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Twitchy Dolphin Flix Begins Production on Eighth Feature

By [Jordan Gass-Poore](#) on May 21, 2012 - 11:30am in [Local Indies](#)

The name of [James Christopher's](#) and [Chris Cople's](#) production company couldn't sound pretentious. Christopher and Cople were halfway through production on their first feature-length film [Littlefield](#) when, after a night of beer drinking, the name [Twitchy Dolphin Flix](#) surfaced and was chosen.



Christopher is now the company's president and writer/director, and Cople the creative director and director of photography. From their first feature-length film [Funny Books](#) to the company's upcoming eighth film [3 References](#), their business partnership is going strong.

The unlikely duo met as radio-television-film students at The University of Texas at Austin. Christopher had enrolled at UT after spending seven years in the U.S. Army. He and Cople shared disinterest in their summer digital documentary class, which led to their collaboration on the short film [Strike Team Archangel](#), an adaptation of Christopher's 26-page script. Over the 2.5 days of filming the short [Strike Team Archangel](#), Christopher said he and Cople realized they worked well together.

"It's not very good," Christopher said about the short film. "We don't really show people this." However, Twitchy Dolphin Flix will give [Strike Team Archangel](#) a second life as a feature-length film, which will employ digital rotoscoping technology. Christopher said the film is in post-production and is scheduled to be released soon.

Twitchy Dolphin Flix's latest production, [3 References](#), is a comedy about one man who is forced to contend with his romantic past. An effort to raise funds for the production raised more than \$6,000 on crowdfunding website Indiegogo.

The production company's first comedic film, [Funny Books](#), which Christopher described as being similar to the movie [High Fidelity](#), was filmed in 2008 in the Dobie Mall comic-book store [Funny Papers](#). The week before production began, Twitchy Dolphin Flix hosted the first Twitchy-Palooza, a concert series that honors the bands whose music is featured in the company's movies.

Christopher said Twitchy Dolphin Flix has worked with San Marcos-based band [Texas Renegade](#) for three years. He said the company has produced seven different music videos for the band, some of which have hit number one on various online music sites.

"It got to the point where their manager was like, 'Can I just sign over the rights to all the music; do we have to do this contract thing after every film?'" Christopher said.

On May 10, the sounds of Texas Renegade, among other bands, could be heard at J. Black's Feel Good Lounge for the third Twitchy-Palooza. The event coincided with the DVD release party of Twitchy Dolphin Flix's award-winning film [Look at Me Again](#).

The company had another reason to celebrate at J. Black's, Christopher's "home away from home" and the first place the team filmed on location: May 11 marked the first scheduled day of filming for [Three References](#).

Christopher said work has also started on Twitchy Dolphin Flix's annual horror film festival [Scarlet Waters](#). The positive festival release of the 12-minute film [Scorned](#) led to their production of other horror short films that are sold in compilation DVDs. Completed in 2008, the first [Scarlet Waters](#) DVD release coincided with the company's annual cast and crew Halloween party.

Christopher said he wanted to continue to screen horror short films, but didn't have time to write and direct them all. Instead, Twitchy Dolphin Flix finances shorts created by filmmakers worldwide.

He said [Scarlet Waters](#) and Twitchy-Palooza align with the company's mission to do whatever it can to help grow the Austin film scene. This includes minimal filming of the company's productions outside of the city, and hiring mainly local cast and crew.

Twitchy Dolphin Flix's homegrown, micro-budget approach to filmmaking has been recognized at festivals across the U.S., such as [Action On Film Festival](#) in Pasadena, Calif.

"I feel like we're not just knocking on the door; we're ready to kick it in," Christopher said.

Christopher will be writing a production diary about [3 References](#) for Slackerwood -- look for the first entry this afternoon, and subsequent entries in the coming weeks.

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