

Q&A: Rob Zombie talks "LORDS OF SALEM" novel, New album and much more

Written by Trevor Parker
Thursday, 07 March 2013 11:50



For fans of Rob Zombie and his multitude of media tentacles, Christmas is coming in April. In addition to Zombie's much-anticipated, hotly-debated arthouse horror THE LORDS OF SALEM galloping onto screens April nineteenth (courtesy of Anchor Bay), his latest, meanest solo album VENOMOUS RAT REGENERATION VENDOR lands a mere four days later via Universal music. Even with the considerable bulk of those two projects to juggle, Zombie is also publishing a novelization of his SALEM script (serialized in the March issue of Fangoria), prepping a corresponding album tour, and as a director he's circling a departure from his horror filmography—a dramatization of the Philadelphia Flyers merciless run to the NHL championship during the 1970's called BROAD STREET BULLIES. FANGORIA got a chance to chat exclusively with Zombie about his new album for our April issue, and also managed to grill the man on some of the other pursuits mentioned above.

FANGORIA: You've got a co-written LORDS OF SALEM book on the way. What prompted you to want to resurrect the movie tie-in novel?

ZOMBIE: I never really thought about it, it didn't even cross my mind. [The idea] had been brought to me through my manager by the publisher. They were really interested in doing it. I used to like that type of stuff as a kid; I would always read the books that tied in with the movies, whether the book came first or the book was based on the movie after. So the publisher approached us and I thought, "Yeah, that's cool. Let's do it."

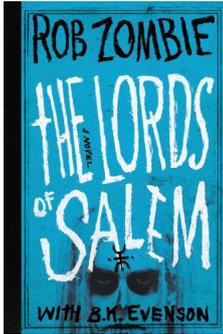
FANG: You've written comics and obviously film scripts before now; what was the process of co-writing with B.K. Evenson?

ZOMBIE: The book is one-hundred-percent based on the original script for LORDS OF SALEM, which is different than the movie. I'm trying to think of the timeline, but I was halfway through shooting the movie before [Evenson] came in and got involved. I decided that we should base the book on the original script, because by that point the movie was changing so much every day that I felt like there was no way to base the book on the movie as it stands.

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FANG: Are there any solid plans yet for a new album tour?

ZOMBIE: We have some stuff coming up, but we won't be playing shows until summer, maybe June.

FANG: Is there another dual-icon bill in the cards like your tours with Ozzy or Alice Cooper? Is there anybody of that nature left that you haven't toured with that you'd like to?

ZOMBIE: Hmmm... there's got to be somebody left! But no, it's not one of those. We may end up doing more of those down the road. Those are always fun and I like doing those types of tours, but nothing planned at the moment.

FANG: Last year, the mainstream media gleefully reported on a tour feud between yourself and Marilyn Manson. Was the drama with Manson overblown?

ZOMBIE: It was overblown. I mean, the drama was real for that moment, but it was overblown by the time anybody reported on it. It was something that happened on a Monday and was over by Tuesday; people are still asking about it two weeks later, three weeks later, six months later. So it was overblown. It was already long forgotten before anybody asked me any questions about it.

FANG: Could you see yourself touring with him again?

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ZOMBIE: We did more touring. That happened in the U.S. and then we finished that tour and went over to Europe together. It was already water way under the bridge.

FANG: Like Fangoria, you're involved with Chris Hardwick's Nerdist youtube channel. Do you have plans to create any new content with the Eugene character or maybe resurrect your Tom Baker/Doctor Who impression?

ZOMBIE: I haven't really done anything for it. Me and Chris have been friends for a really long time, like twenty years. He came to me about the Nerdist channel thing, I said, "Yeah, that sounds great." I just haven't done anything yet because I just haven't had time. It was right at the moment where I was either in the middle of a movie or the middle of a record. So technically, I haven't done anything. It was all good intentions that never quite panned out. I don't know if I'll ever get around to doing any of it at this point... [*laughs*] It is what it is. Sometimes there are just so many projects that you want to do, and you just literally do not have enough time in the day to do them.

FANG: Your next project, the hockey story BROAD STREET BULLIES, has the potential to be your most violent movie ever. Will your take be dramatic or more comedic, akin to SLAPSHOT?

ZOMBIE: What I want to do is a true-life take on it, because it's not a comedy. I love the movie SLAP SHOT but I feel like that has tainted [BULLIES] a little bit, because if I just told you the real story, you would never ask that question. And SLAP SHOT makes you think that way: "Oh, it must be funny then." That being said, there is funny stuff. I mean, SLAP SHOT was stolen from their story, obviously. They say it wasn't, but I don't know how it couldn't have been. So there is funny stuff because the team, the players, were so out there and just so larger-than-life, and the situations are so crazy. But not funny as in it's a comedy, but funny like absurd real life humor coming out of real situations. It's a straight drama. To me, it's like ROCKY on ice. That's really the story.

FANG: There were pictures of you recently hanging out at a game with some of those Flyers veterans. Will the BULLIES script be based on a pre-existing account or are you gathering up the material yourself?

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ZOMBIE: It's both. I have been researching it for about a year. I've read every book there is on the subject, every newspaper article, watched every obscure documentary. The thing when I was in Philadelphia last time was to get to go and meet the players. Because you might have an idea about who Bernie Parent (Flyers hall-of-fame goaltender) might be, but when you get to hang out and talk to him and pick up his vibe, you get a much better understanding for who he is and how to turn him into a movie character. Plus, the Flyers have a huge archive, so I got down into the archive where they have literally everything... when the doors opened, it was like a pyramid opening up. Yeah, I've been researching intensely because I want the details to be correct. I know there are enough fanatical fans that they would want to see the details. And with that, it is a movie, so you're condensing a lot of information, but I do want the information in there to be really detail-oriented.

FANG: With the flurry of changes to the movie business over the past number of years, are you finding it harder to get your movies into production?

ZOMBIE: The movie business is changing a lot, in the same way that the record business changed, because the technology has changed everything. People don't go out to the movies as much as they used to, but they watch stuff just as much on Netflix or whatever you have. But getting any movie made has always been tough, it's never been easy. It kind of still feels the same, really and truthfully. You feel like every time you have a success, that the next one should somehow be easier. Especially after something like HALLOWEEN being like a record-breaking, number-one movie, but it's always hard, always a battle. And I know for people that I would have thought for sure would say the opposite, they say the same thing I just did. It's just a really, really hard business. The amount of scripts that exist, the amount of projects that start and never get done... it's a miracle that anything gets made.

FANG: Your filmography is interesting in that fans rarely come to a consensus over their favorite movie of yours. Mine is HOUSE OF 1000 CORPSES, which you've called a "cartoon" in comparison to REJECTS. Could you ever see yourself returning to that fun, candy-coloured world of horror?

ZOMBIE: I don't know. I'll say probably not, because usually you don't tend to return to things you've already done. A lot of times when people do that it's usually out of desperation. It becomes a journey of, "you did that, and that led you to the next thing, then the next thing led you to the next thing." But you never know. Something might come up and that style of filmmaking might perfectly suit the project, and then you're doing it again, so who knows? I'm never really sure what's next until it's happening. That's the funny thing. Every movie I've ever made, I didn't think that was the next movie. I didn't think REJECTS was the next movie, I

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didn't think HALLOWEEN was the next movie, I didn't think HALLOWEEN II was the next movie, SUPERBEASTO, LORDS OF SALEM... I always thought something else was the next movie, and somehow it became that. Even BROAD STREET BULLIES, I think that's the next movie... but it might not be. It's crazy, you read about it all the time; there'll be big directors, and they'll have a whole movie prepped, stars are cast, and they'll get shut down the day before they start shooting. They really thought that was their next project. Yeah, it's a fucked-up business.

FANG: One of the best parts of being a Zombie fan is the regularity of your endeavors. Would you say you have a strong work ethic, or do you maybe just get bored easily?

ZOMBIE: It's a little bit of everything. I like *creating* the thing, you know what I mean? Sometimes it becomes overwhelming; this last stretch preparing the album and the movie at the same time was just slightly enough to make me insane. Either one is a shitload of work and enough to drive me crazy, but trying to do both at the same time was overbearing. I almost couldn't handle it. But I just like creating. I do it all the time. I mean, I woke up this morning and I don't even know where this came from, but I went, "If I ever made another REJECTS movie, I just figured out what it would be." I don't even know why I was thinking about it; I'm not planning on doing it, it just popped into my head. And that's a dangerous thing, because once it pops into your head, you feel like, "maybe I should do it."

FANG: Can you give Fango readers a little glimpse into what you had in mind?

ZOMBIE: No, because I don't want anyone asking me about it! [*laughs*] It was a half-delirious moment.