WILMINGTON | 'Revolution' shoots on Market Street

State of illusion

Crews with the NBC series 'Revolution' set up along Market Street at the former Sticky Fingers location Wednesday. In the scene, the abandoned restaurant served as a rebel hideout. For a gallery of photos, go to www.StarNewsOnline.com. 

Film crew transforms vacant eatery into rebel hideout

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For some filmmakers in Wilmington, capturing time and place is relatively easy. It wouldn’t take movie scouts long to find a location for a scene that called for a coffee shop or a nightclub, for example.

Scouts, set designers and construction crews with the new NBC TV series "Revolution" have a tougher task: to search out, envisage and create a world that nature is reclaiming.

In the past week, TV crews imagined what would happen to a chain restaurant — in this case, Wilmington’s former Sticky Fingers restaurant redubbed "Hannigan’s" — if all the lights went out and Mother Nature took over.

"In ‘Revolution,’ we want a street that looks like it hasn’t

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been driven on in 15 years. Those things don’t exist in our world,” said Vick Griffin, one of the series’ location scouts. “The notion that we can create this world and shoe horn it into the middle of the world around us is amazing.”

“Revolution” crews have done just that in about a week’s time, said set director Matt Sullivan.

At the Market Street set, dirt, weeds and vines bought by the show’s greenery crews clogged the lawn of the vacant eatery and crept up the side of the brick building. A rusted-out Audi, a ’90s-era Plymouth Voyager and a school bus marked “Tri County Transit Line” littered the parking lot. Inside, carefully constructed menus and memorabilia placed just so by set designers looked as if they had seen better days. Photos of ’80s sitcom stars were smudged and dingy.

“The set is supposed to look as if it’s 15 years after all the power went out,” Sullivan said. “In order to bring that about, we used what was already here and added other items, such as the dirt and vehicles.”

Modeled after a chain restaurant such as Bennigan’s or T.G.I. Friday’s, crews also added stained-glass elements and brass accents to “flare” up the restaurant before scenic painters aged it.

“I think it says a little about where America was before the power outage,” Sullivan said.

The vehicles, abandoned after the outage because anything that carried an electrical charge doesn’t work, were rented from A-1 Garage Paint & Body Shop in Leland.

Set designers sprayed a mixture of dirt, paint and water over the temporary props to get the rusty look.

To get that apocalyptic feel, the crew has filmed at the former Ideal Cement plant and a stretch of unused railroad tracks near downtown Wilmington.

Characters include a young woman (Tracy Spiridakos) who links up with her uncle (Billy Burke) to find her missing brother – who was seized by an evil militiaman played by “Breaking Bad’s” Giancarlo Esposito. The rebels’ struggle to remain hidden form the militia at hideouts like “Hannigan’s.” In the scene, sword-clad militia, some riding on horseback, attack the rebel stronghold. The sci-fi adventure, which kicked off filming in the region earlier this month, will premiere on NBC on Sept. 17. The scene will be featured in the series’ third episode, Griffin said.

“When you see the show, you won’t have any idea that there’s a Dunkin’ Donuts across the street. You won’t know that if you walked 150 feet, you could get a tattoo or buy a charger for your iPhone, which is kind of ironic,” Griffin said. “It’s challenging because it’s not reality. That’s what makes this fun.”

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