

MTV's New Series Gives Viewers Reason to 'Scream'

By Paula Tudor

I have always considered myself to be somewhat of a film buff; but I know very little about the horror genre because I have never been much of a fan. Growing up I was never the girl who excitedly participated in slasher movie marathons at slumber parties. My imagination ran too wild and my nightmares were too vivid. Not much has changed. Even as an adult I tend to steer away from the frightful. However, when the Scream franchise of films began in the 90s I found myself enjoying a scary movie for the first time ever.

Perhaps it was because I was older, but Scream presented something different for me. The violence and gore was almost secondary to the plot, instead of the other way around. Scream had more depth, more meaning behind the madness. However, it probably should have come to an end after the second or third film. It also probably should not have spurred a tv series, but it has, almost 20 years since the premiere of the original Scream.

I binge-watched the first three episodes of MTV's serial version of Scream and I really was not expecting much from it. The idea that a series could be created from a popular slasher movie franchise just did not seem possible, even with an all new premise and cast of characters. The pilot episode was well done though and scarier than I would have thought; but by episode three I was completely disillusioned, if not downright bored. However, I still think this series has potential. Airing during the summer, I am sure it is a popular viewing choice for young teens; but if the show is to find long-term success there are numerous kinks that need to be worked out.

Even though most dramas are approximately one hour long, I was surprised to find that this particular series was. After sitting through an hour of Scream, things feel somewhat resolved and void of any anticipation for upcoming episodes. Moreover, two episodes or more feels like a full-length movie. For that reason it may not be the best series to binge-watch. Nevertheless, I think it would have been better to package this series in thirty-minute segments to maximize viewer interest from week to week. A full hour allows for too much time to drag things out and I think people will tire of that fairly quickly.

Another major problem I have with this series is that it is not clear what prompts the sudden murder spree. Is it the filming and online posting of a private moment that ignites the killer's rage or is it the resurfacing of a decades old murder mystery? So far, at least, the answer is not clear.

The new Scream takes advantage of all the technology that didn't quite exist when the original Scream premiered. Teens make full use of web cams, video chatting, and texting. One even communicates with the killer through twitter. This took me out of

the story, because while all of that technology would make it easier for the killer to communicate it should also make it easier to find said killer. Of course no one thought to call a tech expert to help track him down.

Another update is the use of a different mask for the killer. I actually think this was a smart move since the original mask has been featured in so many parodies, not to mention Halloween costumes. As a result it has lost most of its original creepiness.

Scream is not a must-see series, particularly for adults. I suspect it will mostly resonate with young viewers who were not around for the premiere of the original Scream. I do have to wonder though how long a show like this can hold their attention. I think that will largely depend on how attached they become to the characters, who unfortunately are mostly unlikeable.

Scream airs Tuesday nights at 10/9c on MTV.

Paula Tudor is a freelance writer, and a distinguished blogger/online correspondent, with more than two thousand followers on twitter. The bulk of her work can be found at <http://www.paulas-soapbox.blogspot.com>