



City Lights Pics falls for 'Descent'

By Gregg Goldstein

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NEW YORK -- Producer-actress Rosario Dawson's harrowing date rape drama "Descent" has been acquired for domestic theatrical release by City Lights Pictures Releasing.

Sister company City Lights Home Entertainment will handle video and digital distribution of the film as part of its recently announced partnership with Warner/Elektra/Atlantic.

In the less than \$3 million feature, set for a platform release in late spring, Dawson will play a college student slowly recovering from a brutal date rape. While trying to rebuild her life, she decides to take revenge on her attacker (Chad Faust, "Saved!") in a manner City Lights CEO Danny Fisher describes as "equally shocking, controversial and graphic."

Fisher said he is prepared to release the film unrated or with an NC-17 rating because of its violence as he doesn't want to diminish the power of the material.

"This is not a revenge thriller, and we're not planning to market it as such," Fisher said. He plans to reach out to rape and women's organizations to spread awareness about the subject matter and launch a strong Internet campaign, including a presence in online support groups.

First-time feature director Talia Lugacy, a longtime friend of first-time producer Dawson, co-wrote the script with Brian Priest especially for the actress. Morris S. Levy's MEGA Films produced the project in association with City Lights Pictures and Dawson and Lugacy's production company, Trybe Films. Two of Dawson's "Rent" co-stars, Tracie Thoms and Wilson Jermaine Heredia, appear in supporting roles.

Fisher owns City Lights Pictures' parent company City Lights Media Group with his brothers Jack and Joe, who executive produced the film along with Michael Almog and Michael Califra.

City Lights Pictures plans to sell certain projects like the upcoming Sundance Film Festival entry "The Ten" to outside distributors. Danny Fisher said he received several offers from indie distributors for "Descent," but he, Dawson and Levy felt it was important to release it through CLPR so the initial creative team could be fully involved. Dawson plans to have extensive participation in the film's marketing and distribution.

CLPR had its first releases this year with the horror film "Tamara" and the docu "Suicide Killers."

Steven C. Beer of Greenberg Traurig represented CLPR and MEGA and Carlos Goodman of Bloom Hergott Diemer Rosenthal & LaViolette represented Dawson in the deal.