

Scott Ian spills "BLOOD & GUTS": First episode, Exclusive words

Written by Trevor Parker

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In the trailer for new web series FANGORIA'S BLOOD & GUTS (Presented on the Nerdist YouTube channel), host Scott Ian sits across from effects artist and director Robert Hall of LAID TO REST infamy and declares, "CGI sucks. F—k CGI!" It's a rallying cry that will no doubt endear Ian to BLOOD & GUTS' target audience, meaning anyone interested in the enduringly fascinating discipline of special effects makeup—lovingly devised, sculpted and implemented by human hands to thrill and shock thirsty terror addicts worldwide.

Ian and the BLOOD & GUTS crew have been granted access to the secret laboratories and toy shops of incumbent gore gurus like Greg Nicotero (THE WALKING DEAD), as well as visiting with Robert Hall and other emerging talents—Rembrandts of the red syrup who even now are managing to carve a bloody niche for themselves in this age of cut-rate digital beasts and unconvincing pixel-squibs. Ian, of course, makes his living as a founding member of thrash pioneers Anthrax; the enthusiasm and humor that the band is known for translates well into Ian's BLOOD & GUTS hosting gig, making him the ideal figure to guide viewers through the know-how behind the delightfully nasty craft of horror film effects. FANGORIA managed to pin down the busy Mr. Ian midway through his current tour to discuss his BLOOD & GUTS journey...

FANGORIA: Have you always had a passion for effects makeup?

SCOTT IAN: Yeah, ever since I was a kid I've been into horror. At some point, when I realized it wasn't real, my curious mind wanted to know, "Well, if it's not real, then how do they do it?" So, even at a young age, it's been something I've been fascinated with. In the eighties, actually when FANGORIA came out, all of a sudden you really had a window into that world. I was a fan of the mag pretty much from the beginning. So that really opened the doors, and then you started finding out about who these people actually were and how they did what they did, and they kind of became like rock stars in their own way.

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FANG: Who were some of your effects heroes growing up?

IAN: Certainly Tom Savini. Even though I had seen movies that Dick Smith (THE EXORCIST) had done, and all the old Universal stuff, as a kid Savini just struck a chord with me; based on DAWN OF THE DEAD specifically. I went to see that in the theatres, and it still is my favorite horror movie of all time. As a fourteen year-old seeing that in theaters, it just seemed so real and so *possible*. Just the world that Romero created in that movie, even more so than in NIGHT OF THE LIVING DEAD. I can compare that to when I was a kid: my bands growing up were like, Kiss and The Ramones and Cheap Trick, AC/DC... whereas the kids who were about six, seven years older, they were into Led Zeppelin and other stuff—which I got into later, but as a fourteen year-old, that was for the older kids. That's kind of how I felt, like DAWN OF THE DEAD was *my* movie, and NIGHT OF THE LIVING DEAD was for the older kids. I mean, I liked NIGHT, but DAWN was so much better. How Savini depicts the violence and the gore... obviously, technology has made things better in that you could do things now on a grander scale and make things look even more real, but for me, it's still the scene where the biker gets pulled out of the blood pressure machine and they tear him open and rip his intestines out. That stays with me more than anything I've ever seen in a movie. I was like, "Oh my God, that's f—king horror!" Savini did it so well, and it seemed so real to me.

FANG: We see Greg Nicotero and Robert Hall pop up in the BLOOD & GUTS trailer, can you tell us if any other artists make an appearance in the series?

IAN: Yeah, we've shot with Gary Tunncliffe (DRIVE ANGRY) and we've shot with Jerry Constantine (WATCHMEN), and then we have a bunch more coming up. Hopefully, we've got Savini. I know we're shooting Jennifer Aspinall (STREET TRASH, THE TOXIC AVENGER) on October 7th, that's the day I get home from tour. And it looks like we might have Rick Baker, but you know, fingers crossed on that one.

FANG: So BLOOD & GUTS is set to extend beyond the initial five episode offering?

IAN: I think at this point, there are going to be eight episodes. Originally, there were only going to be six, and we're hoping that if we nail down a couple more of these people that we're going after, maybe they'll go for ten episodes.

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FANG: You mentioned that you grew up reading FANGORIA's how-to articles on gore effects. Was there anything unexpected that you learned by actually being in the studios alongside these artists as they work?

IAN: I can't say that there was anything really unexpected; I know how hard the process is and how much time it takes. I'm trying to think if there was anything that I learned where I was like, "Oh, really?", but I didn't have any of those moments. I guess that's why they thought I'd be a good fit with the show, because it's a world that I have something to say about, and something I was already familiar with.

FANG: You always hear actors complain about how arduous it is undergoing intensive makeup processes, such as having lifecast moulds done of their heads. You are subject to this several times during BLOOD & GUTS—so is it really that bad?

IAN: Hell, no [*laughs*]! Look, it's not something I'd want to be doing every day, let alone a couple of times a month. But no, it wasn't bad at all. If anything, it was a strangely relaxing experience. Once they get you all covered, you just have to sit there and let it set; for whatever the time was, ten, twelve minutes. You're completely closed off from the rest of the world, and I'm not a claustrophobic person anyway. And you don't have to worry about breathing, it's not like they plug you up so you can't breathe. It's nice and quiet, and it gets really warm... toward the end, I think I fell asleep with the stuff on.



FANG: Another story often heard about gore effects artists is how they may be responsible for these brutal atrocities on film, but are really the nicest, kindest folks imaginable, on and off the

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job. Did you find that to be true?

IAN: I definitely find that to be true. Everyone's just been super cool, just great. It kind of makes sense: I play in a metal band, and all these other guys I know in all these other metal bands that have been around forever, people think we're the craziest, or most violent or insane people on the planet because of the music we make. But if you meet us, we all just tend to be nice guys and mostly a bunch of goofballs. I find that it's the same type of nerd in the horror makeup world. They just have a different thing to focus on. They're not writing songs, they're smashing heads in.

FANG: Since BLOOD & GUTS is being presented in conjunction with FANGORIA, what does the Fango brand mean to you?

IAN: It defines horror for me, the way I'm sure Famous Monsters did for another generation. I bought Famous Monsters as a kid, but it wasn't until FANGORIA, because I guess I was now at an age to really understand it, maybe, more than just being a fanboy. So for me, if I see the Fango logo, it just defines horror. It's also a brand that has never, ever sold out. It's been around for a long time, and for a brand to stay true to what it started as, and to keep promoting what is basically the most underground of the world of cinema, it's a great thing. There aren't many things out there like that, let's put it that way.

FANG: You're obviously very busy with your current tour, but is there something horror-related that you've seen recently that really knocked you out?

IAN: Well, to say THE WALKING DEAD would be kind of the obvious choice. I actually just watched the first new webisode that Greg Nicotero directed for the season, and it's *good*. I'm super looking forward to season three, because anyone who reads the comic knows where it's going with the prison and the Governor, and from what I've heard... I don't actually have any spoilers, although I'd ask Greg all the time. He'd say, "Scott, I'll tell you anything you want, but do you really want to know?" And I'm like, (sighs) "No, I don't..." But from what I hear, where season two got a little bogged down with looking for Sophia, season three starts off at a hundred miles per hour and doesn't stop. So I'm really looking forward to that.

FANG: So, when you were filming with these effects artists, were they working on live

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projects? Did you get to see designs done for anything exciting?

IAN: I did, yeah. Movies and T.V. I'd walk into a room and everyone would be like, "No, wait, don't take any pictures of that stuff!" Even specifically, I'd be at KNB and they'd have out all the stuff they've been doing for Joe Hill's HORNS... I saw everything! I had just finished reading the book, and I walked in the room and was like, "No fucking way!"

FANG: I have to ask about the day job. Anthrax is in the middle of a North American tour with Testament, and you've got some festival dates already booked for summer 2013. Would the recording of a new album maybe fit in there somewhere?

IAN: Yeah, maybe next year. We finish these dates next week and go to Europe, November, December. Then we have a pretty good break until the end of February, when we go to Australia. For 2013, the plan is to cut back on the touring; we've been out for a year now. Touring for 'Worship Music' started last September. We plan to cut it back to probably about a third of what we've been doing now, so we can spend time working on new material and maybe get a record out; doubtfully by the end of '13, more realistically, early 2014. That would mean two-and-a-half years between records, which is a lot better than the eight years between the last two.

You can find the first episode of FANGORIA'S BLOOD & GUTS below

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