

Walking With the “MIDNIGHT SON”

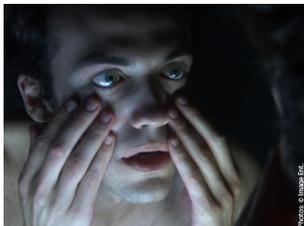
Written by Michael Gingold
Friday, 20 July 2012 12:04



If you're looking for a modern vampire movie where the bloodsucker doesn't sparkle, yet is more human than rapacious beast, you'll want to give MIDNIGHT SON a look. This superior horror/drama is just out on DVD from Image Entertainment, and Fango chatted with its writer/director Scott Lebrecht.

MIDNIGHT SON stars Zak Kilberg as Jacob, who spends his nights working as a security guard and his days shut up in his Los Angeles basement apartment. A chance meeting with Mary (Maya Parish) promises to bring him out of his shell—but also to draw out his latent compulsion to drink blood. As they struggle to each overcome their addictions and forge a relationship, MIDNIGHT SON balances its psychological study with sexy and splattery moments (see full review [here](#)). It's an auspicious feature debut for Leberecht, who (rather ironically, given the film's spare, moody aesthetic) started out as a visual FX art director on such genre spectacles as SPAWN and SLEEPY HOLLOW.

FANGORIA: Was MIDNIGHT SON a reaction to the TWILIGHT-ization of vampires?



SCOTT LEBERECHT: No, I wrote the first outline for MIDNIGHT SON in 2003. I think vampires have always been depicted as powerful and sexy, but my story required a character who is weak and vulnerable. It was later that I realized I would be telling a classic vampire story in a very unusual way for the genre.

Walking With the “MIDNIGHT SON”

Written by Michael Gingold
Friday, 20 July 2012 12:04

FANG: Were you inspired by the likes of George A. Romero’s MARTIN?

LEBERECHT: I didn’t know about MARTIN until after a cinephile friend of mine read MIDNIGHT SON and told me to see it. I love that movie. It explores many of the same themes and conflicts.

FANG: What new ideas about vampirism did you want to explore in this film?

LEBERECHT: When I attended the American Film Institute, I read a lot of Joseph Campbell, which led me to Carl Jung. I was really taken by his “shadow” concept; Jung theorized that we all have a persona lurking inside us that represents our repressed desires. The shadow is that naughty, bad person we all know is deep within us, and he believed everyone must come to terms with their shadow in order to find psychological peace. This isn’t necessarily a new idea for the genre, but I believe MIDNIGHT SON presents the protagonist’s inner conflict in a way that most vampire movies do not.

FANG: Did you also want to make a comment on Los Angeles life?

LEBERECHT: LA works well as a setting, but so would San Francisco or New York. I think the weirdest thing about life in any big city is that you have the choice to surround yourself with people anytime you want. It is a lot easier to become lonely because you can get a connection fix pretty easily, but it’s not real connection. Bars and pubs are the perfect place to get a kind of pseudoconnection. Most interactions are rarely deep or meaningful. When real intimacy is too scary for people, big cities offer a lot of opportunities for something halfway there.

FANG: Was this a guerrilla shoot, or more structured?

LEBERECHT: It was guerrilla. We had no lights for exteriors. We chose locations based on a street lamp or bright storefront. As far as structure goes, John Mattingly, my 1st assistant director, was the only one who could provide that. Without him we would have gone down in flames.

Walking With the “MIDNIGHT SON”

Written by Michael Gingold
Friday, 20 July 2012 12:04

FANG: Any fun/scary stories from shooting on the LA streets at night?

LEBERECHT: We wrapped at 5 a.m. one night in the LA river basin. Everyone dispersed from the location. Only one person was left, standing alone next to a fake body wrapped in plastic. Passing joggers called the police. No arrests were made.



FANG: How did you discover your two leads?

LEBERECHT: Zak contacted me via e-mail because he saw a website I had created about the movie. I liked his look, he auditioned and I knew he was the one. He gave so much to the film; never once was he afraid. He committed to this journey with total trust in me. It was thrilling to work with an actor like him.

Maya and I met at a screening of AFI short films. I liked the film she was in, and she liked mine. Her performance made me think of the Mary character, so I told her about the screenplay I was writing. Three years later, I called her and told her we were making the movie and I wanted her to play the female lead. She agreed, then proceeded to raise a bunch of money which enabled us to make the film on a much more realistic level.

FANG: Did they contribute a lot to their characters?

LEBERECHT: Yes, but Zak and Maya already had most of what they needed to draw from in their own personalities. They naturally understood the conflicts and inner world of their characters.

Walking With the “MIDNIGHT SON”

Written by Michael Gingold
Friday, 20 July 2012 12:04

FANG: How did you get veteran actor Tracey Walter, who plays Jacob's co-worker, involved?

LEBERECHT: He actually showed up for an audition—I couldn't believe it! Michelle Short, our casting director, contacted his agent, and I had no idea. When he walked into the room, I couldn't believe my eyes. Needless to say, he killed the scene and I was walking on air the rest of the day. Tracey is a truly amazing, brilliant man. A legend in his own time.

FANG: How did you approach handling the movie's sexual/violent moments?

LEBERECHT: We carefully planned them out and rolled camera. It was the first time I ever shot any nudity, so it was weird. It was the first time for all of us. We just did our best to be respectful and careful about the actors' bodies. The challenge of shooting violence and sex is that it has to be well-planned and blocked, but not to the degree of destroying opportunities for natural action or spontaneity. It's impossible to get those things to look real without taking some risks.

FANG: Has the festival/audience/critical response to MIDNIGHT SON been satisfying?

LEBERECHT: More than satisfying. The reviews have been pretty much all positive. I love reading them, especially the negative ones. I feel like a fraud sometimes, so when someone articulates all the flaws, I get excited. I want to call them and say, “You see what I see! Thank you for proving that I'm not crazy!”