

Tony Cervone Brings 2D Charm to 3D 'Scoob!'

Director of the first fully 3D/CG animated 'Scooby-Doo' feature shares his long-time love of Warner Bros. cartoon animation and the timelessness of Mystery Inc.

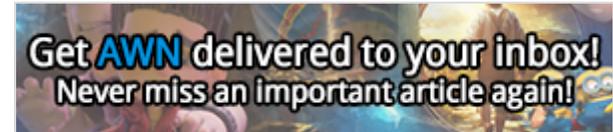
By **Victoria Davis** | Friday, July 24, 2020 at 9:22am

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Director Tony Cervone's 3D/CG animated feature, 'Scoob!' from Warner Bros. Pictures and Warner Animation Group, is now available to own on Digital and Blu-ray / DVD, as well as stream through HBO Max. All images © 2020 Warner Bros. Entertainment Inc. All Rights Reserved.



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A lime green van, endless Scooby snacks and phrases like “jinkies,” “zoinks,” and “you meddling kids” have been key ingredients in our Saturday-morning-cartoon rituals for the last five decades. One of the most prolific Saturday morning cartoon stalwarts is Joe Ruby’s and Ken Spears’ *Scooby-Doo*, which to date has seen 14 animated series with over 400 episodes combined, 43 films including 2 live-action, 27 short films and even a few plays since the show’s birth in 1969. And there are still plenty more animated pooch stories to tell.

Scoob!, released May 15, is the latest feature film to star the Mystery Inc. gang and their trusty (and always hungry) pup, Scooby-Doo; in this latest fully animated 3D/CG feature, the group has to end a “dogpocalypse” and help Scooby rise to meet his epic destiny, with the assistance of a couple superheroes. *Scoob!* is also the first Scooby-Doo animation to include the origin story of how Shaggy (Will Forte) and Scooby (Frank Welker) became an inseparable duo. The film also stars Zac Efron as Fred, Gina Rodriguez as Velma, Amanda Seyfried as Daphne, Mark Wahlberg as Blue Falcon and Jason Isaacs as Dick Dastardly.

“I really love this story because it takes Scooby and Shaggy and pushes them forward and makes them the stars,” says *Scoob!* director Tony Cervone. “They’re normally the comic relief in their own show, but this story really is about them and their friendship.”



Known for his work on *Animaniacs*, *Tiny Tunes*, *Duck Dodgers*, *Space Jam* and *Tom & Jerry* shorts, Cervone has been a Warner Bros. animator for the last 25 years, but a *Scooby-Doo* fan for much

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longer. "In the world of *Scooby-Doo*, the kids are right, totally led by curiosity, and the adults are usually wrong," he says. "I've always thought that's really a positive and important message. When I was a kid and watching these shows after school, I never thought I would grow up to do this for a living or that I would never stop thinking about this. But I've never stopped thinking about it. I've never stopped thinking about the same things as I did when I was a kid and it's been nothing but fun."

Cervone, whose first job with Warner Bros was on a *Tiny Tunes* Happy Meal commercial for McDonald's, has produced for half a dozen Scooby-Doo videos, including *Scooby-Doo! And Kiss: Rock and Roll Mystery*, *Scooby-Doo! Legend of the Phantosaur*, and *Scooby-Doo! Music of the Vampire*. Cervone also not only produced but voice acted in the series *Scooby-Doo! Mystery Incorporated*.

Scoob!, produced by both Warner Bros. and Hanna-Barbera Productions, is the director's first theatrical project for the franchise. "I've worked on a lot of Warner Bros characters in the past, but these characters are very valuable to the studio," Cervone notes. "It's been rewarding getting to be a part of the first 3D animated *Scooby-Doo*. It's a huge honor to take something like that and blow it up to this level, to take these characters and really get to animate them more fully, in 3D for the first time with the budget to do it right. As an animator, that was really exciting for me."

But Cervone says the animation process wasn't without its challenges, and it took five years to get everything right. "I had done enough 3D animation where I felt pretty confident early on that we could bring Scooby's character into 3D without losing the charm he had in the 2D animations," he explains. "But it is extremely complicated taking an iconic 2D character like Scooby-Doo and making him still feel like Scooby-Doo in a completely different animation world. With Scooby-Doo's original 2D design, in different poses, he was, subtly, different dogs and you can cheat that in 2D because you can draw whatever you want. But computers have a hard time with that, so with the 3D animated Scooby, there were always subtle manipulation going on inside the Scooby model so that, when the camera angle moved, he wouldn't look like a Picasso drawing."

"There was so much extra work being done that our animators ended up being more like sculptures by the time they were done," Cervone continues. "There's so much behind the scenes work for this movie just to try to make Scooby look like Scooby, but it looks awesome. I love the effects and the drama you can get out of 3D animation. All the emotion and action you get when it's done right is incredible. I was really happy with the final result."

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Tony Cervone. Photo credit: Courtesy of Warner Animation Group.

While serving as director, Cervone also got to animate a bit on the film, bringing in 2D animation techniques wherever he could. "I did draw a lot during the animation stage and would actually draw on top of the 3D animation and try to push it back into the 2D world a little bit," he says. "Those drawings would go back to the animators to be used as a guide. And then they had to take what I'd drawn and transfer it back into 3D, so there was a lot of back and forth."



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Cervone describes *Scoob!* as a 2D-style movie made in 3D, as the animators often looked to the original, hand-drawn *Scooby-Doo* cartoons for inspiration, as well as classic MGM animations. "Many of the animators on this movie started with William Hanna and Joseph Barbera at MGM working on the *Tom and Jerry* cartoons," Cervone shares. "So, sometimes, to get something right, the animators would watch *Tom and Jerry*, trying to do what those same past animators would do if they had more time and money. There's a fair amount of MGM-style *Tom and Jerry* animation in this movie."

There are also a fair number of Hanna-Barbera "Easter eggs" in *Scoob!* from *The Flintstones*, *Magilla Gorilla* and *Wonder Woman* to referencing the actual Hanna-Barbera studio building itself. "It's one of the things that makes it feel like a true Hanna-Barbera world and I think the audience can feel that everyone who worked on this movie loves this stuff," says Cervone. "This movie was made by Hanna-Barbera fans for Hanna-Barbera fans."

Cervone's favorite scene in the film is also a tip-of-the-hat to Hanna-Barbera's 1970s cartoon, *Captain Caveman*. "Bill Haller, our animation supervisor, and I always like the scenes with Captain Caveman fighting Dee Dee Skyes," the director says. "Captain Caveman is like a character straight out of *Looney Tunes*. He's old-school cartoon animation, whereas Dee Skyes is animated like a superhero, and to watch these characters fighting is pretty cool because they're coming from two different worlds of animation inside the same scene."

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“Tracy Morgan is also the voice of Captain Caveman and he is like the greatest guy in the world. I enjoyed every second of my time with that guy,” Cervone adds.



In addition to the rewards of working on the film’s animation, the greatest reward, according to Cervone, was getting to pass the torch on to a new generation of animators. “I’ve been lucky enough in my career to work with people like Mr. Barbera and Iwao Takamoto, the original Scooby-Doo designer,” he says. “So, I felt like there was an obligation or responsibility there to honor them and to pass the lessons and tricks they taught me onto the next level of animators. And that was the best thing about making this movie.”

While nothing has been officially decided regarding a *Scoob!* sequel, Cervone is confident in the ongoing longevity of the Scooby-Doo characters, noting this universe definitely has more stories it can share. “These characters are archetypes of characters that will always be with us,” he says. “Every generation is going to have a Fred and a Daphne and a Velma and a Shaggy. Those character types are as relevant now as they ever have been. With *Scoob!* we set out to create a universe that could contain multiple stories and I think we were successful in doing that. It’s a rich world and it wouldn’t be difficult to find more stories and more characters, and if that were to happen, we’re ready to do it.”

Scoob! is now available on Digital, Blue-Ray / DVD, and streaming on HBO Max.



Victoria Davis is a full-time, freelance journalist and part-time Otaku with an affinity for all things anime. She's reported on numerous stories from activist news to entertainment. Find more about her work at victoriadavisdepiction.com.

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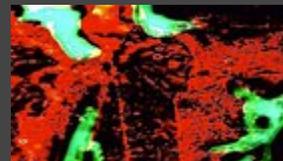
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