

Fido defies categorization. Sure it's a zombie movie, but it's also a black comedy with social commentary and a love story woven in. "*Fido* is really cross-genre," explains writer/director Andrew Currie. "On the simplest level it's a boy-and-his-dog film, but instead of a dog you have a dead man." *Lassie* meets *Shaun of the Dead*, perhaps?

Currie set out to make a film with "a lot of sweeping crane shots" and "big, bold Technicolor frames"—not an easy task on a Cana-

ZOMBIE ZONE

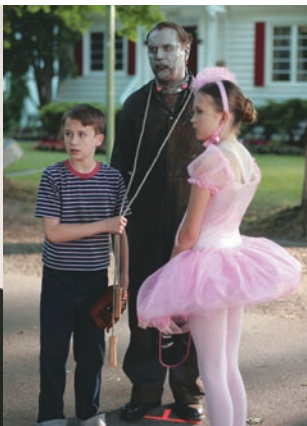
It takes brains to make a zombie movie in BC. Meet the brains behind *Fido* *By Sheri Radford*

MOVIE MAGIC (BELOW L-R): ANDREW CURRIE IS THE MAN WITH THE PLAN. TIMMY (K'SUN RAY) AND CINDY (ALEXIA FAST) TAKE FIDO (BILLY CONNOLLY) FOR A WALK. FIDO CRAVES A FEAST OF FLESH. HELEN (CARRIE-ANNE MOSS) SEEMS THE PERFECT 1950S HOUSEWIFE

dian budget. His company, Vancouver-based Anagram Pictures, raised \$10.7 million (rumoured to be the largest budget ever for an independent film in western Canada), but "it doesn't feel like a lot of money," says Currie. With 37 days of shooting, each about 11 hours long, he knew to the minute how much every moment cost: "You go to the bathroom and it's 3,000 bucks."

Filming in the US was never an option, due to the cost, so Currie scrutinized all of Canada before deciding on Kelowna, BC, as the

ALL PHOTOS BY MICHAEL COURTNEY





**THE DIRECT APPROACH:
WRITER/DIRECTOR
ANDREW CURRIE GIVES
POINTERS TO ACTRESS
CARRIE-ANNE MOSS**

place to create the 1950s suburban world of *Fido*. (Raised in Victoria and educated at Simon Fraser University, the Vancouver resident has a soft spot for the West Coast.) Fortunately, the budget didn't prevent Currie from hiring a stellar cast, including Dylan Baker, Henry Czerny, Tim Blake Nelson, newcomer K'Sun Ray, Vancouver's own Carrie-Anne Moss, and Billy Connolly as the title character. "The actors all

worked for a lot less than they were used to," says Currie. He's under no illusions as to what attracted them to *Fido*: "I'd like to say it was on the merits of my personality, but it really was the script."

The story unfolds in Willard, an idyllic small town in which the monolithic ZomCon corporation has domesticated the undead by fitting them with special collars. Family patriarch Bill (Dylan Baker) is

FILMED IN BC

Locals are used to seeing the province turned into a huge film set. Check out some of the most-hyped movies shot in British Columbia during the last decade.

1. *X-Men: The Last Stand* (2006)
2. *Snakes on a Plane* (2006)
3. *The Sisterhood of the Traveling Pants* (2005)
4. *Fantastic Four* (2005)
5. *The Chronicles of Riddick* (2004)
6. *The Butterfly Effect* (2004)
7. *I, Robot* (2004)
8. *Elf* (2003)
9. *X-Men 2* (2003)
10. *Paycheck* (2003)
11. *Insomnia* (2002)
12. *The Sixth Day* (2000)
13. *Best in Show* (2000)
14. *Snow Falling on Cedars* (1999)
15. *Gods & Monsters* (1998)





ZOMBIE ZANINESS (CLOCKWISE FROM TOP L): HELEN AND FIDO TRIP THE LIGHT FANTASTIC. THE FAMILY ENJOYS AN AFTERNOON OUTING TO THE CEMETERY. FIDO TAKES CARE OF THE YARD WORK

“terrified of zombies but he’s also terrified of life and especially of emotion,” says Currie. Bill’s son Timmy (K’Sun Ray) befriends Fido (Billy Connolly), the family zombie/servant, who is “actually more engaged and alive than the father...I guess it’s ironic that he’s dead, right?”

Currie always writes from a theme statement. For *Fido*, he used “love not fear makes us more alive”—a message as relevant today as in the Cold War. Currie is unapologetic about crafting a film that is simultaneously deep and amusing, arguing that Canadian filmmakers “shouldn’t be afraid of entertaining peo-

ple.” Currie adds that filmmakers who try to make enjoyable movies often “get hit with a stick in Canada. They get ‘sell-out’ or ‘wanna-be Hollywood.’”

So far, Currie’s entertaining film has received kudos from reviewers, festivals and Internet bloggers. Recently it won the Vancouver Film Critics Circle Award for best British Columbian film. But Currie’s head isn’t swelled by all the accolades. He has one simple wish for *Fido*, which opens nationwide this month: “I just hope it gets a good chance and people get to see it. And the rest I’m willing to give up to fate.” **W**

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ESSENTIAL ZOMBIE VIEWING

- 1.** *Night of the Living Dead* (1968), *Dawn of the Dead* (1978), *Day of the Dead* (1985), *Land of the Dead* (2005), *Diary of the Dead* (scheduled for 2007)
- 2.** *Zombie* (1979)
- 3.** *The Evil Dead* (1981), *Evil Dead II* (1987), *Army of Darkness* (1992)
- 4.** *The Return of the Living Dead* (1985), *Return of the Living Dead Part II* (1988), *Return of the Living Dead III* (1993), *Return of the Living Dead: Necropolis* (2005), *Return of the Living Dead: Rave from the Grave* (2005)
- 5.** *Re-Animator* (1985)
- 6.** *Dead Alive (Braindead)* (1992)
- 7.** *Cemetery Man (Dellamorte Dellamore)* (1994)
- 8.** *Biozombie (Sun faa sau si)* (1998)
- 9.** *Versus* (2000)
- 10.** *Bubba Ho-tep* (2002)
- 11.** *28 Days Later* (2002)
- 12.** *Shaun of the Dead* (2004)