

Take a journey with "THE OREGONIAN"

Written by Samuel Zimmerman
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While admittedly not for all, the realm of surrealist, pure cinema is often exemplary at evoking a journey in an audience. It can be a sensory plunge into another realm; one consistently surprising, often befuddling, but sometimes transforming your element from start to finish. Calvin Lee Reeder's THE OREGONIAN, having flown under the radar since its premiere at 2011's Sundance Film Festival, opens tomorrow at Brooklyn's [ReRun Gastropub Theater](#)*, and FANGORIA caught up with Reeder to discuss his unsettling trip with a nameless character into undiscovered land.

"Leaving behind a desultory and potentially abusive existence, a beautiful farm girl, known only as The Oregonian (Lindsay Pulsipher), rushes head-long into an unknown future." That's all you'll get from its synopsis, and truthfully, this talk won't give you much more, except a feeling that if you consider yourself brave, and open, THE OREGONIAN may be for you.

FANGORIA: Given the title and locale, I'm curious about the idea of the Pacific Northwest being a pocket of strangeness, and odd energy. Did that feed into THE OREGONIAN at all, and what's your own take on this concept?

CALVIN LEE REEDER: You know the word "Oregonian" to me has a strange shape to it independent of its actual meaning. I loved the mystery of the title, and carried it around with me for a few years before I even knew what the movie was about.

I guess it is a pocket of strangeness up there. I was born into it, so it didn't really occur to me until I moved away. That said, I tried to create a place that doesn't exist for the movie. We shot as far north as Ravensdale, WA and as far south as 29 Palms, CA. We jammed it all together, scrambled it and folded it over like a subconscious omelet.

FANG: Is there a lot of yourself in THE OREGONIAN? Is the lead character's journey expressive of one you feel you've taken?

REEDER: It's possible. I think everyone is sort of going on that journey. Most things are

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unknown to us, but we have created a lot of bullshit to obscure that fact. We made a system and agreed upon it. There's a lot of confident people out there so sure they know what's going on. I don't think anyone knows shit, it's all temporary. There's a lot of primitive, barbaric, unknowable stuff out there and it isn't hard to find.



FANG: In making challenging and abstract work, is there an atmosphere or emotion you specifically hope to evoke in its audience, or do you enjoy folks taking what they will? Do you enjoy being offered interpretations of your work?

REEDER: I'm really just happy to have an audience. I can only try to evoke emotion, there's no way everyone will feel the same about it. If people are feeling the same blend of dread, curiosity and excitement I was when conceiving/making the film, that's really good news, but that's for them. I'll never really know.

I don't mind hearing different interpretations of my work, there's no wrong way to interpret any movie if you ask me.

FANG: You seem lucky to have found a kindred spirit in Lindsay Pulsipher. Was it hard discovering other actors completely open to the world?

REEDER: You are very right, meeting Lindsay elevated everything. She makes the worlds we create real, she's a natural talent. As far as meeting other actors I'd say it's been pretty easy. Actors want to do interesting things and if they like my stuff they show up ready for battle. I've really been fortunate that way.

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FANG: Something like THE OREGONIAN can be out of many viewers' elements. Have you found it difficult for audiences to judge the film on its own terms, and not through comparisons of other surrealist filmmakers?

REEDER: You know, I wish more audiences would compare it to surrealist works but most of those films are foreign and old, so that limits the general public's knowledge/interest right away. I've found the more curious the audience the better it plays. You don't have to know all of Bunuel or Tarkovsky's stuff to enjoy it, but people who are open to that type of cinema seem to respond better to it. It's when folks frame it as a horror film is when I think it gets devalued. I do get a lot of David Lynch comparisons. It's cool, but there's a lot more out there people should know about before they become film bloggers.

FANG: How is THE RAMBLER progressing? Is there an overarching theme you're searching within, in tales like THE RAMBLER and THE OREGONIAN?

REEDER: THE RAMBLER is going really good. I guess I'm still probing the unknown but THE RAMBLER is a very different movie. I think it will be funny.

**If outside New York, THE OREGONIAN is currently available on Netflix Instant*