

Lucky Number 13; Zombie Crawl – The Final Chapter



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What began as a small private pub crawl grew into a bloody block party attended by thousands over its 12 years. On Saturday, October 12, the undead will once again descend upon the Dark Lady in Downcity for Providence Zombie Night XIII: The Final Chapter. The Zombie King himself, Reverend Al Mighty, has confirmed this will be the last of his popular Zombie Nights.

On a dark, quiet night with two beers before us, Rev reminisced on how it all began. Two of his friends, Julie and Andrew, wanted to throw a zombie party, but take it to the local pubs. Rev was put in charge of wrangling 50 friends, and the party began. Along the way, the trio acquired 50 more strangers who wanted to join in.

Rev says, “The next year, people were asking if we were going to do that again. We met at Kennedy Plaza, but this time 200 people showed up. After that, we decided we were going to do this every year.”

By Zombie Night’s third year, they were up to about 500 attendees. The following year, 900 zombies packed RiRa’s beyond capacity. That mass attracted the attention of PVD’s finest, and the unexpected happened.

Rev explains, “[The police] came walking up and shook my hand and they asked, ‘You’re Rev Al?’ and I said, ‘Yeah,’ and they said, ‘There’s never been a problem here.’ They handed me a walkie-talkie and said, ‘If there’s any issue, you should report it in right away. Some cops will be following along to make sure everyone’s safe.’ I realized that this was something big.”

Bigger crowds meant bigger Zombie Nights. The fifth year began at the PVD Social Club. While the horde gathered, waiting for its release into the city, they were entertained by Rev’s new Zombie Night tradition: the Boolesque - a horror-themed burlesque performance. The “Zombie Queen” Bettysioux Tailor, who had been part of Zombie Night since its third year, headlined at each year’s Boolesque with a rotating cast of performers. This year, she’ll be taking the stage with Maiden X, Blitzen VonSchtupp, Stage Kitten and the legendary Kurt Fowl.

Rev explains the idea behind Boolesque: "I was an emcee for burlesque at the time. So I had a good lineup of dancers from Providence and Connecticut. [Bettysioux] is 'The Simpsons' of Boolesque. She did it first!"

By the fifth year, the eyes of the corporate world turned toward the event. One unnamed company wanted to host it indoors at a single location with tickets presold.

Rev says, "It was everything I was against. [Zombie Night] was supposed to be a 'fuck you' to the rules and corporate kind of set-ups." However, Rev did realize he needed to make a big change. "The group was getting huge, and I was getting scared. What if someone got hurt? When it got to 3-, 4-, 5,000 wandering the city, that becomes too many people to control. So that became huge in the decision to bring it to one place."

And so the Quarantine Zone (QZ) was born. The first QZ was held as an end-of-the-night gathering in front of the 88 Keys Lounge on Union Street. Even then, the massive group of walkers forced Rev to eliminate the crawl and rally everyone to the QZ's new home - The Dark Lady.

"No better place, no better thumbprint than the Dark Lady," Rev says. "They do block parties like nobody else. It was inclusive. Randy and Butch and Rob the manager [were] so accommodating."

For the last few years, one block of Snow Street has been fenced off to be the new home of Zombie Night, and the party expanded to an indoor/outdoor event that featured the Boolesque, fire spinners, marching bands and even an official zombie wedding. Added to it were local DJs spinning all night, with this year's event featuring DJ Transcendance, DJ Joey Dee and DJ AV8. Rev teases there are still more surprises to be announced, but as a bonus, the final Zombie Night will feature live musical performances from interstellar Space Heart and the rock 'n' roll of Jodi Jolt and the Volt, who are working on an original set for the show.

Rev says, "With Space Heater, the aliens are going to beam down with what they claim is the cure of the zombie virus. If it doesn't work, we'll eat them."

No one can deny the great success of Zombie Night over the years. While trying to explain what promoters and organizers need to know on how to make it work, Rev gave some solid advice. "Make sure you stick with your original desire to why you are doing it. Add on to it as people ask. Never think you know more than the people who are enjoying it. When they ask for something, give it to them. When you don't, you fail."

After the Final Chapter is closed, what is next for Rev and for the city of Providence? "I want to do something grassroots, but I want to do something different."

Rev admitted exclusively to *Motif* that he is in talks with the heads at RI Comic Con about starting

something “new and fresh” next year. The idea is to do a night for Comic Con fans. Now imagine the city overrun at night with cosplayers and LARPerS with the former Zombie King leading the pack. What devious plans are hiding under his top hat? Until we find out, try to survive Zombie Night XIII: The Final Chapter.

The apocalypse starts at 7pm on Snow Street for those 21+. The costume contest will also be back, awarding \$666 to the first place winner and tickets to Rhode Island Comic Con for 2nd place. Just remember the one rule given every year by Rev, “Don’t be a douchebag or you’ll be eaten on site.” For more info, [facebook.com/events/1266776116829110](https://www.facebook.com/events/1266776116829110)