

30th Anniversary Special Interview

David Greenlee

Actor

(Mouse)

1) What was your first impression of the series production?

Day One for Mouse was a very full day, and a day full of surprises.

My first impression of the on set production (Shades of Grey) was overwhelming in several ways. First, the high quality of the production design was a surprise, excellence always surprises. The sets, the costumes, lighting, props, all of the design elements were not just well done but each element was telling the story and defining this tunnel culture. That's what was surprising, that there was a tangible culture being presented, different from that of the world above. The physical production elements described not just some people living in the tunnels but a community thriving there with principles and traditions of their own. One look at the working set of Father's Chamber let me know that this show was very special and that I had a high bar to meet.

The first scene I shot on the show was the big opening scene of the episode (Shades of Grey), Mouse on trial then subjected to the silence. It was a big first day.

2. Was there anything you wished you had known before you walked on the set?

The show had not been on the air for long, and in those pre-digital days I had not yet managed to see an episode, I had one on tape unseen because Linda was a friend of mine and I wanted to see her work and I assumed if she was in it, it was going to be good TV. Once I was working, I was glad I had not seen an episode in advance, although having seen one might have made day one easier on me!

My hero of the day was director Tom Wright, who had also directed the Twilight Zone episode and who I trusted greatly in terms of performance and production. However, the thing I wished I had known before walking on the set that day was the way Tom shot that scene. In TV, such large scenes are very often shot in pieces for the sake of time, Tom was shooting

that scene more like a movie shoot, we'd start with a full master, meaning the entire scene played start to finish. The first shot would establish the entire scene, and I had to make all of my choices quickly and early in the day.

It was fortunate for me that the show was fully stocked with outstanding actors and technicians, that the script itself was also excellent. I needed all the help I could get that day.

3) What surprised you most about your role in the production?

Next surprise, learning that Ron Perlman was 'that guy from Quest For Fire' and that Father was no less than Roy Dotrice, an actor of astonishing accomplishments. Along with the flawless Ms Hamilton, this cast was more than impressive and in that moment suddenly a bit intimidating. At least I already knew Linda, that helped, but she was not there that day!

Another saving grace that day were the words on the page and the sharp characterizations presented by George RR Martin and David E Peckinpah in the script for Shades of Grey. I was a long time reader of George's fiction and had already worked with him on Twilight Zone in a script by George based on a story by Terry Matz called 'Toys of Caliban'. These were words I could trust to support my efforts and allow for the taking of risk. Mouse was a unique creation and a joy to play, but that first day was more panic than joy.

4) After 30 years, what is your fondest memory of the production?

Irina Irvine was so very sweet and vulnerable as Jamie, she gave me so much to work with that day. Ron Perlman made me cry with his back turned to me which not many actors could do. Roy, Armin, James, Rutanya (Alda who played Sarah), all of the actors were all so very generous and so skilled, everything I did that day came from their eyes.

5) Which episode did you personally find the most challenging? Why?

So that (Shades of Grey) was without a doubt my most challenging episode, also most challenging scene. It was a hell of a first day in heaven!

6) Which episode do you think was the best? Why?

I don't really have an episode I consider to be 'the best' but Shades of Grey is my favorite because it was the most challenging for me personally. It's also got great scenes from Linda and Ron, stuff blowing up - what's not to like?

8) What experience did you find most rewarding?

The most rewarding parts of Beauty and the Beast for me were and remain the people involved both in production and in the fandom. The dedication and actions of the fans of the show have impressed and delighted me now for 30 years.

9) Looking back, what do you wish had happened differently?

There are many things I wish had gone differently with the show, we should have had a few more seasons but that's not how it worked out.

10) If a sequel were possible, what would be most important?

Had yesterday been like today, the show could have easily found a venue that would have allowed the cast to thrive and the show to continue, but back then there were limited outlets for television series.