

## Mel Brooks Delivers “PIZZAMAN”

Written by Tony Timpone

Friday, 23 September 2011 10:43

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Earlier this week, comedy legend Mel Brooks celebrated the 25th anniversary of his BrooksFilms production THE FLY with us (see feature [here](#)) and shared his love of horror. The octogenarian also revealed plans for his next film, a slasher opus called PIZZAMAN (first reported [here](#)) that will likely begin lensing this fall/winter in the Midwest. See below for the scoop.

“I’ve got a script and I’ve got a director,” says Brooks (pictured below during a FANGORIA RADIO appearance with Debbie Rochon and this writer). “PIZZAMAN was written years ago by my longtime collaborators Steve Haberman [who will also take the helm] and Rudy De Luca. They did DRACULA: DEAD AND LOVING IT for me, a great horror/comedy film. Then they also did LIFE STINKS, in which I starred, and it was funny and very moving, too. It was one of the best pictures I ever did as an actor. So these guys are not untalented. When they told me the plot of PIZZAMAN, I said, ‘Are you kidding?’ And they said, ‘No, it’s a real great idea for a horror story.’ And they wrote a rather exciting, interesting script, and I worked with them a little bit on it.”



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The film has no connection with author Greg Taylor's recent young-adult novel KILLER PIZZA, or any past maniac-on-the-loose movies. "It's purely original, based on Rudy and Steve's insane imagination," he says. "It's very, very tight. It's about a young man who was formerly incarcerated in an insane asylum for something he didn't do, but it made him crazy to be there and he comes out and decides he will get even with society, with the people who put him there, with almost anybody. He does it through becoming a pizza man. He gets his truck and his list of deliveries, and just goes about killing them all. And sometimes there are problems, but sometimes there are unexpected victories, where a bad guy that we hate gets in his way. Just like in THE FLY, when that tough bastard at the bar tries to break [Seth Brundle's] arm and he easily shatters the other man's arm. We get kind of a victory. And it's just so with PIZZAMAN. We get some moments where this insane young man occasionally does some good. I can't give the story away, but it's just one adventure, delivering pizza and killing people. And it will be perfect for FANGORIA."

Brooks is confident with his fellow funnymen in charge. Besides their DRACULA spoof for Brooks, Haberman and De Luca (memorable as the hitman in Brooks' HIGH ANXIETY) produced the wonderful MEL BROOKS AND DICK CAVETT TOGETHER AGAIN special airing on HBO this month. "Steve Haberman is a very good screenwriter and just a natural director who knows everything there is to know about directing a horror movie. Born to do it. Born to be a horror-film director. Steve is now in Illinois, scouting locations."

That's right: If all goes well, Brooks will be putting PIZZAMAN in the oven this fall. "If the state of Illinois agrees to fund it, basically, with tax breaks, and I get the [other] funding, we probably could start shooting this thing either in the fall or winter...if it's not too cold there. I mean, people eat pizza in the winter as well as the spring! Preproduction would take a couple of months, and if it's shot in a hurry, it could be done in the fall and then maybe we could wait through the worst of winter and finish in the spring."

Brooks has paged his ROBIN HOOD: MEN IN TIGHTS star Cary Elwes to topline PIZZAMAN. The SAW survivor also happens to be a classic horror fan. "He's one actor who I love," Brooks says. "There's a wonderful part for a detective, and Cary will play it. I can't tell you too much about [his character], but it's convoluted, is all I can say. It's a convoluted role, it's a major role, and Cary wants to do it, and we'd love for him to do it."

Veteran actor Stacy Keach, whose genre credits include ROAD GAMES, THE MAN WITH THE SCREAMING BRAIN, BODY BAGS and CLASS OF 1999, has also been paged for a key

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PIZZAMAN role. "There's a bad guy who's the head of the institution," Brooks says. "A really evil guy who has some very good things to do, and Stacy Keach would probably do it for me. I have two really talented guys, and the rest of it would be players who we know would do the right job."

The titular villain will not be a household name, according to Brooks. "The Pizza Man himself has to be unknown," he says. "Once you see that it's an actor who you know, you wouldn't believe he's going to cut people's throats. So you don't know who the Pizza Man is. We might do a kind of worldwide audition, or a U.S. audition, where we find a newcomer who could be the next big star."

Not unlike Pizza Hut, Papa John's and Domino's, Brooks and company foresee a franchise for their PIZZAMAN. "Especially if when they capture him and they're taking him away, he somehow gets free at the end," Brooks says of his movie, which will be made under his new shingle, BrooksPics.

If Brooks' PIZZAMAN can be readied in time, perhaps it can share the local multiplex with the epic zombie flick WORLD WAR Z, which sprang from the mind of another Brooks genius, son Max. Daddy Brooks says he's delighted with Max's accomplishments and the upcoming WORLD WAR Z movie, which stars Brad Pitt (also producing), DRIVE's Bryan Cranston and LOST's Matthew Fox under the direction of Marc Forster (QUANTUM OF SOLACE, MONSTER'S BALL), and will open in December 2012.

"Well, I'm really proud," Brooks says. "First of all, from leaving a really hot job like writer on SATURDAY NIGHT LIVE to go on a book tour with his first one, THE ZOMBIE SURVIVAL GUIDE, that was very brave. And then Max went on to write WORLD WAR Z. And it's not just a horror/zombie thing, it's a complete, wonderful novel about society and governments. It's just a wonderful book. I'm very proud of him. It's going to be a sensational movie, because Marc Forster is a great director, and I know they're going to do a good job."

Let's hope the same for Brooks and PIZZAMAN.