

## Gay of the Dead: Actor Jeremy Owen, Part One

Written by Sean Abley

Wednesday, 21 September 2011 07:17

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Apparently Albuquerque, NM is a hotbed of indie horror film production. Who knew? One guy who knows all too well is out actor Jeremy Owen, having appeared in, and crewed on, some of the more notorious low- and no-budget horror flicks coming out of the region.

**FANGORIA:** Let's start with the movie that I noticed you in first, FEEDING THE MASSES. I was trying to track down the director, Richard Griffin, who outed himself in the BTS on the DVD. And somehow you and I found each other online. How did you end up in that film?

**JEREMY OWEN:** That was the second film I worked on. I met the director of FEEDING THE MASSES because of the first film I worked on, THE STINK OF FLESH. We got along well, and he invited me to come out and be the assistant director as well as play the role "Tate."

**FANG:** Where did you guys shoot FEEDING THE MASSES?

**OWEN:** In Pawtucket, RI, and Providence.

**FANG:** You weren't living there at the time, were you?

**OWEN:** No, I was living in Denver at the time.

**FANG:** I know these are low budget films. How in the world did they get you out there for the film?

**OWEN:** Denver is a pretty big airport hub, and at the time there were airfare wars and stuff, so I was able to get a round trip to Boston for less than two hundred bucks. And they helped me out a bit – it wasn't a paid gig – but I think we ended up splitting the ticket to get me out there.

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His partner, Ted, who was the producer on the movie, was living in an apartment, and between that apartment and the upstairs neighbor [who] allowed us to use her guest bedroom, all the cast and crew just crashed together in these two apartments on couches and floors. It was tight, but it was pretty fun. It was like a sleepover.

**FANG:** How many days did you shoot on that flick?

**OWEN:** I believe it was something in the neighborhood of sixteen or eighteen days. It was really fast. But it helped that most of our shooting locations were all centered around this parking structure in downtown Pawtucket. At least half of the movie was shot in and around that structure. Then, in Providence, we had a cable station where Richard was working at the time. And the only other location was the apartment we were staying in.



**FANG:** FEEDING THE MASSES was written by Trent Haaga, and it looks like it was one of his earliest scripts. His shit is blowing up right now!

**OWEN:** Tell me about it!

**FANG:** Was he around at the time?

**OWEN:** He was not around for the shoot. He was actually producing another movie at the time. I do remember when he saw the movie he was very proud of how we handled the script. At the time, it was the closest adaptation of (a script) that he'd handed over that he'd ever

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seen, because he'd handed a few scripts over and they got drastically changed before getting made.

**FANG:** Jumping back to your first film, THE STINK OF FLESH. Was that also shot out there in the RI area?

**OWEN:** No, that was shot in Albuquerque. I'd just moved back to Denver...but I had met the writer/director, Scott Phillips, through a mutual friend because he'd come up to Denver for Mile High Con. He came up to promote his short films, and he was going to do a zombie movie, and of course I was waving my hand, "Can I help in any possible way?" I'd just graduated with my musical theater degree, and I love zombie films, and so I just volunteered to come down for the full two weeks and do whatever I could. I'd never worked on a movie before, and this was his first feature (as a director). I ended up getting an Associate Producer credit on that. He wrote the fight scene between me and the main character because he wanted a big, burly zombie for the main character to fight as kind of a tribute to the first zombie in Fulci's ZOMBIE. They kept calling me the Fulci Zombie.

**FANG:** So this was the first time you'd been in extensive makeup for full shooting days. Nightmare, right?

**OWEN:** Yes and no. I enjoyed it quite thoroughly. Doing theater, I know that spirit gum does not stick well to my skin – I just sweat it off, almost immediately. They did it old school, just building up latex and tissue paper on my face. The neck piece kept coming off because I kept drooling fake blood into the appliance instead of on the outside of it. So by the end of the day we were just sticking it to my neck with the fake blood that had dried to my neck because it was stickier than the spirit gum would have been. It was definitely a challenge, and fun.



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**FANG:** I think you're the only person I've ever heard say it was fun to be in makeup all day.

**OWEN:** (Laughs) Granted it wasn't a full body appliance. I thought it was cool.

**FANG:** [WEDDING SLASHERS](#) involves a lot of the same people you've worked with over and over again. Wasn't there some weirdness with that film and the producers?



**OWEN:** It was the first time this group of friends I'd hooked up with were producing something for somebody else. It was interesting. The money issue was always a gray area. The producer first said, "Just write something cool." And so Robert Medrano wrote the first draft of the script, and it was like a \$100,000 script. (Laughs) It was not like the no/low budget we were used to working with. When the final budget came down, Scott was rewriting as we were shooting. It was just one of those situations where we never knew how this scene was going to end up, what was going to happen, until that day when we were shooting. We ended up shooting a pretty funny, low budget, corny little movie.

But then the producer got a hold of it, and was "Oh, this is terrible!" He shot some stuff out in L.A., like a back story. When you watch it now, when it's cut together, the first part of the movie is a lot of what he shot out in L.A., and there's no humor in the script—they were going for a pretty straightforward slasher flick—and then the second half of the film is pretty much how we shot it, and it's funny. It's almost like there's two movies together. Not to mention my character, Sock Monkey, for the beginning of the movie, they shemped in somebody else that was almost half my size. Which is kind of funny, to me at least, because they probably could have flown me out there and gotten me to do it for free.

**FANG:** And at this point you're still working for no money, right? Still doing these low budget movies for free?

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**OWEN:** Yeah, for fun and experience, in the hopes that something might take off at some point.

**FANG:** [NECROVILLE](#) was written by one of the actors you've worked with a bunch, Billy Garberina. What can you tell me about the shoot? And remember, the best stories are the ones where you're the most uncomfortable.

**OWEN:** Billy. I love Billy. He's this funny, amazing person. But when he was in the driver's seat—especially [NECROVILLE](#), because that was only the second film he'd produced, directed and starred in at the same time—he was a big gigantic powder keg. You'd never know when he was going to be his usual laffy-daffy self, or one thing could happen and he'd just start yelling and screaming. And I was always the person right in front of him when that happened. (Laughs) It was always me standing right in front of him when something goes off. It actually got funny. By the end of the movie he started realizing I was always the person right in front of him and it would actually kind of break him out of it. I don't want to call him a tyrant, because he wasn't some sort of slave driver, but he had a temper on that movie, quite a bit. But it got better, and on subsequent movies it got better, too, but he was kind of a powder keg. [The script] was so ambitious, and [for] the no money we had, I can see why he'd get stressed. I took it in stride because I knew him pretty well.

**FANG:** When you're talking about small budgets, what are we talking about here? \$50,000? \$10,000?

**OWEN:** At the most \$10,000. I don't know for sure what the shooting budgets were, but I know all these movies were done for \$10,000 or less. I think a couple of them were even \$5,000 or less. We were just putting as much money up on the screen as we could. None of us were getting paid except for food and maybe some gas money. We were all together just trying to do something; make a good movie, and maybe get some experience because we all want to work in the industry. Get some credits on our resume, and have fun, too.

TO BE CONTINUED

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For more info on Jeremy, check out [his webpage](#). You can join the Gay of the Dead [Twitter](#) [melee](#) and the [Facebook massacre](#) a

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