

Christopher Smith talks “BITCH,” “DETOUR” and more

Written by Michael Gingold
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While chatting with Fango recently about the U.S. release of his much-praised chiller **BLACK DEATH** (now on VOD and coming to theaters March 11 from Magnet Releasing), director Christopher Smith (pictured) gave us an update on the assorted projects he's working on now. These include the werewolf thriller **BITCH** and a film noir called **DETOUR**, both of which he's currently in the midst of scripting.

“**DETOUR**'s probably a draft ahead of **BITCH**,” Smith tells Fango, “but they're both films I will be making within the next 18 months to two years. I've kind of been writing them in between finishing the **BLACK DEATH** shoot in 2009 and the editing since, and whichever script I think is ready to go first, we'll do first. I don't know which one it'll be, but I'd like to be able to go through a period of making films back to back now, because I'm not someone who loves writing; I do it as a means to an end, and the end is making movies.”

While he's not ready to spill story details on either, or explain his approach to lycanthropic mythology in **BITCH**, he does know how he wants to bring that film's creatures to life. “In terms of the way I intend to shoot the transformation, it's going to be practical,” he states. “**AMERICAN WEREWOLF IN LONDON**'s transformation is still the best and the most iconic, and I want to take an approach that gets around that problem.” Said problem, he explains, is the expectation surrounding the question of how the human-to-wolf metamorphosis will be pulled off, “which is kind of a redundant question. I've managed to find a really cool, interesting way to handle that, where it becomes more about the scene you're in rather than the mechanics of the transformation. I want to have a very impressive transformation, but that's been done brilliantly, and all you can do with a new one is make it slicker or whatever. What I'm trying to say is that I believe werewolves can be really scary, and there's a way of doing the transformations that isn't CGI-based and is truly frightening, and that's the ambition of this film.”

As it is with **DETOUR** as well, which despite its noir basis will definitely have horror elements, according to Smith. “It's very much the darker kind of noir. The old Hitchcock films have the macabre elements of dealing with bodies and all that kind of stuff, and all of that is in **DETOUR**. It goes into horror moments, even though it's not a horror movie.”

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Smith also remains attached to *PARIS, I’LL KILL YOU*, the anthology feature on which he’s one of numerous genre specialists creating short chillers set in the French city (others include Joe Dante, Paco Plaza, Vincenzo Natali, Ryuhei Kitamura and the team of Julien Maury and Alexandre Bustillo). “Again, I’m not allowed to give out details about what my story is, but I’m doing one segment that hopefully is going to be funny and scary,” in the vein of his 2006 film *SEVERANCE*. “I’m also helping with trying to put together a linking device, because the best of this kind of film has some sort of theme running through it. So we’re working on a number of ideas for that.”

One project he is not and never has officially been involved with, despite numerous reports, is the film version of Seth Grahame-Smith’s best-selling horror mashup novel *PRIDE AND PREJUDICE AND ZOMBIES*. “Honestly, the first time I’d heard of that was when I saw it on-line,” he laughs. “I genuinely didn’t have a clue about that. I woke up late one night—my son was crying at 3 in the morning—and then I couldn’t get to sleep, so I put the Internet on and said, ‘Wow, I’m gonna be directing *PRIDE AND PREJUDICE AND ZOMBIES!*’ Of course, I don’t know of any director who wouldn’t like to be attached to that—it’s a very, very good project—but there’s no truth, as far as I know, to that rumor at all. Just the other day, I was reading about some other director, the guy who did *FRIGHT NIGHT* [Craig Gillespie], doing it, so I mean, is that true? Who knows. But I’m certainly not.” Look for more on *BLACK DEATH* at this site soon, see our review [here](#) and look for a feature story on the film in *Fango* #301, on sale this month.

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