



Death in the shower. A staple of slash films. Above photo from one of the never-ending Friday the 13th series.



Jason is fended off by another

# Dissecting the



Slash films produce endless bodies that refuse to die. Above body from Return of the Living Dead.

by Gilbert Bouchard

Slash movies are probably the least publicized victims of the sexual revolution.

Slash films, like *Friday the 13th* (and all the offspring of), paint a portrait of America embracing the wild hedonism of the 70's, while stubbornly holding on to the prudish Judeo-Christian sex-associated guilts left over from the 50's.

This sexual schizophrenia began with the granddaddy of all slash film, *Psycho*. Norman Bates (played by Tony Perkins) was notorious in that movie, not only for his cold-blooded murders, but more so for his hot-blooded lust.

The schizophrenia in *Psycho* was neat and clean. Norman Bates' persona was divided into two personalities: Norman, the lusty son, and the mother half. Norman's lusty half wants Janet Leigh's body, and he proceeds to peep into her room as she undresses. Then the mother half of Norman's persona kills Leigh's character violently in the shower. We were seeing a clash of values personified by the character of Bates.

One half of him lusts while the other half purges (symbolically enough in the shower: murder as a cleansing act) Bates of sexual temptation.

*Psycho* gives us the first murderer as sexual redeemer. You might even say that Bates' murder of Leigh was the last ditch effort of a prudish America to stifle the evil act of fornication.

Judeo-Christian society has always put a high value on self-denial and restraint. The philosophy of holding back and controlling of the baser emotions, particularly lust, and the emphasis on spiritual growth meet head to head with a society in the throes of a sexual revolution advocating a philosophy of "If it feels good do it". Result: an America unable and unwilling to practice sexual restraint, yet unable to purge itself of the guilt that maybe it should.

By the time that the swinging 70's were well into force, and the modern slash movie swelled in popularity, the only remnant of the old Judeo-Christian guilt was an almost sub-conscious nagging at the backs of America's collective mind. This background and subconscious nagging emerged in the form of Jason (the monster in *Friday the 13th*) and all his ilk.

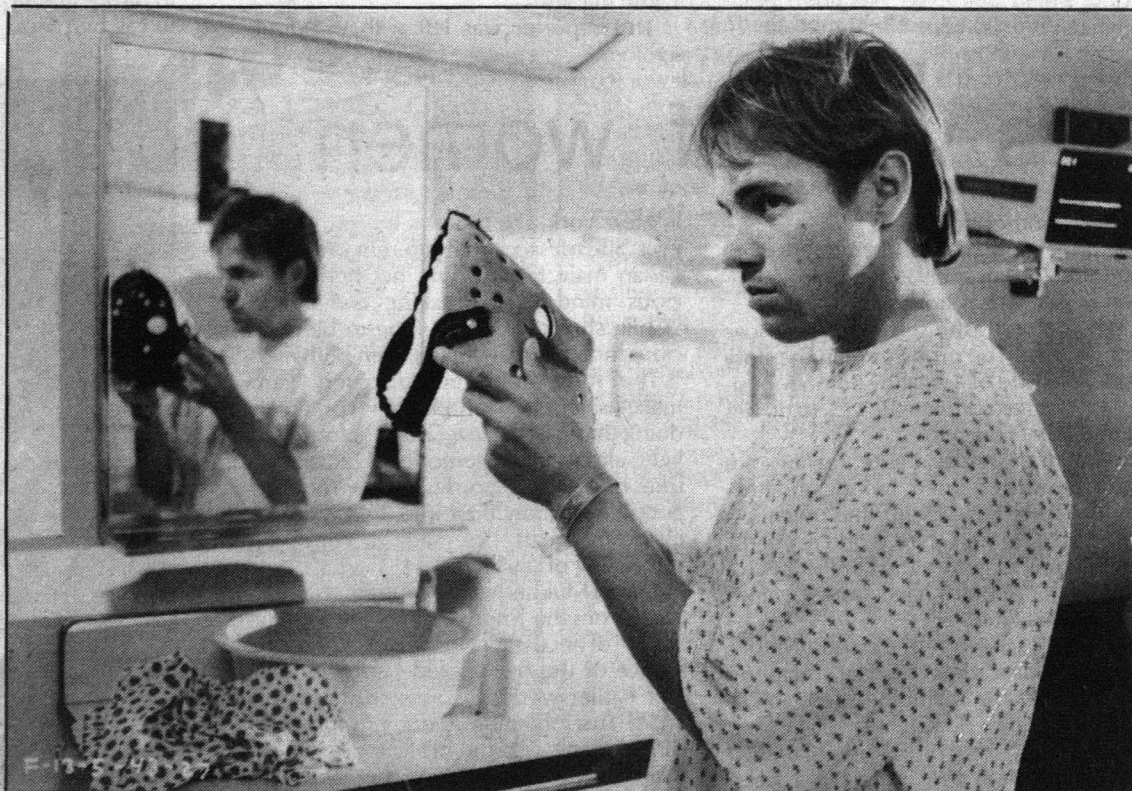
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The birth of Jason? John Shepherd contemplates a whole new career in Friday the 13th - A New Beginning.

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