



Syfy's 'Van Helsing'—Jonathan Scarfe and Christopher Heyerdahl Interviews

BY REBECCA MURRAY ON SEPTEMBER 19, 2016



Jonathan Scarfe as Axel Miller in 'Van Helsing' (Photo by: Robert Akester/Helsing S1 Productions/Syfy)

During the San Diego Comic Con, Syfy's *Van Helsing* star Jonathan Scarfe explained that when the series begins, it's three years into a vampire apocalypse. Vampires have taken over the world and our only hope for survival could be Vanessa Van Helsing ([Kelly Overton](#)). It's Scarfe's character Axel's job to protect Vanessa after, as Scarfe says, "everything goes to hell."

Scarfe admits he's a fan of both vampire stories and apocalyptic tales. "I'm a huge *Walking Dead* fan and there's obviously a lot of parallels between the two shows," said Scarfe. "The thing I love about *The Walking Dead* is how interesting the characters are they populate that world with. They've stuck them in this

situation and it doesn't matter if it's zombies or vampires...it doesn't matter. It's what happens to these people once all the rules have changed. I think the biggest lure for me was finding out the person who was going to be responsible for creating those characters was Neil LaBute. I mean, to have someone like him who's got such a twisted, interesting take on humanity, I thought, 'Oh my god, it's going to be interesting no matter what.'"

Van Helsing star Christopher Heyerdahl, who also on hand at this year's Comic Con, is no stranger to the world of vampire TV shows and films having been a part of *True Blood* and the *Twilight* franchise. "I've played vampires before and I've played vampire hunters before, and this appealed to me because the character is deaf. That I found fascinating, the challenge there of trying desperately to learn ASL. It's not an easy language to learn," explained Heyerdahl. "This character, Sam, is very strong. He's able to take care of himself. He's survived for three years where the majority of human beings are toast. They've either become food or they've turned to vampirism or they're dead. This guy along with the group he finds himself with are still alive after three years. There's something to be said for that."



Christopher Heyerdahl in 'Van Helsing.'

Heyerdahl says Sam is also a protector. "He's fiercely loyal to those he cares about. And there's a relationship he has with another character, Mohamad, who is a young man who he's learned enough ASL so that he's able to communicate

for Sam. He's not only Sam's voice but he's also Sam's ears. There's a wonderful relationship that goes on there," said Heyerdahl. "There's a wonderful thing to be explored there when you have to ignore something that you're doing on a regular basis as an actor is listening. I have to stop listening."

Scarfe's role as Alex is fairly action-heavy and he enjoyed that aspect of the character. "There's a ton of action in there. There's a ton of fighting, running and shouting and jumping and rolling, getting beat up and bruised," explained Scarfe. "I'd love to tell you how they put me through months of kung-fu training and all that, but no, we were kind of flying by the seat of our pants. They were just counting on you to be able to pull it off. We had a great stunt coordinator and a great team of stunt people who come in there and help work you through it all as they build those sequences. We were pretty run and gun so we didn't have a lot of lead-up time."

So, how would Scarfe hold up in an actual apocalypse? Quite well, actually. He spent years off the grid on a 30 year old sailboat that was constantly breaking, accompanied by his wife and two kids. Over the course of the trip he learned how to hunt for food, do engine repairs, and everything else needed to survive. Laughing, Scarfe said, "You super duper want to find me in an apocalypse!" Syfy's *Van Helsing* premieres on September 23, 2016 at 10pm ET/PT.

The Plot: After a catastrophic volcano eruption, the last remaining underground vampires rise up through a dark, ash-filled sky to overtake America. Vanessa Van Helsing (Overton), a descendant of the legendary line of vampire hunters, awakens from a three-year coma to discover that she's not only immune to the bloodthirsty predators – but also has the ability to make them human again. With this "cure" threatening the vampire's existence and a target on her back, can Vanessa save humanity?