



Edgar was never this serious during the interview. Edgar Wright, director of HOT FUZZ and SHAUN OF THE DEAD, sat down for a roundtable with Crackpot Press. Hot topics include Cake Flushing, Oscar Winner Cameos in HOT FUZZ and his trailer “DON’T” now showing at the GRINDHOUSE.

I: All of the shootouts at the end of HOT FUZZ are even bigger than Shaun of the Dead. Was this a challenge?

EW: Absolutely. The film cost twice as much as SHAUN OF THE DEAD but the ambition in the script was probably five times that; with the amount of characters with the plot and the action side. It was a real challenge and I came out with even more respect for the action directors I love. It was really tough. And doing it in the U.K. with the terrible weather was even worse. What’s funny with the shootout in the town square we never could have the roads closed off. We didn’t have the money to close down that part of town. If you can imagine behind the camera, there are 50 school children and old ladies watching ... it was really, really surreal. We had a lot of French Foreign Exchange students coming through all the time.

I: It was really intense even in “The Paperwork” scenes, how hard was it to maintain that?

My films have always been very “vision dense,” very snappy transitions and stuff. Given the cop action genre and the way that cinema has gone with Michael Bay in the last ten years, it was gift to go completely over the top. I am the soul member of the “Domino” fan club.

I: Explain your passion for the film “Domino”

EW: With the recent Tony Scott films, a 60 year-old is directing like a 20 year old. Like MAN ON FIRE, the direction of it is absolutely crazy. I think it's too easy to dismiss, or when critics dismiss him, I think it is a disservice. The style is fucking amazing. I don't get snooty about different films, I appreciate different films for what they are. You can have with something with long held visuals and you can have Domino. There is room for both.

About the paper work, I wanted to take the most boring part of cop work and make it amped up. It was funny shooting those scenes. That was exactly the intention. There is a show in the U.K. called HEARTBEAT, which is a boring cop show about the cop in the country. It's this kind of Sunday afternoon T.V.

And our thing was "What if Tony Scott had to direct HEARTBEAT?" That would be the thing, to take this sleepy mundane end of the cop work. We got in touch with police officers. While we were writing, we interviewed lots and lots of police officers. We went to the rougher neighborhoods of London and we went to the country as well. We had a questionnaire for them and one of the questions was "Which part of the job have you never seen dramatized on the screen? "

Almost every one of them said the paperwork. Like a teacher, only about half of it is about teaching kids, the rest of it is going like this (*he mocks scribbling on a pad*). I remember vividly, we went to a rural station and there was a tiny room with about eight police officers all hunched over their things. There was kind of forlorn energy of these officers who were having to do so much paperwork. So that the idea.. Let's make the paperwork the most exciting aspect of the film.

I: How much of British take on this genre and how much of it was filtered from these American movies, like Bad Boys 2?

HOT FUZZ is on one hand very British and on the other hand it's very American. That's kind of the joke. It mutates halfway though. It's at the point halfway through where they watch BAD BOYS 2 ... after that it goes off the scale

They (Frost and Pegg) fall asleep during BAD BOYS 2... which is quite amazing. BAD BOYS 2 has to be the LOUDEST film ever.

The idea is like Keanu Reeves in the MATRIX. Nick Angel falls asleep during Bad Boys 2 but it filters into his brain. Like when you fall asleep with the T.V. on and you start dreaming about what is on T.V. The idea is that he didn't see that last part of the film, but he heard it.

He wakes up and now he knows Kung-Fu.

I: Nicholas Angel is the name of your music supervisor, why him?

He's named Nick Angel, it sounds like a cop. Even before we got the idea for the movie, we were in a meeting and Nick left the room. I whispered over to Simon... *"Nick Angel... One Good Cop."*

We never refer to him as "Nick" in the movie. It's funny.. he was really pleased that we name dropped him. Then during the shooting he freaked out, thinking he would get the piss ripped out of him for the next 30 years.

At the start of the film, you see all of Nick Angel's commendations, certificates of outstanding work. Now (the real) Nick Angel has all of those on his wall.

I: SCOTT PILGRIM, THEM and Mike White what's going on with all of your upcoming projects?

Ask Mike, he's right next door.

There are several things in the works. There is a lot of attention with this comic SCOTT PILGRIM with Michael Beca who is GRINDHOUSE. He's a great writer but also an actor. Mike White and I have been forking on THEM, I'm also working on ANT MAN. On top of that, Simon and I have an idea for Number 3. What we're calling The Three Flavors Carnage Trilogy.

We know the three films will feature blood and ice cream. That will be the only linking variables.

It feels like we are still working on HOT FUZZ. HOT FUZZ was finished only two weeks before it came out in the U.K. Then I shot my trailer for GRINDHOUSE like a month ago. Which is insane. It was like handing in homework. I had total carte blanche doing the trailer for GRINDHOUSE. They read the script and they liked it. "Here's a little bit of money.. go do it" Then I hand it in.

Then they say "Great, it's in the film" and I say "Cool."

It's so weird.

Are you thinking about making "DON'T" (Edgar's trailer in GRINDHOUSE) into a feature?

I don't know. If anyone wanted me to, I would happily do it. The thing about a trailer is that there is no plot. Sometimes you see trailers for U.K. films and you say "I have NO idea what the fuck that is about." My idea to make it look like it was a 90 minute film, condensed, was to have a different actor in every single shot. So it seems like there is a new cast. In 90 seconds it has thirty different actors in it, which is crazy.

What are your thoughts on Cake Flushing?

It was Nick Frost's birthday about a week ago. In the space of 24 hours, he got two birthday cakes. He didn't want to add to his girth, so the only thing to do to give it due ceremony was to flush it down the toilet. Nick is very impressed with America's toilet flushing. In the U.K. we don't always have those. It was great to watch a birthday cake go down in flames. We have all of this on tape.

Will it be on the DVD?

Yes! We have been doing this documentary. We have fifteen minutes every day of us going to the hotel and being in the hotel. I was in San Francisco the other day and I had an hour off. We did drive around and saw as many “Cop” locations as we could. We saw Steve’ McQueen’s apartment in BULLIT. We saw the hill where he does the chase. We saw the Diner where Clint Eastwood says “Make My Day,” which is now a McDonalds. We found Michael Douglas’s apartment in BASIC INSTINCT.. San Francisco is the perfect place to do that because all of the locations are right down the street from each other.

Is there any temptation to do a big budget American movie?

I suppose so as long as I can put my stamp on it. The worst thing would be to lose your identity. As long as you can keep your identity and make films then there is no reason “not” do a film here. It would be a challenge, it would be fun.

The thing I am proudest of with SHAUN and HOT FUZZ is that we made these films set in contemporary Britain. A lot of the films you see have a slight Fairy Tale quality about them. You know, Richard Cursor and Guy Ritchie films are both equally bullshit. What kind of London is that? The films aren’t bullshit. But the London in SNATCH doesn’t really exist. Just like the London in NOTTING HILL doesn’t exist either. To have a film called NOTTING HILL and not have a single have a single black person in it—is really something else.

How did you guys Cate Blanchett to do that cameo?

Well we knew she was a fan of SHAUN OF THE DEAD, so that was a start. The first scene we wrote in HOT FUZZ was the girlfriend CSI scene. The first joke is that you have this really emotive scene saying farewell to his girlfriend and it was very sentimental. And you can’t see her face. So then when started to try and figure out who could be that person. I thought “Why don’t we get a really heavyweight actress?”

When you make a big budget movie in the U.K., you would not believe the amount of pressure you are put under to put a really big stars in it. I sometimes get criticized for putting too many big name stars in it. If you knew who they wanted me to put in it, you have people saying (this is not the name they suggested), :”If you put Ashton Kutchner in your film you could get an extra 5 million. If you put more American Stars in your movie that’s more marquee value.” We wanted to keep it uniquely British.

So I thought.. let’s get an Oscar winner in there and never let them see her face. And for the record, and this why Cate Blanchett goes to heaven, she donated her fee to charity.

She is one class lady.

Peter Jackson is in there as well, we got him to play Santa Claus. The irony is we had to give him a fake beard and pad him up. The prerequisite for the role was something he had lost. He was a big supporter of SHAUN when it came out and we’ve become friends. I took a holiday to New Zealand when they were doing KING KONG. I was hanging out like a “work experience kid.” He said he was in the U.K. and would like to do a cameo and I thought “Fucking, he should play Santa.”

It was brilliant actually, he came down. He was in London for a week and he actually came all the way down. His cameo is five seconds long. It was really cool, because the night before we were shooting in the castle. It was really tough. We were shooting night scenes in June and only had six hours a night. The night before had been pretty disastrous. And the next night, Peter said “Can I come and watch?” and I thought “Aw, Fuck!.” Before we started shooting we has a cup of tea and I told him what had happened the night before. The night before we had been shooting a dinner table scene; always a complete bitch because of the eyelines you have to get and coverage when you have people around a table. It’s tougher than shooting a shootout. And Peter says “The scene we did like that in LORD OF THE RINGS, was my least favorite to shoot, for the same reasons. I could not wait to get out opf that scene.

It was really sweet, it was like having him on my shoulder for the rest of the night.

Your setups are pretty grisly. Was there ever a time when you said “Oh, let’s toss that idea. That’s too over the top” ?

NO!. (LAUGHS)

It's FUN doing the murder scenes. We wanted to do an amped up Agatha Christie. Hercule Poirot stories have a HIGH body count, don't forget. I suppose the idea of the violence in the film was to recapture the hard edge the cop films in the 80's had. Even BEVERLY HILLS COP is more violent than you would remember. Most of the films I saw on VHS, I was too young to see them so I would go to my brother's friend house. I was trying to capture the illicit thrill of watching DIE HARD, LETHAL WEAPON, ROBOCOP or THE LAST BOY SCOUT. You have films that covers the spectacular and violent in terms of people's demise. That was the vibe we were going for.

I like the aspect of a pleasant comedy having brief outbursts of swearing and ultra-violence.

Edgar Wright Interview: HOT FUZZ!

Written by Administrator
