

“HOLLISTON” for the Holidays and Beyond

Written by Abbie Bernstein

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Adam Green sounds a little sleepy when Fango speaks to him the day after his FEARnet comedy series HOLLISTON has wrapped its second round of episodes. “This season,” he explains, “we started [HOLLISTON] after we finished photography on HATCHET III, so until last night, I hadn’t really slept since May—but I never want to go home.

“All of us are so incredibly depressed that HOLLISTON is done,” he continues. “Normally, at the end of a shoot, everybody’s beat up and ready for it to be over, but we all hung out there until 2 in the morning and nobody wanted to go home. It’s a good testimonial to what the show is.”



Green created and executive-produced HOLLISTON, and also stars with fellow exec producer Joe Lynch (director of WRONG TURN 2 and KNIGHTS OF BADASSDOM), with the two playing fictionalized versions of themselves. Green also directed the show’s first season, before turning the reins over to Sean Becker for season two (which airs next year, though FEARnet airs a HOLLISTON Christmas special, pictured above and below, tonight to tide fans over; it will be available at FEARnet On Demand and iTunes tomorrow). Prior to this interview, Fango visits the HOLLISTON set on FEARnet’s Hollywood lot, and witnesses Green playing a scene in which his character has a very odd interaction with HALLOWEEN stalwart Danielle Harris and Jason Voorhees’ alter ego Kane Hodder, both playing surreal versions of themselves. The

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shot calls for Green to run around in a panic, and he goes for it with such gusto that at one point he knocks over a piece of furniture and hits the wall.

He's clearly putting his all into HOLLISTON, and in the new season, he's giving the show's fans more than in the previous one. “Last season, we did it a little bit more traditionally, like a network sitcom, where we shot an episode a week for six weeks,” Green explains. “This time, even though we have the same exact budget, we really wanted to do a more traditional season, so we've done 10 episodes and the hour-long Christmas special for the same money we did six episodes on. The only way to do that was to basically shoot out [all the scenes taking place on] each set and shoot out each character, so we could get everything done. That made rehearsals a little harder, because we had to be so well-rehearsed before we got to that stage. It's a lot like performing a play, where you'll do 12 pages in one shot, so the actors really need to know their lines and blocking. There's no time to figure that out or pick out a line here or there, like you do on a feature.

“Because of that,” he continues, “we had less of a real audience with us this time, because there was no way to have them understand what was going on, just seeing everything shot out of order. But what we usually do is, we have the crew and any guests we have—maybe 30, 40 people—watch the rehearsals, and they're the laugh track. That's how we know where to pause for the laughs, where the laughs are coming, if they're not coming, and then we take that track and add to it, which is what every other network show does. In fact, some of the biggest network shows don't have an audience at all any more. They do the whole thing with a canned laugh track. So in some ways, we're doing it more traditionally than the networks are—but the fact that we block like a feature is actually unique to a sitcom.”



Also rather unique is the Christmas episode, a one-shot that includes a black-and-white flashback (pictured above) and is designed to serve as a bridge between the two seasons. “The Christmas special is its own island,” Green notes. “It's an hour, as opposed to a half-hour show like the rest of season two. That will start probably in late spring; I don't know the exact

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dates. There’s a lot of complicated stuff we’re doing for that; we’re doing an animated episode this season, which takes an incredibly long time. There’s a company called Six Point Harness, and if people look them up, they’ll probably be surprised how much of their work they’ve already seen. One of the things they’re best known for is the BLACK DYNAMITE animated show. They’re doing all of our animation for that episode, and it takes many, many months to get all that stuff right. So I think probably by March or April, the whole season will be done and delivered.”

Toiling in an animation studio is one thing, but the on-set production of HOLLISTON can be grueling in a physical way—as witness Green’s aforementioned collisions with the set. The whole team, he says, is literally throwing themselves into each episode. “We all actually get hurt a lot on this show,” he admits. “It’s not like the stunts are that hard, but Laura [Ortiz] gets pushed around and does all that stuff herself, because she’s a gymnast. Even with Joe and I, there’s a lot of hitting and slapping each other, just for slapstick comedy. This season we tried to get better at it, but last season, we would always go for it, and if Joe had to punch me in the face, he’d just do it as hard as he could. We’re still children, I guess [*laughs*], and we think it’s funny.

“The makeup department was getting so frustrated,” he continues, “because our faces were starting to swell and get red and continuity was get screwed up, so they kept begging us to stop actually hitting each other, and we’d say that we wouldn’t—but then, of course, we’d hit each other again [*laughs*] when the other wasn’t expecting it. Corri English’s whole body was covered with black-and-blue bruises, which all stemmed from a fight she had with [DON’T BE AFRAID OF THE DARK’s] Bailee Madison, a 12-year-old girl who kicked the shit out of her [on the show], and then a fight she had with a raccoon. Everybody just goes for it and does what they have to. And you don’t even feel it when it happens, because the adrenaline’s going and you know it’s funny.

“But I’m really paying for it today, especially from that scene; it wasn’t so much running into the wall, it was how hard Danielle [Harris] was on me. When I woke up the next morning, I had teeth marks, and when she would have to slap me, I said, “Just do it, just hit me.” I think she got out a lot of the aggression she has toward me for all of the stuff I’ve made her do in the HATCHET movies, and she was just having a field day [*laughs*].”

As much fun as the slapstick, genre in-jokes and horror guest stars are, Green believes that the secret to HOLLISTON’s appeal lies in the emotional connection viewers have had to the characters. “One of the special things about this show is that, as irreverent and out-there as it is, there’s a lot of heart to it,” he says. “We found from the feedback we got from the first

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season that people loved the horror references and the comedy and the gore, but what they wanted to talk about most was the relationship stuff, Adam and Joe’s struggle of chasing the dream and constantly being kicked in the balls and told “No,” and Adam’s heartbreak over Corri [pictured below], and Corri not knowing what she wanted out of the relationship.



“That proved what I always knew,” Green continues, “but it was an interesting thing for everybody else to see that horror fans are people, too. They’re not just about how much blood is in something and how many people die and what the body count is. I think anybody in the world knows what it’s like to be let down and be disenchanting or feel like an outsider or be heartbroken. It’s this culture of fans, and that’s why we’re different from everybody else; that’s why we have conventions, that’s why we make friends with people in other countries on-line that we’ve never even met before. You don’t see that with romantic comedies or even action movies. They don’t have conventions where everybody gathers and has the time of their lives for a weekend. So it was very cool to get fan mail wasn’t just, “It was really great when you guys referenced SHOCKER” or “I thought all the GREMLINS references were funny.” It was passionate, passionate letters about how hard it is to watch the Adam-and-Corri thing, opinions about it, people telling their own stories about what they’re going through. I took a lot of that to heart when I wrote this season, and was a little bit more daring with how far I went with it.”

If viewers respond to season two with the same enthusiasm, Green and co. are naturally looking forward to a third go-round. “Last season was one of the few times I’ve seen a show get renewed after only two episodes had aired—at least, a new show,” Green says. “That would be great, if we were able to find out [about a third season] while season two was airing, because obviously we’re all on pins and needles waiting to hear if we’re going to be able to make more. But at this point, we haven’t even finished editing this season yet, so I have no idea. I know they want to do it and everybody’s hoping, but it’s so weird with TV; all of a sudden, FEARnet could merge with another network, or Sony, the parent company, could dissolve the network, or all the executives could be changed and new executives could come in and try to get rid of the stuff they didn’t develop because they want their own shows.

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“There are so many things beyond all of our control, so we have to just always remain cautiously optimistic. It’s hard when you wrap a season, because you get very, very emotional. On this season, it started three days before we wrapped; people were walking around crying and hugging each other, and they all feel like they’re in high school and everything’s going to change now and everyone’s going to go their separate ways. I have faith that we’ll be back, and I’ve ended this season in a way that’s sort of ballsy, because it’s a cliffhanger, but I have faith that we’ll return. The fans have never let me down; they’re so good at making their voices heard and they were so supportive of season one, even though so many of them couldn’t even see it yet. The few who could were so loud about how much they liked it that FEARnet picked us up right away. And season one is available everywhere on DVD and Blu-ray now and the Christmas special will be out by the time the second season airs, so the audience will hopefully be three or four times the size it is now.”

In the meantime, Green has HATCHET III, which he wrote and produced, in postproduction for a 2013 release, among a diverse portfolio of upcoming projects. “I handpicked HATCHET III’s director, BJ McDonnell, who was the camera operator on both the HATCHET films and on SPIRAL. He’s been part of the family, and whoever was going to take my place on HATCHET III had to be somebody who had been with it from day one. I also like to try to promote internally and give people their first chance, like I did with GRACE, which Paul Solet directed, because it’s so hard nowadays to get something made and have that opportunity. I knew I didn’t want to direct another HATCHET movie—two was more than enough for me—but I still love it as much as I always did, and I wanted III to be the best one yet, so when I pitched the idea of BJ at Dark Sky, I was able to say, ‘I’ll still write it, you can still say “Adam Green presents,” I’ll be there every single day, I’ll be completely responsible—but please give this guy this chance, because I know he can do it.’ And they did.

“I’ve also finished the script for KILLER PIZZA [based on Greg Taylor’s book], which MGM has acquired, and now it’s completely out of my hands. I have no idea what’s going to happen with it, and seeing that it’s a big-studio movie, I’m just going to try to be optimistic and put it out of my mind, and if I get the call that I’m directing it or that it’s being made, awesome. The next thing I’m working on is a project called DIGGING UP THE MARROW, which started as a straight documentary about monster art and monster culture and where these ideas come from, but it keeps evolving into something else, and we’re not putting any parameters on it. There are already six of us working on it, and we’re just going to see where it goes. But at one point, Alex Pardee, the artist who became my collaborator on this project, and I started talking about fans and the fan mail that we get and how weird some of it can be, and it started to veer in that direction, and now it’s becoming something that might not even be a true documentary; it might end up being a mockumentary. We don’t know; we just keep shooting and gathering stuff, and we’ll hopefully get to put that together next year.”