

[Zombie Zone News](#)

Zombie Movies, News, Games, and Reviews

- [Home](#)
- [Movie Lists](#)
 - [Movie List by Name](#)
 - [Movie List \(#-C\)](#)
 - [Movie List \(D-F\)](#)
 - [Movie List \(G-L\)](#)
 - [Movie List \(M-P\)](#)
 - [Movie List \(Q-U\)](#)
 - [Movie List \(V-Z\)](#)
 - [Movie List by Year](#)
 - [Movie List \(1932-1979\)](#)
 - [Movie List \(1980-1990\)](#)
 - [Movie List \(1991-2002\)](#)
 - [Movie List \(2003-2005\)](#)
 - [Movie List \(2006-2009\)](#)
 - [Movie List \(2010-2011\)](#)
 - [Movie List by Nationality](#)
 - [Movie List \(Argent.-Israel\)](#)
 - [Movie List \(Italy-Turk.\)](#)
 - [Movie List \(U.K.\)](#)
 - [Movie List \(U.S.-1\)](#)
 - [Movie List \(U.S.-2\)](#)
 - [Movie List \(U.S.-3\)](#)
 - [Movie List \(U.S.-4\)](#)
 - [Upcoming Zombie Movies](#)
 - [50 Best Zombie Movies Ever](#)
 - [10 Best Online Short Zombie Films](#)
- [Book & Comic Lists](#)
 - [Book List by Name](#)
 - [Book List by Year](#)
 - [Comic List by Name](#)
- [Submit News](#)
- [Community](#)
 - [Forums](#)
 - [Site Links](#)
- Search this website ...
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 - [Zombie Movie News](#)
 - [Zombie Movie Reviews](#)
 - [Zombie Movie Forums](#)
 - [Full Movies Online](#)
 - [Movie Trailers](#)
 - [50 Best Zombie Movies Ever](#)
 - [Upcoming Zombie Movies](#)
- [TV](#)
 - [Zombie TV News](#)
 - [Zombie TV Forums](#)
- [Books](#)
 - [Zombie Book News](#)
 - [Zombie Book Reviews](#)
 - [Zombie Book Forums](#)
 - [Book Trailers](#)
- [Comics](#)

- [Zombie Comic News](#)
- [Zombie Comic Reviews](#)
- [Zombie Comic Forums](#)
- [Games](#)
 - [Zombie Game News](#)
 - [Zombie Game Reviews](#)
 - [Zombie Game Forums](#)
 - [Game Trailers](#)
 - [Online Games](#)
- [Web Video](#)
 - [Short Films](#)
 - [Full Length Movies](#)
 - [Trailers & Promos](#)
 - [Movie Trailers](#)
 - [Game Trailers](#)
 - [Book Trailers](#)
 - [Misc Video](#)
 - [Web Series](#)
 - [Bite Me](#)
 - [Semi-Dead](#)
 - [Zombie Roadkill](#)
 - [Universal Dead](#)
 - [Dead Road](#)
 - [10 Best Online Short Zombie Films](#)
- [Photos](#)
- [Music](#)
- [Products](#)
 - [Zombie Product News](#)
 - [Zombie Product Forums](#)
- [Reviews & Analysis](#)
 - [In Depth Analysis](#)
 - [Zombie Movie Reviews](#)
 - [Zombie Book Reviews](#)
 - [Zombie Comic Reviews](#)
 - [Zombie Game Reviews](#)
 - [Zombie Products Reviews](#)
- [News & Lifestyle](#)
 - [Zombie Events](#)
 - [Zombie Survival](#)
 - [Zombie Players](#)
 - [People Interviews](#)
 - [People Profiles](#)
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 - [Zombie News](#)
 - [Zombie Movie News](#)
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 - [Zombie Comic News](#)
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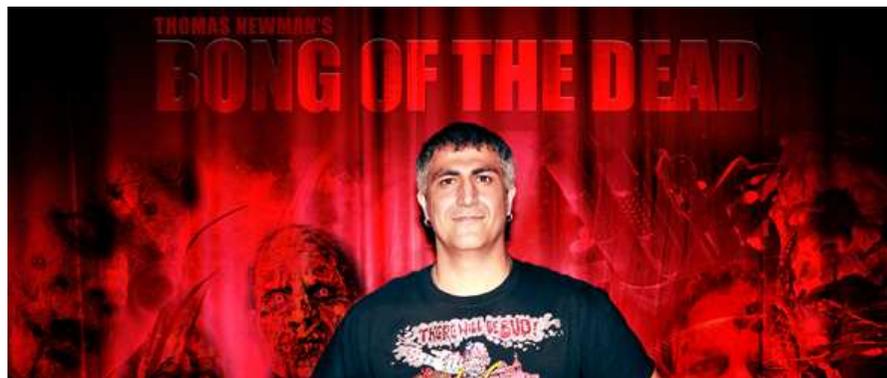
You are here: [Home](#) / [Location](#) / [Reviews & Analysis](#) / Picking Brains with Wednesday Lee Friday: Thomas Newman

Picking Brains with Wednesday Lee Friday: Thomas Newman

June 25, 2011 by [Wednesday Lee Friday](#) at 4:08 am [Share Your Undead Thoughts](#)

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Zombie Zone News is delighted to be privy to the thoughts of Thomas Newman, director of the instant zombie-stoner classic, **Bong of the Dead**. Billed as a \$5,000 Zombie movie, Bong of the Dead had a presence at the Cannes Film Festival, and was lauded by such authorities as Tommy Chong and Rue Morgue Magazine.

WLF/ZZN: Hey there! We're so excited you could answer our Q's. I'm sure some of our readers are wondering, what exactly is a Bong?

Well...a BONG is basically a pipe or device that one can use in order to smoke marijuana. Some people who are serious pot smokers actually take pride in their bong collections. Some Bongs are hand blown glass with intricate hand painted colors and chambers that make the whole social pot smoking activity more fun. I used to collect Bongs and had over 150 different bongs from all over the world! (WLF note: Kids, don't try this at



home!

WLF/ZZN: Do you feel there's some kind of cosmic correlation between zombies and fans of marijuana?

I think there's an even bigger correlation between fans of entertainment in general and pot. Lets face it anything you do straight just feels much better on pot! When we go to concerts to movies or anything else that's supposed to be fun to begin with, we (those who smoke pot) usually enjoy it even more with pot! (WLF note: See previous note.)

WLF/ZZN: Novelist Christopher Moore has asserted in his novel The Stupidest Angel that zombies have no interest in eating the brains of potheads. Seriously, how relieved were you to hear that?

I have not read Christopher's book but did hear that they are currently working on a movie for this concept. I think its bullshit to say that zombies are not interested in the brains of those who smoke pot! I know a lot of people who smoke pot including myself who are a lot smarter than those who don't smoke pot. Besides a zombies hunger is driven by the smell of the living. They have no way of distinguishing whether a person smokes pot or not. At the end of the day we are ALL just meat!

WLF/ZZN: The *Bong of the Dead* trailer seems to suggest that there will be benefits to be had in the event of a zombpocalypse. Isn't that dangerous thinking?

I'm the type of individual that likes to try and find the positive in any situation. Just because the world ends and zombies have taken over does not mean that has to be it. I like people who can take a bad situation and make the most of it. This is the reason why I wrote the Edwin character as a high functioning creative pot smoker. I guess I wrote myself into that character just to flesh him out even more.



WLF/ZZN: What are the advantages of featuring stoners as the main protagonists?

The definite advantage of that in a comedy film is the fact that it allows you to write whacky scenes and dialogue that is genuinely funny and acceptable. BOTD is supposed to be a fun movie with unique characters that allows you to escape without being bored to death with too much seriousness. I believe having Edwin and Tommy as our stoner leads helped keep a good balance of that. Especially when they meet up with our more serious character, Leah Kroaker.

WLF/ZZN: The trailer features a tough, sexy chick who knows how to shoot and does not appear to be getting anyone a sandwich. Can we assume then, that this story is fiction? (WLF note: I'm kidding! Jeez, relax.)

LOL I really enjoyed writing Leah's character as this inventive, tough no bullsh*t type of girl. She is a more modern girl of the 21st century who has no time for being vulnerable. I think it's nice to see a woman take the power roll in a situation where us men usually are expected to step up. It's also nice to get a break as a man and have your woman do some ass kicking for you for a change!

WLF/ZZN: Your film played at the Cannes Film Festival. Was that as wicked awesome as it sounds?

Well I had my sales agent go to Cannes to represent the movie since I was staying back to do the Vancouver showing. Because of BOTD's appearance at Cannes I was able to secure a sale for Australia! That means my movie is now going to be released in The Netherlands, Benelux, Luxemburg and Australia. I'm expecting a big marketing push and release for October of this year.



WLF/ZZN: What was the reception like?

People genuinely loved it and distributors as well as other festival representatives from all over the world also liked it enough to ask for DVD screeners from my agent for their up and coming festivals.

WLF/ZZN: Does marijuana come into play in your own zombie defense strategy? Do you consider it to be part of any well-stocked hidey-hole?

If zombies ever took over the world I would definitely grow fields of marijuana and find ways to get the zombies to work my fields for me! What better substance to have for future medicine as well as leisure escape?

WLF/ZZN: Please tell us about the casting process. What impressed you most about the actors cast as Tommy and Edwin.

The thing that really impressed me about ALL my cast and crew was the fact that they understood the commitment I was asking of all of them and they gave it! It was a tough 15-day shoot where I would soak them from head to toe with blood at 8AM each day then we would shoot until 10 PM that night. The whole time I would have to soak them again and again to make sure my continuity was perfect. They were devoted to the project 100%!

WLF/ZZN: Simone Bailly has mad Sci-Fi cred, and is one hot tomato. I don't really have a question there, just pointing it out. Wouldn't



you agree?

The reason I cast Simone was because of her eyes before anything else. I met her on the set of Stan Helsing a film that was EPK Producer on and she was a stand in. The second I saw her and it was not even up close but rather from a distance I immediately thought to myself that she was Leah! I wanted someone with sexy cat like eyes that would pull you in the second you saw her. Simon Bailly is a true professional who brought so much to the film with her talents and her vibrant beautiful screen presence.

WLF/ZZN: Is Canada considered to be a zombie-friendly country? I would guess the brisk weather would make zombies stay fresher longer.

Canada is definitely great for zombies because of the constant cold and rainy weather we have, especially in BC! Also if there was ever a mass zombie attack here, we would not be short on weed let me tell ya.

WLF/ZZN: I understand that there are [marijuana loving bears in British Columbia](#). Do you think these ursine creatures would operate in concert with zombies, or against them?

If the bears were high on weed then it could go two ways. On one hand they would be really sluggish and therefore easy to get eaten by a horde of zombies. On the other hand they would have a bad case of the munchies themselves in which case the zombie would be the ones in trouble. It



could go either way.

WLF/ZZN: What have you enjoyed most about promoting *Bong of the Dead*?

What I have enjoyed the most about promoting my movie is the fact that the world has accepted it! It's a tough thing to pour almost 4 years of your life into something, sacrificing it all then exposing yourself to the world. Lets face it audiences are spoiled today with all the dazzling multi million dollar effects that they get to see in so many films. You do a film for only \$5000 and you're going against major studios its nerve-racking! I'm just happy that fans and critics all are loving my movie!

WLF/ZZN: Where can fans go to see this film? Is there a DVD release forthcoming?

Currently Vancouver fans or anyone close to Vancouver BC can see it again at the Rio theatre in Vancouver on August 19th then maybe again on October 9th! I'm trying to 4 wall my movie so if any other regions want to see the film then I would love to hear about it because I will bring it to a theatre near you! Also it will be available in Europe on DVD in October. I'm still awaiting domestic distribution which means it will soon be available in the US and Canada.

WLF/ZZN: Thanks a whole bunch for the interview, Thomas. Can't wait for the film!

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