



## *Los Cabos: Liam Neeson Shares Details of Martin Scorsese's 'Silence'*



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PAT SAPERSTEIN/VARIETY

[Liam Neeson](#) dropped by the [Los Cabos Film Festival](#) Saturday to share his excitement over [Martin Scorsese](#)'s long-in-the-works historical drama "Silence," which is finally nearing the finish line.

"Martin requires a lot of commitment," Neeson said at the Las Ventanas Hotel press conference, explaining that he dropped 20 pounds off his already-lean frame to play a Jesuit missionary, while co-star [Adam Driver](#) became extremely gaunt and Garfield is already "a piece of wire."

Scorsese "gives 200%," said Neeson. "All he requires is that you give 100%." "He's intimidating," Neeson explained. "He requires absolute silence on the set — if he hears one tiny sound, it shatters it for him."

It was a physically demanding shoot for co-stars Andrew Garfield and Driver, and a big departure from roles like "Spider-Man" and "Star Wars."

Neeson said the production started off shakily — literally — when Taipei was hit by a 6.1 earthquake and his 15th floor hotel room began to sway. "It was terrifying. The world started to shake." He walked all the way to the ground floor and realized that the frequent temblors in the region barely affect the residents.

His only response to a journalist who asked about the connection to the Paris attacks and "Silence" was "We are all in shock." But Neeson said the project resonated for him because of his Irish Catholic upbringing, and that the central question of the film is, "Is there a god?"

Mexico's Fabrica de Cine, headed by [Gaston Pavlovich](#), is a production partner on Scorsese's passion project, based on the Shusaku Endo novel, which the director is currently editing. Scorsese sent a video message in which he explained that the team was finally able to bring the film to the screen because, "Gaston understood what I was trying to do and my commitment to it."

Neeson feels "it's Marty's true legacy," says Pavlovich, "He is so proud."

Pavlovich said that while a Cannes premiere would be ideal, they won't rush it if Scorsese isn't satisfied. Paramount is expected to release the film in the U.S. in late 2016. IM Global has international rights to the film.



*Liam Neeson in "Silence"*

Pavlovich, who has produced several smaller U.S. indies since opening a Los Angeles office for his Mexican [production company](#), says "Silence" has been the highlight of his professional career.

"It's fantastic to work with a genius," he says, "But it's all about preparation." When Pavlovich went to talk to Scorsese in his New York apartment, the 23-year old project was suffering under the weight of at least one lawsuit and several delays. "I knew this was my risk. It had to be done quickly or we would lose the cast," he said. But Scorsese and his producing partner Emma Tillinger Koskoff "respected that we were producing and were willing to compromise," says Pavlovich.

After even higher budgets had been considered, the production came in around \$51 million — not huge for a period piece shot on 35mm film on location with a director of Scorsese's caliber, but still substantial for an independently-produced film.

"It's hard, it's emotional — I think it will inspire a lot of debate," Pavlovich says of "Silence."

Scorsese recruited some of his frequent collaborators including cinematographer Rodrigo Prieto, [editor](#) Thelma Schoonmaker and production designer Dante Ferretti, who constructed a facsimile of a 17th century Nagasaki monastery at the Taiwan location.

Endo's 1966 novel tells the story of young Jesuit missionaries in the 17th century who were persecuted during their trip to Japan. They go in search of Neeson, a priest who has reportedly forsaken his faith.

Fabrica Cine is ramping up its international productions and opening a European office as well as L.A., with its first documentary "Sea of Cortez" announced Wednesday at Los Cabos. Directed by Paul Taublieb, the adventure sports film will shoot in Mexico in 2016.

The shingle is first and foremost a "story-oriented company," says Pavlovich, considering projects in any language. "The world's our stage," he says."

<http://variety.com/2015/film/news/liam-neeson-silence-martin-scorsese-1201640172/>