

Moss trades latex for taffeta

Actress escapes Matrix image in B.C. director's new film

BY KATHERINE MONK *CanWest News Service*

TORONTO — Carrie-Anne Moss might forever be associated with The Matrix character Trinity, but she ditched the black latex suit for a flouncy taffeta number in *Fido* — the new movie from Vancouver director Andrew Currie that opened the Canada First program at the Toronto International Film Festival earlier this week and is slated to hit festivals in Vancouver and abroad before its release later this year.

A period comedy that follows a post-war thread of paranoia and fear of invasion, *Fido* features Moss as Helen, the picture-perfect '50s-era suburban wife in smalltown Somewhere. Helen is trying to keep up with her successful neighbours, and so, realizing servants are a sign of bourgeois achievement, she gets the family its very own zombie to be cook, cleaner and companion.

That's right. *Fido* is a zombie movie, but really, it's a giant metaphor. According to Currie, who shot the movie in Kelowna last summer, the film follows a boy and his dog template in order to flesh out themes about the importance of facing hard realities, companionship and coming of age.

For Moss, the experience of *Fido* was marked by a few personal notes, the first being a photographic record of her second pregnancy, which despite the bustles and empire waistlines, is easily visible throughout the film — though only acknowledged in the penultimate act.

"My acting coach actually mentioned the Lucy [Ball-Arnaz] thing and how this was going to be a record, forever. She thought it would be great to actually see my tummy, but I didn't think this was the kind of character who, given the relationship with her husband, was going to walk around in a bra and panties."

Indeed, Helen — Moss's character — is the furthest thing one could imagine from a lingerie lady. A tough woman with a steady hand, and an ability to shoot small zombie children with a handgun, Helen didn't demand the roundhouse kicks of *The Matrix*, but it clearly pushed Moss to a different skill level within her craft. That's where the second life lesson from *Fido* came in — thanks to its message of containment. With the zombies representing a raw, wild, violent and unpredictable world, it's the force of commerce that eventually comes in to harness the potential of an unkillable workforce.

"The theme of containment meant a lot to me," says Moss. "It's important to have freedom in your life. I also gravitated towards the relationship Helen has with her son ... and how close she is to transformation."

As a mother of two, Moss says she spent a lot of time processing her own maternal instincts as well as her parental duties over the course of the film.

"I see a lot of people searching for meaningful relationships ... and sometimes they're missing what's right in front of them, which is developing a meaningful relationship with their own children," she says.



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