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Fear, Inc. – Exclusive Interview with Director Vincent Masciale

Posted on October 15, 2015 (<http://www.dreadcentral.com/news/125709/fear-inc-exclusive-set-visit-interview-with-director-vincent-masciale/>) by Staci Layne Wilson (<http://www.dreadcentral.com/author/Staci-Layne-Wilson/>)

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In the upcoming feature film *Fear, Inc.*, a horror junkie (Lucas Neff) and his hapless friends sign up with a top secret, exclusive company that brings their customers' greatest fears to life. If it sounds a little bit like *The Game*, you're right – that old David Fincher film was a definite influence on co-writer and director Vincent Masciale, but more than anything it was his own desire to experience true terror in the myriad of Halloween mazes and haunted tours that turn up every Halloween.

Masciale and writer Luke Barnett put their heads together to make a short film a few years ago along these lines, and the feature grew from that. Dread Central visited the set of the film in Los Angeles a few weeks ago, and here's what we found out. You'll find our interviews with the cast by **clicking here** (<http://www.dreadcentral.com/?p=132581>). Photos are by Trisha Harrison and Micah Wesley.



Dread Central: When you directed the short film version of *Fear Inc.*, were you already thinking toward a feature, or was it just a little story you wanted to tell and things grew from there?

Vincent Masciale: One of the reasons we decided to make *Fear, Inc.*, the short, was because we had a pretty good idea the concept could lend itself to a feature-length version. But it wasn't until the short was finished and received good press and reviews that we decided to fully develop the idea into a feature.

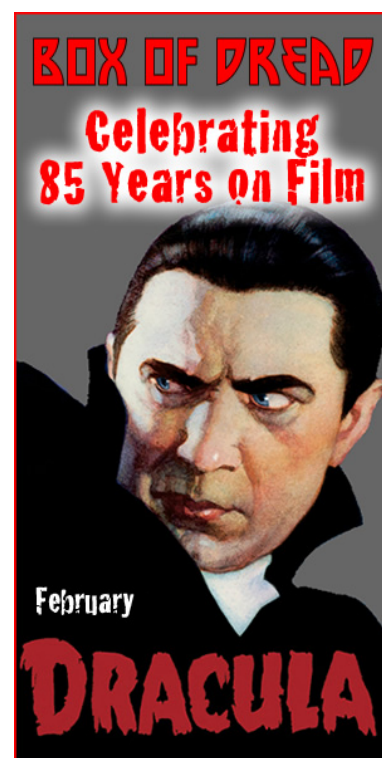
DC: What are some of the haunted maze and haunted attraction tropes that inspired you – either in a good way or that made you think: We can make it scarier than that!

VM: I've been a big fan of haunted house attractions since I was old enough to attend them. Knott's Scary Farm in Orange County became an annual trip with my friends starting in junior high school, but even then I remember not being as scared as I was hoping I would be. The thing that always irritated me was seeing other groups of people getting scared, instead of my group. I loved the sections of the park that were filled with fog, Knotts called them the "Scare Zones." On a not too crowded night, you would walk through, clutching the arms of the people next to you, waiting for someone to jump out. The anticipation alone was what always got me!

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DC: Do you remember your first experience going through a spooky maze? What was it like?

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VM: When I moved to Los Angeles, I started going to Universal's Halloween Horror Nights, which mixed my love of Halloween with movies. The first year I went, they had the Michael Myers house from Halloween, which was amazing. It felt like you were in the movie, on the run from Myers in the house from the original film. He would pop out of corners, scaring everyone. It was thrilling!

DC: At its core, what is *Fear, Inc.*, really about?

VM: Our society is obsessed with all things horror. We love horror films, haunted houses, Halloween, zombies, vampires, you name it. Most people living in Western culture have pretty safe lives, so maybe this fascination with getting scared is a way for us to live dangerously, while knowing in the back of our minds that we'll be able to sleep safely at night. *Fear, Inc.*, takes that idea up a scale or two and asks, "How scared do you want to be?"

DC: Please tell us a little bit about how your cast came together, and how the ones selected won their roles.

VM: We have such an incredible cast for our film! We didn't really have auditions; we took meetings with actors that we really wanted to work with. It was a little bit tricky to find four actors that were similar in age and looked like they could all be friends, that also understood the tone we were going for. A lot of horror/comedies tend to be a bit campy, which we didn't want for *Fear, Inc.*, so we had to find actors that had experience with comedy and knew how to walk that fine line. The people we cast had such good chemistry, and they knew the appropriate times to be funny and when they really needed to be scared. We also wanted our cast to have decent name recognition, which we got in spades. Even our supporting cast came from some really huge shows and films. We had a couple actors that just came out for a day or two because they loved the script!

DC: I was lucky enough to be on set with Luke Barnett (<http://www.dreadcentral.com/?p=125500>) in the coolest location ever: CIA (California Institute of Abnormalarts). I've been there a number of times and was even IN a friend's film which was shot there. What an amazing place it is to shoot! Please explain to our readers what it is about that little hole in the wall that made you want to shoot there.

VM: CIA is incredibly weird and amazing. I'm not exactly sure how we originally found it, but one of our producers went to one of their monthly freak shows and fell in love with the place. Once I saw it in person, I knew we had to shoot there. The owner of CIA collects strange and creepy artifacts and puts them on display for people to see. He has a story behind everything there, including an artifact that brings you bad luck if you snap a photo of it. So of course we used it in our film.

DC: I understand Laurie Hallak does your makeup effects... what are some of the more unusual creatures you can talk about, and how closely did you collaborate — or did you just let her do her thing?

VM: Laurie was fantastic! She has such a love for what she does. We collaborated with her team on a number of special effects for *Fear, Inc.*, including the mask we needed for our main antagonist. After several discussions and concept drawings, we found an original look that we loved, and her team fabricated the mask in house. They also designed several special blood and gore gags for us that were incredible. There was rarely a day where Laurie wasn't walking around set carrying her signature "Laurie's Bucket of Blood."

DC: What's more fun for you to direct — the emotional character moments or the horror action?

VM: They both have their challenges for sure, but my biggest challenge as a director was finding my own voice in a genre that already has so many expectations. In *Fear, Inc.*, we have a nice blend of comedy that leads to emotional character moments that leads to some horror action that leads back to emotional character moments and then back for some more comedy. It all connects into a fun adventure story that hasn't really been told before. It may sound cliché, but this film really does have a little something for everyone to sink their teeth into.

DC: What do you hope the takeaway will be, when all is said and done?

VM: We're really proud of our film! We found a great balance of scares and laughs that I think create a really unique tone in *Fear, Inc.* Our background with *Funny or Die*, mixed with the talent of our cast, allowed us to find natural moments of tension and release that should make for a fun rollercoaster ride. When your experienced crew sneaks into the DIT station to take a peek at clips in between setups because they can't wait to see footage, you know you have something special!



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