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THIS SCHOOL IS AUTHORIZED UNDER FEDERAL LAW TO ENROLL NONIMMIGRANT ALIEN STUDENTS.
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I can still recall seeing the ad in STARLOG magazine during my childhood, way back in late 1978. It teased an upcoming sister publication called FANTASTICA that would be devoted to the more monstrous and, well, fantastical side of cinema, with Godzilla emblazoned on the first cover. Being a huge fan of the Big G, I quickly subscribed... then waited while legal issues surrounding the mag’s moniker were cleared up, and it emerged the following summer as FANGORIA. This transpired right around the time I saw my first R-rated horror film in a theater: Don Coscarelli’s Phantasm.

You could say that Fango and I found our devotion to fright films simultaneously. Within a year, I had become a die-hard fan of scary cinema, and the magazine had left the Star Wars and Star Trek covers behind to put The Shining’s Jack Nicholson, “Wormface” from Zombie and Motel Hell’s chainsaw-wielding, pig-masked maniac up front. I caught every horror movie I could on the big screen—largely R-rated fare that I and my friends attended without a parent or adult guardian, for years before we were officially allowed to. With few schoolmates quite as into the genre as I was, though, I started a Xeroxed-review-zine called Scaresapanaqua to communicate with the same kind, and traded subscriptions with fan-eds from both the U.S. and as far away as Australia and New Zealand (two of the latter were Michael Helms, now Fango’s longtime Down Under correspondent, and Ant Timpson, who has gone on to produce Housebound, Deathgasm and more).

It all led to that day I walked into Fango’s Manhattan offices seeking a college internship, and four hours later got the call to write my first article (an interview with The Seventh Sign director Carl Schultz). Within two years, I myself was being interviewed by editor-in-chief Tony Timpone and associate publisher Milburn Smith to replace exiting managing editor J. Peter Orr. I can also still remember receiving the word that I had landed the job, and how excited I was to be a regular staff member on the publication I had grown up reading. My first issue on the editorial masthead: #95, with an eye-popping Rob Bottin creation from Total Recall on the cover.

In the 25 years since, collaborating with Tony and then Chris Alexander on Fango, two incarnations of GOREZONE, assorted special editions and our website, I’ve seen enormous changes. I’ve seen horror go from a dirty word at the studios and networks during the early and mid-'90s to an established staple of mainstream culture. I’ve seen the death of VHS and the rise of the Internet. I’ve seen new talents work their way up from ambitious low-budget indies to long careers and, in some cases, to become influential major moviemakers. To have been a part of the scene, and being able to make some small contribution to the culture of terror, support films and filmmakers I believed in and share my enthusiasm with readers worldwide, has been an amazing experience and a true privilege.

The friends and colleagues I’ve made and the experiences I’ve had over these years have been incomparable, and to thank all those folks here by name would fill pages. I’m grateful to them all, for Tony and Chris’ guidance over the years, for the tireless work of art director Bill Mohalley (still the longest-lived member of the Fango team), to all of our many contributors and for the opportunity to now steer the ship I’ve been sailing on for more than half my life. So where do we go from here? Right now, there’s a certain amount of “If it ain’t broke, don’t fix it” to my view, and we’ll continue to balance coverage of new movies, TV, etc. with interviews giving veteran actors and filmmakers the chance to dish on terrors past. I am looking forward to introducing new columns while bringing back an old favorite or two that have gone defunct—with the pendulum now having decisively swung back toward physical creatures and gore on the screen scene, look for Makeup FX Lab to return—and running more reviews of books and home-video releases.

And I’m anxious to hear what you want to see and read in our pages. FANGORIA is for the fans (dare I say we’re dead without you?), so your suggestions are encouraged via the e-mail address below. I and newly minted mag managing editor Ken W. Hanley look forward to taking Fango into a fruitful and frightening future!

—Michael Gingold, Editor gingold@fangoria.com
"Hannibal" Holocaust

FANGORIA #343 was truly worth the wait. It's my favorite issue in recent memory! Great job on the Hannibal extravaganza, and I loved the article about the vinyl soundtrack revival. Perhaps you can make this into a semi-regular column? There are literally dozens of releases every month, and the list seems to keep getting longer. Anyway, I just wanted to let you know that your hard work is appreciated. It's a shame that Hannibal was cancelled, but that's nothing new. At least we got three mind-bogglingly twisted and beautifully scripted, shot and acted seasons.

Esteban Medaglia
Pt. Lauderdale, FL

...I loved your Hannibal coverage in issue #343, which actually gave me insight into some elements I missed. To call the show brilliant is an understatement, with its blackest of black humor and the beautiful and gory set pieces. However, I am disappointed about NBC's cancellation of the show, even as I can see how it's not a typical audience. On the other hand, I must commnend the network for airing shows like Hannibal, Grimm, Constantine and Dracula. Let's hope the trend continues and that maybe, just maybe, Hannibal may find a home somewhere else. After all, how many times has Dracula risen again?

Alan Levine
Ewing, NJ

...Thank you for your lovely tribute to Christopher Lee in Fango #343. I was extremely saddened to learn of his death, especially because I was lucky enough to meet him in 2000. Mr. Lee was in Australia filming, and at the time I was working at the NSW Police Headquarters in Sydney, and received a telephone call to say he would be coming in to pick up some police memorabilia; he was apparently an avid collector! He and his wife spent a good half hour talking with me and my colleagues about his films and interests. He was completely gracious and unassuming, and I felt very fortunate to have met him. It's huge loss for the film and horror industry; he will certainly be missed.

Carmen McCormack
Sydney, Australia

...Never in a million years did chef Janice Poan probably think she would be involved in designing food to resemble human body parts. I was amazed by the story about her and Hannibal in Fango #343, as I had always been curious how they did it. Now I know. I will probably never eat park again, since it can resemble something that was once human. Then to read that a lot of the meat and blood was supplied by a Toronto butcher who specializes in blood sausages... Poan has quite an imagination: white corn hominy far human teeth!

The way Mads Mikkelsen as Hannibal takes his time preparing delicacies and eating various morsels makes it seem so tantalizing, and then I have to stop and think, "We are dealing with cannibalism here." The Hannibal story and legacy will always live on—I love this series!

Paul Dale Roberts
Hala Paranormal Investigations

...Thanks for another great issue with Fango #343. I was shocked that the fact that Betsy came along. Alexander created the perfect blend of the past, present, weird, experimental and unexpected.

At 44 years old, I have been reading Fango for a long time (I got my first issue, #6, when I was able to sucker my parents into picking it up since it had Star Wars on the cover), and I have been here ever since. All I can say to Alexander is a heartfelt and sincere thanks for saving the mag, and hopefully laying down a plan that will be followed by the next editor, even though there is no way to match his imprint. Thanks again, brother—you were easily the best since Uncle Bob, and may have even taken that title from him!

Jim Eschert
No address

...I am very pleased to see that longtime Fango managing editor Michael Gingold got the editor-in-chief position after Chris Alexander departed. I'm sure he will do a fantastic job. I am concerned that recently, the print mag has had little or no coverage of Crimson Peak, The Gallows, Fear the Walking Dead and Ash vs. Evil Dead. I realize that you have covered some of these on the website, but you should include at least some coverage of all of the current films and TV in the magazine as much as possible. I want an Ash vs. Evil Dead cover! Otherwise, you are doing great; I loved the Hannibal issue. Thanks for all your hard work, I've been reading since Fango #4—the Zombie cover!

Herb Young
Durham, NC

Like Hannibal (Mads Mikkelsen), Fango readers know what they like.

Palmer passed away on a Friday wasn't mentioned in David DeCoteau's nostalgic obit. I do love the "Heaven to Betsy" headline, though—a great job to whoever wrote that DeCoteau is right as to how frightening Friday the 13th remains to this day, and I don't understand why critics say it's so lazy. Its storytelling is superior to all of its sequels, and that's why it did so well, in addition to the onscreen blood, scary music, etc. The movie was still quite frightening when I saw it on TV with the gore cut out—it's story telling, I tell you!

Thanks also for the great write-up about Day of the Animals, which was a '70s staple on commercial TV. I also loved your write-up on the "hospitalization" movies of the 1960s, including Suddenly, Last Summer, which I now must reread—I don't remember the cannibalism. Looking forward to the next issue!

Glenn Allen
Parsippany, NJ

Editorial Transitions

I was extremely bummed to read the news on the Fango website that Chris Alexander was leaving as editor. He injected some badly needed new blood and vitality into my favorite mag of all time, and one that I had feared I did not have much of a future before he

Send your comments and craziness to gingold@fangoria.com.
For actress-turned-writer/director Toro Subkoff, there was no question as to what kind of movie she wanted to make for her debut behind the camera. Growing up playing with action figures and watching science fiction and horror films with a group of spoiled, rich young girls, then observing the ways they terrorize one another, Subkoff found herself fixating on the narcissism of our modern culture: the obsession with taking images of ourselves and with Likes, and the ongoing popularity of social media, especially among young women. After watching the kids of close friends fall victim to on-time abuse, Subkoff began to find the elements of Horror. “You can’t escape cyberbullying; you can’t just change schools anymore,” she says. “It is its own demon, and it’s move-mode. I thought doing that as a horror story would be interesting.”

After checking statistics to learn who makes up the audience for current horror films, she discovered some surprising facts: A staggering number of 12- to 19-year-old girls are watching少年 movies now, despite the genre's obviously male leanings. “Horror films are usually made by men, and so male-driven with female characters who are pretty weak. They’re getting killed, or running around being protected by a man. I thought it would be interesting to do something that really focuses on young girls—their stories, what they are going through—and have it feel real.”

Aside from a group of recognizable faces recruited for small roles, including Chiwetel Ejiofor as well as Taryn Manning and Natascha Lyonne from Orange is the New Black, the stars of Horror are a group of young girls who were all 12 years old at the time of shooting. Moreover, each had experienced some form of cyberbullying in their everyday lives, whether it was directed at them or a close friend. Although most kids will never experience such attacks on the level Horror takes them to, not aspect of relatable real-life trauma is still there. Subkoff intends this to be a film that young girls can watch and relate to—but don’t worry, gory attacks, she didn’t hold back on the bloodshed. She odds that the teen actresses all loved horror movies, and were excited for every bloodsoaked sequence. Although Horror isn’t an art film per se, it does boost a tense setting. Subkoff shot it in a massive, elegant house in a wealthy and woodsy Connecticut neighborhood, decorated with real artwork by a long list of talents. The house was first furnished with a creepy array of borrowed antiques, and then Subkoff’s husband, artist Urs Fischer, helped cover the walls and empty spaces with strange and intriguing modern art, giving the movie an eerie, eerie atmosphere.

Having grown up in a similar area of Connecticut, Subkoff points out her familiarity with the high sophistication and both the emotional and literal chilliness of the snowy area. Horror delves into the fixation with expensive lifestyles and objects, as the girls mock one another for just about everything, from the location of their houses to the size of their bodies. And then there’s the obsession with technology. All the characters spend much of the film with cell phones glued to their hands. Even Ejiofor, as one of the young girls’ mothers,11 dependently takes two of the devices.

Subkoff has already started writing her next movie, and promises it’s another horror film, this time about adults. Working in the genre not only speaks to her interests, but allows her to tell stories through which she can communicate different kinds of ideas by inspiring fear. “Clive Barker was once asked why he always wrote such dark stories,” she explains, “and he said that he thinks it’s so much easier for people to believe in the dark. If you believe in the dark, you also have to believe in the light.”

—Madeleine Koester
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NOVEMBER/DECEMBER HIGHLIGHTS

NEW MOVIES

- BLOODSUCKING BASTARDS (Shout! Factory, Nov. 3): Cabin in the Woods’ Fran Kranz tangles with workplace vampires, on Blu-ray and DVD with commentary, an on-set segment and a gag reel.

- A CHRISTMAS HORROR STORY (Blu-ray, Dec. 24): An evil-battling Santa, a family-stalking Krampus and more intervene through this Yuletide anthology, an Blu-ray and DVD.

- COOTIES (Lionsgate, Dec. 1): Elijah Wood and his fellow teachers get a lesson in terror from infected grade-schoolers, on Blu-ray and DVD with commentary, deleted scenes, features, etc.

- DJINN (Screen Media, Nov. 3): Tab Hooper traveled to the United Arab Emirates to film this story of a couple tormented by the titular shapeshifting demons.

- THE FINAL GIRLS (Sony Pictures, Nov. 3): Teens become trapped in an 80s slasher film, with plenty of laughs, jolts and heart; on Blu-ray and DVD with commentaries and much more.

- KNOCK KNOCK (Lionsgate, Dec. 8): Who’s there? A couple of sexy girls who torment Keanu Reeves, on Blu-ray and DVD with commentary, deleted scenes, a featurette and stills.

- PAY THE GHOST (BLU, Nov. 10): Nicolas Cage aims to get his daughter back by other means after she vanishes during a Halloween parade; on Blu-ray and DVD.

- SINISTER 2 (Universal, Nov. 10): Bughuul and his youthful minions set their sights on a new, troubled family while Ex-Deputy So & So tries to stop them, on Blu-ray and DVD.

- STUNG (Shout! Factory, Nov. 3): Lance Henriksen et al. are buzzed by giant wasps at a remote mansion; on Blu-ray and DVD with commentary, a making-of and production blog videos.

FOREIGN FRIGHTS

- GOODNIGHT MOMMY (Anchor Bay/Blu-ray, Dec. 1): Shattering study of what happens when twin boys believe their mother is an imposter; on Blu-ray and DVD with a filmmakers’ interview.

- SYMPHONY IN BLOOD RED (Trama, Nov. 10): Italian shocker in the giallo tradition about a psychiatrist unleashing a patient’s madness, with Dario Argento among the extras.

NOVEMBER 13:

Condemned (limited)

November 20:

#Horror (limited)

November 25:

Victor Frankenstein

November 27:

Submerged (limited)

December 4:

Dementia (limited), JeruZalem (limited), Krampus

December 18:

Anguish (limited), He Never Died (limited)

January 8, 2016:

The Forest, Untitled

Blumhouse Horror 2

January 22, 2016:

The Bay (2016)

January 29, 2016:

Lights Out

January 31:

The Abandoned (a.k.a. The Confinés; limited)

February 5, 2016:

Pride and Prejudice and Zombies, Regression

February 19, 2016:

Shut In, Viral

February 26, 2016:

The Other Side of the Door, The Witch (limited)

April 1, 2016:

Delirium, Green Room, Rings

April 15, 2016:

Amityville: The Awakening

May 13, 2016:

Untitled BH Tilt Horror

June 10, 2016:

The Conjuring 2

July 1, 2016:

The Purge 3

July 22, 2016:

Ghostbusters (new film)

August 12, 2016:

Spectral

August 26, 2016:

A Man in the Dark

September 2, 2016:

Patient Zero

September 9, 2016:

Untitled New Line Horror Film

October 14, 2016:

A Monster Calls

October 21, 2016:

Ouija 2, Underworld

FEARFILM FORECAST

January 13, 2017:

The Dark Tawer, Friday the 13th (new film)

January 20, 2017:

Split

January 27, 2017:

Resident Evil: The Final Chapter

March 10, 2017:

Kong: Skull Island

March 24, 2017:

The Mummy (new film)

June 9, 2017:

World War Z 2

March 30, 2018:

Undated Universal Monster Franchise Film

June 8, 2018:

Gadzilla 2

June 22, 2018:

Jurassic World sequel

2020:

Gadzilla vs. Kang

Undated: Untitled Alien sequel, The Autopsy of Jane Doe, Backtrack, Bashkin (limited), Before I Wake, The Bab (new film), Cabin Fever (remake; limited), Cell, Cherry Tree (limited), Clown, Darling (limited), Demonic, The Disappointments Room, Emelle (limited), Excess Flesh (limited), 47 Meters Down, Frankenstein (limited), The Greasy Strangler, Holidays, Howl, Incarnate, The Invitation (limited), The Neon Demon, Ninja, Persevering (limited), The 9th Life of Louis Drax, The Pack (limited), Rabid Dogs (remake; limited), Ratter, She Who Brings Gifts, Solace, Southbound (limited), The Strangers 2, Summer Camp (limited), There Are Monsters, Torment (limited), Trail Hunter (remake), The Well, XX

Note: Some release dates are tentative and subject to change.
THE MUTILATOR [Arrow, Dec. 1]: One of the bloodiest and nastiest of all '80s slashers, on Blu-ray/DVD combo with interviews, a location visit and other supplements.


QUEEN OF BLOOD [Kino Lorber, Dec. 1]: A spaceship crew (including John Saxon and Dennis Hopper) is terrorized by the eponymous alien seductress, an Blu-ray with interviews.

ROCK `N` ROLL FRANKENSTEIN [Camp Motion Pictures, Nov. 10]: New DVD of the seriously politically incorrect monster mash, with commentary, a featurette and a music video.

THUNDERCRACK! [Synapse, Dec. 8]: Curt McDowell and George Kuchar's old-dark-house adult art-horror film, an DVD with interview commentary, and Blu-ray with that plus a documentary and more.

TROLL/TROLL 2 [Shout! Factory, Nov. 17]: The Empire original and its notoriously bad in-name-only sequel, on Blu-ray/DVD combo with the Best Worst Movie documentary, commentary and interviews.

WHITE OF THE EYE [Shout! Factory, Nov. 17]: Donald Camell's sometimes surreal Southwestern psychodrama, an Blu-ray/DVD combo with commentary, interviews, deleted scenes, etc.

FEAR THE WALKING DEAD: The Complete First Season [Anchor Bay, Dec. 1]: The origins of the undead invasion on Blu-ray/DVD combo with a featurette and character bios.

HANNIBAL: Season Three [Lionsgate, Dec. 8]: The final course of bloody good episodes on three-Blu-ray and four-DVD sets, with commentaries, featurettes, deleted scenes and webisodes.

LAVALANTULA [Alchemy, Nov. 3]: Big Ass Spider! director Mike Mendez returns with more giant arachnids, which this time spit a fiery trail of destruction in this Syfy flick.

MYSTERY SCIENCE THEATER 3000 XXXIV [Shout! Factory, Dec. 1]: The latest four-DVD package of movie mackery, featuring Viking Woman and the Sea Serpent, War of the Colossal Beast, The Undead and The She-Creature.

INDIES

THE LAST HOUSE [Wild Eye, Nov. 24]: That's where a young man goes to rescue his girlfriend, who's been kidnapped by escaped maniacs; includes a director interview and deleted scenes.

LILY GRACE: A WITCH STORY [Midnight Releasing, Nov. 3]: After a man returns to his childhood home, he's plagued by guilt over his father's death and a mysterious supernatural being.

QUEEN OF BLOOD [InterVision, Nov. 10]: Fangoria's Chris Alexander homages Eurohorrors with this female-vampire tale, on Blu-ray and DVD with commentary, featurettes, etc.

3'S A SHROUD [Wild Eye, Nov. 24]: British fright omnibus including stories of ghosts, demons, time travel and assorted busty women, with commentary and a bonus short film.

For the complete, updated on-line schedule of DVD/Blu-ray releases, head over to www.fangoria.com/new/chopping-list.

—Michael Gingold

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On Halloween night, fright fans had a good reason to stay home as Starz debuted the premiere episode of Ash vs. Evil Dead, in which Sam Raimi, his producing partner Rob Tapert and star Bruce Campbell reteam to subject Ashley J. Williams to more Deadite abuse. Thirty years after his last encounter with the evil forces, Ash was still working retail (apparently he was let go at S-Mart, and moved on to Value Stop) when the demons of the Necronomicon re-emerged, jolting him out of his trailer-park existence and propelling him into an ongoing, bloody adventure.

The 10-episode series, in which Ash is joined on his quest by Ray Santiago's Pablo Simon Bolivar and Dana DeLorenzo's Kelly Maxwell, while Michigan police detective Amanda Fisher (Jill Marie Jones) and the mysterious Ruby (Lucy Lawless) also join in on the action, follows up on Raimi, Tapert and Starz's successful collaboration on the assorted Spartacus series. For Raimi, who also directed the pilot before turning over those reins to Michael J. Bassett (Solomon Kane, Wilderness), Michael Hurst (a veteran of Raimi and Tapert's Hercules and Xena shows) and others, Ash vs. Evil Dead is perhaps the highest-profile stop on a long road that began when he and his pals set out in 1979 to film the ultimate experience in grueling terror...

FANGORIA: Back when The Evil Dead first came out in 1983, it would have been unthinkable that you could turn on the TV and see the same thing. Is it a strange experience to now be doing this kind of material for television?

RAIMI: Yeah, I guess it’s a testament to how television standards have been lowered [laughs], that they would actually put an Evil Dead show on TV.

FANG: So how did that all happen? It had been reported that you were thinking about doing a new Evil Dead movie; what led to it making the transition to television?

RAIMI: My brother Ivan and I had written different versions of Evil Dead 4 as a feature film, and we started to think about actually going out and getting the financing for it, and I was worried that we wouldn’t be able to. It was getting to be a bigger picture, and the Evil Dead movies have never really been financially successful for the distributors, nor were they ever met with a lot of critical acclaim when they opened, except probably from FANGORIA. So I didn’t know if we could point to anything to show the studios why it could be a good investment for them.

But Rob Tapert, who had a lot of experience in television, said, “You know, the landscape has changed; premium cable channels, specifically Starz, now want things that the audience can’t get anywhere else, and maybe this would be cool for a cable TV show.” So my brother and I rewrote the script for the television world, and took Ash vs. Evil Dead around to the various channels. To our surprise, three different networks wanted it. I couldn’t believe it; I thought I’d have to explain why we thought this could be successful, but they all knew of it and wanted it.

Our only condition was that we had to have absolute creative control, and that was just born out of the desire to give the fans what we felt they wanted. We knew that there were going to be so many things in this show, like the outrageous gore, the dumb choices our hero makes, his bluster and his bragging, that would likely rub the executives the wrong way, but we knew we couldn’t compromise, because we were really making this for the fans who wanted to see it. And we needed to deliver exactly what we hoped they would like. That’s why Starz turned out to be a great place to go; they gave us that authority.
FANG: You worked with pretty limited funds on the first two Evil Dead films; did you have a comparatively bigger budget here, or have you still been working to make a lot out of a little?
RAIMI: We’re still working to make a lot out of a little, because we have a regular cable-TV-show budget, but we’ve got a lot of visual and mechanical and makeup effects—or maybe all shows deal with this kind of problem. For us, it’s more like an Evil Dead II experience; we have professionals doing everything, and department heads. It isn’t as cheap as the first Evil Dead, but it isn’t as big as Army of Darkness, where we had horses and horse wranglers and legs of the dead. We don’t need as big a production as that.
FANG: Speaking of the FX, there is a certain amount of digital work in Ash vs. Evil Dead, but also a lot of great prosthetics. Have you been attempting to keep that faith as much as possible and do as much as you can with physical and makeup FX?
RAIMI: Exactly—we’ve been trying to do everything we can practically, and when we fail, unfortunately, on a TV schedule, head of what’s out there.
But those shots take a lot of time, and for schedule reasons, we haven’t really had the time to do as much as we would like to in that area. We have tried to put as much love and care into it as a television schedule will allow, though it’s a very different way for us to work. In the movies, you can really craft shots, Bruce and I could talk, we could try something and try it again, make a tweak. But on a TV schedule, things have to run by the numbers, so we can’t spend as much time doing the same wild stuff we did in the movies.
The tradeoff of that, though, is being able to have Bruce Campbell for five hours over the course of the season, which the audience really likes. They love watching Bruce; he’s their favorite part of the Evil Dead movies. So they can have a lot of him and the character of Ash, if not those things that the movies do very well, as far as the elements that take a tremendous amount of time or money.
FANG: One of the advantages of doing a TV series as opposed to a movie is that it gives you more of an opportunity for a character to grow and change. Yet the appeal of Ash over the course of the Evil Dead films is that he doesn’t change; he’s the same ridiculous guy throughout.
RAIMI: Yeah, he’s regressed, if anything [laughs], that’s true.
FANG: How have you, the writers and Campbell approached developing him over the course of the first season’s 10 episodes?

“We always thought we should take the evil very seriously...and the humor would come from the fact that our hero is very human.”
RAIMI: Well, it started with Ivan and I figuring out where he would be now after 30 years—what had he been doing, what does he want, how aware of the evil dead is he? We tried to determine, for the audience, what his reality would be, what he wanted, and it was from that last question that we started to develop ideas going forward of what the series would be. We figured out who he’d interact with, who he’d make friends with, who would be interesting characters for him to share scenes with. That’s how we came up with Pablo; he’s someone who notices the tiniest bit of it’s influence to weaknesses.

RAIMI: Well, I started with Ivan and I hired a lot of people he had collaborated with before. A director such as myself has very little experience working with other directors; we’re just never on the same set together. So I counted on his knowledge, as a producer, of experienced directors, and also, the Starz executives pointed us toward dependable, creative people who would be good.

FANG: Was there ever a thought of using some of the up-and-coming filmmakers who have adopted your style and made it their own? I’m thinking of people like Jason Lei Howden, who did the Evil Dead.

RAIMI: They were given freedom, but we made sure they were aware of the style we were going for, which should be oriented toward practical effects and interesting camera shots, when they have time for them, when dealing with the supernatural. We really wanted to make the demons scary and bring out that sense of the unknown. There were a lot of aspects we communicated to them so that the show could be consistent with what we wanted. Like, we didn’t want someone going in there and making fun of the demons, or making them goofy.

FANG: Can you talk about that balance of horror and humor? Certainly, in your pilot episode, there’s a terrific balance between scary and funny, and one never compromises the other.

RAIMI: Yeah, we always thought, my brother and I, that we should take the evil very seriously. It should frighten the audience, it should be a real threat to mankind and to the characters in the show, and then the humor would come from the fact that our hero is very human, and has all the same problems we have and a big ego and low intelligence, and that he’s the guy who has to fight this very serious threat.

FANG: The bit where Ash struggles with the doll in that first episode seems very much like a flashback to the possessed—

RAIMI: Well, really, that was Rob; he inspired Deathgasm down in New Zealand.

RAIMI: I haven’t seen that film yet, but I would love to, I’ll have to look for it. I don’t think I knew of him; it was really about who could deliver as far as television directing, because that’s a unique thing, as I’m learning. You need someone who can work on a schedule, who’s good with the actors, who knows a little bit about visual effects and makeup effects.

RAIMI: Those were some of the things that went into our choices of directors, though I didn’t actually choose them.

FANG: The Evil Dead franchise has been defined in large part by the aggressive visuals you brought to it. Was that a kind of house style the Ash vs. Evil Dead directors were oriented toward, or were they given the freedom to shoot the episodes as they saw fit?

RAIMI: They were given freedom, but we made sure they were aware of the style we were going for, which should be oriented toward practical effects and interesting camera shots, when they have time for them, when dealing with the supernatural. We really wanted to make the demons scary and bring out that sense of the unknown. There were a lot of aspects we communicated to them so that the show could be consistent with what we wanted. Like, we didn’t want someone going in there and making fun of the demons, or making them goofy.

FANG: Can you talk about that balance of horror and humor? Certainly, in your pilot episode, there’s a terrific balance between scary and funny, and one never compromises the other.

RAIMI: We knew that there were going to be so many things in this show...that would likely rub the executives the wrong way.”
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That’s right, dear and mostly naughty readers. The writer/director behind this instant-classic Halloween homage Trick ‘r Treat has tackled Thanksgiving and herded children into an ever-present Yuletide creature feature that aims to warm the cockles of your hearts, even as its metaphorical (and not-so-metaphorical) talons claw away at your jugular. Yet while Dougherty is a confirmed admirer of Black Christmas and Silent Night, Deadly Night, his own vehicle for holiday fear, Krampus (opening December 4 from Universal), is, as its folkloric title suggests, not the sort of gift horror fans are used to finding under their stocking black-trees. The film does not kick off with, say, a screaming girl running through the drapery of a (freezing) cold open, or feature a visceral, festooned, deranged man in a Santa suit strolling transfixed at a miniature display of figurines, festishing amidst a exquisitely decorated model village. Instead, it’s anchored by the European myth of a horned man-beast who serves as the dark yin to Saint Nicholas’ sunny-yet-metaphorically punishing to those children whose behavior has fallen short of earning his jolly lack’s goodwolt. Thus, Krampus delivers all the that magic served evil purposes? What if a kid’s Christmas wish came true in a more sinister way?

In this case, a young boy’s abandonment of the holiday spirit in the midst of an extremely dysfunctional family gathering leads them to fall prey to Krampus and his deadly minions. But Dougherty says this is no mere body-count feature. “As a number of ways, it would be easier to just slap a horror label on this and call it a day,” he notes. “There is a horror aspect, obviously—the movie’s filled with monsters. I believe we have 10 different kinds of creatures, all running around causing chaos. But we’re not making some brutal torture-porn flick with thumbs being slit and dismemberments—because that, to me, doesn’t say Christmas or Krampus. If you look at the Krampus legend in any serious way, it’s very mischievous and twisted, but there is also a dark playfulness to the character. So it was very important to everyone involved that we make a really scary movie that was also really fun and did the holiday justice. We wanted some nutritional value underneath all the special effects, monsters and insanity.”

If the underlying spirit of that scenario rings a bell, you might be thinking of a certain classic vicious-but-ultimately-life-affirming Yuletide apocalypse that befell the town of Kingston Falls back in ’84. “Yeah, Gremlins is a big one,” Dougherty affirms. “I remember being surprisingly touched by that movie. At its heart, it’s the story of a boy who wants to grow up and be independent, and ends up learning this huge lesson about how difficult and important it is to show up and take responsibility when it counts.” More generally, Dougherty cites as a major influence the entire oeuvre of Steven Spielberg’s Amblin Entertainment, which ushered in Gremlins as well as an entire seminal cohort of science/fantasy offerings like E.T., The Goonies, Back to the Future and more. “A lot of the best Amblin films are modern suburban fairy tales, which obviously crosses over with what we’re trying to do with Krampus,” Dougherty says. “You’re introduced to some character who is broken or lost, or a family that is broken and lost, and through an extraordinary event, they’re put through a trial where to triumph means not only to win against whatever foe they face, but also to come out stronger and closer as a result.”

That’s a very succinct, kind, and deceivingly simple description of what is actually a quite complex and nuanced approach to constructing a narrative. dougherty's
twisted, but serious and laced with Dougherty’s affectionate skepticism: “I’m a fan, but Christmas always did seem to me like it was more fun to do,” Dougherty says. “It’s sort of like meeting that person who is really creepy and peculiar and, like, ‘You smile way too much. You’re hiding something’” but, in fact, just want to share their vision and make it known. It’s like, ‘Here’s our vision for what’s happening and what’s coming up next. We’re going to have to dig too far beneath the surface to find that suppressed darkness. “If you just research Christmas and its origins, you find it has some interesting roots,” he says. “A lot of the traditions we hold so dear go back to these very strange, quasi-mystical, pagan rituals. For example, before it was Christmas it was Winter Solstice, and all the pagans would gather and dance and make sure the light didn’t go out. And the pagans didn’t celebrate Christmas because it was a Christian holiday.”
stic. We all put up Christmas trees every year, thanks to the pagans. There are a lot of very interesting things we simply attribute to Christmas because that's all we've known; that's all we've been raised with. Much like when I was researching Halloween for *Trick 'r Treat*, I discovered if you just peek behind the curtain a little bit, the holidays get much darker, weirder and more fun. It's sort of a thrill to uncover the truth behind these things, and then work that knowledge and history into a story.

One dive down the Google rabbit hole led to another, and another, and yet another. Dougherty soon found himself treading water in an ocean of trivia and history until a conclusion materialized to rescue him. "All roads," he declares, "lead to Krampus."

A veteran of adapting characters from superhero comics as a screenwriter on such mega-pictures as *X-Men: United* and *Superman Returns*, Dougherty did not want to simply throw some tinsel and a few strings of red and green lights over some thinly veiled Pumpkin-head clone. "First, you look to create what amounts to a general character sketch that draws upon all the creature's essential, iconic elements," he says. "For us, the must-haves were horns, chains, hooves, claws, that crazy tongue. We tried to come up with a design that implied how old he is—he's ancient—and then put our own spin on that foundation in a way that was respectful of and paid tribute to all the other portrayals of the character that we've seen throughout the ages.

"That's important, I think, because one interesting thing about this particular legend is that everybody's Krampus is different from everyone else's. If you design a Krampus suit, it's going to be way different than mine, and vice versa. We wanted to add a new twist to that history, not overshadow other takes on the character or try to be the definitive, final work."

"This, of course, begs the question: Where did Dougherty and co. take their liberties? "The one big change we made to the Krampus legend was that he doesn't work alone," the director replies. "We decided that if he's the true antithesis of or dark counterpart to Santa Claus—whichever point of view you believe in—it would follow that everything Santa has at his disposal, Krampus would possess the flip side of that."

It's an intriguing premise: Santa Claus lives up in the North Pole surrounded by elves, flying reindeer and talking toys. He's got his own isolated, guarded compound where he sits enthroned as king, his whims, morals and desires the first and last word. Likewise, Krampus—this fascinating archetype who is literally called "The Shadow of Saint Nicholas"—has his own inverse realm and perverted minions.

"The conclusion we came to is, a good Christmas tale teaches you something—whether you like it or not."

"With Krampus' helpers, that's where we had a lot more creative freedom," Dougherty says of this menagerie, created—like Krampus himself—by the team at Weta Workshop and Weta Digital. "Most of those creatures are original characters, and we were able to hark back to a lot of Christmas iconography we've all been exposed to in our own culture—you know, we reference those great old [Rankin/Bass] stop-motion Christmas specials. The movie is filled with those toys that aren't technically supposed to be creepy, but definitely really are. We also tried to build on elements we found in the backgrounds..."
of these old Krampus postcards we pored over, and images from the Krampus festivals that take place in Europe. People construct these gorgeous, hand-crafted masks and costumes made of real fur, then tear through the streets brandishing birch sticks and chains.” Dougherty pauses for a few moments, then offers dreamily, “To me, it’s everything Christmas should be.”

That may be, but finding the right spirit of performance in the midst of such an unorthodox vision of Christmas is a tall order for virtually any actor or actress. “I needed a cast who could sell the drama and bring the comedy, yes,” Dougherty acknowledges, “but also who would continue to elevate the film when the scares kicked in. That takes real talent, and the problem with finding real talent for a complicated batch of tones like this is that sometimes, genre films are looked down on by the very actors who could help keep an interesting, smart, scary script from turning into another disposable horror movie.”

Dougherty understands this from experience: It would be difficult to argue that Anna Paquin, Brian Cox and Dylan Baker did not indeed elevate Trick ‘r Treat. And Dougherty says that in this respect, signing Toni Collette, Adam Scott, David Koechner and Allison Tolman was déjà vu all over again. “Every day I showed up on set, I was grateful beyond words for the cast we got,” he raves. “We really lucked out when it came to bringing together an ensemble you might not see in your typical horror film, but that you would buy in the role of a family in a Christmas movie. “That heightens the impact of the horror elements when they arrive,” he continues. “Like, if this wasn’t a genre film—if this was just a straight-up Christmas drama—and you had this exact same cast, you would buy it. That was the key to making this movie work. Without a cast as adept at exploring different genres and tones, the necessary connections this story requires just wouldn’t have been made.”

It doesn’t hurt that there’s a little horror in the filmographies of the main cast members: Collette was in The Sixth Sense, Scott graced Piranha 3DD and Hellraiser: Bloodline with his presence and Koechner’s credits include Cheap Thrills and Snakes on a Plane. Tolman had her breakout role on the first season of TV’s funny-dark-brutal reimagining of Fargo and subsequently did the stalker thriller The Gift. But, like Krampus itself, none of them are defined by the genre.

When Krampus is released next month, Dougherty’s three-year scary Christmas will come to an end, and he’s headed back to Halloween for a project he says is “looming for sure,” Trick ‘r Treat 2. If audiences connect with both, he could conceivably get back on the scary, touching, fun spin through the two superficially divergent holidays. “Who knows?” he says. “Maybe I’ll be bouncing back and forth between Christmas and Halloween for the rest of my life.”

Be careful what you wish for. Dougherty. A statement like that is obviously in jest coming from a guy with so many creative ironies in the fire, but Krampus is always listening...
With Israeli horror cinema on a slow but steady rise thanks to films like Rabies and Big Bad Wolves, it was only a matter of time before a film would appear on that scene that delivered its scares via the vérité style. But don’t call Doron and Yoav Paz’s JeruZalem a found-footage movie.

“We had the idea of an entire film shot as someone’s point of view,” Yoav says. “We really loved the concept of actors looking and talking straight at the camera, and having the audience see everything through the eyes of one character. We didn’t aim to do a found-footage movie, but rather a point-of-view movie, but couldn’t find the right way to do it. Then a few years ago, when everyone started talking about the Google Glass and this digital technology, we realized that this was our solution.”

“Yes, because we could add another layer of technology to tell the story in a very effective way,” Doron adds. “It’s like an inner world of the protagonist that she and the audience sees, but the people around her cannot. It’s another way to convey information to tell a story. We really liked that idea.”

The result is JeruZalem, which has played fests including Fantasia (where FANGORIA interviewed the Paz brothers) and the Jerusalem Film Festival, and which makes its theatrical/VOD debut December 4 via Epic Pictures. The movie opens with young American Sarah (Danielle Jadelyn) being gifted with a “Smart Glass” rig just before she sets out on a vacation to Tel Aviv with her best friend Rachel (Rabies’ Yael Grobglas). On the plane, they meet handsome archaeologist Kevin (Yon Tumarikin), who convinces them to accompany him to Jerusalem. Soon after they arrive, Sarah’s bag is stolen and she loses her glasses, requiring her to wear the prescription Smart Glass for the rest of the trip. Presto! An easy way to get around one of the biggest bugaboos of handheld horror flicks.

“The biggest problem,” Doron notes, “is that you always say, ‘Why the hell do they keep shooting? Why don’t they just concentrate on running instead of keeping everything in focus?’ So in this case, Sarah’s not taping, we’re just looking through her eyes, her point of view. It’s not some recorded footage that someone has found a few years later.”

What she and audience witness is an increasingly desperate scenario, as one of three gates to hell described in the Talmud opens up and unleashes demonic creatures into Jerusalem. The evil influence transforms the citizens into monsters as well, and the friends are soon fleeing and fighting to survive in a city that has been placed under military lockdown. “Another thing we liked about the idea of making it with that technology,” Yoav says, “was that we could give it the feeling of a first-person shooter. We wanted the protagonists to run through the alleys, to jump, to run, to fall, while the audience experiences it not in long shots or medium shots, but from inside the scenes.”

“We wanted the audience to experience it not in long shots or medium shots, but from inside the scenes.”

—Yoav Paz, writer/director

A first-person zombie-fighting game, in fact, briefly appears in Sarah’s Smart Glass view early on. It’s part of the fun the Pazes have with the pop-up secondary screens before the scary stuff starts, adding humor they believe is necessary to a film of this kind. “If you want people to identify with the characters and fear for them later in the movie, you have to laugh with them at the beginning,” Yoav explains. “We wanted to start with a light,
funny kind of backpacking trip, based on our experiences when we went to South America. That youthful feeling of going to hostels and meeting a lot of different people, planning to travel to one city and then going to another—we wanted to create this atmosphere in Jerusalem.”

They also set out to take advantage of the atmosphere attendant to the city, suf-

“With this kind of equipment, we were able to shoot in the holiest areas and people didn’t notice us.” —Doron Paz, writer/director

fused in history and Biblical culture. “You can feel the intensity there,” Yoav notes. “It’s a very mystical place, and full of heavy atmosphere. We live in Tel Aviv, and it’s a beach town where everybody’s chill and relaxed, so we loved the idea of making a movie in one of the most dramatic cities in the world.”

Shooting a horror movie there, of course, entailed a certain amount of guer-

rilla tactics when treading on sacred ground. “It was important for us to keep things realistic; we didn’t want to fake it,” Doron says. “We wanted to shoot in the holy places, so sometimes we had authorization, sometimes we didn’t. Sometimes we only had permission to shoot a documental, like when we were at the Wailing Wall. Every time we took the script out and started working on the dialogue there, my producers would run over and say, ‘Hide that away, we’re shooting a documental!’ We used a DSLR Canon Mark III camera because it was important for us to keep a low profile, and with this kind of equipment, we were able to shoot in the holiest areas and people didn’t notice us. Sometimes they thought we were tourists like everyone else.”

“It was crucial that the audience get the grittiness of the real locations, the real city,” Yoav continues. “Because not all American movies set in Jerusalem are really shot there.”

“Like, in World War Z, the famous scene that takes place in Jerusalem was actually filmed in Malta,” Doron points out. “You see Jerusalem next to the ocean, which for us Israelis is so funny.”

Jumping back a bit to Doron’s comment about the screenplay—yes, JeruZalem was fully scripted, as opposed to many movies of this type. For a couple of reasons, the Paz brothers eschewed the ad-libbed approach. “It was all very planned,” Yoav says. “First of all, we believed it would have a better result acting-wise, and also, some of the scenes were quite complicat-

ed. The camera was always moving; it was like a dance with the characters that needed to be choreographed. Timing was very important, so there was no improvisation.”

There was one small acting challenge involved in the point-of-view style, how-

ever: “It was very hard to convince them to look at the camera,” Yoav recalls, “because you always tell them the opposite. They’re trained to avoid the camera, and now they needed to say things to the lens. But it adds to the experience of the movie, because the characters are talking to the audience.”

Although the three protagonists are American, it was important to the broth-

ers to utilize an all-Israeli cast. Even Omar, an Arabic man who works at the hostel in the Muslim Quarter where the girls stay and later tries to help them escape, was played by an Israeli, Tom Graziani. All of them, according to the Pazes, were trouper during the demand- (continued on page 80)

Only a couple of layers of glass separate the heroine from the hellsapawn.


CONDEMNED TO BLEED

Squatter splatter is the name of the game in this over-the-top New York shocker.

By MICHAEL GINGOLD

When you get the call to visit the set of a horror movie in progress, there’s always that little doubt in the back of your mind. Will you get to see a bit of the good stuff, or will the filmmakers, anxious to preserve the secrets and gory details, have you watch as the characters speed the day talking to each other?

Any such concerns are put to rest when FANGORIA heads to New York City’s Upper East Side to observe the filming of the independent feature Condemned (in relation to the recent Puerto Rican channel of the same name, and arriving in theaters and on DVD/Blu-ray November 13 from RLJ Entertainment). No sooner has this writer entered the narrow confines of an apartment building the production has taken over than a couple of crazed characters launch into a bloody fight to the death before the camera.

Under the guidance of first-time writer/director Jon Abrahams and co-executive producer Eben Marra, Condemned, set in a tenement in downtown New York City, follows the story of Dante (Rican Rubinstein) and Maya (Dylan Penn, daughter of Sean) on the first day they attempt to stay safe from out of range of the weapons. All of the action on set today wind up scattered or drenched in red, an occupational hazard on the Condemned set. “I made the cardinal error of wearing a white shirt the other day,” producer Dallas Sonnier admits, “and when you pass by someone in a hallway or staircase here, you’re inevitably going to touch the walls, and I got an entire blood streak across my shirt.” It’s the sort of thing Sonnier should be used to by now, as he and his Caliber Media partner Jack Heller (who are producing Condemned with Jason Sokoloff) are having a horrifically busy year. After this project, they’ll jump straight into Adam Egypt Mortimer’s Some Kind of Hate, also starring Rubinstein, and they’ve also had A Night and Bone Tomahawk cut in the last several months. Each of the films has explored a different avenue of the genre, and here they’re backing a distinctive take on the horror story.

“This is the punk-rock, larger-than-life version” of that modern staple, Heller points out. “Most of those movies take you into a building or some other confined space and pull you into the dark corners, and there’s sort of an introverted feel to it.

“We’re working with Jason Sokoloff, which is a little bit different, because we didn’t want them to get to the point where they’re not people anymore.”

—Brian Spears, FX creator

Everyone in this building, though, is extroverted. The characters fill created for each room make being stuck in this building very much crazier and the frightening thing might not be what infects the people, but who’s infected and why they’re coming after you.”

It is this concept, a launch, squattting in the film’s abandoned lower-Manhattan tenement, that pick up a violent contagion thanks to faulty plumbing. And once they succumb to the sickness that turns them blood-crazed, they don’t become simple-minded brutes, but rather retain their eccentric personalities. “You might even say we got smarter once we’re infected,” Abrahams says during a break from the mayhem. “It may add some brain cells.”

And they don’t stop thinking about escaping their equaldehyde environment when Vince is approached in a subsequent moment by his girlfriend Tess (Lydia Hearst, who looks almost as worse for wear as he does, she matters on about lottery tickets. Considering Hearst’s background as a supermodel, there’s a little irony in the fact that this is her second movie in as many years in which she suffuses those beautiful features, after Cabin Fever: Petteni Zoom. Otherwise, the grandaughter of William Randolph Hearst says, there’s no comparison. “The script for this one is so different,” she offers. “There are many underlying layers and personal stories. It’s about all the different people in this building and how their lives are intertwined, and at the same time, they’re all...condemned; there’s really only one inevitable outcome for everyone here.”

As the scenes continue, Tess turns threateningly toward Dante and Maya, who are evidently evading the man who co-main normal while everyone else becomes a pestilent maniac. Maya has run away from home to be with Dante, and Rubinstein says, “He feels kind of like her savior as they go through the crazy adventure that happens in this building. In the scene we just did, I’m trying to protect her from getting wacked, and instead, these two clash with each other and all the blood pours down on us. It’s been all about the bloody scenes for a week now.”

This supremely messy scenario represents a 150 for Gesner, who was previously active in the art and fashion worlds before turning his attentions toward filmmaking. He wrote the initial incarnation of Condemned a decade ago; Abrahams says, “Ell is one of my best friends, and I’ve been reading various incarnations of this script for years. It’s been such a long time now that originally, I thought I was going to play Dante, and now I’ve grown into Vince.”

When the inspiration first struck to write a horror screenplay set in New York City, Gesner initially considered making it a haunted-house story before drawing from his youth to come up with something more specific to the setting. “Growing up in apartment buildings, you see and hear your neighbors doing all kinds of things,” he says. “You know you see people together and they seem happily married, but then you hear screaming and things breaking and soon somebody’s moving out. So I decided to do something that was an exaggerated caricature of life. Every single character in this film is based on people I’ve known or things I’ve experienced, and the idea of all these people who have very different points of view being forced to live in this confined space together.”

Murphy (Michael Duffield) gets all that work into his body, and look what happens to his face.

Other than Maya (Dylan Penn) and Dante (Rican Rubinstein), no one holds anything back in this movie.

From the confines of the first story, it’s clear thatogan is a horror film that is not afraid to push the boundaries of what is acceptable in the genre. The film’s creators have taken a unique approach to horror, infusing the story with a mix of humor and gore, and it’s clear that this is a film that is not for the faint of heart. With its claustrophobic setting and intense action scenes, Condemned is sure to be a hit with fans of the genre. It’s a film that is not for everyone, but for those who are fans of horror, it’s definitely worth checking out.
There is thus a bit of social allegory festering under the surface of Gesner’s outrageous scenario, an approach that also stems from his childhood. “I remember seeing The Blob when I was a kid, back when we were still at odds with Russia,” he notes. “I was watching it with my dad, and he was like, ‘Well, you know what this movie’s about?’ I said no, and he said, ‘It’s about Communism taking over America.’ I was like, ‘Really?’ and he said, ‘Yeah, the blob is red and it’s going people up and sucking everyone into it, and it’s becoming a bigger and bigger menace—the Red Menace!’ That really blew my mind.”

Plenty of red goofiness is certainly in evidence as Fango’s set sojourn continues, though Brian Spears, who’s handling the makeup FX with Peter Germer, notes that the movie has a more varied palette. In creating the extreme symptoms of the infection, Spears says, “We’ve been trying to go with pus and bile, not just blood—a more yellowish look. It’s like Evil Dead II or Street Trash [and their multicolored bodily fluids]; we want to do something different here.”

That goes for the look of its afflicted killers as well: “We’ve done our fair share of zombies and vampires and monsters,” Spears says. “These are still human beings, so we wanted to avoid that. It was a creative challenge, because we didn’t want them to get to the point where they’re not people anymore. Their humanity comes through in all the makeup.”

Spears and Germer’s room is especially busy today, as the pair, along with artists Steve Saturn and Kristen Alimina, help Abrahams out of his beggar getup while implanting a large knife blade into the face of another cast member—we won’t reveal who—and apply boils and burst veins to actors Jordan Gelber (playing Big Foot) and Michael DeMello (as Murphy). Another member of the ensemble arrives and sits down in the makeup chair: Johnny Messner, previously seen in films like Believers and Anacondas: The Hunt for the Blood Orchid. “I play Gault, who is a sadomasochistic, narcissistic...homosexual, right? Considering my lover is in this room somewhere.

“He’s been tortured his whole life. Messner continues, “and I think living in this building is the first time he’s had the opportunity to be himself, come out and be the man he’s always wanted to be. Because he was raised in a wealthy family and went to private school—and things went a little aury there.

Not half as bad as they do in his current dwelling, though, and as Fango watches the walls and floors—already covered with graffiti and worse—get even more trashed, the question arises: How did the producers find a New York building they could seriously mess up like this?

“We spent a lot of time going to every abandoned tenement we could possibly find,” Heller says. “And then with this one, there was an ad for one of its apartments for rent, and someone in our office sent it over, and we came by. We never figured we would find the building we needed in such a concentrated part of the city; we always thought we’d have to piece meal the apartments in different locations. But we ended up getting everything in one spot; it was just the luck of the draw.”

“There’s only one person still living here,” Sonnier adds. “She’s more of a de facto security guard, making sure the building is safe; otherwise, it’s totally empty. There’s actually a clause in our contract that says we’re allowed to throw blood around with abandon. The exterior is too nice, though, so while all the interiors are being done here, the exterior is going to be shot in Brooklyn. It’s pretty disgusting.”
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Two strong genre talents enact a scenario of the wicked preying on the weak.

By SHAWN MACOMBER

The surreal terrors that bespeckle the harrowing psychological thriller Dementia (in select theaters and on VOD December 4 from IFC Films) can be traced back to a 2014 confab between Mike Testin and BoulderLight Pictures producers Raphael Margules and J.D. Lifshitz. The trio had collaborated the previous year on the well-received body-horror shocker Contracted, on which Testin served as cinematographer, and gotten along well enough to go on the hunt for another project on which Testin could make his directing debut. Finally, after an extended period of mulling, a concept tripped the wire in the cinematic snare.

“What do you think of doing a Misery-meets-Baby Jane kind of thing?” Testin recalls one of the enterprising pair asking. “That actually sold me pretty fast,” he says. “When I heard the premise of a very self-sufficient and proud guy who ends up reliant on a manipulative stranger’s care, I felt there was also a really cool opportunity to develop the backstory and add a bit of a Jacob’s Ladder-type dimension. I like the idea of getting an audience to follow an objective narrative, and then, in certain moments, jolting them into a subjective perspective that unsettles them and suggests there is more happening than they can fully comprehend.”

Screenwriter Meredith Berg entered the picture, and after several brainstorming sessions as a creative quartet, she returned with a solid treatment. Over the next few weeks, she pounded out a nuanced, multidimensional script delving into the life of George Lockhart (played in the movie by The Sac- rament’s Gene Jones), a curmudgeon-with-a-heart-of-gold military vet puttering through a mostly cloistered existence (he does play chess over the phone with a pal) until a stroke fells him. His family hires a mysterious live-in nurse named Michelle (Kristina Klebe from Proxy and Halloween), who not only possesses a seriously sin-ister bent, but apparently harbors nearly as many secrets as her ward.

The question then becomes, how much of the ensuing perfidy and supernatural happenings are reality-based, and how much are filtered darkly through the prism created by George’s brain trauma? How does a man process a slipping grip on reality while simultaneously struggling to adapt to the unfamiliar dual albatrosses of vulnerability and dependence? What can he believe when conspiracy masquerades as coincidence and vice versa?

“There’s a lot of manipulation and deception going on in Dementia,” Testin says. “The antagonist and protagonist roles aren’t necessarily black-and-white. George’s stroke and its aftermath only blur the lines further. What attracted me to the project, generally, was the challenge of finding moments, both obvious and not-so-obvious, to get that complex swirl of intent and action and reaction across on screen in an interesting and hopefully somewhat unique way.

“My end goal was to make a character-based suspense film built around a steady unwinding of information from the beginning all the way through to the credits,” he adds. “A lot of movies today seem to be

mainly interested in instant gratification, and I can appreciate that sometimes. As a filmmaker, though, I’m more intrigued by the vibe and pace older thrillers kept. I personally love movies where there are gaps in the plotting just wide enough to allow an audience to engage more with the story and fill in the blanks a little bit—to participate, in a way, as it unfolds.”

His own touchstones when it comes to that narrative approach, Testin says, are the aforementioned Jacob’s Ladder as well as Mulholland Dr. and Psycho. “I love the darkness Alfred Hitchcock creates in Psycho,” the director explains. “It’s deceptive, really, how he does it. If you go purely by what’s on screen, it’s not necessarily a true horror film. But the blanks it
prompts you to fill in? And the images it helps get into your head? So creepy, I’m also a huge fan of David Lynch. Often in his films, it’s hard to say explicitly what this or that specific visual is supposed to be saying to you, but all of it flowing together is what makes the movie effective and gives it its ultimate meaning. All those tiny nudges add up to something completely affecting, and sometimes disturbing.”

Of course, all attempts to tap into the collective unconscious would be for naught sans an acting ensemble up to delivering substantial, believable performances, and Dementia boasts a bevy of talent, including Jones, Klebe, Peter (Resolution) Cilella, Graham (Almost Human) Skipper, Marc Senter from The Lost and The Devil’s Carnival and Richard Riehle from Hatchet, Texas Chainsaw 3D and many others. “I was on a job in England at the time of casting, shooting 10 hours a day and looking at audition tapes or reel clips in my downtime,” Testin recalls. “It was tiring, for sure, but we were locked into a start date, and obviously you want to have some kind of ownership of who you’re going to be working with, so there wasn’t much choice except to get it done. That said, I couldn’t be happier with how it all turned out.

“I instinctively felt Gene would be great,” he continues. “I mean, all I really knew about him at the time was based on his fantastic scene in No Country for Old Men and some footage from The Sacrament, but that was enough for me to believe he’d be a huge asset to my movie. Kristina, meanwhile, had a very smart, thorough take on her character and where she wanted to go with the performance. We had a few long conversations that actually gave me some new perspectives into the story as well. For me, it was just about keeping those dynamics, however intriguing, contained to where I wanted the overall film to be, rather than overwhelming it. She and I came to a good compromise, and she brought so much to her role and the film.”

Cilella, who taps so beautifully into the pathos and frustration of attempting to care for an ailing parent while keeping one’s own life afloat, signed onto the film on the Friday before the Sunday start date, replacing another actor who dropped out. “I don’t know how much I should go into all of that,” Testin says. “It was definitely a scramble, though, and I think it was the Resolution guys who ultimately recommended Peter to us, for which I’m truly thankful. One day of prep left, and he walked in and completely nailed it.”

As a first-time feature director, then, Testin is counting his blessings. “It was a super-tight budget and a mad dash, but everyone rallied around the project,” he says. “I’ve made short films on the side for a while, and I always had the idea in the back of my head that I wanted to direct a feature. Dementia is such a cool place to start—a great story built up in a very creative, supportive environment.”

Much like one of those quick, spine-chilling visions in Jacob’s Ladder or a creepy Norman Bates glance that opens the mind’s doors to billowing terrors, however, the subject matter of Testin’s own film could occasionally creep up on him. “Making Dementia was a wonderful—and also kind of terrifying—experience,” he admits. “I don’t want to imagine ever finding myself in the situation George is in, but immersing ourselves in the story as deeply as we did, I think we all went there, at least a little bit.”

The war is long over for George, but his battle for survival is just beginning.

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Chasing The Art Of Horror
Genre Renaissance man Larry Fessenden celebrates three decades of unique films and looks forward to more.

By MICHAEL GINGOLD

It was 30 years ago that New York independent filmmaker Larry Fessenden founded his Glass Eye Pix company, and the horror scene has been nothing but the better for it. Following a series of short films, he made his feature debut with 1991’s environmental shocker No Telling, but truly staked his claim in the genre with the semi-autobiographical semi-vampire drama Habit in 1997. Wendigo followed in 2001 and The Last Winter in 2007, fully establishing Fessenden as a man with a true vision, and an ambition to elicit more than simple scares from audiences.

This quartet is just one facet of his achievements: In the past decade, as a producer, he has launched the careers of such indie notables as Ti West (The Roost, The House of the Devil, The Innkeepers), Jim Mickle (Stake Land), Glenn McQuaid (I Sell the Dead) and others, frequently acting in the movies as well. This anniver-

sary year has been an especially busy one. He put together an extensive supplements package (including—full disclosure—liner notes by yours truly) for Shout! Factory’s The Larry Fessenden Collection four-Blu-ray set; entered the world of video games as a writer (with frequent collaborator Graham Reznick) and performed on Sony Computer Entertainment’s hit Until Dawn; produced, among other films, the feature directorial debut of his 15-year-old son Jack; and launched (with McQuaid) the third lineup of Tales from Beyond the Pale audio horror/dramas, with contributors including Stuart Gordon and his regular scripter Dennis Paoli. Three episodes for a fourth season were recorded live in front of a packed audience this past summer at Montreal’s Fantasia festival, where FANGORIA got Fessenden to open up about his history, theories and views on the future of scare flicks.

FANGORIA: Going back through all the material for the Blu-ray package, did you have any epiphanies about your career or your development as a filmmaker over the years?

FESSENDEN: No, just that I have a peculiar sensibility, and it has always been difficult, and that’s why I am where I am. I’ve just been on my own path, and sometimes that has led to frustration. It’s one of the reasons I produce, because I get to make movies that are more in line with the public taste, but I’ve always had the sensibility of a very quiet, almost childlike awe of the world, and that’s something I try to convey, like in Wendigo.

Also, my stuff seems to be a chronicle of...I won’t say failure, but of trying things and not quite succeeding. You know, my monster in Wendigo never satisfied me. So there’s sort of a self-pitying pathos to the whole thing, but I also stand by the fierce originality of what I’m trying to do, and I would now consider myself to be a part of the movement that reclaimed the genre from the mainstream. Hollywood got excited about horror after Halloween, an independent film that was so successful, and they started making it in their system, and my agenda is to make very personal horror movies like Habit. I stand by that as a historical marker that inspired a wave of new filmmakers. So there’s that little bit of self-pity and a little bit of defining myself as an important figure at one point in time.

FANGORIA: You said that the films you’ve produced are more commercial, and yet none of them adhere to commercial formulas. They’re always very personal.

FESSENDEN: Well, that’s what I stand for; I really believe in the individual voice. I believe that if you tell your story and are true to yourself and your own aesthetics, you can invite an audience into a world that is uniquely your own. I’ve always tried to stand up for Ti West, for example; his pacing has always been the opposite of what the industry is looking for, and I feel like the reason his movies are outstanding is because we created an environment where he could do that work and not compromise.

Of course, as a producer, I’m always trying to reason with the filmmakers, and I have stood on the side of the industry and said things to Ti like, “You should cut seven minutes from The House of the Devil.” But when he said no, I said, “Well, I’m with you,” and what makes that movie stand out is just how long you’re in a state of dread, wondering what’s going to happen.

FANGORIA: And that’s what it wound up being celebrated for.

FESSENDEN: Exactly, and it’s what Ti does well. I would apply that to all the films I’m proud of, even the little ones like Jim McKenney making a movie

Lauren Ashley Carter is out of her head in Darling.
Larry Fessenden says anything a filmmaker has in *The Mind’s Eye* can be accomplished regardless of budget.

tons] on Super-8, with kids strapped into garbage cans playing robots. That evokes another genre I love, those somewhat damaged films of the ’50s with people in terrible monster suits. There’s a whole tradition there that I’m celebrating, which has to do with growing up in the ’70s and the access I had to movies back then.

And then there are [Stake Land’s] Jim Mickle and Nick Damici, whose approach is more technically commercial, but they’re also pursuing matters of the heart and atmosphere. A film like Stake Land is clearly not made with the agenda of how we’re going to get the most people into the theater; these are passionate, handmade pictures that resonate with people, and that’s the goal. I believe there is an audience for good, unexpected genre movies, but you’ve got to stick with it to make them.

**FANG:** And you’re passing that enthusiasm down to your own next generation. Your son Jack recently finished directing his first feature, *Stray Bullets.*

**FESSENDEN:** Yeah, and it’s spectacular. He’d made several shorts, and they were all rather long—half an hour; he’s a long-winded filmmaker [laughs]. He was advised by a couple of festival people we know that that’s an awkward length, and my wife, his mother, said to him, “You should just make a feature!” And of course, he took it seriously, so we embarked on that last summer, and it was a great experience. Of course, I pulled in some favors from actor friends and we got a great cast, but we had a very small crew.

That’s the way I like to work, even though it’s impractical as you go forward in your career, but I can revisit that with my kid. It’s what I’ve always said when I mentor young filmmakers: “Let’s have a pared-down crew, give everybody more responsibility.” On *Stray Bullets,* the sound guy helped make this car rig, and he was so excited; he said, “I’m not allowed to do this on most films, and it’s so much fun.” So I get to live vicariously all over again through Jack.

It’s not a horror film, but it’s going to please anyone who loves cinema; it has plenty of guns and interesting characters, and a lot of cojones. It stars James LeGros, John Speredakos, Kevin Corrigan, Larry Fessenden [laughs], Jack, a couple of other kids and then some actors from upstate, including Robert Warren from *Cold in July.* It’s a great cast, and Jack’s been spoiled, thinking that this is how fun filmmaking is going to be, when in fact it’s a nightmare, but he should have a good beginning. If he experiences success and confidence and what it should be like, then he can carry the flag onward and stand for righteousness in the making of movies.

**FANG:** Well, for him to have that cast at his age is pretty amazing.

**FESSENDEN:** I’ll say! Good Lord, I can’t get that in my own films! But I believe in creating a positive environment when I make a movie, no matter what the size, and as a result, I’ve bonded with actors I’ve used in the past, become friends with them and was able to call them up for *Stray Bullets.* Kevin was in one of the Tales from Beyond the Pale audio plays, James had been in a couple of them and was also in *The Last Winter* and *Bitter Feast,* and then John, of course, is in everything we can cast him in. He’s a great actor, and underrated, though that might change with *The Mind’s Eye,* Joe Begos’ movie; I’m very excited about that one, and John has a substantial role. He gets to play a villain, a classic ’80s maniac, and it’s great to see him chew the scenery, and it’s gonna be fun for the fans. It might also change with Jack’s film, because John has a great part in that.

“My message is always: Make a small film. Don’t chase the money, chase the dream, chase the art.”

**FANG:** Can you talk about the other young filmmakers you’ve worked with lately?

**FESSENDEN:** Well, I’m enjoying collaborating with Mickey Keating, who’s just a live wire. He was an intern at Glass Eye—a lot of these people were—and then he made *Ritual* and I did a small bit in it, just over the phone. Then he made *Pod,* and I traveled up to Maine to be in that, which was a great experience, because I had such a different look there. It was a rough-and-tumble production, and my co-star from *Jug Face,* Lauren Ashley Carter, was in it and she’s always a doll.

Then Mickey came to us and said, “Let me do a small New York film with Lauren as the star,” and we said, “Absolutely.” So we made *Darling,* which is a very special
move. Mickey just absorbs certain horror subgenres, and Darling [out next year from Screen Media] has a nice Roman Polanski vibe, but with a modern spin, because Mickey's an ADD kid from the 2000s. And then Jenn Wexler, one of my producers, has a script we're looking at, and I've been talking with Jeremy [The Battery] Gardner about his next project. Jeremy has done a couple of Tales, and I love his scripts, so I'm hoping that can turn into something.

FANG: Well, The Battery is kind of the best Glass Eye Pix movie that Glass Eye Pix never actually made.

FESSENDEN: Exactly, and I was in that. He begged me to be in it more substantially, and I never answered his e-mails, and he was very gracious and kept persisting, and eventually I did a voice for it. Then, of course, when I finally saw it, I realized what a gem it was.

FANG: Are you finding that a lot of up-and-coming filmmakers on the East Coast have been taking on your spirit and making it their own in the last decade or so, like Gardner?

FESSENDEN: I don't know about the East Coast, but there's a great new generation I've enjoyed watching and working with. I really like Joe Begos' style, him and Josh Ethier. I enjoy their films, and I enjoyed even more being on their set [acting in The Mind's Eye]; they make movies the way I like to make them. It's a real family atmosphere; the dad brings the food and it's clearly his same gaffer, and they're always bickering at each other, and Joe does his own camerawork. I love that. He brings this great energy and a kind of zany madness to his filmmaking and his setpieces. He's just a maniac, and it's really fun working with him. I also had a great time doing We Are Still Here with Ted Geoghegan, who I already knew as a publicist and as a writer and a pal, but then he made a cool little film, so we look forward to what he'll do next. And it's fun keeping up with JT Petty. We tried to make a movie with him for a year, but it didn't happen.

Quite honestly, there's a lot of heartbreak in this business, and it's essential to make it clear to aspiring filmmakers, if they're reading this, that if you're not having success, it's

(continued on page 81)
"Designer" Mind Games

One of the key members of Larry Fessenden's team is Graham Reznick, who as sound designer has created memorable audioscapes for a number of Glass Eye Pix productions. Yet the films he has directed himself under the company's umbrella have had to do with visual manipulation, as is evident just from the titles: He helmed 2009's I Can See You and the 3D short The Viewer.

"Actually, I came into sound design late in my process, just as an artist," Reznick reveals, "I was primarily involved in visuals at first; I was a painter in high school, and Ti West and I actually used to take comic-book-drawing classes together. I got interested in sound just because I like music, and did a lot of audio design for my own short films in college. So when Ti got his first feature [The Roost], he asked me to help him with that, and I've been doing a lot of sound work ever since. I think that because there are not a lot of filmmakers working as sound designers, it has gotten me some nice attention."

Now he's planning to get inside your mind with The Designer, a co-production of his Aphasia Films and Glass Eye. Reznick presented the project to potential financiers at the Frontières International Co-Production Market during this past summer's Fantasia festival in Montreal, where he also gave FANGORIA some details about the movie. He says that it expands on the ideas explored in his previous feature: "I Can See You is about someone's mind turning on them for a variety of external reasons, and The Designer is about a collective consciousness. Not in the sense of a hive-mind idea, but the collective consciousness of a society, and the way we can all be manipulated and our realities shaped.

It's about a video-game designer who has a project that turns people's simple jobs into games through augmented reality," he continues. "As you play, your mind is slowly being taught certain things, and that allows the designer to take control and reculpt your reality. It touches upon a couple of themes I've been obsessed with for a long time. I'm a fan of writers like Philip K. Dick, and David Cronenberg's eXistenZ is one of my favorite movies of all time. I like to describe this movie as eXistenZ meets In the Mouth of Madness meets Short Cuts."

Glass Eye's Fessenden and Peter Phok are producers on The Designer, for which work has already begun. "We've shot little bits and pieces, and Larry has a small role in the film," Reznick reveals. "Steve Moore, who has done a lot of great music [for films like The Guest, Cub and the upcoming The Wind's Eye] and is in the band Zambi, has already composed some pieces for it, and will likely score the rest of the movie alongside some stuff by myself."

While most films about video games tend to concentrate on the hardware and spectacle, Reznick says The Designer will take a different tack. "This isn't an action movie; it's about these games and their place in our everyday life now. Nat consoles like PlayStation and Nintendo and Xbox, but how gamification has expanded into all sorts of other places in our lives. The way we interact with websites, with Facebook, with ATMs, even with slot machines is like a crazy gamification. It's becoming a powerful tool in the way companies are infiltrating the human race, basically. There's a similarity to how data is mined from consumers, as with Facebook; you give Facebook a ton of data, and who knows what they're learning about you and your world? That kind of cataloging and shaping of the human consciousness is what fascinates me.

"I haven't seen a movie about video games in that light," he continues. "Everyone's got Candy Crush Saga or whatever on their phones now; if you own a smartphone, you've probably played at least one game. Being a gamer is no longer something where you have to know what Wolfenstein 3-D is to say you're a part of it. My mom is a gamer; she plays Candy Crush and stuff like that all the time, and that hasn't been explored, to my knowledge, in any great extent in cinema."

—Michael Gingold

THEY'RE ALL DYING TO WIN HIS GAME

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DANGEROUS TASTE
After 20 years of delivering scary stories live, Clay McLeod Chapman brings “The Pumpkin Pie Show” to FANGORIA’s Podcast Network.

By KEN W. HANLEY

Although he has ingrained himself into the horror genre for almost two decades, 2015 is an especially big year for macabre mastermind Clay McLeod Chapman. With critical acclaim for the coming-of-age horror feature The Boy (which he scripted from his short story with director/longtime collaborator Craig William Macneill, and now on VOD following a successful festival run), his graphic novel Self-Storage recently issued by Michael Bay’s 451 Comics and dual performances of Tales from Beyond the Pale and The Pumpkin Pie Show at the Stanley Film Festival, Chapman has rarely been busier. And with the 20th anniversary of The Pumpkin Pie Show lurking around the corner, Chapman has broken new ground by making his eerie, emotional monologue series available widely for the first time as Fangoria.com’s second original podcast.

For those who have yet to experience The Pumpkin Pie Show, there is nothing quite like it on the genre scene, as Chapman and co-performer Hanna Cheek dramatize the crazed, maniacal and tragically unfortunate by fans should experience Chapman’s visceral vision, the podcast offers bite-sized scary stories that are rarely readily available for free. The Pumpkin Pie Show is the type of show that can bring out the nostalgic fright fan in us all—the one who remembers childhoods punctuated by terrifying tales and urban legends.

“`The Pumpkin Pie Show has always been this aggressive campfire-storytelling session, so imagine you’re hearing a set list of ghost stories, but they’re character-driven monologues,” Chapman says. “They’re almost like 10-to-15-minute power-ballad-style scary tales that skew close to the Poe side of things, like, ‘I’m the narrator of this story, and by the way, I’m totally not crazy. You guys can hear the beating heart in the walls right now, but I’m not insane. Oh, by the way, I murdered somebody.’”

The show changes every year, and the stories are always connected, whether by theme or content,” adds Cheek. “We make a point of choosing a different way to go every year, so it’s a challenge to create a new version of what’s essentially five character monologues that reel in the audience, make them relate to them and then turn things around so that everyone in the room is a crazy murderer.”

The road from esteemed stage show to petrifying podcast has been a long, arduous one for Chapman and Cheek, who’ve been friends since college. Now, The Pumpkin Pie Show is a hot ticket in the New York underground theater world, having become a Halloween staple, and Chapman and Cheek have also taken the show on the road to whatever wicked venue will host them. With new tales written every year, audiences can never truly know what to expect. “At this point, we’ve got years’ worth of stories,” Chapman says, “so we joke about taking requests. Like, if someone came up and said, ‘Hey, could you do that crazy bridesmaid story?’ we would do it. The show is made up of a repertoire of stories that share a thematic link, or we’ll do a quintet that all take place on a cruise liner during an outbreak or epidemic. Or we could do a trinity revolving around a school shooting. They’re always probing, dark, macabre and sometimes a little tongue-in-cheek.

“That’s what’s great about campfire tales,” he continues. “It’s never just, ‘Oh, I’m gonna tell you a story.’ It’s about selling the story and existing in the space. The audience becomes just enough of a part of it that it’s interactive, and they’re on the edge of their seats going, ‘Well, what happened? You feed off each other.”

Nevertheless, theater is still unfortunately a sea into which many horror
hounds have yet to dip their toes. The Pumpkin Pie Show won’t spray blood upon the audience like, say, the Evil Dead or Re-Animator musicals, nor is it a multitiered, big-budget production similar to the stage version of The Woman in Black. Yet The Pumpkin Pie Show makes a great, convincing case for the stage as a medium for fear, and has built up a reputation for being an immersive experience—an aspect the podcast version aims to replicate with its intimacy.

“Hanna and I like to say that The Pumpkin Pie Show is theater for those who don’t like theater, because I personally have a love-hate relationship with it,” Chapman declares. “I would rather establish a level of interaction with the audience, because that’s what you can’t get from a movie, which doesn’t need the viewers to exist. For The Pumpkin Pie Show, we need an audience. It could be one person, 50 or 500; it depends on having the purveyor of the story deliver the content to an avid listener.

“It’s also more fun to be in an audience where a performer is directly addressing you, where you’re invested and can’t hide behind the person in front of you,” he continues. “In that sense, you become part of the show. It’s almost like theatrical snowflakes, where you’ll never see the exact same show ever again, and that’s because the audience will be different. Someone may laugh at something that has never been laughed at before, or someone might sneeze during a specific line and it could adjust and fluctuate everything. You just never know, because we’re lobbing all this horror at the audience and they’re throwing it right back; it could be a home run or a foul ball, but we’ll never know until it happens.”

Thus, The Pumpkin Pie Show works as a living, breathing piece of art in the listener’s imagination, which Chapman and Cheek have perfected over 19 years of performances. Even though the voices can become familiar, the mannerisms and vocabulary of our sordid narrators are unique to the characters at hand, settling under your skin and allowing you to visualize the nastier details. That dynamic is not only part of the fun, it provides The Pumpkin Pie Show with a viable future as a series of audio nightmares, one that fright fans can revisit again and again.

“Horror is just where my head is, and what’s funny to me is that I love telling stories that elicit a little sympathy for the devil,” Chapman offers. “So we’ll have either a character we come to learn is not who they think they are, or one you don’t want to like, such as a mass murderer or a child killer. But it’s not so much that I give you a change of heart as much as I show you what led them to this place. Having an amazing performer like Hanna helps, but the ghost within the shell is that these stories suddenly become tangible and palatable. That’s what you get through the performances.”

“You can start off with a relationship between audience and performer,” Cheek says, “where you get to know the character Clay writes as someone you can identify and sympathize with, before you really know the details of what we’re talking about. That can be said about films, novels, TV; as the person consuming these stories, you put yourself in the protagonist’s shoes. We get to play with the notion of ‘Who is the protagonist, and what is that relationship like when they’re not the shining hero?’ We ask the audience, ‘In what ways are you like this person? Could you have turned down that road at some point?’ It’s almost like finding out how easy it is to wear the devil’s shoes.”

The Pumpkin Pie Show can currently be found on iTunes, Stitcher, Libsyn and Beyond-Pod for Android. For more information about the podcast and other programs in our network, visit Fangoria.com. For more about the live version of The Pumpkin Pie Show, visit www.claymcleodchapman.com.
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“An accomplished debut”
- The Hollywood Reporter

“A mother's grief over the death of her toddler turns to paranoia when she begins to suspect her eccentric neighbors are involved in a satanic pact.”

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“A mother's grief over the death of her toddler turns to paranoia when she begins to suspect her eccentric neighbors are involved in a satanic pact.”

“An accomplished debut”
- The Hollywood Reporter
THE SOUND OF FEAR

Like the ghouls it accompanied, Fabio Frizzi’s music for Lucio Fulci’s films will never die.

By ROBERTO E. D’ONOFRIO

Only few musicians have contributed so much to horror cinema, specifically the Italian side, as Fabio Frizzi. Although he has scored over 80 movies ranging from ribald comedies to violent Westerns, Frizzi’s art is inexorably intertwined with that of Lucio Fulci; his themes contributed greatly to the success of pictures like Zombie, City of the Living Dead/The Gates of Hell and The Beyond. This year, that collaboration was spotlighted in the U.S. as the composer brought his “Frizzi 2 Fulci” concert, a showcase of his work for the late shock maestro, to Stateside fans.

Although the show could be seen as an elegiac career summation, Frizzi’s over-40-year journey through frightening film music isn’t over yet. Moviemakers who grew up shivering to his scores are now recruiting him to compose for their short-film projects, including Scooter McCrae with Saint Franklin and Chris Milewski for The Cold Eyes of Death (co-directed by Luciano Imperoli) and Violets Bloom on an Empty Grave. FANGORIA traveled to Rome and sat down with Frizzi in his recording studio to look back on his days making music for Fulci’s shocking sights.

FANGORIA: After early composing credits including the hit comedy Fantozzi (a.k.a. White Collar Blues), you met Lucio Fulci for the first time...

FABIO FRIZZI: Yes, and I have the Bixio Recording Company to thank for that. Carlo Bixio and his brother helped me a lot; he involved me in his family business, and I got to meet their father, Cesare Andrea Bixio, one of the most eminent Italian film composers. He wrote the famous “Parlami d’amore Marilli” [heard in Goodfellas] and “La strada nel bosco,” which was used by Federico Zampaglione in Shadow. He wrote the score for the first sound picture released in Italy [1930’s La canzone dell’amore], so he’s considered the man who invented the soundtrack there, and was the reference point for all Italian music. I spent many evenings at their home, and on one of those evenings Carlo offered to put together a trio composed of me, Franco Bixio and Vince Tempera. Initially, I was a bit dubious, but I thought about it and accepted, and we started working immediately.

Carlo sent us to meet Lucio at a test screening of Four of the Apocalypse. We sat in the projection room, and when the movie started, we heard Bob Dylan’s “Knockin’ on Heaven’s Door.” Lucio and the producers later explained that they wanted a soundtrack of songs in the same style. I was a little concerned, as although that was the kind of music I loved, I knew it would be very difficult to do something to match Bob Dylan! Then Carlo Bixio came up with a great idea: “Listen, if they want songs, we’ll write a whole record of them, instead of just a soundtrack.” To do so, he contacted a Dutch duo called Greenfield & Cook, who were doing the same kind of ballads. I don’t remember why, but Greenfield didn’t show up in Italy, so we decided to call the band Cook and the Benjamin Franklin Group. My relationship with Lucio began during the recording of that soundtrack, and I still have good memories of that film. In my concerts, I always play some songs from it.

FANG: Was it at that point you began pursuing horror movies?

FRIZZI: That was a very busy time for me; in 1975, seven pictures for which I wrote the music were released, including another Fulci film, Dracula in the Provinces, a comedy with very few horror elements. With Four of the Apocalypse, I’d already had my first encounter with that kind of thing, as it contained a lot of blood; Lucio later transposed many of the characteristics of the sadistic and violent Mexican bandit Chaco, played by the amazing Tomas Milian, into characters seen in his horror movies.

I did The Psychic with Lucio in 1977; that was a movie on which he had great expectations. He was sure he could prove he was a class-A filmmaker with that. Today, we all know he was a great director—all around the world, people talk much more about Fulci than about Fellini—but in those years he wasn’t so sure about himself. Like all artists, he wanted to demonstrate that he was a great director, and therefore he put together an amazing international cast, including one of the most beautiful women I’ve ever seen in my life, Jennifer O’Neill. Then there were Marc Porel, Gabriele Ferretti...
and other great actors. Dardano Sacchetti and Roberto Gianviti wrote the script, which in my opinion is not a horror story. I also don’t consider the beautiful Deep Red a horror film, but a giallo with hints of it, and I consider The Psychic a psychological giallo.

Back to my involvement with it: Lucio, who was happy about our previous work together, called us back, and we focused on the watch that reveals that someone has been buried alive behind a wall. Franco, Vince and I always shared duties, and I was the one who had to write that seven-note tune [the film’s Italian title Sette note in nero translates to Seven Black Notes]. It wasn’t easy; that was the year of Close Encounters of the Third Kind, and its brilliant theme was still in audiences’ minds. The original idea was to play it on a real music box; we even called Switzerland to have it built and thought about giving it to an audience member at the premiere, but that was too expensive and would have taken too much time.

In the end, we decided to record it using a celesta, which reproduces the notes of a carillon. We also wrote a beautiful song that Linda Lee sang. It’s a good movie, but it didn’t give Lucio the self-confidence he needed, and in fact he was a bit disappointed by the box-office results. Many years later, Quentin Tarantino asked us permission to include The Psychic’s main theme in Kill Bill, and that’s something we’re very proud of. Franco, Vince and I were invited to the Rome premiere, and I have to admit, it was a very emotional moment for us. That’s the kind of recognition that makes you believe you’ve done something good in your life.

**FANG:** Before Zombie, you did another Western with Fulci, Silver Saddle.

**FRIZZI:** Yes, and that was one of the few movies where I was close friends with an actor: Giuliano Gemma. The first movie in which Giuliano had a leading role was Un dollaro bucato [One Silver Dollar], which my father produced, and we had kept in touch since then. I remember that at my first wedding, the only guest who was from the entertainment business, besides my father, was Giuliano, so I was very happy to meet him again on the Silver Saddle set.

**FANG:** Then you parted company with Bixio and Tempera; what happened there?

**FRIZZI:** We had been collaborating happily for five years, writing many themes and film music pieces, and always put all three of our names on anything we did, even if it was written by just one of the trio. After all those projects together, we wanted to do something by ourselves, and each one of us began to work on solo projects. I believe that if you part company before things start to get bad, you can still keep up a friendly relationship, since after a certain point everything gets worse. It was the right time to go our own ways, though we’re still in touch and call each other every now and then. In 2002, the Vanzina brothers contacted us to write the music for their film Horse Fever: The Mandrake Sting, and the very next day we reunited like old friends and began working on the soundtrack.

Another important reason for our split was that on August 28, 1979, my first daughter Francesca was born. I looked at my life and began wondering if, being almost 30 years old and having had a 10-year career, I should be going it alone. The very first movie for which I composed the music by myself was Alberto Vázquez Figueroa’s Manaos, followed by Zombie. **FANG:** That film was a complete change of pace for Fulci. Was it a challenge to create the music?

**FRIZZI:** It’s one of his movies I love the most. Unfortunately, I didn’t get to go to the Caribbean location, but I was given the script and got to watch most of the dailies. It was certainly a big challenge for me, as it was an important picture and I didn’t have Franco and Vince to support me. Luckily, I had great help from my musicians, particularly percussionist Adriano Giordanello; all the themes for the island where the story takes place wouldn’t have worked so well without him. He added this sort of dark Caribbean atmosphere to the score. Maurizio Guarini’s keyboards were another invaluable aid.

We recorded the soundtrack in a new studio founded by former Ennio Morricone assistant Bruno Nicolai. Part of the soundtrack is a Caribbean theme, a merengue, and we called in a drummer from Naples, Tony Cicco, to help us on that. He was in a band produced by famous Italian songwriter Lucio Battisti called Formula 3. We went out for lunch, and Tony probably drank a bit too much, so when we got back to the studio, he kept making jokes and titled that piece “Big Zombie Meringue.” We laughed all day. For the infamous eye scene, I took inspiration from the Beatles song “A Day in the Life,” with the violin crescendo. I believe I took a completely new approach to film music on Zombie and
became a problem. I thought The Beyond is a true masterpiece; you can watch it 100 times and always find something new. It's a movie that makes you think.

FRIZZI: The following year, you did Fulci's Manhattan Baby, this time without the undead.

FRIZZI: After The Beyond, which was the peak of Fulci's career, he began a slow decline. I like Manhattan Baby; the plot makes no sense, but I was intrigued by the story beginning in Egypt. Even though I've never been there, I have always been fascinated with the pharaohs, the pyramids and all that stuff. So writing the main theme was a sort of putting my love for ancient Egypt into music. I'm also happy with the tune for the alarm-clock scene; it reminds me of a sorcerer and his cauldron.

FRIZZI: You then took a break before working with Fulci again...

FRIZZI: Yes, but I kept doing genre films. I scored The Scorpion With Two Tails for Sergio Martino, Blastfighter and Devilfish [a.k.a. Monster Shark], both directed by Lamberto Bava under the pseudonym John Old Jr., where I also used aliases: Andrew Barrymore and Antony Barrymore, respectively. I then wrote the music for some Sergio Corbucci pictures. For a few years, Lucio and I didn't see each other; Italy's cinema was entering a crisis period, and fewer movies were being produced. But in 1990, I received a phone call from him, we had dinner together and he said, "Listen, I'm filming a new movie, it's low-budget and I don't have a music editor, and I need a soundtrack!"

I didn't have a problem with that, so I started working on A Cat in the Brain. He gave me the screenplay, and after reading it I realized it wasn't on the same quality level of his previous movies, but I understood that times were changing and film-

many scenes were filmed in Rome, I often visited the set. I remember an incident that occurred while filming a woman's face being burned off with a blowtorch: Unfortunately, the rubber cover didn't fully protect her face, and she got burned for real. But beyond that, Lucio was quite happy with the movie.

FANG: With City of the Living Dead, you established yourself as a horror-film composer. What do you remember about that movie?

FRIZZI: Having already done Zombie, I was much more relaxed. Among the three movies I did with Lucio about the living dead, that's certainly the one with the most linear and classic story, but you can still recognize his absolutely unmistakable style. I wrote a lot of music for that, and the main theme is somewhat similar to the one I did for Zombie.

The biggest fight I had with Lucio was during that movie, when we were remixing the soundtrack.

For the main titles, when the camera is wandering around the cemetery, since it's set in the morning light, I wrote a theme that had a dreamlike tone, and then when the priest appears, the music became darker and more dramatic. We had mixed everything with the 35mm reels and were ready to screen the film for Lucio with sound and music. We were all sitting together, and after three minutes I jumped up on his seat and shouted, "Stop, stop! Who put this shitty music on my movie?"

I felt like committing suicide, and tried to explain my point of view on that piece. He didn't even listen to me; he wanted creepier music for that scene. Luckily, I had written a lot of different themes, so we used the music you know and everything was OK. But for a few minutes, I thought my career was coming to an abrupt end. The music I originally composed for the main credits, although not in the movie, has since been added to the soundtrack album.

FANG: And then you completed that undead trilogy with The Beyond.

FRIZZI: I consider The Beyond the best film Lucio and I did together, probably as a result of that problem we had on City of the Living Dead. I worked hard on the Beyond soundtrack, trying different things, as I didn't want to disappoint him. I asked the help of conductor Giacomo Dell'Oro, and mentioned including a chorus in one of the themes.

The following day, Giacomo brought me a Latin hymn titled "Dies Irae," written in the 13th century by Italian friar Tommaso da Celano, describing Judgment Day. He told me to choose some lines from it for the chorus to sing. "Cum resurget creatura," a phrase about resurrection, was perfect, as we were dealing with zombies, and "Quantus tremor est futurus," "How much terror will be coming"—I couldn't ask for a better line. I had already written the music, and the final result was fully satisfying for both me and Lucio. I think The Beyond is a true masterpiece; you can watch it 100 times and always find something new. It's a movie that makes you think.

FRIZZI: The following year, you did Fulci's Manhattan Baby, this time without the undead.

FRIZZI: After The Beyond, which was the peak of Fulci's career, he began a slow decline. I like Manhattan Baby; the plot makes no sense, but I was intrigued by
makers were being given less and less money. I did feel the title was very strong and evocative, and it gave me food for thought. I tried to imagine the kind of devastation it suggested, and came up with a theme that sounded a bit messed up. The Cat in the Brain soundtrack is all electronic, with the exception of the guitar playing by Marco Rinalduzzi. I didn’t have an orchestra, as the budget wouldn’t allow it, but despite that, it’s very effective. We both were very satisfied with the final result.

FANG: That was the last movie you did with Fulci?
FRIZZI: Yes, unfortunately. After that, we never met again, and I was very sad when I was told of his death. Lucio Fulci has been a very important person in my life, and our relationship helped me grow as a musician. I owe him so much, and I’m happy with my work for him. Lucio taught me a lot, even though he may have been harsh at times. I would certainly not have achieved the level I did in my career without him. I have a music school, and every time I explain to my students what this job means, I always recall the time I spent with Lucio, and the lessons I learned from him.

FANG: “Frizzi 2 Fulci” is a concert, but also a trip down memory lane. How did you conceive it?
FRIZZI: I didn’t want to give a lecture to the audience, but to narrate the moments of my life I lived with Lucio. About eight years ago, Ferrara Santamaria, the Italian agent for some American actors and artists, wrote me a letter saying that a U.S. production company wanted to do a remake of a Fulci film. At that time, I had lost contact with the people connected with Lucio, like screenwriter Dardano Sacchetti and Lucio’s daughter Antonella, who was a child when I would go to her father’s house. So they got us together, and this was a chance to see those old friends again. The project didn’t take shape, but we got to recall the good old days.

Around the same time, I joined Face- book, and suddenly I got Friend requests from all around the world. Some people in the United States thought that Fabio Frizzi was a “ghost musician,” as nobody had ever seen me in concert, but everyone showed so much appreciation and love for the music I wrote. Only then did I realize how great a legacy Lucio left me. Al-

(continued on page 81)
A fresh look at both the obsessed scientist and his assistant is coming to the big screen.

By ABBIE BERNSTEIN

You know the story,” we’re told by Daniel Radcliffe’s Igor at the beginning of Victor Frankenstein (out November 25 from Fox). As it turns out, we do and we don’t. The eponymous Victorian-era scientist, played by James McAvoy, is still obsessed with creating new life, there’s still a lightning storm and everything builds to the awakening of the massive creature. However, as written by Max Landis and directed by Paul McGuigan, there are many elements new to this tale. Igor is a talented scientist in his own right, becoming partners in the quest after being rescued from virtual slavery by Victor. There’s also a reason why the creature is so big, and a very creepy earlier experiment.

McGuigan has directed films with supernatural elements (the psychic actioner Push) and violence (Gangster No. 1, Lucky Number Slevin), but Victor Frankenstein is his first foray into horror. Speaking to FANGORIA in his distinctive Scottish accent about recreating horror’s oldest creation tale, McGuigan notes that he’s a big fan of James Whale’s 1931 Frankenstein starring Boris Karloff.

“I saw it many times growing up,” he says. “It’s the kind of movie that stays with you as a filmmaker, that you want to sit down and look at again. It’s so well-done, and an important piece of work. As far as Mary Shelley’s book was concerned, I started to read it years ago and got kind of stuck, because it’s quite a heavy read at times. But I read it again, obviously, when I was interested in doing this movie, and found it very inspiring from the point of view of what she was talking about—the whole idea of invention and science and modernity. The story is still very relevant, especially now that we’ve been through this big wave of technology changing how we interact with each other.”

Originally, McGuigan met with Victor Frankenstein producer John Davis about another project; he read and loved Landis’ script, but a different director was attached. Nine months later, though, Davis called back to ask if he was still interested. “I’d had a year and a half of thinking about it,” McGuigan recalls. “I felt it was a very new way of telling what seemed like a familiar story that everybody knew. I loved the idea that everyone thinks that the monster is called Frankenstein, and the monster is really Victor. There’s a line in the film, ‘People will remember the monster, not the scientist, not the man,’ and that’s what I liked.”

While McGuigan is a longtime fan of horror, “I get a little bit flustered when I’m asked what kind of genre Victor Frankenstein is. It has horror elements, but I didn’t go into it thinking, ‘I’ve got to find where I can scare people.’ I consider it a character/adventure film, where you meet these two men [Victor and Igor] who have something in common that makes them go places they’ve never been before, and that’s what’s inspiring about the movie itself.”

Collaborating with Chronicle screenwriter Landis was “great,” McGuigan says; he, of course, aware of the contributions of Landis’ father John to the genre. “An American Werewolf in London, my favorite! That’s a terrific film. And Max is an incredible character himself. He has real imagination and energy, and he doesn’t hold anything up for reverence. He wasn’t saying, ‘Well, this is a story that’s been told many times, and we have...’
to keep to these rules.’ He said, ‘Well, here’s what I liked about this film, here’s what I liked about the book, here’s what I liked about Young Frankenstein.’ He cherry-picked all the things he enjoyed, and wrote a really cool script.”

A key scene, McGuigan adds, is Victor bringing erstwhile circus doctor/clown/hunchback Igor to his home. “We see this amazing apartment with these crazy machines and all this invention and science, but we just don’t know who this guy is. He seems a bit like a psychopath or sociopath or some kind of crazy guy, because he runs at Igor and rebreaks his back and says, ‘Now you can stand up and do something with your hair;’ Then he goes, ‘By the way, I’ve got this [experiment]...’ To me, that one scene sums up the whole tone of the movie, which goes from dark to light to offhand to a kind of Sherlockian vibe about Victor Frankenstein.

“There were so many things I wanted to tell in that scene,” he continues. “One, I wanted to show how Victor lives—his apartment, his environment, his science. I wanted to show how he knows what’s wrong with Igor, so he obviously has a medical background to him. And I wanted to show how sociopathic he is as well.”

Victor Frankenstein is set in Victorian England, but McGuigan didn’t want to be too exact about the year. “We did a lot of research and did our homework, so we kind of made it around 1861, but we didn’t want to be too specific, because there’s always someone who goes, ‘Well, I can see a Mark 1 crane in the background, and that only came out in 1864.’ I didn’t want people to get all worked up about the date.”

The film’s science is accurate to its timeframe, he adds. “I said, ‘I want the science to be real for the time,’ because that era was the beginning of the Industrial Revolution, which was the biggest change that happened in any of our lives: the invention of the steam engine, the factories, the underground [subway], the transport systems. In a way, London was being reborn itself. So that was a good metaphor for us to look at and think about. When you see the big guy getting lifted up by these big pulleys, and electricity is going into him, he’s getting blood pumped into him, he’s being warmed up, he’s swinging from side to side—that was all to do with what we felt the real science was.”

Before embarking on creating his creature, however, Victor is already working on another experiment that he dubs Gordon. “I love Gordon,” McGuigan declares.

“You probably can tell—we had so much fun thinking about him. He has a chimpanzee head, a hyena back and other bits and pieces on him. He’s a hybrid of all sorts of animals. Our inspiration was to come up with something that’s a bastardization of all these animals Victor could find. If he discovered a dead hyena at the zoo, he’d put a bit of that onto the monkey head. It was a very put-together beast, but one that I had so much joy and happiness assembling. It’s one of the reasons I want to do another horror movie based on things like that, because in a way, I was being Victor Frankenstein for a moment, if you like, creating this little monster.”

He was largely handmade by the filmmakers as well, McGuigan reveals, employing mostly animatronic FX. “He’s all practical, until he starts to run. We made various different versions of him. We had him as a kind of puppet with quite a lot of people underneath, operating him—we had to build sets [with recessed floors for the puppeteers]. There’s not a lot of CGI in this film, because we wanted to do as much in-camera as possible, and I think that works.”

Still, there was some digital work done on Gordon. “When he starts to run about, we had to go into the CG world,” McGuigan explains. “We had a stunt girl [Talia Craig] dressed in a green suit and a helmet with LED lights on it, chasing Daniel Radcliffe in the scene in the hallway. She trained herself to run with these uneven legs—we put stuff on her legs that made one look larger than the other, and arms that were big enough to be cumbersome. When Igor goes over the side of the stairwell, that was a real stairwell Daniel actually threw himself over. And sometimes he had a young stunt girl attached to him, who we replaced later with the [CG Gordon].”

No matter what other experiments are undertaken, though, in anything with Frankenstein in the title, there eventually must be a creature. McGuigan, who directed the pilot and several other episodes of the hit BBC/PBS series Sherlock, recalls sitting down one night with that show’s co-creator Steven Moffat (whose Sherlock partner Mark Gatiss shows up in Victor Frankenstein in a small role). “We were having a drink, and I mentioned I was doing Victor Franken-
big, square-jawed chin, so I wanted to use that. We hardly put any makeup on some parts of his face, and then we accentuated the flatness of his forehead by filling that in a little bit, and shaved his head. We added to the back of his neck, ears and eyes—we put contacts in. We had to reshape his nose a little, so that's kind of bent.

McGuigan and production designer Eve Stewart also wanted the creature to look like he belongs to the story's Victorian era. "We wanted to make someone who felt like he was constructed," McGuigan explains, "and that was influenced by the Victorian engineers. You can see how engineering was quite crude in the early days of the Industrial Revolution, so his joints are put together with pieces of metal."

For those who look closely, the creature is quite detailed, and the makeup was also the result of some experimentation. "We took a cast of [Delaunay's] head, and that became our canvas," McGuigan says. "We tried all sorts of things. We tried having one eye be higher than the other, which as you can imagine is quite a hard thing to do in the prosthetic world. We wanted the eyes to be asymmetrical, because we thought, 'Well, maybe he's got one eye from a different person.' Who is that person? It would be a sailor, so we have half a tattoo, which is very subtle, and different bits of skin that come from various other parts. Obviously, as Victor says in the movie, it's not the way he'd prefer to do it, but he has to get the parts from somewhere, and he always gets them quickly. So we tried to give a life to all the parts—like, who did each one come from?

As for the aforementioned flat head, McGuigan explains, "We thought, 'Well, why are they doing that?' And I love the line that McAvoy kind of ad-libbed. Victor says, 'A flat head,' and Igor asks, 'Why?' and Victor goes, 'Because I like it!' That was a homage to the makeup artist [Jack P. Pierce] on the James Whale film. There isn't really any reason for a flat head, and I thought that was a nice little joke. Victor does it because he can."

One bit of story logic that most other versions of Frankenstein have overlooked is that where there is dead flesh, there will be flies—lots and lots of them. "Well, that's just a matter of thinking about it, isn't it?" McGuigan observes. "If these fleshy body parts have been lying about in a Victorian underground lab somewhere, there's bound to be some kind of infestation, so we came up with flies. Actually, I think it was Max who had that idea. We used real flies, augmented with a bit of CG work for certain moments. But for the main shot you see, we had a guy underneath with a whole bunch of flies, and he pushed them through with some air. Not my favorite day on set [laughs]."

In the midst of trying to bring life forth from dead flesh, it's clear to the audience, if not to Victor himself, that he's engaging in another sort of creation process with Igor, who transforms from a timid, nameless captive to a man with his own opinions and ethics. "Victor's only thought is to do his experiment," McGuigan says, "to achieve what he has to achieve because he wants to create life. I believe he brings Igor in for those very reasons. He doesn't really want to be Igor's friend, but he becomes softer and understands that here's another life and another person."

"But then the experiments go wrong, and Victor gets even more caught up in his own life and his own world and his own needs. And his friend, who's been with him all that time, gets left a bit behind, and the story is that Victor wakes up and realizes that he has created a monster—and the monster is himself, through his unrelenting, unyielding focus on making the Prometheus and creating new life.
Whereas actually, he has created a life, and it has been standing there right beside him through all this. What’s interesting about the movie and about Victor Frankenstein is, he’s not the most likable character, because he does stray into the dark elements. The cinema has told us and Mary Shelley’s novel has told us that that’s where he goes, and that’s interesting to me. How long do you keep him on the dark side before he wakes up?”

Prior to production, the director got together with his leading men to talk about such dynamics. “We came to New York for a week or so a few months before we started to shoot, and sat down every day, went through the script and talked about every single element,” McGuigan reveals. “We talked about why this was a good story to tell, and a very important one. We certainly discussed how this was parallel storytelling, with a familiarity to one thread and a new idea running through the other, and at the end, they kind of meet up. When you have two amazing actors like James and Dan, they understand what they have to do from the beginning of the film to the end—the dialogue, the friendship, the confrontation.

“That’s a process you have to go through when you’re making a film like this,” the director continues, “because it has a lot of twists and turns. You want to make sure that you’re not misleading, that those twists are true to the story, and we spent a lot of time on that, because we knew people would have expectations when they heard the name ‘Frankenstein.’ It’s like when I did Sherlock; everyone had expectations, and when they heard that it was a modern-day version, they already had the knives out and were about to condemn us. And then they saw it and suddenly went, ‘Oh, that works.’

“It’s the same with this. We always knew there was a cinematic weight to what we were trying to do, because it’s Frankenstein, and some of the past films haven’t really worked or gelled, because people’s expectations went a certain way. So we just decided to make our own version.”

Roderick Turpin (Andrew Scott) finds that Victor is almost as tough a customer as the monster.
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Continuing David Bertrand’s study of Africa’s wild, homegrown DIY genre cinema (see part one in Pango #344), we find him heading into the shoot of the cannibal movie Eaten Alive in Uganda...

After 24 hours of travel, I disembark from a plane, greeted by an armed rifle guard and an Ebola scan (I fill out a form and they wave a wand around my forehead). Buying a travel visa costs one crisp new U.S. $50 bill, the only currency accepted, as a curious customs agent inquires how much I spent to get to Uganda—and why I would do that. Producer/transplanted New Yorker Alan Hofmanis and a handful of the Wakaliwood gang pick me up to take me to the hotel where I’ll spend my first night. After a wide-eyed trip through nighttime Entebbe and Kampala with a nerve-wracking reckless driver, we finally arrive at a hotel peppered with large “No gun, no knife” signs. The blaring lobby music is, of all things, Toto’s “Africa.”

For a week, everyone will stare at and comment on my pale musungu (Caucasian) skin, kids especially, but everyone is unfailingly gracious. Uganda often feels like how I imagine dusty, rural America in the 1960s. There’s an easygoing, uncluttered lawlessness about day-to-day behavior, no seatbelt requirements or smoking laws or anyone worried about enforcing them. Boda-bodas (motorcycle taxis) don’t require any kind of permit or driver’s license, and are terrifying but exhilarating death traps. Weaving in and out of Kampala’s absolutely horrendous traffic without a helmet, you pray that you won’t clip a leg on one of the thousands of hop-on/hop-off van taxis and spend your trip in a Ugandan hospital with a shattered pelvis.

Geographically, Wakaliwood is a couple of small buildings built out of bricks that Wakaliwood founder Nabwana Isaac Godfrey Geoffrey cooked in a kiln himself, from the clay-rich dirt under his feet. Nabwana, who started out in music production—including the early career of dancehall star Eddy Kenzo—before pursuing his dream of moviemaking, began the process by taking one month (of a six-month course) learning how to build a computer from spare parts, and then taught himself Adobe Premiere and After Effects and the rudiments of filmmaking. He was the first person to bring electricity to his neighborhood, though power is subject to constant and erratic outages from the government. His work area contains stacks of fried hard drives, burnt from power surges or dust exposure—many of them containing the only copies of Wakaliwood movies that are now lost.

Nabwana’s own family home and work space, which houses his lovely, take-no-nonsense wife and co-editor Harriet (a.k.a. Mama Rachel) and their kids Rachel, Gitti and Isaac Newton (!), is adjacent to a rectangular building which includes a rehearsal room, Hofmanis’ room, the Ramon Films audio studio and, of course, the gear and prop warehouse of Bisaso Dauda, Wakaliwood’s indispensable master craftsman and one-time founder of the Gaddafi Quality Chapatti empire. Dauda also refers to me as “Dauda” (apparently,
it's the Arabic variant of “David”). The day after I arrive, he spends 14-plus hours welding professional-grade Kino Flo-style light grids out of scrap metal. Currently, the Wakaliwood courtyard is completely filled with the monstrous frame of Dauda’s latest project: a full-sized scrap-metal Huey HU-1 helicopter.

Walk a few steps, and you’re surrounded by ramshackle stands selling local cheap eats like ki kommando (chapatti and beans—"commando" because it’s cheap bachelor food) and bottles of real cane-sugar Coca-Cola. Also, an open sewer, the communal hole-in-the-ground outhouses and a lot of grazing goats.

Most Wakaliwood films are shot in the immediate neighborhood, but for Eaten Alive we overload a van taxi and depart Wakaliga for the village of Kaliti, where we will be shacking up for a weekend of night shoots. I’ve seen a three-minute edit of some footage from a shoot six months prior (minus a score or audio mix), which featured cannibals attacking footage had been lost. Basically, they were starting from scratch.

Photographer Frédéric Noy and I are the first outsiders to tag along for a Wakaliwood location shoot, and I’m honored—though I’m secretly shitting my pants about heading to the epicenter of a recent Marburg virus outbreak (a deadlier cousin of Ebola with a 90 percent mortality rate in Africa). Once we arrive, though, the beauty puts me at ease. With dramatic hills and valleys draped in lush green vegetation, and mango, banana, coffee and avocado trees growing on the property for the picking, it’s seriously an Eden-like ambience. This is the home of Dauda’s mother, and we are well taken care of. Kickstarter money has allowed for a few shooting privileges: We have rice to eat instead of the usual posho, a tasteless cornmeal, and a rented generator to power Dauda’s homemade light stands. And so it begins...

On any Wakaliwood production, the cast is also necessarily the crew, and everyone hustles from the moment we arrive, constructing a cannibal village from trees and banana leaves. There is vegetation everywhere around us, so foraging is easy.

Nabwana has been mostly quiet, contemplative, a little aloof since I’ve been around. For the first few days, it was hard to build a rapport with the man, but suddenly on set, he’s a workhorse and an intense force of nature, with very definitive ideas of what he wants, how to accomplish it and how fast. There is no question that this Wakaliwood mini-empire wasn’t built on happenstance and blind luck. He’s nimble on his feet and expects the same of his team, which means for a visitor like me, you’d better have your camera ready.

I can’t understand the language of crew communication, Luganda, and no one keeps me up to speed anyway.

Wakaliwood makeup and physical FX are notoriously quaint (Who Killed Captain Alex used real butcher-shop blood and a tripod built from a car jack), and the visual FX—created by the self-taught Nabwana on a computer perpetually on the verge of implosion—are not exactly Pixar. But on set, without any professional stunt actors, first aid or safety apparatus, they make the most of what they can, rigging simple in-camera tricks, or just overcoming the odds with excessive gusto and awesome athleticism.

Our writer fearlessly confronted a different kind of African hunger problem.

**The goat’s ribcage is placed over Hofmanis’ torso, so that he’s essentially wearing a bodysuit of still-steaming goat flesh.**

a pregnant woman, eating her guts and unborn fetus as one flesh-eater complains, “The baby’s sour!” I learn from Nabwana and Hofmanis that in the intervening gap of time, they ran out of money and were desperately stripped for cash—so much so that even Hofmanis, the American, was borrowing money from slum residents to buy his daily drinking water. As a consequence, actors had moved away,
On set, without any professional stunt actors, first aid or safety apparatus, the crew make the most of what they can.

The excitement within and for Wakaliwood is continuing to grow.
I shaved. (This part actually was fortunate for us three muzungus in retrospect—boiling hot water was needed for the goat-shaving, which meant we had pure hot water for coffee, something which is surprisingly difficult to find, as Ugandans always add lemongrass to hot water despite our protests.)

When Nabwana’s shot is ready, the goat’s ribcage is placed over Hofmanis’ torso during the devouring scene, so that he’s essentially wearing a bodysuit of still-steaming goat flesh, its blood and with a deficit of toys, clothes and productive things to play with, actually play real games with the severed noggin.

Film exhibition and distribution in Uganda is a weird affair; the street-level economy, complete lack of distribution, unreliable Internet and a culture reset in the ‘80s make for odd quirks. Most world cinema pre-1980 simply did not make it into the country, meaning that action stars like Norris and Arnold Schwarzenegger are heroes who date back to the early days of the collective Ugandan cinema experience. They are the Buster Keatons, if you will (“Busta Keaton, World’s 1st Supa Commando” was recently popularized in Uganda, through Hofmanis’ efforts). Ugandan film fans don’t know, for example, that the Reagan-era macho material was—to many people—a downgraded, simplified product of the meatier stuff from the 1970s. They have no familiarity with Sam Peckinpah, or Taxi Driver, or Apocalypse Now, or Night of the Living Dead.

The absolute weirdest moment when this comes into focus occurs during a sequence break on Eaten Alive in Uganda. On my flight over, I brought with me a suspiciously large load of essential electronic gear purchased with cash from their Kickstarter fund, including a laptop with a random assortment of movies from my collection. Nabwana, plus three actors in full cannibal regalia—banana-leaf skirts, bone necklaces, remnants of goat’s blood—are huddled around it one night on set, watching Rio Bravo. As Hofmanis noted, it’s a very reasonable bet that I have inadvertently introduced Uganda to John Wayne.

All DVD sales here are bootlegs—from the swankiest mall to scrap-wood shacks, I never see a legit product for sale (with the slowness and hassle of the local Internet, streaming services would be pointless). Nabwana himself esti-

(continued on page 81)
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somewhere in the south of Ireland, FANGORIA is trapped in an attic. Specifically, we’re at Co. Galway’s Studio Solas, a production facility once used by Roger Corman. Today it’s home to writer/director Corin Hardy and the evil forest sprites of his debut feature The Hallow. On a raised set accessible only by trapdoor, this writer is surrounded by clutter: old furniture and boxes, televisions, typewriters, birdcages, crockery, cushions, assorted wicker items and various other loft-space bric-a-brac. It’s a large set, but feels cramped thanks to the addition of the necessary film equipment and the crew cramping themselves into corners to stay out of shot, stuck up here until the scene is complete and the exit becomes available again. The hatch creeps open and something begins to come through...another crewmember. “This is the lock-in, is it?” he grins.

This is one of relatively few days in the studio, with the majority of The Hallow being shot on location in a cottage and several forests some distance away in Letterfrack. “I like things to be as textured and atmospheric as possible,” Hardy says, “so I was adamant about doing as much on location as we could. We’re shooting in five forests to get different sequences.”

The Hallow (in theaters and on VOD from IFC Films) centers on Clare (Aussie actress Bojanka Novakovic) and her husband Adam (Joseph Mawle), whose job as a set surgeon has taken the bickering couple and their newborn son out to the edge of some rural Irish wilds. There, in an isolated house from which they’ve unwisely removed all the protective iron from the windows, they ignore the advice of the locals—to their increasing peril, as they find that the Good People of the forest are far from whimsical storybook fairy-folk. Right now, the cameras are capturing Mawle as he painstakingly investigates with a flashlight, having heard something go bump in the night.

“On one level,” Mawle says later, “Adam’s journey is fantastical, a very dark fairy tale: the scientist becoming primal. Adam and Clare still have secrets from each other, which I think makes them more tenable, somehow. Rather than being a perfect married couple, they have difficulties. In many ways, it’s about intellect vs. instinct, and they become more instinctive as time goes on. By the end, they’re starting to find themselves again, in terms of each other and as parents. Adam is a father, but not a ‘dad,’ really. But by the conclusion of the film, that has changed.”

Back in the attic, the crew has moved on to the next sequence, and Fang girls with some trepidation as an elongated hand with gnarled wooden fingers gropes its spindly way through that trapdoor—a Hallow attempting to get at Novakovic. The twiggy digits are a complex animatronic system; the only CGI planned here is in the interests of post-production finessing. The Hallow is otherwise an all-practical affair—a loving homage to the creature features that inspired Hardy. “It’s all about having seen Ray Harryhausen films as a kid and believing those creatures were real,” he says. “I loved [British claymation character] Morph too, because he seemed to be of the real world.”

The very first rehearsal takes works perfectly, but the only person shooting it is Hardy with his iPhone, and it takes a while longer to repeat the shot for the official cameras. For three takes, the director plays the hand himself, roaring as he strains toward his lead actress, who screams back at him fit to bust a lung; Hardy will later decide he wants a Texas Chainsaw Massacre-influenced extreme close-up of her fear-anguished face. Both collapse laughing afterward. “I think I’m going to credit myself as Fake Shemp,” Hardy beams, referencing the stunt doubles of Sam Raimi’s films (check The Hallow’s end credits, and you’ll see he did just that).

“I’m really proud that we’ve done [the effects] in camera as much as possible,” he continues. “Originally, in my dream big-budget version of this film, the idea was that the whole forest comes to life. Gradually, as we began to make it, we realized we could only afford a relatively small number of creatures, but we’re achieving a lot with them. I never wanted to do a CG army of Lord of the Rings goblins, but it does feel like we’ve got more than we actually have.”

Finally escaping the attic, we decide to go and meet the Hallow for ourselves. A poke around the creature shop—the back of a truck—reveals various gruesome

—Corin Hardy, writer/director

“My mission was always to create a horror movie, but I didn’t want to do vampires or werewolves.”

We trek into the wilds of Ireland to investigate the ancient creatures being given new screen life.

By OWEN WILLIAMS

A Hallow victory is its use of practical makeup and creature FX.
heads with names like Crawler 2 and Sinuous Hallow. One of the performers who get to wear the masks is a contortionist, one is a dancer and one is a parkour expert; the latter's job at one point was to crawl 20 feet down a tree on a wire. The look is appropriately treelike and organic, with protruding twigs and sparse but sharp teeth. The creatures are blind, and the actors also have very low visibility within the suits. The animatronics in the headpieces mean they can't hear very well either.

Below the loft space are various other set bits and small pockets of activity. One piece is a portion of a ruin near the cottage, well on its way to being reclaimed by the forest. Currently abandoned, it will later be the site of a scene in which Adam finds the Hallow Cora (Charlotte Williams) holding his baby. Our phone illuminates an amazing art-department job, with pillars surrounded by tree roots and dead wood; the mulch underfoot even makes it smell appropriately peaty.

Immediately adjacent are other little sections being used for 2nd-unit pickups: a small stone wall with a bluescreen behind it; a pile of leaves; a free-standing airing cupboard, currently being used for a shot where Cora snatches the baby through a hole in the top. The closet is artificially filthy, covered in black goo; you wouldn't want to keep your towels in it, much less a child. The infant's yellow blanket and powder-blue romper suit make for a stark contrast to the set design. The real babies are on set (twins are sharing the workload), and as Williams coos at them between takes, they don't seem fazed by her stick hands.

A stunt dummy is used for the actual abduction shot, and everybody holds it as if it's a real child. "It's just the easiest way to carry it," says a burly, bearded, shaven-headed FX guy unconvincingly, as he cradles it against his chest with its head on his shoulder. He adds that someone held it upside down one day, and he was horrified.

"You're never supposed to work with children or animals," Mawle laughs, "and here we are on Corin's first bloody film and it's animals, creatures, babies, blind actors, Australians playing English people...."

A few months later, in fall 2014, Fango catches up with Hardy during the editing process, when he has a bit more time to talk properly. The trip from London to the set involved a train, plane, coach and car—it took very nearly as long to get to Galway from London as it does to get to New York—but today is a leisurely hour's drive to Hardy's quaint home village of Chiddingly, not far from Brighton. There's no mobile reception, and we can hear nothing but birdsong. The church clock chimes as, fittingly, we enter The Six Bells pub. As Fango waits inside with a pint for Hardy's arrival, a cat comes over, lies down and goes to sleep. It's that sort of place.

"I'd been living in London for 10 years and never thought I'd be able to do anything here again," Hardy explains on his arrival. "Time had moved on. But now I have a baby of my own and we've moved back here, and it made sense to try and bring the edit suite along." A cockerel crows outside, and Hardy laughs, "We keep thinking that's actually on the soundtrack while we're editing."

For Hardy, growing up in these idyllic surroundings, horror was "this other un-touchable world" of films he wasn't allowed to watch. He and a friend used to make trips up to London to buy Fango,
kicking off his love of creature features. He was making monster movies on Super-8 from the age of 11: “We had blood pumps and squibs. We learned to edit in camera. I did it all in our bike shed.” His TV-director father facilitated a meeting with FX legend Bob (Hellraiser) Keen in Hardy’s early teens, and while his classmates were presumably painting still lives of fruit bowls for their school art projects, Hardy was interviewing Harryhausen (who was rude about his foam-rubber dinosaur: “Too fat—he basically told me off!”)

“I’m not really that computer-literate,” he says now. “I was always more comfortable making things with my hands.” For his award-winning animated short Butterfly—made in that bike shed over five years—I built camera rigs out of shower-curtain rings and car jacks.” That film led to music videos, which was “a way to tell short stories”; the cigarette-packet figures from his Prodigy video “Warrior’s Dance” perch on a bookshelf in his house. The Hollow has been a long time coming, but it was clearly inevitable that he’d one day make a feature.

“My mission was always to create a horror movie,” he says, “but I didn’t want to do vampires or werewolves. I wanted to try and look for other ways of creating monsters, and fairies hadn’t really been explored too much outside of children’s films. This is a sort of fairy home-invasion movie! It transforms from this real-world setting to a sort of fevered nightmare.”

His mythology is the result of years of research, but doesn’t specifically adhere to any particular folkloric source. “We’ve created our own stories based on the Good People [the film’s original title; it was also known as The Woods for a time], or the fairies, or the Tuatha Dé Danann. There’s so much folklore out there that I was originally almost trying to namecheck too much of it.

“That was one of the hardest things to get right in the screenplay,” he continues. “The moment you start doing that, you face the problem of the rules not making sense, because there are so many and they’re so widespread and mixed up. You want the movie to be driving forward, but you’ve got a couple who have to stop and boil water and pour it into halved eggshells and stuff like that. So a lot of the writing process involved balancing the mythology and reality, and then presenting it within a story that didn’t need too much exposition.”

The family home is a short walk around the corner from the pub. The bike shed now houses the aforementioned edit suite, through a theatrically creepy door, and a small sitting room that has become something of a Hollow museum, packed with the animatronic heads and copious design work (examples of which you can see below) that went into the film. “The creatures turned up in a big lorry a couple of days ago,” he smiles. “I just wanted them here!”

“I’m really proud that we’ve done [the effects] in camera as much as possible.”
—Corin Hardy, writer/director

Also part of the archive is the Necronomicon-style book of mythology that plays an important part in The Hollow. A labor of ridiculous love, it’s bound in wood and contains more illustrations and dense calligraphy than could possibly be visible on screen. “Yeah, well, that’s making movies, isn’t it?” Hardy asks rhetorically. “If you don’t put the work in…”

As we leave, an hour or two later, following tea and biscuits and a look at some of the footage edited so far, we notice the Godzilla cover of Fangoria’s first issue behind glass on one of the walls. “Yeah,” he grins, “if you get us into FANGORIA, that’s going in a frame too.”
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The Other is Becoming It

The story continues in 2016...
From the seed planted by '80s slashers, Australian filmmaker Chris Sun grows a new gore-thirsty villain.

By MICHAEL HELMS

Even before his first feature, the dark and ragged thrill-kill shocker Come and Get Me, had played anywhere, prop trader turned filmmaker Chris Sun was talking up a project called Charlie’s Farm. But his next film proved to be the sadistic pedophile-revenge opus Daddy’s Little Girl. On a bright and sunny midwinter morning, Sean Gannon, who played Colin in Girl, picks up this reporter from a Queensland airport and heads into the hinterlands, toward the homestead location where Charlie’s Farm is seeing fruition at last.

Speaking with a Scottish brogue thicker than the fog outside The Slaughtered Lamb, Gannon explains that he’s concentrating on producing duties on Charlie’s Farm (now on DVD from Alchemy), and is clearly excited to be attached to Sun’s biggest and highest-profile production yet. Without revealing any other details, Gannon also promises that a very serious FX bit is being staged today...

Some time later, we arrive at a few dilapidated buildings just as the cast and crew have finished lunch. From inside an ancient shed that once housed livestock, Sun is soon striding out onto a field adjacent to where the property backs into a river, and where shooting will be concentrated this afternoon. “Charlie’s Farm has been in the making for something like four years,” he says. “In Australia, we make the most amazing horror films and films in general, except for drama shit. But I don’t believe there’s ever been a true, iconic Australian slasher character like Jason Voorhees, Michael Myers, etc. So I’m excited to have created Charlie. I think once audiences have seen him, they will realize he’s one of the greats.”

To boost the appeal to those fans, Sun has brought a couple of horror heavyweights on board. “We’ve got Bill Moseley and Kane Hodder,” he says, “along with Tara Reid, plus Nathan [Mad Max: Fury Road] Jones playing Charlie as a dead-set monster. We get to kill all these famous people in cool ways with a really big guy.”

As if on cue, a large figure seated on a bench in front of a few tents becomes visible in the distance. People are scurrying left and right, but this man appears much bigger than anyone else, even though he’s sitting down. Yours truly approaches the bench with sudden and unexpected trepidation, and Jones turns around slowly before smiling. The overall impact is instantaneous, and for the first time on a film set, this writer is actually spooked by a character in makeup. It’s hard not to focus first on the dentures that seem ready to rip and tear, before taking in a wider view of a face that’s hideously disfigured with fine but deep scars that leave long shadows when he looks to the sky.

Although he’s tanned, Jones, with his yellow contact lenses in, bears an overall look of sickness. He once had the nickname Muscles, which are bursting out of his ragged costume, and later proves his athleticism in a most frightening way. Before he can speak to Fango, though, he’s led away by a PA who tells him he has an extra 10 minutes to rest up in his tent before the first shot of this very hot afternoon.

It’s not surprising when Sun reveals, “I had Nathan in mind when I wrote Charlie’s Farm. It was important that we not have some dude with warts or big boils on his face, but scars created from scratching fleas. What people have to remember is that Charlie is a 40-year-old kid. He’s just an overgrown child, and he kills people for touching his stuff. There are people who have survived Charlie’s Farm; they’ve gone searching for the legend and lived.

People just need to realize that if they leave Charlie (Nathan Jones) alone, he’ll leave them alone.

“The whole idea of a deformed serial killer is a cliché now, and we wanted to do something a little different.”

—Steve Boyle, makeup FX creator

When he takes a life, Charlie’s just taking after his dad (Bill Moseley).
Then there have been people who went out there and started playing around, and that pisses him off. Charlie doesn’t know how to share.”

In one of the tents, we came upon Steve Boyle, makeup effects master and designer of all things Charlie. Having worked his magic on major films like *The Hobbit: An Unexpected Journey* and the vampire thriller *Daybreakers*, as well as smaller projects like *What We Do in the Shadows* and *Sun’s Girl*, Boyle is charged up to be visiting Charlie’s Farm. “From the start, I was very excited about this,” he says, “because it’s a true throwback to ’80s slashers, and I grew up on those. Even though I’ve done much higher-profile stuff, I always knew I had one of these movies in me—or maybe a couple, if there’s a sequel.

“I was also excited about designing Charlie’s makeup. The whole idea of a deformed serial killer is something of a cliché now, and we wanted to do something a little different and design something where the deformities are kept off the face. We deform other parts of the body, and the facial design is more influenced by sickness, disease and exposure to the elements. He has contact lenses and hairpieces, dentures, protheses for his body, his back, his hands, everything.”

The sheer quantity of makeup FX required for *Charlie’s Farm* was also an attraction, Boyle notes. “It’s rare to have so many effects in a film with this budget. You would usually only see this on a $20-million project. It’s not just making the pieces for Charlie every single day, plus the stunt-mask versions; there are all the deaths of the other cast members. Even though five weeks of shooting time sounds good compared to a lot of other stuff that’s being done, it just takes a lot of time to film the effects. If a scene involves blood, I just know I’m going to hold the set up—but I’m used to that look from people now. I’ve actually lost count of how many, but we’ve got fake heads, slit throats, punctured bodies, people being hit with axes and all sorts of appendages being cut off, and all of them have blood rigs.”

Clearly, Charlie is quite the creative killer, and Boyle adds, “What I like about him is that sometimes, he just uses his bare hands. It’s easier than getting a weapon; he’ll just grab someone’s throat and rip out a big chunk. I’ve always wanted to do something like that.” And even Charlie’s yellow eyes have a conceptual basis: “We were playing with the idea of, what if someone has become so evil that there are all these different stews inside his body, different viruses? How would that present itself physically? We thought we could let that concentration come out through his eyes, through emotional intensity.”

The unique thing about Charlie is that standing next to him, you get no sense of him being supernatural; his look is entirely of his own making. “I get the feeling he’s going to remain alive and stay human” in potential future films, Boyle muses. “That was the thing Chris wanted to separate him from all the others. He didn’t want Charlie to be a bogeyman; he wanted him to be a real guy.”

Another special feature of *Charlie’s Farm* is that its antagonist actually fights Jason Voorhees—at least figuratively, in the form of Hodder’s character Tony Stewart. Few other retro-slashers can claim that. “In a sense, Charlie was fathered by those characters, as we all were creatively,” Boyle says. “I grew up with those movies—the *Friday the 13ths*, the *Nightmare on Elm Streets*—and I still watch them constantly. So the idea of contributing to a character where we all have the same goal for him—the question then becomes, how do we design him so he’s worthy of that legacy? I believe we’ve absolutely done it.

It would be a fair fight if Kane Hodder was playing his masked alter ego.
I was very nervous at first, because I made Charlie’s prosthetics in so many sections, I hadn’t actually seen it put together except in the original design I did with Photoshop. But on the first night, Chris and I looked at each other and knew we’d got it right.

Suddenly, all things are go on set and Boyle is called back to attend to Charlie—but before leaving, he offers an answer to the question of whether he’s doing anything especially innovative on Charlie’s Farm. “The funny thing is, I’ve slit people’s throats before. I’ve done fully deformed makeups before. I’ve cut heads off before, stabbed people before, ripped off people’s genitals. I don’t think I’ve ever torn off someone’s jaw before. This may be the first time I’ve done that particular mutilation.”

After watching a bathing scene with Alira Jaques as Melanie and Sam Coward as Donkey, Fango ends up in the middle of the paddock as the setup for today’s FX family [laughs]. We don’t have a lot of big guys in our bloodline. I’m very proud to see him now that he’s all grown up. It didn’t look like he was going to amount to much. We used to call him the retard. He wasn’t really a good kid. At the end of the day, darkness and rain descend rapidly, and the urge not to get caught in an instant quagmire results in a lot of people running for shelter. Fango catches up with Sun for a final comparison between Charlie and the slasher icons that formed him. “Jason and Michael Myers are both pretty much the same, and they’re both wearing masks. I’m still a huge Michael fan, but the one thing I like about Leatherface is that he runs. Charlie really shows that he’s a child in the way he plays with his victims. He toys with them in the way he kills them, but he doesn’t F**k around either. Once he’s going to kill you, that’s it, and you die very painfully.

As he departs, Sun turns back with a smile for one final observation. “You know who Charlie does remind me of? Harry from Harry and the Hendersons—just a really violent one.”

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Veteran actor Clu Gulager has created a body of work that spans decades, from the Western TV classics The Virginian and The Tall Man to a pair of enduring fright films celebrating their 30th anniversaries this year: Dan O'Bannon’s horror/comedy gem The Return of the Living Dead and Jack Sholder’s sequel A Nightmare on Elm Street 2: Freddy’s Revenge. Entertainment runs surprisingly deep in Gulager’s family: his father John was a prolific vaudeville performer and humorist, and his cousin Will Rogers was one of the most recognizable celebrities for decades. His late wife Miriam Byrd-Nethery co-starred with Gulager in Jeff Burr’s From a Whisper to a Scream (a.k.a. The Offspring) and played Mama Sawyer in Burr’s Leatherface: Texas Chainsaw Massacre III.

And of course, Gulager’s older son John directed the Feast trilogy and Piranha 3DD, casting Gulager in all four. His younger son Tom is also an actor who appeared in the second and third Feast films; who can forget him throwing the baby to the monsters to save himself? (Incidentally, that baby was his own son and Clu’s grandson!) FANGORIA sat down with Gulager to reminisce about the horrors in his past...

FANGORIA: Are you a horror fan yourself?

CLU GULAGER: I’m a fan of every movie. I think no filmmaker, horror filmmakers included, ever sets out to make a bad film. Sometimes, we end up making pictures that are not as good as others, but we don’t mean to. I like the intention of an artist when he or she sets out to make a movie. I always take that into account. Not everyone can be a Martin Scorsese, but that’s OK; we can still make entertaining pieces. We have all these points of view when we create a horror film, and it’s so dangerous because we’re dealing with death and blood and the most dynamic images movies can deal with. The more blood, the more I like it. Maybe I have a perversion that is good for society. I hope I do!

FANG: That’s just fine! What can you tell us about the Return of the Living Dead experience?

GULAGER: I have had numerous people come up and tell me, “You were just right. It seemed like they wrote that for you.” I tell them no, I don’t think so. Dan told me he was writing it as a joke. They had Tobe Hooper to direct it, but the money was hard to come by, so finally, the producers said, “We can’t wait any longer. Dan, you are going to have to direct it.” He said, “I’m not a director.” They said, “Now you are.” So he started directing. He didn’t know, necessarily, how to prepare for each day’s work and so forth, but after I saw it, I felt that he hit it. He came out a winner on that. Dan did a splendid job.

FANG: At the time, were you familiar with George A. Romero’s films and what O’Bannon’s script was riffing on?

GULAGER: Yeah, I was. And we did some things that were really frightening, too. I had to knock the head off a zombie. They had this little person who was the stuntman, dressed in this costume with a fake head sitting on his head. I had this bat I was supposed to swing as hard as I could to knock that head off, and I did. It was crazy, but I actually hit it and it went sailing off like it was going over the fence. I was thrilled, and didn’t think much about it until later. Then I began to cringe and realize what we had done. If I had hit that guy in his head, it would have killed him instantly.

FANG: So it wasn’t a prop bat? It was real?

GULAGER: Oh, yes. A real wooden Louisville Slugger. I really hit it hard. I didn’t even question it until later. Then it almost made me sick to my stomach.

FANG: Return of the Living Dead’s longevity is amazing. When you make convention appearances, is that the role that resonates most with fans?

GULAGER: There are two entertainment entities I have been associated with that are still, as you say, resonating with folks. One is The Virginian, a Western show that was on for about nine years, and the other is Return of the Living Dead. I would say, if I am remembered at all, those two are probably what it will be for.

FANG: You will be remembered. There definitely is a legacy there.

Forrest J Ackerman said, ‘Don’t do Jeff Burr’s film, Vincent... because in it, Clu Gulager kills his naked wife!’

FANG: The Virginian’s longevity is amazing. When you make convention appearances, is that the role that resonates most with fans?

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FANG: You will be remembered. There definitely is a legacy there.
GULAGER: You know, film has been around about 100 years or so. So you’re right in that sense. There is a legacy for every actor, actress, director and editor. I know that we’re now in this kind of recidivism period where people are reviving things like David Cronenberg and so forth, and I think it is right that your magazine honors these legends. My period is within that 100-year era of film.

Quentin Tarantino, who’s a friend of mine and owns the theater I go to all the time [LA’s New Beverly Cinema], just hates it that [actual] film is gone. He would probably hate me for saying film has gone, but that’s how I feel. Now we’re in the age of digital projection, and I think Quentin feels it is wrong. I don’t necessarily agree with his position all the way, but I understand what he’s saying. There may be a different look to film, a little richer maybe, deeper hues and things like that. I understand that, but film is so expensive now, maybe this can make it a little cheaper.

FANG: Well, technology always offers financial savings eventually, but when something is new, it’s usually expensive. Later, when it becomes more affordable, independent filmmakers can finally use it. Just like 3D technology, which will probably become cheaper.

GULAGER: That’s interesting. 3D was a gimmick, and now it has become more widespread. It has never affected my enjoyment of film much. John had to make his last film in 3D. The Weinsteins wanted Piranha 3DD to have big tits shown triple [laughs], so that’s what he did! They had big titties shown three different ways! If the Weinsteins want it and they’re putting up the money, let’s do it!

FANG: A Nightmare on Elm Street 2 had you battling an exploding bird, among other things. What was that like?

GULAGER: Well, all I know is the bird was supposed to fly around the room, and they liked to do things the old-fashioned way. So they got this old man who used to be good with whips and things like that. He had this big long string on a pole with a phony bird tied to it, and he just started whipping it around the living room. It hit me right in the f**king eye! I said, “Oh, shit! That old man oughta be put down!” So, that was my experience with that film.

FANG: Jeff Burr cast you in From a Whisper to a Scream, Eddie Presley and Puppet Master 5: The Final Chapter. How was it working with him?

GULAGER: Jeff is a brilliant filmmaker. Once again, we see that the legacy of Hollywood sometimes disrespects great artists. They disrespected Jeff, and that bothered the shit out of me.
I have a great story about Vincent Price on From a Whisper to a Scream. I played a psychotic guy, as I often do, and Miriam played my sister—my wife in real life played my sister in the movie. They asked Vincent to do the wraparound scenes, and they gave him the script, and Vincent was a friend of this guy who had a horror magazine called Famous Monsters.

FANG: Forrest J Ackerman...

GULAGER: Yeah, Forrest. He was his good friend, and a good friend of mine, so I thought. He heard Vincent was offered this script, so he wrote to him. This is wild, but it’s true [laughs]: A friend of Jeff’s who works at the Library of Congress came across some of Vincent’s old letters and papers he’d received, and sent Jeff one from Forrest J Ackerman to Vincent Price. In it, he said, “Don’t do Jeff Burr’s film, Vincent. You are making a horrible mistake, because in it, Clu Gulager kills his naked wife!” Well, of course—that’s what we do in horror films! But I heard later that the real reason he didn’t want Vincent to do it was that Forrest had wanted that role, and it wasn’t offered to him. So, there you go.

And at the end of the letter, he said, “Destroy this, I don’t want anyone reading it.” Well, it’s in the Library of Congress, and now it’s gonna be in FANGORIA. F**k it, you know, because I think things like this should be known. I didn’t like him sending a letter like that about my wife. She was a very religious woman, and she was an actress playing her part. She did it beautifully. The part required her to be taking a bath when I stabbed her in the back and drowned her. That’s what the script said, so she did it. That’s what actors do. Morality, up to a point, doesn’t enter into art. Now, having said that, you may get a lot of letters, but who gives a shit? I don’t care what anyone thinks.

FANG: Well said! How was it being directed by your son as the Bartender in the three Feast films?

GULAGER: Not only was it thrilling and rewarding, it was an honor, because he is a great filmmaker. He is a true artist, so it was a thrill to be asked to do it. He helped me out so much in film, throughout my life, and the least I can do when he wants me to do something is just do it.

“I had to knock the head off a zombie... If I had hit that guy in his [real] head, it would have killed him instantly.”

FANG: Can you talk a bit about the film acting workshops you offer in different cities?

GULAGER: We don’t take many students in those workshops. We go on location for each scene and shoot everything, and I critique it. Then, when we play it back, I critique it again. It’s not a seminar. I don’t just give a lecture; it’s not that kind of deal. My theory, and it’s probably all wet, is, “Can I get them on their feet, scene after scene, moment after moment, exercise after exercise?” Practice makes perfect—that’s my concept. I’m probably old-fashioned, but that’s the way we think, in that workshop anyway.

Find out more about Gulager’s Film Acting Workshop at http://gulager.com/acting.
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Although Mexico has always been rich in traditions and legends, not many horror movies have been produced there, and very few of those have been released in Europe or the United States. With the exception of a group of films made by writer/director Juan Bustillo Oro, considered by many to be the true father of Mexican horror cinema, in the ‘30s, Mexican production was overwhelmingly dominated by melodramas and Westerns in its early decades. This changed in the ‘50s, when the great TV success of professional wrestling, the *lucha libre*, led to big-screen vehicles for its crazy, costumed heroes and villains, with the likes of Santo and The Blue Demon taking on monsters, vampires, robots, mummies and mad doctors.

With a few exceptions, though—like Chano Urueta’s *Frankenstein* -inspired *El Monstruo Resucitado* (1953) and Fernando Méndez’s *El Vampiro* (1957)—serious Mexican horror had to wait until a young Guillermo del Toro made his international success *Cronos* (1993). More recently, Jorge Michel Grau debuted to much applause with *We Are What We Are*, and formerly Argentina-based Adrián García Bogliano moved to Mexico to create *Here Comes the Devil* and *Scherzo Diabolico*. Sound designer turned filmmaker Lex Ortega thus decided it was the right time to initiate a project that would bring the most brutally shocking Mexican traditions and legends to the screen, gathering together seven other Mexican filmmakers/genres and legends fans for the anthology feature *México Barbaro*, now on DVD and digital from Dark Sky Films.

An anthology from Mexico adapts traditional legends to break new ground in the genre.

Also an executive producer on the film, Ortega was joined in the directorial lineup by Grau, Isaac Ezban, Laurette Flores Born, Ulises Guzman, Edgar Nito, Gigi Saul Guerrero and Aaron Soto. *México Barbaro* had its world premiere at last year’s Sitges Film Festival, where FANGORIA had a chat with its mastermind.

**FANGORIA**: How did you get into moviemaking?
**LEX ORTEGA**: I studied sound engineering at the Trebas Institute in Montreal, Canada, and also cinematography at UNAM in Mexico City. I have been doing sound design for radio, television and films for about 15 years, all the while surrounded by directors, producers, editors, etc. So I got pretty involved in the production area, and realized what you shouldn’t do during shooting and then try to fix it in post.

One day I had an idea for a short film, and it coincided with the submission dates for Mexico’s Mórido horror film festival. I didn’t have a script or any knowledge about direction; all I had to make the short was an idea and a couple of questions: How would zombies hear, and what happens if they attack humans because of our noises? Maybe our screams are so annoying that they just want to make it stop; as you can see, everything was related to sound.

So I took a camera with some friends and shot *Devourment*, and it was an official selection at Mórido and played Fantasia as well! I couldn’t believe it, and after that I just felt the need to make more movies. I subsequently made various extreme shorts in the horror genre, and founded the postproduction and sound-design company LSD Audio, with which I have worked on domestic and international film projects such as Adrián García Bogliano’s *Here Comes the Devil* and *Late Phases*, Richard Raaphorst’s *Frankenstein’s Army* and Isaac Ezban’s *The Incident*.

**FANG**: *Frankenstein’s Army* is a pretty crazy movie; what do you remember of that experience?
**ORTEGA**: I didn’t go on set, I just worked on the postproduction. I remember seeing the black-and-white *Frankenstein’s Army* teasers on the web and totally loving them. After the producers from Dark Sky contacted us to do the sound, I was flipping out about working on that project; I just loved those creatures. When I met Richard during the mixing process, he told us he had to sell his collection of Star Wars toys to pay for those teasers!

**FANG**: How did you come up with the idea of making an anthology horror feature?
**ORTEGA**: Today, it is almost impossible to see short films at regular theaters. Luckily, they’re always welcomed at festivals and have their own space, but their lifespan is relatively brief, and you can only catch them at festivals or special showings. The
idea came up basically because I wanted to give longer life to short movies, so more people would be able to watch them and they could be shown on the big screen. I wanted to give them back their importance, and the only way I found to do that was to join forces with other directors who felt the same way. Creepshow influenced this project very much, but there were other anthologies that inspired its territorial context, which is the spine of México Barbaro. I’m thinking about Three...Extremes, by the renowned Asian directors Takashi Miike, Fruit Chan and Park Chan-wook. They told their stories in a very provincial way, and I loved that.

FANG: Was it difficult to get México Barbaro financed?

ORTEGA: It’s always hard to get money for a movie, and that was a very important issue for México Barbaro. Each director financed his or her own segment, or sought their own resources to finish it.

"Most of the segments ended up presenting a very realistic and socially conscious view of present-day Mexico."

That’s what made this project 100 percent independent.

FANG: How did you corral all the filmmakers?

ORTEGA: We all met each other at festivals, and I respect and enjoy their work a lot, so I told them the idea for an anthology with the common theme of Mexican traditions and legends, and they loved it. The majority of the initial lineup remained to the end, although the original list changed a bit, because two of the directors were busy filming other things and decided to step out of the project for personal reasons. When that happened, we proposed their conceivable successors, analyzed their work and made the decision after voting.

FANG: Based on that, Mexico seems rich with creepy stories to tell...

ORTEGA: This project is very nationalistic. All the directors had to be born in Mexican territory, regardless of the place or their current residence. We wanted to show the world at least a small part of our popular culture—told with some buckets of blood, of course! Most of the time, filmmakers recreate the legend of La Llorona [the crying woman] in different ways; that is our most common and famous traditional legend, but in Mexico we have many stories and creatures, so we tried to use different ones. It’s funny—most of the segments ended up presenting a very realistic and socially conscious view of present-day Mexico, without any agreement among us: feminicide, organ trafficking, narcotics, vengeance, the disappearance of innocent people, drug cartels and so on.

FANG: Tell us about your episode.

ORTEGA: It’s titled “Lo Que Importa Es Lo de Adentro” [“It’s What’s Inside That Counts”]. I did a bizarre, sick and very violent version of what we know as the legend of El Coco [the Hispanic equivalent of the bogeyman], or El Señor del Costal. That kind of contradicts what I said before about not doing the most common legends, but I gave it a social context and put it in an urban setting, very close to any of us who live in the monstrous metropolitan area that Mexico City is.

The story takes place in a dysfunctional family environment, where the mother despises her little daughter Laura, who has a disease called Rett syndrome that affects girls almost exclusively, damaging motor functions and language. The mother feels Laura is a burden to her, and prefers her healthy child. Laura knows what’s going on in the neighborhood with El Coco, but she can’t communicate. I talk about segregation, exclusion and how appearances are deceiving. My bogeyman is not an entity
hiding in a closet; this one is real, living among us, and he is a real son of a bitch.

Tlatelolco, the area of Mexico City where I chose to shoot my segment, has a pretty bloody past. In 1968, there was a genocide led by the state; during a massive protest in the main square, many students were killed by snipers shooting from the roof of the Chihuahua building, which is where the story unfolds. Many students ran into the building to escape, and undercover paramilitary killed them on the stairs. In September 1985, a magnitude 8.1 earthquake shook Mexico City, and on the right side of Tlatelolco’s square, the Nuevo Leon building collapsed, killing between 200 and 300 people. You can imagine the vibes that place has.

FANG: The actor playing the bogeyman is impressive; one moment he looks like a good guy, and the next he is a frightening monster. How did you cast him?

ORTEGA: On most of my past shorts, I have worked with non-actors because of a lack of financial resources—just friends who had the characters’ physical profiles. They’d read the script, I’d give them the backgrounds of the parts and we’d shoot. This case was the same. I wrote the script thinking of my friend Anur Zultiga Naine, who had the perfect look with the right guidance he could be really creepy and a bad-ass. Unlike the character, he is a very easygoing person, and he was so worried about not being believable on screen, but he did a great job!

FANG: Were there any issues working side by side with so many other filmmakers, with such distinct personalities?

ORTEGA: Not at all; it was absolutely awesome! They’re all professionals and very talented, they know what to do and how to do it and there was full commitment from all of them, and that was crucial to the film being completed. México Barbaro offers visions from downtown, the north and south of the country and Mexican residents living in other countries. All of them have different life experiences that give a unique flavor to each of these stories, which makes this the first Mexican feature with that quality.

FANG: There have been rumors about a potential second México Barbaro movie, with different directors involved. Can you say anything about that?

ORTEGA: Well, besides being an interesting project by its very nature, México Barbaro is a door to exposure for filmmakers who, for various reasons, have been unable to make a feature. So yes, there will be eight more Barbaros telling bizarre, extreme and bloody traditional Mexican stories. We want to expand México Barbaro into a franchise, to give opportunities to more genre directors from all over Mexico. It won’t matter if their career has been long or short; the only requirement is to be Mexican-born. We will create a forum within social media, where service providers and film-industry professionals can have a platform to showcase and offer their work and services and exchange ideas for those interested in horror and fantasy movies. Beyond that, this project will create a channel where people can generate projects and provide guidance and support for productions outside the franchise.

FANG: México Barbaro feels fresh while keeping the classic architecture of horror cinema. What do you think will be the future of the genre?

ORTEGA: Hollywood’s lack of ideas is obvious, and we now have the opportunity, thanks to the ease of technology, to film any time. Independent moviemakers aren’t restricted any more; you can shoot on a very small budget. The most important thing is that we have all kinds of fresh, original stories to tell, and I believe all kinds of good directors from unimaginable places are coming to kick ass, so the genre is going to be around for a while.

FANG: What are your next projects? Will we see a full Lex Ortega picture?

ORTEGA: I’m working on my first feature, Atox [Atrocious], which came out of a short I made a few years ago. It’s a very graphic, ultraviolet story about two serial killers who record their tortures and murders, and these snuff tapes are confiscated by the police when they’re arrested for causing a traffic accident. It’s a mixture of found footage and traditional cinema.
“El Gigante” Muscles In

Mexico Barbara’s “Día de las Muertas” isn’t the only short film by Gigi Saul Guerrero to find its way to audiences this year. With her cohort in Luchagore Productions, she’s been rallying up festival crowds with El Gigante, a 13-minute tale of south-of-the-border brutality intended to launch a feature. Guerrero and partners Raynar Shima and Luke Bramley screened both the short and a proud-of-concept for the full-length movie at this past summer’s Fantasia festival in Montreal, where they pitched to prospective backers during the Frantipères International Co-Production Market, and spoke to FANGORIA about the project.

El Gigante may not be the first flick to combine horror and masked grapplers, but it’s likely the most explicit. Bramley describes the story as “The Texas Chainsaw Massacre meets luchador wrestling. It’s about this family who live in the barren outback of the Texas/Mexico border, and they capture illegal immigrants trying to cross over, bring them back to their home, terrorize them in a makeshift wrestling ring, kill them and sell their meat for tacos in the nearest town. Instead of Leatherface, they have El Can Carne by Shane McKenzie, with the short dramatizing its first chapter. “We were really lucky to stumble upon this story,” Guerrero says. “We have to thank John Skipp for that; he introduced us to Shane and basically said, ‘You’ve got to meet this team; they understand what Tex-Mex harrar is all about.’” So, lang well—including El Gigante himself, David Farts.

“He’s probably the most polite giant man you will ever meet, and you would never expect him to be so evil on screen” Guerrero says. “Raynor and Luke actually had to back away from him at the audition. I was lucky way back with the camera, but these guys were like, ‘Whoa!’”

“You know when you see someone who’s really quiet, but they have that dark inner side

Escaping Mexico is a lot harder with this bunch around.

Gigante, this big luchador who just destroys and pulverizes his victims in his ring.”

El Gigante is based on the novel Muerte Carne by Shane McKenzie, with the short dramatizing its first chapter. “We were really lucky to stumble upon this story,” Guerrero says. “We have to thank John Skipp for that; he introduced us to Shane and basically said, ‘You’ve got to meet this team; they understand what Tex-Mex harrar is all about.’” So, lang

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“You know when you see someone who’s really quiet, but they have that dark inner side

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There's a long and colorful tradition of horrific characters in the squared circle.

By TIM CHIZMAR and JOHN PALISANO

A bell rings as smoke fills the arena. Flashes of lightning appear on the large Titantron screen high above the thousands of fans in attendance. Either watching in person or at home on pay-per-view, they know it's going to be another match with a macabre finish. It might be hangings, body bags, burying someone alive or even a classic casket match; these theatrics have replaced the steel cages that were once so prevalent. Chills pass through the crowd. Fans raise their lighters like they're at a heavy metal concert. Children gasp as a short, chubby man in a suit steps through the mist, holding an urn to his chest, and cries, "Oh, yes!"

This man is known as Paul Bearer, and his appearance signifies the arrival of the WWE phenomenon: The Deadman...The Undertaker. Will tonight be one of his infamous "Hell in a Cell" matches?

Although the Undertaker's amazing popularity is certainly not the first time horror imagery and wrestling have come together, his impressive presence in pop culture and huge success for promoters all over the world has inspired many grapplers to incorporate genre elements into their characters, reaching past the common convention of generic babyfaces vs. heels (good guys vs. bad guys). The era of the superhero urging you to say your prayers and eat your vitamins is passé, replaced with an unforgettable demon who's been summoned from the depths of a lake, or an evil leprechaun, or worse. Recently, PAN-GORIA was lucky enough to speak with some Main Event wrestlers currently touring the world. A Demon, a Snake, and a Boogeyman speak below about the past, present and future of the collision between wrestling and horror.

Sinn Bodhi, a former WWE wrestler better known as Kizarny, a crazy carnival freak, says, "I can train in the gym all day long, but it's just not going to make me 7 feet tall. The Undertaker is an ominous man in stature, so if he comes out all serious—with the right regalia, music and lighting—it sets an awesome tone. Whereas Gangrel [a famous vampire wrestler] is medium-sized. I'm no midget, but for wrestling? I'm pretty small at 6-feet-2 and 230 pounds—that's runty for a heavyweight. Gangrel is about 6-feet-3 and just shy of 300 pounds, while the Undertaker is 6-feet-10 and easily 300 pounds.

"I'm the fastest of the three, which is my plus," he continues. "I don't come out trying to look all serious. My ambience is really scary because I'm mixed with cute imagery. I've got bloody, angry stuff going on, but then? I've got duckies and bunnies strapped to me. I'm psycho. I've got circus animals hanging off me. I can't tell you how often fans come up to me and say how they never thought pink hearts would be so scary. Women tell me that I'm the creepiest performer they've ever seen in the ring, and tough guys who think they could take me are afraid I'll bite their faces off!"

Bodhi currently runs Freakshow Wrestling, and was recently honored by the prestigious Cauliflower Alley Club in Las Vegas, inducted by legendary madman...
wrestler Jake the Snake Roberts. Jake the Snake, known for his eloquent promos as well as biting the snakes he took inside the ring, was even once assisted at WrestleMania 3 by none other than shock rocker Alice Cooper. Jake is unfortunately also widely known for his personal horrors of drug and alcohol abuse, as documented in the 1999 film Beyond the Mat and this year's documentary The Resurrection of Jake the Snake. He says he's much better these days—“Getting sober was the first step”—and he was recently inducted into the WWE Hall of Fame.

Fango caught up with Jake following a live wrestling event in Hollywood, where he was victorious over Scorch the Clown.

“I can train in the gym all day long, but it’s just not going to make me 7 feet tall.”
—Sinn Bodhi

“I fought the Undertaker at WrestleMania 8, and you want to know my thoughts on horror in pro wrestling? It’s all about the mystique of horror. What is it? Where does it come from? The bump underneath the bed? Or what’s it in the closet? That’s what it’s all about. Horror, scaring kids. Wrestling does that.”

As far as his own choice for the most iconic scary character in the field, Jake says, “Well, I think Mankind—the original Mankid, before he went silly on everybody. He was pretty spooky.” Mankid lived inside a boiler room, collected body parts and wore a signature Hannibal Lecter-style mask. He would rock back and forth, screeching for his mommy while pulling out clumps of his hair.

Backstage before another live event, Fango catches up with former WWE wrestler The Boogeyman as well as the lovely Katarina Leigh Waters (formerly known as WWE Diva Katia Lea Burchill). The Boogeyman (a.k.a. Martin Wright) intones, “As I see you, you see me. As I look into the mirror, I’m a part of you and you are a part of me.” He lets out a characteristically evil laugh as the crowd goes wild. “They love it!”

Waters, who added to her horror cred by hosting a series of DVDs for Scorpion Releasing, recalls her experience taking on the Boogeyman in the WWE: “Standing in the ring and hearing that music and seeing him come out—the dance and the smoke, the laughter—was probably the most exciting thing that happened while I was there. I wish it had lasted a bit longer.”

The Boogeyman is known for actually eating handfuls of live worms, as well as throwing them into the audience, scattering fans in all directions. “The worms weren’t the only thing, but they were the easiest to control,” he says. “I had insects—maggots, Madagascar roaches, crickets and so forth—in my pouch, but the only thing they could handle was the worms. When we went into the arena, we’d have to pay an infestation clause of $80,000, so they didn’t want to do that. I must add that working with Kat was the most phenomenal time—one of the highlights of my career,” he continues. “She’s a very good, professional wrestler, her and Paul Burchill [Waters’ in-thering brother]. We had a good thing—a good feud—and I wish it had lasted longer, but you know what? That memory of her and Paul is something I’ll take with me to my death.”

What about the elements of his act that scare people? The voodoo, the supernatural, the creature in the closet, sprinkled with a little bit of magic—how did it all come together? “The Boogeyman has been here since the beginning of time. All cultures have him, and he’s a part of everyone.”

Adds Waters, “The reason why the Boogeyman caught on so well, and has lasted so long, is that he’s not a stereotype. He has grown out of you—evolved out of you—native roots and voodoo. He’s more than a two-dimensional character; he’s quite magical. It’s not like you’re acting [opposite him]. You feel like you’re interacting with a creature.”

When the topic of horror arises, few have been as big in the WWE in the last decade as the aforementioned Gangrel, otherwise known as The Vampire Warrior. From his entrance raising through a circle of fire, to his evil minions known as the Brood, to spitting blood out of a goblet into the air before a match, this fanged man is born of darkness. He even began his career as a member of the Undertaker’s group The Ministry of Darkness. When you’ve got a wrestler whose finishing move is called The Nail in the Coffin, he’s someone Fango had to catch up with. He spoke with us at the Art Parlor in Val-
on terror in the squared circle: “A good horror-wrestling character is someone who evokes fear, like Freddy Krueger or Michael Myers. That immediately brings you to the Undertaker, Kane [the Undertaker’s evil brother], Gangrel, Edge and Christian. These were characters who evoked that fear in you—that element of ‘I don’t want to be in the middle of a horror movie.’”

When asked if the performers need to have a darker side in real life or just be good performers, Brown lights up. “It’s a little of both. Wrestling characters are a bit about yourself, but then you magnify what you are, even if you aren’t. I know Kane, and he’s not a scary guy, but he really comes off that way.” Kane, born Glen Jacobs, has had the most conspicuous crossover from the ring to the genre screen as vicious killer Jacob Goodnight in the See No Evil movies; Jacobs previously performed in the WWE as evil dentist Isaac Yankem, DDS. “The dentist evokes a different type of fear,” Brown notes.

Another man involved in the transition of pro wrestlers to film is David DeFalco, director of indie horrors like Chaos and The Backlot Murders as well as Wrong Side of Town, an actioner featuring former WWE World Heavyweight Champions Rob Van Dam and Dave Bautista, the latter years before his breakout success playing Drax the Destroyer in Guardians of the Galaxy. “Many wrestlers get the chance to succeed,” DeFalco says, “but only two have reached the heights of The Rock and Bautista. I had a direct participation in that, as I wrote, directed and produced Bautista’s first movie. Those guys have the larger-than-life charisma, and can translate that to the big screen; I saw that ability in him. In order to be successful, they’ve got to know their limitations, and put themselves in the right vehicles.”

The right vehicle for so many wrestlers these days is to take a walk on the wild side and not run from their shadows, but embrace them, and walk with them. Horror and professional wrestling will always attract die-hard fans, be it on television or in sold-out arenas, and these characters and performers are likely to continue crossing over to mainstream success in a major way. As Brown puts it, “It’s all about tapping into it and bringing out the best of yourself.” See you ringside!
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Cast a Deadly Spell and Witch Hunt are a pair of HBO Original Movies that languish in obscurity, despite being genuinely unique visions that originally received high-profile airings. Ordinarily, this column covers a single film, but since these two go together... they go together.

Cast a Deadly Spell, from 1991, is based on a bizarre yet genius idea. In an alternate '90s where there's no Topnotch Studios, that genius is H.P. Lovecraft—like I said, genius.

The plot concerns Lovecraft's search for a stolen rare book that turns out to be the Necronomicon. Plenty of colorful characters are encountered and references to horror mainstays are frequent, along with an abundance of mood and atmosphere. Director Martin Campbell (who would go on to helm the Bond films GoldenEye and Casino Royale) and topnotch genre producer Gale Anne Hurd (Aliens, The Walking Dead) craft a fully realized world where monsters are not the stuff of stories, but of the evening news. Beyond Ward, there is a supporting cast to die (and be resurrected) for, including Julianne Moore and genre veterans David Warner, Clancy Brown, Charles (The Thing) Hallahan and Lee Tergesen.

Cast a Deadly Spell is a movie every horror fan simply has to see, with a shockingly good story (scripted by Joseph Dougherty) and a noir setting re-done in a Gothic tone. This unique take on an old subject also boasts excellent creature/makeup and visual FX overseen by Tony Gardner and the Skotak brothers, respectively. HBO is committing a crime against cinema by holding it back from a digital release, and Cast a Deadly Spell deserves better. Being left to die in VHS-only limbo is no fate for such an exceptional product, though the tape is pretty easy to find in the wild and very inexpensive on the secondary market.

Speaking of holding back great ideas, we come to the 1994 follow-up Witch Hunt, which may be more insane than its predecessor and is yet interior. This one's set in the 1950s, with Lovecraft (now played by Dennis Hopper) once again getting in over his head with magic and the occult. A conspiracy to stop those who abuse those powers is central to the plot, incorporating a less-than-subtle allegory for the Red Scare.

Once again written by Dougherty, and directed by Paul Schrader (Cat People, Dominion: Prequel to the Exorcist), Witch Hunt ups the ante and somehow becomes the worse for it. The abundance of cheap '90s CGI and an obviously smaller budget are so noticeable, it's hard to consider this a true sequel to Cast a Deadly Spell. Everything about Witch Hunt seems cheaper, including the cast. Hopper and Julian Sands are about it for genre names, and Penelope Ann Miller and Eric Bogosian are hardly of the same caliber as the previous film's ensemble. Hurd is also back as producer, but you can't really see it this time. Witch Hunt falls not out of lack of ambition, but from a lack of cohesion. Where Cast a Deadly Spell feels flushed out while also fun and pulpy, Witch Hunt is just bland and meandering, with a good idea (the magic-vs.-Communism analogy) that got lost somewhere along the line.

Once again, HBO chose to only release Witch Hunt on VHS, witholding it from the digital realm. The company seems reluctant to release many of their properties to DVD, but Cast a Deadly Spell and Witch Hunt are worth seeking out on video-cassette as examples of how cable projects can be original and distinctive. Indeed, Hopper is on the record as saying that Witch Hunt is the strangest film he has ever made, and he had no idea what was happening while filming it. Let that sink in for a moment: Dennis Hopper thinks this film is so odd that he never understood it. That alone should entice even the most skeptical reader to track down this duo of singularly fantastic (in both senses of the word) analog treasures.

—Josh Hadley
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Abbie Bernstein has more Victor Frankensteins coverage coming on Fangoria.com this month. David Bertrand spun horror scores aplenty as resident DJ for the Toronto After Dark Film Festival. Tim Chizmar is often quite nude, which as witnesses will agree is nearly as terrifying as his writings. Nearly. Roberto E. D’Onofrio watched amazing movies and met masters of horror Rick Baker and Tom Savini at Spain’s Sitges Film Festival. Josh Hadley is a Luddite whose reluctance to venture into the future of media has restrained him in the best way. Michael Helms hopes to see more than a few Fangorians at this month’s Monster Fest in Melbourne. Madeleine Koestner isn’t crazy, she just doesn’t give a fk. Shawn Macomber accepts that his 2-year-old daughter Ruth Isabel has inherited her beauty, sweetness and intelligence from Mommy, but takes credit (blame?) for her love of werewolves. John Polisano made his son a Halloween costume of Springtrap from Five Nights at Freddy’s. It scares him. Sadly, Brian Steward wishes Chris Alexander and Michael Gingold the best of luck in their new positions and suggests you visit Briansteward.com often! Owen Williams recently realized that Hellraiser is as old now as the earliest Hammer horrors were when Hellraiser was new. He feels old.

The first name in reluctant horror heroism is also our cover boy for next issue, as we sit down with longtime Fangoro favorite Bruce Campbell. With Starr’s ASH VS. EVIL DEAD series in full swing, the actor discusses his long-time association with the bloodstreamed role in depth. Another of our favorite performers, Henry Rollins, makes his starring debut in a genre picture as the cannibalistic protagonist of HE NEVER DIED. We visited the set of the deadpan horror/black comedy to chat up Rollins and his cohorts.

Next, we’ll head to Japan to take a walk in THE FOREST, and investigate the mysterious horrors lurking within the trees. Then we’ll talk with The Quay Brothers, creators of some of the creepiest and most influential animation ever.

RAIMI (continued from page 14) its own and has its own reality, and it’s moving forward from there.

FANG: How has the show taken on that life of its own as you have overseen its development?

RAIMI: Well, here’s how it has taken on its own life: from the mere fact that I couldn’t be there to run it and direct it all. My brother and I, even though we had some early episode ideas, really had to turn it over to a room of very talented writers and our showrunner Craig DiGregorio. I had to leave the writing room and start preproduction in New Zealand, so I said, “So long, jellies, good luck!” I took care of that preproduction for many weeks, and then I came back for a week and caught up on what they were all writing, and then I had to go away for eight more weeks to do more preproduction and direct. When I came back again, all the scripts were written, and I was kind of cheering them on, basically.

FANG: You earlier mentioned eliciting the fear of the unknown, and given that and the presence of ancient demons and a Necronomicon, the world of Evil Dead seems at least partially inspired by H.P. Lovecraft. Has he been any kind of influence?

RAIMI: I don’t think Lovecraft has been a big inspiration for me. I’ve read some of his short stories, maybe one of his novels, but what I think has really had a giant influence on The Evil Dead is George Romero’s Night of the Living Dead. That was a very influential film for us; it showed Bruce, Rob and I how to make a horror movie with zombielike bad guys in a cabin for a very low budget that could be super-effective. Also, The Texas Chain-saw Massacre and The Hills Have Eyes have been big influences on Evil Dead, but I don’t think it was the work of Lovecraft so much.

FANG: Can you talk a bit about the new freedom that TV allows in terms of showing violence and gore, and how that landscape has become so much more horror-friendly?

RAIMI: It’s great how many horror pieces there are on TV, from The Walking Dead to American Horror Story. I’m not really familiar with the others, but those are terrific, the episodes I’ve seen. It’s really a horror lover’s dream to have this age of television where you can get really scary original programming on a nightly basis; it’s crazy. It’s like the Golden Age of TV horror.

Before the last several years, I can’t think of any show on television, after The Twilight Zone or The Outer Limits or Night Gallery, that really worked on the audience and made them frightened. It has really changed, because people want to scare TV viewers now, and there are no holds barred. It’s quite an open landscape for great young artists to come in and make new horror programming, so it has definitely changed for the positive.

JERUSALEM (continued from page 21) ing shoot that took them into some inhospitable locations, including real caves that they spent days running through.

“There was no air-conditioning, it was hot and wet and sweaty all the time,” Doron remembers. “The actors worked really hard, and sometimes they would fall down and actually bleed. But what’s great about shooting on location is that you don’t need to fake anything, and you can get amazing production value without spending a lot of money.”

Yoav has his own idea about the greatest difficulty some of the cast (literally) faced: “The hardest thing for them was putting in the black contact lenses. We ordered them from abroad, and only when we got them did we realize how huge they were…”

“They covered the whole eyeball,” Doron interjects.

“We felt so sorry for the actors who needed to wear them,” Yoav continues, “because it took so long for the makeup guys to slide them over their eyes. They suffered so much, I couldn’t even look. That was the most horrifying part of the production for me, just watching the actors dealing with those contact lenses.”

Having previously directed music videos, episodic TV and one previous feature, the film Phobidilia, the Paz brothers began the Jeruzalem project by putting up their own money to shoot a handful of scenes. After unsuccessfully seeking financing for the full feature from funding bodies in Israel, they eventually found backing from Epic Pictures—and hope to achieve the international success of Rabies and Wolves’ Aharon Keshales and Navot Papushado, to help pave the way for greater genre acceptance in their home country.

“I believe the industry is going to change,” Doron says, “and that in a few years, it’s going to be natural to talk about Israeli genre movies, which are now very fresh and new. We’re just starting this process, but it’s a positive direction our cinema is going.” Adds Yoav, “The audience is open to new things; on television, The Walking Dead is popular in Israel like it is all around the world. And when you watch Game of Thrones, you see all kinds of horror things. So even if people say, ‘Oh, I don’t like horror films,’ they’re crazy about Thrones. Everyone loves being scared in some way or other.”

And they’ve given themselves a natural launching pad for Jeruzalem sequels, should that opportunity arise. “When we found that quote from the Talmud that opens the film, that there are gates to hell in the desert, the ocean and in Jerusalem, we were amazed, because it tells the whole story,” Doron says. “It gives us material to create a trilogy—but of course, we’ll need a huge budget to shoot the third movie in the ocean!”

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it’s not unusual. It’s incredibly hard, and that’s why my message is always: Make a small film. Don’t chase the money, chase the dream, chase the art, make the movie at an even lower budget than you think you can. So many times I hear about people who have their million-dollar project, and it’s budgeted responsibly, and they eventually make it for $200,000. It’s disappointing, and it’s not the way the business should work. Just like the middle class is being destroyed, so is just the sustainable filmmaking world.

However, if you’re doing this because of the art, if you’re doing it because you have to, there are ways to do it. The cameras are cheap, you can get a crew. That’s why I work with the young; I feed off of them like an old vampire! You have to feed off that energy; that’s the only way to do it, and then maybe you’ll build a career or maybe you’ll just build a movie library, but that’s cool too. If you’ve made a few films in your life, it’s thrilling—you lived the dream a little bit.

FANG: What’s your overall feeling about where the genre is right now?

FESSENDEN: I think horror’s in a great place. It seems like there’s a huge variety of movies being made. You know, it’s weird how things are talked about; if a film has any kind of heart or pacing that’s unexpected, it’s called a throwback. But in general, I think the fans are empowered to assert that they want something different. A lot of the new filmmakers are doing that, and it’s in a positive place.

I want to keep pushing the boundaries; that’s why we’re making Graham Reznick’s The Designer about video games that reshape people’s realities which is a truly interesting project, and tried to get that movie with JT up and running. Believe me, I always like to revisit old storylines, but let’s not get stuck in that haunted house over and over. There’s so much that horror can do—including, as usual, from my perspective, comment on the world of shit we’re in as a human race, continually making terrible choices, ignoring our own better interests and endlessly betraying ourselves, and those are the themes you can bring.

That’s what horror’s supposed to do: It’s supposed to shock the viewer into an awareness and to talk about what’s truly horrific, which has always been my theme. I worry if we’re only making entertainment, and it’s just splatter and gore and more fantastical stuff. We need to use the medium to confront people. That’s what it used be, when Texas Chainsaw Massacre and Night of the Living Dead were made. Those were shocking movies that also felt like they were coming from the culture, and I’m concerned if the genre scene is only about the medium and our access to cameras. It also has to be connected to the real world, so that’s my hope.

FRIZZI: Though I was very busy with my job, I began putting together a concert tribute to Lucio; I even brought in Antonella. When we were confronted by the world economic crisis a few years later, I had more spare time, so the “Frizzi 2 fulci” show saw the light in 2013. With my orchestra, we did two concerts in Italy as a test: at the Italian Horror Fest in Nettuno, and in Rocca Priora.

Then some friends in London proposed that I do a show on Halloween night at the Union Chapel. I accepted, and though the tickets were only available on-line, the event quickly sold out. The concert was amazing; at the end, we got 15 minutes of applause, and realized that people still loved Lucio and the music I wrote for his films. Last year, we went back to London, this time in a bigger theater—the Barbican—and once again it sold out.

FANG: What do you feel you learned from Fulci over the course of your collaboration?

FRIZZI: Lucio helped me figure out the differences between writing songs and writing music for movies or television. I have written six guitar preludes, for example, and took inspiration for those from my memories and emotions, but when Fulci called and asked me to write the soundtrack for, say, The Beyond, things were different. Nevertheless, when you work on a film, your personal feelings act as a sort of filter for what the director wants, so you bring in your own personality.

It’s true when you think about scoring a dramatic sequence in a horror movie, the first things that come to mind are a lot of unpleasant, frightening sounds. Some of my friends and fans have noticed, however, that for these scenes, I often write themes that are almost romantic. I am very instinctive when I compose for a film; I look carefully at the story and the characters, then put aside everything for a while, and then it’s as if the music writes itself. It’s a representation of the psychological impressions the characters leave on me.

To give you an example: Before I wrote Emily’s theme for The Beyond, I went on the set when they were about to shoot the scene with her and the dog, and there was an untuned piano there. Lucio said, “Let’s try to create music that connects this backdrop with her character.” I got to meet the actress [Cinzia Monreale], a very beautiful girl, and we went to have lunch and she told me she had been suffering with the contact lenses she had to wear; when she took them out, her eyes were all red. I assimilated all those things, and when I sat down at the piano, all those emotions came out. To do this job, I believe you have to be a very sensitive person, and when you write music for images and stories that are not yours, somehow you make them yours, and give them pieces of your soul.

WAKALIWOOD: mates that he has a seven-day window for his actors to sell films door-to-door until he is pirated out of profitability. DVD traders carry an extreme hedgepodge: Lots of Nollywood product, Asian action flicks and current Hollywood hits that are often confusingly repackaged—the cover for Ridley Scott’s Prometheus sports a behind-the-scenes snap from Alien of Nigerian stunt actor Bolaji Badejo wearing the Alien outfit, minus the head. I even spot a busted-up copy of Joe D’Amato’s Anthropophagus!

About half the films for sale have pre-recorded VJ (Video Joker) audio tracks laid over the original soundtracks—a uniquely Ugandan phenomenon that stems from a tradition of live explanatory translations for non translated, non-subtitled films. People like VJ Emmie, Wakaliwood’s resident VJ (he’s the voice in every Wakaliwood trailer and through-out Who Killed Captain Alex), are huge stars in the country.

There is so much on deck in the Wakaliwood world, it’s an embarrassment of riches. Aside from the aforementioned scrap-metal helicopter, which may or may not be followed by a full-sized tank and submarine (?), there is now merch for sale, maybe a video game, the Ebola Hunter web series, a feature with a Playboy and numerous films in various stages of production, including Tedaatsasala: EBÓLA, Demon Village (starring a gun-toting guard); The Ugandan Expendables; and the multitude of established classics released domestically but not yet internationally, including Rescue Team, Bukunja Tekunja Mitti: The Cannibals and The Return of Uncle Benon.

The toughest problems facing Wakaliwood are less-than-functional equipment, lack of money and resources and local piracy. Plus, it’s one guy (Hofmanis) in a shoebox-sized room using perpetually crapping-out Internet and electricity in charge of all website management and social media, as well as handling the export subtitles and recording the obligatory English-language VJ tracks with Emmie (an increasingly hard man to wrangle due to his growing rock-star status). But Nabwana and Wakaliwood have been intentionally holding back, prepping to release three films internationally at once, in a multi-barreled plot to blow up the film world.

“Comming Soon” from Wakaliwood: The Crazy World (a huge recent local hit) starring Uganda’s kung fu kids, the Waka Starz; the true-crime-inspired slum actioner Bad Black; and of course the deadly and delirious Eaten Alive in Uganda.

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