

Written by Tony Timpone

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Last December, the producers of RESIDENT EVIL: AFTERLIFE granted FANGORIA exclusive access to the Toronto set of the fourth chapter in their action/horror franchise, derived from the best-selling Capcom video games. Fangoria.com has been presenting a series of one-on-one interviews with the movie's cast and crew since July, right up to AFTERLIFE's release by Screen Gems starting with midnight shows tonight.

Written and directed by film series originator Paul W.S. Anderson, AFTERLIFE once again stars Milla Jovovich as mysterious heroine Alice, who teams with a small group of postapocalyptic survivors in a world overrun with zombies, monsters and agents of the nefarious Umbrella Corporation. For more on the movie, go [here](#) to start tracking back through our previous interviews.

Today we talk with British-born (now Toronto-based) FX artist Paul Jones, who previously created the showstopping Nemesis character in RESIDENT EVIL: APOCALYPSE (as pictured above) and has also contributed FX to GINGER SNAPS, HELLRAISER III: HELL ON EARTH, SILENT HILL and the upcoming SOLOMON KANE.

FANGORIA: Tell us about your workload on AFTERLIFE.



PAUL JONES: Well, the workload has been considerable. There have been consistent elements in all the RESIDENT EVIL movies, so obviously there are certain things that were gonna be there regardless. And of course, with Paul Anderson directing again, he's upped the ante, being the creator of the RESIDENT EVIL movies. He's put his stamp on everything.

FANG: This is your return to the series after working on the second film.

JONES: I was a big fan of the first film, and I heard the second film was coming to town and was just desperate to get on it, even working for somebody else. I was blown away when [series producer] Don Carmody gave me a call and said, “Would you like to come in?” Working on APOCALYPSE was great, because it was like being brought into the family. Being the only designer on AFTERLIFE is great because I have to be responsible for everything. I’m not the type of person who likes to see different paint-brush styles used in the same painting.

FANG: Can you compare and contrast doing the second and fourth films?

JONES: On the second one, they actually asked me to bid on the whole movie, but it needed two totally separate sets of effects: 1) zombies, the dogs, the gore element and 2) Nemesis. I said, “Nemesis is really a movie in itself. You need one team solely concentrating on this character, and then another team doing everything else on the movie.” They said, “You don’t want to bid on the whole movie?” and I said, “No, I just want to do Nemesis.” So I was able to focus all my attention on one character, and it turned out very, very, very well. It was based on an existing design; we gave it a slightly new spin, but it was essentially the Nemesis you saw in the game, it was just our practical three-dimensional interpretation of it. But it was a really good experience briefly working with [producers] Jeremy Bolt and Paul for the design portion.

FANG: So you didn’t do zombies on the second movie, and here you are in zombie heaven with AFTERLIFE.

JONES: Exactly. The irony is, I’ve never actually done a zombie makeup in Toronto. I didn’t work on DIARY, LAND or DAWN [OF THE DEAD]. Actually, I did work a couple of days on SURVIVAL OF THE DEAD, but this movie was really officially my first time doing a zombie makeup in Toronto, and I was given four types to do. For the burrowing zombies, because of their genetic mutation, the T-virus has made them very susceptible to light, so they’ve decided to live somewhere dark, and it also happens that the only way into the prison is underground. So the survivors think they’re safe inside, and that’s not quite the case. The fourth kind is one unique character, which had a minor role in the game, the Axe Man, but Paul really took a liking to the image. He has quite a large, extensive and impressive showdown with Milla and Ali [Larter] in the prison shower.

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FANG: So he’s the Nemesis of this movie?

JONES: He’s essentially a reinvention of the Nemesis, but being a clear character from the game, we were able to bring him into the movie to also appease the fan base. So to create him three-dimensionally was a lot of fun.



FANG: And you’re also creating the zombie dogs.

JONES: Yes, a lot of the staples are back in. The dogs are the one effect I was a little nervous about, because they’d been done three times before to varying degrees of success. And each time the movie happens, the zombies are looking a little bit worse for wear than the dogs. So in this one, Paul wanted us to go to town, just make them look absolutely terrible. Of course, to do that you have to basically create a doggy suit, a complete costume, that dogs climb into and you zip up, just like you would on an actor. And that’s what we did. We sculpted areas of the body that had ripped-off flesh, we had bones exposed and we created a patchwork quilt of prosthetics that attached to an undersuit and then filled in the blanks with rotten fur and stitched that whole thing together, so the dogs suit up like you would a Predator or Alien. They’d get into their costumes in the morning, and we’d slime them down and they’d go on set.

FANG: Were they good sports?

JONES: The dogs were amazing. We built a mockup costume for the animal trainers, so the dogs were trained wearing that. The costume weighed nothing, it was like a pound, and the dogs knew what was going to happen when they came to set. And they were extremely well-trained by their fantastic handlers, and it actually went off without a hitch.

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FANG: That’s amazing that a Doberman pinscher would put up with that.

JONES: It’s not as bad as it sounds. The suit was extremely flexible. It was like tissue paper in some areas, but had the strength it needed for dogs to move around in. Dogs don’t like two things: They don’t like things on their faces and they don’t like things on their feet, so since there’s a lot of running and jumping and banging around, we kept their feet as clean as possible. We kept the heads clean too, and [visual FX supervisor] Dennis Berardi and his guys are going to take elements of the suit as inspiration and modify the faces and feet; some of it will be bone. One of the dogs will have no lips; they’re gonna digitally take its whole muzzle off.

FANG: In the previous films, all they did with the dogs was wet them down.

JONES: Yeah, just put little lumpy bits on them and everything. Paul said, “That worked for those movies, but I want mine to be really, really gory.” Not only have human beings been modified by the virus, the dogs have too.

FANG: Was it a challenge to bring something fresh to the zombies?

JONES: It’s always a challenge when you’re trying to come up with something zombified that hasn’t been seen before. I don’t think it’s possible, because you’re still dealing with human beings. So instead of trying to come up with a zombie and apply it to a person, we’d find somebody who’s interesting and make them a zombie character, based on who they are. So there are a lot of very unique people we’ve hired for this and given them certain spins. I was given already a leg up on other zombie movies in that we’re already emulating a popular game’s much-loved images rather than trying to create something new. Even though we’ve ended up doing that as well.

TO BE CONTINUED

Stop back Monday for more Q&A time with FX maestro Jones. And check out FANGORIA #296, now on sale, featuring an all-different AFTERLIFE set-visit cover story.

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“RESIDENT EVIL”: Conversations from the “AFTERLIFE” Part 11: Paul Jones, makeup FX artist

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