

Alphas Season Finale Q And A

October 19, 2012 By Tony Tellado

Executive Producer Bruce Miller and Summer Glau talk about the season finale for Alphas

I have a question for each of you. I'll ask Summer first. You've played so many great characters on so many great series, a lot of them my favorites. What was it specifically though about Skylar that was so fascinating and that attracted to you to the role?

Summer Glau: There's – the first thing that attracted me about Skylar was the fact that she was a mother. I've talked to Bruce about this before too. It was really exciting for me. I hadn't – I had not played a mother before. And one of the most challenging things about Skylar is that she is a mother but it doesn't come naturally to her. She – in my mind, in the back story that I've created, she's been on her own for a long time. And she's used to just fending for herself. And then when it comes to her child she's very conflicted because she has all of these new feelings that she's probably never experienced before about loving something so much more than she loves herself. And caring for something and protecting someone else and making unselfish decisions. And for me as an actor it just was a very, very fertile story line for me creatively.

Bruce, can you talk a second kind of about what's the – what happened with Rosen last week? He's gone – has he gone too far? I mean can he come back from what he's done?

Bruce Miller: Sure. Before I move onto that I just wanted to, you know, kind of comment on what you asked Summer. I think the character – because I inherited the character from last year and the reason we wanted so much to bring her back was just because there's that conflict between someone who's very self sufficient but not selfish and has to kind of, you know, battle those two parts of her personality in being a mother is really, really interesting. I mean especially in terms of all of this where parents you really have to – it's so hard to be a parent and be a kind of a – be a person in the world who can take care of themselves but also have to take care of somebody else. In terms of what Rosen did last week, well I don't know, can we ever come back from the bad things that we do? I always think that we can. I mean most of the time you meet people on television and the terrible things that they've done are all in the past. And we meet them when they're kind of on the other side. I thought it would be very interesting to see them – to see someone who's going through the darkest part of their life probably up until now and see how they actually go through it and see how they come out the other side. And we certainly have you, you know, you sound like a fan of sci-fi. You can probably list 300 characters who have done darker things than what Rosen's been going through but they all happened before the story starts. We're just actually getting to see it...happen. So can he come back? Absolutely. And to see someone like David... To see someone like David go through it is really what's interesting. We just wanted to kind of play it real. I mean here's a guy who finally made a connection with his daughter and then lost her again and how shattering that would be. I guess my parenthood is showing. Everything is about mothers and children this week.

Summer Glau: Thank you.

I have a question for both of you. First for Bruce, assuming Summer would be rolling I would love it if she could become a full fledged regular cast member net season. Is there any chance of that happening? And shy of that would you ever consider perhaps making her and Zoe the focus of an Alphas based Web series?

Bruce Miller: Yes, yes and yes. I mean as much as – I mean, you know, Summer was – I mean that speaking from...

Summer Glau: Excellent question (Tim).

Bruce Miller: ...our point of view, Summer was an absolute pleasure to have on the show as...

Summer Glau: Thank you

Bruce Miller: ...you know, she already knows that I love working with her. But as a character seeing that character on TV was so fantastic. And also getting to see a, you know, someone who has played many tough characters, to get to see a different side of that actress was great. But I agree. I think she was spectacular and I would love to have her as – on the show as much as we could possibly have. And as far as a Web series goes it's not really my department to make those decisions but I would certainly love that. I'd love the act – the very young, the very talented actor who plays Skylar's daughter Zoe who strangely is named Skyler in real life, is just wonderful and the two of them together were terrific. And we – one of the toughest jobs we had in the editing room was deciding which moments to cut from that because they were so terrific together the whole time. So it would be nice to have someplace to do longer stories about the two of them. I mean I think it was really one of the coolest relationships in the whole series was the idea of someone like Skylar trying to raise a child that dynamic and you're right, you could build a whole show around it. So absolutely yes, yes, yes.

I did get to meet you one time in an autograph signing line. And when Erin Way did one of these conference calls I mentioned it and what a positive experience, a pleasant experience it was and asked her if she had gotten to work with you. And she had remarkably kind and complimentary things to say about you. So I was just wondering if you could share a little bit about your experience working with her and also working with young Skyler Wexler, what that's been like.

Summer Glau: Well I'll start with Erin who has been such a – she's been such a blessing for me. You know, I love working with girls and finding friendships through work because, you know, we're all on set for quite a while every day and it makes the experience so much more than just work when you really get to make friends. And actually I'm going to yoga with Azita after this and I'm seeing Erin this weekend. So obviously I love them quite a bit. And Erin one night while we were sitting and we were working overnight, we were sitting in an elevator talking and we realized that we had had very similar upbringings so we just o- we kept swapping stories about our childhoods and realized, you know, how much we had in common. So I respect her immensely as a person and I think she's a phenomenal actress. And working with all of the girls on the show I think has made me better and it's just been a wonderful experience. And then as far as my little Skyler, she's my pen pal. We email every week back and forth and she sends me things online. We're very close. I remember, just as an example, you know, I – when I first started on the show I was working with Sky. And then when I came back this season I was mostly working with Sky. And then there was a period of time where she wasn't there and I was shooting without her. And I had fun with everybody else and it was great but I remember the day she came back. I just felt – I felt so happy. And being on set with her was just – it was a really special experience for me. It's the first time that I've really bonded with a young, young actor like that before. And I just – I remember how nice it was reuniting with her and how much it meant to me. And I hope to do it again. I adore her. She's beautiful.

Hey. Summer, I've got a quick question. You know, when originally you were a guest star on Alphas last season I mean did you ever think that it was ever going to be on this scale that it's kind of developed now through this season?

Summer Glau: Well I was hopeful. I don't know when I – my last job but I love doing TV and I really like sticking with a character and getting to watch them evolve and contribute to a story line that continues week after week. So I was hopeful. And this season I've been so blessed to come back as much as I have. And I have love when Skyler's gone and I would be very excited to come back again next season.

Now and a quick follow up. You know, after working on series like Firefly and Terminator and, you know, and Alphas I guess, what really draws you back to, you know, the sci-fi genre?

Summer Glau: I've always found in sci-fi that the roles for women are really exciting and dynamic and outside the box. And, you know, in the finale of Alphas is a perfect example. I remember in – Bruce was there too. We were sitting and discussing a scene that involved every – all the girls. And I was sitting there looking at the girls and it was so cool to get to do a scene that involved all of us. And I was looking at the girls and we were all four different and our characters are I feel complicated and fleshed out and dynamic and just it made me realize, you know, I'm really happy to be here. I'm really happy to be in a story that creates this opportunity for all four of us actresses. That's why I keep coming back to it. You know, I just – I go for the character that I like.

I really like how Zoe on the show asked you if you were a Terminator last week – in this week's episode. I thought that was pretty funny.

Summer Glau: I know. I looked at her and I'm like she doesn't even know what she's asking.

Hey. Bruce, I just wanted to ask you, the show – I've always watched the show but it seems better now, not that it was never good, but there is more action and there is just sort of crystallized almost if you will. Was there a conscious decision to sort of improve the who in the last season?

Bruce Miller: Well I think you're always trying to improve, you know everything that you work on. But, you know, the first season of shows it was really difficult. The show was finding its legs and finding what works and what doesn't work. And on any show, especially a show that only gets 13 episodes kind of in the first year, it takes a while for a show to grow into itself. And I think this year we just got – they had such – they had o- they put such great story lines in place last year that we were really the benefit of that this year, moving ahead that they had done a lot of the hard, heavy lifting of setting up the world and setting up, you know, characters like Summer and like, you know, all of the people who existed on our team that we were able to bear the, you know, we were able to move forward with those characters and move them in really interesting places because they had already set them up. So I'm glad you – I'm glad it's getting better. We try. You know everybody tries from the cast up and down through the crew and through everybody on the creative side to make it absolutely, you know, fantastic every week. And so I think that – we're just hoping to keep it moving forward and getting more interesting and having the characters kind of lead us to interesting places.

Summer, you've been in so many great science fiction shows and you said that you really find the characters great. Do you like enjoy the action that your characters get to do?

Summer Glau: Absolutely. Coming from being a dancer it was a great way for me to transition into being an actress was – to rules where I got to really be expressive through

my physical self. And it was just a comfortable way for me to start experimenting with how to get my character across. So, you know, when I started in Firefly first and actually the character that we had a very hard time communicating with the rest of the cast and so I found it really interesting playing with her physicality. And then, you know over the years I have been fortunate to get to play a lot of really kick ass girls. And what I like about Skylar is it's something that I've talked to the writers about is that, you know I'm trying to find new ways as making Skylar part of the team and an effective part of the team without being the physical character. It's hard for me. I do get jealous sometimes when I don't get to throw any punches but it's been a good practice for me because Skylar's a badass in a different way. So I enjoy it and it's good for me and, you know, who knows, maybe next season she can throw down a little bit. But she always has a good spot on the team because she can build stuff.

So is there anything you can tell us without giving too much away about how Skylar helps the team thwart the bad guys' plans or tries to?

Summer Glau: Well she definitely integrates into the team more than she has in the past. I think it's, you know, where Skylar left off in this last episode I think it was a humbling and scary experience for her to realize that she's not always in control and she was taken advantage of and she needed help. And that she got that help from the other Alphas is a vulnerable position for her. But I think it's a transition because now she sees that she does need help and that it can be beneficial to her to be a part of a team. And I really, really enjoy – in the finale you're going to get to see her very awkwardly at times, become part of a team which is something that I've been wanting her to do for a while.

Tony Tellado: Hi both of you. It's a pleasure to talk to you. I just wanted to ask as far as the finale, I kind of talked about the role that John Pyper-Ferguson's character plays in the finale and even the series. And also what he's like as an actor.

Bruce Miller: Well I guess Summer I'll start with this. John is a wonderful actor. He's terrific, generous and just, you know, optimistic and sunny personality, terrific. He makes everything we do turn out better and more interesting. And he really makes the best kind of adversary because he's the adversary – or at least I feel like he often seems to be on the right side of the argument which is really the more interesting adversary. I always like Alan Rickman in Die Hard better than the other people. But he's been terrific. And I think that when you have someone like David Strathairn and the rest of the team, if you're going to have a foil on someone who they're opposing you can't just have a cardboard cutout. You have to have someone with the acting ability and the depth that John Pyper-Ferguson brings to it. And also the – honestly the sympathy that he can engender in the audience, he's got to bring something to the table. If he just wants to destroy the world that's, you know, who wakes up in the morning and wants to destroy the world? I mean that doesn't really seem very logical. So – and also to play that kind of character, his character, you know, has lived a very long time and I think that he brings a grace and a wisdom to that – to everything about that role. Everything from the way he dresses to the way he reads the newspaper, to the way he sits. There's kind of a nostalgia in the whole way he plays the character that is just lovely. I don't – Summer, I don't even know if you got a chance to work directly with John.

Summer Glau: I had one scene with him and it was...

Bruce Miller: Oh yeah. And that was a great scene. Yeah.

Summer Glau: I enjoyed it. He's...

Bruce Miller: Yeah.

Summer Glau: ...so charismatic and I mean I find his character so fascinating. And what you were saying about the fact that he's, you know, he's hundreds of years old, he has a way of conveying it with a grace and a charisma that I'm really fascinated by. And I didn't have very many lines with him but he definitely – I cannot picture anyone else in the role because he does it so beautifully. He's very powerful. He has a, you know, this quiet intensity. And the way that he plays the character it's so compelling because yeah, it's not black and white. So you can almost understand his side of the story, you can almost see why he does the things that he does. And he's just very – he's a very, very dynamic actor. I hope to get to watch him more and be around him more because he's really, really fun.

Whenever I just even mention your name online here in San Antonio I get huge hits – thousands and thousands. You really have a huge fan base in your hometown. But I was just wondering if you could get us all caught up. It sounds like you might be returning to Alphas. But are there any other projects that you have coming up?

Summer Glau: Well I just finished a Christmas movie. That's the only other thing that I have that is about to come out. And also Knights of Badassdom. So I have Knights of Badassdom and Help for the Holidays which is going to be on the Hallmark Channel during the 12 Days of Christmas. So that was really, really fun. Yeah. I definitely (enjoyed) that one.

And do you enjoy doing something like that? That's a little different from sci-fi.

Summer Glau: It was very different for me. It was really – it was fun. I've always wanted to do one and when it came – I actually was sent the script when I was shooting the last episode of Alphas up in Toronto and I read it and I thought, you know, it's Christmas in August and we shot it in Simi Valley and it was 110 degrees. So I got to...

Bruce Miller: ...And you played an elf if I'm not giving anything away. Is that...

Summer Glau: I did. I did. Actually I play an elf. It was really fun. It was good for me.

And do you still come home to San Antonio? Do you still have your house in (Bernie)?

Summer Glau: Absolutely. I'm planning on coming home hopefully next month. My parents are going to come out here for Thanksgiving but I'm hoping to come home before then. It's been too long. How's the weather? Is it super hot?

It's like 80ish. It's still hot as for in, you know, for me. I prefer it to be a little more fall like. But hopefully – when are you coming back? Are you coming back in November or...

Summer Glau: Probably the beginning of November.

I also just wanted to ask, you know, it sounds like the invitation is open to come back to Alphas. Is that something you're happy about?

Summer Glau: Definitely. I just – I know that the show is going to keep going and it's going to be something I really, really want to come back and continue working on. It's a fantastic storyline and I love working with the cast.

If you were to do another Syfy show besides Alphas what one would you want to be on for the Syfy channel I mean?

Summer Glau: I would be on Skylar and Zoe's Net Series. I'm not going to pick another Syfy show. I just hope Alphas brings me back.

And Bruce, is there anything – in writing the finale, obviously when you write a season finale kind of there's more to it because you're, you know, getting up the story line. Was there anything you found particularly difficult with working on that episode?

Bruce Miller: Absolutely. I mean writing a finale is difficult because you feel like you're writing the last act to 12 other episodes. You're not really writing an episode. It's hard to find something that holds it together. And having, you know, the characters that we have you really want those character stories to be completed or at least, you know, put away for a few months until we get to come back to them in a satisfying way. But being able to bring Skylar back and being able to have the scene that she's talking about where the women are talking and kind of bringing the human element into what could have just been a bit action fest, made it a lot more interesting and also a lot more fun to write just because it's more fun to write those things. But really, you know, we have a very, very talented writing staff. And even though my name is on the last episode that's not how things work in television it was certainly – it's like every other episode was a group effort by the entire writing staff putting the story together and writing it. And also just I mean every day on the set things change. You move things around. You know the actors are creating the roles and bringing them to life and bringing the moments to life as they happen. So that's the best thing about television. And I think it kind of gets misunderstood when there's one credit that says written by because it's certainly not the way it happens in real life. I think that Summer and I sat at the table in the break room of the set with all of the other women and rewrote the scene that they were doing, from beginning to end. So that was as much, you know, a community effort as anything else.

I have a couple of questions for Summer but first for you Bruce, I'm one of the Warehouse 13 fans that thought that the show really hit or really blossomed when Allison Scagliotti joined the cast. And similarly, I think that the show has really bloomed in a new way with Erin Way. And I was wondering if you could talk about her addition and did you have specifically anything to do with her joining the cast? And just what it's been like with her now in the mix.

Bruce Miller: Well I agree on both points. I think Allison – I can't pronounce her last year – Scags is what everybody calls her. Allison Scagliotti was a terrific addition to Warehouse, a great energy. But when we were looking for someone – yes, and I definitely – we came into this season looking to add another puzzle piece just to have someone new come in who was interesting and had an interesting ability. But more than an interesting ability we wanted someone who had an interesting downside and that their ability made them live a certain way which was something we learned from the guest stars that had worked well before, Skylar, being a great example of someone who was great with machines and not so great with people. It makes for a very interesting, you know, I think our show is much more about how people with super powers live their lives rather than how – than about their powers. It's, you know, what is it like for Batman to make dinner? But Erin was just we auditioned a lot of people. There were a lot of people in the mix and Erin just bloomed from the very beginning. She was, you know, she sparkles in real life as much as she sparkles on screen. And I – personally I don't tend to go into casting sessions. I try not to have a preconceived notion in my head because it just reduces my options or ability to find someone cool. But she just was terrific. And from the first time I saw her read I felt like she brought that character to life. And then the other thing that – and I'm sure Summer can speak to this about working in television. The great thing is that you have – she, you know, Erin does the character, reads the scripts and then you get – I get to see the footage and then you get to write the next episode. And it's influenced by the way she plays the character so the character grows and changes and their arc is kind of decided as a combination of what we think

would be cool and what Erin actually brings to the character. So you're not just writing in a vacuum, writing, you know, a feature and then handing it over to someone else and they're shooting it. You're writing and then getting feedback from the actor and hearing their voice and how they play things. And so certainly Erin's sense of humor and her particular sense of humor, her particular rhythm brings a lot to it. But I don't think we intended to kind of – I think the show had plenty of spirit and humor and energy and we were just trying to find someone cool to add into that mix. It's just the way you think about, you know, if I had a group of people and I could throw someone in there who would mix things up in the most interesting way and Erin just seemed like a – that character seemed terrific with her specific memory problem and her specific living in the moment philosophy.

Well the fans have seemed taken to her overwhelmingly. Also, speaking of ingredients in the mix, I thought Lauren Holly has added a lot. Assuming she survives, is there a chance her character will become a recurring character in future seasons as well?

Bruce Miller: Well she was a pleasure to work with. And having kind of a scary senator was really I think an interesting character, interesting kind of power structure. I don't know. I mean we love the character. It was really interesting. I'm not sure whether we've played the string out or not but I know that we had a terrific time with Lauren and she had a terrific time with us. So if, you know, it all goes back to the characters and the story. If the characters lead us to a story where we'd like to bring that bitch back that would be great.

And for Summer, my questions are all off topic but like firstly, you mentioned Knights of Badassdom. And I was wondering if you could tell us a little bit about the process of learning the live action role playing and how does that differ from what actors already do?

Summer Glau: Well we all went to LARPing school when we first got to – when we first got to Spokane. All together we learned the rules of the game and we would practice together. And I had ideas about how I thought it was going to be based on the martial arts that I had learned before for other jobs. But it was really different because it is a live action and it's created in the moment. So I kept wanting to make choreography and we did create certain choreography just so that no one got hurt. Ryan and I would go over specific moves and memorize them so that we would know, you know, when the sword was going to be flying at our head instead of just a free-for-all. But it was really, really exciting and interesting to see who was the best at it and it was not me. I was not the best at LARPing.

I read Peter Dinklage got that distinction.

Summer Glau: Oh, he's amazing. He's a wild man. You've just got to – you have got to be fearless when you're LARPing and very creative and be able to think on your feet. So... He's amazing. You'll see in the film that he has prowess.

Having worked with Peter and also Lena Headey before that do you have any interest in possibly doing a guest role on their show Game of Thrones?

Summer Glau: Oh, I'd love to. I'm a huge Game of Thrones fan. And they're both phenomenal on the show. At Comic Con I actually – I did have quite a fan moment when I saw the cast walk by. I got giggly and hyper and ran up to them and they looked at me compassionately but wary because I got a little bit overexcited. I love the show.

Well then speaking of Comic Con Nathan was probably I don't know, joking maybe but Nathan, Sean and Jewel were at New York Comic Con this past

weekend and he mentioned, Nathan did, a possible animated revival of Firefly as a TV series. And that the cast would, you know, no power on Earth could keep you all from re-voicing those characters. Is that something that you would really want to do?

Summer Glau: Absolutely. I would take any opportunity to get back together with my whole fam and keep telling the story. I think we'd all love that. So who was there? It was Nathan and Sean and Jewel?

Summer Glau: Fun. That's great. Yeah, I'd love to. Absolutely.

And just before I let you go, one more quick one. Syfy does their original creature feature movies. Have you been approached to do one of those at all? And would you?

Summer Glau: No, not yet. I think that's a great idea. No. I haven't been approached yet.

Tony Tellado: Hi guys. I have a question for each of you. Bruce, you came over from a great show, Eureka. Have you had a chance to reflect on some of the great TV and being part of that team as you literally had to step into Alphas and get to work?

Bruce Miller: Yeah. Eureka was a spectacular experience and luckily I, you know, was able to bring over some of the people from that show so some of that family came along with me here. You know, it's – I just reflect back on it with great, you know, I'm very thankful. Most shows when they end – just end, you know, you find out some time in between seasons that it's not coming back and you don't get a chance to end it the way we were lucky enough to get to end the story of Eureka. And Jaime Paglia and I, Jaime was the original creator, and we co-show ran it for a number of years. But he was able to tie up those story lines that he had been working on for so long. So mostly I look back on it with great, you know, real affection and I'm really grateful that it was able to move along the way it did. And the – it was a real – it was a blessing. And Syfy did such a terrific job with the show in letting it be its odd, quirky self. And, you know, the only shattering regret I had is that we never had Summer on.

Tony Tellado: And speaking of Summer, I have to really commend you on your voicing Supergirl in Superman:Apocalypse. What was that like for you to take on the Girl of Steel and did you have any preconceptions of how to play her?

Summer Glau: I did. But it was – well I had an idea of what it was going to be like, the experience in general. Voiceover is really, really different than filming and I was nervous about it. I didn't know what it was going to be like to be in the room by myself. But I had the most amazing coaches and it was a very addicting experience to strip away everything but my voice and paint the pictures that way. It was a really, really good exercise for me as an actress and I – they pushed me quite a bit. And I didn't – I did things that I didn't know that I could do. I did things that I didn't feel comfortable doing. And I think that's always very exciting for artists in general. So I thought oh, I want to keep doing this because I'm really learning and challenging what I'm comfortable with. You know, being in a room and just, you know, I'm going crazy and really getting to scream at the top of your lungs and then, you know, she has to be able to convey all of these different emotions just through her voice. When I saw the final product I – sometimes – there were times when I didn't even recognize my voice. It was really, really cool.

Tony Tellado: Well it was great and it was great that you did the Origins story. And I really have to commend both of you for the work you're doing on Alphas. The show is lucky to have both of you and to bring your talents to it.

Summer Glau: Oh, thank you.

Bruce Miller: Thank you so much.

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