

## “LET ME IN” Fantastic Fest Interviews

Written by Drew Tinnin

Tuesday, 12 October 2010 16:01

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In the last few years, horror fans would be hard-pressed to find another film that came under as much scrutiny as Matt Reeves’ LET ME IN. It was yet another remake (needless, some said), coming close on the heels of the original, the Swedish masterpiece LET THE RIGHT ONE IN—one of the best slow-burn horror films of the last decade.

Despite surprisingly strong reviews, LET ME IN failed to connect at the box office this month, but it played to a packed house at its U.S. premiere at Austin, TX’s Fantastic Fest—the same event that premiered LET THE RIGHT ONE IN in 2008. The fact that LET ME IN was chosen as this year’s opening film shows how much confidence the programmers had in Reeves and his cast. Co-stars Elias Koteas, LOST’s Dylan Minnette and Jimmy “Jax” Pinchak were present at the red-carpet premiere in Austin, along with composer Michael Giacchino and writer/director Reeves himself. Fango got to speak to all of them at the festival.



With 2008’s CLOVERFIELD, Reeves crafted a great shaky-cam monster movie told from a single point-of-view. In LET ME IN, he once again approaches a horror story from a very personal perspective, but the visual style and results are quite different.

**FANGORIA:** Did you feel a huge sense of responsibility to do this film the right way?

**MATT REEVES:** I love the novel and the [previous] movie, and I just hope people are able to take this as another version of that story. We’ll see how people respond, but that’s my dream. I

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never intended to do something that was meant to replace or usurp or step on the toes of LET THE RIGHT ONE IN, and I think everyone should see that movie. It's a fantastic film, and I really hope people enjoy ours too.

**FANG:** How did you approach the bullying aspect of the story?

**REEVES:** Well, the thing that struck me about the novel and blew me away was the idea that the boy's life is like a horror story—the bullying in his life is just as horrific as anything else that occurs. That's what it feels like to be Oskar, and that's what I wanted to do with my movie. I wanted to make the scenes where Owen is being bullied as visceral and disturbing as the other stuff.

**FANG:** One of the most incredible moments in LET ME IN is the first-person car-crash shot. Can you talk a little bit about why you chose to film the scene in that particular way?

**REEVES:** It was really fun to shoot. That in particular was something where I thought it was really important to get inside what it's like for [the character played by Richard] Jenkins—to take his point of view, even though he's a killer. Through the process of that sequence, you almost find yourself unwillingly rooting for a killer, and feeling how horrible it is for him. That's the beginning of the end for him, so it was a critical moment for me. I really cared about it a lot, and visual FX supervisor Brad Parker and I worked very hard to find a way to do that seamless shot, so you could feel like one minute you see him sort of escape, and the next minute his hopes are dashed and it's really over.

**FANG:** What are the film's FX highlights?

**REEVES:** I hope people like the car crash, and that they don't know it's an effects sequence. The acid-burn makeup on Jenkins is amazing too.

The thing I hope for horror fans is that they just respond to [John Ajvide] Lindqvist's story and feel we did it justice. I don't want people to look out for this or that in terms of effects. I'd like for them to just embrace it as part of the story. I hope that's what people get from it.

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LET ME IN co-star Koteas has slowly carved out a name for himself in Hollywood, and is now considered one of the go-to character actors in the business. His character, known only as “The Policeman” is the only new role in LET ME IN.

**FANG:** You haven’t seen the original LET THE RIGHT ONE IN before?

**ELIAS KOTEAS:** Never seen it.

**FANG:** Was that because your character is a new addition?

**KOTEAS:** Trying to get me to focus on a movie and sit down and watch it...that’s another matter. But eventually it will come around and I’ll watch it.

**FANG:** You don’t seem to like viewing yourself on screen. Is that accurate?

**KOTEAS:** It’s not my favorite thing to do, watching myself in something. To me, it’s really about making it. Then it’s up to the gods and you and everyone else.

**FANG:** Do you feel like you’ve had your breakout role yet, since you’re known as a character actor who takes smaller parts? Everyone at this festival loves Casey Jones from TEENAGE MUTANT NINJA TURTLES, of course.

**KOTEAS:** SOME KIND OF WONDERFUL—that got me started, you know. I mean, I’m grateful to Casey Jones, back when the hair was flowin’!

**FANG:** Did you ever read FANGORIA when you were a kid?

**KOTEAS:** I think so. The monster magazine, right? Oh yes, definitely.

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Giacchino is on a roll. His compositions for LOST are among the best music heard on TV in a generation, he helped revitalize STAR TREK with his thrilling score for the cinematic reboot and he now has an Academy Award for Pixar’s UP.

**FANG:** Is LET ME IN distinct from the recent teen vampire romances?

**MICHAEL GIACCHINO:** This is a completely different kind of movie than TWILIGHT. You can say that’s about relationships, but this is really about two people and the bond they form, and it’s a much more emotional film. It’s about what we all really feel, as opposed to the more 90210 thing.

**FANG:** The lead characters’ age—around 12 years old—is such a relatable time. Were you inspired to bring that vulnerable age to life with the LET ME IN music?

**GIACCHINO:** When I score a movie, I want to watch it and feel something, and what you hear is what I’m feeling. I don’t want to work on something and say, “I think people should feel this.” I only want to give you what I’m feeling. Matt is such a great director and he really gets to the emotional core of the characters, and I just felt so many different things [with LET ME IN]. I couldn’t wait to sit down and start writing that music.

**FANG:** Do you and Reeves or [LOST and STAR TREK’s] J.J. Abrams feel a kinship with Steven Spielberg and John Williams? Are you guys the next generation?

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**GIACCHINO:** J.J.’s beginning to work on SUPER 8 and Spielberg is producing that, and when I think about how, at some point, my name is going to be on the one-sheet with Steven’s—that’s just crazy. I mean, it wasn’t too long ago that I was just a kid making movies with my friends, and I know that’s what Steven did when he was a kid. So it’s very humbling, but I also feel a real responsibility to do the best I can and not forget why I’m doing it, and we’re doing it because we like it and we just want to tell stories and have fun. That’s why I love working with J.J., Matt or Brad Bird, because they all love it, and we haven’t forgotten that we’re really all just 12-year-old kids.

**FANG:** So you were a STAR TREK fan?

**GIACCHINO:** Yeah, of the original series, I was. But STAR WARS was my first love, and STARLOG was always covering that—but I was always afraid to buy FANGORIA. Fango was the one magazine I would completely stay away from! I would go grab STARLOG instead.



Teen actor Minnette was lovable as Jack’s son in LOST, but in LET ME IN he plays Kenny, one of the worst bullies ever featured on the silver screen.

**FANG:** What was it like being a bully? Did you ever get bullied when you were a kid?

**DYLAN MINNETTE:** I wasn’t, really. But it was fun, because I’ve never played a character like that before. I had always wanted to be in a horror movie and be a main character, so when I got the role, it was awesome.

**FANG:** Have you seen the film before this festival?

**MINNETTE:** This will be my fourth time seeing it. I get chills every time I watch it. I’m an only child, so I liked working with the backstory that you find out later in the film.

**FANG:** With the novel and original film already covering the same ground, does LET ME IN do this story fresh justice?

**MINNETTE:** I really feel like it’s a good adaptation of the book and a good remake. I like it more than the Swedish film; I feel more involved with the characters and feel more from them.

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No bully can be effective without his minions, and Pinchak plays Jackson—one of the accomplices to Kenny’s terrorizing tactics against Owen.

**FANG:** Dylan claims he was never bullied as a kid. What about you?

**JIMMY “JAX” PINCHAK:** I’m an only child, but I have these crazy cousins in New York who are insane! Every time I go up there, they try to throw me off the roof or smash snow in my face!

**FANG:** What did you think of the finished film when you saw it for the first time?

**PINCHAK:** I was really surprised. You don’t really know how it’s gonna turn out, and I knew people were skeptical. They were wary, thinking, “Why would they make this so soon?” but once you watch it, you’ll love it.

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**FANG:** Is this film more relatable than the original for U.S. audiences?

**PINCHAK:** I believe so. I think American audiences will appreciate it more.

**FANG:** Could you take LET ME IN star Chloë Grace Moretz, a.k.a. KICK-ASS’ “Hit Girl,” in a fight?

**PINCHAK:** It does come down to that. I get butchered!

**FANG:** You do indeed have a pretty gruesome scene in LET ME IN. How was that experience?

**PINCHAK:** I get a huge gash in my chest. We used dummies for everyone else, but I was in gym shorts and they couldn’t make a dummy because I was showing too much skin.

**FANG:** What was the worst part about that grueling day of shooting your death scene?

**PINCHAK:** There were all these dummies around me, and the effects guy thought I was one too, and poured blood on me and stepped on my head!

{comments on}