

## Todd Farmer Collaborates “ANGRY”

Written by Samuel Zimmerman  
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A partnership for the modern-horror ages, director Patrick Lussier and writer Todd Farmer debuted their collective brain with the highly entertaining 3D MY BLOODY VALENTINE remake. This Friday, their second feature DRIVE ANGRY, also in 3D, promises to step the game up even further with plenty of carnage, cars, Nic Cage and Satanists (!). Farmer, who also further builds his résumé of cameos with DRIVE ANGRY, says the way his connection with Lussier works is a matter of circumstance.

“It depends on what’s going on because he wears a lot of hats—director, editor and writer as well,” Farmer says. “A lot of times, what we’ll do is figure out the story, break it together and once we have the story, we’ll dive right in. With DRIVE ANGRY, all we really had was the first 20 minutes of the movie, and we were so excited we just took off writing. But normally, I’ll do a first pass and then he’ll come along behind me and we’ll hand it off back and forth. That’s basically because he’s so busy doing the other stuff. It’s good to have a partner who’s both a director and editor, because he’s got your back the whole way.”



When it came to DRIVE ANGRY, “Patrick came to me, wanting to do sort of a 1970s throwback,” Farmer continues. “The movies when the good guy was not exactly squeaky-clean, the movies that came out before JAWS and CLOSE ENCOUNTERS, when the genre changed a little bit, and that’s essentially what we did. We threw in a little bit of HIGH PLAINS DRIFTER to make it interesting.”

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But Farmer’s work doesn’t stop with a finished script. In the spirit of true partnership, he toils day in and day out alongside Lussier. “For DRIVE ANGRY, I was on set the whole time,” he recalls. “We had 12-14-hour days, and we would walk to set together at the beginning of the day and then walk back at night. The interesting thing about Patrick is, he gets no sleep, and yet at the end of the day, he would literally walk to every crewmember and thank them for the day’s work, and I’ve never known a director to do that—and that was daily, no matter how exhausted he was. That’s why the crew loved him and were willing to bend over backwards.”

Being available at all hours allowed Farmer to make his own, highly entertaining [and butt-naked] cameo in VALENTINE, and he chose to re-up for DRIVE ANGRY. “Just as a joke, we named the character Frank again, ’cause I was Frank in VALENTINE,” the writer says. “It was a fun role; I got to work with Amber [Heard], I got to work with Nic and the wonderful Bill Fichtner. I couldn’t have asked for a better cast. Nic is as good as he’s ever been, and he just devoured this role. Amber Heard is gorgeous and perfect for what we needed. Billy Burke—you know him from the TWILIGHT movies, but he is deliciously evil, and I don’t know if you’ve heard his album, but his album is incredible. And then of course there’s Bill Fichtner, who’s now a good friend. Bill Fichtner may actually be God. The jury’s still out, but he chews this movie up. He will be the guy people talk about.”



As Farmer explains, however, don’t look for his onscreen chops outside of Lussier-directed pictures. “I’m only really interested in being in stuff we write, because I’m going to be on set anyway. I don’t know if I want the attention, or the stress, involved in being a full-time actor; that’s a tough job. I like what I do and I enjoy playing the little roles, and they’re fun. I’d like to keep my pants on at least once; that’d be a nice change. I like to be the T&A in my movies. I apologize to all those who don’t want to see my butt. Close your eyes or shield them, take the 3D glasses off for a moment.”

With such a great cast on hand, one has to wonder how Farmer’s presence on set affects improvisation, or how the writer himself deals with modifications. “I’m not protective at all,” he

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explains. “My journey is to get them behind the cameras, and one of the great things is that, for the most part, they liked my dialogue, they liked the world we created. But a lot of the times, when you step into a role, it doesn’t feel natural; even in the small part that I play, I was changing my lines left and right because when you get in the moment, the words on the page don’t work. A lot of writers are precious and that’s fine, but I’m not. I’m precious toward the story, I’m precious toward the structure, I’m precious toward character, but when it comes to the words coming out of the actors’ mouths, they have to make them their own.”

Up next for Farmer and Lussier is the new iteration of HELLRAISER, a remake that admirers of horror in general and Clive Barker’s series in particular are most definitely keeping a close eye on. And while Farmer shares a close connection with fans and filmgoers via Twitter and Formspring, he doesn’t necessarily let their wants and needs predict the result. “For the most part, it’s all about what we want to do,” he says. “I’m familiar with what the fans want, but—it’s funny, when I got started back in ’96, it was really just Dimension and New Line doing horror movies and everybody else tended to look down their noses at horror, and then SCREAM came out and changed everything—now everybody does horror. I thought I was starting in horror because that’s what you do, it was sort of the way you get your foot in the door, but it turns out I love it. A lot of times, I tend to think I go with the majority as far as horror is concerned—which movies are good, which ones screwed up—so the idea is to create movies and stories that Patrick and I want to see, and just hope that the majority follows along. That’s the intention, anyway.”

*For more with Farmer, check out his comments on HELLRAISER and HALLOWEEN 3D [here](#), and see our DRIVE ANGRY feature in FANGORIA #301, now on sale!*

{jcomments on}