

Falls City residents work to bring Manos back

Child star Jackey Raye Neyman Jones works to tell the story of her character, Debbie, and family 50 years later

By Jolene Guzman
The Itemizer-Observer

FALLS CITY — OK B-movie fans, want to find out what happened to Debbie, the little girl from "Manos: The Hands of Fate?"

The wait could be over soon.

"The Hands of Fate" has the reputation as a famously awful B-movie of the horror variety. Some even grace it with the title of "worst movie ever made," which comes with the upside of attracting a sizeable fan base of bad movie lovers.

Falls City resident Jackey Raye Neyman Jones and her father Tom Neyman starred in "The Hands of Fate," Jones as Debbie, and Neyman as "The Master."



Jones

The film has Debbie's family heading to a vacation spot called "Valley Lodge."

A twist common to many a horror film, they take a wrong turn leading them to a compound occupied by a polygamous cult worshipping a god named "Manos."

The family is helped by the compound's caretaker Torgo, but when "The Master" comes back, things do not go well for Torgo or the family.

The ending is a little unsettling and unsettled, leaving the film ripe for a sequel.

It's been attempted, unsuccessfully, once before in

2011 and 2012. In that go around, Jones starred as a grown-up Debbie decades later trying to piece together what happened to her family — and take a little revenge.

The project, directed by Rupert Talbot Munch Sr., fell apart before it was finished.

But it reintroduced Jones to the world of cult stardom. She's been surprised by fan reaction and has written a soon-to-be released book "Growing up with Manos: The Hands of Fate" about being the child star of one of the worst movies ever made.

"It's amazing," Jones said. "I've always done it for the love of it."

In November, it will be 50 years since the original was released, so Jones, Neyman, others involved in the original and new-found fans decided it was time to reveal what happened to young Debbie and her family.

"Manos Returns," starring Jones and Neyman in their original roles will tell that story.

A script is already written and the scenes including Neyman have been filmed, but the project needs help to get off the ground.

A Kickstarter campaign was launched on Saturday to raise at least \$24,000 to cover the remaining expenses of filming.

The project is on a tight time frame because the goal is to release it on Nov. 15, the 50th anniversary of "Hands of Fate."

The script this time isn't revenge-based and will be set in Oregon rather than



"Manos Returns" artwork was featured on a T-shirt used in a fundraising campaign to help pay the sequel's star Tom Neyman, "The Master," for his work on the film.

Texas where the first movie was filmed.

Jones is producing the project, which will be directed by Seattle filmmaker Tonjia Atomic ("Plain Devil," "Hobo with a Trash-can").

"It's based on the idea that the original film was loosely based on a true story," Jones said. "That helps explain the different location."

She said the film focuses on a group of young filmmakers who are fans of "Hands of Fate." They go in search of the "real" Valley Lodge.

"It's really fun, tongue in

cheek, and up to date," Jones said.

She said the filmmakers are successful in their quest to find Valley Lodge, and in horror-movie fashion, they encounter more than they bargained for.

Jones added another plot-revealing little tidbit for fans who have wondered about Debbie's fate in the cult: "After 50 years of hanging out with these people, I may be a little cranky. I've got to pull out my dark side. It will be fun."

The rest, fans will just have to wait to find out.

While "The Hands of Fate"

is considered cringe-worthy is fun, Jones said this new project isn't trying to replicate that.

"We are not trying to make a bad movie," Jones said. "And not trying to do a remake."

She said the Kickstarter goal would indicate a low-budget, but that doesn't include how many people are volunteering for the project and what has been donated.

Fans have already demonstrated their support through a successful T-shirt campaign that helped pay Neyman, now 80 years old, for his work on the sequel.

The history (and fate) of Manos:

- Nov. 15, 1966 — "Manos: The Hands of Fate" premieres.

- Jan. 30, 1993 — "Mystery Science Theater 3000" airs an episode riffing "The Hands of Fate," making the film a cult classic.

- 2011 — Filming on an unsuccessful sequel begins, including a shoot in Falls City.

- 2015 — A restored version of "Manos: The Hands of Fate" is released.

- September 2015 — Jackey Raye Neyman Jones and project supporters launch a T-shirt fundraising campaign after deciding to try another run at producing a sequel: "Manos Returns."

- December 2015 — Jones completes the book "Growing up with Manos: The Hands of Fate" about her experience since starring in Manos. It will be available this spring.

- Jan. 30, 2016 — A Kickstarter campaign is launched to cover the remaining costs of "Manos Returns." The campaign ends March 1.

- Nov. 15, 2016 — date Jones would like to premier the sequel, 50 years to the day after "Hands of Fate."

something that didn't happen with "The Hands of Fate."

"It was great," Jones said. "He had so much fun. He really did."

To learn more about the film or to contribute: www.kickstarter.com.

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