Written by Michael Gingold
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A new horror film is currently shooting at a real haunted location—but this isn’t a found-footage investigative flick. It’s a supernatural thriller called SQUATTER that marks the feature directorial debut of Jerusha Pettit (pictured left), featuring her sister Tracy in the lead role. The filmmaker sent along comments on the movie and some exclusive photos.

Shooting at the Walker-Ames House in Port Gamble, WA (pictured right) that has been the site of reported ghost activity for years and visited by a number of parapsychologists, SQUATTER focuses on Ellie Walker (Tracy Pettit), who is forced to return to her childhood home and finds a stranger living there, claiming squatter’s rights. As she tries to get him out, she discovers that something much more evil has also taken up residence in the house. The cast additionally includes Alexi Yulish (1st and 2nd photo below with Pettit), whose credits include David Lynch’s INLAND EMPIRE, as the fallen angel Abaddon, Jeff Newberg (3rd photo below) and Andres Faucher.

”The investors who decided to fund the project told me I needed to find the perfect, iconic house on which the film would center,” Jerusha Pettit tells us. ”Port Gamble was suggested to me, so I went to scout it out. When I drove into town, I immediately knew that the Walker-Ames house was *the* location. When I first drove down the main street, it was like being plugged into an electrical socket, there was so much energy.”

The filmmaker was so inspired by her location, she adds, “Certain events and inspiration for SQUATTER have come directly from the town, its founders and the Walker-Ames House. We’re finding that the making of the movie is proving just as interesting as the film itself, so we’re eager to share that as well. We’ll be placing surveillance cameras to capture how the house and its inhabitants react to our shooting there, and have seen and heard various phenomena: light bulbs dimming, sudden spikes in temperature and electromagnetic field energies, as well as auditory and visual phenomena. We’re in close contact with the various paranormal research groups that have been investigating the house for years, establishing connections and learning about the various sightings. Working with the Olympic Paranormal Peninsula Society, a scientist, Tracy and I had an overnight stay in the house using eight

surveillance cameras and audio recorders. We gathered several findings from that night, which will go in the special features on the DVD.”

Pettit plans SQUATTER as the first of a trilogy, with an overarching story that will encompass ”dark secrets, sinister cabalistic conspiratorial plots, demonic possession, paranormal activity, supernatural phenomena and even romance. The target audience extends way beyond the normal 14-40 male demographic, as there’s a bit of something for everyone past the age of 13. Horror buffs will be thrilled, as it pays homage to the classic genre films, so if you loved THE SHINING or ROSEMARY’S BABY, you’ll love SQUATTER. It’s also a love story at its core, so the female audience will have that to hold onto, but this is truly a film for anyone who loves to watch a deeply character-driven story.”

SQUATTER’s postproduction team includes composer Ram Khatabakhsh and sound designer Dane A. Davis, an Oscar winner for THE MATRIX whose many horror credits include SINISTER, THE CABIN IN THE WOODS, ORPHAN, THE REAPING, THE HILLS HAVE

EYES, THE FORGOTTEN, THIR13EN GHOSTS and HOUSE ON HAUNTED HILL. Stay tuned for more on SQUATTER as it gets closer to release.