



## Interview: Adam Nagaitis Talks AMC's 'The Terror'

March 20, 2018 0 By JEFF FOUNTAIN

Recently we had the opportunity to talk with Adam Nagaitis about his experience working on the terrifying new AMC show *The Terror*.

**How did you end up in the world of acting? Was it something you always wanted to do?**

Adam: I think I just sort of fell into it, to be honest. I don't know, when I look back I don't know if I could have done anything else, if that makes sense. I started when I was a teenager and every stage of decision making that came down in my life, it always revolved around acting. I think it was just inevitable that it was something I was going to do, it was really the only thing I ever truly enjoyed.

**I've watched the first three episodes of *The Terror* and one of the things that I noticed was even though the two crews were sailing through the huge expanse of the arctic it still felt very claustrophobic. As an actor, what was the experience like, in terms of filming this series?**

Adam: I was quite a long process, it went on for about seven months if I remember correctly. It changes significantly as the series goes on but early on when we're on the ship, it is what you said, very confined. The process is always enjoyable and fun and it was nice to be on those sets they created, it made it really easy to imagine the world that you were in. They kept the temperature down on the set, minus fifteen degrees so that helped to make it very easy, the environment very believable. When you're closely confined with lots of people you tend to keep to yourself after a while, trying to concentrate, which can help you develop an understanding of what your character might go through in that scenario. Having to be private in public, I think that was a key part of developing Hickey, no question.

**I find your character rather intriguing. There seems to be a lot more to him than meets the eye. What was it like for you playing Cornelius?**

Adam: It was probably almost the same as what it's like for you experiencing him, it was like learning on a daily basis what he actually does. I found that, because the character developed as he went through it, he goes through room after room after room, that's kind of how I describe his life, he just keeps going through rooms and constantly looking for the exit and then leaves. He's just constantly exploring, looking for something and that's kind of the way it was developing him, figuring out what he does. You can't really nail him down, just when you think you have he kind of transforms or adapts so for me it was about letting go and not trying to nail anything down on a regular basis. It was more about just knowing where he's been and the story of his life that I'd come up with and keeping that solid and knowing some markers as to where he's going to have to go. It was really a lot of fun, there's no real wrong answer with Hickey, he'll take you places that I think are unexpected.



**There is also a great feeling of dread on the show, first concerning the two ships stuck in the ice, then with what is hunting the two crews. Was it hard to convey that emotion, to bring out that real sense of terror?**

Adam: For me, it was interesting because Hickey has felt plenty of terror before, so it doesn't really surprise him the same way it does for other people. I didn't really have that problem, it was more opportunity for me instead of terror, it's more Hickey isn't exactly satisfied with the current social order on the ship, the hierarchy doesn't fit his opinion of himself and so he's looking for circumstances to unfold that will allow him to re-arrange or re-organize that particular hierarchy. He just doesn't succumb to the fear and terror like the rest of them do, he sees it in a different way.

**Now you mentioned the sets, and combined with the costumes and the whole feel of the show, it seems to all come together very well. While you were going through this long film shoot, did you have a good feeling as to how it would turn out when it was finally finished?**

Adam: Oh absolutely, yeah. I think once you step on that set and see the cast that is involved, you read the scripts, the costumes, the set designs, it was all flawless as far as I could tell. It was just about matching the quality that everyone else brought and making sure you were always concentrating all of the time but there was never any doubt in anybody's mind that this was something unique and special. You can never predict whether something

is going to be commercially successful but everyone was on top of their game all the time so to me it was always pretty clear it was going to be something special.

**Did the actors spend a lot of off-hours together or did the claustrophobic nature of the show make you want to have some time alone?**

Adam: Yeah, we did spend time together. I did in the beginning, I got on with everyone, it was lovely, but I found it was easier when I was working to kind of isolate a bit sometimes. Hickey is not really a social animal so sometimes I thought it was a bit dangerous to sort of be really friendly and get on great as mates, it is sometimes easier to keep an air of isolation when on set. That being said, when we were together we all got along, so that was great.



**What was your audition like for the role of Hickey? Did you know exactly what you were auditioning for?**

Adam: I did, I knew what I was auditioning for. I remember I read a scene from episode seven, I just kept reading the same scene for all the auditions, they just added more people to the auditions every time I did it. I didn't have the script but I had the scene and I knew that it was for *The Terror*, I knew the novel and there were all kinds of references to things when I was auditioning, Apocalypse Now references, any sort of reference we could throw together that would give it some shape to where it might go. The writers were not precious about creating Hickey differently than he was in the book, they were very excited about that prospect because there is a lot of ground they could play with. The final audition was a very small room packed with executives and all kinds of frightening people, they all turned out to be lovely people so that was nice. It was a scene from the last episode of the show, it has just been written, and at the time a very big scene and there were

people that sat very close to me and I remember vividly I ended up spitting on quite a few people, which I'm told went down just fine, so yeah, that was interesting.

I want to thank Adam for taking the time to speak with us

*The Terror* premieres on AMC Monday, March 26th at 9:00 pm