

## Shivers with the “SHRIVEN”

Written by Samuel Zimmerman  
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Indie filmmaker Brian Schiavo gave Fango a little insight into his just-completed first feature, SHRIVEN. The writer/director lensed the movie in New York City under his Strangewerks Films banner.

THE SHRIVEN focuses on a guy named Ben, who has always been troubled by violent nightmares of himself killing others. As they begin to get even worse, he meets Nina, a beautiful woman with a secret: In the dark of night, she transforms into a demonic killing machine known as a Shriven. She reveals that Ben is also one of her kind, destined to be her mate, and Ben is horrified to learn that the Shriven must feed on humans in order to live.

“Conceptually speaking, I was looking to tell a story about someone who feels like he’s an outsider, that there’s perhaps something wrong with them, when the truth is they were really just different,” Schiavo tells Fango. “I’ve felt that way my entire life, and I’m sure most of us can relate to it. I became aware of a burgeoning indie-film scene in New York City and decided to reach out to those who were also actively pursuing genre filmmaking. You can’t go a block without falling over a DP, an actor or a makeup artist. And if you can wow them with your vision, they might get involved.”



As far as his influences go, it’s no surprise that a man with monsters in his flick looks up to the contemporary king of creatures. “I love Guillermo del Toro’s style and attention to detail,” Schiavo raves. “I share the same love of creatures and the fantastic that he has. I love Clive Barker too and how he takes stuff to the max, especially in HELLRAISER. I enjoy twisting audience identification and making the monster into the hero, which is why NIGHTBREED is so dear to me—also HELLBOY, come to think of it. That was also what I enjoyed about the PLANET OF THE APES films—screenwriter Paul Dehn took the apes and made them into the

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good guys halfway through the series. How cool is that?”

Mostly shot in Queens, THE SHRIVEN endured some close calls, giving Schiavo a crash course in the perils of indie filmmaking. “The production ran for about four months,” he recalls. “We shot mostly on weekends, I would say 18 to 20 days in total, and it was extremely trying, as only low-budget filmmaking can be. We shot most of our interiors at an abandoned furniture factory in Queens, near the airport. I’m a nice boy from Schenectady; I don’t know a bad area when I see one. I had no idea there were two serial rapists operating in the area when we were shooting—and I had scantily clad monster women running around! This place was wide open to anybody who wanted to walk in. It was as big as a city block and full of twisting hallways and rooms right out of SAW. There were dead cats in the place, rooms full of dead flies. One night, we were shooting inside and there were guys shooting outside, at each other—with guns! Everyone dove for shelter. Ah, the memories.”

Schiavo informs that the movie is currently being shopped around by a sales rep, while he has begun preproduction on a new project, WAR OF THE DEAD. “It’s UNDERWORLD with zombies and also dysfunctional families and machine-gun-toting lesbian vampire assassins,” he says—and if that doesn’t grab your interest, we don’t know what will. You can find out more about THE SHRIVEN and check out its trailer at the Strangewerks site [here](#) .

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