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[GUEST INTERVIEW] "Plan 9" Is Back! Matthew Warner Novelizes the Remake of the Notorious Zombie Movie

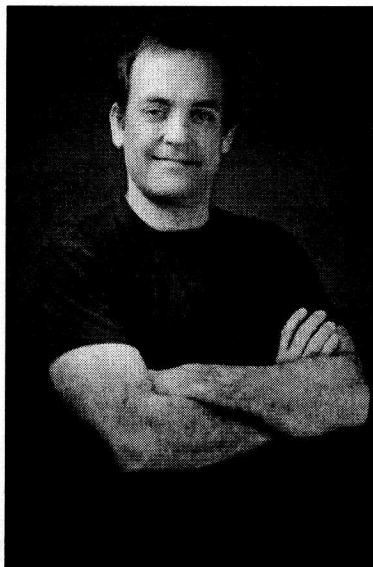
Posted on March 22, 2016 by Carl Slaughter in [Interviews](#) // 0 Comments

The second most famous zombie movie of all time is back with a shortened title: *Plan 9*.

When Darkstone director John Johnson did a remake of *Plan 9 From Outer Space*, he tapped his frequent collaborator Matthew Warner to write the novelization.

The original movie was made by the legendary B horror director Ed Wood. Wood was the subject of the eponymous movie starring Johnny Depp and directed by Tim Burton.

The remake stars the longtime Cinema Insomnia host Mr. Lobo and *Charmed* actor Brian Kraus. Dubbed "The First Black Scream Queen", horror movie staple Monique Dupree has a supporting role. Monique Dupree starred in 2 other Matthew Warner-John Johnson collaborations, *The*



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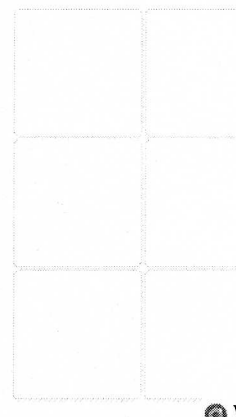
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Lovecraft Chronicles and *The Good Parts*. Mr. Lobo collaborated with Warner and Johnson on the *Criswell Predicts!* humor video series.

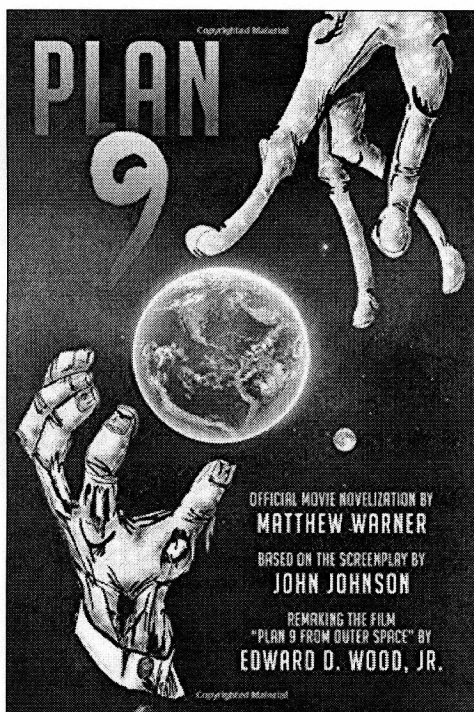
Watch a *Plan 9* trailer and teaser [here](#). Watch a sneak peak [here](#).

I spoke with Matthew Warner about the novelization process and about his latest short story anthology.

CARL SLAUGHTER: How did you get the contract for the novelization of the *Plan 9* remake?

MATTHEW WARNER: I already knew the Darkstone director, John Johnson, through other projects. I met him in 2010 when he directed my short film, *The Good Parts*, and I've since served as co-writer on *The Lovecraft Chronicles* and *Criswell Predicts!* John has helped me with some fabulous book trailers for my novels *Blood Born* and *The Seventh Equinox*. Anyway, that's how our friendship began, and I had been expressing interest in novelizing his remake of *Plan 9 From Outer Space*. I suppose I just nagged him about it until he caved in.

CS: Were you given a script, an outline, or just the movie?



MW: I was given his screenplay and a rough cut of the movie on CD. A rough cut is a first edit of a film, where all the scenes are put together in order, but without any music, special effects, or titles. Between the two of them, I had a fairly good idea of what he was going for. John read my chapters as I went along, offering suggestions and corrections. "The alien energy pulse is going to be blue and not green," for instance.

CS: Are there any special challenges for writing a movie novelization, as compared to writing an original novel?

MW: Yes, and this being my first movie novelization, it was especially challenging. The book *Tied In: The Business, History and Craft of Media Tie-In Writing*, edited by Lee Goldberg, was helpful. The novelists interviewed

for it suggested a technique I took to heart. Scene and point-of-view changes in movies happen much more rapidly than in novels. A three-minute scene is quite long these days. But it would get on the nerves of a novel reader to shift around so rapidly unless it was done sparingly and for good reason, say to ratchet up the pacing. The writers suggested to take a chunk of movie scenes that follow a particular character and to mush them together into the same chapter. That way you don't keep jumping around.

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The other technique I employed, which I think really saved my ass, was to emulate the POV-switching technique of George R.R. Martin in his **Game of Thrones** novels. *Plan 9*, like **Game of Thrones**, has a whole lot of characters. Unless the reader is given a stable emotional access point into the action, the story will quickly deteriorate into a confusing progression of names. So I took a cue from GRRM and gave each chapter a subtitle that was simply a character's name—"Jeff" or "Kelton," for example—and then I stayed in a very close third with that character for the duration. In that way, I was able to successfully navigate a story involving over a hundred named characters with only seven points of view. Not sure I want to repeat that experience, but thank you, George.

CS: What kind of research did you do on *Plan 9* to prepare for the novelization?

MW: I watched Ed Wood's original *Plan 9 From Outer Space*, of course, and I studied John Johnson's *Plan 9* screenplay and rough cut. Beyond that, I did lots of research as necessary to round out the characterizations and settings. John gave me some clues, like by saying scientist Lucy Grimm specialized in "particle physics and spectroscopy," but I had to research to understand what exactly that meant. And if she was studying those things, then why was there a cadaver sitting in her laboratory? That's where I had to creatively link the subjects together.

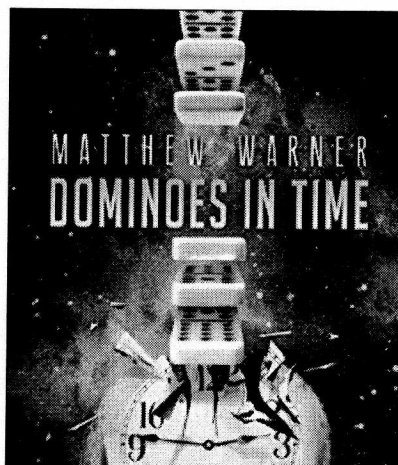
Sometimes I had help with my research. Conscious of the harsh reviews of the realism in *Flight*, starring Denzel Washington, I asked *Rambo* novelist and pilot David Morrell to vet my chapter 1 descriptions of airplane operations, which he kindly obliged.

CS: What's going on with *Dominoes in Time*? Last I heard, it was on the ballot for the Bram Stoker.

MW: My latest short story collection didn't make it beyond the preliminary ballot stage, but it's still chugging along nicely in its eBook edition from Cemetery Dance. A reviewer recently wrote, "This is one of their [CD's] better ones, and it's proof that they're taking their e-books as seriously as their printed ones." I'm personally happy with the collection because it's the first time I've articulated a philosophy as a writer, which I hope in retrospect will be viewed as a sign of artistic maturation. Hell, I don't know. But I did realize what's important to me as a writer is to dramatize the most significant moments of a person's life—the key domino that causes the ones afterward to fall on the table—because the most powerful stories are those in which the characters change the most.

CS: What was your criteria for inclusion in *Dominoes in Time*?

MW: I wanted only to include stories that had been previously published. In future collections, I may include some stories that haven't been printed before, but this time I realized I had eighteen good ones that had already received some editorial votes of confidence, and that was enough for a book-length work. I purposely excluded stories that appeared in my last fiction collection, **Death Sentences: Tales of Punishment & Revenge**, and I excluded stories that weren't as strong as the others. "Gnaw," for instance, is one of my favorite published short stories, but it's been twenty years since that first came out, and I'm a better writer now.



David Moody or



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CS: What's on the horizon for Matthew Warner?



MW: Keeping something in each ring of the writer's three-ring circus, if I can. Ring one is the dark fantasy novel I'm trying to sell (alternate-history and human sacrifice, anyone?), ring two is the fantasy & science-fiction novel I'm writing (first line: "As far as I was concerned, most of this stinking world was a sewer pipe that needed flushing of that special stain of filth known as other people"), and ring three is the story that will come out in print soon. Ring three is now occupied by a project for White Noise Press, run by the estimable Keith Minnion. I believe it's going to be a chapbook published in early 2017.

Carl Slaughter wrote many reviews for Tangent before moving to Diabolical Plots as a reviewer and later an interviewer. He conducted 50 plus interviews for Diabolical Plots. For the past 14 years, he has traveled the globe teaching ESL (English as a Second Language) in 6 counties on 3 continents. Carl has traveled to 18 countries and counting. (He's tired.) In college, Carl studied journalism, broadcasting, advertising, English, speech, and history. For several years, he was a stringer for the Associated Press. His essay on Chinese culture was published in Beijing Review. His essay on Korean culture was published in The Korea Times, as was his expose on the Korean ESL industry. His travel/education reports about Thailand occasionally appear on the Ajarn website. Carl subscribes to the Mike Resnick philosophy of fiction: It's all about the characters. Check out Carl's Diabolical Plots interviews, his Facebook photos with his students of all ages from around the world, and a short Youtube video of Carl with some VERY excited Thai kindergarteners.

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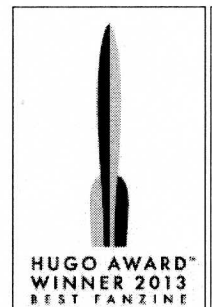
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