



May 9: Director exposes NAKED BENEATH THE WATER

Writer/director Sean Cain gave Fango the word that his horror/mystery NAKED BENEATH THE WATER (see photos at left) will have its commercial world premiere Fri. June 2 at midnight at Los Angeles' [Laemmle Theatres Sunset 5](#) (8000 Sunset Boulevard in West Hollywood). This is the latest in the series of recent movies to put a horrific spin on the reality-TV trend, but it takes a different tack from the usual body-count approach.

"I was never a fan of slasher films," Cain tells Fango. "Psychological horror is more to my liking; Roman Polanski's THE TENANT is a good example. And I was drawn to this aspect found in reality TV—why some poor schmucks would put themselves into torturous situations just to be reality stars. I thought only someone who was really deranged would do that, and NAKED BENEATH THE WATER comes from this idea."



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The storyline Cain came up with focuses on Pelle (played by the filmmaker himself), whose brother has been missing for a month. He receives a mysterious phone call telling him to check out a popular reality show called PUBLIC ENEMY NUMBER ONE, in which contestants commit murder on camera in a quest to be the year's top killer. Pelle sees a chainsaw slaying shot in his brother's apartment and sets out to discover whether the killing is real, and finds himself in the middle of a battle of Public Enemies past and present.



The cast also includes Bonnie Steiger, Richard Teran, Serge Federov, Film Star Randal Malone, James Wright and Wendy Taylor. (Cont'd →)

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(Cont'd →) "When I started putting the movie together, I found the lead character of Pelle Svanslos difficult to cast," Cain says.

"I was asking actors to go through some heavy-duty torture scenes for very little money. During the course of the movie, Pelle was to be tied up, beaten and have his head shaved on camera [see photo on previous page].

"All the actors balked at the prospect—especially about the hair thing. So in the end, I figured I'd have to do it myself. At least I could count on myself being there every day. And in a weird way, it was very cathartic. Probably a lot cheaper than paying a shrink, too.

"For the reality-show scenes, we filmed in a studio in San Rafael," he continues. "I was extremely lucky to find Bonnie Steiger to play the host, Sharon Sharalike. She had been

hosting a successful local show called MOVIE CLOSE UP that interviewed Hollywood types from Jeff Bridges to John Waters, and it was her experience with that which made her perfect. She let me work on a couple of her segments for fun, and I gained invaluable knowledge to use for the script.

"There was also a fairly large action scene that took place near the Golden Gate bridge. It was a night shoot and I brought a very small crew along, because we had no permits. We were running around doing all kinds of stuff; I had a chainsaw with me, we were driving vehicles back and forth and no one stopped us. Maybe the cops didn't want to get out of their warm cars because, let me tell you, it was cold out there."

After completing the first edit last year, Cain showed NAKED around and, based on the

reactions, decided to add an additional "balls to the wall" action sequence. The setpiece in question finds the Public Enemy known as The Shaver (Fedorov) blowing up a house and then emerging to meet his adoring fans. Having acted for director/FX creator Jeff Leroy on the upcoming feature PSYCHON INVADERS, Cain tapped Leroy to build and explode a miniature house.

"Jeff introduced me to Randal Malone, who was also in the alien flick, and as soon as I met him, I knew he had to be in NAKED," Cain recalls. "So we modeled the miniature house after his amazing place in Van Nuys, and I had him portray the Shaver's brand-new manager, who's trying to wrest this über-reality star from the clutches of Sharon Sharalike.

"Our final day of shooting consisted of blowing up the miniature house, then doing real explosions with Serge Fedorov at the actual place [see photo on previous page]. We had dozens of extras playing firefighters, cops and adoring fans, topping it off with a shootout inside a limo. It was a lot of fun, and the scene now opens NAKED BENEATH THE WATER."

Cain hopes to get the movie limited theatrical play before shopping it around for DVD distribution. You can check out the official website for NAKED BENEATH THE WATER [here](#).

—Michael Gingold

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