

Burlington filmmaker debuting *The Drownsman* at Montreal festival

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There aren't enough iconic villains nowadays, says Christopher Giroux.

So the filmmaker is doing his best to fill that void.

To make this happen it required him showing up to work at a city pool in a wet suit some days.

That's because Giroux's latest contribution to the big screen is *The Drownsman*. It's a horror/suspense film about a woman whose fear of water, due to a near drowning, becomes debilitating. When her four friends stage an intervention to help, a floodgate of terror opens.

Next week *The Drownsman* has its world premiere on Aug. 2, in Montreal, at the Fantasia International Film Festival, North America's largest gathering of genre films, including sci-fi, thriller and action flicks.

It's Giroux's second trip to the vaunted film festival. *Antisocial*, which is also a horror movie, premiered there last year and it is now selling on DVD in major retailers HMW, Walmart and iTunes.

While *The Drownsman* is a modern day original story it takes a page out of horror movie making from the '80s.

A self-described "retro guy" the 1980s are Giroux's favourite era "when films such as *Nightmare on Elm Street*, *Halloween* and *Hellraiser* haunted movie theatres everywhere." He counts fantasy and horror fiction directors Clive Barker and Wes Craven among his moviemaking his idols.

"Those are the films I grew up with," said Giroux who has fond memories of sleepovers and staying up all night watching horror movies with buddies.

"It was all about having fun and being scared but seeing the comedy that was intentionally put into the plot line to relieve the tension," he said. Story is still king for this filmmaker. "Everything should come down to story."

That priority prevailed in *The Drownsman*, which was written by Chad Archibald and Cody Calahan, who also both wrote *Antisocial*.

All of the water scenes for *The Drownsman* were filmed in Angela Coughlin Pool attached to M.M. Robinson School, which is Giroux's alma mater. Divers from Float N' Flag Dive Shop stepped in to offer their expertise.

Filming at the high school was familiar territory for Giroux. He made his first film at age 14, while a student at M.M. Robinson. He then graduated from the film program at Sheridan College in 2009 and immersed himself in the industry, doing camera work, directing, casting, producing and editing for television, film and video.

Giroux travelled extensively and worked with bands such as *Theory of a Deadman* and *City in Colour*, as well as politicians in Ottawa, and stars such as Oprah, Tom Hanks and Ben Affleck.

Giroux continues to live in Burlington full-time, except when he's away on a shoot, or attending a film festival, which is often and will continue to be as Giroux is slated to produce four films this year for Black Fawn Films, a Canadian independent film production house.

For now he is focused on the upcoming film fest in Montreal and reuniting with the cast and crew of *The Drownsman*.

"It's my baby, I want everyone to like it."



Burlington filmmaker Christopher Giroux.