

## Exclusive art, comments: Brad Dourif runs “THE CONTROL GROUP”

Written by Michael Gingold  
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A new take on the haunted-asylum subgenre is wrung by **THE CONTROL GROUP**, a horror feature that rolls soon in Minnesota with genre veteran Brad Dourif (pictured) starring. Read on for exclusive production art by artist Frank Kasy and comments from the film’s producer/director, Peter Hurd.

First, here’s the synopsis: “A group of teenagers wake up in an abandoned insane asylum, with no memory of how they came to be there. As they explore the building, the audience learns that the teens are part of a covert CIA experiment to test the effects of a drug that changes people’s feelings of trust in frightening situations. The teens are put through a series of potentially deadly tests, under the cover that what they’re experiencing is a supernatural haunting. However, unbeknownst to the CIA scientists, the building actually is the site of a terrifying haunting, and soon enough both the teens and the scientists must band together if they want to escape the building alive.”



Jessica Gallant will serve as director of photography, with Mike Dinetz (whose numerous credits include a few recent Full Moon productions) handling the makeup FX, Taso Stavrakis, a veteran of **FRIDAY THE 13TH** and George A. Romero’s **DAWN OF THE DEAD** and **DAY OF THE DEAD**, serving as stunt coordinator and Joey Mercado handling still photography. Their efforts will come together for a film that, as Hurd tells us, “combines nearly every horror subgenre in a very original way. The basic elements are that of a haunted-house story, but then we incorporate elements of everything from slasher and torture porn to zombie movies to Hitchcockian conspiracy and psychological thrillers. There was never a conscious decision to make a film that combined so many genres; we simply started with a plot we liked, and it played out in such a way that crossed through all of them, so I think it feels very natural. So many movies that try to bend genres end up feeling forced because they work hard to stuff everything in, but here it just played out well. No one even really notices that we’re combining so many different things; everyone who has read the script just comments on how original it is.”

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In bringing it to the screen, Hurd says that the greatest influence on his directorial style is the films of Dario Argento. “I love his extremely formal and stylized direction; the beauty of the shots combined with the horror of what’s happening in them is really frightening. I also want to do something very different from most horror movies today, which favor the jittery camerawork and frantic editing of the BOURNE movies. Not only is this style really overplayed, I also believe it’s just a pathetic cover for a lack of talent: They don’t need to set up good shots if they can just shake the camera around, and they don’t have to create real suspense and excitement if they just cut to something else every second. With the more classic style I’m going for, we actually have to work to build suspense and fright, and I think audiences will respond to that in a big way.”



They’ll also hopefully respond to the presence of Dourif, who plays Dr. Broward, “the head of the scientific team and the film’s primary villain,” Hurd says. “To have both him and Taso Stavrakis is a dream come true, as they’re both horror legends. Taso actually came to me,

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wanting to work on the film. He recently moved to Wisconsin and heard about the project when he saw my on-line ads looking for crew. We're the only horror movie shooting in the Midwest right now, so he was thrilled to be a part of it, and I was thrilled to have him on board. I attached Brad Dourif in a more conventional way: found his agent on-line, submitted the screenplay, etc. But Brad really liked the script, and that's what got him on board. His agent told me some of the movies he turned down to do this one, and I couldn't believe it!"

Jerry Angelo has also been cast in THE CONTROL GROUP, set to shoot at the Fergus Falls State Hospital (pictured below, which recently served as the locale for another independent fright flick, Eric Dunn's GEIST). Stay tuned for more on THE CONTROL GROUP as it gets into production!

