



BAD AX ENTERTAINMENT PRESS KIT FOR *BAD HABIT*
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CONTENTS: PROJECT OVERVIEW, ARTICLE, INTERVIEWS

Bad Habit:

DIRECTOR: Joe Filipas

STARRING: Sarah French (*Insectula!*, *Marilyn Monroe: Zombie Hunter*), Bryan Daniel Porter (*Dear White People*), Amy Cocchiarella (*The Public Domain*), Earl Milton (*Kumiko The Treasure Hunter*), Kenton Holden as Dr. David Dale (*Superhuman*), and features Chersti Rydning, Steven Shega, and Dylan Thomson

STORY: Joe Filipas, Clint Andera, Mike Cavalier

EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS: Clint Andera and Joe Filipas

ASSOCIATE PRODUCERS: Andrew Neill, Dylan Thomson, Sam Wotzka

GAFFING, LIGHT DESIGN, ASSISTANT CAMERA: Sam Wotzka

PRODUCTION COORDINATOR: Andrew Neill

PRODUCTION ASSISTANT: Dylan Thomson

SOUND RECORDING: Paul Davalos

HAIR AND MAKEUP: Nicole Fae

MUSIC: Mike Sayre

Runtime: 24 minutes (standard and alternate ending cuts)

Format: Digital, 16:9

Release: Streaming and download VOD through VHX.tv

BAD HABIT: The Screamless Scream Queen

It's late on a Sunday night in February in Minnesota, and scream queen Sarah French is wearing a see-through rain suit, a spattering of stage blood, and little else. She's filming the last few shots of her latest film and, between takes, is all smiles. Since production began two days earlier, Sarah hasn't screamed once. She hasn't even delivered one line of dialogue.

The film is *Bad Habit*. In it French portrays an intensely quiet office worker who fills her spare time with serial killing. She's desperate to stop though, and turns to a self-help audio book to try to cure herself before she lapses again.

What was it like playing the bad guy instead of a victim? "It was awesome!" French says. "Though I'm trying to be a better person in the film, so I'm not completely bad, I do kill people and seem to take joy in it."

French thinks her fans, and fans of the genre, will enjoy her playing so dramatically against type. Director Joe Filipas agrees. "That dichotomy - that we're rooting for Sarah to succeed but we're also afraid of what she'll do next - that's really interesting to me. I think her fans will love it, and her character's desire to change drives the story in a really compelling way."

Bad Habit is a long-form short, both the standard edition and deluxe alternate ending edition have an approximate run time of 24 minutes. Plans to shoot over a three day weekend didn't go quite as planned. French arrived to set almost eight hours after the scheduled call time. "The day I had to leave to get to set, which was roughly 2 hours away, we got a huge snow and ice storm, the worst I've ever seen. It was horrible! The snow and ice was so heavy a large tree branch fell on my car and blocked me in the driveway."

After clearing her car off, French hit the road. "I wasn't going to cancel the shoot. We had it planned for months and it was the only weekend that would work, plus I didn't want to let anyone down. Normally it takes 2 hours to get to where I was going for the shoot, but it took me about 7 hours to get there that day! Trust me, those 7 hours contained the worst anxiety and stress I've ever had... when I got to set, I was ready to shoot because of the build up of real emotions."

The weather delay actually worked in favor for the production, giving the crew a bit of extra time to prep the set and refine shot lists for the rest of the weekend. "When Sarah finally arrived, we filmed for about four hours, and then knocked out everything else on Saturday and Sunday, mostly as we'd originally scheduled," Filipas said. "I think we filmed something like 200 unique shot setups in that time, and Sarah, the rest of our cast, and our crew just crushed their work."

Shooting time was a consideration before the script for *Bad Habit* was even written. "I play the role with no dialogue... all emotions have to be conveyed with my eyes and mannerisms," French said. "I'm really excited for [my fans to see] it!" Her character's total lack of dialog was planned from the beginning, according to Filipas. "Early on, so we could move through production efficiently, we decided that Sarah wouldn't have any dialogue in the film. Instead the audio book she listens to throughout serves as a Greek chorus for the piece. This allowed us to film her scenes in a lot less time but still produce the story we wanted to in a minimal amount of shooting days. We were able to move fast because Sarah didn't need to run lines, or do more than a few takes on each scene." Cast members that did have dialog were encouraged to improvise around an outline to minimize the amount of takes necessary.

The audio book that French listens to throughout *Bad Habit* was recorded after the first cast read-through. Kenton Holden, who voices “Dr. David Dale,” only appears onscreen in an iPod thumbnail, and was cast without an audition when producers agreed his voice would be perfect. While his audio wasn’t played often during the filming of *Bad Habit*, executive producer Clint Andera admits that when he was reading the voiceover for Sarah, he was mimicking Holden’s tone and cadence.

To score the film, Filipas reached out to New York composer Mike Sayre. “I really enjoy writing for horror, because there’s so much room for creativity and experimentation. For example, one of the sounds near the very end of the film is actually a recording of me making some weird hollow sounds with my mouth, which I then processed and turned into a synth. One of the challenges of the approach in this film - which uses a lot of atmosphere and non-musical sounds - is that it can be difficult to establish unity since there’s not a lot melodic material. I tried to address that by associating recurring locations - like the basement - with a particular sound.” It works, according to Filipas: “It’s a moody score. I’m very pleased.”

Bad Habit has a short presale period before it’s officially released in late October on video-on-demand platform VHX.tv. The decision to monetize the end product versus running a crowdfunding campaign beforehand was a difficult one for the producers. “To be honest, it just didn’t feel right to me for this project,” Filipas said. “Crowdfunding has helped make great content that wouldn’t have been feasible otherwise, but at its core, *Bad Habit* is more of a character-driven thriller than anything else. I would’ve felt awful for fans to have to wait a year to see a final product, and ask them for \$20, \$30, or \$50 donations to make it possible. So, for *Bad Habit*, viewers don’t have to wait to see the final product and their orders will help us with seed money for the next project.”

Will fans of horror and Sarah French like *Bad Habit*? French thinks so: “There’s a montage when my character goes from office worker mode to serial killer mode. It’s quite freaky, I felt like Christian Bale in *American Psycho*! The crew and actors were all great and it was an all-around fun set!” Filipas is hopeful too. “I think if you’re a fan of horror and thrillers, even if you’re not familiar with Sarah, you’ll really like how we play our scream queen against type. You want to be on her side but she is so damned unnerving, I hope viewers have a lot of conflicting emotions throughout. In particular, there’s a scene later in the film when Sarah is changing. In other projects of hers, the moment would be played up for sex appeal, but I hope viewers are extremely uncomfortable when this happens. I knew going into the project how much talent we had on our cast and our crew, but seeing it all come together - the performances of Sarah, Bryan, Amy, Earl, and Kenton; how incredible our AC and gaffer Sam made everything look, Mike’s music - I’m really pleased. I hope we can find an audience that loves it as much as I do.”

Bad Habit is available in Standard and Deluxe Editions at <http://badhabit.vhx.tv>, and can be downloaded or streamed via desktop, iOS, Chromecast, and Roku.

Interviews have been condensed and edited for clarity.

INTERVIEWS:

Sarah French, Actor; star of *Bad Habit*

Sarah has been an actor and model ever since being discovered at a metal concert, and has appeared in films like Insectula!, Marilyn Monroe: Zombie Killer, and numerous other horror films and music videos.

Why will your fans like this film?

My fans will like *Bad Habit* because it's something new from me. Most of my films I play the victim and in this one, it's the opposite. I also have to play the role with no dialogue.. all emotions have to be conveyed with my eyes and mannerisms. I'm really excited for it!

*What was memorable about filming *Bad Habit*?*

The most memorable part of filming for me was when my character goes from office worker mode to serial killer mode. It's quite freaky, actually. I felt like Christian Bale from *American Psycho*. The other thing memorable was the production itself. The crew and actors were all great and it was an all-around fun set!

How is this different from other films of yours?

Bad Habit is different in that I have no dialogue. My whole performance had to be based on facial expressions and body language. Another difference is I got to play the bad guy, where I usually play the innocent helpless victim.

What was the craziest thing that happened on set?

The craziest thing to happen on set was actually what happened before I got to set. We shot this in Minnesota in late February, by then the winter weather usually starts getting a little better. Well, not this year. The day I had to leave to get to set, which was 2 roughly hours away, we got a huge snow and ice storm, the worst I've ever seen. It was horrible! The snow and ice was so heavy, a large tree branch fell on my car and blocked me in the driveway. After dealing with that mess, I was able to leave the house. I wasn't going to cancel the shoot. We had it planned for months and was the only weekend that would work, plus I didn't want to let anyone down. Normally it takes 2 hours to get to where I was going for the shoot, but it took me about 7 hours to get there that day! Trust me, those 7 hours was the worst anxiety and stress I've ever had... With that being said, when I got to set, I was ready to shoot because of the build up of real emotions.

Which scene was the most fun to shoot?

I don't want to give it all away, but there's a montage of me getting my "kill station" ready and it's pretty sweet.

What do you think will be your fans' favorite scene?

I think my fans' favorite scene will be of me getting ready to kill and taunting my victim. It's pretty creepy!

*How did you get into character for *Bad Habit*?*

The stress of the drive. Real life has a way of guiding a performance and when you can tap into that, the character

becomes real.

What was it like portraying the "bad guy" on film?

It was awesome being the bad guy! Though in my mind I'm trying to be a better person in the film, so I'm not completely bad... but I do kill people and seem to take joy in it.

Joe Filipas, Director

Joe is an award-winning filmmaker in Minneapolis, and has produced numerous films and documentaries, including the dark-comedy horror short The Garage (winner of Best in Show at 2014 Minneapolis Comic Con), and webseries and comedy specials with Stand Up! Records.

What inspired you to make Bad Habit?

I love horror films. There's nothing quite like a good thriller, the way your adrenaline gets up, and I'm the type of person with a very active imagination, so some horror films stick with me for a long time. Horror films aren't just fun to watch, they're a lot of fun to produce. You can really let yourself get unhinged and push yourself creatively, and a good horror set just bubbles with energy.

I'd met Sarah a few years ago when I was workshoping a compilation project that didn't get off the ground, and I wanted to find another project to work with her on. She's a really fun performer, a great collaborator, and has a dedicated following, and then it hit me that she's usually the "final girl" in most of her body of work. What if we played against that type, and instead of asking the audience to be afraid for her, had them be afraid of her? A sequence towards the end of the film when Sarah is getting dressed in plastic was the first image I had of *Bad Habit*. That was the initial lightbulb, and then after some work with the producing team, the second lightbulb was that if she didn't actually want to kill any more, not only could the audience be afraid of what she'll do next, they could also be rooting for her to succeed. That dichotomy was really interesting to me, and I think aside from showcasing Sarah in a role she's never played before, which her fans will really love, that character's desire to change drives the story in a really compelling way.

What were the challenges of producing Bad Habit?

Bad Habit is very long for a short, the final run time on both the standard and alternate ending cuts of the film is about 24 minutes. I didn't want to rush the runtime of the film so it would have enough room to breathe and let tension build the way a more traditional 8 to 10-minute short can't. Early on, so we could move through production efficiently we decided that Sarah wouldn't have any dialogue in the film, instead the audio book she listens to throughout serves as a Greek chorus for the piece. This allowed us to shoot her scenes in a lot less time but still produce the story we wanted to in a minimal amount of shooting days.

The core cast and crew blocked out a three-day weekend at the end of February last year to film, but on Thursday night, a massive snowstorm blanketed most of Minnesota. It was the only weekend that was going to work for us to film, and on Friday it seemed like we might not finish. It took Sarah most of the day to drive about 90 miles to St. Paul, but on the plus side, that day gave the crew time to set dress the house we were filming in, prep the lights, and it gave me enough time to fine-tune storyboards and the shot list and order for every day.

When Sarah finally arrived, we filmed for about four hours, and then knocked out everything else on Saturday and Sunday, mostly as we'd originally scheduled. I think we filmed something like 200 unique shot setups in that time, and

Sarah and our cast all just crushed their work. We were able to move fast in part because Sarah didn't need to run lines or do more than a few takes on each scene to get it right.

The only other major challenge we've had is funding and time - post has been handled entirely by myself and (executive producer) Clint. We just haven't had the resources to farm out the post work to others around town, and for the past year I've also been in grad school (at Northwestern University) so finalizing the project has been a very slow and cumbersome process. I'm relieved and excited to finally get it out in front of audiences.

Why didn't you crowdfund?

We actually talked about crowdfunding a lot, and to be honest, it just didn't feel right to me for this project. Crowdfunding has helped create some great content where the visuals just wouldn't have been financially feasible otherwise, but this project felt just a bit too small scale to run a big campaign before we even started production. At its core, *Bad Habit* is more a character-driven thriller than anything else. I would've felt awful for fans to have to wait over a year to see a final product, and ask them for \$20, \$30, \$50 donations to make it possible. So I funded this project personally, and the current release through VHX is - hopefully - the way we break even and maybe start funding the next project. That's why we've left the "pay what you want" option open on our site. So, for *Bad Habit*, viewers don't have to wait to see the final product and will help us with seed money for the next project.

Why will horror fans like Bad Habit?

I think if you're a fan of horror and thrillers, even if you're not familiar with Sarah, you'll really like how we play our scream queen against type. You want to be on her side but she is so damned unnerving, I hope viewers have a lot of conflicting emotions throughout.

In particular, there's a scene later in the film when Sarah is changing. In other projects of hers, the moment would be played up for sex appeal, but I hope viewers are extremely uncomfortable when this happens.

What was your favorite scene to film?

I don't want to spoil it, but there's a scene with Sarah and a cured ham. I actually ruined an incredible take by jumping up and down and screaming "I love making movies!" We ended up using that shot up until the point I blew it.

What surprises were there in post?

Two scenes in particular stand out. A meeting room scene turned out great, it's just a tremendous amount of fun. The alternate ending, too, is something I really can't believe I filmed.

I knew going into the project how much talent we had on our cast and our crew, but seeing it all come together - the performances of Sarah, Bryan, Amy, Earl, and Kenton; how incredible our AC and gaffer Sam made everything look, the moody original score from Mike - I'm really pleased. I hope we can find an audience that loves it as much as I do.

Mike Sayre, Composer

Mike is a New York City-based composer and musician whose credits include work on programs for Showtime and CBS.

Have you scored horror films before?

I've made a fair amount of horror music for practice, but this was my first real live horror project.

What were your musical influences for the Bad Habit score?

The director (Joe Filipas) was looking for something that channeled the industrial and synth-driven styles in the recent Trent Reznor scores for *Girl with the Dragon Tattoo* and *Gone Girl*, but we didn't want to do too much of a techno or EDM score. Really once the guitars got added I think we ended up with something that also hearkens to some earlier Nine Inch Nails - lots of distortion on the synths, and grungy guitars. I also really admire Stephen Price's work on *Gravity*.

What's fun about writing for this genre? What are the challenges?

I really enjoy writing for horror, because there's so much room for creativity and experimentation. For example, in this score, one of the sounds near the very end of the film is actually a recording of me making some weird hollow sounds with my mouth, which I then processed a bunch and turned into a synth. There's another sound that I made by mangling some of the dialog and making it rhythmic.

One of the challenges of the approach in this film - which uses a lot of atmosphere and non-musical sounds - is that it can be difficult to establish unity since there's not a lot of melodic material. I tried to address that by associating recurring locations - like the basement - with a particular sound.

What was your favorite scene to write for?

I enjoyed writing for the board room scene because there's some great comedy to play off of.