

## Going Green With “HOLLISTON,” Part One

Written by Michael Koopmans  
Thursday, 29 March 2012 14:52

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Next Tuesday, April 3, FEARnet’s first original series HOLLISTON will debut. This sitcom was made by horror nerds for horror nerds, and follow Adam and Joe (played by filmmakers Adam Green and Joe Lynch), two broke friends who are stuck in the titular New England town and dream of becoming horror filmmakers. Fango recently chatted with creator/writer/director/co-star Adam Green, who also has HATCHET 3 and KILLER PIZZA on his plate.

**FANGORIA:** You’ve been trying to get HOLLISTON made for quite some time now. Would you mind going over the ups and downs that brought you to FEARnet?

**ADAM GREEN:** Well, the first feature I ever made was called COFFEE & DONUTS. I had a job at the time directing really bad local cable commercials in the Boston area, and I would steal their equipment overnight to direct my feature. People would always tell me, “Write what you know,” so I came up with this sort of romantic comedy about two guys struggling to be radio DJs. Now, I never really wanted to be a radio DJ, so most of it was about me trying to come to terms with my break-up with my childhood girlfriend. Which apparently took me decades to get over. So we made that movie for \$400, and didn’t really know what we were doing or what to expect. But it ended up winning a film festival, and three years later was being developed as a sitcom for UPN. Through the development process, it really started to fade, and it just wasn’t really what I wanted it to be any more—which is usually what happens when working with a network. Ultimately, UPN merged with WB and all their development projects were lost, but they still held the rights for five years, which was pretty painful because they’re the rights to *my* life.



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In that time, I made HATCHET, SPIRAL, GRACE and FROZEN, and started to make a name for myself in the horror world. So when the rights came back to me, and Peter Block, who produced FROZEN, became the president of FEARnet and asked what my first original show was gonna be, it all just kind of fell into place. With that, it became a lot closer to my actual life, because now it's about two guys who are struggling to be horror filmmakers, not radio DJs. All the heart was always there, but now that we can gear it to the horror audience, it makes it so much more fun and unique. I've really never seen anything like it. I keep telling people "Imagine FRIENDS, but every once in a while they stab each other in the face."

**FANG:** How much of a character does the actual town of Holliston play in the show?

**GREEN:** Well, Holliston is the backdrop. It's where we're basically trapped. We had a few different titles we went through, and for a while it was called BLOOD AND GUTS, but we didn't like how that limited the audience; when you hear that title, you think blood and guts is all it's going to be. Sure, there are some gory moments, but you don't have to be a horror fan to get it and enjoy it. So eventually, someone was like, "Well, you talk about Holliston constantly on the show, why not just call it that?" Which really made me happy, because there's nothing cooler than seeing the name of the little town you grew up in all over billboards. The cast and I actually went back to Holliston, Massachusetts to screen some episodes.

**FANG:** So the town has gotten behind this project?

**GREEN:** Yeah, they're all really excited, but I don't think they know what to expect. They probably expect something more vile and horror-esque than it actually is. That's something I'm really proud of. I think people often forget that horror fans are people too, and it's not all about seeing the most depraved, disgusting and violent thing. If anyone in the world knows what it's like to be rejected, to be told "no," to have their dreams crushed and hearts broken, it's horror fans. And that's why we are more of a culture than any other genre. You go to conventions, and I don't care what part of the world you're in, you make all these new friends just because you're all into the same things and can relate to each other.

It's a show about the trials and tribulations of being a genre filmmaker, constantly being told you can't do something, and the girl that got away, all wrapped up in this neat little sitcom package that does include little moments of violence. There's a moment in the pilot where I find

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out Joe's been eating my peanut butter, so I scan him and his head explodes all over the wall. That's something you won't see on any other network, and I hope the horror fans like it.

**FANG:** Tell us about Dee Snider's character, Lance Rocket, and where the idea came from.

**GREEN:** Lance Rocket is really the only fictitious character on the show. Everyone else in the main cast basically plays a younger version of themselves. Lance is our boss at the cable station, and he's a cross-dressing, ambiguously sexual guy who's stuck in the '80s. He's still caught up in the whole glam look, thinking it will come back and he's going to be a huge rock star because he's the lead singer in a Van Halen cover band. The fact that we got Dee Snider to play this part is so great, because he's spent the last 20 years of his life fighting that image. People think that's what he's really like because of Twisted Sister, but he's nothing like that. I think for him it was fun, because he got to make fun of all the Lance Rockets he's met over the years. It's fun to see the crazy new costumes he'll be wearing in each episode, and some of the inappropriate stuff that comes out of his mouth. I've never seen a character like that in a sitcom, and he definitely steals the show.

**FANG:** GWAR's Oderus Urungus plays your imaginary friend in HOLLISTON; any fun stories with him from the set?

**GREEN:** Oderus was in town for three days; we shot him for two, and then there was a day of photo shoots. He's been on board with this show for three years now, just waiting for it to finally get made. But the fact that he gets to play Oderus, this character he's been performing for 27 years, on a sitcom is something nobody thought would ever happen. I wrote all his dialogue, but we would also always do a couple of takes where he would ad-lib, and some of those takes did make the final cut. And some of the things that come out of his mouth, there's just no way you could put them on TV. But he was such a trouper and a nice guy on set.

Now, I do feel that over the years, the lines between Dave Brockie [his real name] and Oderus Urungus have become a little blurred. Sometimes he talks about himself in the third person and doesn't realize it. You'll be on the phone and not sure if you're talking to Dave or Oderus. But we all had such a blast. He's so f\*\*king funny.

**FANG:** Was there a lot of improv going on, or mainly with Oderus?

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**GREEN:** There was a lot of improv. The four core cast members, myself, Joe, Corri English and Laura Ortiz, all started rehearsals last April. We rehearsed for about five months together before we actually got to set. I learned that doing a sitcom is a lot like doing a play. Whether it's a scene where you have a live audience in front of you or not, you're doing like 12 to 20 pages. In a movie, you're just shooting moments. So once we had the scene down, we'd shoot a few extra takes where everyone would try different things. A lot of it came from rehearsals, because one of the things I like to do as a director is have a day where everyone switches parts. What that does is help actors understand the reactions to what they were originally doing. Getting to play a different role, where it doesn't really make sense, helps you see things from other people's shoes. That's always a fun day, because it's awkward. But through that, people would come up with their own ideas and add-ons.

We also break the fourth wall a lot on the show, and a lot of great ad-libbing came out of that. There's an episode where a scene ends, but the camera keeps going like someone forgot to turn it off. Now, it was written like that, but when you see it, it almost feels like it was accidentally left in there. We don't do it too often, but having things like that in there really keeps the audience on their toes.

**FANG:** Do you have any favorite moments from the shoot?

**GREEN:** One is a scene in the second episode where Joe's girlfriend Laura says she's hungry. Now, Joe never has any money, so he basically spits out his gum, hands it to her and she puts it in her mouth. Then I walk in and tell Joe I want my gum back, so I take it from her and put it in my mouth. At the end of the scene, Corri walks in and says she's hungry, so I spit it directly into her mouth. There's no cutting, so you can tell this disgusting piece of gum has traveled through all of our mouths. At the time, it was probably one of the grossest things I've ever done, but it's my fault because I wrote it. It was watermelon Bubblicious gum, and was so wet and slimy and nasty; you can see saliva strands coming out of our mouths. But now when I see it, I can't help but love it because I think it brought us closer, and scenes like that really show the chemistry between us. Just all the hugging and kissing and having to be naked—it's all really humbling and deflates any ego you get from having your own sitcom.

**FANG:** If there's a second season, do you plan to continue directing it?

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**GREEN:** Right now, while talking about a second season, I will likely step down as director. It was important to me in the first season to direct, because I wanted to make sure it got off on the right foot and had the right tone. But the good thing about television is, as the show creator and writer, it all comes down to my decision at the end of the day. So I'm not worried about passing the torch, director-wise. I like to think I'm invincible, but this has been way harder than I thought it'd be. I literally haven't slept since April and a) I still have movies I want to make and b) I wanna live past, like, 50 if I can.

TO BE CONTINUED