

Tony Timpone's Elegies: Talk to Me, Baby!

Written by Tony Timpone
Thursday, 15 April 2010 11:03



In case you haven't noticed, Fangoria.com has been ramping up its video interviews lately. You can now find collected segments—including my chats with the KICK-ASS kids and Michael Gingold's sit-down with BITCH SLAP and FRIDAY THE 13TH hottie America Olivio—on the homepage's right side under FANGORIA TV, or on the top navbar underneath MOVIES/TV. I think you will dig these one-on-ones, which have been edited and expertly assembled by award-winning filmmaker Bill Hall (also a talented musician; check out his band, Evil Prince Ludwig, [here](#)).

In the last few months, I've been doing a slew of these on-camera interviews, as they're a ton of fun and provide exciting content for the website. We also envision reusing or running longer versions of these chats once our VOD channel launches in the near future. For our initial assignment, Bill, his assistant cameraperson Dori Kamarin and I braved the last New York City blizzard on February 26 and grabbed talk time with velvet-voiced actor Ciarán Hinds (of ROME and MUNICH) and director/co-writer Conor McPherson on their subtle ghost story THE ECLIPSE (a three-part video). That same day, we shot Korean director Bong Joon-ho (two-parter), who helmed the dark melodrama MOTHER and the great giant-creature feature THE HOST. Last week, we caught up with charming Europeans Bruno Forzani and Hélène Cattet, creators of the stunning *giallo* throwback AMER, out this fall from Olive Films. And at the Lionsgate junket for KICK-ASS, I spoke with the film's talented young stars, British-born Aaron Johnson ("Kick-Ass"), Chloe Grace Moretz ("Hit Girl" and soon to be seen as "bit girl" in LET ME IN) and SUPERBAD's unforgettable McLovin, Christopher Mintz-Plasse ("Red Mist"). Don't give me any of that "Why is FANGORIA covering a non-horror film?!" crap. KICK-ASS is the coolest movie of the year, and has more gore and violence than all of 2009's PG-13 horror flicks combined.



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I've always enjoyed tackling interviews. The first one I ever did was with none other than Tom Savini, back in 1980 when I was in high school. I met the splattermeister at a Manhattan Creation convention and introduced myself. Of course, he didn't know me from Adam, but consented to a phone interview. "I live in Pittsburgh, so it will be long distance, of course," Savini said. "But you can call me. Then hang up and I will call you back." The guy was so accommodating that he offered to share the charges with me! (No worries, the folks paid the bill.) Anyway, I caught the bug, and my journalism career was off and running. I thought I'd sell the Savini interview to *Famous Monsters of Filmland*, since Fango already had the man covered extensively in its redder pages. F

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contributing editor Jeff Rovin (author of myriad film and fiction books) sent me a hand-written rejection note back, saying, "Thanks, but no thanks. Some good questions in here though." Anyway, that was good enough to encourage me to pursue more genre celebrity profiles. (I eventually published the Savini interview in my high school Sci-Fi Club fanzine, FANTAZINE, which I edited as well.) During this period, I also conducted one of my only non-entertainment-related interviews—future Vice Presidential nominee Geraldine Ferraro, then a Queens Congresswoman—for a class project.



While attending New York University, I continued these journalistic endeavors. Toiling at the college newspaper, I got to interview indie gods Jim Jarmusch (for STRANGER THAN PARADISE) and Joel & Ethan Coen (BLOOD SIMPLE), SERPICO director Sidney Lumet and Carl Kolchak himself, actor Darren McGavin, a New Yorker at the time who helped the city bid for TV and film shoots. I once tried to get Billy Idol for a music piece; unfortunately, the rocker was so wasted, I never got past my introduction! At the same time, I'd visit more Creation cons and somehow scored interviews with various STAR TREK and STAR WARS people. For one, C-3PO actor Anthony Daniels genially accompanied me to the hotel restaurant and gave me lots of great quotes on sweating it out in the George Lucas universe. At the time, ousted FM editor Forry Ackerman had started a new mag called *Monsterland*, so I sent him my Daniels piece. Forry liked it, but forwarded it to his sister publication,

Enterprise Incidents

(later

SF MovieLand

), which bought the article. My first sale to a national magazine! Both

Incidents

and

Monsterland

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were cheapie versions of STARLOG and FANGORIA, so I eventually set my sights higher—STARLOG and FANGORIA!



In 1984, STARLOG finally bit. Editor Howard Zimmerman and managing editor David McDonnell dug my interview with Admiral Kirk's son, STAR TREK II-III's Merritt Buttrick. The actor (sadly, an early AIDS victim) spilled some juicy stuff about getting killed off in the franchise and was very forthcoming to this nobody kid from Queens. Equally controversial stuff came from STAR TREK: THE MOTION PICTURE star Stephen Collins, who happened to be in NYC performing on Broadway around the same period. He dished dirt to me on working with Shatner and may have been the first actor to reveal (way before all those tell-all books) that the Kirk thespian wasn't the nicest guy to be around. When the piece ran in STARLOG, it pricked the ears of co-star Leonard Nimoy, who angrily contested some of Collins' remarks in a letter to co-publisher Kerry O'Quinn. A journalistic troublemaker was born.



Still in college and penning more and more articles for various genre and movie publications (interviews with British starlet Caroline Munro, BONNIE AND CLYDE director Arthur Penn, ALIEN editor Terry Rawlings, etc.), I really wanted to break into Fango. But back then, co-editors Bob Martin and Dave Everitt penned most of the mag's features themselves. For example, Bob rejected my Coen Bros. piece because he himself had done them. Anyway, as luck would have it, Bob left Fango, and, as recounted to me by late STARLOG/Fango scribe Steve Swires, parent company Starlog Group wanted to "keep me away from the competition" and hired me to join the staff of their flagship publications full-time when I graduated college in 1985.

TO BE CONTINUED

{comments on}

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