

# Summer Of Sam

It didn't get any hotter than the summer of 1977 in New York City.

As temperatures soared well into the hundreds for endless days, the city was seared by its own heat, sweat and energy.

With the unrelenting swelter, things started to change in the city and it made everybody a little tense and crazy. Looters poured into the streets as a blackout plunged New York into darkness and fear; a mysterious psychopath began gunning down strangers in the night at random.

Dubbed "Son of Sam" by the tabloids that luridly reported his killing spree, the .44-caliber killer terrorized the city with a steady streak of grisly slayings. With the media playing an integral role in fueling the fear and paranoia, the whole city became a hotbed of suspicion and panic, captivating not only New York, but also the entire world.

With trademark virtuosity, filmmaker Spike Lee goes into the throbbing heart of the Bronx during this unbelievable summer to paint a portrait that is

both intimate and panoramic. John Leguizamo, Adrien Brody, Mira Sorvino and Jennifer Esposito lead an ensemble cast in "Summer of Sam,"

which chronicles how Son of Sam's plague of terror disintegrated a neighborhood, turned friends against each other and transformed trust into dread.

The process started with a conversation between director/writer Spike Lee and Michael Imperioli, an actor who has appeared in several of the filmmakers' previous films. Imperioli and his friend Victor Colicchio co-wrote the script and approached Lee to be involved as executive producer, rather than as a director. Lee agreed. Imperioli and Colicchio searched unsuccessfully for a director who might be able to help them realize their vision. Their fortunes changed when Lee decided to take a second look at the project himself.

"Summer of Sam" was

shot almost entirely in the Country Club section of the Bronx in New York City where the first of the murders took place. The production was very careful to make the families and the neighborhood as comfortable as possible with the film's locations.

Lee explains further, "Our film is not just about Son of Sam. Yes, Son of Sam is a large part of it - we're not trying to duck that - but it's not everything. It's about the Summer of 1977 in New York. It was one of the hottest summers on record; consequently you had the blackout with all sorts of people looting. Also, during this time, the Yankees won the World Series; Reggie Jackson hit three homers in game six against the Dodgers; it was the first summer of disco; punk rock was going strong; and there were places like Studio 54 and Plato's Retreat that epitomized all that was going on. This is a great story.

As serial killer Son of Sam terrorizes New York City, four friends from the Bronx, (left to right) Ritchie (Adrien Brody), Ruby (Jennifer Esposito), Vinny (John Leguizamo) and Dionna (Academy Award winner Mira Sorvino), find their relationships tested by pressure, infidelity and paranoia, in Touchstone Pictures' drama, "Summer of Sam."



Photo by David Lee



Photo by David Lee

While filming "Summer of Sam," director Lee (right) discusses a scene with star John Leguizamo (left).

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