

# Vampire Movie Filmed in Belvidere

By Lisa Palmeno

Part of a vampire movie was recently filmed in Belvidere, in the basement of *The Boone County Journal*. Script writer/main actor Andy Schatner plans to use more artistic/historic locations for what he hopes will be a more traditional blood-and-guts vampire movie than what is currently mainstream popular. The cast and crew will be finished with the photography by the end of November, and, after it is edited and scored, the 30-45 minute "short" will be ready to submit to producers.

Their plan is that, if a producer like the short, maybe they can get them interested in the feature-length edition of the story Schatner also wrote. Schatner and Actress Heather Dorff touched on the differences in the story lines, characters of both movie scripts, which the writer said stand independently of one another.

*Afraid of Sunrise*, which started out with a \$3,000 budget, has also made use of other locations in the area, such as Kryptonite Bar in downtown Rockford and the Stratford Inn in Sycamore. Third Eye Blind's Bassist/Backup Singer, Abe Millet will score the film, along with help from Paul Sinnog, the band's guitar tech and pianist.

Schatner based the short on the feature-length screenplay he wrote 10 years ago, a script inspired by the girl he was dating and his love of classic gothic horror movies, such as *Frankenstein* and *Dracula*. The writer/producer said he loves the '80s standards (*Friday the 13th*, *Nightmare on Elm Street*, *Motel Hell*) as well as Vincent Price and *House of Wax*.

After showing director Belvidere native Justin Romine his horror story, the two started raising money for the project by posting it on [www.indiegogo.com](http://www.indiegogo.com). They asked friends and family for donations and offered DVDs and opportunities for small roles in the film as incentives. It worked and now Schatner will get to bring his love of "the Halloween atmosphere" to life, or to death. He studied behind-the-scenes TV production at Michigan State and film at Columbia for a year before deciding to start his acting career. He quit school and began study at Center Theatre, which he said had some Steppenwolf members and good teachers.

His new goal is to make *Afraid of Sunrise* what he considers a more real version of the bloodsucker story. "I wanted to make it a little more brutal," he said, adding that recent vampire films are very "sanitized, very romantic," with characters that are "in touch with their feelings. Vampires are not like that, they will kill you. They are not there to romance you; they're there to eat you."

Romine also talked about making a "more traditional bloody vampire movie." He explained the plot with, "The film revolves around Jonathan Sloan, who is a vampire hunter. When Jonathan was young, his parents were killed by a gang of vicious vampires, along with an old mentor-type person. He vowed revenge for the parents' death. Years later, we catch up with Jonathan stalking illegal vampires. It takes place in a semi-futuristic world where vampires are real, they do exist, and they've been relegated to second-class citizens. They're living in ghettos, they're micro-chipped and they're tracked..."

Unlike traditional vampire movies, the bloodsuckers spend their nights fighting for their freedom. Romine spent his days in drama club while at Belvidere High School. His involvement in the Audio/Video Club led to his new profession as a Television newscaster for Channels 17, 39 Fox and ABC. Dorff also has television work under her fangs. She said she has "done a lot of indie film work in Chicago and a few commercials." She appeared in a Bud Light promotion, a SoSheCosmetics commercial, and music videos for Alternative/Gothic/Hip Hop Artist Etare Neged and in Ross Crean's *Sleepers* (folk, rock, world music, Celtic) In *Afraid of Sunrise*, Dorff plays Perrey, the love interest of main vampire Jonathan Sloan. "She's the vampire, he's the vampire hunter, so you can see the issue," said Dorff. She said the character of Perrey struggles with trying to be a good girl and "not hurt humans, but it's in her nature to drink blood, sometimes you can't fight your nature." The next shoot will take place October 27 in Chicago, at Fizz, a local bar on Belmont and Lincoln.



Actor Tom Lodewyck bares his vampire fangs for the camera during taping of the independent film "Afraid of Sunrise" in downtown Belvidere on Thursday, September 30. (Photo by Curtis Clegg)

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