

The Summer Glau Chronicles

January 31, 2008 - Tim Surette - TV.com

The Firefly alum and Terminator star talks about doing the robot, posters with her guts hanging out, and (omg!) a new Joss Whedon project.

Taking one look at actress Summer Glau, one would never guess that she is an ass-kicking machine. Standing at about five-and-a-half-feet tall and likely qualifying as a flyweight, Glau isn't exactly an imposing figure. However, she is the successor to one of the beefiest movie figures in history--Arnold Schwarzenegger.

Like Arnie before her, Glau is tasked with playing the synthetic protector of John Connor, the savior of the human race in the Terminator universe. In Fox's Terminator: The Sarah Connor Chronicles, Glau gets her cyborg on as Cameron (yes, that's an homage to Terminator godfather James Cameron), who is considerably more humanlike than Arnie's machine but still adjusting to the strange mannerisms that humans exhibit.

It's these attempts at understanding nature that offer some of the action show's few comedic moments, whether Glau intends it to or not.

"It's just me trying to be as honest as possible," Glau said during a conference call of her approach to playing Cameron. "I never ask for the audience to laugh at me because it doesn't feel real. I just approach everything and try to be really sincere...[Cameron] can't be anything but genuine, she's very open, like a child. She absorbs the behavior around her and tries to understand it as best she can, and sometimes that ends up being extremely funny."

Though Cameron tries to assimilate with her fleshy friends, there's no denying that she's machine down to the nuts and bolts--and playing a machine took a bit of getting used to.

"I remember one day we were on set, and [one of the producers] was describing this concept to me about this 'awesome' [promotional] poster," Glau said. "I was going to be naked, and I wasn't going to have any legs, and my guts were going to be hanging out. I was trying to act excited, but it was terrifying...I said, 'Come on, let's just use a picture of Lena [Headey, who plays Sarah Connor] holding a gun.'"

In fact, Glau almost didn't even go to the audition for the role because she had her own idea of what a Terminator should be. "I didn't fit that role in any way. I'm short and I didn't think I had that Terminator look," she said. Acting as Cameron isn't exactly a walk in the park, either. "I have to constantly remind myself not to react humanly, not to move in a human way. Even things like crossing your legs...I can't move my hair out of my face. I have to really reprogram my mind."

Glau also believes there may be more to her character than just whooping the Terminators that SkyNet throws at John.

"It's a mystery at this point if Cameron's intentions are what she presents them to be," Glau says, choosing her words carefully so as not to give away too much. "I don't even really know what exactly is going on with Cameron. I do know that maybe she has a bit of a mysterious past. At this point, I think all three of us--as far as I know from the script--are fighting for the same goal. But that might turn out to be a front--Cameron might have come back to the past for a different purpose."

One criticism of Terminator: The Sarah Connor Chronicles was the change in Cameron's personality from the show's pilot--where she was just like any normal teenager--and the rest of the series--where she is much more robotic. Glau admits they "were experimenting with Cameron quite a bit" in the pilot and trying to figure out how

Cameron should behave. The very human persona she originally had was put in place in order to fool John into accepting her into her life. But she says the more robotic personality was "done for several different reasons."

"Once her cover was blown with the Connors, [Cameron] was able to drop that [human] persona and become who she really is around them," she explains.

As for the future of the show, Glau tells fans to get ready for an interesting ride.

"I think people are going to be surprised with the direction that the show is going in," she says. "I'm always amazed at what our writers come up with. People have a feeling of what they think the show is going to be, but there are going to be a lot of interesting twists. When you take a concept from film and you put it into a television show, you can really take time to develop the story. There are things [that will happen] that people haven't thought of."

Glau of course is part of science-fiction legend for her role as River Tam in Joss Whedon's *Firefly* and the *Firefly* movie *Serenity*, as well as Tess Doerner in *The 4400* (the cancellation of which left her "heartbroken"). And it doesn't take long for the inner-geek (or, more likely, outer-geek) in the reporters to come out and tackle the subject.

"I see some similarities between [Cameron and River]; they're both foreigners in their surroundings," she says. "River was never good at being able to relate to the people around her, and she always seemed to be somewhere else in her mind. Cameron is the same way--she's from a different place, she's from a different time. So in that way, they're similar. But River was so emotional and so vulnerable, and Cameron can't really be those things. And that was the biggest challenge for me when I was first cast in the role."

But what about the question everyone really wants answered? Who would win in a fight: Cameron or River?

"Well, you know, I played River a little bit longer so I think I know her moves a little bit better," she says. "River was all about finesse and creativity, and using her form as best she could because she wasn't the strongest person in the room. Playing Cameron I don't even have to break a sweat. I think it would be an ugly fight."

OK, but what about the real question everyone really wants answered? What does the future look like for a *Firefly* reunion?

"You know it's never over, we thought it was over after the show got cancelled," Glau teases. "[The *Firefly* cast members] all have such a strong bond. That was my first experience; I didn't even know how to stand on my mark. They treated me like an equal. I think we would all come back if we got the opportunity."

But the real head-exploder for Joss Whedon and Summer Glau fans came at the end of the call when Glau cagily commented on what she was up to next.

"Well there's a little something that I'm working on right now with dance," she said, slightly hesitant to go into detail. "It's a little thing that Joss Whedon is working on. We've had this idea for a while, and we haven't had the opportunity where both of us are available, but it's something that we're working on as much as we can." Perhaps Joss is getting back to writing another musical?

As for the real Summer Glau, the San Antonio native loved ballet before an injury sidelined her and pointed her toward acting. She also loves *Brothers & Sisters*, cooking shows, and the Dallas Cowboys.

Taken from TV.com's website:

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