





## ***After Midnight: Scream Park***



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*After Midnight* digs through the glut of new and old genre films arriving each week on DVD and Blu-ray, singling out the horror, action, smut, and cult items that stand out from the schlock.

In [an interview with the website \*Hacked In The Head\*](#), writer-director Cary Hill talked a little about the impetus for his debut feature *Scream Park*: “I hit upon the root of *Scream Park* at a Great America Amusement Park in October, while it was done up for Halloween. A friend of mine who was with me remarked that a real killer could totally slip in with a mask and be running around with these actors.” That, combined with access to the then-crumbling (since renovated) Conneaut Lake Park in Pennsylvania, was about all the inspiration Hill needed to make an old-fashioned slasher movie, about a pair of masked killers who stalk and slaughter an amusement park’s attractive young employees on the last night of the season. The kids get drunk, they screw around, and then they die in creative ways, all while scampering around the abandoned park in the dark of night.

*Scream Park* isn’t just a throwback to 1980s slashers. It’s part of a long tradition of ultra-low-budget horror movies that can also be viewed as twisted versions of used to be called “regional films”—small movies set in real locations, with mostly amateur casts. The advent of digital filmmaking and alternative distribution models has made these kinds of horror movies more common. They’re undeniably an acquired taste, best appreciated by

people who also like to watch other people's home movies. *Scream Park*, for example, has barely functional dialogue, and the acting is almost uniformly flat—even with cameos by *Hellraiser*'s Doug Bradley as the park's owner, and [Everyone Must Die!](#) director Steve Rudzinski as the manager.

But here's what really matters when it comes to *Scream Park*: the killer's disguises are creepy (one inspired by a medieval plague-doctor's mask, and the other a burlap sack cut to resemble a 1920s Halloween costume); the big plot twist is fairly clever (though spoiled by the description on the back of the DVD box); the kills are suitably splatter-y (with no apparent digital gore); and the setting is used effectively. There's a certain charm to *Scream Park* that makes its amateurishness easier to enjoy. It helps that Hill has a good sense of where to put the camera, and it helps that *Scream Park* doesn't take itself too seriously—but also doesn't try to be funny. It's rickety, quaint, and mildly thrilling, like an old wooden coaster.

Scream Park Official Trailer



0:00 / 1:33

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**Mike Mariano** · an hour ago

Ooh, *Ice Cream Park*!

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Funny how I wasn't a huge fan of slasher films when they were big, but give me a good throwback and I'm there.

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