Set in a near future where people can “lease” artificial organs, but run into big, bloody trouble if they can’t keep up their payments, Universal’s REPO MEN is the first feature by director Miguel Sapochnik. The filmmaker recently chatted with Fango about the experience, why he hates good movies with lousy third acts and how AVATAR blew him away.

Based on Eric Garcia’s novel, REPO MEN was adapted for the big screen by the author (who discussed the movie here and here) and noted TV scribe Garrett Lerner. “We had them on the set as much as possible,” Sapochnik tells us. “The problem was that we ran into the writers’ strike, which started like two days after we began shooting. So they weren’t allowed to be anywhere near the set, and they couldn’t talk about or do any writing. It was funny, because on the one hand the strike meant that Eric and Garrett couldn’t help when we got into trouble on set during production, but on the other hand it was great, because we shot the movie that was intended. Usually with films, if the writer is available, you keep working on the script as you go through the shoot, and that can have a discombobulating effect on the production. But after we wrapped, the strike was over, so Eric and Garrett helped me during postproduction, and we rewrote some of the voiceover.”

REPO MEN takes place in an unspecified time, but one that’s still recognizable. “When you’re making a SF movie for a price, you have to work with what you’ve got,” Sapochnik notes. “We never wanted REPO MEN to be another BLADE RUNNER, or too science-fictiony like MINORITY REPORT. We wanted to hold onto the future-past idea. The reference points were BRAZIL, A CLOCKWORK ORANGE, TRAINSPOTTING and CHILDREN OF MEN. TRAINSPOTTING aside, they’re all futuristic, but they [show recognizable new] technologies. It’s like the Rubik’s Cube that the kid plays with in CHILDREN OF MEN: It throws you slightly off-center, but you recognize it. It’s not like MINORITY REPORT, where you’ve moved into a completely different future.”

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