

Creating a tunnel of terror

by Justine Geake

TWO Hawkesbury residents are right in amongst the gore in a new horror movie being filmed under St James' station in the city.

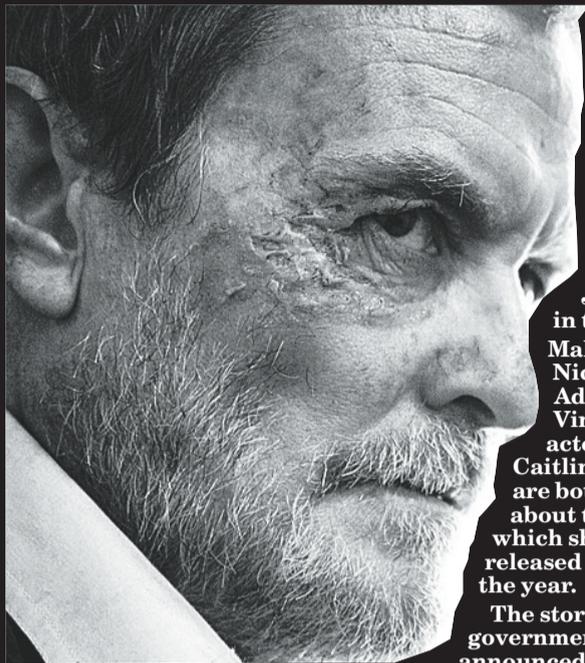
Make-up artist Nicolle Adrichem of Vineyard and actor James Caitlin of Richmond are both excited about the movie, which should be released by the end of the year.

The story is that the government had announced a plan to use water that had accumulated in disused tunnels under the city, to ease water restrictions. But then the government does a backflip and abandons the program with no explanation. Amid rumours of a cover-up and shadowy urban legends, a crew of four reporters enter the tunnels to find the real story.

Shot like a documentary, it covers what happens down there and what they find.

Ms Adrichem said the film had a real atmospheric quality, where an unnamed horror stalks the characters like in (the 1999 movie) *Blair Witch Project*. "I've been doing make-up and special effects for the movie as part of my business ReelEFX Make-up Studio," Ms Adrichem said. "I've done eyes gouged out, scrapes and scratches, and the dirty and dishevelled look (for the actors)." Some very convincing wounds have been part of her *Tunnel* repertoire as well.

Actor James Caitlin, a Richmond resident for eight months, plays a homeless man – the only one of a group of home-



Richmond actor James Caitlin.



Showing Nicolle Adrichem's handiwork, an actor on *The Tunnel* bears the scars of an attack.



James Caitlin (centre) discusses the approach to a scene during shooting for *The Tunnel*.

less men living in the tunnels who survives.

"The crew keep mentioning all my (homeless) friends who kept disappearing and I start screaming and lose it," he said.

Like from post traumatic stress disorder? "Yes."

"I finished filming my part about three weeks ago," he said.

"We filmed my part in a closed-down nursing home near Ashfield. It was a very eerie place to be. It was like a shoot we did at the old mental hospital at Rozelle – it gets very strange at night."

Mr Caitlin said the movie does play on feelings of claustrophobia, and said being down in those tunnels is extremely unnerving.

"I play tough guys, villains and murderers usually, but [in these tunnels] I'd be the first one screaming out the door!" he laughed. Once the movie comes

out you may recognise him in Coles in Richmond, or at Patchy's, places he's frequently at.

The film also has the guiding hand of Andrew Denton, one of the executive producers of the movie, with his company – Zapruder's Other Productions – providing rehearsal space at Chippendale as well.

Besides tunnels under St James, they've been shooting at the Navy base in Woolloomooloo, old bunkers in Vacluse and at George's Head.

The film has already been nominated for an Australian Directors Guild Award in the category of "cross-platform interactive" for its unique promotion methods. The film will not be released in cinemas, but on-line and on DVD. To raise the money to pay for the film, and to sidestep the problem of movie piracy, the filmmakers Julian Harvey and Enzo

Tedeschi started what they called the 135K Project.

"We figured that movie posters and collectable frames from movies are being sold every day, so what if we could raise the money to make *The Tunnel* by selling every individual frame of it," Mr Tedeschi said. "We would be able to make a movie unencumbered by a studio's need for box office."

They figured out there would be 135,000 frames of film in the movie and if they sold every one for \$1 they'd have enough to finance the film and release it online for free.

But how do they pay the actors?

"We're on a deferred contract," Mr Caitlin said.

"We get paid when the movie starts making money."

If you'd like to know more, go to www.thetunnelmovie.net.

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