

## Hungry for “SECONDS”

Written by Michael Gingold  
Thursday, 27 January 2011 18:41

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More twinsanity comes to the screen in *SECONDS APART*, one of the After Dark Originals that opens in theaters tomorrow, January 28. The saga of violently telekinetic twins, played by identicals Gary and Edmund Entin from the *REST STOP* films, is the first American-backed feature by Colombian-born filmmaker Antonio Negret (pictured left), who discussed the movie and his love of horror with Fango.

Beginning as an actor in films like the Goya Award-nominated *RATAS*, *RATONES*, *RATEROS*, Negret soon transitioned behind the camera, starting in TV before moving on to features. His kidnapping thriller *HACIA LA OSCURIDAD* (*TOWARDS DARKNESS*, co-starring America Ferrera and William Atherton) led him to *SECONDS APART*, as he explains...

**FANGORIA:** How did you make the transition from actor to filmmaker, and from Spanish-language projects to your English-language debut?

**ANTONIO NEGRET:** I acted a lot when I was younger, growing up all over South America. But I remember from a very young age always wanting to have more control over the story, and the way it was told, so I quickly realized that what I really wanted was to direct. One of my mentors was director Sebastián Cordero, who offered me a small role in *RATAS*, his first film. I accepted, but with the condition that I could kind of hang out and watch him work throughout the shoot. That experience really helped in my transition to directing. I later went to USC film school in Los Angeles, and continued my studies as a director. I am, however, glad to have acted, because I find it really helps me on set when communicating with my actors.



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In terms of doing an all-English film, I was excited. TOWARDS DARKNESS had some English in it, but was predominantly in Spanish. I got my agents and representation after it premiered at the Tribeca Film Festival, and was definitely on the lookout for an English-language project. However, having grown up speaking English and Spanish—my mother is British and my father is Colombian—I found it really didn't change the experience at all. At the end of the day, making a movie is making a movie, regardless of the language.

**FANG:** What led you to make that all-English debut with SECONDS APART?

**NEGRET:** The script really stood out to me. The writer, George Richards, did an amazing job of creating a story that was terrifying but also had heart. He also created a world that really intrigued me, and I felt I could do some cool things with the movie, on a visual level. On top of that, I've always been intrigued by twins and their connection. Though I'm not a twin myself, I have a brother who is very close to me in age, and when we were growing up, people always thought we were twins. So there was a fascination there—this idea that there is a link beyond explanation. This film really taps into that in an original and scary way. I knew that with SECONDS APART, I could make a movie that would be horrifying and smart.

**FANG:** Did the script contain themes you had previously wanted to explore?

**NEGRET:** Yes, definitely. One that really stood out to me was the idea of not belonging. In the film, none of the major characters fit in with their surroundings. The twins have abilities that go beyond what other people can do, and they wrestle with that. Detective Lampkin [Orlando Jones], who is hot on their trail, is kind of a shell of a human being who detached himself from the world after his wife's grisly death. And Eve [Samantha Droke], the girl who unknowingly threatens the twins' bond, is kind of a drifter who stumbles into their lives. I really wanted to explore this idea of outsiders—of people who don't really belong in our world—and what happens when they're forced to confront each other.

**FANG:** How did you apply your own personal style to the material?

**NEGRET:** To me, it was really important to create a strong mood and tone. I wanted the movie

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to be dripping with style and suspense, and really pushed for that. I was also able to add personal touches to the story, like the way Lampkin’s wife looks in his nightmares, and some of the ways in which the twins kill. It was an opportunity to bring my own twisted nightmares and fears to the film, so that was cool. I think I got to work out some of my own demons—because the movie is pretty messed up! [ *Laughs*]

**FANG:** Is SECONDS APART a psychological horror film, or are there heavy visceral/bloody elements as well?

**NEGRET:** One of the things I love about this movie is that it has both. On one hand, it is very psychological, *à la* JACOB’S LADDER, where we play with people’s perception of reality and try to get under their skin. It certainly has a disturbing, nightmarish quality to it, hopefully something that lingers with you after you leave the theater.

On the other hand, though, the ways in which the twins kill their victims can be pretty visceral and cruel. Beyond telekinesis, they are also able to get inside people’s minds and make them see and experience messed-up things. So there are some pretty brutal and bloody moments that I think visceral horror fans will appreciate.

**FANG:** How was it working with the Entin brothers?

**NEGRET:** It was great. A big part of the movie relied heavily on having twins who could be very similar, but also very different. And we really needed a pair who were individually good actors. We found that in the Entins, and they truly elevated the film. Plus, it helped that they were goofy and fun to be around, so it made the shoot more pleasant.

**FANG:** Were you familiar with their work in the REST STOP movies when you cast them?

**NEGRET:** I had seen one of the REST STOP films, but as soon as I knew the Entins were coming in to audition, I went out and watched the other one. I think they’re great in those films, but unfortunately they don’t say much in them, so it was difficult to see if they could handle the roles of Seth and Jonah. It wasn’t until they came in to audition that I knew we had found the

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right actors. But it certainly helps that they are already well-known in the horror community, and they have something new that I think their fans are going to love.

**FANG:** How did the SECONDS APART shoot go, and what were the greatest challenges?

**NEGRET:** The most significant one was making the film feel as big as possible given the schedule and the budget. We didn't have a lot of time, and we had a very ambitious script. So every second counted, and we were constantly racing to get everything. Add to that the fact that we were shooting in the Louisiana humidity, and often overnight, and that certainly was a challenge. In the end, though, the experience really brought the cast and crew together, and it was a pleasure to see everyone care so much about the movie and push so hard to make it something we would all be proud of.

**FANG:** Are you excited to be part of the After Dark Originals?

**NEGRET:** It is cool. One of the things I truly respect about After Dark is that they go out there and make movies, which sounds easy, but a lot of people don't actually do that. They take chances and “pull the trigger,” instead of just talking about making films. Also, it is very cool to be part of the first-ever batch of After Dark Originals. I feel privileged to help launch this new approach to horror. In a time where we constantly get remakes and sequels, it's great to be part of something that is without a doubt original and ballsy.

**FANG:** Are you interested in making more genre films?

**NEGRET:** Absolutely! I am a huge horror fan. Some of my all-time favorite films are horror films. THE EXORCIST, A NIGHTMARE ON ELM STREET and THE SHINING really shaped my childhood—and I grew up reading FANGORIA! To me, this is in many ways the most visceral of genres in that it allows you to break all the rules, and to deliver movies that are true rides for the audience to embark on. I always have, and always will, love horror.

{comments on}

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