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'Terror Inside' accepted to festival

Film shot on location in Montverde last year

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When Joe, a well driller in a small Florida town, unearths more than just primordial muck from deep below the swamp, he sets off an unfortunate chain of events, one in which the town's residents transpose pleasure and pain.

So begins "Terror Inside," which is the brainchild of Cape Coral resident Joe Lenders. Lenders wrote and directed the script, and along with producer Flip Minott, turned a frightening vision of an altered town into a reality on the big screen. The film, which was shot on location in Montverde last year, has been accepted to the Fort Lauderdale International Film Festival (FLIFF), ranked by the Florida Arts Council as the highest rated film festival in the state.

"Even just this tiny bit of success - that to me is a surprise," Lenders said. "You learn to expect nothing."

Lenders' film, with a budget of only \$250,000, was one of only 175 films from around the globe chosen for the festival. Actress Tanya Memme, who plays a lead role in the film opposite Corey Feldman, received the Crystal Reel award for best actress from the Florida Motion Picture and Television Association. Actor Chris Cavallaro earned a supporting actor Crystal Reel award for his work on the film.

The success of the film, which Lenders hopes to sell to a DVD distributor, is a good start for a filmmaker who relied heavily on students from Valencia Community College for the production crew.

"It was challenge working with students," Lenders said. "They don't have the full knowledge of what they're doing. Teaching while I was directing was challenging."

For Memme, who has is filming her sixth season as cohost of A&E's "Sell This House," the movie provided a vehicle for her to reunite with her first love - acting.

"I am dying to get back into acting," Memme said from a "Sell This House" location in New York. "And horror movies are so much fun."

Memme is often cast as wholesome characters but for her role of Maria, she got to take her character to darker places.

"There was a whole journey," Memme said. "The character went from the girl next door to the complete antithesis of who she was. Finding that change, I loved it. It was a wonderful challenge."

Memme said she is enthusiastic about the film because Lenders and Minott gave her an opportunity few other directors have.

"This was my first real lead I've been given the opportunity to play," she said. "It's great when someone like Joe and Flip see something in me. I put my heart and soul into it. I have so much to thank them for."

Cavallaro agreed. "My final emphasis would be gratitude to Joe Lenders and Mr. Minott," he said. "I like them both very much. I would say they are well-rounded. I was grateful to them because I know a lot of people auditioned."

The Orlando-based actor has a supporting, but memorable role on the movie.

"I like the fact he's the only one killed," Cavallaro said. "It's not so much a face in the crowd."

Like many of the cast and crew, Cavallaro is already looking to future projects, but already considers "Terror Inside" a successful venture.

"Somebody wrote it, somebody mastered it, somebody shopped it," he said. "To me it's already a success."
