Written by Samuel Zimmerman
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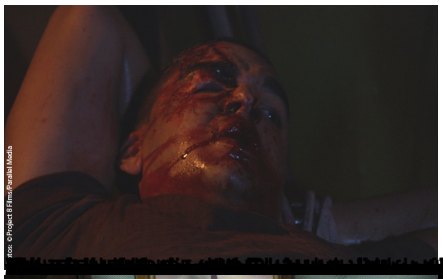
At this point in the history of cinema, and more specifically horror cinema, the description “a group of friends head to a cabin” is enough to make any moderately experienced genre fan sick, and not without good reason. For almost 30 years now, we’ve been inundated with flicks that displace youth into the woods, only for them to fall prey to a masked killer/hungry monster/evil spirit that just happens to reside there. So what exactly is different about THE BLACK WATERS OF ECHO’S POND, which is just such a story, you ask? A lot, in fact.

Directed by Gabriel Bologna from a script he wrote with Michael Berenson and Sean Clark, BLACK WATERS (opening in theaters across the country tomorrow) sees that traditional gang of pals arriving at an island vacation home for a weekend party—only this time with no cloaked deviant or FX creature on the loose, just an ancient board game and their own dark distrust of one another—which, frankly, any longtime circle of chums can relate to. The game that Rick (James Duval), Kathy (Danielle Harris), Josh (Nick Mennell), Veronique (Mircea Monroe), Anton (Arcadiy Golubovich), Renee (Electra Avellan), Erica (Elise Avellan), Trent (Walker Howard) and Robert (M.D. Walton) uncover holds a ritualistic relationship with the elder god Pan, and forces them to act out dormant desires and reveal hidden feelings. This in turn, leads to deadly consequences.

Shot over 24 days on Malibou Lake near Santa Monica, CA (which stands in for the New England Gothic of coastal Maine), the film found inspiration in the ideas behind, and classical uses of, tabletop games. “I read that ancient peoples, like the Egyptians and Greeks, believed that board games were supernatural,” Bologna tells Fango. “After all, what other inanimate objects can elicit emotions like laughter, jealousy, camaraderie, greed and contempt? They were also used in sacred ceremonies, hence they’ve turned up in ancient tombs. I thought, what if there was a game that was inherently evil and unassumingly lets loose the demons in each of us?”



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