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The 'Sinister' Side of Local Writer C. Robert Cargill

By [Jordan Gass-Poore](#) on November 16, 2011 - 11:00am in [Local Cast and Crew](#)



[Ethan Hawke](#) stars as a true crime writer who moves his family into the house of murder victims while researching their murders for a new book in Austinite [C. Robert Cargill's](#) feature screenwriting debut, *Sinister*.

I spoke with Cargill a few weeks back while he was on location for *Sinister* in NYC. At the time of the interview, he said there was not much he could say about the movie, except that "weird, creepy shit" happens.

But he's just playin' it cool.

Cargill began writing movie reviews under the name Massawyrn for Austin-based film website [Ain't It Cool News](#) in May 2001. His first review was of Jon Favreau's directorial debut, *Made*. Over the years, he's also reviewed movies for [Spill.com](#) and [Film.com](#).

Recently, however, he hasn't been able to write about movies because he has been on location for *Sinister*. He said it is getting "tougher and tougher" to work on movie reviews because he has met and formed relationships with more people in the film industry.

"I've always had a strict code about writing about films made by people I'm friends with," said Cargill. "It's harder to write objectively about film without people feeling that you're being biased."

Cargill and *Sinister* director [Scott Derrickson](#) (writer/director of *The Exorcism of Emily Rose*) pitched the movie in January to producer [Brian Kavanaugh-Jones](#). Check out [Rod's interview](#) with Cargill earlier this year for the full story.

The pair began writing the script for *Sinister* in February and finished five weeks later. The movie went into production in September and has since wrapped.

Hawke, a fellow Austinite, joined the *Sinister* cast after receiving the script (which Cargill said Hawke loved) from the movie's producer and godfather to his children, [Jason Blum](#).

Cargill said Hawke was his and Derrickson's first choice for the male lead in *Sinister*. He said the actor has been incredible to work with.

Another "incredible" moment in Cargill's life occurred during the second day of filming on location for *Sinister*. He received a text message from his agent that said his debut novel, tentatively called *Dreamstuff*, and an as-yet-unwritten sequel **had been sold** to publisher [Harper Collins](#).

Cargill said he ran over to Derrickson in between takes of *Sinister* and told him the good news.

"He's been a huge cheerleader for *Dreamstuff* for over a year now," he said. "We had big, huge man hugs."

Dreamstuff is about two young boys, one who is abducted by fairies and the other who is granted a wish to see "all the things mankind wasn't meant to see." Cargill said *Dreamstuff* is about how the relationship between the two young boys affects their lives.

As for *Sinister*, Cargill said [Summit Entertainment](#) will distribute the movie. He said a release date has yet to be determined.

"I got a really lucky break," he said. "I'm doing two things that I've always dreamed of doing."

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