

## Stephen Dorff Takes a “BRAKE”

Written by Walter Bonner  
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Opening today in select theaters from IFC Films, BRAKE is a thriller where the claustrophobic need not apply. Stephen Dorff plays Jeremy Reins, a Secret Service agent who wakes up to find himself trapped in the trunk of a car, where he is tortured both mentally and physically by terrorists attempting to assassinate the President of the United States. As the minutes tick by, the torture escalates, with the terrorists pulling out all the stops to make Reins crack.

Along the way, there are twists and turns that lead up to a shocking finale. “BRAKE’s a unique one,” Dorff says. “It’s almost like an experimental movie. We made it in 10 days, and this 19-20-year-old kid [Timothy Mannon] wrote the script. I thought it was a clever concept in a time when Hollywood’s frankly not being that clever lately. I’m reading scripts to, like, PREDATORS PART 7, and then I read this little BRAKE script and I was like, ‘Huh. This is f\*\*kin’ kind of cool.’ And I liked that it’s an independent, small movie, but at the same time it’s a genre movie; if we’d spent 30 million bucks, they never would’ve let me stay in the trunk that long. This is a movie that’s not comfortable to watch. It’s much more like, ‘What the f\*\*k is going on?!’ ”



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After working out some of the bugs in the script, Dorff, who also serves as an executive producer, felt he and the rest of the BRAKE team (also including director Gabe Torres, a veteran of documentary TV) had a story in place that would really grab viewers. “It felt like the first DIE HARD, almost like a young John McClane in the trunk of this car,” the actor says. “I thought, ‘OK, I like movies where there’s one character in this one space, but if it really feels like we’re in that space together... I thought this was one that I could bet on.’” The actor was initially dismayed by the disappointing box-office performance of the similarly themed BURIED, starring Ryan Reynolds. “I knew at the time that BURIED had just come out. It had some hype out of Sundance, but it didn’t really do that well at the box office, which kind of worried me a little. But what it did do was encourage me even more, because I thought this wasn’t as stagnant as BURIED. I felt if we could manipulate the audience the way I was manipulated through the script; you know, let’s make a lean, mean, 88-minute time bomb of a movie.”

Being stuck in that car trunk for days on end proved a challenge for Dorff, even if it was only movie magic. “It was definitely a physical movie. I wanted it [that way]—the more physical, the better. I knew I was gonna get bruised up and go to town on this thing; my body took the biggest beating, and my voice and things like that. But for 10 days, as an actor, it was pretty awesome. The only time I came out was to get something to eat for a half hour, but most the time I didn’t want to eat, ‘cause it was so f\*\*kin’ hot in there and I wanted to keep that rhythm going. They didn’t want me always locked in, and I wanted to be. This wasn’t like a box where you could unlock it and it opened; you literally had to screw it closed. A couple of times, the oxygen left the box and I was like, ‘Let’s go, I need a break!’ ”

No doubt viewers will be talking about the film’s plot turns, including one particular shocker the actor disagreed with his fellow producers on. “There was always the one big twist. You thought the second twist was good? Yeah, see, Ryan [Ross] wrote that—my partner. And I was kind of against it; I felt it gimmicked it out a little too much, but then some people really like it.”



Dorff’s most visible previous genre role was probably his villainous turn in BLADE, and the

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subject of the oft-rumored prequel can't help but come up; Fango gets an update from Deacon Frost himself: “That's been hanging around the Internet for a while, and I think it's something the fans want more than Marvel. Marvel and New Line own that franchise, so there was a whole thing when Marvel got bought, blah blah, blah, by Disney. There was talk about it. [Director] Stephen Norrington and I still remain friends, and he's so talented. At the same time, he doesn't really like working in Hollywood. Right now, I think he's making his own movie in his apartment, which is probably going to be bad-ass. He's doing it all with miniatures, and then is gonna do some stuff with actors later, but he's literally building cranes and crane shots. The guy's a genius, but he's so f\*\*kin' out there that it's hard for him to work within the system.

“There was a great treatment for a BLADE prequel, which really had nothing to do with Blade,” Dorff reveals. “It was all about the birth of Deacon Frost. At some point, I'd like to do something with Norrington in that genre, and maybe we'd create our own graphic novel, if Marvel doesn't give us too big of a hassle. Because frankly, Marvel is a different company now, and I know they've become successful, but their movies suck [*laughs*]. I'm sorry, but THE AVENGERS looks terrible. It's gotten ripped to shreds on-line, that movie. I'm just a fan of real shit, I like going to see big movies when they're really well-done. I think IMMORTALS [in which he co-starred as Stavros] at least delivered, because I thought Tarsem [Singh, director]... I mean, yeah, you could compare it to 300, but he brought some originality to it with the look and the feelings of those fights.

“But the comic-book stuff has gotten out of control. It's kind of repetitive. I loved the first IRON MAN 'cause I thought [director Jon] Favreau came out and did something really original. And Downey was really strong in that part. Kind of similar to the first BLADE and THE MATRIX—to me, those movies really set the bar, and then it seemed like everyone was doing the same f\*\*kin' thing, just in a different costume.”

Another movie from Dorff's past that's set to be revisited is THE GATE, with Alex Winter directing a remake (see story [here](#)). On that subject, Dorff says, “At one point they were asking me if I wanted to do a cameo; I think something came through my agents. I don't know, I'm always embarrassed when THE GATE comes up, but people still mention it, it's funny. Quentin Tarantino, he's always like, ‘Man, I love THE GATE!’ and I'm like, ‘You're out of your mind, dude’ [*laughs*]. But no, no one's mentioned anything to me [recently], but I wish them the best, you know?”

Speaking of remakes in general, the actor, like many Fango readers, is not a fan, and doesn't seem interested in taking on further horror projects unless he'd be breaking new ground. “I like good horror, but I feel like I've done a lot of that. Unless it's gonna top the ones I've done, I

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don't really want to venture into it, you know? I want to go into it with all cannons blazing if I'm really going to go into the horror genre. I don't want to do just some f\*\*kin' remake, you know?" We hear ya.