

Dante Tomaselli delves into “TORTURE CHAMBER”

Written by Michael Gingold
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Independent horror filmmaker Dante Tomaselli hasn't been represented on screen since 2006's *SATAN'S PLAYGROUND*, but that's soon to change, as he recently completed his new shocker *TORTURE CHAMBER*. He's anxious to unleash it upon the world, and shared his thoughts about the movie and the dark creative philosophy behind it.

“Anyone who follows my work knows that it usually takes a while between films,” Tomaselli tells Fango. “This was the netherworld I needed to explore. When I'm channeling a film, I conjure the terror picture in my mind, exactly the way I see it and hear it. It's very specific. I spend so much time fantasizing about the movie, planning it and feeling its textures and rhythms in my mind. I'm a slave to unlocking these misty, glowing images. For me, when the shoot begins, everything goes black, and all my senses funnel into the movie. I'm living inside it. More than any other film, *TORTURE CHAMBER* lodged itself deeply in my unconscious. I'm sure it had a lot to do with the fact that I didn't get to mount the last feature I wanted, *THE OCEAN*, a film I still plan on finishing [which—full disclosure—this writer co-scripted with him].”

“I approached *TORTURE CHAMBER* with rage and love,” he continues. “It felt like it was my first movie all over again. This was an emotionally charged production for me, because I want to keep making fantasy/horror films forever. You'll never see me direct a romantic comedy about lawyers in love. My passion is in exploring the supernatural. I'm here for Gothic horror. This production was a lesson in tenacity. After years of chipping away, the stars aligned, and I finally got to create my new film.”



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That passion helped him bring in TORTURE CHAMBER, about a possessed 13-year-old boy who abducts and torments adults with a youthful band of followers, in at a very low cost. “Though the budget was small, I knew the movie had to be larger than life. TORTURE CHAMBER is a wild horror ride, an interior journey full of light, color and design. I wanted to create pure cinema, and from the beginning, I knew I had to give it a feeling of epic exuberance. That’s not easy when your budget is \$200,000, but I’ve worked with similar budgets in the past. Still, I’ve never had as many locations before. Usually, as a rule, low-budget productions concentrate on one area. From a scheduling standpoint, TORTURE CHAMBER seemed very ambitious, nearly impossible. I was moving my very large crew from Ogdensburg, New Jersey to Fort Totten, Queens to Cranbury, New Jersey to Brooklyn, New York to West Paterson, New Jersey, back to Queens and then Plainfield, New Jersey and so on. The locations were spread out, but they were very specific and important to the movie’s visual tapestry.”

And his creative obsession didn’t stop after the film wrapped. “I watched the footage nonstop, and all the while, I was listening to the audio effects, mixing sounds like tarot cards. The score is 50 percent of the film’s equation. I created this soundtrack like I was making an album. At the studio, I had different categories of sounds, with labels like staccato, crescendo, baritone, glacial... It was a palette filled with audio; I painted TORTURE CHAMBER with these sounds. It felt intimate, like I was inside the movie. The soundtrack should feel subliminal—crawling under the surface, like liquid fire. More than anything, this is a portrait of a repressed religious family bathed in guilt and sin. There’s a brooding undercurrent, an emotional violence pervading the atmosphere. This is a family in deep psychic pain, and we witness that opened wound oozing. The whole film is an incantation, really—a spell. It’s fueled by pure belief; frame by frame, building to the climax, it conjures a demon of blasphemy and murder.”

You can keep updated on TORTURE CHAMBER via its [official website](#) and [Facebook page](#) , and start tracking back through our previous coverage [here](#)

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