

# KOLOBOS

by Jay Kay

What would you do if you had the chance to be part of an experimental film project? For five strangers, including a woman named Kyra (Amy Weber), this is an opportunity to find a new focus in their lives. With little known about each other, they are locked inside a house where a nightmare of blood, murder, and madness unfolds. Dealing with delusions and psychosis, Kyra must survive an experiment that will test her sanity. Paying homage to the giallo legends and their cult-classic film works, first-time horror feature filmmakers Daniel Liatowitsch and Todd Ocvirk bring to life the blend of giallo, slasher, and psychological thriller in *Kolobos*. Made back in 1999, the film has had a long journey to its release 20 years later. *HorrorHound* had the chance to speak with the pair of filmmakers about the transition of Kyra from page to screen, production design, and a heavy giallo influence.

**HorrorHound:** *Kolobos* was your debut feature. What made this project the right one?

Daniel Liatowitsch: We were overjoyed to be able to co-direct something that we had co-written two years after graduating from film school. The first thing which made it the right one was that we had three weeks to come up with something for a highly motivated investor. Not to be too precious about this, but it was crunch time and we ran with it. With that being said, we wanted to make a horror film paying homage to



the greats of giallo. Having grown up on opposite ends of the world but both buried in our stacks of *Fangoria* and *Gorezone*, *Kolobos* was a dream come true. We really felt we had something fresh to contribute to the genre.

**HH:** *Kolobos* is a product of the 1970s and 1980s era horror films. The coloring, score, performances, tone of the film, look, and more. Can you talk about what films influenced *Kolobos* from that era? How much did giallo influence this film?

DL: The giallo influence affected the look and feel for *Kolobos* tremendously. Todd and I had bonded over our mutual admira-

tion for Italian horror – the works of Dario Argento, Mario Bava, Lucio Fulci, Ruggero Deodato, and Giorgio Soavi. Mainstream American horror was on a very different path at the time with movies like *Scream*, *Army of Darkness*, and *From Dusk Till Dawn* that were obviously great movies but took more of a meta approach to the genre, mixing elements of comedy and terror. It was, in many ways, a time of transition for horror after the heyday of the 1980s. We wanted to get back to what we loved about Dario Argento's work which had only rarely been attempted in American horror ... the everyday turning into a surreal, multi-colored nightmare, and a feeling of grime. We discussed the long push-ins, the color schemes, and the importance of practical effects. We loved Argento's music, and Bill Kidd created a perfect score for us.

**HH:** *Kolobos* blends several horror styles including haunted house. Can you talk about the film's production design and creating that haunted-house feel with the lighting, color, and camera work?

Todd Ocvirk: We were quite lucky to secure that house as our main location, which was owned by a friend of our investor, Ed Taylor. It already had a lot of personality with its retro decor. Once it locks down and traps our characters, we went full funhouse mode. The house had a lot of open spaces and long hallways, which we took advantage of with darkness and shadow. When the lights go out and come back on with all these garish colors, it gave us an opportunity to tap into Argento territory with reds, blues, and greens. It added to the surreal nature of Kyra's nightmares and hallucinations, which begin to take on a life of their own and give the film a sort of dream logic. The attic was shot in a different location, and our art department did a great job of collecting all kinds of weird and creepy knickknacks to fill the space. One of my favorite shots in the movie is when our group climbs the stairs to the attic with only a pulsing red light illuminating the stairwell, then Gary turns on a light bulb and he's suddenly in the foreground. The scene is a little more claustrophobic compared to [others], and I think is a good example of the overall mood and atmosphere we were going for. Not being a huge fan of MTV-style filmmaking at the time, our



W ... T ... F?



We hope you left room for dessert.

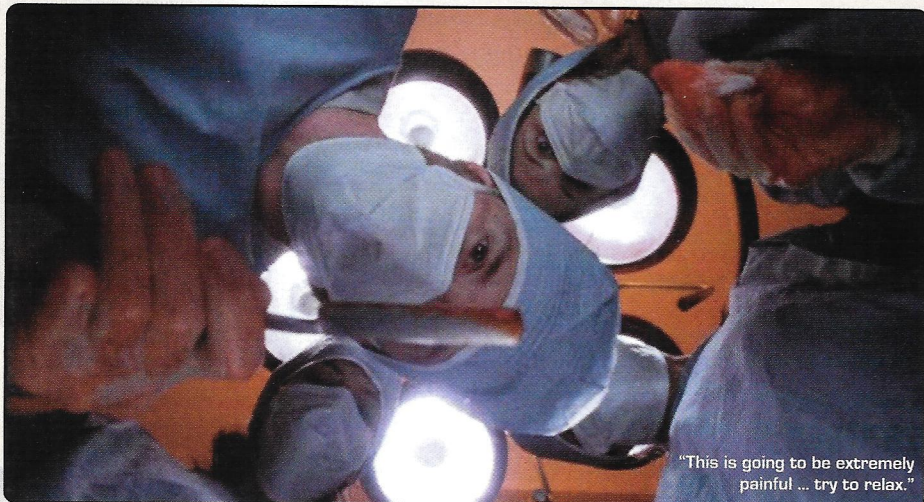
camera work was more fluid with slow dolly moves and tracking shots. In general, we wanted a '70s/'80s vibe, but also contemporary, at least for the late '90s.

**HH:** The kills in *Kolobos* are creative, practical, and at times, brutal. Can you talk about the development of the kills? Where did the idea for the buzz-saw blades come from?

DL: I'll always remember sitting in the kitchen together and trying to come up with the kills. We started running around the kitchen and acting out all the death scenes that had stayed with us from the great giallo films of the 1970s. For our producer, the eye poke from *Zombi 2*. The teeth crushed on the mantelpiece in *Profondo Rosso*. The final gut eating in *Anthropophagus*. The buzz-saw kill was originally supposed to be a pendulum that shoots out of the closet and cuts open Tina's guts before embedding in the ceiling but [that] wasn't practical on our budget. Our talented FX department suggested sawblades. The blades themselves were love at first sight. They looked cinematic,

scary, and could do the kind of damage that would really make it a dramatic, unexpected first kill. Promise LaMarco, who played Tina, also sold the kill incredibly well. It's literally a gut-wrenching death to watch.

TO: We're huge fans of practical FX, so that was very important to us. For one thing, CGI was not in our budget. Also, CGI at that time in our budget range was usually not very convincing. It gave us more of a reason to keep it old school. Since we weren't shying away from the gore, the quality of the prosthetics was the key. We can thank Rob Hall, Jason Collins, and Liz Villamarin for their great work. We wanted to be able to linger on some of the more gruesome shots, which I think is best accomplished with practical effects. These days, CGI is better, and you can get away with more. Preston Fisher, who designed the mechanical effects, also did a wonderful job bringing our traps to life. There's no way CGI buzz saws and mechanical claws would've been nearly as effective. I think the practical effects also keep the film more grounded. 🍷



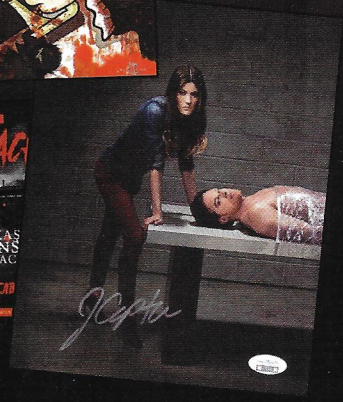
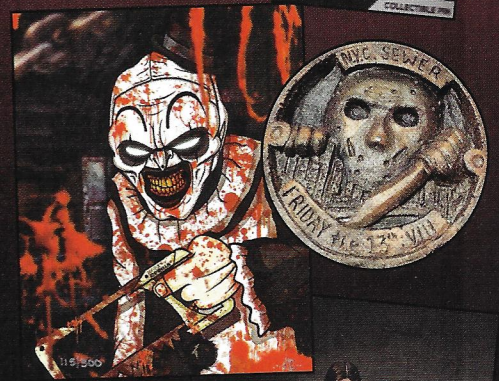
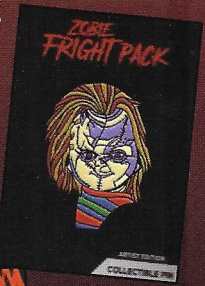
"This is going to be extremely painful ... try to relax."



ZOBIE

# FRIGHT PACK

Who doesn't love subscription mystery boxes? From Loot Crate to Box of Dread and everything in between, we have covered a number of these companies in prior issues of *HorrorHound Magazine*. There's one such company that we have not yet highlighted, a company that's celebrating its one-year anniversary in the industry: Zobie Fright Pack. A collector-friendly company, Zobie has a decent history working with other sub box companies, and are among the top mail-order autograph companies around. It just made sense that they would launch their own annual mystery box. *HorrorHound* got their hands on the one-year anniversary box, and it was quite a doozy. This particular one included a hand-crafted "Jason" medallion, a fan-pin of Chucky or Tiffany, as well as exclusive fan art of *Terrifier* and a Jennifer Carpenter [*Dexter*] autographed 8X10. Prior monthly boxes are quite comparable (auto, print, pin, prop/toy) and can be secured for \$40 by visiting [www.shop-zobie.com](http://www.shop-zobie.com). 🍷



**Movie News:** It was bound to happen. Paramount Pictures has finally announced that the long-gestating sequel to *World War Z* (to be directed by David Fincher) is officially dead.