

# Out for 'Blood'

## Matt Sanchez tracks indie in Austrian Alps

Scheduled to be released in 2012, *Autumn Blood* was scribed by the creative minds of Markus Blunder and Stephen Barton. Markus is also serving as the film's director. The story follows the excruciating life of a pair of orphaned siblings, one played by the lovely Sophie Lowe from *Beautiful Kate* and the other played by Maximillian Harnisch. Peter Stormare of *Fargo* fame was also tapped to for the nefarious town mayor. Lens'd by DP Reed Morano in the Austrian Alps, Matt Sanchez teamed up with a small crew to capture *Bloods'* audio tracks. He recently sat down with us to share his overseas experience:

**With a title like *Autumn Blood*, my guess is it's not rated G?**

(laughs) No not particularly. Maybe the end credits... But being on this film has truly been a breathtaking experience with cinematographer Reed Morano behind the camera. I wouldn't say it's a family movie, but then again, that depends on the family. *Blood* has a somewhat controversial plot with a few disturbing scenes, but it will entertain to say the very least. It's set in modern times in an unknown, remote location which gives it a life of its own.

**How did you land the *Blood* job?**

Back in early 2010, Reed and I worked on a film called *Little Birds* starring Kate Bosworth. We haven't worked with each other since, but when she asked me if I was interested in coming out to Tirol, I jumped at the opportunity. Reed then put me in touch with producer Matt Tauber who signed me on to the film.

**Where did you guys shoot the film?**

*Blood* was entirely shot in Austria. We were originally slated to be in Tirol for 5 weeks, but they added almost another week to the schedule. Markus really wanted to make a carefully crafted film and took the extra time to do so. We ended up shooting all over the region of Tirol. From Oetz, to Imst, to Boden, and Ehrwald, to name a few.

**Who was on your crew with you?**

Omar Barraza was my boom operator and was such an invaluable asset to our department and to the crew in general. We've worked on many features together and he's one of the best boom ops I've ever met. He has the ability to mix as well so he really knows what I need. Having that little bit of mixing knowl-



Boom Op Omar Barraza with Matt Sanchez

Photos courtesy of Matt Sanchez

edge is such a great asset when it comes to unique situations and catching problems before they arise.

About half of the crew was American, with the rest being Austrian or German. Reed is based out of NYC and flew some of her crew out to hold up the grip and electrical departments, who were amazing to work with.

Matt Walker was our outstanding gaffer and Brandon Taylor was our amazing key grip. They served as our source of crew morale as well. I've been fortunate enough to know most of the Americans from previous projects, especially the camera department, which was also composed of the highest caliber of individuals. Kevin Akers and Joe Segura were our awesome 1<sup>st</sup> ACs, backing up our extraordinary steadicam operators Thomas Maier and Erwin Lanzemberger.

### **Blood is shooting on film correct?**

Yeah. We were filming on both 35mm and 65mm and were able to capture some stellar imagery for the film.

### **Do you approach your mix differently with film?**

Not really. Every take I did a mono mix with ISOs recorded from each mic. We didn't have a proper VTR setup or playback operator, so the sound comes to the bag and goes nowhere else. Kind of scary when you think about it...

### **What kind of gear did you bring on this trip?**

To be perfectly honest, *Autumn Blood* had minimal dialogue. And I mean minimal. Because of this, and the low budget nature of production, I cut back on shipping costs and broke down my package significantly. I worked exclusively out of a PortaBrace bag with a Sound Devices 744T as my anchor and a Sound Devices 442 mixer. For wires, I used four Lectrosonics 211s, two UM250Cs and two UM200Cs paired with Sanken COS-11 lavs and an extra Countryman B6. Production rented Block 25 Lectrosonics IFBs which were a breath of fresh air when compared to the Comteks.

We used Sennheiser MKH 816T and MKH 816T-F for the outdoor shots, which I think gave us a phenomenal sound. For interiors, I love the Schoeps CMC6-U with MK41 capsule and CUT1 filter. Also in my kit was a Sennheiser MKH 416, Sanken CUB-01 for plants and handhelds, a bunch of cables and a slew of batteries. A Denecke smartslate was used for marking and Omar used a 16' K-Tek boom pole for his set work.



*The crew readies a scene with Peter Stormare*

### **How did the weather elements affect your mix?**

The climate out there was beyond brutal. We were usually shooting at or above 2000m which made the daily temperature average around 2-6 degrees Celsius. Many mornings and nights ended up dropping below freezing. (laughing) There's just a certain point when you just can't add any more layers of clothes or breathe any harder. Still, things went very smoothly and we managed to survive every day with minimal griping.

### **What were some of your other challenges on the show?**

A lot of the film was shot via handheld or steadicam which were mostly tracking shots. Because of this, we picked up a lot of crew footsteps and the usual noise that goes along with it. All the dialogue was so pristine, we tried to make the ambiance and effects just as good. We were able to capture a wide range of natural sounds and the wild room tone was interesting as well: you really got to hear the world around you; no planes, no cars, no civilization, no anything. With that being said, a lot of the rivers out there sounded remarkably similar to California's 405 highway.

### **How was it working with Peter Stormare?**

I've actually worked with Peter before back in July of this year when I mixed the feature film *Jewtopia*. He was a pleasure to work with then, and yet again on *Autumn Blood*. He kept the energy as high as ever and is one of the finest actors I've ever worked with. His performances were amazing to say the least and his demeanor with all the departments, in-

cluding sound, was exceptional.

### **Tell us a little bit about your workflow on set.**

Matching sound to picture is important for me. I like to know exactly what's being covered and what will be covered. We would watch the blocking and rehearsals and Markus would let us know of any specific changes to the script as they came along. Omar on boom was another major plus. I trust his skills, which never let me down. This allows me to focus solely on the mix. Omar and I generally worked close with Markus, Reed and camera department so it felt more of a team effort than anything. Having a director that is so personable and incredibly energetic was awesome, because the shoot never felt like a job. It really became a synergistic effort between us all.

### **How was it working with a smaller crew?**

The Austrians and Germans in the crew were outstanding to work with, so what we lacked in quantity they certainly made up for in quality. Some were interns that became promoted throughout filming while others started as department heads; it couldn't have been any more of a mosh-pit of nationalities and personalities.

Because of the less than grand size crew, there's a little more responsibility on our shoulders to manage ourselves and figure out some logistics at times, but that's half the fun. The harsh conditions also managed to bring us together, despite how brutal they were. It's safe to say this one will be remembered forever. ☺ -Daron James