

## “DEATH RACE 2”: Luke Goss Takes the Wheel, Part One

Written by Tony Timpone  
Friday, 07 January 2011 18:29

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In the surprisingly superior sequel (make that *prequel*) DEATH RACE 2, out on disc and digital download January 18 from Universal, British pop singer turned actor Luke Goss plays Carl Lucas (a.k.a. Frankenstein), a cop-killing bank robber doing time in a most unconventional prison. The masked character last appeared, briefly, in the 2008 Jason Statham-starring/Paul W.S. Anderson-written/directed predecessor; DEATH RACE 2 (go

[here](#)

for info on FANGORIA’s free screening in LA next Thursday, hosted by Goss himself!) explores the origins of both the titular vehicular combat and that of antihero Frankenstein. The actor—whose credits include another FRANKENSTEIN, 2004’s cable redux, and Guillermo del Toro’s BLADE II and HELLBOY II—discussed the film (for which we also have some more exclusive pics) and his other genre gigs with Fango.

**FANGORIA:** What attracted you to DEATH RACE 2?

**LUKE GOSS:** Well, I liked what Paul Anderson did with the first one. It was a bit of a thrill ride for me, but initially, I wasn’t going to see it; I thought it would be a bit too much. And it was nuts, it was relentless. I really enjoyed it; it was a guilty pleasure. When I got the screenplay [by Anderson and Tony Giglio] for the new one, I did honestly think—I don’t mean it’s better or worse or anything—that there were more characters and more relationships in this script. I knew Roel Reiné was directing, and he said, “I want Luke on this film,” as we had almost worked before on another project. And I thought, “This is gonna be cool, and I’m certainly gonna work hard because I know Roel is a hard-working director. So regardless of the medium, how it comes out, where it comes out, we’re gonna try and make a [theatrical-quality] feature film.” And it paid off.



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**FANG:** Had you see DEATH RACE 2000, the original 1975 film?

**GOSS:** Of course, yes. Some fans are going to hate me for this, but DEATH RACE 2000's funny, one of the most camp movies I've seen in my life, where they run over old people; that's kind of genius in itself. Like all great cult movies, DEATH RACE 2000 is a cross between absolutely dreadful and absolutely fantastic. I can't say I love it, but it's fun. It may not always end up having a great deal to do with what goes on in 2011, but it certainly kicked the ball off rolling. I'm a part of that journey.

**FANG:** Was David Carradine's performance in DEATH RACE 2000 an inspiration in any way for your Carl Lucas?

**GOSS:** I did refer to it. What some of the really die-hard fans don't realize is that that was a different time of filmmaking. I'm a big Carradine fan anyway; I remember watching his show KUNG FU when I was a kid. I was a really small guy then, and he was super-cool to me, a kid in southeast London. That was another world to me, not only because it was Hollywood, but because he just seemed like a movie star to me at that point in time. As far as my character is concerned, which is an origin story, I've had to embrace the idea that that we were trying to create another world that's more palatable for 2011. There is a stoic kind of confidence about him, plus there are more relationships in this movie. So I had to research DEATH RACE 2000, watch it and be aware of it, but make [the Frankenstein character] my own and tie it in. I also had to tie in my character with Jason Statham's portrayal and make sense that if this guy has to, hypothetically, be replaced, they have to find people somehow physically relatable to Statham so that it all ties together. It was a new invention of something that had been redone, so I had to be aware of both of them.



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**FANG:** Does DEATH RACE 2 take the franchise in a new direction in any way?

**GOSS:** A tiny bit. We had to create the origin of this death match: it's losing ratings, people are getting bored and they need to find a new way for it all to evolve. All of our characters have to find this oddly perverse sanctuary in a very gnarly place. If there's another DEATH RACE, then hopefully it will likewise be character-driven with great shitloads of action. I'm an action fan, but I prefer stories invested in relationships. You really have to care, and if you don't, then the action loses its way. We managed to mix it up a bit.

**FANG:** Usually the heroes in prison films are wrongly accused, like in THE SHAWSHANK REDEMPTION. But your Carl Lucas really is a criminal, which I found refreshing.

**GOSS:** Exactly, it's unusual. My character kills a cop and it's devastating to him, but he doesn't show it, nor is he blasé about it. He has to get on with surviving in this joint and win the audience over. Out of all the crimes, if you kill an officer of the law, you are f\*\*ked! He knows it, and he's like, “Look, what more can you do to me than the endless years ahead of me of being screwed over by you guys?” Day one, he's a survivor and a capable human being, and needs to get on with surviving in this race. So I agree with you, it did make for a change. It's a challenge, because you're not going to have the audience from second one; you're going to have to try to win them over through the story, the writing, the characterizations and all of that stuff. To me, it makes it more interesting for the same reason you just said, because you really are not redeemable at that stage, you have to find a way to become redeemable, and that is a new challenge. It was the same thing with Prince Nuada [in HELLBOY II]; I wanted to find a contingent of people who said, “I'm with him.”



**FANG:** Did you do any stunt driving or other stunts in the film?

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**GOSS:** Yeah. Patty Jackson, one of the film’s South African executives, said to me, “Hey man, I have a family, I have grandkids, I have this, I have that, and if you scratch that [opening getaway] car, I will get fired.” [ *Laughs*] So they wanted to see what I could do, I got some training and I put in some 360s and J-turns. And they were a little surprised. So they let me drive a great deal in the movie. I told Roel, who knows I’m a massive Steve McQueen fan, “If they could do it back then, please, we must be able to do it now. I want your camera in the car with me, looking inside out. I’m doin’ it, so the audience knows I’m doing it.” As a fanboy myself, I don’t want it just to be greenscreen. Inevitably we had to do some of that because of time restraints and safety, but I said, “Please, I really want to do this.” So I did all the fights myself 100 percent, and most of the driving, but I had an amazing stunt driver who did some of the crazy stuff. So that was fun.

**FANG:** How did you like shooting in South Africa?

**GOSS:** DEATH RACE 2 was my fourth project in Cape Town, so it’s almost like a little family down there for me. Meg Tanner, my personal makeup artist, lives there, and I’ve worked with the stunt dudes before. And I know the area, I know where I’m going, so I ended up driving myself [to set and locations] a lot because I knew where I was. I love it down there.

**FANG:** There has already been gossip about a DEATH RACE 3. Will you/Carl Lucas return?

**GOSS:** It’s certainly something I’d love to do; it’d be fun. The official standpoint at the moment is that it hasn’t been announced that it’s happening, but there have been discussions. But it’s not in development, it has not been decided, it’s not a green light at this stage. I have not spoken to anyone about any more than that, really.

**TO BE CONTINUED**

{comments on}

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