

PIVOTAL ALLIANCE

Recently, we ran a review of the documentary *KISS Loves You*. We asked the film's director Jim Heneghan if he'd like to do an interview, he was game, and what you'll read below is the end result. Please check out the review, but most importantly check out the DVD *KISS Loves You*. It's good entertainment.

Jim what inspired you to film a KISS documentary? There have been so many fan-shot films before. Granted, none that have been officially distributed like *KISS Loves You*. Are you a card carrying member of the KISS Army?

I was never was a card carrying member of the KISS Army. I have a Tommy Bolin fan club card though. Seeing some Maysle Brother, Frederick Wiseman and early Erroll Morris films, got me thinking I could make a film. The nail in the coffin was hearing Francis Ford Coppola talk about these new small camcorders and the future of movies at the end of the documentary *Hearts of Darkness*. He said some unknown fat chick from Ohio was gonna make a movie and blow everybody away someday. I wanted to be the fat chick. Unfortunately the video cameras that were available when I started making *KISS Loves You* couldn't create film-like images, so I chose the 16mm format.

How did you get interested in film? Did you know early on that you wanted to work behind the camera?

Yeah I knew I wanted to work behind the camera as soon as I understood what work was. I visited the set of *Dark Shadows* when I was very young and remember the fake cobwebs, dry ice, and vampires. I thought if you gotta work, might as well be behind the camera. Beats working for a living.

Were you ever a musician?

I started playing bass when I was old enough to spit blood.

Would you like to set up the film for those that haven't seen it? I didn't give away too many details in the review on Pivotal Rage. I want the KISS fans past and present to really experience this documentary. It was quite entertaining.

I think *KISS Loves You* is quite entertaining, too. I was hoping for really entertaining, but I have settled for quite entertaining. It was my first one. My next one should be really entertaining. As for a set-up, I prefer to know nothing about a movie before I see it, so I appreciate that you tried not to give away too much.

You began filming this feature in 1994, but from what I can gather, the filming was completed about 2001. Is that correct? Was the intent to follow the members of the tribute bands, Bill Baker, and The KISS Family for that length of time?

Yeah, that's about right. The intent was to wrap it all up when it felt done. For me it

felt done around 1997-98 but I took longer.

I have question about Bill Baker. Just how much of a lunatic is this guy? I know he was an Ace Frehley *super fan*, but to do a complete about-face and give up on one of his passions like that . . . t's fickle. I can understand the hurt from Ace not calling him anymore, but relationships change. Bill was like a 10 year old kid who was crushed when he found out that his hero didn't have time for him. Ace was touring the planet! What was it like interviewing Bill? He seemed very needy.

Interviewing Bill was a pleasure. My jaw dropped when I saw all this KISS paraphernalia sitting in this otherwise unremarkable apartment complex in New Jersey. I think all collectors can relate to Bill's story. Bill went to great lengths and expense to get stuff. The fact that he got so close to Ace put him in a unique position and you heard his version. Bill Baker's story is much bigger than the one you see in *KISS Loves You*. Although it's not revealed on screen, Bill had an impressive Jimi Hendrix collection & tribute band before the KISS stuff, so what happens at the end of *KISS Loves You* did not shock me. What was a shock for me was how good he plays Hendrix music. And he does a great Joey Ramone too. He's a Rock 'n' Roll Zelig. Remember you just saw a movie, not the guy. I can't quantify Bill's lunacy, just concerned with my own lunatic quotient these days.

What happened to the plaque that The KISS Family gave Paul? At one point in the film it resurfaces . . . I know Mr. Ventrice appeared to be shell shocked. He didn't utter a single bad word, at least not in the footage that made the final cut. But you could feel the tension through the TV screen.

The plaque is now in a hermetically sealed CGC acid-free strong box awaiting a rocket ride . . .

Much like most of the KISS Army that hadn't ever seen KISS with the paint, I was thrilled when they did the Reunion Tour in 1996-97. At one point, they wore out their welcome. I personally liked the KISS-era from *Hot in the Shade to Revenge*. Were you much of a fan of the non-make-up era? And since throwing the paint back on, when did the band go wrong?

I'm probably a bit older than you so KISS hit me at the perfect age to fall for the whole package in the 70's. In the 80's they changed the line-up so the chemistry changed, music changed, the make-up came off and I discovered other music.

Which was a bigger mistake: *Psycho Circus* or the Ace and Peter replacements? The album tanked, but in defense of Eric Singer and Tommy Thayer, they are fantastic musicians.

Can't say. I tried listening to *Psycho Circus* and I skipped forward to the Ace tune and didn't even get through that one. The most recent album by KISS that I sincerely listened to, because I felt obligated as a fan, was probably *Unmasked*. The replacements are not a problem for me at this point. Just two more members to go. If KISS does anything new, I hope they exploit the tribute scene and franchise KISS like McDonald's did. KISS could license all the tribute bands, one for each territory, to do the KISS show. So for example, in Florida you might have one *Alive!* KISS band, one *Alive //* KISS band, etc. Then fans can go see KISS anytime they want and pick the era they want to see, like riding a time machine. But of course you need

consistency and quality to be successful, so KISS should sell all the costumes and props to the franchisees so that when you go to see an official KISS brand band perform, you know you will get a proper show with levitating drum riser, KISS brand blood and fire, authentic costumes, etc. Plus the musicians should have to pass tests. Not just fire-breathing. Remember, there is music to be played too! And KISS can live on and on and on . . . until the Burger King band comes along to stir things up.

If you had any of the original members of KISS see *KISS Loves You*, what would you want them to get out of it?

I made *KISS Loves You* for myself. One of my goals here was to make a movie that allowed viewers to ruminate. Depending on a multitude of factors, the movie should give different things to different viewers.

What projects do you have coming up next? Is there a chance for a second edition of *KISS Loves You* in store for us?

I have another film in development now. It won't be a music film. And yes, there is more footage from *KISS Loves You* that could be used for a second edition. I spent a day filming the late Sean Delaney that I never found a way to use, that might be interesting enough to stand on its own.

Thanks to Jim Heneghan for taking the time to answer some questions. For info on *KISS Loves You* and more of his upcoming projects, check out Jim's website: www.8thgradefilms.com/.

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