

Q&A with director JOSS WHEDON, NATHAN FILLION & SUMMER GLAU

Movie Interview by Neils Hesse

Joss, apparently FIREFLY and also SERENITY were inspired by a book that you read on the Civil war?

JOSS WHEDON: Yes, it was a book called Killer Angels that explored the lives of the people on the frontier and that is what particularly interested me. In these times that we live in we don't experience that kind of frontier life anymore so I thought that it would be cool to explore that sort of lifestyle from a different angle. For me whether there are vampires or Reavers I will always be interested in the relationships that my characters are experiencing.

Summer, did the fact that you used to be a ballerina make the martial arts easier to do?

SUMMER GLAU: Well, being a dancer I was used to gyming and I could mimmick the shapes of the various moves pretty easily but it was hard to learn the aggression and to build up my muscles for that kind of exertion.

JOSS WHEDON: Hard for you to learn to be aggressive? I thought that you were already known for that!

SUMMER GLAU: Like I said earlier it was pretty hard!

Nathan, apparently you have a very interesting nickname that involves tight pants, how did that come about?

NATHAN FILLION: I used to wear surprisingly tight pants in the Firefly series and they had very weak seams that would rip at the most unexpected times. Once I had to pick up one of the girls and as I bent over the seams ripped, and another time they ripped for no reason they just went!

JOSS WHEDON: Yes, he is also known as MR Wimpy drawers! And by the way Nathan are you sure that you didn't flex your Maximus of Aurelius?

NATHAN FILLION: Yeah, that could have done it because I do have quite a Maximus down there!

Joss, was there any pressure from Universal to use bigger more recognisable names for your cast?

JOSS WHEDON: They wanted longer names! Tom Cruise was lobbying for the part of River, but of course he didn't get it. They were quite understanding and pretty much left it to me but for the part of the bad guy they insisted that the one condition they had was that it should be a good actor and I think that I got the best actor for the job.

Could you each describe your first moments back on set?

JOSS WHEDON: It was boring

NATHAN FILLION: No it wasn't!

JOSS WHEDON: Ok it wasn't I was just trying to mask all the emotion that I felt. When I first walked back on it only really got to me emotionally when Nathan walked in behind me and shouted "captain on deck", I don't know whether he meant me or himself but

that made me pretty emotional.

NATHAN FILLION: When we toured the cargo bay of the ship during its construction. As a crew I remember how everybody was commenting on how that was wrong and the ship looked like this and not the way that it had been redesigned, everyone remembered the original one intimately. Alan Tudyk in particular was quite unhappy but once it was finished we all loved the changes. That whole experience was emotional for me.

SUMMER GLAU: The set is really built like a ship, it made us feel like we were at home back then and it still does now. During our lunch breaks none of us would use our trailers we would just find couches on the set and chill out, and I remember that every day there would be a different crew guy in my trailer bed.

JOSS WHEDON: Different crew guys everyday hey?

SUMMER GLAU: Oh not like that I wouldn't be in the bed with them!

So Nathan and Summer how did you two feel when you got the call from Joss about the film?

NATHAN FILLION: I thought that he was drunk again, and he was but he was also telling the truth. I had a very hard time believing it and it only sank in after three weeks of filming.

JOSS WHEDON: And now do you believe it?

NATHAN FILLION: Yes I think I can safely say that now I believe it.

SUMMER GLAU: I cried, and I remember exactly what I was wearing and how my teardrops fell onto my shoes

NATHAN FILLION: And you were drinking a double vodka tonic?

SUMMER GLAU: No it was in the morning!

NATHAN FILLION: Oh so it was a triple then?

Joss, seeing as this came about after your 15 episodes and then the cancellation before this opportunity to do a movie, do you now never expect too much and just accept that what will be will be?

JOSS WHEDON: I love both the series and the film but they are separate entities and it's like having another child, so you are proud of both. I like to call it the 15-episode workshop for the movie. It saved us a lot of time.

Joss, despite the show being axed and being more of a cult than a universal phenomena the film has being critically applauded. Why do you think it's so good?

JOSS WHEDON: Nathan says it's him, Summer will say that it's Adam but I say that it's all of them, despite all the sci-fi stuff and effects it is still all about these people trying to live out their lives amongst these extraordinary circumstances. I got surprised to see how the fan base got what I was trying to express. If you can care about the characters then you will enjoy the film and that is what I was going for.

Joss, did you always dream of turning Firefly into a movie?

JOSS WHEDON: I always wanted to make a sci-fi movie so to be able to have these schmucks [he gestures to Nathan and Summer] in a low rent film was a dream come true! Then to have Universal pay that rent was even better!

Joss, what's next, possibly the INDIANA JONES movie?

NATHAN FILLION: Well I could act in it.

JOSS WHEDON: Yeah a thirty something INDIANA JONES movie.

JOSS WHEDON: [Rubbing his hands with glee] I go through stages where I think wow I could do a great BATMAN movie, or I think about the upcoming STAR WARS project for TV, so I love all sorts of films. I think that I only developed critical judgement halfway through BAD BOYS 2. A sequel to SERENITY would be sixth on my list.

[Nathan looks at Joss]

JOSS WHEDON: Maybe fourth

NATHAN FILLION: Cool man!

Joss, what do you think about this apparent trend where series like FIREFLY and FAMILY GUY both get cancelled by the networks then both get the movie treatment?

I think that it's disgusting! No seriously the networks are like Mommy and Daddy, they pick what they think is right for us the viewers. But now because of the internet there is much more connection to the viewers views. Things are breaking up, and this instance of FIREFLY turning into SERENITY is unprecedented. The fan base affected everything.

Joss do you think that this whole networks thing is similar to governments and radio stations having playlists, effectively respectively deciding how we live and what we hear?

JOSS WHEDON: I'm sure that I have no idea what you mean, but seriously I think that there might end up just being three studios and that will cause harm to the filmmaking process because they would have such a monopoly over what people watch and they would decide what they see in the cinemas.

Nathan, don't you think that playing Captain Mal who could be compared to the likes of Hans Solo was perhaps rather simplistic for you?

NATHAN FILLION: Yes, definitely and that's one of the reasons why I love doing it. Whereas I would invite Hans Solo to dinner I would not invite Mal because he likes to start fights.

Nathan, would it be safe to say that you played with Hans Solo toys when you were younger?

NATHAN FILLION: Yes, my parents only bought me Lego so I had to build what I wanted. My neighbour had the action figures and I had the Star Wars comics so I would rent him my comics in exchange for playing with his action figures for the duration of the comic rentals.

Nathan and Summer, what was it like to speak some Chinese?

NATHAN FILLION: We apologise to all the Chinese people in the world for ruining their

language. Once when we were dubbing some dialogue this Chinese language coach came in and she looked at me and asked whether I was reading from the same page as she was, it was that bad.

SUMMER GLAU: Yes it was quite hard.

Summer, were you surprised at how the storyline had changed and how it was going to affect different characters in the film and do you have any ideas for the storyline?

SUMMER GLAU: Joss is good at keeping secrets, so I was blown away when I found out what was going to happen.

NATHAN FILLION: He told me way before. Oops I don't think I was supposed to say that, sorry.

SUMMERGLAU: Nathan, I can still kick really high! I will leave it to Joss to keep on pushing the ideas.

JOSS WHEDON: I heard that Jayne wanted to wear a floral skirt, or was it a kilt, well one of the two.

Joss, why did you reveal the Reavers?

JOSS WHEDON: It was inevitable that we were going to have a confrontation with them and it's not polite in movies to show glimpses of monsters and then not explore it anymore.

Summer, you just appeared on the 4400 series on TV, basically playing a crazy teenager. Are you worried about being typecast?

SUMMER GLAU: At this moment I'm just worried about being cast.

Nathan, what is your dream role and to all of you which are your favourite scenes?

NATHAN FILLION: Playing Captain Malcolm Reynolds is my dream role, I reap all the benefits. And I know that Summer might say otherwise but he is the best thing in the whole movie! It was just so great to go up to Joss and say, "hey why don't we get Mal to do this?" and then Joss would say that's cool but why don't we do it this other way and then I'd say that's cool. Playing Malcolm Reynolds is an actor's dream come true. My favorite scene is when Mal finally meets the operative and even though he realises that he is out matched he still goes for it. The whole face off between the two of them is really cool.

JOSS WHEDON: My favorite scene even during editing that I just couldn't bring myself to skip through is the scene in the maidenhead when Summer/River is kicking butt and it's all her, no slow motion or Matrix style effects, it's glorious to watch.

SUMMER GLAU: My favorite scene is the final fight between Mal and the operative, it's so cool.

Joss, if Universal had suggested that someone else ought to direct the film would you have been happy to pass on your script?

JOSS WHEDON: I would have set it on fire! I have worked with other directors before and it has not always gone well. Luckily I spent many years directing and writing for

television so it finally got into their heads at Universal that I could be entrusted with helming this project. If they had suggested another director I would not have burnt the script but I would have laughed. The only other living person that I would have handed it over to would be Tim Maineer, he worked with me on this and he understands the characters.

Joss, in the film Kaylee and Simon become very intimate, does this mean that in any future sequels Mal and Inara will finally get closer as well?

JOSS WHEDON: Yes there will be sex scenes in the sequel!

NATHAN FILLION: Yes and I do method acting!

Joss, why did you kill off those two characters?

JOSS WHEDON: It just amuses me, that's all. We had to make it harder. If there were no casualties after all those fights then the audience just stops believing that these people are flesh and blood and then they don't care about the final battle and they don't appreciate the magnitude of their choice to lay their lives on the line for their beliefs, so even though I may find it funny there are other reasons to it as well.

Taken from **Phase9's** website:

<http://www.phase9.tv/moviefeatures/serenityinterview1.shtml>