Things continue to get buggy for Dustin Warburton. While the East Coast—based writer has been busy juggling horror fiction (TASTE, STRANGE THINGS and MORTICIANS FOOD), young adult novels and children's books (including THE LITTLE MONSTERS GUIDE ON HOW TO SCARE CHILDREN), as well as co-authoring books with major sports figures like Dennis Rodman (!), he now makes his motion-picture debut this year with the big bug flick SPIDERS 3D, produced by that nature amok/Syfy-friendly Nu Image company. Warburton whipped up the story for recent festival-fave SPIDERS 3D with veteran frightmaster Tibor Takacs (THE GATE, ICE SPIDERS, I, MADMAN, etc.), who then handed final screenwriting chores to Joseph Farrugia.

In SPIDERS 3D (which stars STARSHIP TROOPERS' Patrick Muldoon, 2001 MANIACS' Christa Campbell and ALIENS' William Hope), a Soviet spacecraft crashes into a New York City subway tunnel (Sandy wasn't enough?!), unleashing a horde of giant mutated arachnids.

FANGORIA: How did you first become involved with SPIDERS 3D?

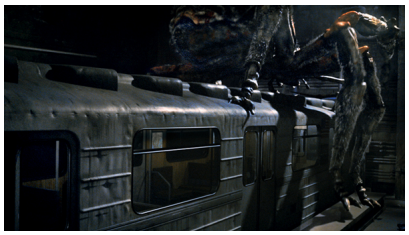
DUSTIN WARBURTON: I had been collaborating with [director] Tibor Takacs for a few years, ever since he contacted me after my second book was released in 2007. Tibor and I became friends, and he coached me as a screenwriter for a few years. How this came to be was pretty amazing, because it was on my 29th birthday, December 15, 2009, that I received a phone call from Tibor regarding this project. Tibor told me that he could set up a pitch meeting for me to meet with a producer, who was Boaz Davidson. He said the meeting was for December 21 in LA, which meant I had a week to come up with a solid pitch. This being my first-ever pitch meeting with a real producer, needless to say I was very excited and nervous at the same time, but I work well under pressure.

FANG: Is there any connection with the previous two films, and did you see them?

WARBURTON: No, there isn't any connection that I am aware of. Other than Nu Image taking an interest in spiders, I felt this project was something new and very much different than any other spider/disaster film out there. It's pretty funny actually, I noticed the Nu Image SPIDERS movies on Netflix recently, but I didn't watch them.

FANG: What kind of instructions were you given from your producers?

WARBURTON: Well, the only instructions I was given in the beginning were from Tibor regarding how to prepare the pitch in terms of the written structure. Tibor told me he wanted to do a SPIDERS film in New York City, the rest was up to me. When I first got the call about the meeting, I literally locked myself in my apartment for three days where I studied and analyzed dozens of invasive species. I looked at the python surge in Florida, bacteria plaguing lakes in upstate New York, and the cane toads in Australia. This eventually led me to start looking at new species of spiders being discovered year after year in isolated areas across the world ranging from jungles to deserts. The only instruction I basically had was to make it original, which of course is the trick in any killer bug movie.



FANG: When did the 3D element come into play? Did the 3D element affect your story in any way?

WARBURTON: I knew Tibor wanted to do a 3D film for quite some time. He had been attending training conferences and had been studying the new cameras used in shooting the current 3D films. So when I started developing the story and the characters, I knew he intended for it to be in 3D, but I didn't think about that at all when I was working on the story. I knew the 3D element would come into play later when the script was being rewritten in order to accommodate the 3D shots.

FANG: Was the story adapted from one of your pre-existing works?

WARBURTON: For many years I studied invasive species as a hobby, and I knew that someday I'd be able to incorporate something invasive into a story, but no, it didn't come from anything I had written previously. Interesting enough, my third book was a children's book titled MY BROTHER EATS SPIDERS. To this day, it's one of my favorite works because it's about my two sons, but when I think about it now, I find it interesting how the spider book may have led me to the SPIDERS film without even knowing it.

FANG: Why didn't you get a screenplay credit?

WARBURTON: My role basically ended after I developed the pitch and treatment and co-wrote the story. I had been given the impression Nu Image wanted the script done ASAP, and when I was writing the story in December, January and February, I was also going through a divorce. I have two small boys and at that particular time, I couldn't leave them for a month to go to LA and work on the script with Tibor.

FANG: How do you think your writing is unique compared to other writers?

WARBURTON: All of us have a different style, a different voice from within. Everything I read I take in like a sponge and try to take something from it while adding it to my own writing arsenal. I worked in a prison for four years while attending college full time, and during that experience I learned what real horror is all about. It changed my thoughts on what makes something horrifying and without a doubt humbled me in a way. What makes me different is I've taken an untraditional road through all of this. I was a young father learning how to be a man all the while learning how to control the internal drive to create. Ever since I was 9 years old, I thought my writing was bizarre, and to this day I still continue to shock myself. But at the same time, I'm changing as a writer. Not only do I write horror, but now I love working in the children's genre. The combination is incredible and it adds to the overall element of what I'm trying to accomplish. In short, what makes my writing unique is the fact that I try to put myself in the shoes of whomever or whatever I'm writing about. I try to be realistic while really putting myself in the situation I'm creating, even though the situation might be unthinkable.

FANG: Could you describe your writing process?

WARBURTON: That is a good question! My process is unlike anything I can even describe, but I'll do my best. First, I start with an idea, then I think about it while flushing out notes in a notebook or piece of paper. I always like to work on paper first and then move onto the computer, thus creating my rough outline before I even turn the computer on. I then tear the pages out and scatter them on the floor beneath me, resembling a giant puzzle. I move papers around and start to visualize what can be done with the idea now that it's starting to take shape. Once that happens, I go to work and dig deeper in each element within the story. I break down the characters along with each of their personalities. I always try to identify a weakness in the protagonist so that the story will pave the way for the character's change. After all, who wants to read a story about a character who doesn't change by the end of a story? I will mention one odd thing I do: I never edit anything on the computer, I always print stuff out and edit it by pen. That's the old school writer in me, but at the end of the day there is no recipe for creativity other than trying to not lose it as we grow older. We all have ideas, and the difference between creative minds and regular minds is the fact that creative minds make it happen. Anyone can watch a movie, and everyone in Hollywood considers himself or herself a writer, but not everyone can write a story simply because they've seen thousands of films and read hundreds of books. They must first understand the concept of structure and then begin understanding the elements that make up the story from the opening sentence to the last word. When it comes to structure, you must be able to break down the story in all its elements before you even begin to write it. Creativity is the driving force behind every story and every movie, and although the two worlds seem distant, they are considerably more similar than most people realize.

FANG: Any other film things in the works?

WARBURTON: Yes, I have two projects that I am very excited about. I just finished the second draft to a psychological horror film titled BLACK ASYLUM. I wrote it with horror actor Robert [VAMP] Rusler, and he plans on making his directorial debut with this film. At the current moment, most of my focus is going toward my other film project titled THE WINDMILL KIDS. I became friends and writing partners with Zach Galligan, who is known for his role in GREMLINS. Several years ago, Zach and I had the idea to write a modern day

GOONIES/GREMLINS-type film because we felt that modern day adventure films are not what they used to be. So needless to say, Zach and I are finished and we are going to bring back the '80s in a kickass way! Who better to write an '80s adventure film other than Zach? I learned a lot from him, and it's always a blast!

FANG: Any other future plans?

WARBURTON: Well, it's kind of like business as usual now. I'm finding myself getting busier with less time during the day for everything! I guess that's something we all have to deal with as we press on. I'm currently preparing for the release of a new children's book soon, DENNIS THE WILD BULL, written by Dennis Rodman. I assisted as the co-writer. It is the most discussed children's book of the year. It's illustrated by Dan Monroe, who also illustrated my last two books, JESSE AND THE BOOGEYMAN, co-written with a former lightweight world champion boxer, Jesse James Leija, and BULLIES AREN'T SCARY, co-written with the former undisputed world champion and 2011 Hall of Fame boxer, Kostya Tszyu. I'm looking at my future in a good way. I have a wonderful fiancé, two sons and a daughter, so that's pretty much my motivation. I intend to make a name for myself in Hollywood with my films and with my books. Now that I've broken into Hollywood with SPIDERS 3D, I'm excited to see what happens next. But I'm still the same guy who loves nothing more than snorkeling in the Caribbean and hanging with family, while always attempting to create the next best thing. My mind never stops, therefore my project slate continues to grow and grow. I'm determined to grow as a writer and challenge myself in every way possible in order to learn as much as I can. I never stop learning, and I always think I can improve. In the long run, I hope to make my mark not only in the world of horror and in film, but in the world of children's literature as well.