

941 In The Backseat With... Matt Pizzolo - Halo-8 Productions

Halo-8's 'Slumber Party Slaughterhouse' screening at 941 Theater

Halo-8's Slumber Party Slaughterhouse—one of the companies latest releases—is going to be screening THIS WEEKEND at 941 Theater in Northern Liberties. Slaughterhouse is a collaborative film born of the efforts of a group of six filmmakers—Matt Pizzolo, Doug Sakmann, Joanna Angel, Ramzi Abed and Kurly Tlapoyawa. Each filmmaker wrote and directed a particular segment in the film.

Slumber Party Slaughterhouse is designed as an interactive, horror-trivia game. The film features a multiple-choice menu; in choosing correctly the audience serves the main character, Paul, with options—to kill or not to kill his “friends” and their hookers.

Slaughterhouse is being released and distributed by Halo-8, a media production and distribution company based in Los Angeles. The company was started in 2005 by Matt Pizzolo. Pizzolo's company has grown out the problem of producing independent films and later having a hard time getting the film distributed—the distribution part became harder than the actual process of getting

the film made. The company is modeled after independent record labels. Pizzolo gave the example of Victory Records.

“We're a small company, with a staff of about half-a-dozen people,” Pizzolo says in a way that communicates he's said this a few times before. “We market the films to retailers to get them on the shelves, so that people can buy them.”

Some of the places where Halo-8 films may be found are in retailers like Best Buy, Hot Topic, Newberry Comics and then smaller record stores. Tower Records, before its departure from the retail market, was also one of the more successful spots for Halo-8 to sell its products.

“When Tower went under, oddly enough, it was Hot Topic that saved us,” Pizzolo says. “Typically I don't think of Hot Topic as a big market for independent movies, I think of them as having a younger base, but who knows?” Pizzolo goes on to say, “Other places typically we've done well are the Virgin Megastore, Hastings.” “The problem right now is the



Matt Pizzolo choking Kurly Tlapoyawa--two of the filmmakers who worked on Slumber Party Slaughterhouse.

people making the money are the major media companies,” Pizzolo says his voice deflating like a balloon. “They lose a lot of money on the process of making smaller movies but then they make it up with the Iron Man or Batman--those movies make up for the other losses.” Matt continues, “As a smaller company, I don't know that we're a threat to them [larger media companies], but because we're used to being more overly responsible [financially] and we try to be as proactive as possible we do whatever we can to get the most out of our movies.”

Not a bad strategy for any time, especially with the current state of the economy. These are troubled times. Pizzolo acknowledges that

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the ultimate goal of a filmmaker is to have the end result seen by the audience. He goes on to say, “We don’t put FBI warnings on our movies, because that’s just ridiculous.” Pizzolo says with an air of regard for the intellect of his consumers, “Our audience is so savvy about piracy. I’m not entirely convinced piracy is completely destructive, but it does redefine how things get made and how money is made.”

Pizzolo goes further to explain his dualistic identity in terms of the changing media market with the advent of digital media and online renting services. “From a consumer stand-point, I love Netflix. I think it’s great. But then from a business standpoint,” Pizzolo laments, “Netflix is horrible for us.” With the changing market, distribution companies have to focus more on marketing the product—and marketing costs money.

“When we produce something we can build the marketing directly into the product, as opposed to picking it up later and then doing the marketing,” Pizzolo says rekindling his role as a numbers savvy business-man. “We have a line of DVDs that are a good example of built-in marketing schemes. Some of the titles are “Yoga for Indie Rockers, Pilates for Indie Rockers,” etc. and the big pull in these DVDs is that you choose the music you want to work out to. Those DVDs are doing really well for us,” Pizzolo says.

To that end, having a steady flow of income frees up the company to take on other things. Like the Slumber Party Slaughterhouse venture that’s been screening throughout the

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month of October and will be coming to Philadelphia and New York this weekend—October 25th and 26th. Halo-8 is also presenting a theatrical showcase in LA for a week at the Engine Theater (Oct 23-29th) where new Halo8 releases will screen along with the *Slaughterhouse* game nightly. Halo-8 Filmmakers are invited to meet the public and moderate Q&A sessions. The DVD is also set for release on Oct 28th.

“We have a broad range of filmmakers,” says Pizzolo. “So for Slumber Party Slaughterhouse we gave all the filmmakers the same idea and they interpreted that idea to film in their particular style, with their particular vision.”

“The main idea is that a guy and a hooker walk into a room together. I don’t think it’s initially what we intended,” Pizzolo states. With a deep breath and an edge of excitement in his voice, he says, “It’s better!”

Check out www.halo8.tv for more info!



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