



Zombies get down in local filmmaker's 'Disco of the Dead'

By EARL WATT

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When Liberal's Joel Trujillo decided to add another chapter to his series of zombie films, he opted for a "twe-quel," a movie in between two other zombie releases.

The result was a 1970's themed film that includes references to Jimmy Carter and bell bottoms in the movie, "Disco of the Dead."

Trujillo was ahead of the zombie curve, starting his movie-making in 2007 before the smash-hit television series, "The Walking Dead" and the box-office thriller, "World War Z."

"It all goes back 20 years," Trujillo said. "My dad borrowed a cam corder, and I put on some make-up and started acting like a zombie. I knew then I wanted to be a director."

Trujillo was greatly influenced by the work of George A. Romero with his thriller, “Night of the Living Dead,” and Trujillo’s films have taken that concept with the idea of showing what was happening in Southwest Kansas during that same time.

Since Roer’s film was built around 1968, Trujillo started his series at the same time with “Dusk of the Living Dead in 2008. He produced two more spin-offs, jumping into the 1980s, but then putting together the newest installment with the “twe-quel” he just produced.

While Trujillo does not believe there will every truly be a zombie apocalypse, he credits the fascination for the undead with real-world events.

“With terrorism, biochemical warfare — look what happened in Syria. All those people died. There is a fear of not knowing if something like that could happen. I don’t think that. It’s like believing in Dracula, it’s just something that has always been there. I think it appeals to the older generation, the grandparents. Zombies have been around for a long time, and George Romero blew it out of the charts. It was something different during the Vietnam war. You had all this love and peace and boom, now you have a problem in the U.S. with zombies.”

Trujillo began writing the script in April after he and his wife lost their daughter in childbirth.

“I needed something to get my mind off the loss of my daughter,” he said. “I had to keep my mind off that, and I was listening to KC and the Sunshine Band, and when they sang, “I’m Your Boogie Man,” I thought disco era, and I started calling the cast to reprise their roles.

Newer technology, including HD equipment, has allowed Trujillo to enhance his films.

“Disco of the Dead” will be shown at the Southgate 6 at 2 p.m. Saturday as a matinee.

Following the film, DVDs will be available for \$10 each in the lobby, and the cast will be on hand to sign autographs.

