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AN INTERVIEW WITH FILMMAKER RUSS EMANUEL

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THE SHORT FILM SHOWCASE



We last caught up with Russ Emanuel back in September 2016 so we knew a catch up was long overdue. We managed to sit down and grab a coffee with Russ to talk about what he has been up to over the last few year and to tell us about his upcoming projects.

Hi Russ. I hope you are safe and well in these uncertain times?

Yes, I am thank you so much, I hope you are too!

Yeah, I am good thanks.

The last time we spoke to you was in September 2016. Have you been keeping busy since then?

Yes, it's been a long time since we last spoke and thank you again for doing so today. And yes it's been a very busy couple of years from me. Since then, I've directed several films including "The Assassin's Apprentice" action short film starring Tarah Paige, Marina Sirtis, Robert Picardo, Rico E. Anderson, "Collar" a crime mystery short film starring Sean Gunnell, Michael Ray, Denise Gossett, Jennifer Durst, "American Wisper" a mystery thriller feature film starring Christian Barber and "The Assassin's Apprentice 2" a action short film and my first sequel film, starring Tarah Paige, Armin Shimerman, Sean Kenney, Gary Graham, and currently the horror feature "Staycation" starring Olivia d'Abo, Sean Kenney, Tracee Lee Cocco, Eileen Dietz, Kelli Maroney, and Laurene Landon.

Wow, you have been busy!

You had an extremely successful festival run with The Assassin's Apprentice. How was that?

It's been a ride that's for sure and I'm very grateful to our cast, crew, family, contributors, followers, and the film festivals.

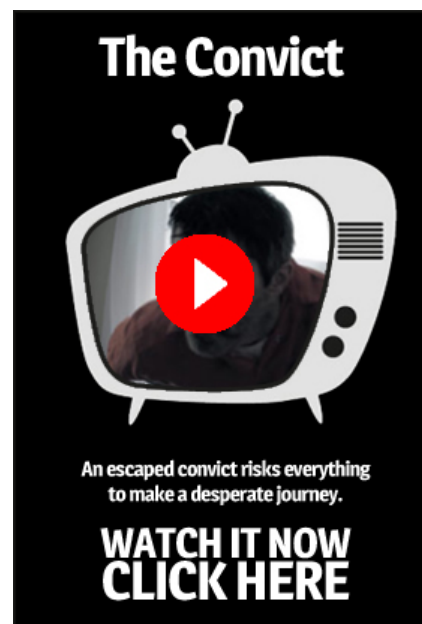
And how are things going with The Assassin's Apprentice 2?

The sequel was filmed during March to November 2019 right before the Covid-19 Pandemic struck. We were even able to do location filming in the Canary Islands (islands of Spain located off the coast of North Africa).

That was very fortunate as things pretty much came to a stand still last year.

What are you working on at the moment?

Currently, I am working on the aforementioned "Staycation" feature film which we began with the prequel film "Routine" back in April 2020, my first film during the Covid-19 Pandemic, and has already gotten into accredited film festivals like FilmQuest Film Festival. As for "Staycation", we already filmed 40% of the feature with actors including Olivia d'Abo who you may know from Star Wars: The Clone Wars, Star Wars: The Rise of Skywalker, Star Trek: The Next Generation and Wonder Years), as well as Sean Kenney from Star Trek: The Original Series, Eileen Dietz from



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The Exorcist, and Kelli Maroney from Fast Times at Ridgemont High and Night of the Comet. We have done an [Indiegogo Campaign](#) where we raised over \$38,000 (192%). Here, you can see November 2020 shoot footage and additional information.

Thanks, that is great, we will have to check that out.



Can you tell us a little bit more about Staycation and the Pandemic franchise?

Let me give you the story. The Nix virus is winning. Scientists scramble for a vaccine but to no avail. Virologists Edward Bellows and Samantha Weaver lead the charge as they monitor the state of the country and the world in their lab through various stories of peoples from around the world including Los Angeles natives Cathy and Matt who are separated by continents due to the lockdowns. Meanwhile, Britt and Marnie live large on the government dole as they weather through the crisis. Their idyllic lives get interrupted when a friend pleads with them to locate his missing fiancée. As the two lazily embark on their adventure, the numbers of the infected grow larger by the day.

This sounds really interesting. Is it as close to home as it sounds?

The “Staycation” franchise is a take on the Covid-19 Pandemic and what the governments around the world are doing to handle such a crisis. And yes it does hit home, with scenes featuring mask wearing, lockdowns, and sanitizing. But it is NOT about the Covid-19 Pandemic, but one that is of the horror genre.

I think a lot of people will be able to relate to that.

What have you got left to do to finish the film?

We are filming the next part of the shoot in June 2021 with around 35



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actors to film.

How does the Indiegogo campaign help with the shoot?

Crowdfunding helps us tremendously to raise finishing funds for the film as well as attract publicity as we spread the word about the film and franchise in hopes people will want to contribute and take part in it.

What can our readers get from backing the campaign?

There are various perks available such as buying the DVD, getting a credit in the film itself and on the IMDb (Internet Movie Database), as well as naming a character, and buying a poster with the name actors' autographs.

That sounds brilliant!



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How have you found shooting in the current pandemic we are in?

When we filmed in November of last year, we had to abide by strict Covid Compliance requirements and it ate into the efficiency of the shoot, as well as was very expensive (about 1/6th of our budget). That said, no one thankfully tested positive on my set and for that I am very grateful.

It sounds like the restrictions have made things a lot harder.

What has proved most difficult about filming?

I think filming during Covid added an extra layer of preparation. We had to make sure everyone got their specific Covid tests, or they were not allowed to show up on set. It was not knowing if people would get their tests back on time or even god forbid, test positive, which would mean that a key cast or crew member was not allowed to film and hence

crippling the production.

Has it changed the way you think about film-making?

Yes it definitely has. It made me want to wait for more people to get vaccinated and the rules to be eased before I start shooting again, hence waiting until June of this year to continue filming.

Do you see more of the Pandemic franchise in the future?

Yes that is the hope. We have grand plans for "Staycation" and its franchise and key actors like Olivia d'Abo and Sean Kenney are guaranteed a return to film more if we get that opportunity.

We will be looking forward to that.

What is next for Russ Emanuel?

The other film that is on my docket is "The Assassin's Apprentice 2" which is currently in post-production. We have pickup shoots to do in April in Northern California and are beginning the process of music scoring, sound designing and visual effects creation. The film should be completed later this year and "Staycation" should be finished by early 2022.

Well we wish you the best of luck with The Assassin's Apprentice 2 and Staycation I am sure there will be big things ahead for these and good luck with the rest of the Indiegogo Campaign. Hope fully it won't be another five years before our next catch up!

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