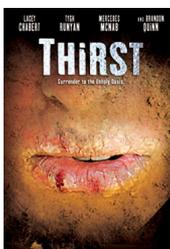


Feel the heat in “THIRST”; exclusive pics, comments

Written by Michael Gingold
Thursday, 22 April 2010 14:26



Director Jeffery Scott Lando got in touch with Fango to talk up his latest flick, the survival chiller THIRST (not to be confused with last year’s Korean vampire drama). Actually, “chiller” is the wrong term, since the movie (for which Lando also sent some exclusive photos) is more concerned with deadly heat.



THIRST, which hits DVD from First Look June 22 following its Canadian pay-TV premiere early this year, stars BLACK CHRISTMAS’ Lacey Chabert, HATCHET’s Mercedes McNab, Tygh Runyan and Brandon Quinn as two couples whose trip deep into the desert is rudely interrupted when their car winds up in a ditch. Stranded with few supplies, miles from civilization, they being to fall victim to the elements and their own delirium. Lando tells us, “This was an idea Raffy Ardhdaldjian [one of the executive producers] came up with along with screenwriter Kurt Volkan [who scripted with Joel Newman]. It all came from a vision Kurt had, a very gruesome image that I can’t convey because it would reveal the secret of how the pregnant wife, Noelle [Chabert], manages to survive. You’ll have to see the film! Extra special props to producer Jeff Schenck, who saw the potential in the movie and myself and made it all happen. We need more like him.”

Lando is no stranger to the genre, having previously helmed SAVAGE ISLAND, the Fango Video release INSECTICIDAL, DECOYS: THE SECOND SEDUCTION and the Syfy titles HOUSE OF BONES and GOBLIN. But THIRST, he says, “may be my most horrific to date, because it deals with real situations. The horror is far more impactful when it is more believable. Paradoxically, people often react with disbelief—such as when they see someone suck the blood out of a snake carcass—probably because the horror would be too potent otherwise. Generally, horror films fall into more of a fantasy genre, but this is real. And in reality, people often make poor choices. This is the true horror of our lives. We’re constantly making bad choices and having to live with the consequences. Sometimes we have an opportunity for redemption, though; that may be our only hope.”

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As might be expected on such a project, the shoot had its unpleasant side as well. “This movie was incredibly tough to make,” Lando recalls. “We worked on a ranch on the northernmost tip of the Sonora desert, which reaches into Canada. It was August: sun, dust, heat stroke, black widows, wasp attacks, pulling cactus spines out of your legs. Yep, there were many trips to the emergency room. But the cast and crew were truly heroic. We worked with a bleeding-edge camera system, the SI-mini, which enabled us to tackle the extreme range of contrast we encountered out there without the benefit—and burden—of massive lights, cables and power. In fact, we shot the entire show without a generator.



“The cast seemed to love the realism of it all,” he continues. “They truly did suffer, especially

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Lacey Chabert, who crawled through cactus take after take, and Brandon Quinn, who literally ate dirt in a desperate attempt to assuage his burning tongue after eating acidic cactus...this was in the script. The clincher was that we worked in sequence, literally shooting chronologically, so the hair stubble and performances would be more real. This allowed for far more improvisation, which the cast took to immediately. The climactic scene came entirely out of this process.”



THIRST is one of a recent string of fright films which generate their terror by stranding their characters in remote locations with inhospitable elements, such as OPEN WATER and, most similarly, last year’s THE CANYON. “What distinguishes this from other survival thrillers,” Lando notes, “is that there is far more going on than the people coping with extreme thirst. There is a horror more profound—that of realizing that you yourself are at the root of the circumstances. We are responsible, we made the wrong choices through our lack of self-knowledge. We are the ones who drove ourselves into the ravine of death. We are the ones who chose to perform brain surgery with a rock and a screwdriver. We are the ones who will have to live with the consequences.” Wait, what was that about brain surgery with a rock and a screwdriver...?

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{comments on}