

## *Death of Brian* Offers a Zombie's-Eye View at Boulder Fringe Fest

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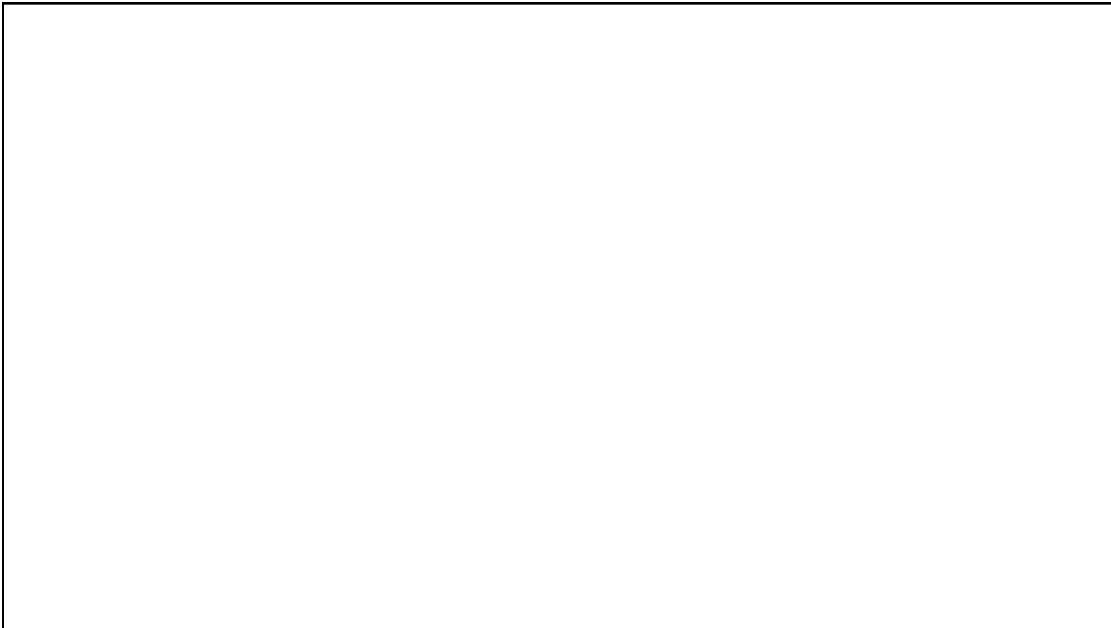
Kasandra Kincaid

Stories about a ragtag group of survivors braving a zombie apocalypse are everywhere, but such scenes are not the only way to spot a great zombie saga. After all, that's only half the story. Haven't you ever wondered how the other half lives (or unlives, as it were)?

***See also:*** [Army of Darkness Approaches Geek Perfection<sup>\[1\]</sup>](#)

"Five or six years ago ... I started wondering, 'Why does everyone write from the perspective of the survivors? What about the perspective of a guy turning into a

zombie?" says Ricky Coates, author and star of the one-man show *The Death of Brian: A Zombie Odyssey*. "I started writing and I came up with this man who's turning into a zombie, but in the process he ends up becoming more human."



Coates describes the resulting work, showing now at the Boulder Fringe Festival, as "a cross between patient zero and *The Odyssey*." Like many a zombie story before his, it explores some of our darkest fears, even if it does tackle them all from a slightly different angle.

"Zombies and robots are our modern monsters," he explains. "We're afraid of becoming the soulless consumer of the zombie, or the mindless automaton of the robot, [doing nothing but] performing a function of society."

To explore these ideas, his one-man show incorporates a zombie puppet and plenty of voiceover to tell the story of Brian, a man who dies in a car accident, but comes back as a zombie. As his transformation from office drone to flesh-hungry monster progresses, he seeks to be reunited with his wife, faces off against his asshole boss and a mad scientist and, perversely, becomes a better person along the way as he gets in touch with the parts of himself previously obscured by the trappings of society.

"It's a grand, long epic journey where he comes to terms with and embraces himself as a zombie and wants to share that with the world," Coates says. "The life that he was totally oblivious to at the beginning is actually something he should have been paying the most attention to."

Despite the unusual perspective on the walking dead, Coates promises that zombie lovers will find plenty of nods to classic zombie tales along the way. "I basically wrote a show that I would want to see," he says. "I threw in some zombie tropes -- the rednecks hunting him down with guns, him chewing on brains. There's tons and tons of sci-fi references, comic-book references and nods to other zombie filmmakers. There's little Easter eggs in there for people who enjoy that kind of nerdy stuff."

That said, he's been finding that as much as zombie fans enjoy the show, its pleasures are just as accessible to theater-goers who haven't yet embraced the undead lifestyle.

"It was a surprise to me, but a lot of non-zombie fans told me they were reluctant to see it because of the zombies, but then were glad they saw it afterward," he says.

See it for yourself at 8:30 p.m. Thursday, September 25 or 6 p.m. Friday, September 26 at the Dairy Center for the Arts in Boulder<sup>[2]</sup>. Tickets are for \$15 general admission<sup>[3]</sup> or \$13 for students and seniors. For more information, visit *The Death of Brian* website<sup>[4]</sup>.

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1. [http://blogs.westword.com/showandtell/2014/06/army\\_of\\_darkness\\_approaches\\_geek\\_perfection.php](http://blogs.westword.com/showandtell/2014/06/army_of_darkness_approaches_geek_perfection.php)
  2. <http://www.westword.com/locations/dairy-center-for-the-arts-10597/>
  3. <http://www.boulderfringe.com/programs/2014/theater-2014/theater-simple/>
  4. <http://www.deathofbrian.com/>