

## RDC grad plays nun in feature film

Reagan Dale Neis  
film *Dirty Habit*  
in city Dec. 10

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Reagan Dale Neis steps out of her usual comedic or romantic roles to play a nun with more going on than meets the eye in *Dirty Habit*.

It's an independent full-length feature movie made in Los Angeles, in which Neis plays a lead role and also acts as creative producer.

The film also stars a man who has recently joined the cast of *Lost*, the hit television series about a mixed bag of passengers who survive a plane crash and must survive on a lush but mysterious island.

*Dirty Habit* is currently showing on the festivals circuit, where the rules dictate it can't be shown in a commercial theatre while that goes on.

But the rules do allow a Canadian premiere at Red Deer College's Arts Centre Main Stage on Dec. 10.

Red Deer College is where Neis studied acting in the theatre studies program and where she played the lead role in her first film, *Naked Frailties*, written and directed by Larry Reese, now the head of the college's motion picture arts program.

Neis, 28, has made her home in Los Angeles for the last few years, as she pursues a career in film and television.

But right now, she is spending a few weeks at home with family in Red Deer until the new year, when casting begins for season pilot pro-



Photo contributed

Red Deer College theatre studies program alumnus Reagan Dale Neis rests between takes on the set of *Dirty Habit*: plays a lead role and is creative producer of the movie.

grams.

Neis said the director of *Dirty Habit* is Bryan Root, who makes his living as a set painter but has been writing and shooting short films for some time.

He wrote the screenplay for *Dirty Habit* and directed it.

Root had Neis in mind for his movie since seeing her star in her own series, *Maybe It's Me*.

Twenty-two episodes were shot, but the show wasn't renewed. Neis played a 15-year-old regular teen who is part of a wacky, dysfunctional family.

*Dirty Habit* is light years away from that sort of show.

"It's a dark film," she says.

The synopsis says faith, addiction and the abuse of power are at the heart of the psychological thriller.

It's about a crack-addicted hooker and a young nun who are stuck on an elevator.

One is going to, the other is coming from, a meeting with a killer.

It's set in a seedy hotel, and the filmmakers found an appropriately run-down place in Chinatown where they filmed the outside-the-

**WHAT:** *Dirty Habit*, an independent, Los Angeles-made movie. Described as "a dark, hallucinatory ride."

**WHO:** Red Deer's own Reagan Dale Neis plays a leading role and was the movie's producer. Sam Anderson, who is one of the new characters on this season's *Lost* television series, plays a creepy bishop.

Neis and the movie's author and producer, Bryan Root of Los Angeles, will talk to the audience immediately before the screening.

**WHERE:** Red Deer College Arts Centre Main Stage.

**WHEN:** Dec. 10. Neis and Root to speak at 7:45 p.m., just before the 8 p.m. screening. Root is flying from Los Angeles for the occasion.

**TICKETS:** Tickets for the 90-minute film are \$10 or \$8 for students. All money raised will go to the college's film program.

elevator scenes.

A small sound stage that Root built in his backyard became the stalled elevator for the inside shots.

Neis had to put on 25 pounds for the role, a goal she achieved by chowing down on "bowls and bowls of oatmeal."

She chased the oatmeal down with Skittles, a chewy candy, till she practically couldn't stomach them anymore.

The role of the prostitute is played by a young Australian actor, Kirsty Hinchcliffe.

Root was the main financier for his own movie, said Neis, adding he

put his life savings into it.

He wanted a fairly well-known actor to play the creepy bishop, and ended up with Sam Anderson.

Anderson has had a long career as an actor, though not at the leading role level.

Since making *Dirty Habit*, Anderson landed a role on *Lost*, where he plays Bernard, an older man who is with a small group of passengers who survived the plane crash, unaware that many others did too.

Anderson does a great job in *Dirty Habit*, said Neis. Out of character, he's a delight.

"He's so incredibly charming and lively and funny.

"He really wanted to do this script."

Neis also has another movie role under her belt, albeit a small role, but one in a big studio production.

She is a friend of Hilary Duff's older sister Haylie, an actor, and through that connection landed a part in the sisters' upcoming *Material Girls* film.

They wanted somebody who wasn't afraid of making a fool of herself, so Neis stepped up to the plate.

She plays an office assistant who wants to be a somebody and is dissatisfied with her appearance and puts a lot of effort into changing it.

"It's not the ideal message for a teen," she says, but overall, the end result of the movie is a great family film.

Neis is at work right now on a short film with Red Deer filmmaker Harley Hay called *Looking Glass*.

And next summer she will be back for a five-week shoot in Edmonton on a film based on the story of that city's first school.

But in the meantime, people can check out Neis's work in *Dirty Habit* on Dec. 10.