

The “CREATURE” Crew, Part Two

Written by Michael Gingold

Friday, 09 September 2011 15:49



Stalking out of the swamp and into theaters today, *CREATURE* assembles a cast of young actors under director Fred Andrews, who sics a rubber-suit monster called Lockjaw (and Sid Haig) on them. Fango chatted with the filmmaker and some of his ensemble; go [here](#) for comments by Andrews and creature performer Daniel Bernhardt, and read on for the others...

FANGORIA: How did you wind up casting the actors you did?

FRED ANDREWS: Oh, wow—that was a hard process, but it was a good process. With a couple of them, I had in mind who I wanted from the very beginning when I was writing the script. Mehcad Brooks for sure, as my lead, and he was great. With Amanda Fuller [pictured above, and below with Andrews], I had seen *RED WHITE & BLUE*, which was a fantastic film and she’s amazing in it, and Lauren Schneider was in it was well. I had Kelly Wagner, our casting agent, get in touch and see if they would take a meeting, so I could convince them that this was a horror movie worth them doing vs. just some kind of gory genre thing. Dillon Casey [2nd photo below] was kind of a big surprise, him and Aaron Hill; the character Aaron played had been written as a little more of a hard-ass. Aaron’s a really tall guy and he’s got this real boyish quality to him, and seeing him and Dillon together, their chemistry was so good.

It’s one of those situations where everybody in this film is such a developed character, and they’re all really good-looking people. There’s not a bad-looking person in this film; even my monster is handsome!



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DILLON CASEY: I always thought it was hilarious being on set with Dan; he was in the makeup the entire time. You go to the table to get a snack, and he'd come walking up with a coffee but in the full monster suit, like, "How's your day going?" And I'd be like, "Jesus, Lockjaw, get away from me, man!"

ANDREWS: I also believe that the personalities, the way the different actors brought a different reading to stuff... What I was looking for was how they would interact, as a group. And here we are, a year or so later, and we're all still really good friends. We all hang out and talk, and there's a very natural chemistry that happened that I got lucky with. There was no small part in the film. We had Sid Haig, Pruitt Taylor Vince, who plays the smallest part in the film, and still it's amazing what he brought to it. David Jensen and Wayne P re—they were fantastic. They're all just great character actors who were attracted to the script, because it wasn't the typical thing.

AMANDA FULLER: That was the draw of coming from other, more layered pieces. It was like, "Oh, a monster movie? OK, that might be fun," but then reading the script and talking to Fred, there were a lot of layers to the characters he wrote, a history with all of them that ties in to the creature; there's so much more to this film than just graphic effects and screaming and running away. It gave us a reason, as actors, to be a part of it, and create something you don't normally see in typical genre flicks.

ANDREWS: To be able to snag Lauren and yourself, coming off of RED WHITE & BLUE, which I'm a huge fan of, was great. In fact, the character I had Amanda playing, I rewrote for her so she would have more to do, just because getting someone of her caliber to do that part, it deserved a little more.

FULLER: Aw, shucks.

ANDREWS: I'll also say that one thing I believe the actors responded to was that I knew exactly what I wanted. I'm very specific and clear about things, so it's not like we walked in like, "Yeah, maybe this'll work..." We had enough meetings and read-throughs and discussions—lengthy discussions about each character and what we were going to do. That was very important, to be able to meet our schedule. Dillon's a good example. With his character, if we hadn't had as many conversations as we did, prior to even going into

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rehearsal, about what was going to happen with his character, I don't think we would have made our days. I had great people; I was lucky.

FANG: Dillon, what can you tell us about your role?

CASEY: I'm Oscar, who's friends with Aaron's character [who is about to depart for a tour of duty with the Marines], and I decide to take them on a trip to the bayou, to New Orleans.



ANDREWS: And he has to deal with what happens, because he makes a bad decision.

CASEY: Yeah, it's my fault that we get in this mess. Or sorry, it's not my fault, it's Oscar's fault.

FULLER: I play Beth, a girl who is seemingly just a Southern belle type. She's just off on this trip with her friends, and then has to endure everything that happens, and there's also a twist involving what happens with her. It's so hard to talk about her without spoiling it. With this film, everything at first glance is like A, B and C, but on second glance, while you're watching the film, there's so much more happening.

LAUREN SCHNEIDER: I play Karen, who is probably the wildest of the bunch.

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FULLER: Damn straight. She’s very seductive, especially with Beth.

SCHNEIDER: She’s not quite one of the group, but wants to be and tries to fit in, but she’s got some dark secrets in her pocket. I just don’t want to give anything away.

ANDREWS: I’m not trying to say we’re like CRYING GAME or anything—this is a classic creature film, first and foremost, and it starts out very much like you expect it to: kids on a road trip and things go wrong. But that’s just the first level of the film, and not to be too pretentious, but there are a lot more levels. So what everybody’s trying to do is be really nice about saying, “You’ve got to see it, and you’re going to get everything that you want,” but the story is very different and engaging.

SCHNEIDER: It doesn’t unfold how you think it’s going to.

FANG: Do you want to talk about filming on location in the swamp?

ALL: No! [*Laughter*]

ANDREWS: All they’re going to do is talk about bugs.

FULLER: We have a lot more to talk about than that! We had snake wranglers, gator wranglers, along with the bugs. We in the swamp, shooting primarily at night with all our lights, and bugs are attracted to lights, so it was often hard to get through our takes without bugs flying right in our faces or into our mouths.

DANIEL BERNHARDT: What about the alligators?

FULLER: I tried to ignore those as much as I possibly could.

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ANDREWS: We had to stop shooting once, actually. There was an actress, Jennifer Lynn Warren, who was swimming in the water all day on our first day of shooting, and we had to stop for almost two hours because a 14-foot alligator kept coming in too close. It got within 8 feet of her, because it got away from the wranglers, and she had no idea. So it was like, “Come on, come on, you’ve got to come out of the water!” and then when she realized why...it actually ended up in the film, which is pretty fantastic, because it’s not a fake performance. There really was a big-ass alligator out there.



BERNHARDT: That’s also the scene where I went in the water after her. At this point, they actually had a cop there, and he had his gun out.

ANDREWS: And we also had the owner of the property there with a shotgun at the same time, saying, “We’re going to have to shoot him, man. We’re going to have to shoot that gator.”

BERNHARDT: I went up to the cop and said, “Listen, are you a good shot?” And he went, “I’m a very good shot.” I said, “If there’s an alligator, shoot. I don’t care if you hit me, but shoot!”

ANDREWS: They were a real danger. The gators would come right up to the edge of the water, waiting to grab something. The whole time we were shooting, we’d have five people off to the side with guns, just being ready in case something got too close. It was pretty cool.

We also had the set flood, because we literally built it in the middle of the swamp. If you get just a little bit of rain in that area, that becomes two or three feet of water, so everything gets

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covered. We had sets wash away and stuff.

FULLER: But at the same time, we had a lot fun together because we were all there, in it together, and spent all of our off time together.

CASEY: There were moments though when we were working these really long days, it was really hot and humid, there were bugs everywhere, and right when we were about to complain...

FULLER: We'd see Dan in his 200-pound suit.

CASEY: I'd look over at Dan in his full outfit, and I'd be like, "You know what? I'm OK.

There was a funny thing that went on. Everyone was wearing so much bug spray, and I never touched the stuff. You guys were all getting bit, but I didn't know what you were talking about. The bugs didn't go near me.

FULLER: I didn't put that much bug spray on!

CASEY: Actually, Serinda Swan, on day one, overreacted to the swamp, and put on so much bug spray that she got sick and had to go to the emergency room.

ANDREWS: Yeah, she had to be hospitalized. I beat everybody up on this film, but Serinda and Mehcad especially; they got sucked down mudholes and in caves, and under the water and that kind of stuff. But they did a fantastic job.

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FANG: Amanda, was CREATURE a different kind of physical experience than RED WHITE & BLUE, which is also a very intense movie?

FULLER: Entirely different, yet with some similarities. I mean, the heat was a factor in both, because in Austin, with RED WHITE & BLUE, we were shooting in 110-degree heat outside every day, and that was ridiculous. There was heat in Louisiana, but it wasn't quite as bad; it was more humid. There were similar physical factors, but RED WHITE & BLUE was different because I was on my own most of the time. So much of that film is singular character development and then they meet in the end, while this was a group story. We were always together, and it was a lot more easygoing and getting to know each other and having fun and creating something together, rather than being focused on myself. It was a very different experience, but they both were amazing.