

Look Into the “MIRRORS 2”

Written by Chris Haberman
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On one of the last few nights of MIRRORS 2's shoot, Fango arrives on the sequel's Baton Rouge, Louisiana set just in time to listen to actor Jon Michael Davis scream his head off. In agony. For hours.

Davis is playing Ryan Rosen—a character whose Achilles' tendons have just been slashed open, courtesy of his evil counterpart he has just met via a mirror in his apartment. Now, Davis will crawl along the apartment floor, shrieking in bewildered pain, while Fango sits downstairs in the nightclub in which the scene is being shot to quietly conduct a few choice interviews.

Directed by RETURN TO HOUSE ON HAUNTED HILL's Victor Garcia and written by WHITE NOISE 2's Matt Venne, the sequel to Alexandre Aja's 2008 remake of the Korean film INTO THE MIRROR hits DVD and Blu-ray October 19 from 20th Century Fox Home Entertainment, and will have a special free preview screening in New York City tomorrow, Monday, October 4 courtesy of Fox and Fango (see details [here](#)). MIRRORS 2 will more closely echo the subdued nature and plot of the Korean movie (which will be included on the discs), due to a smaller budget and Garcia's desire to focus more on that initial story (which was blown a bit out of proportion in Aja's big-scale spectacle).



The plot follows recovering addict Max (TERMINATOR 3's Nick Stahl), who has been having strange visions in a new security-guard job at his father's department store. Unsure if the young lady he has been seeing in the store's mirrors are the result of prescriptions he's popping or the

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real deal, he sets about investigating the girl’s connection to the place. Meanwhile, other employees start dropping off in all manner of gruesome ways, with Max being implicated in the gnarly crimes.

KNB EFX gents Kevin Wasner and Alex Diaz, who worked on the first MIRRORS, treat Fango to a few glimpses of their grisly creations for MIRRORS 2. Wasner has the glow of a school prankster when he shows off one of his favorite props: an incredibly realistic torso with a huge slit across the tummy, which spews intestines nestled within when he blows through a tube connected to the torso’s back. Wasner promises that MIRRORS 2 will have a “lot of good gags,” many of which are practical, though he emphasizes the importance of utilizing the right combination of digital and makeup tricks to pull off great kills.

So what are the highlights of such marriages on this show? “Two decapitations—one classic, and one where a girl literally rips her own head off,” the two happily talk over one another to reveal. With the discs being released unrated, both the artists were able to go all the way with the film’s nastier bits, encouraged by the studio. “They wanted to make sure we had enough blood,” says Diaz of Fox’s input, which reminds him of experiences he’s had on some of Quentin Tarantino’s messier sets. “They always keep asking for more, which was funny, because unless you’re working with Quentin—who *really* wants blood—all the other people are like, ‘Ah, that’s way too much—you can’t show that much!’ But [here] they’ve been like, ‘Are you sure you’re bringing

enough blood?”

We really want a

lot

!’ Every time we show a test [effect], we get a response: ‘Yeah, the producers saw it and they say it looks great, but if you could put more

blood

into it...’ It’s like ‘OK! We have the fire extinguisher, so...’ ”

That comment is borne out with Fango heads up to the apartment from which Davis’ cries have been resonating all night. A few crewmembers are quickly mopping up puddles and streaks of gore before the next take while the camera track is being reset. Davis walks by, looking disheveled and sweaty despite a comfy outfit of shorts, sandals and plaid shirt. A glance at his heels reveals they have been sliced deep, and the wounds open and close with each step he takes. A prosthetic though it may be, it’s nauseating.

Fango next catches up with Garcia—a youthful, bright and pleasant fellow from Barcelona, one whom you can tell loves his job the first time you lay eyes on him. A fan of Asian fright fare, Garcia reveals that the seeds of his latest project were initially planted some time ago. “I first

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saw INTO THE MIRROR back in 2003 at the Sitges Film Festival in Barcelona, and that was the year I screened my short film EL CICLO,” he recalls. “That was fun to watch, especially because I’d had a concept for another short that was basically, ‘Here’s a girl falling in love with her reflection in the mirror.’ But I couldn’t shoot that, because it was too expensive, so I made EL CICLO instead. But then I was watching [INTO THE MIRROR] and I was like, ‘That’s my short film!’ ” Years later, Garcia is now able to walk through his own weird world of mirrors.

“I’m always pushing the limit,” the director says of MIRRORS 2’s violence. “I pushed it as much as I could in HAUNTED HILL, and I really went extreme with [the on-line miniseries] 30 DAYS OF NIGHT: BLOOD TRAILS. Here, I haven’t been getting any notes. I mean, we have pretty brutal scenes, though the most violent one actually has no blood at all; that is the one I’m most proud of after watching the dailies. Acting-wise, it’s really good and intense, and I think it’s going to be a standout moment in the movie.” Despite this particular moment of restraint with the red stuff, Garcia does back up Diaz’s previous comments. “With the blood, I have no problem—the only note I got at some point from the producers was, ‘We want more blood.’ I said, ‘Dude, are you talking to me or what? We’ll spray everything, I’m down with it!’ ”

After giggling about gore for a few more moments, we settle down to discuss Stahl’s tormented performance as Max and how Garcia wanted to explore such a torn character. “With Nick, it’s not really up to me; he just delivers,” the director says. “Like, we were talking with the producers in the beginning, and it was like, ‘Oh, maybe he’s a little low-key’ and stuff like that. But no—he’s right because he knows exactly when to play this chill, kind of quiet guy. He understands his arc. He’s gonna make it happen. And then we showed the sequence in which he had to be a little more intense—but never over the top because he’s not an over-the-top actor, which I love. But his intensity is so awesome on camera. It’s really basically up to him. I’m not into rehearsing with actors or anything like that. I’m more into having dinner with them and having a glass of wine and just talking about life, and establishing this kind of trust.”

Before getting back to the set, Garcia confirms the difference between Aja’s MIRRORS and his film. “It’s not about possession,” he notes. “We kind of get rid of the whole [character of Anna] Esseker concept from the previous one. This one is more of a remake of INTO THE MIRROR than the first MIRRORS was. In that movie, basically the first opening sequence had something to do with the girl in the mall—that was not the same [as in INTO THE MIRROR], but at least the concept was similar. And then you had the ‘triangle’ sequence which was basically the same, but the whole plot was changed. They created a different backstory and mythology about it. This is why we turned [the setting] into a new mall and it’s cooler—it’s not Gothic and dark, it’s nice and shiny, with modern architecture. And we went back a little bit to the storyline from the Korean movie. So we’re kind of doing our own MIRRORS here.”

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