

Richard Lynch talks Rob Zombie's "THE LORDS OF SALEM"

Written by Michael Gingold
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Longtime genre actor Richard Lynch recently reunited with filmmaker Rob Zombie, following up their collaboration on HALLOWEEN by taking part in Zombie's witchcraft chiller THE LORDS OF SALEM, and Fango got some words with Lynch about his role.

Speaking to us at last weekend's Chiller Theatre convention in New Jersey, Lynch says, "I play the Reverend John Hawthorne in LORDS OF SALEM. My scenes take place in the 17th century—1695 or so—and he's one of the ministers overseeing the Salem witch trials. I pass judgment on these would-be witches, and they burn at the stake. It's kind of heavy; anyone familiar with the trials will understand what I mean." The action then jumps to the present day, but Lynch doesn't follow. "I'm only in the history of it," he explains. "It then jumps into the present time, and there's a lineage whereby it connects with me through a great-great-great-great-granddaughter."

While he didn't do any specific research to prepare for the role, it appealed to him because "I'm fascinated by history, and I'm very familiar with Arthur Miller's [witch-trial drama] THE CRUCIBLE. I haven't done that one, but I did Miller's A VIEW FROM THE BRIDGE and DEATH OF A SALESMAN and many others on stage."

It's a hot time for those ill-fated sorceresses, but the actor recalls having the opposite experience on the LORDS OF SALEM location. "Most of my scenes were filmed in the Angeles National Forest, up near Magic Mountain in what they call the Angeles Preserve. And it was miserable. A *miserable* shoot. I mean, it was rain and cold and night—not an easy ride. I don't do nights very well anymore. That's where you only work all night long, and then you've gotta go to sleep when the sun comes up. You couldn't stay in the weather too long. You had to show up, hit your mark, do your work and go back to your trailer, your dressing room. I'm older now, I don't stay up beyond a certain hour. I just don't have the stamina to be up all night like a young kid. That'll burn you out at my age."

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Despite the inclement conditions, Lynch enjoyed reteaming with Zombie, for whom he'd previously portrayed the school principal dealing with the young Michael Myers. "I didn't even have an audition; it was just, 'Are you available?'" he recalls. "I got to know Rob on HALLOWEEN and he enjoyed working with me, so he gave me a call and said, 'Hey man, I'm doing a new movie called LORDS OF SALEM. You wanna work?' I said 'Yeah, I'm available, sure.' Rob is a very sweet, creative guy, and terrific to work for. He knows what he wants; he has a vision, he knows what he's about. He casts actors he understands, and he trusts them. He'll go, 'Just give me the part. You know what I'm about.' Easy shoot with Rob. Easy. But weather-wise...miserable!"