

Anthony Anderson: Will the Black Guy Survive 'Scream 4'?

By Brian Stimson
Of *The Skanner News*

From his comedic roles in *Barbershop*, *Bernie Mac Show* and the *Scary Movie* franchise to more serious roles in *Hustle and Flow*, *The Shield* and *Law and Order*, Actor Anthony Anderson has one diverse resume.

Anderson is appearing as Deputy Perkins in "Scream 4," the latest in the Wes Craven horror franchise due out on April 15. Here, Anderson spoke with *The Skanner News* about being the black character in a horror film, the similarities between "Scream" and "Scary Movie" and what his worst day on set has ever been.

The Skanner News: Hey, Anthony.

Anthony Anderson: What's going on brother?

TSN: Not a lot, just ending the work day. How about you, how you doing?

AA: Oh shit, man, I wish my workday was ending.

TSN: How many reporters do they put you through on these days?

AA: AAAAAAAAAAHHHHHHH,

too many to name, brother, it started at 10 o'clock and it's 5:30 and I'm still going through the ringer. From 10 to 1 we sit in a room and they send people in for three hours, every three minutes it was a different reporter. Straight to lunch and after lunch, you do your Entertainment Tonight, Access Hollywood and shows like that. Then after that, you have your foreign press. And there are maybe 10 of those. And then after that, which I've never done, we had two press conferences brother. And there were 25 to 30 people in each room and we sat on a panel and discussed the movie with people on the film. And then after that, I shot some more video interviews and then after that I'm sitting here talking to you.

TSN: Well, I'll try to make this quick and painless as possible. You've acted in two 'Scary Movies' (3 and 4) and now you're doing an actual scary movie, 'Scream 4.' Is there any real difference between acting in a comedy horror movie and acting in an actual horror film?

AA: no man, cause if you



Anthony Anderson, far right, is Deputy Perkins in Wes Craven's 'Scream 4'

were doing behind the scenes footage while we were making "Scream," you would think this was a comedy. Just the fun we had as a cast and crew. Wes Craven is a practical joker and we can only be but serious when if you were getting stabbed in the forehead, cut off and all that. So, we laugh because it's silly fun. The horror doesn't really come together until Wes is in the editing room putting the finishing touches on what we shot. It's not unlike the filming of a scary

TSN: Historically, Black characters tend to not fare very well in terms of their survival ..

AA: You can say it, they always die first before the opening credits. But it's a new decade, new rules, those rules don't apply. At least that's what the poster says (maniacal laughter ensues)!

TSN: The "Scream" movies are renowned for their dissection of horror movies clichés. Was that particular cliché something that people talked about during the filming or was mentioned in the movie?

AA: The fact that if you're gay you may survive, there are new clichés we come up with in Scream, if you're a virgin you live, that's not true anymore. But yeah, we talk about it. Things you never say or do in a horror film to survive. Never say I'll be right back, never say, after you hear a noise, let me go check that out, never go into the bathroom and turn on the shower water and then go back in and take that shower. They're trying to flip everything on its ear and it's kind of fun.

TSN: You haven't been in a whole lot of horror movies, what made you decide to do this one?

AA: One, the franchise itself. I grew up watching these movies. Two, Wes

Craven. Three, to be the Black guy in a horror film, it's fun unto itself. And four, I was actually in the Scary Movie franchise that spoofed this franchise. And now I'm a part of this franchise. That was fun to be a part of as well.

TSN: And a question I like to ask a lot of actors: What was the absolute worst day on set you had?

AA: Wow, the absolute worst day on set?

TSN: Was there one?

AA: There were several days, I'm just trying to pick one. There are days you just don't have it. You know, you don't have it as an actor. You can't remember a line,

you've been in is really, really diverse. Is there any rhyme or reason to the stuff you pick?

AA: There is. From an early age, I've always said I'd like to have a long career. To have a career at this and not be the flavor of the month. You have to pick your projects. None of us can be picky in the beginning because we're just starting out but once you've established yourself and some kind of body of work. You want to pick things that really showcase your talent. I've always said I want to work with the best from the best material and that what drives me. It's not always

if you were doing behind the scenes footage while we were making 'Scream,' you would think this was a comedy

you can't remember blocking, and it happens to all of us every now and again. I didn't have a bad day on Scream 4, but I just finished this independent film down in Albuquerque, New Mexico, never had allergies before going to New Mexico, but juniper pollen was at all time record high, so I could barely see, my eyes were swelling up, my nose was running, my eyes were watering, it just had me feeling lethargic, it was my last day on set and I could not remember my lines because so much was going on in my head. So that was it. I'm snorting, I'm sniffing, I'm crying, I'm sneezing and I could not hit this mark and remember my lines. So I say go with that.

TSN: The history of movies and TV shows

about a payday, because paydays come and go. But when people see and really feel the work on screen, that's when they call you back. That's one reason I've been dancing in this dramatic world for quite some time because I didn't want to be typecast as the comic relief, as the funny guy. So, I made a conscious choice to target shows like *The Shield*, I targeted *Law and Order*, I targeted other shows and they came to fruition. I targeted movies in the vein of *The Departed* and *Hustle and Flow*, those movies came to fruition. So now I'm known as an actor, not just the funny guy. When you say Anthony Anderson, you say, 'oh wow, what's he going to do next, what's he doing now?' Because I remember him in this.'

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