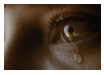
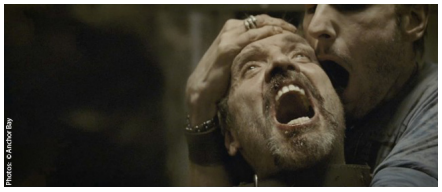


THE DIVIDE. Wow. Where do I even begin? Well, I have to start with my mood going into the movie (opening in limited engagements this Friday from Anchor Bay). It’s not often I lift the “reviewer curtain” and talk about the fact that what is happening in my real life can occasionally tweak my perspective. On this particular day, I was delayed leaving a press junket and was scared I was going to be late for the DIVIDE screening.

On the way, I got in a minor fender-bender, which, though all parties left psychically unscathed, had damaged my car and my attitude even further. So needless to say, by the time I made it to THE DIVIDE, I was in a pissy mood and certainly not looking forward to what I figured would be two hours of watching a group of people go through radiation poisoning. I took my seat just wanting this to be over so I could go home and continue on with my crappy day.



Two hours later, I emerged from that theater a different person than the one who went in. I had witnessed, thought about and experienced things that made my car, my bad day, everything all

seem like bullshit. It’s a rarity a film does this to me. I consider myself to be pretty horror-hardened, and when a film comes along that actually makes me question my very existence and character, it’s a major cathartic event. MARTYRS, REQUIEM FOR A DREAM and FAT GIRL created that feeling in me—I didn’t know whether to scream, cry, laugh or some combination of them all, but I felt like I had to do something. I used think this was a weakness I had with certain movies; I now know it is just a demonstration of what makes me human. It also demonstrates why horror fans are able to watch some of the most visceral, brutal and grotesque movies out there. We can find redemption, beauty and emotional cleansing in them. I’m adding THE DIVIDE to my personal cathartic list.

I should discuss the actual movie here at some point, but first, one more note. When I was a kid, I was allowed to watch anything I wanted, for the most part. My parents never stopped me from watching horror. If anything, they encouraged it, as these films led me to read books at a very young age on FX and how they were made. The only movies I was not allowed to see were nuclear-holocaust stories. TESTAMENT, WHEN THE WIND BLOWS and even that weird made-for-TV pic with Steve Guttenberg, THE DAY AFTER, were all off limits until I was much older. After seeing a few, I couldn’t understand what the big deal was. Yup, Trioxin turns you into a zombie, and radiation makes your hair fall out. Movies are full of f**ked-up fears. But I know see what my parents wanted to protect me from—they wanted to keep my young mind from being exposed to everything that happens in THE DIVIDE.

So now, on to the details of the movie itself. THE DIVIDE begins with multiple nuclear blasts. Seriously, the credits roll and boom—nuclear armageddon. As the tenants of a New York City apartment building scramble to find shelter, a small group make their way down to the basement, where the superintendent, Mickey (played by Michael Biehn), has set up a fallout-style shelter with supplies, lye toilet and battery-powered electricity. A hardened fireman and 9-11 veteran, Mickey has been preparing for armageddon for quite some time, and is quick to take control—which soon collapses.

People turn. Some try to break out, some actually make it out, and others come in. Certain people get radiation poisoning and go insane, while others do not. With the exception of the first few minutes of explosions, THE DIVIDE is a two-hour descent into how quickly a handful of survivors can create a hell far worse then the annihilation outside. Filth, cockroaches, fetid dead bodies, illness and no showers. Insanity, abuse, moral humiliation, rape and murder. This movie holds nothing back, and the camera never looks away from anything, no matter how brutal.

[redacted]