



Monday 24 November, 9.45 pm, Massimo 1

Torino 26

An encounter with Christopher Weekes (director) and Steve Rodgers (actor) of Bitter&Twisted

Writing the movie

C.W.: *When I was twenty years old, I started writing the first draft of this story for my mom, who was still alive back then. The mother's character in the film is very similar to my mother, who used to spend most of her day laying on the couch. She came from a family with divorced parents, she suffered a lot and, in the end, gave up on life. You can live a disastrous life in the suburbs of Sidney.*

I was young when I started writing this movie, so I would invent stories filled with aliens and car chases, just like all kids do. Of course I could never find a cast to play the roles! Then, when my mother died, I tried using writing as a way to escape that painful situation, and that's how the movie was born.

Working with actors

C.W.: *When my mother died I inherited 200.000 Australian Dollars, which I decided to use to make this movie. In a certain sense, then, something positive came out of something really bad. The film didn't cost that much, but to stay within budget we didn't have much time to work with the actors: just two days! When I met with Steve, who plays the father in the movie, we had a long chat that gave me a lot of ideas to find the words to better portray his character.*

S.R.: *The positive thing about this project was that, since the first time I read through the script, you could notice its strength. It convinced me immediately for the humanity that shined through it. When you read this movie, the heart of it immediately stands out, and it's amazing that such a young man could find such deep words to describe such feelings. All of us actors were stunned by the film's emotional strength, and that's why we all wanted to work on it, not for the money, but truly for its heart!*

C.W.: *Noni Hazlehurst, who plays the mother, is a famous actress in Australia because she has a part in a popular TV show in which she plays a mother, so she seemed perfect for my character. Getting the screenplay to her was a lucky strike: a friend of mine worked on that show's set, so I asked him the huge favor of sneaking me in her dressing room so that I could leave the script. She read it and she immediately called me to tell me that she was going to quit the show to make my movie! At that point I had only six months to find the rest of the cast and the money that I still needed to finance it.*

Sidney and Melbourne

C.W.: *Sydney's suburbs scare me because everything seems so extremely calm. All the neighborhoods look the same, with houses with their front and backyards, all separated from one another, encompassed by silence. I prefer noise and traffic. In Australia there's a big rivalry between Sidney and Melbourne, which is younger and more artistic. When someone moves to Melbourne, it's as if they were saying "I want to change my life."*