

David William James Elliott To Direct Western-Horror 'The Cursed and the Dead' For Commodicon

Midwest entertainment outfit officially transitions from live event coordination to full-scale feature film production with debut genre slate.

LOS ANGELES, CA, UNITED STATES, July 16, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Following its high-profile restructuring from a live-entertainment event coordination collective to a full-service independent film and digital media production banner in March of this year, Commodicon has officially announced the active development of its debut narrative feature, *The Cursed and the Dead: Silver and Lead*.

“

We're making a version of America that never existed, one where monsters roam the woods and plains, not shareholder meetings and private islands.”

David William James Elliott

Described as a sprawling, high-concept [western](#)-horror hybrid, the film explores an alternative pre-industrial American frontier where indigenous folklore, local cryptids,

and ancient occult magic coexist. The narrative outlines a brutal, decades-long blood feud between an unnamed wandering sheriff known to local townsfolk as "The Lawman" and the enigmatic, supernatural figure "Mister Cross." Production design documents indicate a highly atmospheric visual palette spanning swampy southern bayous, abandoned deep-shaft iron mines, and pristine high-altitude pine forests. All special effects are intended to be fully practical, with several prominent effects teams poised to help create everything from a Louisiana take of the Baba Yaga to a Sasquatch who engages in unarmed combat with a seven foot tall drifter.

Acclaimed novelist Avi Llio is attached to write the screenplay, adapting the cult-classic dark western mythology he originally developed in the early 2010s. While the original multi-book literary saga was tragically cut short following the sudden, highly publicized insolvency of independent publisher Ixtab Media, Llio is expanding the lore specifically for the cinematic canvas.

"The ultimate goal for these characters and this world was always the big screen," Llio said in a statement from his study. "The structural collapse of small-press print distribution in the mid-2010s was a devastating setback at the time, but in hindsight, it preserved the integrity of the property. I am incredibly grateful to finally show the world the scope of what has been trapped in

my head for over a decade now."

Award-winning director, cinematic recluse, and professional voice-over actor, and model [David William James Elliott](#) is attached to direct the feature. Elliott—who rose to prominence in the early 2010s before famously retreating from the public eye after turning down an invitation to join the cast of Saturday Night Live, and who just this spring received his black belt in Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu from the world-renowned Gracie family—is stepping back from investigative documentary journalism to lead the production.

Elliott is fresh off a prolific year, following the success of his highly discussed, genre-bending investigative documentaries *I Forgot to Unsubscribe* from a Stock Footage Service and *Hypernormalization 2: Revenge of the Titans*. Both these genre-bending documentaries found home in multiple festivals across the globe and collected dozens of awards ranging from Best Narration to Best Stunt and have left critics stunned with the unique blend of metafictional documentary, investigative journalism, and Lynchian existential horror.

"You don't spend years in the production orbits of Steven Spielberg and Christopher Nolan without absorbing the fundamental architecture of scale and cinematic atmosphere," said Elliott. "Documentary filmmaking is a vital, challenging career, but world-building is my primary artistic passion. Stepping back into the narrative saddle alongside Avi and the Commodicon team was the easiest creative decision of my fiscal year," David said from the confines of his three story converted warehouse film and art studio in Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

Production Trivia and Industry Tidbits:

IP Moneyball: Commodicon is attempting to use metrics in their [film production](#). By acquiring notable but commercially unviable intellectual properties such as *The Cursed* and *The Dead*, the goal is to not only acquire compelling stories for pennies on the dollar but to also give a second life to fantastical stories that would otherwise be confined to Goodreads history.

The BJJ Protocol: Sources close to the production report that Elliott, a notorious stickler for physical discipline and martial arts conditioning on set, has mandated that all principal cast members undergo basic defensive grappling training prior to shooting.

A "Gracie" Influence: Rumors persist that the film's elaborate hand-to-hand combat choreography will heavily feature traditional Gracie-style ground defense, adapted for 19th-century frontier environments.

Casting Secrets: Casting is currently underway across multiple regional hubs, with several supporting roles already formally offered to emerging theater talent from Chicago, Minneapolis, and New York. We can expect several cameos from David's time as a comedy writer and show runner based in Chicago, with several former cast and crew mates posting photos of themselves in costume on their personal Instagrams. However, production executives have confirmed that the lead roles of "The Lawman" and "Mister Cross" remain a closely guarded secret.

Principal photography is scheduled to commence on location in the Koreatown and the Pacific Northwest in late September 2026.

About Commodicon:

Originally established as a premier live entertainment and regional event coordination entity, Commodicon restructured in Q1 2026 to form a specialized independent film and creative media production house. Based in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, the banner focuses on high-concept genre pieces, auteur-driven narratives, and cutting-edge digital media distribution models.

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