

"WHAT'S SO FAMOUS ABOUT BEING A STAR?"

YOUR NAME HERE

THE
REINACTORS

A DAVID J. MARKEY FILM

WE GOT POWER FILMS/AHiP PICTURES presents

"THE REINACTORS"

Original Music by ABBY TRAVIS CURT KIRKWOOD THE HAWKS

Edited by ANTONY BERRIOS Produced by KEVIN CHURCH & DAVID J. MARKEY

Director of Photography DAVID J. MARKEY Directed by DAVID J. MARKEY

WE GOT POWER FILMS

AHiP
PICTURES

THE REINACTORS

'*The Reinactors*' interweaves the disparate lives of film character impersonators and celebrity look-a-likes on Hollywood Boulevard over the span of a year. Recognizable characters and stars of movies are portrayed by anyone who chooses to buy the costume and brave the mean streets of Hollywood. These self-employed rouges forge a living one-dollar at a time, posing for photos with tourists in front of Grauman's Chinese Theater. These street characters have big dreams of breaking into the big-time as they struggle to make ends meet. Freddy Krueger works alongside Superman, Marilyn Monroe, Shrek, Batman, Borat and Lucy Ricardo. Competing Chewbacca's, Spiderman and Captain Jack Sparrow's vie for a spot on the limited real estate of The Walk Of Fame. The story unfolds through their colorful day-to-day lives and incredibly dramatic back-stories.

One-by-one, these reinactors find themselves at odds with the Hollywood they so want in on. These characters are literally right out of the movies, yet the unforeseen drama of the people underneath the make-up threatens to eclipse the bizarre array of Hollywood film icons they appropriate. We come to realize these people are born of the indigenous psychotropic nature of Hollywood itself. It's a surreal story, in fact it does not seem at all like a documentary. '*The Reinactors*' is somewhere in-between Martin Bell's '*Streetwise*' (a sublime 1980's document of street kids in Seattle), and the comedic improvised absurdity of Christopher Guest's mockumentary '*Waiting For Guffman*'. Director David Markey says, "'*The Reinactors*' plays like a great-depression era Hollywood classic retold for the new millennium. It's also a film about the cutthroat nature backstage and behind the scenes of show business. A profound statement on where we are at culturally in America at the moment. An 'American Idol' on crack, if you will."



David J. Markey

is a resilient and resourceful filmmaker who has sustained a truly independent career in the shadow of Hollywood and against the backdrop of corporate America for over two and a half decades. As a self-taught filmmaker and musician, Markey brings together underground music, experimental cinema and contemporary culture in a direct and

insightful way. The majority of his work has been self-funded, directed, produced and distributed. His body of work is also historically significant, representing a unique record of the punk scene in Southern California throughout the 80s and 90s. Markey has worked with Raymond Pettibon, Sonic Youth, Nirvana, Mudhoney, Redd Kross, The Ramones, Black Flag and the Meat Puppets to name a few.

His films include the acclaimed documentary "*1991: The Year Punk Broke*" (1992) and the Los Angeles Punk Super-8 cult classics "*The Slog Movie*" (1982) "*Desperate Teenage Lovedolls*" (1984), and the sequel "*Lovedolls Superstar*" (1986) made before he was practically of legal age. His unique take on pop culture and dark wit are present throughout his work. Markey's

indefatigable DIY aesthetic continues to drive him, as well as inspire a new generation of filmmakers, musicians and artists.



We Got Power Films Presents "The Reinactors"

Directed By: David J. Markey

Produced by: David J. Markey & Kevin Church

Original Music by: Devo, Abby Travis, Lee Ranaldo, Curt Kirkwood

Cinematography by: David J. Markey

Film Editing by: Antony Berrios

2nd Unit Director: Dan Clark

Sound Department: Kunal Rajan, Nathan Russell, Israel Segura

Editorial Department: Mark Fletcher, Tanner Roth, Brian Socko, Samantha Deghetto

Costume and Wardrobe Department: Tuck John Porter

Cast

Gerard Christian Zacher ... Himself
Christopher Dennis Himself
Michael A. Luce Himself
Tienna Marie Johns Herself
Maxwell Allen Himself
Melissa Weiss Himself
Adam Allee Himself
Mitchell Schonberner Himself
Juan R. Simmons Himself
Sandra Lee Allen Herself
Thomas Parsons Himself
Omar Budhoo Himself
Fred Young Himself
Sean Vezina Himself
Marty Porter Himself
Tuck John Porter Himself

Drevon Cooks Himself
Johnny 'Elvis' Foster Himself
Bonnie Finkenthal Dennis . Herself
Matthew Muhl Himself
David Billingsley Himself
Henry Avalos Himself
Kevin Barner Himself
David Born Himself Himself
Gary A. Downe Himself
Gil Gex Himself Himself
Arlene Parness Herself
Neil Moryson Himself
Thomas Rocheblau Himself
Damon Knight Himself
Ray Manzarek Himself



L.A. WOMAN
BY ANN MAGNUSON

AND THE WINNER IS...
THE REINACTORS!

It's awards season! And, so, like a tiny coke spoon squeezed between the behemoth mammaries of the Oscars and the Golden Globes, L.A. Woman presents her third annual Choice People Awards! Every year an anorexic blonde pushes a gold-plated wheelbarrow full of abstract Plexiglas shards onto the stage of the Kodak Theatre of our collective subconscious. Here we honor the ordinary citizens whose inspiring stories and can-do spirit help us forget the increasingly horrific freeway traffic and convince us to stay put for one more year.

This year our awards go to filmmaker David J. Markey and the entire cast of his documentary *The Reinactors*. Destined to blow the minds of film-festival-goers in 2008, *The Reinactors* features an itinerant group of misfits who dress up like Hollywood's beloved movie icons, cartoon characters and superheroes, and trawl for tips and that elusive big break outside the legendary Grauman's Chinese Theatre on Hollywood Boulevard.

Tourists delight in having their photo taken with the likes of Marilyn, Elvis, James Dean and Chewbacca—and these icons, in turn, depend on those tourists for their sustenance. But look closer and that costume on Chewie looks rather flea-bitten. Don't look any closer at this Marilyn, who hasn't been ready for her close-up for a good decade (or two). And say the wrong thing to Batman, who admits to anger management issues, and you'll probably get kneed in the groin.

Most of us do our best to avoid the insanely congested Hollywood and Highland area. But Markey, whose previous films include *Lovedolls Superstar* (featuring L.A. band Redd Kross) and the documentary *1991: The Year Punk Broke* (which followed the seminal 1991 tour of Sonic Youth and Nirvana), dove deep into the subterranean nooks and crannies of this bizarre Hollywood subculture and surfaced with cinematic gold.

"I was first flagged to the Hollywood Boulevard characters by a local news story: 'Freddy Krueger Stabs Man in Front of Grauman's Chinese Theatre,'" says Markey. "I thought, 'Wow, film characters are coming to life and stabbing people!' I was probably subconsciously aware of them before that, because I would see a few of them while driving by. I was curious to see what these people in costume were up to. I just showed up there one day with a camera and started shooting. It took a while to win their trust."

Markey's patience paid off with a film that has it all: pathos, bathos and, yes, even eros (Captain Jack Sparrow finds true love with an ex-porn star goth chick on the Boulevard). His camera records but never judges the everyday life (and many misadventures) of these wayward "reinactors." The result, a postmodern *Day of the Locust*, is a bittersweet insider's look at a tribe of desperate dreamers whose dreams are routinely chewed up, spit out and recycled for another day of make-believe.

Yes, they are deluded, but no more deluded than many of us who wash up on these shores. Delusion is a necessary component of being an actor, a crucial ingredient to making it in show business. Everyone who has ever made it here was at one time or another delusional. Their parents told them so. It is only success—sweet, glossy, red-carpet, second-home-on-Lake-Como success—that makes the delusion acceptable.

But remove the success and sprinkle the dream with Loser Dust and you have all the ingredients for high tragedy... or cruel comedy. If you watch *Jimmy Kimmel Live*, you may have already seen some of the "reinactors"—particularly Superman, who serves as a sort of self-appointed mayor to the community, a kind of Pufnstuf who, it turns out, loves to puff the stuff.

"Kimmel used to have them on his show regularly," says Markey, "until things started getting weird with the characters. He used them like clowns. The Kimmel producers used Christopher 'Superman' Dennis as a liaison and, much as the characters did not like him, they were forced into kissing his ass so they could get on TV."

Markey never exploits his cast or uses their stories to provide us with feelings of smug superiority. There are a lot of laughs, but by letting the characters tell their own stories, Markey gives them—and his film—surprising depth.

"Their world is even more lurid than what appears in the film," concedes Markey. "I was privy to even darker info that I chose to present sparingly. I felt I had to draw a line somewhere. It was not like I was going to outright befriend them—although I did that cinematically, I did not care to do it in real life. I did my best to treat them with respect, just as I would with any other working actors in this town."

Markey's respect shows. The characters open up in ways that Oscar-winning actors rarely do. My jaw dropped on the floor many times over as I watched these masked men and women reveal intimate details about themselves. Amazed at their brutal histories and in awe of their (at times maddening) resilience, I laughed but I also cried. The second time I watched the film, I was awash in a deep abiding sense of gratitude that a thousand Thanksgivings could not provide.

The film ends with footage of the teenage German street band The Hawks, also locally famous for working the Boulevard. Composed of two lanky, longhaired guitarist brothers and their prepubescent sister on keyboards, their born-innocent rendition of the Eagles' hit "Hotel California" could not have been more appropriate.

The final scene involves a bunch of teamsters wheeling around 15-foot replicas of the Oscar (in anticipation of the Academy Award ceremony to be held just around the corner). As the "reinactors" aimlessly walk their beat, the Eagles' lyric "We are all just prisoners here/of our own device" prompts me to wonder what Nathanael West would make of all this.

"I thought of *Day of the Locust* a lot while filming," says Markey. "I had its apocalyptic ending playing in my mind more than a few times. This is the same dream that Hollywood has been generating through the last century—stardom. Or perhaps it's the loose nuts that feel the need to gravitate towards something larger than themselves. I know I felt the same way growing up here as a kid. It's just more toxic now in the age of *American Idol*, because people believe it even more. And there is no stopping them from coming here."

Or leaving. ★

For more information, go to www.thereinactors.com.

THE REINACTORS (2008)

This documentary is about those people you have probably seen many times in documentaries about Hollywood and make their living impersonating Hollywood stars. Some consider themselves stars on the verge of being discovered, others just take pictures with tourists to make ends meet. This documentary by American David J. Markey does not comment from the sideline, but simply lets the impersonators tell their story. Markey (1963) is a self-taught musician and independent director who directed music videos for Sonic Youth, Nirvana and The Ramones. *The Reinactors* was mainly shot around Hollywood Blvd.

This world premiere is pretty hilarious especially when you come to the conclusion these wannabe actors make complete fools of themselves. Most them have the sincere believe one day are gonna be big as actors. An unintended coming out scene of a Freddy Krueger impersonator is the highlight of this freak show. Then there is a Christopher Reeves look-alike who is nothing but a racist homophobe pig who wants to control and rule the Hollywood Blvd. area. Some of these people need to be protected against themselves even though Markey makes very clear that if they want their fifteen minutes of fame they shall have it.



Arjan Welles on January 25th, 2008
<http://www.chokingonpopcorn.com>



The Reinactors follows the lives of a group of Hollywood Boulevard reinactors—those who impersonate well-known movie industry characters on the street, posing for photos and entertaining tourists—for a span of two years.

Most of them are homeless or living in mobile homes; some of them are part-time actors in Hollywood or just aspiring to it, but they are all stars in their minds.

At first, the main thread of the film is one, which forms the basis for most reality TV shows: the delusional aspirations of normal people, and the subsequent exploitation of them. The problem with this format is that some of the characters refuse to get out of character and stay unknowable throughout the film. On the other hand, the beauty of this approach is how it does show, in great detail, the personalities and lives of some of the more accessible people. This way, you get both a broad and a detailed view. The broad view is ironic, showing the different characters' delusions and contrasting opinions, their squabbles and competitions, their insanity. But when the film focuses in on a few of the subjects, their difficulties, feelings, and backgrounds—depicted previously as caricatures—move to the forefront.

Of course, being a Dave Markey film, it is absolutely hilarious. The characters jump from revealing their traumatic lives to complexes about their sexuality; from tales of drug addiction and criminal pasts to discussions of how much they hate other impersonators' costumes; from their careers as porn stars to details of their endless hopes and ambitions. The absurdity is so extreme it nearly defies belief, and this disbelief was apparent in the audience reaction.

Even at a lazy early morning showing, everyone was laughing, gasping, or staring in horror. At the question and answer session afterwards nearly all questions were about the subjects: where they were now, what they thought, what had happened to them. Obviously there was a high level of involvement with the reinactors in the making of this film, which is not something you would expect from the bizarre subject matter.



Rotterdam Film Festival

JASON SANDERS

A different version of the American home could be found in David Markey's documentary *The Reinactors*, which follows several days in the lives of Superman, Marilyn Monroe, Captain Jack Sparrow, and Chucky... or at least those who pretend to be them on Hollywood's Sunset Strip. Whether getting hassled by the police or battling their own various demons (drug use, eating disorders, delusions of grandeur, etc: just like real movie stars, in fact), these "reinactors" possess lives every bit as fascinating as the costumed heroes and heroines they pretend to be. Following his troubled, at times troubling, subjects for more than a year, Markey fashions a thoughtful portrait of life at the waking end of the Hollywood dream one far more recognizable than any studio creation.

The mixture of emotional involvement and extreme ludicrousness in *The Reinactors* is almost impossible to either describe or summarize. It's like one of those 60s pulp novel covers stating that the stories inside are Incredible! Impossible! Larger Than Life! Only in this case, that's really what it is, just like the people in it.

The Gazette DIGITAL

This year's RIDM lineup officially kicks off Thursday night with a group of illegal immigrants trying to get from Calais to London. The festival closes Nov. 23 with a road movie about a retiring rodeo star. In between, there's a heartbreaking family reunion, a superhero with anger problems, Native American DJs, a grieving father who turns to magic and Montreal's most notorious street artist - among many others. Here are the films we've managed to see so far (ratings are out of five):



The Reinactors (USA, 2008: David J. Markey) 4.5 stars

You mustn't miss this offbeat look at the strange citizens of Hollywood Blvd. who dress up as well-known entertainment figures to pose for pictures with tourists for handouts. There's Batman with an anger problem, a gentle Freddie Krueger who's riddled with insecurities, a long-in-the-tooth Marilyn Monroe who's just plain cuckoo and plenty of other weirdo clones, all under the de facto leadership of a pot-smoking Superman who's a ringer for Christopher Reeve - minus a tooth or two. Some of these characters are endearing, some are kind of scary, but all are genuinely interesting. Director Markey's wonderful, compassionate study of these oddballs makes us cheer for their small triumphs, including an actual wedding, and keeps us interested in their daily soap operas and feuds. (In English; Nov. 15 at 7 p.m. - with an RIDM-organized costume contest - and Nov. 17 at 8:45 p.m. at Cinéma du Parc.) BP

© The Gazette (Montreal) 2008