

## Joe Bob Briggs: The Drive-In Will Never Ever Die



When you think of the drive-in, images of campy horror films, weekend nights with friends, and concession stand chats with locals may come to mind. For many in the horror community, the drive-in is synonymous with Joe Bob Briggs, a persona created by John Bloom. As a cowboy-type host with a quick wit, Briggs gained recognition for presenting television series in the 1980s and 1990s, particularly *MonsterVision* on TNT, where he analyzed horror and B-movies. In 2018, he revived his presence with *The Last Drive-In with Joe Bob Briggs* on Shudder, connecting both new and long-time fans on Instagram and other social media platforms to foster the 'mutant' community.

Leading up to the first livestream of *The Last Drive-In*, Joe Bob Briggs' Instagram hyped the event with countdowns and clips from earlier shows. He hinted at a new mail girl as part of the classic format from *MonsterVision*, sparking debates among nostalgic fans. Posts included heartfelt moments, such as an interview with Gary Busey and recitations of the drive-in oath. Comments showed fans reminiscing about *MonsterVision* and encouraging Shudder to keep Joe Bob on regularly, gluing together an entire new group of 'mutants' from all generations.

A screenshot of two Instagram posts from the account 'joebobbriggsofficial'. The left post features a black background with white and yellow text titled 'THE DRIVE-IN OATH'. The text reads: 'We are Drive-In mutants / We are not like other people / We are sick / We are disgusting / We believe in blood / And breasts / And in beasts / If life had a vomit meter / We'd be off the scale / As long as one Drive-In remains / On the planet earth / We will party like jungle animals / We will boogey till we puke / Heads will roll / The Drive-In will never die'. The post has 955 likes and a caption that says 'We're a half hour away. Start practicing the drive-in oath! #thelastdrivein'. The right post is a screenshot of two tweets from '@shudder'. The first tweet, dated 1/2, says: 'The staggering demand for Joe Bob has temporarily overwhelmed Shudder TV. We're working hard to fix it! Once we fix things, you'll be able to join the live-stream in progress. Even better, we'll be posting the entire TOURIST TRAP with Joe Bob's commentary so you can catch up.' The second tweet, dated 22m, says: 'On top of it all, we will rerun the marathon in its entirety later next week on ShudderTV. We apologize for a frustrating experience this evening, but we THANK YOU for your tremendous support and fandom!'. This post has 871 likes and a caption that says 'Statement from @shudder they are still working to bring more and more users back online tonight.'

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p3al9fC9tDI> – Link to the Drive-In Oath

Following the infamous livestream crash, known as the night Joe Bob Briggs broke the internet, overwhelming fan response convinced Shudder to keep him as a mainstay. During the incident, Joe Bob kept his fans informed and engaged on Instagram by posting technical updates and resharing fans' viewing parties, using the situation as an opportunity to connect with his audience rather than leaving them in the dark. This is also when we got to get more acquainted with the new mail girl, "Darcy the Mail Girl."

Reflecting on what it means to be a 'mutant' in this niche group of horror film junkies, it feels as if Briggs aims to unite and uplift film lovers who grew up with drive-ins and theaters, using his platform to challenge the status quo—a theme mirrored in many films he hosts. Referencing Fidler's analysis of *I Spit on Your Grave*, Joe Bob encourages viewers to see such films as more than just violence, but as opportunities to discuss anti-censorship and feminism. Throughout his career, as shown on his account timeline, his dedication to protecting the arts and supporting this community has been consistent, with his film knowledge and passion building his credibility.

Joe Bob's first livestream with Shudder and his evolution as a public figure make it clear that he has always championed dreamers and artists who feel outside the mainstream. He uses Instagram stories to share message boards and live chats where fans of The Last Drive-In can connect. Both Joe Bob and Diane, the mail girl, interact with fans to foster a sense of belonging. This echoes his speech from the end of *Pieces* (1982), in which he expresses his desire to create a space for "weirdos and misfits." What began as a show celebrating forgotten films has grown into a strong community. Through all his actions, Joe Bob consistently demonstrates his understanding of and appeals to his passionate fan base.

I encourage you to get out of the house and visit your local drive-in or theater because I believe you'll find a place waiting for you there. Support your communities and local theaters— and more than anything, may the drive-in never die.



Written by Cooper Gantz

## References

Fidler, T. (2009). "They don't call 'em exploitation movies for nothing!": Joe Bob Briggs and the critical commentary on 'I Spit on Your Grave.'" *Colloquy*, 18, 38–60.

Spry, J. (2020, June 22). The last Drive-in show Host Joe Bob BRIGGS says the time is right for 'bubble Gum horror'. Retrieved April 11, 2021, from <https://www.syfy.com/syfywire/last-drive-in-host-joe-bob-briggs-horror>