Lock and load, people, for this is a very special article. Harry Bromley Davenport, the *enfant terrible* behind XTRO—a British video nasty from the early 1980s that he's about to sequelize again (see item here)—does not mince his words in this interview regarding his latest shocker, HAUNTED ECHOES (out today on DVD from E1), complemented by a few exclusive pics. Harry is clearly a man not to cross—as we found out…

FANGORIA: What was your inspiration for HAUNTED ECHOES?

HARRY BROMLEY DAVENPORT: Well, basically that's nobody's f**king business, but since you are a toadying bastard who says nice things about me in print, I will give you an answer, albeit a stultifying boring one. Daryl Haney, who has written for me for 16 years and with whom I have done seven completed movies, was sitting at home one night, presumably drunk and desperate. An idle thought flitted through his mind which went like this: "The wind…erm…erm… Yep… The wind… I'll bet that if I call up Harry and tell him I have a great idea for a movie and that it starts with someone sitting on their sofa, drunk and desperate and listening to the wind outside, he's enough of a fool to pay me to write it."

And I did.

The fact that HAUNTED ECHOES has nothing to do with this "wind" leitmotif is symptomatic of a needlessly complicated creative process, during which we have long discussions over lunches for a period of several months to nail out a theme, a story and some odd bits and pieces of ideas we like. Daryl then goes away and writes a screenplay which has no bearing whatsoever on our conversations. I then submit to this perennial insult because he's better at this writing thing than me.

By the way, he is writer-credited as a woman, "Rachel Calendar," on our three most recently released films. That's because the first of these, SMILE PRETTY, is a true story about child pornography. Now, it looks bad enough to have a director who has a picture like XTRO lurking in his c.v., but also to have a writer with a FRIDAY THE 13TH sequel [PART VII] and Roger Corman credits…well, Daryl wanted to give the film a chance. You see, he and I have had a couple of reviews for our more "serious" films which start with, "Haney and Davenport are clearly out of their depth here, both having come from exploitation films, they are clearly assholes, etc." So Rachel Calendar was born. We had a great time fabricating a life story for her—how she had adopted Chechen orphans and taught at a community college and a lot of politically correct claptrap. A friend of ours posed for her press-release photo.

FANG: What was it about HAUNTED ECHOES that attracted the cast, such as Sean Young, to the screenplay?

DAVENPORT: Sean did it because it's a good part. They don't write good parts for women any more as they did in the '30s and '40s. And because of us being friends. I have known her since my film MOCKINGBIRD DON'T SING, and I enjoy Sean immensely. She's intelligent and has a sharp wit, plus she doesn't suffer fools gladly, which has often gotten her into trouble for being outspoken and saying the kinds of things we all want to say. I adore her. M. Emmet Walsh I have known since we did a film together called ERASABLE YOU, a satire where he plays a rich, stupid and casually violent father. He's a great old coot who just loves to work. His agent tells me that he only did it because he likes me, which secretly delighted me. Juliet Landau, she of BUFFY THE VAMPIRE SLAYER, I have known for 13 years since we did LIFE AMONG THE

CANNIBALS, a satire where she plays the bitch girlfriend, and, of course, Barbara Bain is her mother. Wait a minute… Which f**king movie are we talking about? This is getting confusing and dreary. Next question.

FANG: What is it about HAUNTED ECHOES that brings something new to the genre?

DAVENPORT: Nothing. Next question.

FANG: How did you get on with the cast? Was it a tough shoot?

DAVENPORT: Can't you do better than that? I mean, here I am, all dressed up and poised to deliver sobering answers, and you come on with this crap about "Was it a tough shoot?" *All* shoots are tough. And my emotions toward actors are those of pity and compassion for poor creatures who have subjected themselves to such a demeaning profession. For this reason, I try very hard to make them feel at ease and let them rip. I don't believe in telling actors how to do it. I tell them *where* to do it. It's a hard life and a difficult task to look as if you are saying that line for the first and last time. Try it yourself sometime. You'll see. Oh, I forgot, you're a film journalist and therefore incapable of empathy. Next?

FANG: After XTRO, were you delighted to be typecast within the horror genre?

DAVENPORT: "Horror film" is a term usually used in a deprecating manner. I believe that, in today's parlance, it indicates a film which is only just above the level of pornography. That, at any rate, is the common usage. The term is associated with slasher films, torture porn and dusty old relics of the '60s and '70s like old Roger Corman movies and Hammer pictures. Getting a start in exploitation films, as I did, suddenly became unfashionable about 20 years ago, and such movies are now regarded as smut, despite the fact that they gave Martin Scorsese, Francis Ford Coppola, Jim Cameron, Joe Dante, Jonathan Demme and countless others their first opportunities to direct a professional movie.

I get this "horror film" thing a lot, largely because I directed a cult movie called XTRO some 28 years ago. To this day, that movie is available and is rereleased every few years on video. On the IMDb, there are pages and pages of people still yammering on about it. I wish I had a piece of that film. Oh! Silly me! I forgot, I *do* own a piece of it, but was cheated out of the money by scumbags who will go to hell and be forced to suck Charlie Manson's d**k. HAUNTED ECHOES is a ghost story. Why am I talking to you? The sorry answer is that I am desperate to see my name in print, thereby increasing my pathetically low sense of self-worth.

FANG: As a filmmaker, do you have certain responsibilities toward your audience, and can you go too far in the portrayal of rape and physical violence?

DAVENPORT: I don't think it's a good thing, for instance, for a young girl to see a scene where a man sticks a gun in a woman's mouth, or in her naughty bits, or other scenes of sexual violence. I don't mind what adults view. They can watch camels humping crocodiles on ice for all I care. But if you allow lunatic filmmakers to show anything to anybody of any age, you risk making indelibly adverse impressions on young minds—and that's foolhardy. You have to draw a vague line somewhere, and if that means some truly creative work is not shown for censorship reasons, then that's just too damn bad.

FANG: Do you have any anecdotes about the HAUNTED ECHOES set and production that you can share with me?

DAVENPORT: I will not "share" anything. That's such an annoying term. I thought it was unique to California. When I hear it, I want to slap the speaker. Memories… I remember that my feet hurt a lot because it was a very hot summer and I had to stand up a lot. I remember seeing this massive 45-foot crane arm sweeping across the garden of the location and thinking, "Yes, this is a f**king movie," and I remember two or three scenes where we shot between three and five minutes in super-long takes, with camera moves and cranes and whatnot. Look for them—if you, a mere journalist, are capable of such observation—and you'll find them. There's a smashing, long, long exterior scene night at the end where Monk is hiding in the garden. It took half a day to set up and rehearse, and the other half to shoot.

FANG: Do you have anything to say to the readers of FANGORIA?

DAVENPORT: I love you. In return I ask merely for your worship and adoration. Money would be nice, too.

FANG: And lastly, would you prefer to work with Nicole Kidman, Sandra Bullock or Helen Mirren? Why?

DAVENPORT: I would like to work with Sandra Bullock very much because I have always wanted to f**k her and I might get a chance to slip it in while she Isn't paying attention. I would not like to f**k Helen Mirren, but I do admire her enormously. I never understood the big deal about Nicole Kidman. Is she really so luminous? Think about it. Oh, I forgot, that's beyond you. That's why you do this job of writing down stuff that other people say, rearranging it and then imagining, in your impoverished and tiny mind, that you are in some way responsible for the utterances of others. In this case, basking in my reflected glory. Next.

FANG: See you soon, pal.

DAVENPORT: Sure. Bugger off.

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