production company that could sustain me financially by day, and allow me the resources to make my films by night. So I officially launched my company in the summer of 1999 and I've never looked back.



James M. Storm



"Meet My Pet Monster" is a fan film that revives a classic '80s franchise. What made you decide to revisit this iconic character?

My Pet Monster was one of my favorite series when I was growing up. They had produced one season of a Saturday morning cartoon, a TV movie, and a very cool toy line. Then the entire franchise seemed to fade away with the changing of the decade. However even as a little kid I realized that the series had never reached its full potential. I always knew that given the chance I could tell the ultimate My Pet Monster story. Later, in the early 2000's, I started watching in horror as all of my favorite franchises from the 80's were getting remade and ruined by Hollywood executives that had no respect for the original materials. That's when I made my mind up to produce the ultimate My Pet Monster movie as an underground indie film. This was strictly a non-monetized project made by fans, for fans, and released for free for the public to enjoy.



"Meet My Pet Monster" follows the style of a classic '80s B monster movie. Can you tell us about the creative choices and techniques you employed to capture that nostalgic essence?

Authenticity was my key objective. I didn't want to try to reinvent the wheel on this one or reimagine it in any way. Growing up I remember vividly that what everyone really wanted to see was the original toy line come to life. So that's where I began - using the original vintage toy line as my main characters instead of some CGI abominations. After that it became obvious that since I was using live-action puppets and animatronics that this film needed to reflect the live in-camera techniques that were used during the 1980's as pioneered by the likes of Steven Spielberg, George Lucas, and especially Jim Henson. I really did my research on this one. From the comic books, to the animated series and the TV movie, you are going to find all of the original elements that made My Pet Monster great incorporated into a fresh new story. It was very important to me to tell a story that was respectful of the original established cannon.

Reviving a nearly forty year old character must have been a challenge. Once finished how was this film received by the public?

To my surprise, the My Pet Monster fan community is alive and well. Our humble indie film absolutely exploded among the fan communities. People that remember the original content have told me that my film is better than the original source material. New fans seem to really love this movie as well as they don't really need to know the history of the franchise to enjoy my movie. In the last year, we have since won dozens of awards and film festivals and the hype seems to just keep growing. Of course, there have been a few festival directors that have marginalized our film. Sometimes people can't help but judge a film by its cover and refuse to look deeper at the amount of work and intricate detail we put into our movie. That's always disappointing however when given the chance I'm confident the quality of this production will always speak for itself.



"Every moment on screen is sacred to me," you've said. Can you elaborate on this philosophy and how it guides your work as a filmmaker?

So many films these days have no respect for screen time. More often than not, modern films are full of too much useless dialog, wasted frames, and arbitrary time filler. As a kid, the first book on film I ever read was the classic Understanding Movies by Louis Giannetti. This book was a game changer for me. One of the aspects of this manual that I loved was that it was packed full of stills from classic films.



Even as a kid I remember thinking that I wanted to make films with such high artistic value that people might someday study my work frame by frame. Ever since it's been my mandate that a person could pluck a single frame from one of my movies and have a perfect example of light, color, and composition. I have too much respect for my audience to give them random filler. Filmmaking comes with a great responsibility as the highest level of art we have today. To me, every single frame in my films is sacred. I would never want to take that for granted, I insist that every single frame in my films is picture-perfect.

How do you see the future of indie filmmaking evolving in the coming years, and what role do you hope to play in its development?

Hollywood is a big fat mess these days. Major studios are creatively bankrupt and there seems to be some kind of new strike every other week. To make matters worse we are entering the brave new world of artificial intelligence in film. This will be a game changer and it's about to effect the world of entertainment in ways we haven't even imagined yet. In this environment I feel as if things are going to get much worse before they get better. However, there is hope. More and more, the independent filmmakers are stepping up to fill the creative gap. I predict we are about to see a cosmic shift that will favor this new generation. Mark my words, we will all find in the coming years that it will be the indie filmmakers that take the lead and will save us all. There is definitely a new indie revolution coming and I intend on being a major part of it.



James, what advice would you give to aspiring indie filmmakers who are just starting their journey in this highly competitive industry?

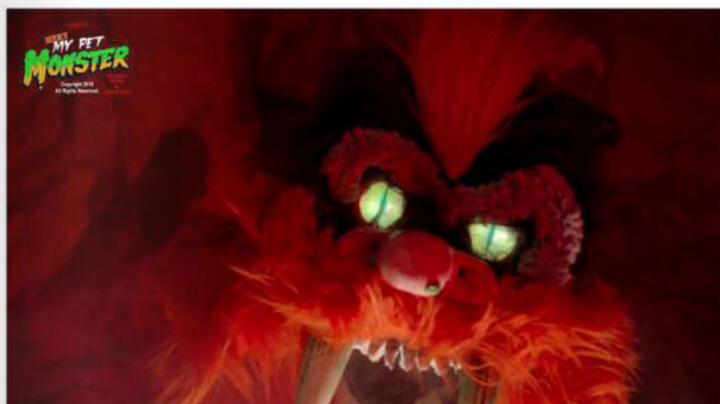
Just don't ever stop working on your projects. The universe does not reward the lazy, the unmotivated, or people that think they are rock stars without putting in the work. Like all great art, your work means nothing if you don't suffer for it. The world is full of haters, naysayers, and hypocrites. Don't listen to these people. If you have a vision then do whatever it takes to make that vision a reality. As long as you never give up, I promise you that cinematic enlightenment is right around the corner.



Tell us about your upcoming project, "WHERE THE DRAGONS SLEEP" (2024). What can audiences expect, and what inspired you to embark on this adventure thriller?

Where the Dragons Sleep is a fictional story based heavily on my crew's collective experience navigating the red tape of what we like to call dark Hollywood. Not only is this one of our most anticipated film projects to date, it's shaping up to be one of the darkest films we will ever produce. We are all going into this knowing that this film may be regarded as highly controversial. We are definitely going to rattle some cages and there may be some very real industry consequences once this film is released. However, I definitely have some things I want to say with this film and I feel as though we have finally earned our right to say them. The time is right to drop some truth bombs on Hollywood and for once I'm holding nothing back. You can follow the progress of our film by checking out the official website: WhereTheDragonsSleep.com

Your company website, JScompanyproductions.com, houses a vast body of work. Is there a particular project that you hold closest to your heart, and if so, what makes it special?



Back in 2001 I released my magnum opus, a film titled "BEYOND NARGIDIA". It was a two-hour sci-fi adventure set in a dystopian, post apocalyptic future world. I didn't know it at the time but this film would eventually take me four long years to complete. I suffered and sacrificed much during this time. A lot of people told me I would never finish it. I was deeply in love in that era and my girlfriend left me, claiming I was stalling because I knew I couldn't pull it off. Her mother would often ridicule me calling me a "hack" and a "wanna-be." Even worse, one of my best friends and film collaborators named Andy Campbell had un-

expectantly passed away during the postproduction of the film. These were devastating and soul crushing events for all of us to say the least. However, much to the dismay of my many haters and critics, I finished the film and it was a massive success. To this day my epic film Beyond Nargidia will always be a testament to my determination and my perseverance as a filmmaker in the face of severe heartbreak and tragedy. I'm very proud of that although it does raise the question of how much am I actually willing to sacrifice in order to achieve my dreams. The film may be a cinematic masterpiece but I'm not sure I will ever recover from the emotional damage I sustained in its creation. But that's Hollywood baby!

Thank you, James, for sharing your incredible journey and insights with us. Your dedication to the art of cinema is truly inspiring, and we can't wait to see what you have in store for the future.

Thank you FilmmakerLife Magazine for allowing me to participate in this fantastic interview. On behalf of my immortal crew, we love you too!

Connect with James M. Storm

