

R.I.P. Sage Moonblood Stallone (1976 – 2012)

Written by Lianne Spiderbaby
Friday, 13 July 2012 21:50



I will never forget [my first article](#) for Fangoria. In 2010, Chris Alexander took me on as a writer, and my first assignment was to run a phone interview for a print piece in the magazine. It was a Friday evening and I was over eager, scared as hell, and to be honest with you, I was a lil' tipsy. Naturally, I had done what every grown woman does when she's feeling a little nervous before the first "date" and I'd had a glass of wine. Or three. After all, I had been instructed to call the famous exploitation enthusiast and founder of Grindhouse Releasing, Sage Stallone. However, the minute Stallone picked up the phone, I knew I would be okay.

Stallone was kind, calm, chatty, and completely in love with the films his company had worked so hard to restore and distribute. My primary interest for the Fangoria article was the release of Bill Lustig's MANIAC. Stallone explained that I hadn't really seen MANIAC until I'd seen his new print, completely uncut. With great conviction, Stallone told me that I had to see the "clams casino" sequence that had been added, and after seeing that, I will have officially experienced what MANIAC always should have been on the big screen. When I saw the new 35mm print at the Toronto Underground Cinema, I was impressed by how beautiful and pristine it was – Stallone was right, although the uneventful "clams casino" scene didn't blow me away. However, the scene just proved to me what kind of man Stallone was – a purist, a true lover of cinema and anything caught on camera by request of the director (or as Stallone would call Umberto Lenzi, the auteur).

After the interview was over (Stallone and I discussed MANIAC and GRINDHOUSE RELEASING for about an hour), Stallone wanted to continue talking... for a total of four hours that evening. I didn't mind, he was full of fascinating film knowledge, and I was thirsty for more. We talked about film noir, neo-noir, exploitation, horror, and Can-con classics. Stallone schooled me in low-budget Canadian classics from the 1970s. He told me, "You have to see GOIN' DOWN THE ROAD directed by Don Shebib. You haven't seen Toronto until you've seen it in that film"! Despite the fact that I've lived in Toronto my entire life, I agreed with him. Around midnight, Stallone and I hung up the phone and I wondered if all of my future interviews for Fangoria would be like that. Two years later, I can tell you that the answer is no. I didn't know him that well, but I think it's safe to say that no one was quite like Sage Stallone.

After [the article came out](#) , Stallone called and thanked me. After that, he would call me every

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now and then just to chat about movies. As we know, Hollywood can be unkind to children who grow up in the spotlight. Stallone's father, Sylvester Stallone, is one of the biggest action film stars of our time. Sly is also a writer, director, and producer. Sage Stallone had big shoes to fill. Stallone starred in ROCKY V (1990) and DAYLIGHT (1996) with his father, amongst other films. In 2006, he also wrote and directed a short film called VIC for which he won the award for Best New Filmmaker at the Boston Film Festival. And us horror lovers wouldn't have beautiful 35mm prints of CANNIBAL FERROX, CANNIBAL HOLOCAUST, THE BEYOND, or most recently, MANIAC and GONE WITH THE POPE without Stallone (and Bob Murawski, Chris Innis and David Szulkin)'s hard work, passion and dedication to genre excellence and their company, GRINDHOUSE RELEASING.

Sadly, Sage Stallone passed away today, on July 13th, at the too-young age of 36.

I have a few e-mails that I've saved from Sage (I often keep the feedback I get from those I interview/write about). In an e-mail after my article was published in Fangoria #299, he wrote to me,

"Hey Lianne! Your article was brilliant. YOU did a GREAT job. I'll try to make the majority of the Maniac screenings, maybe I will just see you there. I hope you've done the research into the Shebib/Pearson films!!! Dorian Gray with Helmut Berger lives on!!! From Sage, to the Superb Spiderbaby!"

I'm both stunned and saddened by Stallone's death. I had wanted to talk to him about the GOIN DOWN THE ROAD sequel that Shebib made just last year, GOIN DOWN THE ROAD AGAIN. To be honest, I don't think he would have liked it.

From all of the comments, pictures, and messages being shared on social media, it is clear that Stallone will be deeply, and greatly missed by his close friends and family I'm so sorry for their loss, as I am sorry for our (the horror and exploitation film community) loss as well. Rest in peace, Sage Stallone. And please give the godfather, Mr. Spinell, our regards. We'll miss you.

Lianne Spiderbaby