

## Dante Tomaselli talks “TORTURE CHAMBER”

Written by Michael Gingold  
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Writer/director Dante Tomaselli, whose previous stylized fright features include SATAN’S PLAYGROUND, HORROR and DESECRATION, is getting rolling on his latest film TORTURE CHAMBER. The filmmaker got in touch to give us a cast/character breakdown and more info on the flick.

The story centers on Jimmy Morgan, a demonically possessed 13-year-old who escapes from a mental institution and finds his way to the title lair in the bowels of an abandoned castle. Soon, an assortment of victims wind up in the torture chamber as well, thanks to Jimmy and a band of other children under his evil sway. “Jimmy is a pyromaniac, and horribly disfigured from experimentation with drugs,” Tomaselli tells us. “His Catholic mother is a religious fanatic who believes her son is evil, sent by the devil, and his older brother is a priest who tries to exorcise him. At the core, this is a twisted family psychodrama. But more than anything I’ve ever done, TORTURE CHAMBER is a pure horror film. I’m not trying to be clever or surreal; this is a movie that’s devoted to scaring an audience. I’m going for a shadowy, tactile, frightening experience.”



And where there’s possession, there will inevitably be exorcisms. Tomaselli elaborates: “There are many such sequences in TORTURE CHAMBER. In THE EXORCIST, the demon was Pazuzu, the king of the demons of the wind; here, Baalberith, who in demonology symbolizes blasphemy and violence, is at the heart of the supernatural mayhem.”

Trying to track Jimmy down and put a stop to his grisly activities is the asylum’s Dr. Fiore, played by THE SOPRANOS’ Vincent Pastore. “The character was inspired by Donald Pleasence’s Dr. Loomis from John Carpenter’s HALLOWEEN,” Tomaselli says. “I worship that landmark independent horror film on so many levels, and Dr. Fiore is my official homage. Vincent will disappear into this serious, somber part—and like most characters in this film, he

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could be eternally damned."

Lynn Lowry, from both versions of THE CRAZIES and a number of independent chillers from the '70s through today, "is Lisa, an art therapist who works at the children's mental hospital. She's mentally and physically terrorized by Jimmy. I loved Lynn in David Cronenberg's SHIVERS and many other cult horror classics. There's a real mystery to her."

TORTURE CHAMBER also serves as a reunion for original TEXAS CHAINSAW MASSACRE co-stars Ed Neal and Marilyn Burns, playing the ill-fated Dr. Thompson and his wife. "Ed and I worked together very fluidly on SATAN'S PLAYGROUND," Tomaselli notes. "He's an interesting, malleable actor. Dr. Thompson gets kidnapped by Jimmy and brought to the mazelike torture chamber. Marilyn's part is not huge, but it's memorable. There's a home-invasion sequence, and let's just say we'll get to hear her scream bloody murder in a horror movie again after all these years. TEXAS CHAINSAW is another one of my favorite movies of all time, and Marilyn ranks at the top of the greatest horror heroines. And of course, Ed was one of the creepiest villains."

Tomaselli himself is reuniting with actresses Raine Brown and Christie Sanford on this project. "Raine plays a homeless hippie woman who's relentlessly chased by Jimmy's bloodthirsty brood. I've worked with Raine on two of my previous films, and it has always been a dream. She told me she got cast in a string of genre films after being in my second film, HORROR, and I always predicted her success. I knew she was going places. Christie has a starring role as Mrs. Morgan, Jimmy's enigmatic, blind mother. I've worked with Christie on every short and feature since 1993; it's a tradition. God, I was 23 when she starred in my first short, MAMA'S BOY! As director and actress, we communicate almost telepathically. She really gets what's required of a scene, and many times takes it a step further.

"Christie's characters in all my films interlock on some level," Tomaselli adds. "Demon mother or morbid angel? I like to merge the past, present and future, like it's all one moment. Independent horror filmmaking is a kind of mixture of will power and black magic, and I'm here to stir the pot with my ingredients and cast a spell." We'll bring you more on TORTURE CHAMBER as it continues into production; check out the movie's MySpace page [here](#) and Tomaselli's Facebook page [here](#).

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