

DVD Review: *My Breakfast with Blassie - Special Commemorative Edition*

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As the DVD begins, an old man with an unkempt beard gives a bizarre recitation of the FBI warning seen on all DVDs. It is later revealed in the extras to be Johnny Legend, who has been a rockabilly musician, a film producer, and a wrestling manager.

My Breakfast with Blassie spoofs Louie Malle's classic filmed-conversation *My Dinner with Andre*. Here, Andy Kaufman, still in a neck brace after getting piledriven by Jerry "King" Lawler during his first wrestling match against a man, sits for breakfast at a downtown Hollywood Sambo's with famed wrestler and self-proclaimed "King of Men" Freddie Blassie, who famously coined the term "pencil-neck geek." Over the course of about an hour, they cover a number of subjects as they discuss fame, international travels, breakfast choices, hygiene, and dealing with fans.

They also interact with a pregnant Thai waitress, who worked in the restaurant; a group of female autograph seekers, including a young woman named Lynn, who Kaufman is very interested in; and an oddball, played by Kaufman's off-screen cohort Bob Zmuda, who pulls things from his nose. They get slightly obnoxious arguing with the women, but it's more silly than sexist, and is something both men did in their wrestling act.

Kaufman is funny when he throws his name and resume around, pointing out he's Latka from *Taxi* to both impress and belittle people, another element taken from his wrestling persona. Blassie is consistently amusing, particularly his phrasing, and totally unpredictable throughout. He comes off so completely authentic at times I couldn't tell if he was in on what was taking place, which makes perfect sense considering there is a performance component to wrestling. He reveals that while on the circuit, he was shot at by the KKK, had acid thrown on him, and was friends with Elvis.

The video quality is poor. It was shot on 3/4" videotape in the early '80s when the format was relatively new and certainly shows its age.

There is quite a bit of material in the Bonus Features. "Lost Footage: Andy in the Raw" presents almost 50 minutes of recently discovered footage, mainly taken from the single shot of Andy in the restaurant. "Bonus Footage: Blassie Graffiti" (15:31) is awesome, showing classic footage of Blassie in action. He's hysterical and feisty in the newsreels, as he points out the local women are pigs that dress in potato sacks. The audience in that town must have been so enraged when they went to see him. Blassie is shown in the

ring during a quick fight against The Hangman, losing his title to Rikidozan, in a cage match, and later in life performing a live rendition of his novelty song “Pencil-Neck Geek,” which was written by Legend.

“Home Movies: Legendary Graffiti” (18:16) presents footage of Legend at different wrestling gigs and interviews. During “Lunch with Lautrec: The Making of *My Breakfast With Blassie*,” filmmakers Legend and Linda Lautrec, who appeared as an autograph seeker, tell the tale of the video’s creation and the difficulties associated with it a few weeks before “Man on the Moon” opens. It is for the devoted fan, as it is one single take that runs 34:27.

There is also “Film Premiere Footage” (7:39) shot at the Nuart Theatre in Los Angeles. Legendary ring announcer Jimmy Lennon introduces the film. Harold Ramis is seen in the lobby where Eggos are served to audience members. Andy shows up with a mohawk in what would be his final public appearance. He would die in less than a year.

My Breakfast with Blassie is more performance art than comedy, which was typical for Kaufman. This is sure to be enjoyed by his fans, but it might be a long hour for those who don’t get him. Either way, it is undeniably memorable.