

Filmmaker talks SXSW film “MONSTERS”; exclusive photo

Written by Samuel Zimmerman
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This week sees the beginning of the 2010 edition of [South by Southwest](#), the music and film celebration that aims to introduce the world to new cinematic talent. One of them is Gareth Edwards, whose movie MONSTERS is among the five SX Fantastic genre features being presented at the event by

[Fantastic Fest](#)

. Fango spoke to the visual FX artist turned writer/director as he awaits MONSTERS' SXSW world premiere this Saturday, March 13.

This little film is shrouded in quite a bit of mystery. Currently there's not much out there promoting MONSTERS, including a couple of stills (including the exclusive one below) and a synopsis that tells of a future five years from now where an extraterrestrial presence has infiltrated Central America, leaving half of Mexico quarantined and redubbed the Infected Zone. The movie follows an American journalist (Scoot McNairy) escorting a tourist (UNEARTHED's Whitney Able) through the hostile, creature-ridden territory in a bid to reach the safety of the U.S. border.



Regarding this self-imposed secrecy, Edwards tells Fango, “We really set out to try and take a different approach with making this film. It’s all shot very guerrilla-style, and apart from our main actors, everyone else is just ‘real people’ going about their real lives, with the crazy sci-fi elements added later in the computer. The final effect is something very subtle that I’m really proud of, but it’s hard to explain to people who haven’t seen it. So we’re really looking forward to South by Southwest so we can finally show it and have everyone else tell us what our film is.”

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The director, whose FX credits include *IN THE SHADOW OF THE MOON* and Emmy-nominated work on TV's *PERFECT DISASTER*, was inspired to make *MONSTERS* after not being able to shake his day job from his imagination. “When you create digital effects for a living, it’s very hard to switch off,” he says. “You end up walking around picturing crazy things in the background of wherever you go. I remember being on holiday about five years ago and seeing these fisherman struggling to pull something out of the ocean. I thought, ‘Wouldn’t it be cool if it turned out to be a giant creature or something?’ They were arguing and mocking each other in such a way that I figured, if you filmed them, you could easily add creatures in later and these guys would look like Oscar-winning actors. Eventually, that approach of mixing real and fake scenarios evolved into my movie.”

What’s known about *MONSTERS* certainly reveals it as ambitious, yet Edwards made the film with a tiny budget but a lot of scope. “I actually believe it’s easier that way,” he says. “When you have a big crew, it becomes a bit restrictive. Shooting everything guerrilla-style means you can go with the flow and have ideas on the spot. The best, most realistic stuff in the film came from moments that happened by accident as we were shooting. Because of my background in digital effects, I could just roll with it, knowing I’d be able to manipulate scenes later in the computer to better fit our sci-fi/horror scenario.”

But how will he deal with the film’s specifics going public after its screening this weekend? “As long as the details that emerge are ‘It’s a pretty good film,’ I won’t mind at all!” he laughs. “I’m a massive fanboy myself, and genuinely can’t think of a better audience to premiere this film to. I don’t believe our film really hangs on a particular detail or piece of information; it’s a lot more about the atmosphere and journey of following these characters through this crazy situation.”

Check back at Fango for coverage of more SXSW flicks soon.

{jcomments on}