

STEPHEN KING ON SCREEN



Week Eight

Screams for the Scream

Welcome to *Stephen King On Screen*

Week Eight

We're taking a little detour this week, delving into the work that Stephen King has written directly for the screen – largely television, but also the occasional movie or – nay, stare not so – music video.

We start in 1991 with *Golden Years*, a 'novel for television' that was co-written by King and Josef Anderson. Originally intended to be a continuing series, it ended up as a one-off story (with an edit to the home release to give it the ending it hadn't been granted on its original airing.) This was new territory for King, owing much to the success of David Lynch's *Twin Peaks*, which demonstrated that audiences were ready for a little weirdness on the box.

The next year saw the release of *Sleepwalkers*, directed by King stalwart Mick Garris – King's first original screenplay, not based on an existing novel or short story. It wasn't particularly well-received, but these two projects had added another continuing thread to the King canon. Stories written for the screen, rather than the page.

Further miniseries would follow in subsequent years – *Storm of the Century* and *Rose Red*, as well as King contributing scripts for individual episodes in longer form adaptations of his books.

There would also be stranger side journeys – like Michael Jackson's *Ghosts*, which, in its original form, involved both King and Garris, alongside effects maestro Stan Winston and Jackson himself. How much of King's original vision survived into the film is up for debate, but it remains an artifact of the way in which King had become the go-to guy when creepiness was required.

Which also probably explains the temporary addition of Stephen King to the writing staff of *The X-Files*, co-writing the episode 'Chinga' with series creator Chris Carter. Or Stephen King taking charge of the American

adaptation of Lars Von Trier's *The Kingdom*, in the form of the deeply strange *Kingdom Hospital*.

We'll be back to the novels and stories in our final two weeks, exploring adaptations of modern King, but, for now, let's glory in the special weirdness that is Stephen King writing for the screen.

FILMS WEEK EIGHT

Film

Sleepwalkers (1992) – Dir. Mick Garris

Ghosts (1996) – Dir. Stan Winston

TV

Golden Years (1991) – Dir. Kenneth Fink, et al.

The X-Files – ‘Chinga’ (1998) – Dir. Kim Manners

Storm of the Century (1999) – Dir. Craig R. Baxley

Rose Red (2002) – Dir. Craig R. Baxley

Kingdom Hospital (2004) – Dir. Craig R. Baxley