



THE KILLER OF GRASSY RIDGE

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SYNOPSIS

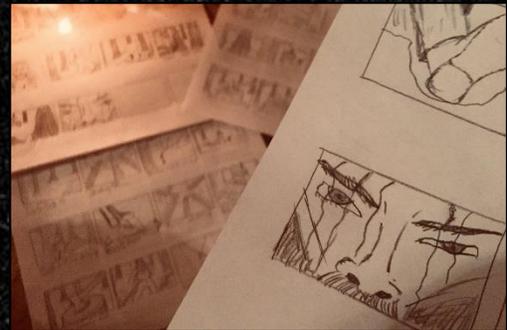
Deep in the Shenandoah backcountry, a killer stalks for prey.

THE FILM

A horror short produced in late 2019, *The Killer of Grassy Ridge* was purely a personal challenge for first-time director Johnny K. His goal was to write, cast, shoot, and edit a completed film in two months, on a micro-budget, using only equipment he had on-hand. With the first storyboard drawn November 3, 2019 and post-production completed January 4, 2020, *Killer* was produced in just 62 days.

I became inspired by filmmakers who were making incredible films using minimal gear. They were out telling amazing stories while I was sitting on the couch complaining that my gear wasn't good enough.

I'd been making excuses for long enough, and after being inspired by the 48-Hour Film Project, I made it a point to prove myself wrong. The Killer of Grassy Ridge is the result, and I couldn't be more proud of how it turned out, and humbled by how well the film is now doing in festivals. My hope is that Killer will inspire other amateur filmmakers the same way I was inspired.



As a personal challenge, *Killer* was shot on an entry-level Digital Single-Lens Reflex (DSLR) camera with minimal equipment, using only natural light sources (sunlight and firelight). The budget, or lack thereof, dictated a horror film. Johnny knew he'd come away from the production with some workable footage and fun shots to edit, but the solid performances of the actors changed the tone of the film.

*When I first saw the rough-cut under that creepy music, suddenly there was this dark tension that I could really work with, something that no storyboard could have predicted. The actors absolutely brought their A-game which cranked everything up a notch, so I tweaked the film during the edit to focus more on their performances and reactions; much more than the straight-forward "slasher flick" that I'd originally envisioned. They say there's the movie you write, the movie you shoot, and the movie you edit, and I had absolutely no idea what that meant until I made *Killer*.*



Editing and sound-design were completed on January 4, 2020, just 62 days from the film's conception.

The Killer of Grassy Ridge has won awards for Best U.S. Short Film, Best Horror, Best Thriller, Best Debut Short Film, Best Director, and more, and is an official selection for several other festivals and events worldwide.



THE DIRECTOR

A native of East Tennessee, Johnny K. currently resides in the Washington, DC metropolitan area. A lifelong fan of cinema, he grew up enjoying behind-the-scenes featurettes and shows on how all his favorite films were made. His favorite films include *Jaws*, *Raiders of the Lost Ark*, *Halloween* (1978), and John Carpenter's *The Thing*.

Johnny has also worked on-screen as an actor on major productions including AMC's *The Walking Dead: World Beyond* (2020), Showtime's *The Good Lord Bird* (2020) with Ethan Hawke, and *The Comey Rule* with Jeff Daniels.



The Killer of Grassy Ridge is his directorial debut.

THE CAST

The Killer of Grassy Ridge introduces **Heather Stone** and **Michael Stumbo**, both first-time actors.

Voiceover in the film was provided by Kevin Conn.



THE MUSIC

Acting as the “third character” in the film, *The Killer of Grassy Ridge* proudly features haunting and atmospheric music by Italian composer Mattia Cupelli, as well as Doug Maxwell, and ESN Productions.

In May 2020, *The Killer of Grassy Ridge* was awarded Best Score at the Sandgrunder International Short Film Festival in the United Kingdom.



AWARDS

As of September 23, 2020, *The Killer of Grassy Ridge* has been recognized/awarded at the following events:

WINNER:

- ❖ Best U.S. Short Film - 52 Weeks Film Festival (USA)
- ❖ Best Director - Salt House Creative Int'l Film Festival (Australia)
- ❖ Best First-Time Director - New York Movie Awards (USA)
- ❖ Best First-Time Director - Florence Film Awards (Italy)
- ❖ Best Cinematography - The Magic of Horror (USA)
- ❖ Best Horror Film - Sandgrunder Int'l Short Film Festival (U.K.)
- ❖ Best Thriller - Best Global Shorts (India)
- ❖ Best Thriller - Wallachia International Film Festival (Romania)
- ❖ Best Debut Short - Moody Crab Film Fest (India)
- ❖ Best Score - Sandgrunder Int'l Short Film Festival (U.K.)

FINALIST:

- ❖ Best Film – The Magic of Horror (USA)
- ❖ Best Horror Short - Frostbite International Indie Fest (USA)
- ❖ Best Horror Short - Košice International Monthly Film Festival (Slovakia)
- ❖ Best First-Time Director - Independent Short Awards (USA)
- ❖ Best Sound Design - Sandgrunder International Short Film Festival (United Kingdom)
- ❖ Best Fiction - Aladerrri International Film Festival (USA)

SEMI-FINALIST:

- ❖ Best First-Time Director - New York Cinematography Awards (USA)
- ❖ Best Director - Madrid Film Awards (Spain)
- ❖ Best Cinematography - Madrid Film Awards (Spain)
- ❖ Best Director (Horror) - Best Director Award (online)
- ❖ Semi-Finalist Selection - Lisbon Film Rendezvous (Portugal)

OFFICIAL SELECTIONS:

- ❖ Barcelona Indie Filmmakers Festival (Spain)
- ❖ Bastalavista International Genre Film Festival (Germany)
- ❖ Bloody Flicks Awards (United Kingdom)
- ❖ Enginuity Film Festival (USA)
- ❖ First-Time Filmmaker Sessions (United Kingdom)
- ❖ Horror ShowFest (Italy)

- ❖ Loudoun Arts Film Festival (USA)
- ❖ Melkbos Short Film Festival (South Africa)
- ❖ New Jersey Horror Con and Film Festival (USA)
- ❖ Reels of the Dead (USA)
- ❖ Rock Horror in Rio (Brazil)
- ❖ Sanford Independent Film Festival (USA)
- ❖ Scumdance (USA)
- ❖ Slash Night (USA)
- ❖ Slasher Film Festival (USA)
- ❖ The Northern Virginia International Film Festival (USA)
 - Nominated: Best Horror/Thriller
 - Nominated: The NOVA Award (Best Local Film)
- ❖ Visioni Notturme (Italy)

REVIEWS

- ❖ *A solid atmospheric short... eerie creepiness from the very start.* – Pop.Horror.com
- ❖ *An instant horror short classic. Ten minutes that will keep you on the edge of your seat!* – Fandom Podcast Network
- ❖ *Stunning. More atmosphere in 10 minutes than some movies have in two hours.* – Garage of Horror Podcast
- ❖ *The Killer of Grassy Ridge skillfully presents stereotypical characters and horror clichés, then proceeds to roll them in their grave.* – The Blogging Banshee
- ❖ *This film has been playing on my mind since I watched it. It's the kind of thing that stays with you, almost haunting you.* – Lou Yardley
- ❖ *You need to experience this yourself. It's 100% a personal experience, but I will say that as the film continues so does the feeling of dread. As we're shaken out of the moment, brought to a peaceful lull, put on edge and then pushed right the f*%k over, the film leaves a lasting impression that doesn't soon go away.* – MutantFam.com

LINKS

- ❖ YouTube (film)
- ❖ Trailer
- ❖ Twitter (Kaotica Studios)
- ❖ Twitter (Johnny K.)
- ❖ Facebook
- ❖ IMDB
- ❖ Interviews:
 - Making The First Film: An Interview With Johnny K.
 - Podcast Interview with Director Johnny K. and Actress Heather Stone
 - Podcast Interview with Director Johnny K.

FAQ

What equipment did you use? To prove a point that you don't need expensive equipment to make a good film, *Killer* was filmed entirely using entry-level gear. The film was primarily shot using a Nikon D3300 DSLR with the kit lens and a Yongnuo Prime 50mm lens. The film was shot entirely in natural light or firelight, and used no artificial light sources. This decision was inspired by the work of cinematographer Emmanuel Lubezki on *The Revenant* (2015). Audio was captured on-location using a Zoom H1N recorder, with a lavalier mic hidden on the actors. Additional audio was provided by the YouTube Audio Library. The film was edited in Sony Movie Studio Platinum (Vegas).

How long did it take to make the film? *Killer* was started and finished in 62 days.

Where was the film shot? The film was shot on location in Front Royal, Lake Arrowhead, and Rileyville, Virginia, with additional footage shot in Carter County, Tennessee.



CREDITS

DIRECTOR, PRODUCER & EDITOR: Johnny K.

STARRING: Heather Stone and Michael Stumbo

MUSIC: Mattia Cupelli, Doug Maxwell, ESN Productions

VOICE-OVER: Kevin Conn

CREW: Andrew Bowers and Raynstroyk Czar

SOUND: Andrew Bowers

ADDITIONAL SOUND: YouTube Audio Library

PHOTOGRAPHY: Raynstroyk Czar and Andrew Bowers

HAIR/MAKEUP: Heather Stone and Raynstroyk Czar

CATERING: 619 Market in Front Royal, VA

DISTRIBUTOR: Kaotica Studios

SPECIAL THANKS: Sharon Bowers



 **kaotica**
STUDIOS