Written by Michael Gingold
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Actress Elizabeth Olsen is winning all kinds of raves for her performance in MARTHA MARCY MAY MARLENE, the chilling drama which plays the New York Film Festival next week (details below). That film and her single-take chiller SILENT HOUSE (pictured left and below) screened at Sundance earlier this year—but the actress revealed to us that HOUSE has been altered for its upcoming theatrical play.

“SILENT HOUSE has a different ending than the one seen at Sundance,” Olsen tells Fango. Based on the Uruguayan movie of the same title, the American version (from the OPEN WATER team of Chris Kentis and Laura Lau) follows a young woman through a frightening night inside a rural home, stitching together a number of long takes to create the illusion that the camera never cuts. The conclusion was reshot following that fest debut, though the actress notes, “It’s not like there’s a cut, but the ending has been changed. The audience is on the side of my character the whole time, and I think the ending we originally had made them confused about whose side they want to be on. So this one is in the same vein of everything the story’s about, but it’s more in support of the person they’ve been behind for the entire film.”

The punchline of Gustavo Hernández’s original HOUSE provoked dissent among some critics (including ours), and Olsen says that even the original denouement of the remake (to be released by Open Road Films) didn’t follow it to the letter. “I can’t call it the same,” she notes,

“because the films to me are so completely different.”

Following MARTHA MARCY MAY MARLENE and SILENT HOUSE, the rising young star jumped into a significantly bigger genre project, the supernatural drama RED LIGHTS, which saw her acting opposite a trio of heavy hitters. “Cillian Murphy and Sigourney Weaver play professors who basically debunk psychics—people who say that have all these paranormal abilities—and figure out ways to disprove them,” she says. “I play a student of Sigourney’s who becomes Cillian’s love interest—which actually mainly happens off screen, because it would take away from the story if too much of it happened on screen [laughs]. Robert De Niro plays a world-renowned psychic who they try to discredit, though I didn’t have any scenes with him at all.”

She does call Murphy “an incredible person to work with,” and sings the praises of director Rodrigo Cortés, making a big step up in scale from his acclaimed claustrophobic thriller BURIED. “Rodrigo is such a brilliant director; he’s really innovative and specific and knows exactly what he wants. He literally had every shot mapped out in his head when we were working, so that was amazing. I’m really excited to see what happens with the film. He also wrote it, and it has been his baby for a while, and I think it’ll be really, really cool.”

MARTHA MARCY MAY MARLENE, in which Olsen plays a girl who flees an upstate New York cult and becomes fearful that its leader (John Hawkes) will track her down, plays the New York Film Festival Tuesday, October 11 at 9:15 p.m. and Thursday, October 13 at 3:30 p.m. Olsen, Hawkes and writer/director Sean Durkin will appear at an open event Monday, October 10 at 7 p.m. at the Upper West Side Apple Store (corner of Broadway 67th Street); go to the fest webs ite
for more details. See the MARTHA MARCY MAY MARLENE trailer and RED LIGHTS teaser below, and pick up Fango #308, on sale later this month, for a full interview with Olsen on MARTHA and SILENT HOUSE.

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