Written by Tony Timpone
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Last December, the producers of RESIDENT EVIL: AFTERLIFE granted FANGORIA exclusive access to the Toronto set of the fourth chapter in their action/horror franchise, derived from the best-selling Capcom video games. For 10 weeks, right up to AFTERLIFE’s September 10 release from Screen Gems, Fangoria.com is presenting a series of one-on-one interviews with the movie’s cast and crew.

Written and directed by film series originator Paul W.S. Anderson, AFTERLIFE once again stars Milla Jovovich as mysterious heroine Alice, who teams with a small group of postapocalyptic survivors in a world overrun with zombies, monsters and agents of the nefarious Umbrella Corporation. For more on the movie, start tracking back through our previous articles here .

Today we talk with veteran Canadian producer Don Carmody, whose long list of genre credits includes SHIVERS, DEATH WEEKEND, TERROR TRAIN, SKINWALKERS, SILENT HILL, THE ECHO, WRONG TURN, GOTHIKA and ORPHAN, as well as 2004’s RESIDENT EVIL: APOCALYPSE. As an army of technicians readies some underwater undead action for an abandoned (and flooded) prison siege, Carmody discusses the hurdles of his latest production.

FANGORIA: In this scene, are our heroes running from the zombies?

DON CARMODY: They’re trying to escape to get to Arcadium, which, as we saw in the last film, was the kind of Shangri-La of safety. And to do that they’ve got to get away, re-equip and

rearm.

FANG: Is it a challenge shooting with all these various elements going on—3-D cameras, water stunts…?

CARMODY: The only thing I’m missing is kids and dogs, and we had dogs [laughs]. Anytime you’re dealing with water, it just slows everything down, and next Wednesday when we get to the actual underwater stuff, that’s going to be interesting because these cameras aren’t small; it’s going to be a pretty big underwater rig. And the other challenge with 3-D is that it takes a lot of light. With the Pace system we’re using, which is the same one they used for AVATAR, the quality of the images is stunning, much more so than a lot of the 3-D that’s out there now. But it does require a great deal of light to get those images.

FANG: As you’re winding down to your last week of production, how has the shoot been going as a whole?

CARMODY: Amazingly well. We brought in the cameras and had a full two weeks of preproduction where we learned the ropes. We did some preshooting to help us get up to speed and then hit the ground running, and it’s been working pretty well. The crew is very trained now, so much so that we’ve groomed the 2nd unit to complete a lot of the sequences we weren’t giving them before to let Paul move on with the main unit.

FANG: So is 3-D here to stay?

CARMODY: I’m a little gun-shy, because I did a 3-D picture in 1983, the last time it got hot [SPACEHUNTER: ADVENTURES IN THE FORBIDDEN ZONE], and it burned out pretty quickly. It didn’t burn very brightly for very long, but the quality and the presentation are so much better now than they were back then. We researched all the systems and saw all the current 3-D movies out there before deciding to go with the Pace system. Paul is really liking the technology; he wants to do his next movie [THE THREE MUSKETEERS] in 3-D. It’s actually a wonderful storytelling tool, for the right movie. I don’t think you’d want to use it for a drawing-room comedy or a psychological drama, but it’s suited to a lot of different movies—although it is a little more time-consuming and more technically challenging.

FANG: So has this added to the production schedule?

CARMODY: Going in, we said, ‘OK, it’s going to be an additional two weeks and an additional week on the 2nd unit.’ And it’s actually only proving to be an additional week on our schedule and an additional few days on the 2nd unit. We did get up to speed pretty quickly, and we just made some compromises in that we’re doing a lot more in studio than on location, which was previously planned because we’ve learned that mobility is key and the cameras are heavy, so we keep one of them on a Technocrane almost all the time—that moves it around much faster than a dolly.

FANG: As a veteran Hollywood producer, do you see hi-def as the death knell for film?

CARMODY: Yeah. I still have an affection for film; it looks better, although these cameras are pretty damn good. These are Sony F35s and are the best HD I’ve seen yet, and I know the whole generation. Film is going to be pretty much toast in about four to five years.

FANG: What’s the advantage of HD—quicker, faster, cheaper?

CARMODY: No, in certain budget categories maybe, but I don’t really find it all that faster, But you see [the footage] instantaneously; what you see is what you get. In the old days, the DPs would have their fingers crossed a lot of times, and they’d sneak into the lab to try and digest things before the director saw it. You don’t have to do that anymore; literally, what you’re seeing is what you’re getting.

FANG: And what other HD advantages are there?

CARMODY: It’s very, very lifelike. Which presents challenges to us in that our sets have to be better, our makeup has to be very light; it’s almost like the coming of sound—actors with squeaky voices were all of a sudden pretty much dead meat. Actors with bad skin, it’s going to be a sad thing for them. If you’ve got big pores in HD, up on the screen you see them.

FANG: Your name is attached to a couple of other upcoming genre films. What’s the status of SILENT HILL 2?

CARMODY: A little stalled now because of [writer/director] Roger Avary’s [legal problems], so a little unsure yet. The original plan was Roger writing and polishing the screenplay, and when he had finished his thing, we’d begin full-blown preproduction. I’m not sure what’s going on with that. We know we want to make SILENT HILL 2 and have a basic outline for it. We’ll have to see.

FANG: ORPHAN was a nice sleeper success for you and Dark Castle last summer.

CARMODY: We were very pleased with it. It didn’t cost a lot of money. [Director] Jaume Collet-Serra did a great job, worked very hard with those children. Isabelle Fuhrman is a pro; I’ve never seen anything like her, and so was the kid who played her brother [Jimmy Bennett]—he’s a bit of a pro too. The little girl [Aryana Engineer] actually was a deaf-mute girl, who had never acted before, and Jaume got an amazing performance out of her. And Vera Farmiga, it was during her pregnancy. It was an interesting challenge that the poor gal had to do.

FANG: You have something else coming up called DIE. What’s that about?

CARMODY: DIE is a psychological thriller made with my partner André Rouleau, and we’re just finishing up the mix and the music over in Italy, and it’ll be pretty good. It’s very tense. Die is the

singular for dice, and it basically revolves around this guy who lets fate decide by using the cast of the die, and he brings together this disparate group of people who have all come to the ends of their wits, so to speak, and he basically challenges them to either end their lives or continue them by letting fate decide. Definitely a psychological thriller, really well-told and well-acted. The director is Dominic James, a young David Fincher acolyte, and the picture looks sensational.

FANG: It seems that you have a real taste for genre films. Were you a fan of these kinds of movies growing up?

CARMODY: A certain amount of it was falling into the specialty because I am *not* a fan of horror movies. I don’t like watching them because I get scared. But that’s how I started out; it’s how I learned to make films, the horror ones. I really love making comedies, but there’s the old adage that dying is easy, comedy is hard, so for every decent comedy script I get, I’ll get 30 decent horror movies. The comedies are few and far between, and they’re also so cast-dependent now. With a genre film, you can make them without well-known stars. I like doing it and I enjoy the visceral reaction you get from the audience, in both comedy and horror. You can hear them screaming and jumping, or you can hear them laughing. It’s instant payback. You don’t have to wait for the Academy Awards.

Stop back next week for an interview with RESIDENT EVIL: AFTERLIFE director Paul W.S. Anderson. And check out Fango #296 (on sale this month), featuring an all-different AFTERLIFE set-visit cover story.

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