

Written by Michael Helms
Wednesday, 15 August 2012 09:29



The last time we saw Australian filmmaker Andrew Traucki (pictured), he was floating around the location of the shark thriller THE REEF and thinking about box jellyfish. This time, Fango catches him on a late-night phone call from his Sydney base, finding him tired but happy to divulge some details on THE JUNGLE, the new film on which he’s knee-deep in last-minute preproduction, and his contribution to the upcoming anthology THE ABCs OF DEATH.

Traucki sees THE JUNGLE, for which Lightning Entertainment has already picked up worldwide sales rights, as the last installment in what he likes to call “Traucki’s Trilogy of Terror,” following REEF and his previous croc shocker BLACK WATER (co-written/directed with David Nerlich). “It’s got a nice ring to it, three T’s,” he laughs, before adding that he also thinks of it as THREE COLORS: RED. Set to be shot in Australia and Indonesia, THE JUNGLE “is about a big-cat conservationist named Larry Black who goes to Indonesia to save the Java leopard, which really is on the verge of extinction,” Traucki tells Fango. “He’s joined by a couple of local men; one is a trapper, the other is like the administrative guy. They go into the jungle to catch leopards and tag them. There, they discover something much bigger and nastier.”

Snappy dialogue ensues:

FANGORIA: So the predator creature mightn’t be a cat?

ANDREW TRAUCKI: Mightn’t be.

FANG: Why set it in Indonesia?

TRAUCKI: It was too much like an urban myth to set in Australia.

FANG: So it’s not an Indonesia urban myth, is it then?

TRAUCKI: No, it’s my urban myth [*laughs*].

FANG: They’re the best sort.

TRAUCKI: Exactly.

Relieved not to be going back into the water, Traucki does dive into discussing his struggle to come up with a menace for the last of his trilogy, and how he arrived at the concept for THE JUNGLE. “Originally, we were going to have little creatures in the tunnels beneath Sydney, and then THE TUNNEL came out and f**k that! Then I had an idea for a UFO-based film, and I heard that the PARANORMAL ACTIVITY guy was doing AREA 51. Then I reached for the idea of THE JUNGLE. At the same time, I saw a documentary about a bear in Peru, the one Paddington Bear had been based on. They’d discovered that this bear, which they thought had

“THE REEF” director talks “THE JUNGLE” and “ABCs OF DEATH”

Written by Michael Helms

Wednesday, 15 August 2012 09:29

only existed on fruit, was also a practicing carnivore. It started to knock off the neighbor's cows. So I just went from there, really.”

For the location where he intends to film, Traucki has ended up in a jungle of which he claims, “It's very disorientating. At night it's pitch black, and if you lose your orientation with the track, you are lost. It's very important to remember which way you came in. It's amazing. You set up a shot and think, ‘Wow, this is the shot,’ and then come across the back of a tree covered in tape and you realize you've already been there.”

Filming of THE JUNGLE will take place over “a pretty tight [schedule of] three to four six-day weeks,” the filmmaker says. “I need a quick turnaround on this one. I've got to turn it in by the end of the year. It's money restrictions, really; it's a low-budget film”—a budget that's actually less than that of BLACK WATER. “If I'd gone down the conventional route, I'd still be out there raising finances. This was an opportunity to take a smaller amount of money and run with it. It's a long process making these films, and I just wanted to shorten that process. It's got a downside, but the upside is that I got my film made. Hopefully, it'll be good.”

Once it's wrapped up, Traucki admits that he'll be moving away from animal horror: “Yeah, about time I stepped into the horror of real humanity and had humans doing things. I mean, we're the real dangers, aren't we?” And Traucki wasn't idle in the intervening period between completing THE REEF and launching THE JUNGLE, finding a spare day to shoot his contribution to THE ABCs of DEATH. “I'm the only Australian, and I got the letter G. The object was to go and make something three to four minutes long, which I did—killing with G. A nice little project. The weird thing is, I don't know what anybody else has done. It'll be interesting to see what the mix is. I'm sure some will be incredibly violent, so I went the other way and tried to keep it less violent. It'll be a very interesting collection of films. Innovative.”