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Kate Bosworth

Her blond locks and shining disposition seem to be Summer embodied, though she will take a turn for the dark side in the remake of *Straw Dogs*, a 70s shock classic. So, it seems she ain't all that nice

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ACTOR/PRODUCER/DIRECTOR FRANKIE NASSO FOUND HIS CALLING AT TEN, AND HAS NEVER QUESTIONED IT SINCE

By Jessica Jones Gorman • Photos by Mark Santana

Role

Frankie Nasso grew up loving film. It was hard not to, after shadowing his producer father on movie sets and other Warner Brothers endeavors for nearly 17 years, and it was during his early childhood that Nasso seemed to grasp an innate sense of direction. And it all happened by the end of his first decade.

"I started acting professionally when I was about 10, playing a young Joe Pesci in the film *Gone Fishin'*," the 26-year-old director/producer said recently, detailing how he got his start. "I had some other roles with Kathleen Turner, Harvey Keitel, and Danny Aiello and I loved being in front of the camera. Those first experiences on feature film sets gave me a taste of what the entire process of making a film was really like."

Nasso said he was enamored with the camera at a young age: how it was built, how the crew worked with it, and how all of the behind-the-scenes minutia operated.

"I saw acting as an integral part of filmmaking, but also realized that it was just a small piece of the puzzle," he said. "There was so much that went into the making of a film and I knew from that point on that I needed to learn more."

So, Nasso treated his time on movie sets as a sort of classroom setting, filling his mind with practical knowledge about the nuances of Hollywood's production secrets.

Attending both middle and high school at Poly Prep in Bay Ridge, Brooklyn, he continued to develop his acting skills at the school's Richard Perry Theatre.

"I didn't take professional acting lessons or courses," he recalled. "I tackled a few bit roles and acted in school plays, but it was a very demanding schedule and I didn't want to take time away from school. I took my first filmmaking class in my senior year."

The class called for Nasso to edit on iMovie—a sort of basic training as far as film and video was concerned. It was enough to reignite Nasso's passion for film production.

Continuing his education at New York University's Tisch School of the Arts, earn-

ing a B.F.A. in Film and TV Production, Nasso continued to act throughout college, appearing on a few episodes of *Law & Order* and earning a supporting role in *Dot. Kill*, a 2005 crime thriller starring Armand Assante, but production continued to be his true calling.

"While I was a student, I assisted on as many productions as possible in order to get a well-rounded knowledge of the industry," Nasso said. "During that time, I became involved in producing and directing a number of music videos and short films."

One of those films, *Officer Down*, won the Spike Lee award at the Cannes Film Festival in 2008.

"That was definitely one of my greatest achievements," Nasso said. "And so much experience came out of producing all of these student films on different budgets and in different places like Utah, California, and Miami."

From there Nasso decided to start his own company, one that would focus on the production of music videos, documentaries, short films, and content for the Web. Founded in 2008, Nova Entertainment has produced countless commercials, several award-winning short films, and hundreds of music videos. Now working closely with influential record labels such as Sony Music Entertainment, Universal/Motown, Warner Music Group, Roadrunner, and Victory—and with over a dozen music videos featured on MTV, VH1, BET, and FUSE—Nasso says he's most definitely found his niche.

"Music has always been my first passion," he said. "I think it's one of most visual forms of storytelling...almost like a novel that allows the listener to visualize and come up with their own story based on what's happening in the song. Music is really what has always inspired me. A lot of filmmakers study films, me, I listened to music."

And Nasso is inspired by a range of genres from hip hop to metal, a musical diversity evident in his work.



Left: With The Rza of Wu-Tang Clan.
Below (from left to right): Richard Recco, Spike Lee, Nasso, and Joseph Frio.
Right (from left to right): Mehcad Brooks (of *True Blood* and *Necessary Roughness*), Nasso, and actress/producer Jaimyse Haft.





"I believe, for example, that heavy metal and rap are completely misunderstood art forms," he noted. "They are both all about conquering your own demons, about facing adversity; there are very strong messages in all of those songs. As a filmmaker, it's one of my goals in life to break the stereotypes associated with that type of music."

Nasso recently wrapped a video on LA's Sunset Strip for English metalcore band Asking Alexandria, whose album *Reckless & Relentless* debuted at an impressive #9 on the Billboard charts. And, on the other side of the production spectrum, he recently completed work on a documentary on the life of Harry Belafonte which will air on HBO this October.

"I traveled with Mr. Belafonte to London, Berlin, Paris, New York city—all over the map during production of this film—and words cannot explain how inspiring that man is," Nasso recalled. But that brand of experience is what the filmmaker describes as the most beautiful part of his career and his life in this industry.

"I love what I do," he said. "It doesn't feel like work when you're traveling, meeting new people, and having such wonderful experiences with every new project you create."

And with his boutique, Eltingville-based studio, Nasso has plans to branch out even further into the music industry.

"We converted this 100-year-old ranch house into a brand-new, state-of-the-art music recording studio where we edit, write, and brainstorm," Nasso said. "We created a space that is a living, breathing, recordable environment where we have the ability to cater to all different types of productions—there is really nothing like it on the East Coast."

The facility allows Nasso to remain so passionate about his horizon in the production industry.

"We're excited about what the future holds for us," he concluded. "Every project and every day in this career is so amazing. I can't wait to see what blessings the next day holds." ●



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