

Terror Tidbits (Fango #305)—“SAINT” and Sinner

Written by Michael Gingold
Sunday, 03 July 2011 08:01



While Dutch writer/director Dick Maas' SAINT (a.k.a. SINT) is not specifically a killer-Santa-Claus saga—it focuses on the even older, somewhat different European figure of St. Nicholas, a.k.a. “Sinterklaas”—the film initially sparked some of the same outrage that greeted SILENT NIGHT, DEADLY NIGHT in the U.S. back in 1984. Societies devoted to protecting the beloved icon protested to the media, objecting just to the concept and poster before filming had even begun. The two movies' situations diverged, however, once SAINT hit theaters in Holland.

“All the controversy we had before the movie opened just created awareness for it,” Maas recalls. “Everybody knew what the film was before it came out, so they weren't surprised. When they went to the cinema, they knew what to expect.” And lots of them went; as opposed to SILENT NIGHT, which was quickly drummed out of theaters, SAINT became 2010's highest-grossing Dutch release. It will be making its way across the international festival circuit (including a stop at Montreal's Fantasia) this summer; IFC Films snapped up U.S. rights following this past spring's Tribeca Film Festival, where Fango spoke to Maas about the movie, and currently plans limited theatrical bookings and video-on-demand exposure in September.



Terror Tidbits (Fango #305)—“SAINT” and Sinner

Written by Michael Gingold
Sunday, 03 July 2011 08:01

SAINT's great success validated Maas' long struggle to get it made, despite his success with previous genre films like THE LIFT and AMSTERDAMNED and the FLODDER series of comedies. He completed the script five years ago, but explains, "In Holland, you have to go through the process of getting film funds from the government, and they almost never choose my films, because I make movies with a lot of action, for the greater public. They'd rather support more 'artistic' movies. So they didn't want to give me money for this, and then I had to get into a sort of legal battle with them, almost going to court. But they settled it; they thought they were gonna lose, so they gave me the money, but that cost me two years. We also had to shoot it in the winter, because of the setting, the snow, etc., so it took a long time."

As opposed to SILENT NIGHT and its ilk, in which psychopathic regular folks don Santa garb, SAINT showcases an actual evil incarnation of its holiday gift-giver. "I didn't want to just make a slasher movie, with a guy in a St. Nicholas costume who slaughters people," Maas notes. "I wanted to give it a greater scope, make it a bigger movie with an epic feel. In Holland, St. Nicholas is the biggest tradition there is; it's more important than the queen. There are a lot of St. Nicholas movies, but they're always for children, and no one had tried before to make a horror film out of it. It was strange to me that nobody had thought of giving it that twist."

For the whole story, pick up FANGORIA #305, on sale now. Go [here](#) for full issue details, and [here](#) to order the issue or subscribe to the magazine!