

Nathan Fillion & Summer Glau

How did you react when Joss broke the news that the film was going ahead?

NF: I didn't believe him. I thought he was drunk – again. He was, but he was telling the truth. I had mixed emotions. Adam [Baldwin] used the word redemption, I use the word revenge. Sweet, sweet vengeance. I'm a bitter, bitter man and cross me at your own peril because I will bitch and moan. I was very excited about it but I had a hard time believing it was true.

You know what, it was much like coming back to school after an extended summer vacation because the first day on set, if you guys remember, was out in the desert. We had to take that long, old bus ride and we're singing songs on the bus... It was like going on a field trip on your first day of school, after an extended vacation, with all your best friends thinking that it might not have ever happened again.

It was not until the third week of filming, I remember we did two weeks of exteriors, then after the first week back on the ship, when we kept coming back to the same place, day after day after day, that's when I finally relaxed and knew it wasn't going to be taken away. When I fully realised it was actually going to happen was three weeks into filming. And now I'm pretty sure.

The ship's a little different, but it's cool. I remember when we came on and we visited the cargo bay and took a tour of the ship before it was actually finished being created and I remember a couple of us were a little put out. "But this isn't the same! This wasn't round in the original ship. And these stairs go down and they're supposed to go up." There were some minor differences and people didn't take, right away, to any changes to the ship. It was quite personal, but once the ship was actually finished it looked very homelike. It looked very much like home and we took a liking to it real quick. There were some subtle differences and some of us were thrown at first. Alan Tudyk cried a little bit. That's his way.

Summer did you have a more mature reaction?

SG: Hardly. I couldn't believe I was recast.

NF: Neither could I.

SG: And I cried a little. I cried on my crocodile pumps. I remember my outfit, I remember what I was drinking, I remember everything about it. It's one of my favourite memories.

What about being back on the set?

SG: One thing is it doesn't feel like a set. It's really built like a ship. It's a real ship. It's not like a wall here and a wall there, it really feels like it's your home. I remember when we were doing the series, even, people would have their special places and we'd never go back to our trailers. We'd just find a couch and rest on the couch. During lunch breaks a crew guy would always sleep in my bed. It was just my little room, but it still feels like our home. That's why we got so attached to every little detail.

NF: A different crew guy in your bed every lunch time?

Nathan, you've already been described by a number of people as being the new Han Solo, and Harrison Ford with charisma. How did you go about getting that delicate balance between the reluctant hero character, and the barbed sense of humour that he has in the film?

NF: It's a very good question. I would say that it wasn't easy, but once I focussed and realised all I had to do was exactly what Joss told me to, I come out looking great and take all the credit. What I do is not so much an homage to Harrison Ford, as copying him exactly.

Would it be too simplistic to say that it was an extension of childhood games of pretending to be Han Solo or Butch Cassidy?

NF: Is it too simplistic? Yes. If you asked me to go and play Han Solo it would be a completely different experience to playing Malcolm Reynolds. Mal is not the same man. There are certainly the space, scallywag similarities, but whereas I would invite Han Solo to a party, Malcolm Reynolds, not so much. I'm afraid he'd start a fight – for no reason.

But it would be fair to say you played those games as a kid?

NF: Perfectly fair. But I didn't have any of the action figures. My parents got us Lego. We had to build the toys we wanted. My Han Solo always came out terrible and Cubist. My next door neighbour had a bunch and we always had comics, so I would rent action figures for as long as it would take him to go through a stack of my comics. So that's how I got my Han Solo jollies.

The fan nickname for your character can be traced directly back to you. Can you tell us where that came from?

NF: Mr Wimpy Drawers?

Captain Tightpants.

NF: Joss actually wrote that one. That was in *Shindig*. In an episode called *Shindig*, I was actually called Captain Tightpants and it stuck because I wore pants of a sort of canvas-type material, that was extremely strong. The only thing was, the seams were as weak as they could be. In one episode I had to pick up Kaylee, I bent down to get her and Oops, split my pants. One time I sat on a rock in a scene and split my pants, and one time they split for no reason, they just spontaneously split. I do have the most maximus of gluteuos maximuses, I'm told.

Summer, in the series, River is like this child of the 60's, kind of hippy and otherworldly, then in the movie she turns into flailing killing machine. How many of your stunts did you do yourself, and was it down to choreography to make these very fast-moving fight scenes work?

SG: I worked really hard so I could do about 90-95% myself. I worked for months. How we did it was, Joss found the stunt co-ordinator that he wanted and they met with me, and Joss came with the producers and they watched me move, and I felt like I was a little girl at her first day of ballet class, and the parents come to say, "You can do it." I was really scared and really embarrassed. The stunt co-ordinator watched me move. I was a ballet dancer all my life, and he came up with this style because Joss wanted something really organic and really believable. He wanted it to look powerful and real at the same time a technique, a style that looked like a young girl could take out grown men. So we all collaborated on a technique that would work on my body and something that I could do myself. I worked really hard but it's a completely different energy. It's a very aggressive and a fast twitch muscle, which is very different to what I was used to and I thought, "They'll take it easy on me because I'm the actress", and before I knew it I'm looking around and I'm in class with all the stunt guys. My training partner was this world-class boxer, and I was taking Creatine. I was a vegetarian and by the end I was eating steak and ham and was going, "I don't know what's wrong with me."

NF: A lot!

SG: I was working very hard and every day I had to psyche myself up. I knew I was going to want to quit and knew I was going to cry at least once, and I was going to look at the door, and was going to look at my trainer, but it was an amazing experience for me to make it through. I worked really hard because I didn't want to let Joss down.

Did you get through it without a scratch?

SG: No. I can show you the scars. I worked so hard, and being a ballet dancer I thought... Ballet dancers are a lot tougher and meaner than a lot of people think. When

they...

NF: They can't kill people though.

So how is it working with Joss?

SG: Joss knows how to inspire me and how to talk to me and to encourage me. So many times I've come to the set, terrified and thought I couldn't do it, and he knows just what to say. He knows how to inspire me and get me in there doing something I thought I could never do. There's no one else like him, directors or writers. I'm constantly amazed that he trusts me as much as he does and gets me where he does in my acting, and he inspires me so much as a person. When I have problems or am feeling sad, he knows what to say.

You have to speak a lot of Chinese in the series and the film. Was it a way to get swearing past the censors, and was it hard to learn?

NF: I think it would be worse, the worst, for all the Chinese speaking people in the world. I wholeheartedly apologise to them for our terrible, terrible Chinese. I remember doing some dubbing for the film and they brought in a lady who spoke Chinese, and she was watching something I said on the film in Chinese, and she said, "I don't know what you're trying to say." I said, "Neither do I. Hey we're on the same page, I don't know what that means." It was pretty terrible.

What was your favourite scene in the film, and what type of character would you like to play?

NF: Malcolm Reynolds, man. You're looking at me living the dream. Malcolm Reynolds is the best character in the movie. I know Summer thinks differently, but hear me out. Malcolm Reynolds, man – I find it really satisfying, really enjoyable. I'll come up with an idea and say, "Joss, I figured that in this next bit I'll do it like this." And he'll say, "That's a great idea, or you can try and do this..." and it's cooler, cooler by the factor of ten. It's so much cooler – Malcolm Reynolds is sooo cool. This guy is so cool! I get to go up and play the cool and reap the benefit of all Joss's great ideas. My favourite scene in the movie? Malcolm Reynolds meeting the Operative. There is some nice stuff with Inara there, their banter that betrays their relationship. Then the one-on-one. The two finally meet. I found that really interesting, and the fact that he was clearly outmatched.

SG: My favourite is your fight scene with him towards the end. Again, they're so well matched and they did such an amazing job with the fight scenes.

NF: You're right.

The plot for the film is where the story would have gone by the end of the second series, were you aware of where the plot was going, or did you just read the script and go, wow?

SG: I just went wow, omigod. Joss is really good at keeping his secrets about our characters' past and their future. I was amazed and thrilled. I can't think of anything that is more satisfying or challenging than playing River. She's like ten girls in one.

NF: All of them crazy.

You were in the first episode of the new season of The 4400, playing a similar character to River. Are you worried that you are going to be typecast playing slightly nutty young girls?

SG: I just want to get cast, that's all. I'll play as many crazy psychics as possible, as long as I'm still working. I should be so lucky. The role I just finished shooting was a girl-next-door-type and it was a comedy, so I am aware of the need for different roles. I really just want to keep playing River.

Have you spoken to Joss about where you'd like the character to go next?

SG: I'll leave that up to him.

Taken from **SciFi London's** website:

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