

## First set report: Brandon Cronenberg goes “ANTIVIRAL”

Written by Chris Alexander

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Sitting on set in a video village is dull on the best of days, and on a chilly warehouse locale in Toronto, Fango is watching a young actor open and close a retro/future fridge ad nauseam. And you know something? I'm not bored. Not in the slightest. Because I'm having the unique opportunity to watch the next generation of Cronenberg strut his directorial stuff, to come into his own as a man making his own damn movie.

Yes, Fango is indeed hanging around the set of Brandon Cronenberg's *ANTIVIRAL*, a new body-horror melodrama-cum-satire that sees a lanky-haired misfit (Caleb Landry Jones, pictured above, of *X-MEN: FIRST CLASS*) become increasingly obsessed with the cult of celebrity, going so far as to becoming addicted to the very diseases that infect them. But that's merely the jumping-off point of this bizarre tale, and watching Cronenberg perfect every image alongside *HOBO WITH A SHOTGUN* producer Rob Cotterill and ace Canadian cinematographer/creative multihyphenate Karim Hussain (DP of *HOBO*, co-writer of *THE ABANDONED* and director of *SUBCONSCIOUS CRUELTY* and the *VISION STAINS* segment of *THE THEATRE BIZARRE*, who previously discussed *ANTIVIRAL* [here](#)) is a rare privilege, the birth of the new new flesh...

“It is a satire, for sure,” Cronenberg says of *ANTIVIRAL*, which takes its cues from *BROKEN TULIPS*, his award-winning ultrashort film about disease fixation and celeb culture gone mad. “But it also functions as a straight science fiction piece, and it has plenty of horror—more horror that perhaps I had originally imagined.”

The ever-articulate Hussain is one of the most talented and innovative visual artists working in indie film today, and beyond being in awe of just how effortlessly the younger Cronenberg is

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taking to the task of directing a sizably budgeted first feature, he’s also struck by just how good Jones is in a very difficult role that only the bravest of actors would dare touch. “Having Caleb in the viewfinder for a month and change,” Hussain says, “I’ve seen this amazing transformation into something powerful, akin to Christian Bale in THE MACHINIST. The level of commitment and dedication he has to this role is on a level most actors would be afraid to do. He’s made this something special, and I believe in him.”

And we believe in ANTIVIRAL, a hopeful return to intelligent sci-fi that doesn’t skimp on the fluids, both red and otherwise. Keep reading this site and FANGORIA magazine for more on Cronenberg and ANTIVIRAL as the months progress, and be sure to pick up FANGORIA #309 for our exclusive interview with David Cronenberg on his own cinematic beginnings, as well as a chat with Hussain about his BIZARRE work.