



# An Interview with Sean Weathers, Director of *The Trade Off* and *Maniac Too!*

by **Mike Habermelner**  
December 2013

Films directed by **Sean Weathers** on (re)Search my Trash

**Your movie *The Trade Off* - in a few words, what is it about?**

It's about a hedonistic man with no morals, or no social consciousness, that has done what he wanted his entire life and is now, for the first time, having to deal with the consequences of his actions and lifestyle.

**Is any of *The Trade Off* based on personal experiences - and other sources of inspiration when writing the movie?**

None of the situations were based on anything that actually happened to me; I was just trying to come up with relatable drama and conflicts that people go through in life. In terms of the plot, I did lean on Oscar Wilde's *The Picture of Dorian Gray* for inspiration.

**You also play the lead in *The Trade Off* - so what did you draw upon to bring your character to life, and to what extent have you based the character on yourself?**

This character was just a dialed up version of the man I was in 2008 when I did the film.

**How would you describe your directorial approach to your subject at hand?**

Keep things simple and don't fall on my face. Going into *The Trade Off*, we were shooting in HD for the first time, and yes that was a big deal in 2008 because the technology for an HD prosumer camera was still very new at the time. We were shooting our HD footage onto a hard drive attached to the camera called *Firestore*. We recorded through the *Firestore* and not the camera, so we were recording without actually hitting any record button and see the all-important red light, which gives you a very uneasy feeling going into every scene. Transferring the footage took 3 times longer than the footage we shot. So if we shot an hour we'd have to stop shooting for 3 hours to be able to look at the footage to make sure it recorded properly. In addition to the *Firestore*, we were shooting with a lot of new equipment we had never used before; including a new lighting set, boom stand, and steadicam. Also, I was directing from in front of the camera for almost all of the film. My crew consisted of 1 other person aside from myself (Aswad Issa), and most of the girls in the film were models that had never acted before. The selling point for *The Trade Off* was going to be beautiful girls, T&A and softcore sex. So being in the sex scenes and not having to direct both actors in them definitely helped a lot as well.

**Do talk about your cast for a bit, and why exactly these people?**

My films can come off as very graphic, extreme and offensive to a lot of people, including actors. So, my main goal is finding people who have no reservations about the material and no inhibitions in terms of what they're willing to do and how they're portrayed on camera. Then, as long as I have something that fits them and makes sense, I'll work with them. This film has 2 multi talented actors that are in 2 of my next 3 films, Chrystal Claire and Adonis Williams. Chrystal is also an amazing singer that I'd also like to get on a future soundtrack. Adonis is also a stuntman and fight choreographer, 2 skills I plan on making use of in future projects. Lastly, I'll mention Waliek Crandall. He's the best actor I've ever worked with and he has played a lead character in 4 of my films.

***The Trade Off* features quite a few quite explicit sex scenes. What led to the decision to go almost all the way, and was this at all a problem with any of the actresses?**

I enjoy pushing the envelope as a filmmaker. So when we decided to do a hedonistic film inspired by *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, I had to make it my own. I did things such as shooting in an urban environment, having an ethnic cast, taking the supernatural aspects out of the story and viscerally showing his sexual desires play out on screen. In terms of problems with the actresses, I haven't had any issues at all. I worked with one of the actresses again on my next film and I interviewed 4 of them about this film years later. That's not to say, some time down the road one of them may regret what they did when they were younger and view things differently. But, I can't let the possibility of that happening prevent me from fully expressing myself as an artist.

**What can you tell us about the shoot as such, and the on-set atmosphere?**

Imagine being in a car and almost getting into an accident. You're scared, you're anxious, you're terrified and then it's over and you're fine. You feel like you wish it didn't happen, but you're excited that you survived it and it's over. Between equipment issues, dealing with first time actors, not being able to direct from behind the camera, that's how I felt everyday on set.

**Rather recently, another film of yours, *Maniac Too!*, has finally seen its release as well - so what is that one about?**



# An Interview with Sean Weathers, Director of *The Trade Off* and *Maniac Too!*

by **Mike Habermel**  
December 2013

Films directed by **Sean Weathers** on (re)Search my Trash

A man sexually assaults women on the streets of New York and it's unclear whether it's real, a dream, a nightmare or a drug-induced hallucination.

**The title of *Maniac Too!* is of course a reference to William Lustig's *Maniac* - so what did you find so interesting about that movie that you wanted to follow it up?**

I loved the look and feel of the film as well as the lead character. Someone who, while doing heinous acts both enjoys and hates it at the same time; the killer is asking the audience and the victim to feel his pain.

***Maniac Too!* features quite a few very graphic rape scenes that you've filmed in public, guerilla-style, and that don't necessarily hold back - so how did you even go about filming these?**

The first thing is to be completely honest with the crew and actors as to what's going to happen. Then I pitched my vision of the end product. Once they're clear, it becomes a group effort. Aswad helped me find the locations; one actress used the headlights on her car to light her scene because the location we had was too dark; another actress completely reshot her scene after the cops shut us down. Everyone that was part of the film went above and beyond expectations.

**How hard was it actually to cast the girls in this movie?**

The script called for 12 actresses. Of the 6 in the film, we cast 2 from an open call, and 4 were callbacks from previous castings. I think the main thing that got the actresses to do it was my passion for the material. Even though the end product has very little more than the actual rapes, you can still see this was intended to be a psychological film. If we had more time, we would have cast girls for the 4 remaining rape scenes. The 2 principal female roles were the girlfriend and mother. All of the actresses being considered for the girlfriend would later be cast in *Hookers in Revolt*, but the mother was another story. We never came close to casting her, we needed a really good actress that was in her 40's, who had the body and willingness to do nudity and love scenes on camera. That was one of many reasons we decided to stop production.

**As far as I know, *Maniac Too!* ran into all sorts of trouble during and after the shoot. Care to elaborate, and what made you push through and release it despite everything?**

Where do I start and where do I end? We were shooting with a new camera that had no warranty, that wasn't ours. We were never able to cast the other 2 principal roles of the mother and the girlfriend. We hit a roadblock trying to cast the last 4 girls to get the 10 rape scenes we wanted. We were shooting with a lead actor that had worked with us on several projects that were never finished and his faith in us was understandably waning. We were almost arrested when the cops pulled up on us during a rape scene. With all that said, and despite it not being the film I intended when we started shooting, I am very proud of the end product.

***Vault of Terror*, the DVD featuring *Maniac Too!*, also includes your acting debut *A Good Samaritan in New York City* - so obviously, you have to talk about this one for a bit!**

Acting was something I had resisted for years at the time, despite Aswad Issa, my partner, pushing me to do it. However, we had Glenn "Illa" Skeete, a crew-member that was acting in all of our films and Jeff Roches, an actor, who had become part of the crew. So I had no excuses. We were sitting around eating Chinese food in Aswad's apartment, reading the script for the first time when he asked us to pick which roles we wanted. Surprisingly we each got our first choice. I thought for sure when I suggested Jeff pick first, since he was the only one of us that is an actor by trade, he would pick the role I wanted, but he didn't. We shot a few hours later on the "A" train in Far Rockaway, Queens. The most memorable part of the shoot was when I started going over the top with the screaming and crying; I kept waiting for Aswad to say cut and tell me to tone it down. Instead, he wanted me to take it further and he kept dousing me with more and more chocolate sauce, which was doubling for blood. After we shot it and started packing up, some cops suddenly came on at the next stop. The train and myself is covered in chocolate sauce and I'm sitting there by myself angling my body so the cops and the people coming on the train don't see enough of me to make the connection. Meanwhile, the guys are pretending they don't know me, so we don't all go down if I get caught. Then I'm going home a sticky mess hours later for no pay, thinking to myself, a) that was awesome and b) what actor would do all of this for me? That's when I realized, with the type of films I do, I need to act simply to make my job easier. So much of my time is spent trying to find good, open-minded actors that are willing to throw caution to the wind. But, what better way to find them than leading by example?

**The other two films on *Vault of Terror*, *The Driller Killer* and *Night of the Living Dead* ... what made you choose exactly these - especially in relation to your own body of work?**



# An Interview with Sean Weathers, Director of *The Trade Off* and *Maniac Too!*

by **Mike Habermelner**  
December 2013

Films directed by **Sean Weathers** on (re)Search my Trash

I feel that when you look at **Maniac Too!** and **The Driller Killer**, from visuals to themes to characters to shooting styles, I feel they both have a ton of parallels. I also feel the same could be said for **A Good Samaritan in New York City** and **Night of the Living Dead**. Those reasons, as well as the fact that they were both low budget indie films made by filmmakers that I admire, lead to my decision to include them on this disc.

**Any future projects you'd like to share?**

**Tortured by Regret**, **Scumbag Hustler**, and **Ace Jackson is a Dead Man** will all hopefully be released in 2014, in that order.

**Your/your movies' website, Facebook, whatever else?**

[www.fullcirclefilmworks.com](http://www.fullcirclefilmworks.com)  
[www.facebook.com/thetradeoffmovie](http://www.facebook.com/thetradeoffmovie)  
[www.facebook.com/vaultofterror](http://www.facebook.com/vaultofterror)  
[www.facebook.com/fullcirclemovietalk](http://www.facebook.com/fullcirclemovietalk)  
[www.facebook.com/bannedfilm](http://www.facebook.com/bannedfilm)  
[www.twitter.com/SeanWeathers](http://www.twitter.com/SeanWeathers)

**Anything else you are dying to mention and I have merely forgotten to ask?**

Three things: 1<sup>st</sup> I want to thank my partner in crime, Aswad Issa, for helping me to complete these films. 2<sup>nd</sup> I have a weekly podcast you can listen to on my website, in which I interview other artists in the entertainment field, called *Full Circle Movie Talk* - [www.facebook.com/fullcirclemovietalk](http://www.facebook.com/fullcirclemovietalk). The 3<sup>rd</sup> and final thing is to anyone reading this, thanks for your interest in me and my films. I always try to make my next film my best film and I appreciate all of the support and feedback from all of my fans. Please keep spreading the word on social media.

**Thanks for the interview!**

Thank you again Mike, this was fun. Can't wait to do it again.