

## ***Alphas interview with Summer Glau and Bruce Miller***

October 19, 2012 By Nightfly

"Everything you think, "they really don't do that on television," we're actually gonna do." Describing tonight's season finale, "You think we'd actually never go there,... we go there," says Bruce Miller, Executive Producer and writer of Alphas' second season finale. Bruce, who formerly co-showran Eureka, answered press questions a few days ago about tonight's episode alongside fan-fave genre thesp and Alphas recurring guest star Summer Glau.

In tonight's electrifying season finale titled "God's Eye," Dr. Rosen frantically closes in on his arch nemesis Stanton Parish (played by John Pyper-Ferguson), spurred by hallucinations of his deceased daughter Dani (played by Kathleen Munroe). Meanwhile, the Alphas team race the clock to thwart Parish's murderous plans while contending with their mutual mistrust, bouyed by the invaluable help of genius-gadgeteer Skylar Adams (brilliantly portrayed by Summer Glau).

Having seen what happened to Glau's character last week (in "Need to Know"), fans are very curious how she fits into tonight's episode and what potential role Skylar has in Alphas future? Summer divulged, "In the finale she definitely integrates into the team more than she has in the past. In the last episode she was taken advantage of and needed help. It was a humbling and scary experience for her to realize that she's not always in control. It's a vulnerable position for her, but I think it's a key transition because now she sees that she does need help and that it can be beneficial to her to be part of a team." Adding, "I really, really enjoy that we're going to get to see her - very awkwardly at times - become part of the team in the finale, which is something that I've been wanting her to do for a while."

Did Summer originally imagine Skylar would grow into the fan-favorite character she's become? "I was hopeful," she explained. "I love doing TV and I really like sticking with a character and getting to watch them evolve and contribute to storylines week after week. I've felt so blessed to come back as much as I have and I've loved where Skylar's gone. I know that the show's going to keep going strong and it's something I really, really want to continue working on, both for the fantastic storyline and because I really love working with this cast. I definitely hope Alphas brings me back. I would be very, very excited to come back again next season."

Aware that the decision doesn't fully rest in his hands, I nevertheless asked Miller if he, like her many fans, would welcome Glau becoming a full-fledged "regular" cast member on Alphas? "Yes!," he enthused. "I think she's spectacular and seeing that character on TV is so fantastic. I would love to have her on the show as much as we could possibly have. I loved working with her." Just in case the powers-that-be don't hire her full-time, I wondered if a web series focusing on Skylar and her daughter Zoe might be in the cards? "As far as a web series goes, it's not really my department to make those decisions but I would certainly love that. I love the very young and very talented actor who plays Skylar's daughter, who's named Skyler in real life, who is just wonderful, and the two of them together are terrific. It would be nice to have someplace to do longer stories about the two of them. I really think they have one of the coolest relationships in the whole series. One of the toughest jobs we had in the editing room was deciding which moments to cut from their scenes because they were so terrific together the whole time." Further musing, "The idea of someone like Skylar trying to raise a child - that dynamic - one could definitely build a whole show around it. It's so hard to be a parent. To be a person in the world who can take care of themselves but also has to take care of somebody else. The reason we wanted so much to bring her back was just because of that conflict between someone who's very self-sufficient but not selfish. The battle

between those two parts of her personality, in being a mother, is really just so interesting."

When asked what first drew her to the role of Skylar Adams, Summer revealed, "The first thing that attracted me was the fact that she is a mother. It was really exciting for me because I had not played a mother before. One of the most challenging things about Skylar is that although she is a mother it doesn't come naturally to her. In the backstory that I've created for her in my mind she's been on her own for a long time and she's used to just fending for herself. And 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. Loving something so much more than she loves herself; caring for something and protecting someone else and making unselfish decisions. For me, as an actor, it was just a very, very fertile storyline, creatively."

I invited Summer to talk about Skyler Wexler, who so engagingly plays Skylar Adams' daughter Zoe. "We're very close. Little Skyler and I are pen-pals. We email each other back and forth every week. Coming 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. I had fun with everybody else and it was great, but, I remember the day she came back I just felt so happy." Moved by the emotional memory, she continued, "Being on set with her was just a really special experience for me. It's the first time that I've really bonded with a young, young actor like that before. I remember how nice it was reuniting with her and how much it meant to me. I hope to do it again. I adore her. She's beautiful."

Having played a number of sci-fi related roles, it's only natural to wonder what continually attracts Glau to this genre? "I've always found in sci-fi that the roles for women are really exciting and dynamic and outside the box. This season finale of Alphas is a perfect example, I remember - and Bruce was there too - we were sitting and discussing a scene that involved all the girls. I was sitting there, looking at the girls, and it was so cool getting to do a scene that involved all of us. Our characters are all so different and complicated and fleshed out and dynamic; it just made me realize that 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. That's why I keep coming back to sci-fi, I just go for the characters that I like." But does Summer enjoy the rigors of combat choreography that so often accompany sci-fi roles? "Absolutely," she confessed. "Coming from being a dancer, for me, doing roles where I got to really be expressive through my physical self was a great way to transition into being an actress. It was a comfortable way for me to start experiencing how to get my characters across. When I started on Firefly, I played a character who had a very hard time communicating with the rest of the cast and so I found it really interesting to play with physicality. And then, over the years, I've been fortunate to get to play a lot of characters who were really kick-ass girls. One thing I like about Skylar, and I've talked to the writers about this, is that I'm trying to find new ways of making her an effective part of the team without being 'the physical character.' It's hard sometimes not getting to throw any punches but it's been good practice for me because Skylar's a badass in a different way. So I enjoy it and it's good for me and, who knows, maybe next season she can throwdown a little bit. But she always has a good spot on the team because she builds stuff."

Bruce offered insight into the writing process when quizzed about the difficulty of crafting an epic season finale. Is it harder than writing a typical mid-season episode? "Absolutely. Because you're not really writing a single episode. I mean, writing a finale is extra difficult because you feel like you're writing the last act to twelve other episodes. It's hard to find something that holds it all together. You really want the characters' stories to be completed in a satisfying way, or, at least put away for a few months until we get to come back to them." Expounding, "Having Skylar back and having the scenes that Summer referenced where the women are talking and bringing the human element into what could've just been a big action-fest made it a lot more interesting and a lot more

fun to write. Summer and I sat on the set with all the other women and rewrote that [brief] scene from beginning to end, so, that was as much a community effort as anything else. We have a very, very talented writing staff and even though my name is on the last episode that's not really how things work in television. As with every episode, it was a group effort by the entire writing staff. Everyday on the set things change, you move things around and the actors are creating the roles too - bringing them to life as things happen. That's the best thing about television and I think kind of gets misunderstood when there's a single "written by" credit, because that's certainly not how it happens in real life."

Summer and Bruce also discussed John Pyper-Ferguson's season-long performance as villainous Stanton Parish. "John is a wonderful actor. Terrific. Generous. And just an optimistic and sunny personality," Miller imparted, "he makes everything we do turn out better and more interesting. He really makes the best kind of adversary because he seems to often be on the right side of the argument, which is really the most interesting kind of adversary. Personally, I always liked Alan Rickman in Die Hard better than the other people." Further detailing, "When you have someone like David Strathairn leading the team you can't just have a cardboard cutout foil for them to oppose, you have to have someone with the acting ability and depth that John Pyper-Ferguson brings to it as well as the honest sympathy that he can engender in the audience. He brings a grace and wisdom to everything about that character who, as we know, has lived a very long time. 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 so lovely." Glau wholeheartedly concurred, "He has a great way of conveying his character's age with a grace and charisma that I'm really fascinated by. I definitely can't picture anyone else in the role because he does it so beautifully. He's very powerful. I only had one scene with him - I didn't have very many lines with him - but I enjoyed it. He has a quiet intensity and the way that he plays Parish is so compelling because it's not black and white. You can almost understand his side of the story. You can almost see why he does the things he does. He's just a very, very dynamic actor. I hope I get to watch him more and be around him more because he's also really, really fun."

In addition to the role of Skylar on Alphas, Summer also graciously answered questions about past projects as well as a bit about her next two movies coming out soon. "I just finished a Christmas movie for the Hallmark Channel called "Help for the Holidays". I've always wanted to do one, and I was actually sent the script for it while I was shooting Alphas' season finale in Toronto. It was very different and fun, it was good for me. I play an Elf. It'll be airing during the 12 Days of Christmas, but it was Christmas in August for me. We shot it in Simi Valley when it was 110 degrees."

Another upcoming film, in which she appears with HBO stars Peter Dinklage (Game of Thrones) and Ryan Kwanten (True Blood), is called Knights of Badassdom. I inquired as to the storied training the cast underwent to learn about the film's main subject, Live Action Role Playing. "Well, we all went to LARPing School when we first got to Spokane." She laughingly relayed, "All together, we learned the rules of the game and would practice together. I had ideas on how I thought it was going to be based on the martial arts that I've learned before for other jobs but it was really different because it is "live action," in that it's created in the moment. You've just got to be fearless when you're LARPing and you've got to be very creative and able to think on your feet. I kept wanting to make choreography, and, we did make some choreography just so no one got hurt. It was important to know when swords would be flying at your head instead of it just being a total 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. Peter Dinklage, though, was amazing. He's a wild man." Now having acted alongside both Dinklage and Lena Headey in various projects, I was curious if she'd be interested in guesting on their current mega-hit drama Game of Thrones? "Oh, I'd love to. I'm a huge Game of Thrones fan. And they're [Dinklage & Headey] both phenomenal on that show. At Comic-Con I actually

had 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 wearily because I got a little bit over-excited. I love that show."

Speaking of Comic-Con(s), I mentioned the animated Firefly rumor Nathan Fillion recently addressed at New York's Comic-Con. I asked if she'd be eager to voice River Tam again if that TV show ever happens? "Absolutely. I would take any opportunity to get back together with my old family and keep telling that story. I think we'd all love that." Wrapping up my questions on hypothetical projects, I asked if she'd ever been approached to star in one of Syfy's original movies? "No. I haven't been approached yet," Glau replied, "but I think that's a great idea."

Comic book fans no doubt remember Summer's breathing life into Supergirl's post-Crisis origin story in the animated film, Superman/Batman: Apocalypse (2010). When asked about voicing The Girl of Steel, her very first voice-over job, she confided, "I was nervous about it. Voice-over is really different than filming and I didn't know what it was going to be like to be in a room by myself, but, I had the most amazing coaching and it was a very addicting experience to strip away everything but my voice and paint the picture that way. It was a really, really good exercise for me as an actor. They pushed me quite a bit and I did things I didn't know I could do. I did things that I didn't feel comfortable doing and that's always very exciting for artists in general. I thought, "I want to keep doing this because I'm really learning and challenging what I'm comfortable with." Being in a room, going crazy, and really getting to scream at the top of my lungs. You have to be able to convey all these different emotions just through the voice. When I saw the final product there were times that I didn't even recognize myself. It really was cool."

On a closing note, impassioned Eureka fans surely wouldn't forgive my not including Bruce Miller's reflections on his time co-showrunning the recently concluded series. "Eureka was a spectacular experience, and I was luckily able to bring over some of that family to Alphas. I look back on it and I'm very thankful. When most shows end they just end, you know, you find out sometime inbetween seasons that you're not coming back and you don't get a chance to end it the way we were lucky enough to end the story of Eureka. Jaime Paglia, who was the original creator, and I co-showran it for a number of years and we were able to tie up some of the storylines that we worked on for so long. So mostly I look back on it with great and real affection and am really grateful that it was able to move along the way it did. It was a blessing that Syfy did such a terrific job with the show in letting it be its odd, quirky self." Topically adding, "The only shattering regret I have is that we never had Summer on."

Taken from the tvovermind's website:

<http://www.tvovermind.com/alphas/alphas-preview-summer-glau-bruce-miller-season-finale/>