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GEORGE A. ROMERO'S
LAND OF THE DEAD
IN THEATERS JUNE 24

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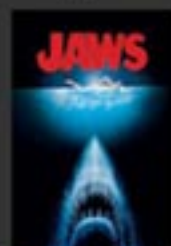» Order Back Issues
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NEWS

a film by Jacob Strunk
REVENANT
2006

June 20: Producer talks REVENANT

Last week, Fango first got word of a new genre film going into production called REVENANT, written and directed by Jacob Strunk and executive-produced by Teller (of Penn &...). We got in touch with Strunk to learn more about the project, and here's what we found out, starting with a synopsis:

"Aging widower Smith Forrest [Ronnie Marmo] leaves his successful life in the big city and returns to the small Wisconsin farm on which he grew up," Strunk tells Fango. "Suffering from the debilitating symptoms of a terminal illness and plagued by the ghosts of his past, Smith is forced to re-examine the choices he's made in his life and the relationship he shared with his wife, now long dead. As the visions grow increasingly violent and the lines between Smith's reality and delusion begins to blur ever more heavily, Smith must face the demons of his past head on in a last attempt to reconcile.

"REVENANT will be truly a unique and exceptional film," Strunk continues. "As I have said publicly before, I do not believe in 'genre.' There are good stories, and there are blocks of text and strands of film aspiring to be stories. If you're speaking honestly about people, it doesn't matter whether your film is about falling in love in 1920s Prague or fending off a horde of the hideous undead. I refuse to acknowledge the naysayers who speak out against the 'literary merit' of horror-based fiction. I wrote my AP thesis in high school on I AM LEGEND by Richard Matheson, against the urging and wishes of the board, who deemed it a pulp novel not of sufficient literary merit—and got a perfect score.

"As such, I strive to push the boundaries of the definition of 'genre' in my movies. REVENANT is an art film, it's a horror film, it's a thriller, it's a dark, dark, dark comedy, some may even call it a romance. But bottom line, it's a story about a man, told honestly and with empathy by people who really believe in the power of film and fiction. That's what matters, and I believe that is why the film will ultimately be successful. We are aiming for a festival run—I've had good luck with that in the past—and, God willing, a theatrical run in the United States, with a DVD release to follow.

"I was raised on horror movies and FANGORIA," he adds, "popcorn in one hand, Coke in the other, a light on in the corner of the room as my friends and I pulled our sleeping bags up tight to our necks. I am still, to this day, influenced by horror films in everything I do, and I believe that's one of the things that makes my vision of filmmaking uniquely mine. The horror genre right now is at a low; financially, it's doing quite well, but the independent voices and original, sparkling ideas of the past have been replaced by scads of remakes and straight-to-video knock-them-out-in-a-weekend slasher movies. I want to see the credibility that is deserved returned to our stories. If REVENANT can help that happen in any way, I'm honored to be a part."

REVENANT is set to shoot this year in Wisconsin; check out the website for Strunk's Seven Miles West of Town Productions for more info about this and his previous projects. —Michael Gingold

SEARCH

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