



'Red State' tops Sitges 'Block' conquers critics and public

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Sitges, Spain-- Horror-thriller "Red State," helmed by Kevin Smith ("Clerks"), took film and actor (Michael Parks) at the 44th Sitges Festival, Europe's biggest genre pic confab, which wrapped Saturday.

Toplining Parks, John Goodman and Melissa Leo, "State" turns on a group of religious fundamentalists determined to eradicate American teens' sex-drive.



World-premiering at Sundance, and distributed Stateside by Smith himself under his Smocast Pictures banner, "State" is sold internationally by IM Global. It has yet to snag distribution in Spain. Online reaction to its Sitges screenings was tepid.

Meanwhile, the StudioCanal-sold "Attack the Block", a South London-set alien invasion spoof, scooped no less than four plaudits at Sitges: Special Jury Prize, the coveted Audience Award, Critics' Prize and soundtrack.

Its first-time writer-helmer, Joe Cornish, said at Sitges that he has all the material he needs for his next project: All he has to do is to sit down and write the screenplay. Production-distribution house Avalon releases "Block" in Spain Dec. 7.

Sitges' actress award went to Brit Marling in Mike Cahill's "Another Earth," a Sundance Fox Searchlight pick-up that enjoyed a warm audience and critical response at the Catalan fest. A large Spanish genre Armada - "Emergo," "Blind Alley," "Eva," "Juan of the Dead" - landed at Sitges playing to large applause and one key plaudit: best f/x to Kike Maillo's Sitges opener "Eva," Spain's first robot pic.

Sitges ticket sales rose 5% to 65,000 with "Block," Nacho Vigalondo's "Extraterrestrial" y Jaime Balaguer's "Sleep Tight," which played out-of-competition, proving the biggest draws. "Eva," Benedek Fliegau's "Womb" and "Tight" were among the most buzzed-about fest pics, while Juan Andre Ovredal's mockumentary "Troll Hunter" and Juan Martinez Moreno's "Games of Werewolves" and Alejandro Bruges' "Juan of the Dead" spoofs raised guffaws from auds.

"Tight" opened Friday in Spain nabbing around a solid Euros180,000 (\$245,000) off 230 screens. Spain's genre boom is attracting ever-more interest abroad. Talent scouts at this year's fest included Marc Helwig (ICM), David Flynn and Jason Burns (UTA), and Abram Nalibotsky (The Gersh Agency).