

Written by Lee Gambin

Thursday, 13 December 2012 10:06

**SEBASTIAN
HAWKS**
Creature Hunter

Australian writer/director Greg Mclean—who delivered the goods with the gritty blood soaked nihilistic outback slasher WOLF CREEK and the clever, subversive and fun killer crocodile flick ROGUE—is now unleashing a monster-hunting maverick in the vein of an Indiana Jones type with his new creation SEBASTIAN HAWKS. But this adventurer will not be found on the silver screen (well, not yet). Right now, he's comic creation that needs your help.

The comic book is a work of love for Mclean and a new Australian-based Kickstarter program called Pozible is the foundation for donations from genre loving fans (and fans to be). Joining Mclean is critically acclaimed comic book writer and artist Tristan Jones (IDW's TEENAGE MUTANT NINJA TURTLES and GHOSTBUSTERS). Mclean and Jones spent some time with FANGORIA talking about their new character and are happy to share a sample of what will promise to be a wonderful independent horror comic book series that fans of the old EC Comics will just eat up!

FANGORIA: What were the set characteristics you had initially mapped before fleshing Sebastian Hawks?

GREG MCLEAN: I wanted to make a story about a "professional," a guy who had a specific skill set that could be applied in various scenarios. Being a Creature Hunter would enable us all kinds of cool opportunities to play with monsters from myth and legend in a fun, "tales of adventure" kind of way. That, and he being relatively nonchalant about the dangers he'd encounter. The risks were real, but we have a sense he's up to any challenge; an old fashioned hero in that sense, I guess.

FANG: How much input did the writer and artist have on the creation of the character?

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MCLEAN: I had a pretty fleshed out idea of the character and a series of adventures plotted. I pitched this idea and some others to Tristan and he really dug this one and then he fleshed out the arc into a bigger and better storyline and pitched that to the brilliant Chris Dibari, so it evolved pretty organically with everyone just building on and being attracted by the world and character.

TRISTAN JONES: Yeah, I think when I came on board, Hawks himself was pretty much figured out. It was a matter of figuring out where he was actually going. There were some ideas tossed about, but the more I sat down and looked at how I could make the character something a bit different to the adventurers we've already seen, the more apparent the direction he should be going in became. I was actually just looking back at some of the earlier notes I took on the trains and trams and such, and there's a pretty drastic evolution. The seeds were definitely there but I think, story wise at least, it's probably very different to where I think Greg was initially planning on taking it. At least that's what I gathered from the meetings we'd have. Each time I'd come in with something different and we'd bat ideas around, and I could see Greg was getting pretty excited about it. Knowing I'm working with Chris puts a definite spin on things too. I always try to write to suit the artist as best I can. That way you get the most out of them and they bring their all to the story

FANG: Did monster-hunter type TV shows such as KOLCHAK inspire SEBASTIAN HAWKS at all? What did you grow up watching in relation to this sub-genre?

MCLEAN: I loved THE NIGHT STALKER! I grew up watching Hammer Horror movies, Universal Monster movies and loving horror comics, which often featured various monsters. So I'm a monster guy originally, and I love creating this world which in which monsters are real, part of the texture of the SEBASTIAN HAWKS universe, and we get to see lots of lots of excellent monster hunting/fighting goodness.

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JONES: Not as much. There's probably something right in the back there, but I look at things that draw immediate parallels and find things I would want to see done, or things that haven't been done. I love Hammer Horror, and even a lot of the Hammer adventure films, so they're a big influence (the core villain of the piece is essentially a love letter Peter Cushing and the tremendous work he did at that studio). Those old Doug McClure films—WARLORDS OF ATLANTIS, THE LAND THAT TIME FORGOT, AT THE EARTH'S CORE—I used to watch them all the time! They're hilarious, but there's a real charm to them and I kind of look at them and go "Well, taking what I have, if I were to make something like this without worrying about a budget, what would I do?"

Regardless of what people make of them, those Stephen Summers MUMMY films are things I look at, but in the way I mentioned earlier. What would I, as both a horror fan and someone who thinks RAIDERS OF THE LOST ARK is one of the best adventure experiences of all time, have done instead of this? Or, how do I think this could have been better? Those MUMMY films are fun, but I think they fall short in a number of ways. Stemming from that, there's a sense of adventure and heroism to a lot of those old Universal monster movies as well that I'm riffing on. CREATURE FROM THE BLACK LAGOON. KING KONG is a *huge* influence, too. A lot of what's in SEBASTIAN HAWKS is a tip of the hat to Ray Harryhausen and Willis O'Brien. Phil Tippett, as well.

FANG: Will you be involving famous movie monsters and/or cryptids in the comic book series?

MCLEAN: There are definitely well known monsters and creatures from world myth and legend in the overall arc, however they are connected in a way that'd be a bit of a spoiler at this stage to reveal. It's very cool, and Tristan's got some wild ideas for what's coming up.

JONES: Oh yeah! If the book moves forward and we reach the funding goal, you can expect all sorts of things. This story immediately leads into stories set in Africa, which looks at the whole Mokèlé-mbèmbé thing, and again, nods to things like THE LOST WORLD and KING KONG, in terms of scope and big, monster-y action. We've got werewolves, mummies, living statues (Talos from JASON AND THE ARGONAUTS and Kali from THE GOLDEN VOYAGE OF SINBAD are *seared* into my childhood and development), dinosaurs, vampires. I'm kind of in love with the idea of him interacting with other literary monsters. There's a moment in this first story that makes a reference to the orangutan from THE MURDERS IN THE RUE MORGUE. Something else I find fascinating (just on that historic/literary note) is the history that leads up to the whole NAZI Occultism. I think it's been done to death, but the more I looked into it—the Thule society and things like that—the bigger my sandbox got and the cooler the toys became, so there's a lot of occult lore going into it as well. It's pretty across the board. There'll

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be recognizable monsters, as well as pieces of folklore taken from around the world, which often ends up tying into a lot of the mystery surrounding modern cryptids.

FANG: Tristan, did Greg Mclean establish specific traits for Sebastian Hawks that you will have to use as a guideline in the writing of this comic book series? Or was his input simply the design and look of the titular character?

JONES: There were some very broad strokes. I think initially he was much more serious. At least that's how he came across in the earlier discussions we had. He was kind of a Van Helsing-meets-Indiana Jones-type character. I think Greg had initially envisioned something more along the lines of a James Bond-type character thrown up against monsters. After he asked me to take a look at it and see what I thought, my interpretation of the character and how he should work in the world shifted him significantly. My approach was that it would be more fun to see him develop into that person. I can't look at these British Lord-type characters regardless of how badass you try to make them without thinking of Monty Python (specifically Graham Chapman) or Stephen Fry and Rik Mayall in BLACKADDER GOES FORTH. Since he handed the character to me, he's become something very different, but the core idea of the character is still what Greg envisioned. I don't think we'd be as far as we are, or I'd have been allowed to get this far along in developing him, if Greg didn't like what I'd done.



FANG: What is the best thing about working on something that is completely your own as opposed to writing for established titles such as TMNT and GHOSTBUSTERS?

JONES: Freedom. I had a lot of fun working on those titles, but working on this and perhaps more so the two books I'm doing right now that are completely my own, the freedom to tell the stories I want to tell without worrying about the interests of anyone but myself and the audience is the big draw card for me. The great thing about working with Greg is that he's a fan of my comics and the stuff I've done already, so he is essentially who I'm writing for audience-wise. He's given me a tremendous amount of freedom on this book and being able to build this world around the character, and even the character itself, has been amazing.

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The flipside is that I don't think I'll be able to go back and write TMNT the way I used to at Mirage, now that Nickelodeon is in charge. I was very fortunate to get away with some of the stuff I did when I wrote the Lovecraftian story for them, but there was still a lot of back and forth about what was acceptable and what wasn't. I don't have to worry about any of that here. In fact, there's stuff I couldn't put into that TMNT story that'll pop up in Sebastian Hawks down the track. You start writing your own stuff, or get given the green light to do whatever you want on something and it's tricky going back. And I'm constantly being pushed by people like Ben Templesmith, Howard Chaykin to go down that path. I see what they're doing, and other friends are doing with their books and it really kind of sets your mind in a particular direction. That said, I'd never say no to working on something like ALIENS or TERMINATOR; properties that have been interpreted and presented in ways that make full use of the medium they're in. I've read ALIEN stories you'd never see on film, and I really love that and love that both publishers and licensors are willing to take a shot on stories like that these days.

You can donate to the creation of "Sebastian Hawks" right [here](#).