

Robin McLeavy talks “LOVED ONES” and “LINCOLN”

Written by Chris Alexander
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It was over three years ago that this writer hunkered down at the Toronto International Film Festival and had his brain melted by the deranged elegance of director Sean Byrne's blackly comic Aussie horror melodrama THE LOVED ONES. And then we waited. And waited. And waited.

It's nice that this incredible picture has finally seen the light of digital day thanks to Paramount Home Entertainment's DVD release last month, and even nicer to witness the steady cult amassing around it, the magazine covers and coverage it's been getting (we've plugged it numerous times, including my glowing review [here](#)). It's also fine to see LOVED ONES' lunatic lead, Robin McLeavy—who plays the evil Lola to the hilt and beyond—start to build a nice little career for herself Stateside (see her as the gorgeous Eva in AMC's HELL ON WHEELS and in ABRAHAM LINCOLN: VAMPIRE HUNTER, coming October 23 on Fox DVD/Blu-ray, as Abe's mum). And while Fango caught up with McLeavy in issue #316, I couldn't refuse the offer to share a little space with her myself. Here, then, is the loveliest of lovely ones: Robin McLeavy...



FANGORIA: Eva (pictured right) is such a strong character in HELL ON WHEELS. Do you see any connections between HER and Lola?

ROBIN McLEAVY: There is definitely a sense of determination that both characters possess. Eva's determination comes from resilience and hardship and the will to survive, and Lola's comes from the need for intimacy, but her determination is fueled by hurt and rejection.

FANG: Is Lola really the villain of THE LOVED ONES? Do you fancy her a victim? Is she a tragic character?

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McLEAVY: In playing any part, you always have to empathize with them, so that everything you do as that character comes from their true sense of self. Lola believes she deserves a boyfriend, but she also believes the only way she can get one is by kidnapping him with Daddy’s help. So her self-esteem and self-worth are really skewed. She is definitely a tragic character in the sense that she has no social skills, and the only way she feels connected to anyone is through violence and torture. What I love about Lola is that she “plays” the victim, but is always really the predator.

FANG: We adored THE LOVED ONES at TIFF in 2009. How is it for you now, a few years and many professional adventures later? Do you feel distanced from the film?

McLEAVY: Thank you! It’s so funny; this film has been in my life for four years—I feel extremely close to it. I can’t escape it! I loved making the film, and we have all been so thrilled at the ongoing support and passion for it at festivals and in its release. All the fans and the Internet commentary have been really overwhelming. None of us anticipated it would be so embraced by the horror world!

FANG: ABRAHAM LINCOLN: VAMPIRE HUNTER is something of an unsung action/horror masterpiece. Was it upsetting to see it not be understood by the mainstream?

McLEAVY: There was so much scope in the book and the script that Seth Grahame-Smith wrote, and the creative process between [director] Timur Bekmambetov and all the other creative departments was a huge endeavor. I think the film was visually spectacular, and I always loved the idea of history being falsified in order to reveal an alternate truth. Maybe audiences weren’t ready to see their beloved Abe Lincoln committing so many violent acts—who knows?

FANG: How has Lola followed you in Hollywood? Have any of your new directors seen the picture, and are they completely gaga over it?

McLEAVY: Happily, quite a few directors and casting directors have seen THE LOVED ONES and are fans. At first I was wary, because I didn’t want people to think I was a psychopath in

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real life. But generally, Lola has served me very well, because directors can see that I can be equal parts sweet and lovely and pure psychotic rage-monster bitch. So it's always nice to have Lola in my back pocket.

FANG: Do you receive endless offers to play psychos now?

McLEAVY: I have had a few offers, but generally, I want to keep away from horror for a little while. I need to be in a romantic comedy or something! To be honest, though, I am often drawn to characters who have a few screws loose, or who are damaged in some way. It's more interesting to play.

FANG: What does your mum think of Lola?

McLEAVY: My mum is hilarious. She normally wouldn't like horror but she loves THE LOVED ONES. I think she likes the fact that I tie Xavier Samuel up in the movie. After the premiere at MIFF [Melbourne International Film Festival], we all went out dancing, and my mum whipped Xavier and his friends with her faux-leopard belt on the dance floor. I think it's fair to say she got some hot tips from Lola!