

Filmography for *Darkon* (2006)

Directed by Luke Meyer and Andrew Neel. Featuring Skip Lipman and Daniel McArthur.
Porchlight, 2006. 93 mins.

DVD: Porchlight Entertainment, 2008

IMDB Site: <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0462246/>

IFC Site: <http://www.ifc.com/darkon/>

Cast:

[Skip Lipman](#) ... Himself / [Bannor](#)

[Daniel McArthur](#) ... Himself / [Trivius](#)

[Rebecca Thurmond](#) ... Herself / [Nemesis](#)

[Kenyon Wells](#) ... Himself / [Keldar](#)



Script: Not available

Major Reviews:

Village Voice, <http://www.villagevoice.com/film/0737,hillis,77755,20.html>

New York Times, <http://movies.nytimes.com/2007/09/14/movies/14dark.html>

Darkon Website: <http://www.darkon.org/>

IFC short video link: <http://link.brightcove.com/services/link/bcpid1218134456/bctid1279694017>

Synopsis (from the Internet Film Channel)

"Darkon" is a documentary feature that follows the real-life adventures of an unusual group of weekend "warrior knights," fantasy role-playing gamers whose live action "battleground" is modern-day Baltimore, Maryland, re-imagined as a make-believe medieval world named Darkon.

These live action gamers combine the physical drama of historical re-enactments with character-driven storylines inspired in part by such perennial favorite fantasy epics as the legends of King Arthur, Lord of the Rings, and the saga of Conan the Barbarian. As role players, these gamers create alter-egos with rich emotional, psychological, and social lives. They costume themselves and physically act out their characters' exploits both in intimate court intrigue and campouts and in panoramic battle scenarios involving competitive strategies, convincingly real props, and full contact "combat."

Directors Andrew Neel and Luke Meyer put three years into the project, first gaining the trust and access they needed from their subjects, then tackling their "in-character" fantasy world with the epic vocabulary we've come to expect from movies about Knights in Shining Armor: aerial and crane shots, history-making battle sequences, and a rousing original score.

In character, the people we meet are powerful leaders who participate in an emotionally rich social hierarchy; but we also see how easily "real life" gets in the way, and learn what drove them to become so involved in the fantasy world of Darkon in the first place. While maintaining an essential and clinical distance, DARKON at the same time enters the subjective imaginations of its participants and celebrates the inner-workings of a culture that lies just beneath the surface of everyday American life.

Suggested Readings:

Grady Hendrix, "Feel the Sting of My Foam Sword," *Slate* 12 November 2007;
http://www.slate.com/id/2177830/pagnum/all/#page_start

Carl James Grindley, "The Hagiography of Steel: The Hero's Weapon and Its Place in Pop Culture," in *Driver* (on reserve): 151-166.

Suggested Questions:

- What medieval values do the members of the Darkon community most value? Why?
- In what way(s) is the Darkon community "dreaming the Middle Ages"?
- In Eco's terms, what kind(s) of Middle Ages are the Darkon members creating and why?
- What sorts of literary stereotypes and clichés do the Darkon members perpetuate, and why?
- What do the existence of live-action role-playing groups (LARPs) like Darkon say about modern attitudes towards the Middle Ages?
- What cultural commentary are the filmmakers offering through this film?
- Reflect on the film's tagline: "Everybody wants to be a hero."