

Comic Book Writer's Short Film Wins Awards

Batman Animation Producer's Buffalo-Based Super-Hero Film Wins Awards Shaun McLaughlin's "The Last Night Of The TwiKnight" Looks At Aging Heroes



Buffalo, New York Feb 22, 2023 ([Issuewire.com](https://www.issuewire.com)) - Shaun McLaughlin's film about what happens when an aging superhero who is too old for crime-fighting still thinks he can stop his nemesis one more time has won two awards at Indie Fest.

The Last Night of the TwiKnight won the Award of Merit for a short film and a special mention Award of Merit for McLaughlin as the leading actor in the movie.

Animation producer and filmmaker Shaun McLaughlin's movie, "The Last Night Of The TwiKnight," shot in Buffalo in March of 2022. The cast involved award-winning international performers Peter Michael Marino, Jenny Ney, and Ricky Needham.

McLaughlin, a Buffalo native who returned after an award-winning career in Hollywood and built on his background writing comic books for DC Comics and producing animated TV shows for Warner Animation.

"I'm from the generation that grew up watching TV and reading comic books," McLaughlin says. "I always thought up my own episodes of my favorites that I felt they should be doing. Some of those ideas have morphed into TwiKnight."

"The Last Night Of The TwiKnight" is an idea McLaughlin has nurtured for a while. "I like to look at superheroes the way we might look at athletes and celebrities, like a baseball pitcher who's lost his fastball or an actor who's too old to be the leading man."

"The Last Night Of The TwiKnight" looks at a superhero who's simply getting too old for all the running, jumping, and crime-fighting, and is approaching his last night and may not realize it. "The TwiKnight doesn't have superpowers," McLaughlin says. "He's all fitness and strength, leg days and NOOM. And that only goes so far into middle age." The TwiKnight feels the effects of aging, and now that he's in his 50s, he's getting a nagging sense that it might be time to hang up his cape and cowl.

It might be twilight for the TwiKnight.

And a personal injury lawsuit hasn't helped matters.

According to McLaughlin, one of the characters in the film notes that being a superhero is debilitating. "There's a part where one of them says, 'The fighting isn't what you think it is. It's breaking bones. It's hurting people. It's getting hurt. You don't realize what's happening to you.' That really speaks to the consequences."

The film is a mockumentary. "I've fallen under the spell of 'What We Do In The Shadows' and what they do for vampires, I want to do for superheroes," McLaughlin says. "Love them, but also have some fun with them."

McLaughlin is no stranger to comics and superheroes. He got his start writing "Aquaman" for DC Comics. From there, he transitioned to animation at Warner Bros. working on "Animaniacs," "Superman: The Animated Series," "The New Batman Adventures," "Pinky & The Brain," "Batman Beyond," "Static Shock" and "Justice League Unlimited." Since returning to Buffalo, the busy single father has been an adjunct professor of theater, produced a feature-length animated movie, and has been active as a stage actor and playwright.

"I went to Hollywood to immerse myself in the worlds that I loved," McLaughlin says. "But I was serving the corporate interest on a lot of projects and making sure that other peoples' projects got made and came out great. I thought it was time to do something that's from my own ideas and make my own thing run as well as the others. It's like being in a band but still wanting to do a solo album."

That experience in Hollywood has informed McLaughlin's ideas and enhanced his storytelling skills. "I still have stories to tell," he says. "They're stories that I always thought were worthwhile, but I couldn't convince the producers above me to take a chance. My stories aren't always the obvious choices. I go for out-of-the-box ideas, informed by the adventures that thrilled me as a kid. But I'm not trying to recreate those."

McLaughlin himself is playing the TwiKnight. "I work cheap," McLaughlin says. But more importantly,

he's an experienced performer. "I've done more than 40 stage plays, I trained as an actor and I know I can do this." To help bring this world to life, McLaughlin also has pulled together a strong team.

As the villain, there was only one actor who could play The Chancellor. "I showed the script to Peter Michael Marino to get some feedback, and after he read it, he wanted in. He wanted to be the villain. Which is a very Peter choice." McLaughlin and Peter go back years, to their days in college.

Marino is a New York City native who has worked extensively as a producer, director, developer, writer, teacher, and performer whose work has been seen on five continents. He's appeared Off-Broadway as the villain Joules Volter in the award-winning, immersive family show, "Pip's Island." He's performed for years in NYC, Hollywood, The Edinburgh Festival Fringe, and in theater and festivals around the world. He's also a character voice in "One Piece." McLaughlin and Marino began working together as undergraduates at SUNY Buffalo State under the tutelage of Warren Enters.

"Shaun's writing resonates with me," Marino says. "We have a similar worldview. When I did 'Pip's Island,' I really enjoyed playing the villain, and now I get to one-up myself playing a *supervillain*. And I get to wear a costume!"

As Jardena, the TwiKnight's ex-girlfriend who's also a thief, McLaughlin cast Jenny Ney. "She's an actress I directed in a play and she's startlingly good," McLaughlin says. "She's exactly who I wanted to play a super-villain who was at one time the superhero's girlfriend, but doesn't want her husband, kids, or the ladies at her book club to know about her previous life."

McLaughlin also cast his son as TwiKnight's son. "It's a blatant act of nepotism," McLaughlin says. "I believe my son has the experience to make playing my son believable."

Clint Byrne, who is the DP and a producer on the project is a Buffalo-born, New York-based cinematographer who has experience with commercials, documentaries, and narrative projects, most recently having worked with the producers of "Tiger King" on a new project about New York City. "I'm excited to be working with Shaun and the team," Byrne says. "I've been inspired by their work in theater and television and I grew up reading comic books. I'm looking forward to working side-by-side with them."

Shooting in Buffalo was a no-brainer for McLaughlin. "It's the first big city of my childhood," he says. "While the TwiKnight is not specifically set in Buffalo, I'm using local locations, and people familiar with the city will certainly recognize it." Buffalo will also give the film a very different look from other superhero projects. "The cool thing about Buffalo is that they've retained a lot of the city's classic architecture."

That architecture will give "TwiKnight" a different look from other superhero projects while still capturing a big city feel. "We have access to a lot of places that were built in the 1920s and 1930s that will give the TwiKnight a lot of visual appeals," McLaughlin says. "While this will be a Buffalo-based project, we are creating something with worldwide appeal."

Like many independent filmmakers working in a pandemic world, McLaughlin has turned to the crowdfunding website Kickstarter to finance the production. "I didn't want to do this on a shoestring budget," McLaughlin says. "I really want to make this look and feel like a Hollywood movie."

#

www.twiknight.com

Images available on request

To set up an interview with Shaun McLaughlin, send an email to: ShaunMcLaughlin@gmail.com

Text Shaun McLaughlin: 818-216-2895

Shaun McLaughlin on Twitter: cheapjackshakes

Shaun McLaughlin on Instagram: cheapjackshakes

Shaun's guest appearance on "Geekview Tavern": <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lwV5NGVG5hc>

Shaun is cohost of the Small Screen podcast <https://www.youtube.com/@SmallScreenCo>

Shaun @ IMDB: <https://www.imdb.com/name/nm0572428/>

Peter Michael Marino's website: <https://www.petermmarino.com/>



Twiknight Enterprises, LLX

shaunkmclaughlin@gmail.com

8182162895

1714 Amherst St

Source : Twiknight Enterprises, LLC

[See on IssueWire](#)