Beat: Entertainment

A conversation with Producer Devon Byers

There is a Zombie Assassin in All of Us

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USPA NEWS - What happens when a terminally ill inventor meets the zombie apocalypse? Super Zero, a new short by producer Devon Byers attempts to answer that question. Devon offers us insight into the moving of Super Zero as well as what the future of this short might be.

I had the chance to talk with Devon Byers producer and actor, known for Jonestown (2013), Dream in the Dark (2011) and Super Zero (2014). Our conversation centered on the recent short Super Zero. Super Zero is a dark comedy that explores the inner hero inside of all of us. I highly recommend checking it out. It is a free view on youtube and is only about 15 minutes long.

What inspired the making of this film?

“Well as most great projects do, it sort of fell into our laps “ a mutual friend of the Writer/Director Mitch introduced me to the project and I loved it. I brought it to my producing partners (Alex Moran and Bryan Hwang) and we met with Mitch and decided to work together. We loved his energy and passion about the project, those elements and the great script made us excited to work together. I know Mitch had the idea kicking around for awhile so it was great to sit with him and develop the story even further.“

Small budget films are usually very crude and superficial. Yours was a small budget but somehow you managed to make a clean wonderful short movie. Just how small was your budget?

“We made the film for about $15k. We were lucky enough to have a lot of people volunteer their time as well so we were able to really put the money onscreen. Our cast and crew killed it with what limited resources we had.“

Without giving away any spoilers, what do you think it was that has mad Super Zero such a success?

“I think the overall world of Super Zero is really unique, in that it is a self aware, pop culture movie, but with a heart. We as producers fell in love with the idea because it felt like it was written for us “ in that it didn´t feel dated. Or pandering. People are brought in by the humor, and I think stay to follow the character. We wanted to have fun in the video game, comic book movie world that we all grew up in, but we wanted you to care about our heroes, and I think that what people have connected too (or maybe they just like zombies?!)“

Josh´s character begins the film as such a loser that I felt absolutely no sympathy for. Watching his opening sequence made me want him to just die. So how is that he becomes the most important character in the story? What drives him and how the hell did he come up with his gadgets?

“Haha, well it´s a shame that you wanted him to die! We do start in a pretty dark place with Josh, but we hoped that it would ground our film, and really bring you into Josh´s world at his lowest point so you can see him grow and kick ass by the end of it."

"Josh represents the small part of ourselves that hopes to one day be the hero, as corny as that sounds we wanted to show that every one is unique and brings something to the table, even if they don´t realize it. Josh´s uniqueness just happens to come in handy when the zombie apocalypse hits. He continues on because he decides to see what´s still out there in the world (plus he ran out of food) and knows there more to his journey. He´s a engineering genius (even if he doesn´t think so) and a super nerd, so when he needed to protect himself he used his skills to create some pretty sweet weapons, plus he´s able to protect those around him with an awesome walking cane “ slash- shotgun.“

By the end of the film I wanted to see much more of these characters. Do you foresee a feature length film or series being made out of Super Zero?

“Glad to hear you liked it! We are currently developing a series out of the short. That seemed like the best format to really explore the world and continue to follow the journey of our foursome. We´ll see what happens, but we are pretty stoked so far“

Do you have any other projects on the back burner that you would like to tell us about

“In addition to working on the Super Zero series, we´re talking to Mitch about another film project and me and my fellow producers apart of our company, Midnight Protocol Films are also developing a project that takes place in a post apocalyptic setting (we do enjoy that world apparently!) as well as a couple other projects that we are talking with our fellow AFI Conservatory alum about “” we´re excited about all of it!“

I found this short to be quite interesting and it captured my attention for the fifteen minutes that it ran. Most youtube videos that run for more than three minutes lose my attention but this one really captured me and though I found little to redeem the main character, he somehow transformed into the guy I want to know. Truly this piece is inspired and has all of the makings of a great HBO series. I truly hope to see this story become a series or perhaps a feature length motion picture.

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