

SUMMER GLAU
AN INTERVIEW WITH THE TERMINATOR: THE SARAH CONNOR CHRONICLES
STAR

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From Firefly/Serenity to The 4400 and now the hit series Terminator: The Sarah Connor Chronicles, Summer Glau is quickly becoming the go-to girl for sci fi standard. But, what lies deeper? What drives her, inspires her and where is the series taking her and her character...

SHAKEFIRE: One of the things that's interesting about Cameron is that not only does she have the action scenes, but the comedy is very central to the character. Could you talk about sort of that deadpan attitude that you have to play there?

SUMMER GLAU: It's just Josh Friedman. It was his idea, you know, and it was a fine balance from the pilot to the series, deciding exactly how Cameron was going to relate to the people around her. And I think we all felt that it was a great comic opportunity. It's been really fun for me.

SF: What are the logistics of sort of playing that deadpan? How flat do you have to play it, or is there an inflection that we maybe aren't picking up necessarily?

S.G.: Well, I always told Josh it's just me trying to be as honest as possible as Cameron. I never want to ask the audience to laugh at me because then it just doesn't feel real, and so I just approach everything and try to be really sincere, as Cameron would be. She's so - I think that is what is so funny about her is just that she 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 it ends up being extremely funny.

SF: The single most discussed promotional piece I think for any show this year was that poster. What does it feel like to look at it and see that strange picture of your sort of - basically your disembodied head with some wires coming out of the bottom of it. How did you react the first time you saw that? In general, is it just kind of weird playing, in some respects, a machine?

S.G.: Yes. You know, I remember when we were on set and James Middleton, who is one of our producers, was describing this concept to me about this awesome poster. 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 I was terrified. I thought, oh my gosh, this sounds so scary, and I'm going to be up on a billboard looking like that.

Then I said, oh, come on. Let's just use a picture, a normal picture, maybe Lena holding a gun and that sounds good. Then I saw the poster, and I thought, wow. I'm actually - I understand the concept now. I thought it's really different. I think it's going to make people wonder. It's interesting. And I think it says a lot about the show.

But I remember they were talking about how they were going to start the campaign in LA in December, but I went home for Christmas and for New Years. And when I got home is when all the posters were up. I can't even describe how it feels. It doesn't feel like me. When I look at it, I just think about the team of people that put it together. It doesn't even really register that it's me, so it kind of represents all of us to me.

SF: Can you tell us if there's ever going to be sort of an exploration of Cameron's point of view? Right now it's the Sarah Connor Chronicles and we're trying to find Sky Net, but Cameron obviously would have a very unique point of view of all of this, and is that something in the show will they explore, do you think?

S.G.: I think that it is sort of – I think that we do work as a dysfunctional family right now, and I think it is sort of – it's a mystery at this point if Cameron's intentions are what she presents them to be. I don't even really know what's going on with Cameron. I do know that maybe she has a mysterious past. And it's unclear what she ends up being in the future. But at this point, I think that all three of us, as far as what I know from the script, we are all fighting for the same goal, but that might turn out to be sort of a front. Cameron might have come back from the past for a different purpose.

SF: So, if River Tam (from Firefly) fought Cameron, who would win?

S.G.: Well, you know, I played River for a little bit longer. I think I know more of her moves at this point, but 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, and she wasn't the biggest girl in the room.

Now playing Cameron, I don't really break a sweat because she just gets to pick things up and throw them and bash through walls. I don't know. I think it would be an ugly fight.

SF: Dovetailing off of that, I was hoping you could talk about some of the differences between playing River and playing Cameron, first of all.

S.G.: It's funny because I actually see some similarities between them. They're both kind of foreigners in their surroundings. River was never good at being able to relate to people around her, and she always seemed to be somewhere else in her mind. And Cameron is the same way. She's from a different place. She's from a different time. She's not human. She doesn't really know how to relate to the people that she's living her life with now, so in that way they're similar.

But River was so emotional and so vulnerable, and Cameron can't really be those things. That was the biggest challenge for me when I first was cast in the role was trying to define how I could make her relatable and how I could relate to her as an actress, so it's been an interesting balance. I'm still finding out who she is, and I think that she's constantly growing. She's constantly changing from scene-to-scene and absorbing human characteristics, so I think that she will continue to become more relatable as time goes on.

SF: What do you think the prospects are for a Cameron/John romance?

S.G.: The writers are keeping me guessing. At this point, I can't tell. I know that it's a possibility. And I think that in her own way, Cameron does love John because, when I think about it, her entire existence is to protect him. Her purpose in life is to keep him safe and to be with him always. I think that she does love him, as best a robot could.

But at this point, their relationship is very complicated. John is still trying to figure out how he wants to treat her and what his relationship with her should be. It's really complicated, but I think that anything is possible at this point.

SF: Can you give us any hints or spoilers as to what we might see in upcoming episodes?

S.G.: Well, I think people are going to be surprised at the direction of the show is going in. We have a lot of really strong subplots and a lot of great guest stars coming in constantly. I'm always amazed at what our writers come up with. I think people have a feeling of what they think the show is going to be, but there's going to be a lot of interesting twists because, when you take a concept from film and you put it into a

television show, you can really take time to develop the story. So there are things that I think people haven't thought of.

SF: What are some of the other shows that you're watching on TV when you get time?

S.G.: My favorite show is Brothers & Sisters. I'm so addicted to that show. And the other shows I watch, I watch anything that Anthony Bourdain does. I love all of his shows, and cooking, the Food Network. I'll watch anybody cook.

SF: I know that another show that a lot of us probably enjoyed you on was The 4400. What were your thoughts about the cancellation? How did you feel about that?

S.G.: I was heartbroken. I love all of those actors. I have to say, I enjoyed my time there immensely, and I thought it was an excellent show. You know, they had a really long run though. The show was on for a long time, and I'm sure all those actors are going to do great in new projects. I wish I could have been there for the finale too because I had to leave before the last episode because I was shooting Sarah Connor, and I always thought, well maybe I'll come back. Now I don't know. Maybe some of those actors can come be on Terminator, so I get to see them.

SF: Was there a pivotal moment in your life that compelled you to be an actor, or was it an accident or something you fell into or what?

S.G.: It's funny. When I was a little girl, I just had a feeling that I was going to be an actress. I don't know why. I just thought I think one day I'm going to be an actress, but I never did it. I danced since I was five. And I did it all day every day. I traveled, I danced, and I was in ballet companies, and I was a very serious dancer. Then I got hurt, and it's kind of the cliché story of the girl who put all her eggs in one basket and that's all I ever learned how to do. Then I got hurt, and I thought what am I going to do.

I ended up coming to LA to dance tango for a year, because I couldn't dance on point anymore. I started auditioning for acting jobs, and something just fit for me. And I felt this piece that I was supposed to be doing it, and I ended up, after a year, I got enough acting work where I could completely switch over. So I was very lucky, very lucky.

SF: Do you keep in contact with any of the Firefly gang? And is there any word on another movie, or is that series pretty much put to rest?

S.G.: You know, it's never over. We thought it was over after the series got cancelled and that wasn't the case. We're really close. I'd say I get to see Nathan the most because he lives the closest. I still see everyone whenever I can. Jewel lives in Vancouver and she's working up there, so I don't get to see her as much as I like, but we all have such a strong bond. I'd have to say, that was my first experience. I didn't even know how to stand on my mark. I lost the camera all the time. I ran into people, and they treated me like an equal and the family, so I think that we would all come back if we got the opportunity. And it's never over.

SF: How much training and martial arts, did you have to have to play Cameron and River?

S.G.: When I met with Joel Cramer to talk about the fighting, I said I don't know how a terminator fights. He said, well it's going to be very different from what you did before with River. You're not going to be doing all these beautiful martial arts movements and it's not about being creative and having to use dynamic movement. It's just about brut

force. It's been a really fun change of pace for me because I worked so hard on Serenity. I had to learn all that martial arts. I did it myself. I did it from start to finish, every fight scene, and it was incredibly challenging.

For Cameron, it's challenging in a different way because I can't – 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 touch my hair to move it out of my face. I have to really reprogram my mind. But as far as the actual fighting, it's really fun. Most of the training I did was just going to the shooting range with Joel. It was a great time.

SF: Do you feel like you're getting to do the range of roles that you would like to play? River and Cameron are similar in a lot of ways. Your role in The Unit, which I loved, was quite a bit different. Would you like to play a more comedic role at some point?

S.G.: You know, I have three goals, three new goals, and one of those is that I'd like to do a movie about dance, which is something that I'm working on right now, and I want to do a western. That's been one of my dreams. When I was a little girl and I thought about being an actress, I always wanted to do period films, you know, romantic, Jane Austin kind of movies. That's not what I'm doing right now, but I hope that I can do it all at some point.

SF: You said you have a movie in the works, is that what that was?

S.G.: There's a little something that I'm working on right now, but with dance. It's something that Joss Whedon is working on. He's had this idea for a while and we haven't had the opportunity where both of us were available, but it's something that we're working on as much as we can.

Taken from Shakefire.com's website:
<http://www.shakefire.com/interviews/summerglau.html>