

As a long time fan of Fangoria magazine, and an even bigger fan of conventions, I've been going to the Fangoria Weekend of Horrors in Los Angeles (previously Burbank) for years. So this year, we planned to go as filmmakers for the first time to promote Infested Films' first official short film, *The Morning After*. What follows is my account of the entire weekend.

I flew into LA on Wednesday, arriving at around Noon, then hopped on the Flyaway Bus which takes you to the Flyaway station in Van Nuys, which comes in handy, since LAX is a huge pain in the ass to drive into and navigate in general. On top of that it's about a 30 minute drive from the valley to LAX, so it's tough to get someone to pick you up when LAX is a nightmare. I got to the Flyaway station and David (director, *The Morning After*) picked me up, after that we went to the house and checked some more of Brad's designs as we were finalizing all of the designs for the posters, table banner, flyers, and DVD covers/labels .

We needed to get the printing done for the 3 poster designs, the banner for the table, and flyers we could hand out. We decided to try out Staples, and the employee was so completely ignorant I wanted to leave immediately. However, since we were on a time crunch, David just wanted to get it done as fast as possible, so we tried them out. First off, the computer they had couldn't even handle the banner image because it was too big for their terrible 1984-design IBM computer. Literally, they try to run a printing business this way. Once it got so ridiculous that we knew they wouldn't be able to print literally anything we needed, we left, because the employee had told David to resize the image and come back. The problem was, we needed the detail of the large image, so that was impossible.

David wanted it to be going well, but it wasn't, so I broke it down to him and convinced him to go find a real printing house, one that did rush orders, and that had more than one printer that could print 24" by 36" posters, and hopefully at a rate faster than one per hour. At Staples, they told us it would "pwn" (seriously, the idiot employee said this multiple times) their computer and it would take 30 hours if we wanted them, and they weren't willing to give up that printer for that length of time. In other words, they didn't want to do what they advertised that they did. We got the paper flyers printed at Staples because it took 10 minutes, and then promptly left in search of a real printing house.

What we found was a great little business in Northridge called Northridge Graphics and Printing Services, who do special printing orders specifically. So we walked in at around 2pm and told them we would need all this stuff by the next morning at 8 a.m. at the latest. Staples told us it would take a week. Talk about a rush order. Iraj, the employee who helped us, gave us his promise it would be done and that they would look great, and it wouldn't take an hour per poster, and they could do our banner, which staples couldn't even do. They gave us a great price on the whole package (despite learning what poster printing costs....wow, not cheap) and said it would be done in time for us to leave early Friday for the opening day of the convention. In fact, Iraj gave his promise for the close of business on Thursday, and what do you know? There really are professional people that still do good work in the world, because we went back at close of business and everything was waiting for us.

In fact, upon finalization of the images for the DVD covers and DVD stomper labels we ran them back over to the printing house and he threw that into the pile, which was also finished by the time we got there Thursday night. The entire experience was exactly what we needed, above and beyond the normal call of printing as it were, and I would gladly recommend them to anyone looking to get anything printed in Los Angeles. Armed with posters, flyers, a banner, and DVD covers/labels all freshly inked, we searched out an avenue to get our t-shirts silk screened around 9 p.m. Now, I realize it sounds like we were terribly unprepared, but if you consider that we had finished shooting around 20 days before this, it's not too hard

to understand what David was up to the previous 3 weeks. He had to get a good edit, with sound, music, credits, etc in the time it takes most people to shoot their films. So the extras, like posters and such, became an "if we can get them in time we'd be glad to have them" type of thing.

We grabbed Brad's designs for the t-shirts and headed over to our old neighborhood where our old next door neighbor did silk screening in his garage. We figured it was a long shot, that if he even remembered us, it would take him at least a few days to make the shirts we wanted, since we wanted 10. Well, we went over there at 9pm on Wednesday night, and I figured there was NO WAY he'd be able to do it, it's like asking Taco Bell to make 100 tacos in 3 minutes. So we knock on the door, and no one answers. We heard them in the garage, where they used to hang when we lived next door, so we knocked on it, and it turns out Haig was there, he agreed to do it, and he agreed to do it all before Friday morning, and by damn it, he did. We picked the shirts up at 2 a.m. on Friday morning, which was our working schedule at the moment, even though we had to get up for the convention at 8 a.m., but it was well worth it, as I sit in my fancy Infested Films shirt as I type this.



Friday morning we woke up, got our asses packed and in the car, and headed downtown to the Convention Center. We got there a little before 10 a.m., and the show opened at 11am, so we got everything set up through the vendor's door, before we even checked in up front. The problem was, David couldn't find out how many vendor passes he was getting, or if he could buy more. It turns out he could, but I didn't know that for sure, so I had bought my General Admission ticket a few days before. What this all meant was when I left through the front door, I had to wait until 11 a.m. to go back through. I walked out through the vendor's door all weekend to smoke though, because the whole crew was going out there, and they didn't even really sweat me. Since I had almost 40 minutes to kill, I went to David's car to grab something and went back inside, stood in line for a few minutes, found out I could get my wristband early since I had already bought my ticket, and waited to get in. They took forever to open it, because they said they wouldn't open it until all the vendors moved their cars down to the parking garage, and apparently some people really lagged.



Once they finally opened the front doors I got in, the people came, and all we did was tell people about the movie, talk to people about horror movies, and told people our plans for the future. It gets old after a while, trying to be enthusiastic about the same thing 400 times, but it wasn't bad because I didn't sit behind the table for most of the time. I mostly wandered around, sat and watched panels, and hung out with all the people we knew there. That was basically the whole weekend, just hanging out at Rotten Cotton, wandering around the LACC, and meeting tons of cool people.



Since Scott's (the F/X artist) first feature (The Janitor) had a Lloyd Kaufman cameo in it, we decided to go to Lloyd and talk to him. We brought a copy of the movie, and as soon as we showed it to Lloyd, he said "Why am I not in this!?". David talked to him a while, and he agreed to be in David's next short, Theodore. David got his e-mail, and e-mailed him, and he replied that the shooting dates would work for him, so Lloyd Kaufman will play Bruce in Theodore.

At one point in the weekend we caught Tony Timpone walking around and stopped him, David gave him a copy of The Morning After, and he said we should've given it to him before, he would've considered it for the short film screenings at the convention. We told him we just wrapped 3 weeks ago and he was impressed, he said he'll watch it and if he likes it, he'll get the final version from David and see where it goes.



We also gave copies to Sergio Stivalletti (Cemetery Man, The Church, The Goodbye Kiss), Lamberto Bava (Demons series), Ruggero Deodato (Cannibal Holocaust, Cut and Run, The Barbarians, Atlantis Inferno), Robert Kurtzman (co-founder of KNB, director of Wishmaster and The Rage), Uncle Creepy from Dread Central (who is an all-star, just a real fan of the genre), Herschell Gordon Lewis (the original king of cult cinema, the Godfather of Gore), Reggie Bannister (Phantasm), Bill Moseley (Devil's Rejects, Texas Chainsaw Massacre 2, Babysitter Wanted), and we gave it to a friend of ours who is a good friend of Clive Barker's, so I'd say that with 100 copies of the movie that we didn't have a few days before, we did pretty well.

At the close of Friday night, we all packed up for the day and headed out to a bar and grill in Hollywood in preparation for the Black Devil Doll premiere at the New Beverly Cinema at midnight. We were supposed to meet Jonathan Lewis (the director of Black Devil Doll) at the restaurant, so we ate waiting for them, and started drinking. Jon said they'd be in about 10:30, so we stretched and stretched, but still no Jon. We went outside to have a cigarette and see if Jon and his entourage showed up, but it was nearing 11 p.m. and still no sign of anyone. At one point I mused out loud "Where the hell is Jon?" and as if on cue, Jon comes out the front door and asks "Where the fuck have you guys been?" It turns out they had been on the outside porch the whole time drinking, so we quickly joined them, had a few more drinks, and then the entire show walked up the street to the New Beverly Cinema.

Upon arrival there was a large throng of fans waiting in line to get in, but lucky us, we had talked to Shawn Lewis (producer/co-writer of Black Devil Doll) at the Rotten Cotton booth earlier in the day where he checked us in and gave us our tickets so we didn't have to wait in the line to get in. We got in, found some seats, and Uncle Creepy from DreadCentral.com was hosting the madness, getting the crowd psyched and asking people what they wanted to see while they filmed for the DVD release. Before the start of the movie they had a quick talk with Jonathan Lewis to introduce the film, and then just a few minutes after midnight they got the film rolling. I've been to hundreds of theatrical screenings in my life, and tons of preview screenings, including Pineapple Express just days before its release. Nothing was like this though, the entire crowd was into it full force, and I've gotta say New Beverly was the perfect venue for this movie's premiere. The people got the movie, and it was like a really big party where everyone was in on the joke. It could have helped that most of the crowd was pretty plastered, a lot of people had followed from the Convention Center to be there, and it was the single most lively and enjoyable theatrical screening of any film I've ever seen, which is no small feat.



Once the film stopped rolling Jon and Uncle Creepy got on stage to answer questions and talk about the production of the movie, and they even coaxed Shawn Lewis onto the stage to say a few words. During the day at the convention Jon had a giant box of black dildos that he was signing, and knowing Jon, we knew it was best not to ask what was going on. Sure enough, the Black Devil Doll crew started launching the dildos into the crowd, hitting one of our crew members in the face, and causing a general ruckus amongst the inebriated crowd. Everyone agreed it was an instant cult classic, and as the first public audience to see the film, I'd say the Lewis Brothers have really hit a home run of an independent film if the premiere was any indication.

The next day everyone made a bit of a slower crawl to the opening of the festivities, but being Saturday, it was the most appearance and panel heavy day of the convention. We met tons of people, handed out posters, flyers, DVD's, and even a few t-shirts to those we could afford to give them to (after we clothed the backs of the crew that helped us make it of course). We met tons of new contacts, including the friends we made at DreadCentral.com, Fangoria Radio, Fangoria Magazine, TheChainsawMafia.com, Zombie Rock, Troma, and the guys that made Clowns vs. Ninjas (Clownsvsninjas.com). David even met a girl, so socially, it was a fantastic experience all around.

There are a few tattoo booths at the convention, and our photographer Megan had decided to get a tattoo in commemoration of The Morning After, so we all sat and watched as she got cut up by a fantastic artist for nearly 3 hours. Sunday was a less eventful day, everyone was in the malaise of knowing it was the last day, so we made sure to exchange business cards and hand out the DVD's we had left before packing our table up and leaving. Overall, it was a very successful, and more importantly, fun weekend. If you've never been to a Fangoria Weekend of Horrors, definitely check one out, they have shows annually in Los Angeles, New York, and Chicago, all run by Tony Timpone and the awesome crew at Fangoria Magazine, who have put on a great show the 4 years I've been.

Post Script:

Here it is July already, Theodore is in the can, shooting with Lloyd was a fantastic experience, he was the consummate professional on set, and we got some hilarious scenes with him. Despite a few hiccups right at the end of pre-production, we managed to get the whole thing filmed in two days, made some more cool friends, and we've been working on the final touch ups on The Morning After. The original score is currently being composed, and once the picture is locked and we output the final cut, it will be available right here at InfestedFilms.com, given away for free, to you, the rabid horror community.

Keep an eye on the website for more updates, an interview with Shawn Lewis of Black Devil Doll (Tie-in novel available on Amazon.com soon, DVD coming this fall), the trailer for "Theodore", Infested Films merchandise, and how to see "The Morning After" for free!