

In the second of a three part interview series, CRACKPOT PRESS sits down with Wes Craven to discuss his segment of the new anthology film PARIS J'TAIME. While Craven was assigned the district with the cemetery, he has put together a romantic and funny short on a couple's pending nuptials.

Craven talks about Falling in Love in Paris, responds to recent media criticisms in regards to the VT Shootings and how Alexander Payne becomes Oscar Wilde.

Some people may be surprised by your change of tone on this piece...

That was part of the charm of it. They contacted me and explained the basic concept of the film. I just looked at the name of the directors and said "WOW! That's good company to be in." And in Paris, how bad could it be? Then they said, "Well we have the Père-Lachaise" available and it has wonderful old cemetery in it."

I thought "Oh God, there we go, back to the cliché." Then they said "No, no it doesn't have to be scary" SO that was the attraction to it. Oddly enough, I wrote one for the grave of Jim Morrison and it was pretty different in tonality. It was more about the Apollonian side of life, to be free in your body and sexuality and that one took a fair amount of time to write. When we got to Paris in the middle of the location scout, which was in the middle of the RED EYE press tour. So in between London and Berlin we jumped on a flight to Paris just for the morning. Then they told me that we couldn't get clearance for Morrison, it was impossible. So I choose Edith Piaf and I could see there eyes kind of roll.

So then we came back to shoot. We did a week of pre-production and then you are shooting. The producers came up to me and said "We can't get Piaf either."

So I said.. "What about Oscar Wilde?"

"Oh yeah, we can get Oscar Wilde" (Laughs)

So I went into another room and wrote it in two hours. And I said “Hey! This is better than the other one” It was great.

Are you planning on doing some more dramatic material?

I don't know how I'd apply for that. Maybe I have been too passive. It's not like I have \$30 million to plop down and write something funny. There has been a script for the last several years that I really like. I've been trying to get people, ya know make it. And so far people have said “No.”

“I think it's not there” or whatever. I know that it's difficult that if you're Wes Craven directing something then you try and sell it. If it's a romantic comedy, I can only imagine.

I know we had that problem during MUSIC OF THE HEART and we really had to bury my name. Just because I would frighten away all of 40 year olds who would want to see the film.

So, it is a problem. Maybe with RED EYE and with PARIS J'TAIME and a few other things, people will suddenly just think “Well this guy, he can direct, he is a director.”

It takes just not the realization from the head of the Studio, but the audience in general. An audience that is different from the genre audience has to be willing to go see something because they heard I can direct different sorts of things. That's a tough thing to get out there. I'm starting write now and it's not a romantic comedy.

Was there something about Paris that influenced you direction?

I love Paris, I just think it's just one of the most beautiful cities in the world. We didn't change anything in the cemetery, that's just the way it is. I think we built one little plank around the

bottom so a stuntman could fall and smack his head into it.

How is it different shooting in Paris than in the states?

Everyone speaks French. The crew doesn't know what you are talking about. The DP we had was the same DP as the remake of HILLS HAVE EYES and he shoots beautiful stuff. It was nice very enthusiastic. The speed was the scary thing. We did the location scout in probably about an hour. It's a blast. For them to get the permits, it had to be done in that one quick drive around.

Did you like working within those constraints?

It doesn't bother me anymore. I have been working under pressure for twenty years. It's just kind of the name of the game and increasingly the name of the game making films with less and less money and less and less schedule.

The interesting thing to me with this one was , especially with that whole thing with Morrison and Piaf, working right on the spot. You have to go by instinct. There is all sorts of stuff writing those other scripts that were also about couples, but we knew where it was going to end up. If I thought about it too much, it probably wouldn't have mattered.

You were working on a love story. Was there something organic that came out of the process?

There was in the case, a pleasant thing. After kind of a rough break up after five years, I told me friends "I'm retired from the Love thing." It's too expensive and too excruciating. I'll just stop dating. Some friends of mine conned me into going on a blind date. I met this woman and we had such a fun evening. And now we're married.

Love can give you great hope. Like I said in previous interview, in riding, if you fall off you get right back on. In love you fall off the horse and the horse jumps on top of you. You know, I think it's very hard to go through life without that spark of love and some romance. It's very hard to go through life without humor. Humor lets you see yourself with a bit more perspective, you have to be able to laugh at yourself. It's important to live life in the REAL part of life.

How did Alexander Payne get involved to play Oscar Wilde?

He called up. And said "Hi, I'm Alexander Payne" and said "Hi, I heard you were here" And he said "I heard you have a role open for Oscar Wilde, I'd love to do it"

I thought "Really?"

I didn't know what he looked like or how old he was. I'd seen his films. And I said "Let's do it?" It was that simple. Everything was done real quick. All the casting was done in the first three days. There were a million things that could have gone wrong that would have made us crash and burn.

Violent films are being berated this week because of what happened at Virginia Tech. What do you have to say about those criticisms?

Craven: Are we being blamed for that too? I've just gotten used to it. I think there is no real proof for it. If somebody has violent thoughts, they could be attracted to things that have violence but I don't think those things are making them have violent thoughts. You have to go all the way back to the beginning of this person's life and what their brain waves are telling them to do. In general, horror films are about the violence that is out there. We live in a country where the President is okay with torturing people and removing habeas corpus from the table. Tapping the country's citizen's without notice. There is a lot going on out there. I don't know if you are aware of it, but there were 150 people killed yesterday in car bombs. Those are real bodies. There is part of me that sees the point.

This is a very violent world right now. There is a tremendous focus on the violence in America

with the war. All that being said, every time I do film that has violence I try not make it look glorious. I can never give examples of two guns in the hands in my films because I think there obviously big consequences with even defending yourself in a violent way.

And then it is on a film by film, director by director way. I can't account for what other people are doing. I haven't even seen all the films. It doesn't surprise me that there is a lot of torture in current horror films. They are coming out more and more. Our troops and our President is okay with IA's taking people to all these secret prisons. That's the reality, so you know, that's gonna creep into the films.