

Terror Tidbits (Fango #295)—“PREDATORS” in the Midst

Written by Drew Tinnin
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There are some things in this life that seem to have always been here, which carry such a level of perfection that we as mere mortals cannot possibly fathom that they were created by human hands. For genre fans, one of these wonders exists in the form of a little movie called PREDATOR.

Over the years, various filmmakers have taken a hammer and chisel to the towering sphinx that is John McTiernan’s 1987 Arnold Schwarzenegger vehicle, slowly chipping away at it. These vandals have been responsible for PREDATOR 2 (which didn’t hurt too badly, even given the dreadlocked Rastas and unwelcome urban landscape), and the unfortunate duo of ALIEN VS. PREDATOR and ALIENS VS. PREDATOR—REQUIEM.



And now, PREDATORS, directed by Nimrod Antal and produced by Robert Rodriguez, is set to uncloak July 9 from Fox. But before you throw up your arms in the face of what seems like another cash-in, consider what would happen if the right group of people were part of this project—people who cared about the source material and wanted to truly expand the mythology. Better still, what if a full-blown, self-professed film geek took the directing reins?

“I went to see the first PREDATOR when I was 14,” Antal tells Fango during a break on the new movie’s shoot at Rodriguez’s Troublemaker Studios in Austin, TX. “I had the poster on my wall, so it made a big impression. And being a fat kid with braces named Nimrod, I was very much into hiding; movies were a way to do that.”

Antal previously helmed the underrated VACANCY and ARMORED (featuring Laurence Fishburne, who also stars in PREDATORS), but this journey into a proven franchise is new

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territory. “It’s a bigger film, and working with visual effects and prosthetics is something I hadn’t done in the earlier movies, so that’s exciting. It has been an awesome experience, and a big deal for me to be given this chance, so I’m very happy and grateful to be involved.”

An equally rabid cinephile, Rodriguez has been attached to PREDATORS as far back as the early '90s, when he wrote a first incarnation of the screenplay. “Originally, I just wanted to get back to the jungle,” he says, “because that’s what I loved about the first one. They had gone to the city [in] PREDATOR 2, and I thought, ‘How can we return to the jungle without feeling like we’re repeating everything?’

“So my whole pitch to Fox,” he continues, “was to take it to another planet—where, when you see [the Predators’ game] preserve, you understand why they gravitated toward the rain forest in the first movie; it felt like something they had at home, or could be recreated. That was something that Arnold [Schwarzenegger] responded to when I talked with him. He didn’t care for the second PREDATOR at all. Ultimately, he didn’t do it, but people just liked that feeling of the first movie.”

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