After impressing the hell out of the horror community with his debut feature BEHIND THE MASK: THE RISE OF LESLIE VERNON a few years back, director Scott Glosserman (pictured left) finally returns with the MTV movie THE TRUTH BELOW, premiering Thursday, June 16. But he hasn’t been idle in that time; he’s been working on a BEHIND THE MASK sequel and other horrific projects, and gave Fango the scoop on where they stand.

First and foremost, of course, is the long-awaited BEHIND THE MASK sequel, B4TM—BEFORE THE MASK: THE RETURN OF LESLIE VERNON. Glosserman and BEHIND scripter David J. Stieve have completed the script, with stars Nathan Baesel (as aspiring teen-slasher Leslie), Angela Goethals (as the documentarian who took Leslie as her latest subject) and Scott Wilson set to return. “We’ve launched an endeavor to finance the movie,” the director tells us. “The script is awesome; we’re deconstructing the conventions and archetypes of the horror prequel, sequel and remake. I’ve got a lot of commentary to espouse about where the genre has come and gone since the last film, and I’m really really excited about revisiting it, so the next step is to secure our budget so we can go about shooting it.”

While he won’t go into detail about what the storyline involves, “What I will say is, it parallels the aesthetic shift we made in the first movie [pictured right]. We wanted to get back into what was familiar from that film, but without copying ourselves; we’ve found another device that we use to get into that change. We’re just trying to pick up where we left off and then augment it.”

And he’s not concerned about comparisons to SCREAM 4, which attempted a commentary on modern sequel/remake trends earlier this year. “Inevitably, we’re always going to be compared to the SCREAM franchise, the same way we’ll be compared to MAN BITES DOG,” Glosserman notes. “I believe we’ve carved out our own niche. The fundamental difference in the SCREAM franchise is that [those characters are] talking about movies and then renting and watching them; our movie takes place in a world where these villains actually exist. Was I eating my heart out when SCREAM 4 came out, and have they tread upon a lot of similar territory? I think so. But, you know, I didn’t have the luxury of being able to read the SCREAM script when we were writing ours. So there are similarities, but also plenty of differences.”

Beyond that, Glosserman plans to introduce a new baddie to the horror pantheon in a movie called DEPARTURE, which he’s currently developing. “That’s a straight-up, fun, rollicking high concept for an airport horror film that I’m excited to be working on,” he says. “It revolves around a guy who was abandoned at an airport as a little boy by his parents, who could no longer take care of him for one reason or another. Now he’s back!—terrorizing nubile couples who are vacationing and leaving this particular airport. The premise is that airports are like cities: They’ve got their commerce, their transportation, their chapels, but they also have missing persons. I’m trying to create a new slasher, and I want to seriously frighten people—planes are bad enough, so I’m trying to scare people from going to the airport in the first place. I don’t know if you’ve ever had to stay over in an old regional airport, but they can be a very scary places at 3 in the morning. So there’s a lot of fun to be had with that idea.”

The director had previously planned to freak out audiences in another vacation-themed locale with PLAYING HOUSE, which he had set up at Paramount Vantage after BEHIND THE MASK became a festival favorite. “That was sort of a throwback, ‘70s-style ‘STRAW DOGS meets THE SHINING meets THE TEXAS CHAINSAW MASSACRE,’ ” he explains. “It was about a couple who basically bounce from seasonal job to seasonal job, and end up working a party at a huge home on a private island. They wind up squatting at that home during the winter, when all the summer homes shut down, and they get stuck there and attacked by some…interesting characters. In case the movie ever goes through, that’s all I’ll say about it [laughs]. That one was really a victim of the consolidation of Paramount. My writing partner Macy Raymond, who is now my fiancée, were working on that script, and then it butted up against the [2007-08] Writers Guild strike, and after that was over, Paramount Vantage went away. I believe that project is still at Viacom somewhere.”

Prevented by the Guild action from doing any narrative screenwriting for those months, Glosserman wound up coming aboard a rather incongrous project: the documentary TRUTH IN NUMBERS? EVERYTHING, ACCORDING TO WIKIPEDIA. “During the strike, when I was

unable to create any original content for the studios, I had an opportunity to help some people [including director Nic Hill] out with this documentary that they thought they were pretty much wrapped up on. Since I was able to do nonfiction, because that wasn’t under the Guild’s jurisdiction, I came in as a producer and eventually as a director, because it needed a lot more work than I thought it would at the beginning. That took a couple of years to finish, and it was great; you don’t often have the opportunity to go out and pursue this sort of research unless you’re getting your Ph.D somewhere, but I feel like I accomplished the equivalent of a dissertation by delving into Wikipedia for all that time.”

Look for an in-depth talk with Glosserman about THE TRUTH BELOW at this site soon!