

What are you looking for? Where is it? When is it?

City & State or ZIP

Tonight, this weekend, May 5th...

MOVIES 11:23 p.m. Tuesday, April 20, 2010

Text size:

'Losers' director a part-time Atlantan

ShareThis Print E-mail

By Gina Piccalo
For the AJC

Paris-born director Sylvain White got his start doing music videos. But after he made his phenomenal debut with the 2007 blockbuster dance film "Stomp the Yard," he was offered every dance picture script Hollywood could muster.

Dan Steinberg, AP

Director Sylvain White, left, and producer Joel Silver arrive at the premier of the feature film "The Losers" in Los Angeles on Tuesday, April 20, 2010.

[Enlarge photo](#)



WARNER BROTHERS PICTURES, NYT
Idris Elba, right, and Jeffrey Dean Morgan in the film "The Losers".

He had something else in mind. White got hold of one of the hottest projects in town, the adaptation of the irreverent DC Comics graphic novel series written by Andy Diggle and illustrated by Jock. And he was determined to beat out the other higher profile filmmakers clamoring for the picture. But it didn't come easy.

White, 38, had to hard-sell Warner Bros. executives with an elaborate presentation. Even after he got the picture, though, he was under some serious budget constraints. Here he sings the praises of Southern life, (he's a part-time Tucker resident), talks about his daredevil cast and the thrill-a-minute production, where even the most pyrotechnically difficult shot was done in just one take.

Q: What intrigued you enough about the graphic novel "The Losers" to pursue making this film?

A: I grew up reading graphic novels. I love video games. I really gravitate towards very eclectic sort of material. My first movie was kind of a dance film. And of course the way Hollywood works I got a bunch of dance movies after that. But I thought no that's not what I necessarily do. All the directors I admire have had very eclectic careers. And I'm hoping that's what I'll be able to accomplish.

Q: How did you end up doing this film from Stomp the Yard? Did you get the script and say this is the one? Did you have to sell yourself for this?

A: It was a highly coveted project and a lot of people were up for it. I fell in love with the graphic novel. I'm from Paris and there's a huge industry there. I always had a passion for it. That and video games. So I was always looking at those two industries for source material. I got the script.

Looking for more on accessAtlanta?

Enter keyword...

- [Sign up for our weekend events newsletter »](#)
- [Become a fan of accessAtlanta on Facebook »](#)
- [Get the latest news on \[ajc.com\]\(http://ajc.com\) and \[wsbtv.com\]\(http://wsbtv.com\)](#)



[The Georgian Terrace Hotel](#)

\$99 -- Elegant Midtown Atlanta Hotel with Upgrade, 30% OFF
www.travelzoo.com

[Delta Deals – Limited Time Only](#)

Flights from Atlanta to cities across the country.
Book now!

[accessAtlanta Blogs »](#)

[Radio & TV Talk](#)
With Rodney Ho

[Food and More](#)
With John Kessler

[American Idol Buzz](#)
Drink

[Misadventures in Atlanta](#)
A dating blog, with Wise Diva

[The Buzz](#)
Celebrity gossip & news

[Atlanta Music Scene](#)
[Atlanta Arts & Culture](#)

I re-read the graphic novels. I did a lot of research on it. I thought this could be a very original movie combining a humoristic tone with this hard-core action. I put together a huge visual presentation and a big pitch. I went into the studio and pitched my vision for the movie. It was supposed to be R-rated. I thought it should be PG-13. All my ideas for characters, actors, my vision for use of color. I wanted them to understand how I was going to make this different than what was expected.

Q: For a film with a modest budget, you made it look spectacularly sophisticated. Did you actually shoot in all those different locations, Miami, Dubai, Bolivia?

A: We shot the entire movie in Puerto Rico and we cheated all these locations. We were on a relatively tight budget for this movie and didn't have the time to go all over the world to shoot all these scenes. So we found a place we could actually simulate all these locations. And that turned out to be Puerto Rico. It's so rich in its environments and its infrastructure that you can really recreate a lot of different looks there. From Bolivia to downtown Miami.

Q: It was strikingly shot film. Some shots look as if they were taken directly from the frames of the graphic novel.

A: There were two elements in the graphic novel that I really gravitated toward. The first thing was the tone, this amazing thing in the writing that combines these fun characters with this cool action. Secondly the aesthetic of the graphic novel is beautiful. I collaborated pretty closely with the British illustrator Jock making sure the movie would mirror and reflect the tone and atmosphere of the graphic novel without having to necessarily replicate frames. For example, he's got an amazing use of color. , You turn the page and suddenly you're in a completely new environment. , I really wanted to stay true to that.

Q: Some of the stunts in this film are pretty daring. The mid-air collision of the exploding Ducati and the plane. That fight scene in the middle of a burning building. You must have had a pretty experienced crew managing that.

A: A lot of the stunts were done by the actors. Ninety percent. . . When you see Zoe [Saldana] and Jeffrey [Dean Morgan] in the middle of this room on fire, there's no [computer generated effects] there. It was really them in the middle of a room on fire. We only had one take. Then the room literally burned down. And that was it! That was the end of the day! ... Normally you would have five days to shoot this scene and we did it in a day in a half. We did it in two takes.

Q: Any other stunts that were particularly tricky?

A: I like to do a lot of my effects in-camera. We didn't have a budget for a bunch of special effects. . . . What you see is what was shot. We really did launch that motorcycle in the air, exploding toward the plane. . . . And at the same time, we only had one take. When I blow up that car in Miami, there was only one car to blow up. One take. And you just have to get it right.

Q: You live part time in Atlanta. What is it about the city that convinced you to live here part-time?

A: As you know, we shot Stomp the Yard in Atlanta. I spend quite of bit of time there. I fell in love with the city. It's such a great city. I fell in love with a woman from Atlanta. My brother lives in Atlanta. I found a beautiful house in Tucker. I just decided to make that move. It's a great way to get away from Hollywood and go back to something that's a little more real. . . . Unfortunately a lot of the cliches and stereotypes about Los Angeles are true. Atlanta is a completely different city. It feels much more rooted and real to me. It seems that it's fast developing and also on the edge. There are a lot of cool arts going through Atlanta. There's really nice diversity that I like. It feels like a moving city. A developing city. It's a place that's happening. Having had such a great experience working there I just felt it was a great place for me to be. For me, Los Angeles is much more a work environment. In the film business you have to be here. I love to get away and go back to a place that's more normal. More real. I feel like there's a certain quality that people have in the South in Atlanta. A nice approachability, great social qualities that people have. And I

Entertainment Video

Best of the Big A »

Nominate: [Best macaroni and cheese](#)

Vote: [Best place to eat at the bar](#)

Winners: [Best sushi](#)

Take a break

- | | | | |
|-------------------------|-------------------------|----------------------------|---------------------------|
| Blogs | Puzzles | Horoscopes | The Vent |
| Lottery | Comics | Sudoku | Crossword |

Most popular stories

- [1. Stratosphere jump opens to daredevils in Las Vegas](#)
- [2. Cigarette sponsor pulled from Kelly Clarkson show](#)
- [3. Ex-partner says gracious goodbye to rapper Guru](#)
- [4. Oprah to film show at Georgia Tech](#)
- [5. Worker punched after confronting man about odor](#)

[Put this on your site](#)

love the food!

Today on accessAtlanta



'South Park' targeted



Islamic Web site warns cartoon's creators they could be killed for depicting Muhammad in a bear suit.

Can you see the change?



What's altered in the two photos? See how you score when you play the Find 5 challenge!

We want the funk



George Clinton & Parliament-Funkadelic bring the funk to Masquerade, where they jammed until 3 a.m.

\$97/Hr Part-Time Job (Love Hewitt) Make \$5500 A Month Online. As Seen on ABC, CBS and CNN. NY-Sentinel.com

Local Part Time Jobs Find a part time job. Search local listings at YELLOWPAGES.COM. yellowpages.com

Hiring Now: Part Time Jobs Urgent - Immediate openings in your area. Apply Now - Interview Today. hiring

Ads by Yahoo!

accessAtlanta Partner Sites



Add an Event »

Add a Venue »

Add a Performer »

Contact Us »

Customer Care »

Looking for more? ▲

SECTIONS

- Home
Celebrities & TV
Events
Food & Restaurants
Movies
Music
Fashion & Style
Games & Comics
Holiday Guide
Blogs
Topics

Advertise on accessAtlanta.com »

Reach the audience you want by advertising on accessAtlanta.com

TELL US WHAT YOU THINK ABOUT THE SITE

Send us your suggestions about this page.

Your e-mail address (will not be shared)

Send Feedback



Visitor Agreement | Privacy Statement | About our ads
© 2010 The Atlanta Journal-Constitution

Search accessAtlanta.com...

