

PRODUCTION NOTES

'GREEN STREET HOOLIGANS'

THE BACKGROUND

'This film is about camaraderie and friendship, somewhat of a traditional friendship that is kind of dying out,' says director and co-screenwriter, **Lexi Alexander**. 'I've always been attracted to stories like that. It happens a lot in war movies but this one was contemporary so that's what really attracted me to it. There's a lot of action in it but it is much more about the love between these guys and their dedication to each other. Basically they'd give their life for each other and they live in an environment where that sacrifice can be required.'

She continues, 'I first thought about the idea when I was studying to become a filmmaker and thought about what stories I would like to tell. I think it's related to my contact with hooliganism and the feeling of family and buzz that I had when I watched it happening in my own youth. Of course I wasn't doing that thinking 'one of these days I'm going to direct a movie about it', but then once I was a filmmaker I immediately thought back to how amazing this environment is and how I would love for more people to know about how it feels and why these guys do it. I know it's a controversial subject, but I didn't set out to make a film or write a script in order to push somebody's button, absolutely not. I wanted to tell a story that was touching and about love and that hasn't been told and I definitely wanted to make it authentic. I think that was the most important thing to me - not make it an after school program and not make it 'Hollywood', I wanted to do it the way it really is. But it is about the drama and the relationships – it's not a hooligan-fest. If people are just watching it because of the violence they are watching it for the wrong reason and they are missing the point of the film.'

Producer **Deborah Del Prete** feels that filmmakers have a duty to present controversial subjects on screen. I think it's our job to let people know about things that are happening all around us and that we may not necessarily be aware of or comfortable with. I don't think that we should ever shy away from controversy nor do I think that we should do things just to be controversial. With '*GREEN STREET HOOLIGANS*' we're telling a story about something that really happens. Young males get involved in these very violent fights and the worst case scenario is that it can destroy their lives. It can enhance lives to be part of something but it can also be very destructive if you are into something that goes so far. I think that we have a responsibility to show those things so that people are aware of them and maybe it will give somebody pause to think. Controversy means making people aware of something that makes them start talking and thinking about it. That can only ever be good. It's when people are ignoring things that they get worse.'

The environment in which the film is set is one that Lexi Alexander knows well. 'I'm a big football fan. I went to my first match in Germany when I was five years old, mainly because my brother had to babysit me. But consequently I grew up in it. It just happened to be something that I really loved and so I ended up going to almost every game. The team was

Mannheim – they used to be in the Bundesliga but now they're quite small. I've been following them for over twenty years now.'

Lexi continues 'I've observed hooliganism in Germany and that's where I found out about why these guys do it and what's so attractive about it. And I'll admit that I've even felt it myself. I remember as a teenager being really attracted to the idea that you had to figure out the streets of the town that you're going to next Saturday because you want to catch the other firm. There's a big adrenaline rush and it's very adventurous, there's almost a romance to it, to the feeling of running with a gang and having that kind of power to be with a bunch of people that you know will all stand together.'

But '*GREEN STREET HOOLIGANS*' has been set in England. 'I have to make it clear that hooliganism is something that occurs in practically every footballing nation around the world – I'm not suggesting that it is just a British thing. The practicality of making an English language film and setting it somewhere that it happens led to my choosing the UK. And you can't hide from the fact that the English have some of the more active hooligans!' Lexi sought the help of Dougie Brimson in order to achieve the authentic background that the drama required. Brimson writes on the subject and co-wrote the script with her, 'I knew only as much as I saw in Germany. I had heard about the English football fans, of course, but I wasn't really clear on the facts so I went on several hooligan websites and chat rooms. That's where I met my co-writer Dougie Brimson who was known for writing these books about hooliganism. I thought it would be good if I would have somebody who could bring more specifically English knowledge to the script.'

'You know it's an interesting thing. I would never have thought we would be making a film about British football!' says producer Deborah Del Prete. 'What really initially interested me in the script was Lexi Alexander, the director. I saw Lexi's Academy Award nominated short film '*Johnny Flynton*' which is about boxing. I was incredibly impressed with her talent. It was a stunning debut film and the way she handled the sport elements was very impressive. So it made us willing to take a look at this script.'

The script was initially brought to Deborah's attention by Linda McDonough, SVP of Production and Development at Odd Lot Entertainment. 'When I read it I was just so incredibly impressed with the story. It had a great dramatic arc and I also felt that as an American it was really a great introduction to what football culture was about. Furthermore it was a world that I was just stunned to even know existed! And I'd been in Europe when there were big matches on and saw all the excitement and the crowds and things that were going on. I even remember being in Italy when there was a World Cup and seeing some tremendous sort of demonstration, but I didn't realize how really organised and sophisticated it all was. It was just a whole new environment in which to place the dramatic action and it was very exciting.'

She continues 'After my partner in Odd Lot, producer **Gigi Pritzker**, and I had read the script, we talked about what really makes a young man get involved in something like this. You're not talking about a disenfranchised group of

people, you're talking about people who are educated. In '*GREEN STREET HOOLIGANS*', Pete Dunham is a school teacher and another member of the GSE is an airline pilot. This isn't the kind of group Americans would immediately think of as a gang. We think of the sort of gangs you get in L.A., the 'Bloods' and the 'Crips', who are basically hardened criminals and drug dealers. But in '*GREEN STREET HOOLIGANS*' they are just regular guys that all of us know, they are people that we could be friends with and to think that they would be so immersed in this fanaticism about a game and that they would become violent seems astonishing. So it became fascinating to examine this whole culture and how normal people live their lives within it.'

But Deborah reiterates Lexi's earlier point that there is much more to the film than just football culture and the resulting violence. 'You only have to watch the film to realize that the football culture is just the context, the environment in which things happen. The script tells the story of this subculture very well, but it also tells an extremely human story. Brothers not getting along particularly well, a coming of age story, young men learning about the world. And you have a particularly interesting viewpoint here. Matt is an outsider, a young American guy, who has basically turned up in London because his life has fallen apart. He hasn't learned to stand up for himself yet. He is going through life letting things happen to him as opposed to being the one that makes things happen and through his interaction with the GSE he learns a lot about becoming a man. But in the process, he also ultimately realizes the cost of his actions and what not to do. I think that the message of the film is that it's hard to grow up. It's about learning to stand your ground, it's learning to support your friends, but it's also about learning what's really important in life and how to make the right choices.'

THE PRODUCTION

'*GREEN STREET HOOLIGANS*' was filmed in London over a five week period during April/May 2004. **Alex Buono**, Co-producer and Director of Photography, says 'We did some early location scouting in November before shooting began, trying to decide whether we were going to shoot the picture in Glasgow or in London. We always wanted to do it in London, but there was some talk that maybe we could do it in Glasgow because it would be less expensive. It took about an hour to figure out that wasn't going to work. At the end of the day nowhere looks or feels quite like London!'

Lexi Alexander explains 'I really always wanted to use authentic locations and that was very important to me. Plus London is an amazing city with so many famous teams. I would really say it's the heart of English football. And the city has the most football firms, the most experience of hooliganism. I also truly believe that the British are the most passionate nation about football. It feels as though pretty much everybody you meet in London is into it! You go into any office and there will be four or five teams represented. You just start a conversation about the sport with someone in the pub and it can end up in a two, three hour discussion.'

But what was it like shooting in the city? Lexi says 'The experience was quite amazing. There were some obstacles because not everyone was comfortable about getting involved with a film about football violence but many others were very film friendly and co-operative. West Ham Football Club at Upton Park was absolutely incredible, and we know that it was quite an honour to be able to actually film whilst a match was going on. We had a really great time filming there.'

And the 'Hammers' fans turned out to be totally unfazed by the arrival of a film crew. 'I was quite amazed, I think all of us in the filmmaking side expected them to look in the camera and wave but we should have known better because the football was on! That taught us a big lesson you know, it doesn't matter that Elijah Wood and Charlie Hunnam are sitting there, they don't care, their team is playing. We could have bombarded them with lights and cameras and I think they would have kicked us out of the way and still watched the game. That was really great because I think when people see that scene with the boys going to the football match it definitely is the real deal. Even the actors ended up getting so into the match that they forgot they were on camera!'

There was one slightly scary moment though. Lexi explains 'It was very flattering really. The police came up to me during the match saying that my guys were too real and that the other people didn't necessarily know that they were actors so they might be starting something. The cast were actually too good at what they were doing and I really thought the police might pull the plug in the middle of me trying to finish the scene! That's a tricky one of course, because we were looking for realism, so I could hardly tell the boys to act less well!'

The look of the film is deliberately gritty and realistic as Alex Buono, who had worked with Lexi Alexander on previous projects including *Johnny Flynton*, explains, 'I guess you could call it kind of a gritty neo-realism. It's going in a direction that I suppose a lot of cinema is going now which I think is a reaction to what was happening in the mid to late 90's where everything was very slick and very clean. I think that in the last few years there's been a reaction against that, certainly with me there has - I'm sick of seeing everything so it's the perfect grain shot, it's the perfect choreographed movement, it's the most amazing, something that's clearly not lifelike. So this film became a reaction to that which was to make this film feel real, to make this film feel it's got some real texture to it and you're kind of a fly on the wall in this world. That's what we were going after.'

But how did he set about achieving that look? 'I read the script from the earliest drafts and was even then trying to get a real feel for where Lexi was going with the story and what she was trying to convey emotionally. When it came to shooting I just tried to help her convey what she had written about and what she was trying to get across dramatically. Of course, I was trying to do it visually. She was very keen to give '*GREEN STREET HOOLIGANS*' this raw edge and real authenticity. And she was also very interested in the recurring themes of rage, control of rage and the elements of love and hate,

the manifestations of them. So there's a lot of raw emotional tension and my process was to just start at the story and with the narrative and really to decide what it was about, what was the narrative structure etc and transfer that realism into the look of the film and ultimately onto the screen. It certainly wasn't about what's a 'cool' look. I tried to start with something that's more based on the story, more based on the realism of the film.'

Alex also readily admits that his experience of the football scene when he arrived in England impacted heavily on the look of the film. He and Lexi did hang out in the pubs with the fans as well as attending matches. 'It was pretty amazing to have a film that's fiction and yet it walks such a straight line as far as what's authentic and what's real. To be able to walk into that world and experience it and then say now we're going to make a movie! My experience here definitely affected how I visualised the film. We shot a scene in this pub where we re-enacted scenes that we saw in a real West Ham pub. It was pretty exact. It's a fascinating experience, I've never had that kind of thing before - where you can just say okay I'm almost like one of the characters, my eyes are open to it and visually I'm going to try and put in the film what really struck me in a real life experience. I've certainly never worked on another movie where I've had that experience of recreating exactly what I have really seen.'

ENLISTING THE CAST

'I wasn't one of those people who thought while I was writing 'oh this guy would be great, this guy would be good',' say Lexi Alexander. 'I always thought once it was done I would listen to suggestions. There are about eight, ten really, really famous actors but the age group of most of my lead characters was very young. There are not that many young actors out there that you immediately think of because you kind of know that they're fairly new in the business. But in a way that was the exciting process about casting this. I knew that I would have this young fresh cast that maybe people didn't really know about and that this movie could bring them out to audiences all over the world.'

Elijah Wood is an evident exception to this though. Having acted since childhood, his appearance in many celebrated films including '*The Lord of the Rings Trilogy*' meant that he was already instantly recognizable to cinema audiences and had his pick of roles. So how did she tempt him to take part in the project? 'When I started the casting process I met Elijah first. His agent had the script and called from an aeroplane to say that Elijah and I should meet up. I'd followed his career since he was eight years old and I always thought he was really quite amazing even in his very early movies so it was great meeting him. But at that time I wasn't really ready to make a decision on the cast so it was three months before we actually signed him. In that time I saw him again, we had kept in touch via e-mail and phone calls and soon every time I wrote something I ended up visualising him in the film. If I did another draft, if I re-wrote a scene, I kept going back to him and what he

thought about the project, so when I was ready to go, it was an easy decision. In my mind he had become Matt Buckner.'

Lexi is certain that she made absolutely the right choice. 'It's an independent movie and I knew that I needed the lead to be easy going, hard working and passionate about it. He's been more than I ever expected, he's a great actor, he was such a support and he nailed the role. I couldn't imagine anybody else in the part.'

The film is an ensemble piece and by its nature the lead characters had to be pretty strong. The character of Pete Dunham was the next to be lined up and producer Deborah Del Prete continues the story. 'Matt and Pete are sort of the yin and yang. After we had decided on the role of Matt we looked to the role of Pete. Lexi had spent time looking at all the young actors who are out there and she from very early on had decided that Charlie Hunnam would be her first choice for Pete. She had seen his work and met with him, talked about the role with him and found he was extremely enthusiastic about this film. He really felt that this was a role he could sink his teeth into and as soon as we all met with him, we were equally excited that he would be taking on the part. He's done an amazing job.'

Deborah continues 'The next person on our journey was Shannon. That took us a while because of course we wanted somebody who would be believable as Elijah's sister. It's a hard role because this is essentially a boys' movie even though the heart of it is actually about the family. Shannon's role is pretty central to all of that and it's the only female part. Claire is someone whose work we'd all seen quite a bit of and we really felt she could bring something to it with the really soft emotional side that that character had to have. Another really key member of our cast is Leo Gregory who plays Bover. He's a catalyst for where a lot of the drama occurs. Leo was an actor that none of us had known before. Lexi had heard about him and had seen a film he made here for the BBC. Once we met with him we just all thought wow! It's always great to discover a tremendous new talent and I think people will be just blown away by the performance.'

Being a film about men in a 'brotherhood' situation, the bonding of the male cast was pretty key to getting the right feeling of easy familiarity on set. The director realized this early. 'They actually bonded right away which was quite interesting because I thought it would take time. But all the GSE cast members met, they had a beer and you couldn't separate them from then on! They were out socialising whenever possible. For me it was great because I was always the one girl in the group and it could get kind of nasty but it was a lot of fun!'

On a wider scale, there were over 100 extras involved, especially for the fight scenes. Many of them were drawn from the football scene and had experienced things for real first hand. Lexi found this very useful in creating the authenticity of events and language. 'They brought their own little habits and ways of talking. Some of them basically grew up in this world and definitely had a lot of knowledge, a lot of suggestions, their own little sayings

and first hand experiences from football which we were able to add to the film. On any given day somebody would show up and tell us about a song or tell us about a certain thing that they do that we didn't expect so they were the real people and they really brought something to it.'

THE HOOLIGAN EXPERIENCE

Elijah Wood, who plays Matt Buckner, had very little knowledge of football before coming to the project. He describes his experiences of watching West Ham play as 'electrifying, there are few adjectives to describe it. I mean it really is unlike any sporting event I've ever been to in my life. There's this kinetic energy that runs through the crowd both before and during a game. We don't really have anything quite like that in America, there is certainly an energy about going to see a live sporting event, basketball is fantastic, but there's nothing more exciting than going to a football match. It's essentially the fans that make it, the game is exciting but it's the fans and their absolute passion and devotion and rabid, dog like, manic energy that makes it what it really is. I was massively impressed by it and I think it really did hit me what it means to these fans. It's unlike anything I've ever seen. I love that. I could go to football games for the rest of my life just to experience that energy because it's a rush unlike anything I've ever felt.'

Preparation for the role meant that the cast went to quite a few West Ham fixtures before filming and one in particular sticks out in Elijah's mind as very relevant to the '*GREEN STREET HOOLIGANS*' script. But did he actually get to witness any violence? 'No I didn't, but we went to the West Ham v. Millwall game and apparently it did kick off post match. Before and during the match there was a rush of impending danger and there was a massive police presence because West Ham and Millwall hadn't played each other in something like fifteen years. It was huge because they are absolute rivals and this is something we deal with in the script.'

He goes on, 'We'd been rehearsing and every day we'd gone through all these scenes dealing with the scripted rivalry between West Ham and Millwall which is a massive centrepiece to the story. So to go to an actual match between them as a Hammer's fan and to experience that whole thing was just unbelievable. There were points where it seemed like it was going to blow during the match but the police had a pretty good hold on it. That was where fiction really met reality, there was a very blurred line – and consequently there definitely was an extra authenticity to what we later filmed.'

So what made him take on a role in such a relatively small film? 'Doing something like the *Lord of the Rings Trilogy*, which was so massive and had such huge appeal, put me in the limelight as one character for so long. My interest was to do something completely different after that, which has always been my philosophy. I look for roles that stretch my ability and challenge me as an actor, something that takes me to places I've not been before. When I read the script, though I wasn't necessarily familiar with the context of the story, the character of Matt was intriguing to me because he starts off as this

innocent and essentially becomes a hooligan by the end of the film and that character arc, and the world in which it takes place, really intrigued me. Plus smaller movies appeal to me in general because I think that there's often more opportunity for interesting character development with adventurous story telling and more intimate character relationships.'

He continues, 'I loved the script and met with Lexi shortly after. At the meeting she gave me a copy of her short film, *Johnny Flynton* and I was so completely blown away by that film. It so emotionally touched me and it affected and moved me in a way that I didn't really anticipate, so I immediately emailed her and said this is the most incredible thing and it definitely enthused me with even more passion to be a part of the '*GREEN STREET HOOLIGANS*' project. Lexi's short film really is amazing so it definitely made me more excited to be a part of this project.'

So how does Elijah see his character Matt Buckner? What makes him how he is in the film? 'Matt doesn't really have much security in his life, he doesn't have a solid base. He doesn't feel like he's got any kind of close family ties or any close friends, so there's something of the wanderer about him. And because he doesn't have a relationship with his father and he's estranged from his sister, when he's kicked out of Harvard he's completely at sea. He lacks personal confidence and he doesn't quite know who he wants to be, so the GSE ends up becoming his family and that whole experience is what ultimately helps to define him as a human being and get him back on track.'

Matt's major relationship is with Pete Dunham, played by Charlie Hunnam. Elijah explains it. 'I think Matt looks up to him, because there's a confidence and a swagger to Pete. He's something of a mentor to Matt, almost like a big brother. Pete has this power in the way he speaks and physically he has a certain strength and presence as well. Matt admires that because that's not something that he feels that he has himself. I think the attraction of the relationship for Pete is that he sees the good in Matt and at the same time he recognizes that he can help Matt out. They connect in a student/mentor relationship. But I guess the most important thing is that they genuinely like and respect each other.'

'I think it's about friendship and loyalty and brotherhood and what that means,' says Elijah when discussing the film's message. 'It's also a pretty anti-violence film as well in the sense that the violence doesn't really get these people anywhere. As the film unfolds, the characters change and the story progresses to essentially show that what violence has gotten these people isn't a hell of a lot. So the characters learn and grow by realising that it's the people, the friendship and the sense of family and brotherhood that they've had that makes them strong, rather than the violence. It's the loyalty and honour that they share and I think that that's really what Matt takes home with him. And consequently he discovers a new sense of himself, a newfound confidence to not have to act violently. And that becomes the twist at the end.'

Charlie Hunnam, who plays Pete Dunham, is the leader of the GSE and introduces Matt to the firm. He explains why. 'Initially Pete's reluctant to get involved with Matt or give him any time but then I think that he discovers that he just genuinely likes the guy for his openness and innocence and willingness to learn and experience things. Pete doesn't really have anyone as smart as Matt to talk to because his friends in the GSE are pretty single minded, so he is finding an intellectual equal in Matt as well as a kind of protégé. Plus Pete's probably not met that many people from outside of the little neighbourhood that he comes from. So despite all odds they like each other and develop this friendship and trust.'

There is no doubt that the guys from the GSE lead dual lives and Pete's is perhaps one of the most pronounced – respectable and responsible history and sports teacher at a prep school and leader of powerful and aggressive football firm, the Green Street Elite. Charlie explains 'Pete's always lived in a family that have been involved in hooliganism and I think that that's all he's really known, he's just kind of grown up and loved football and probably likes a fight. Plus his brother Steve, played by Marc Warren, was the 'Major' and Pete's grown up idolizing his brother and having a lot of respect for him to the point of wanting to emulate him as the 'Major'. But in his daily life Pete is definitely very respectable – and maybe that alter ego adds to the appeal of the GSE. I think most people would find an appeal in the idea of leading a secret life.'

The troubled relationship between Pete and Steve Dunham is key to the plot – despite the brothers evident, though guarded, closeness and devotion to each other, there are serious differences of opinion. 'Pete has never really forgiven Steve for turning his back on the GSE, especially because, ostensibly, he has done it to please his wife Shannon. He doesn't appreciate, maybe doesn't want to appreciate, why Steve steers clear of any involvement or contact with his old firm, so there is a definite tension there. But their dad's dead so Steve's always been a kind of father figure to Pete and, despite all the tension, he's always looked out for him. Steve is constantly getting Pete out of trouble, helping him out financially and trying to steer him away from violence, which doesn't really work too well. But Pete is unwilling to learn from his brother's experiences or to put up with his interference and there is a lot of friction between them. Pete is an addict and he's not ready to quit yet!'

So does Charlie feel any empathy with Pete? 'Not really, no not at all, he's about as far away from me as you can possibly get! But I think that was really what was so challenging and so much fun about taking this role on because we couldn't be further apart. I hadn't been working for a bit and I'd been reading tons and tons of scripts. From the first scene of '*GREEN STREET HOOLIGANS*' I was immediately hooked into the story. And Pete's a character that I haven't really had an opportunity to play before. He's like the hard guy and the leader. I'm usually the guy who gets the girl. In this one I'm the guy that gets to beat everyone up so its just something very different for me and I love the world it's set in and what Lexi set out to do with the whole thing.'

Charlie admits that he knew nothing at all about football, despite being British by birth. 'Until I took this role I'd never watched a game of football, been to a match or watched a game on TV. I played a little at school and that was it. I really wasn't interested so obviously I had to educate myself a bit. I came to England a little early, about six, seven weeks before we started filming. I went to a lot of football matches and hung out in these pubs where the boys hang out before the games. But that was really my whole experience, just the rehearsal period of this film. I've never really known any guys that got involved in hooliganism growing up so I wanted to research and witness it before we started filming.'

He also credits Leo Gregory, Bovver in the film, for some of his education. 'Leo was great, I stayed with him for a while and he's a big football fan, so he helped me a lot. We just hung out, went drinking and talked a lot about the script.'

Discussing the way that the boys worked together Charlie says 'Lexi was great. During the first two weeks of rehearsals she brought all the main boys in the GSE together and we just hung out every day and we'd rehearse the scenes through the day and then we'd go and play cards or go drinking of an evening. It really developed a bond between us which I think translates onto the screen nicely.'

As the film was shot in only five weeks, Charlie admits that he did have to work in a different way to normal, though he thinks that it pays off on screen. 'I'd never worked this quickly before. I had to come to set after doing a lot more work at home than I would normally do, so it was tough. It was twelve or thirteen hours on set a day and then go home to two and a half hours, three hours of work in the evening. I've never worked as hard before but hopefully it will be great! We were shooting a film really that's a ten or twelve week shoot in five weeks which means that it's obviously very, very rushed. It was one or two takes when I'm used to doing five to ten takes. We didn't have the luxury of money and time that I was used to but I think that it created an interesting energy in us as actors and filmmakers. And I hope that we've captured a little bit of that urgency and tension because it is so right for the story.'

Claire Forlani is the only female cast member. She plays Shannon, Steve's wife and Matt's sister, and it's a very emotional part. Claire jokes 'Lexi didn't actually make it easy for my character. Almost every scene is some kind of emotional rollercoaster – I cry in just about every scene at some point!'

What Claire liked about the script was that every character has a different journey within the story. 'It's a story with all these characters going through the same events and yet everybody's being affected in their own personal way. And with Shannon what I felt was so heightened and so real was that she is witnessing her worst life fears being realized. I thought that it was really powerful and compelling.'

But was it difficult playing the 'emotional female' role in a cast that consisted only of men? 'No - the guys were all brilliant and everybody was enthusiastic about the project. It's a project of love. They were all fun and they made me laugh. We were doing this scene with myself, Elijah, Charlie and Marc and it was a really intense, emotional scene - and quite violent too. And, of course, I had to cry! We did it three or four times and the atmosphere was a bit fraught with it all. And then suddenly Elijah and Marc just started camping it up like mad so that everyone was laughing hysterically. It was so brilliant just to release the tension, just to relax for a few minutes and have fun. They were great that way, because the film is so intense. It was wonderful to be able to have moments like that. And everybody was on the same page with it which I really appreciated.'

Claire explains about her character-- 'Shannon has a different existence for each of the characters in her family group. She's kind of a mirror, a reflection for each of them in different ways. So for Steve she's the rock, she's solid, the reason that he's changed his life around. She symbolizes family and support and love and future. But for Pete, she's the block. She's the reason that his world isn't the same, that his brother doesn't participate. She's spoiling everything in his world. Consequently they pretty much hate each other. Pete is the destructive element in the family as far as she is concerned and their dislike for each other is pretty tangible most of the time. And then for Matt she's the only one that could really be there for him, that is his family, even though ultimately she doesn't really make the grade on that score. But she's a reflection of the different sides of each character. And then, of course, she has her own journey.'

There are definite complications with the Buckner family. 'The Buckners, Elijah and myself, have dealt with abandonment, with a father who's not around, with a mother who's died and they've basically been left to their own devices. Shannon has gone off and found a new family, created a family with Steve. She's pretty much left her past behind and then Matt turns up. And it's heartbreaking for her because she realizes that he has no one, he's been kicked out of Harvard, he comes to her because she's all he has and yet she can't be there for him despite her best intentions. Of course, ultimately this is the reason why he joins the GSE. They give him their support and make him feel like he's a part of something. I just thought that Lexi wrote that so beautifully, because acting it was so easy, it felt so easy to connect with the emotions involved.'

Claire is very enthusiastic about the script. 'The beauty of this film for me is the realism. I find that in film today, in fact in stories in general, there's not much realism and the beauty of the script that Lexi has written is that there is a lot of truth and there are a lot of things that people can relate to. I don't feel that there is one moment, it's a necklace of little 'pearls' that just keep happening in the way that life does. It's not a documentary, but it is almost a documentary style. I think that people will relate to different characters in the story, they'll respond to different story lines in lots of different ways.'

Leo Gregory took on the role of Bover. 'The attraction of the role was that Bover is so complex. He's got issues with Pete and deep down he harbours a grudge. I think that Bover feels that he is the rightful leader of the GSE and he's felt this for a while. And then Matt turns up and Bover just loses it and starts playing the Judas really. At the end he's left with emptiness, just a void, but he knows he's played a part in that.'

Leo had a very clear idea of where Bover came from when he took the role. 'Bover had a bit of trouble as a youth, did time in Feltham Young Offenders Institute for fighting, burglaries and other minor offences. He comes from a single parent family and was raised by his dad. They didn't have a great relationship, his dad's an ex-hooligan and didn't really know how to show emotion except through his fists. So Bover lacks a female touch, and understanding, compassion and just a sensibility that comes from having a balanced influence. He totally lacks that. He's West Ham and GSE through and through. But because of the trouble with the law in his past he has made an effort to become respectable on the outside, so he works in a telesales centre. Still internally because of how he's grown up, where he's grown up and who he's grown up with he's still what his past has made him and he can't shake that.'

He continues 'Bover is very much in the middle of all the things that go on in the film and he's very much at the center when things start taking a serious turn for the worse. He feels shunned by the entire pub, by his peers, by his people. They turn their backs on him and the bitterness that was already there multiplies. So he goes down and sees Tommy Hatcher. I do believe that part of what he does is with the best intentions – to get Matt the journo out of the scene, but he also gives the Major's name up as being in the pub! That jealousy and bitterness has taken hold and from then on it's madness. He's then on the periphery, loses it and then at the end realizes that there is only one place that he should be – the Wharf. But by the time he gets there it's too late.'

Following the huge conflict that Bover has instigated by the end of the film, we could hope that he's learnt a lesson but Leo thinks not. 'In an ideal world I'd like to see that Bover has learnt how to deal with his jealousy and emotions in a way that doesn't cause a big blow up. But ultimately, I don't feel he's learnt anything. He's probably destined to sit in the pub every day remembering the good old days but never going there again. I think he'd like to think he's changed, but he hasn't. Bover is just Bover, knows his actions, knows he's wrong, but will always react how he's reacted all his life.'

Leo is a dedicated football fan. 'I have loved football since the 1986 World Cup in Mexico! I'm Tottenham through and through.' He says that he is also very aware of the violence associated with football and though he doesn't agree with it and wouldn't ever become involved with it, he can see why it happens. 'I would be lying if I said that I hadn't seen any football related fights or incidents though I have to say not on the scale that we've shown in the film with the exception of Euro 96. It's one of those things. It's not clever, it's not right, it's not big, but, as with most things, I think you have to look at the

majority of people doing it and ask why. There's an element of being on the edge, feeling alive, just getting back to basics - of being a man I guess. It's mindless violence, but there is an 'etiquette' to it. It's a bunch of people against a bunch of people – and everyone knows why they are there.'

Leo's final comments concern Lexi and come with a word of warning! 'Lexi's a dream to work with. She gives you total freedom to shape and form your role, to go with your character. She's always open to suggestions on dialogue. She's a great director, a great lady. But you don't want to get on the wrong side of her – she was also a world champion kick boxer!'

Marc Warren is Steve Dunham, ex-leader of the GSE, brother of Pete Dunham and husband of Shannon. 'I wouldn't have been interested in playing a hooligan as such. I've done that before in my career - played nutters and stuff! I'd like to think I'm getting through my 'nutter' stage so I liked it that Steve was a kind of reformed character and that he was moving on. I suppose that would be my empathy with him. I can relate it to where I am in my own life.'

In describing Steve, he continues 'This is a guy who was completely involved in hooliganism, it was his whole life, an addiction almost. But he came to a point when he had to grow up and get on with life. And at that point where he felt he couldn't go on anymore, at the turning point for him, he met Shannon, settled down and had a baby. But he was a legend on the football scene, the 'Major', so people still want to drag him back into it and that's really difficult for him. I think when you leave something behind, there are always parts of your past or people that you associated with that won't let you go. And, of course, Steve has an extra pressure in that his own brother took over his role in the GSE. He really can't get away from what he once was because Pete is still living it.'

Marc admits that he knows people that are involved in football violence. 'I've never been a hooligan myself but I do actually know some people who are quite interested in that kind of lifestyle. I won't name any names but a friend of mine told me that they meet up before matches and they have the fight. That was just astounding to me. I just couldn't get my head round it. I tend to play a lot of people who are supposed to be quite hard but I'm not like that at all, I'm an absolute coward! The idea of a group of guys coming together just to beat each other to pulp just amazes me, it just amazes! I'm told there's etiquette to it, you're not supposed to go tooled up and you stop once the police are there. I've done some flashback scenes of Steve in his fighting days and I have to say it does really give you a buzz, it gets your adrenaline going and I was rushing, I was naturally rushing while I was doing it!'

He continues 'We all need things to get through and it's easier being in the group than it is being on your own sometimes. I suppose you become a hooligan because you feel part of something that gives you an identity and a responsibility and a way of bonding. People want to get passionate and there are not many things to get passionate about you know. Life's quite boring in general so we want things to really make us buzz and fighting does it for

some people. I'll sit at home going crazy watching the football but do I want to smash somebody's head in? No I don't!

Marc admits to not being the most loyal of team supporters and he prefers to enjoy it from the comfort of his armchair! 'Do I support a team? Throughout my twenties I never really bothered about football at all and I didn't really understand it. It took me a long time to understand the offside rule. But now I love it. I've brought a plasma TV and it looks great with the football on it! My friends always say I support whoever's winning the league at the time so I've gone through Man U, I never went to Arsenal but I think I'm Chelsea now. Actually I did support QPR for a time too, I even bought a shirt. And my mate took me to some of the games as well and it is amazing, it's an amazing experience, particularly if you go and see a night game when the stadium's lit up. It's awesome seeing that - just the green pitch and the lights and the crowd just going absolutely nuts. It's a real bonding experience and it is quite extraordinary. But I don't know, it's not quite me, I still prefer watching it on telly really.'

GETTING THE LOOK RIGHT

Production designer **Tom Brown** is very clear about what attracted him to the film. 'It was Alex Buono and Lexi Alexander. I'd seen *Johnny Flynton* and knew that I was dealing with a completely different visual sensibility to a film which could have looked like every other film in the genre. Obviously I wanted it to look completely different and so did Lexi and Alex. I spoke to them at length and I was so taken with the fact that they knew that the design was a major element. In most films like this, design takes a back seat - as long as the locations work it's given little real consideration. But we knew from day one that there was a certain look to the film, a certain pallet.'

Eighty percent of the shoot took place on location, but Tom was also called on to create sets – amongst them was the Harvard Crimson office and the Brigid Abbey Pub, the boys' local. 'The Brigid Abbey had to be home to our boys and the dressing had to be completely right, we could never have achieved that in a location because we'd have had to be cautious about what we did to the interior and it probably would have cost a lot more. So from a cost point of view it was much better creating our own set - and purely selfishly I wanted to be able to do exactly what I wanted to do to the pub which is get the colors, the environment and all the textures right. And because of the way that Alex works, we needed the freedom for him to put a camera wherever he wanted and to light it whichever way he needed to which would have been impossible on a location. But East End pubs have a certain feel and a look to them and we really wanted to highlight that. Other than putting a piano in the corner I think we've achieved it.'

He continues 'Everybody thinks that contemporary production design is easy, but it's all about getting the fine line between realism and fantasy right. This picture really cried out to be as lifelike as possible. If it starts to look like it's been designed then I've failed.' But legal and budgetary constraints on the

production did mean that Tom and his team really had to pay extreme attention to detail. 'We have to basically make sure that from a legal side everything is cleared and that is expensive. On a contemporary film, wherever you point a camera you're bound to come across a trademark or a logo so just about everything that's featured in this film had to be created by us. There are lots of labels and logos that you'll see that you've never seen before because we've made them up, but I hope that the audience won't even notice.'

Safety was another major factor in determining what Tom did. 'Shooting certain sequences called for special safety precautions because of all the fight scenes. We've got lots of broken windows, smashed bottles, fire and stuff, so you have to make sure that the cast and crew are happy and feel safe whilst at the same time making it look completely convincing. The sort of fight sequences we have can become kind of anarchic if you let them, and injuries can happen very easily so we have to make sure that everything we provide is totally safe. Fire extinguishers and fire for the firebombing sequences, breakaway windows for the guys to leap through and all sorts of everyday items that are not quite as 'solid' as they appear to be!'

Make-up and Hair Designer, **Lesley Lamont-Fisher**, says 'I thought this was a fantastic vehicle for me because of all the cuts and bruises and character work. I always choose films that have got something really interesting in them and I just enjoyed the script very much, I thought it was really gritty and exciting and there was lots of blood which is so much fun for a make-up artist!'

She started her research by studying boxing magazines. 'Everybody else was looking at women's magazines and I'd be there picking out the boxing magazines and studying all the bruising the fighters had! I've also got lots of photographs from previous productions and of course my assistant was Derek Lloyd who has been doing the BBC's hospital accident room drama *Casualty* for six years. We had great fun doing bruises and cuts and everything though we ran out of places on the face to put them! We had to have the most enormous blood supplies - all sorts of different types, old blood, new blood, jelly blood - it's been a very bloody production!'

There were quite a lot of prosthetics involved ranging from simple cuts to the challenge of Steve Dunham's life threatening bottle in the throat injury, but the most challenging of all was, again, the bruising! 'I think what is really required doing this type of work is a good idea of color. I use my hand as a pallet to get the colors right and as bruises age they change color, which I also had to take into account. I think my art college background has been really good because for this type of work you have to have a good eye for color and design.'

Elijah Wood and Charlie Hunnam both came to the production with looks that the public would instantly recognize but neither of them looked particularly 'tough', so Lesley had to change their personas quite drastically. 'I think the cast were quite excited about the appearance changes. It's always good for an actor to look different as it helps him to get into the role. Charlie had his

hair cut very short and it was fantastic. It was just what I wanted because in *Nicholas Nickelby* he looked very 'leading man' so we needed to create a much grittier style for him. And of course, we wanted Elijah Wood to look very different from Frodo Baggins in *Lord of the Rings* too, although his metamorphosis is subtler. Halfway through the film he starts looking quite 'London punk' and it suits him really well. He's got a very versatile face so he appeared very soft and very innocent at the beginning of the film and then later on he began to look quite hard, quite aggressive. All the cast were very committed and they were great about looking really dreadful at times – which in this film was vital because frankly we didn't get to do much by way of creating 'drop dead gorgeous'!

FIGHTING THE GOOD FIGHT

'My whole life has been about fighting of various sorts, but usually about formal boxing or Karate or Kick boxing, stuff like that. I've staged some street fighting before, but never on a scale like this. I was really happy to do it,' says Fight Co-ordinator, **Pat Johnson**. 'None of the cast had really had any fight experience at all. Leo Gregory had done some boxing in the gym, but that's not movie fighting. So I was teaching them how to throw strikes that look good on screen, how to react, how to fall and be safe, how to throw the strikes without hurting anybody and to make it all look convincing. I literally trained a few hundred guys to get this all to work.'

All the fights in the film were based around the main characters as a starting point, but every single move, whether by main cast or an extra, was carefully choreographed. 'They had to be very precise in their movements and the thing that has worked really well is the background and extra fighters that we had to bring in. These guys were terrific. I had a limited amount of time to train them and they came through fantastically. We had 70 or 80 people in a fight and no one was injured except for someone who scraped himself on the ground.'

The cast was well padded throughout however. 'The protection of the participants in a movie fight is extremely important to me. I insist that everybody involved wears knee pads, elbow pads and an athletic support with a protective cup. And in some cases they put on tail bone pads and sometimes stomach or back pads and even hip pads.' Pat also trains his cast not to make contact! 'I make sure that everyone knows not to actually hit anyone. They don't actually have to make contact. That can be covered by camera angles and sound effects!'

He points out how fit the actors had to be. 'Someone doing a fighting film has to be in better shape than someone like World Champion Boxer Lennox Lewis. Lennox Lewis will train for a one hour fight and he might train for two to three months. For some of the fights these kids are filmed over three or four days, and each day is twelve hours long! So they may end up fighting for 48 hours over a four day period. They can't quit after an hour. And their energy has to be high all day long – no napping after a nice big lunch! The

conditioning period was very long and very strenuous. Believe me, after we trained them, some of these young men couldn't get out of bed the next day!

He continues 'We have eight major fights in this film. Each one of them, in order to maintain interest, had to be different. The first fight occurs in the first five minutes and it has to be a shock. Everyone has to look up and think 'Oh my god, this is brutal'. And the fights have to coincide with the story line. When we first see these kids fighting, they're enjoying it, it's a big turn on and they get a buzz out of it. But there is a transition and by the time we get to the end we see the tragedy, the uselessness of it all and how bad it really is. We have to make that transition, so each fight has to lead from point A to point B – each fight also had to develop and evolve with the story.'

Pat Johnson has had a career in movie fighting spanning more than 30 years and has been training in the Martial Arts for over 40 years. He says that he has to admit that he is actually not too impressed with the fighting style of the real football hooligans. 'What I've discovered about hooliganism, by doing the research, is how completely unskilled these guys are. Nobody really knows how to fight! Generally they are running on alcohol and a person who doesn't know how to fight when they are sober is really a mess when drunk. So I was trying to take people and train them to be fighters and then to tell them, 'look like you don't know how to fight'! It's a lot harder than you realize... and quite truthfully none of them should really put up their dukes! If they went up against someone who really knew what they were doing there would be a lot of broken noses and broken heads!'

WHAT DOES IT FEEL LIKE TO BE IN A RUCK?

By Cass Pennant

About the Author

Cass Pennant was a central figure in West Ham's notorious InterCity Firm. His ability to fight his way out of any corner ensured that he commanded the respect of his peers and the fear of his enemies. The skills he honed there also made him eligible to work the doors at some of the most troublesome nightclubs in South London. His fearsome presence helped prevent many a weekend bloodbath.

*Following the success of his top ten best-selling autobiography Cass, he has become a noted commentator on issues surrounding football for TV, radio and print. He has written four other books - the bestselling *Congratulations You Have Just Met The ICF, Want Some Aggro?, Rolling With the 6.57 Crew and Terrace Legends*. His website address is www.casspennant.com*

March 15th, 1980. Newcastle away. We were the advanced party. The Geordie old bill weren't aware that West Ham were coming ahead on the intercity train.

The train pulls in, everyone piling out at once singing and chanting. Your group is first out the station doors, bouncing. What old bill there is might as

well have not existed because the home team supporters are all there waiting. It's not a nice sight when you have 500-600 geezers wanting to fucking hurt you. You'll be thinking "do I turn and do a bolt" or "what's the next move?well I'll be damned if I'm going to let my mates down!" Then you hear that roar, this mighty roar coming from within your own group that would have the hairs standing out on the back of your neck - that would be the precise moment, the buzz kicks in right there. You see them running, with arms out wide towards you. The adrenaline starts pumping, your old heart is going and everything just goes crazy and you just wouldn't believe what could happen in just a few minutes when it's going off. And it always ends suddenly like the referee has just blown for full time. Somehow it sorts itself out and your body's emotions move to the next high of the buzz, which is simply the relief of surviving. It really is all over and done yet you can't bring yourself down because you're on such a high, in fact your absolutely ecstatic. The atmosphere around you is just electrifying, the lads being totally boisterous and full of themselves as each person relives the moment, what they had just done to the Geordies' main firm. You're just thinking "FUCKING HELL", and you will be buzzing all week, right up until you meet for the next game. Then you will see the lads walking around with these great big silly grins, the same big grins everyone has after the row.

This is the buzz in going to football, you knew danger was there but you never gave it a thought. It was a proper firm we had that day, same firm that had been going years, we had become a little hardcore that just banded together and knew together no one was ever going to take us. I guess we have this feeling we are on our own, no one is going to help us. This is the buzz all the hoolies talk about and it's not something they would seek to explain because they can't, they do not analyse what they do. If they did surprisingly enough they would find it unjustifiable JUST LIKE YOU! Most of them when asked why would reply "it's a larf innit". And myself, I find it laughable that society can't deal with this typical answer because everything in your world has to have a damned reason. Life just can't seem to function without it, everything has to be so black and white, no grey areas.

Why do normal likeable lads with jobs get into going football? Most lads I knew had no thoughts of seeing violence or fighting at football but would accept it had now become the purpose in going to football. We would never ever refer to ourselves as hooligans, it was a dirty word. The whole thing was that you're young, likely to be single and that's where it's at and that's what your doing and that's what you did. Its part of you growing up and becoming what you think is a man....at the time.

The thrill, the excitement, everything was on the terraces. This is the first time we are free, we can do what we want and we are together in a mob. Society changes but not necessarily its people. I was brought up within a fight culture. I didn't ever experience violence in the home, unlike some, but being around your peers I would notice the various street gangs. At the time the whole estate had gone into the skin-head cult fashion. During the early seventies this took a hold throughout the working classes of Great Britain. Peace and love was suppressed, hate and war reigned supreme. This whole new cult

sort of coincided with the music, which coincided with the football and everyone was walking around like they were the bollocks, then it started to kick off around the nation's grounds everywhere.

Probably at the height of all that dressing up period at football, during the mid 80's, the violence start to move to more serious business away from the grounds, into the pubs and streets where you lived in London. Saturdays would find the tube stations turned into war zones. Now, today, it is the football hooligans themselves who have gone underground to an almost secretive underworld, constantly being tracked by police spotters and CCTV cameras.

As a kid, going to your first football match leaves a big impression, the passion, the atmosphere, the crowd, and you will find yourself on the periphery of it all. You start off on the terraces with your dad or older brother taking you along, and you're watching and feeling there's something else going on here and you're starting to follow the older boys and now your recognising faces. This is the moment you were never going to be your favorite footballer and turn out for the team. You're at the age where you can go one way, or the other...and you have just chosen the other.

Regrets I'm sure, but most of the lads I speak to today would insist that the best ever days were "going to football with yer mates", you were just carried away with it. The friendships we made we still value today. Friends who had been through it all and are still standing together...UNITED!

Personally I still remember that every time I was put before the courts I would be thinking "I wouldn't be here if it weren't for the football". It was an addiction worse than any drug. I had parents that didn't deserve what I put them through, I had a job and had always had a job and on every occasion I risked it all.

Most of the lads I knew had jobs and those that didn't were talented otherwise. One had even built up the family business to the point that he floated it on the stock exchange for a million and got it. He insisted on telling me when the big day arrived to sign the paperwork, thus making him an instant millionaire, not even the buzz of that beat going football. And then he added. "Especially if drawing Man Utd in the cup". And he meant it!

Why is it common to most football nations? Much attention is paid to English football hooliganism, but the problem is worldwide, WHY?! Some socialist rock singer once said: "the working class is all around whether it be London or Moscow". But quite simply the British have exported the football hooligan; our reputation has gone before us.

My work as an author led me to take in the Euro 2004 Championships held in Portugal, and a chance encounter with the Russian hooligans. I was to discover their leaders had all passed out through high education and held positions as lawyers, doctors and managers. They basically said football hooliganism for them was only of the recent decade...which would tie in with

their young citizens experiencing greater freedoms that coincided with the end of communist rule. To add further, it may come as no surprise to hear they regard England as being the motherland to all hooliganism. And it was from here they had taken much of their own influences.

During the same tournament Croatian hooligans clashed with England fans in a deliberate attack using CS gas and flares and causing Portuguese riot police to temporarily close down the metro station where the fighting took place.

Why are the British more involved than any other nation? I've always said this country has led the way for young peoples' trendy fashion cults that have sprung up on these islands since the late 1950's: Teddy Boys; Mods and Rockers; Skinheads; Bikers; Punks and so on. The football hooligan has outstayed them all in his Aquascutum and Burberry designer labels; he is still around today as is the phenomenon of it all. Yet up to now there has been no movie to capture and explore what their motivation is to the violence of it all. The whole subject of football hooliganism is almost taboo within the film industry. Even though the other cults I've mentioned were also violent cults, they were all portrayed in films: Rock Around The Clock, Brighton Rock, Quadraphenia, Clockwork Orange, Sid and Nancy etc. It seems nothing quite disturbs us to the same extent as the football hooligan, yet he is as British as fish and chips. Why us?...its hard to say, maybe there are less restraints on us and our education system encourages young people to be recognized and to have more of a say in their own lives than those of other lands. Naturally a number of us would exploit that. This still won't explain away the violence, for which I have never heard a real explanation. I have heard some of the lads themselves say it's in them and is always just below the surface because it's part of their makeup, this country has always been fighting wars.

Why is it football rather than other sports? Football will always be our national sport because quite simply it will always be the sport of the working classes, Chelsea FC being the exception of today. The aggression and emotional rantings of the hardcore football fan is traditionally working class and male. Football has always been very localised with the grounds built literally in your backyard, creating this territorial feeling that the opposition's supporters are invading your manor; the whole thing of going football is that it is much more than a game. There's a whole lot of shit and stuff going on off it. I think it's the only sport where the fans can have a dramatic impact on the game itself. The atmosphere created by the fans vocal support can even raise the tempo of a game. Anger on the terraces can spill over onto the pitch. As a supporter you can be much more involved than you can say a spectator at the Grand Prix, the cricket test series or even the Rugby World Cup. There's something in a game of football that can raise the passions of even the mildest. You knew as a youngster if you chose any other sport over football it was almost like a challenge to your manhood.

CAST BIOGRAPHIES

ELIJAH WOOD – Matt Buckner

Widely regarded as one of the most gifted actors of his generation, Elijah Wood continues to challenge himself with roles in films spanning the spectrum of style and genre. Still only in his early twenties he has an impressive canon of work spanning from his career as a child actor to the present. He was recently seen in Peter Jackson's much lauded trilogy of J.R.R. Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings* in the lead role of Frodo Baggins. The films also starred Viggo Mortensen, Liv Tyler, Cate Blanchett, Ian McKellan, and Sean Astin and the final part of the trilogy, *The Return of the King*, won 11 Academy Awards.

Wood was also seen in Focus Features' *Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind*, written by Charlie Kaufman and directed by Michel Gondry and starring Kate Winslet and Jim Carrey.

He appeared as a young amnesia victim in Martin Duffy's independent film *The Bumblebee Flies Away*, produced by Shooting Gallery's Steven Haft and Larry Meistrich and also starring Rachel Leigh Cook and Janeane Garofalo. He has also lent his voice to Tom Thumb for one of Miramax's first animated films, *The Adventures of Tom Thumb and Thumbelina* and will be heard as the voice of Mumble, the musically talented penguin, in *Happy Feet*.

Other recent films include Jeffrey Porter's *Try Seventeen*, a romantic comedy starring Franka Potente and Mandy Moore, the drama *Ash Wednesday* starring opposite Ed Burns, James Toback's *Black and White*, *The Faculty* written by Kevin Williamson and directed by Robert Rodriguez and Mimi Leder's *Deep Impact*.

Wood's impressive list of film credits include Alan Shapiro's *Flipper* with Paul Hogan, Pontus Lowenhielm and Patrik Von Krusenstjerna's *Chain of Fools* opposite Salma Hayek, Steve Zahn and Jeff Golblum, Jon Avnet's *The War* opposite Kevin Costner, Rob Reiner's *North* with Jason Alexander and Julia Louis-Dreyfuss, Joe Ruben's *The Good Son* opposite Macauley Culkin, Stephen Sommers' *Huck Finn*, Steve Miner's *Forever Young* with Mel Gibson, Mary Agnes Donohue's *Paradise*, Richard Donner's *Radio Flyer* with Lorraine Bracco, Barry Levinson's *Avalon* opposite Armin Mueller-Stahl and Aidan Quinn, and Mike Figgis' *Internal Affairs* with Richard Gere. He received widespread critical acclaim for his performance opposite Christina Ricci in Ang Lee's film *The Ice Storm* with Kevin Kline, Sigourney Weaver, Joan Allen and Tobey Maguire.

Television work includes Tony Bill's *Oliver Twist*. The Disney production starred Wood as the 'Artful Dodger' opposite Richard Dreyfuss' 'Fagin.' He

was also seen in the NBC telefilm, *Dayo*, and the CBS movie, *Child in the Night*.

CHARLIE HUNNAM – Pete Dunham

With his irresistible charm, Charlie Hunnam captured the attention of audiences and critics in the United Kingdom and is now poised to take on Hollywood.

Hunnam was last seen as 'Bosie' in the Miramax feature *Cold Mountain* for director Anthony Minghella. The movie, based on the best selling novel by Charles Frazier, enjoyed a Golden Globe nomination for Best Picture. He starred in the title role in the big screen adaptation of Charles Dicken's novel *Nicholas Nickleby* which was nominated for a Golden Globe Award for Best Picture. He also starred as Katie Holmes' psychotic ex-boyfriend in the Paramount thriller *Abandon*.

On the big screen, Hunnam played the role of Daz in Peter Hewitt's *Whatever Happened to Harold Smith?* for USA Films. The movie, which took us back to the 70's era of Northern England, showed the metamorphosis of a young man from disco to punk, and the relationships he shared with his friends and his father.

Hunnam received audience and critical acclaim for his role in the hit British drama, *Queer as Folk*. In this show about two gay friends, Hunnam played the role of Nathan, a 15-year-old on the lookout for older men. Hunnam also played the same role in the follow-up television mini-series, *Queer As Folk 2*, which was regarded as one of the best sequels ever put to the television screen. He also starred in the critically acclaimed FOX series *Undeclared* as the suave theatre major from Britain who enlightened his roommate in women.

Hunnam got his start on the BBC teen drama series, *Byker Grove*. Following that, he moved on to the BBC and Disney collaboration, *Microsoaps*.

CLAIRE FORLANI – Shannon Dunham

Moving to the United States from her native London, Claire Forlani has made a name for herself in Hollywood. Well known for her performance opposite Brad Pitt and Anthony Hopkins in *Meet Joe Black*, Forlani can be seen in several feature films: *Stroke of Genius* opposite Jim Caviezel; *White on White* alongside Barry Pepper, Tom Wilkinson and Willem Dafoe; and *Shadow Dancer* with Joshua Jackson, Harvey Keitel and Gerard Depardieu.

Forlani starred in *The Medallion*, opposite Jackie Chan; *Triggerman* with Pete Postlethwaite and Donnie Wahlberg; *The Limit*, opposite Lauren Bacall; and *The Pentagon Papers* opposite James Spader. She also starred with Tim Robbins, Ryan Phillippe and Rachel Leigh Cook in the computer thriller

Antitrust directed by Peter Howitt, as well as *Boys and Girls*, opposite Freddie Prinze, Jr.

Raised by her British mother and Italian father, Forlani attended the Arts Educational School from eleven to seventeen years of age, studying dance and drama. When she graduated, she pursued her acting career in England, until 1993, when she moved with her parents to San Francisco. Three months later, she landed her first role as a mistress of John F. Kennedy, in the television movie *JFK...Reckless Youth*.

Forlani has also starred opposite Ben Stiller and Greg Kinnear in *Mystery Men*; as Sean Connery's daughter in the blockbuster film *The Rock*; and portrayed artist Jean-Michel Basquiat's girlfriend in *Basquiat*.

Other film credits include the independent feature *Magicians*, opposite Til Schweiger; *Basil*, opposite Christian Slater and Jared Leto; the independent film *Into My Heart*, opposite Rob Morrow, Jake Webber and Jayne Brooke; Kevin Smith's *Mallrats*; and the independent feature *The Last Time I Committed Suicide* opposite Keanu Reeves and Thomas Jane.

LEO GREGORY – Bovver

Leo Gregory is a young actor who is increasingly in demand. Prior to 'GREEN STREET HOOLIGANS' he completed filming on *Tristan and Isolde*, produced by Ridley Scott, alongside James Franco and Sophia Myles. He will also appear in *Perfect Creature*, directed by Glen Standring, in which he co-stars with Saffron Burrows and Dougray Scott. The film is the retelling of the vampire myth, where science fiction and horror coalesce in a suspenseful, elegant action film about race, serial killings and the capacity of human beings to hope. Leo plays the part of Dougray's brother, Edgar, and his ultimate enemy.

It was his performance in the Dominic Savage film *Out of Control* as the character of Sam that won him much critical acclaim. Screen International describes him as bringing a 'lacerating, De Niro-like conviction' to his character of psychotic bully Sam. His other film credits include the romantic comedy *Susie Gold*, directed by Richard Cantor, which was released earlier this year, *Octane* directed by Marcus Adams, and the Bafta-winning *When I Was Twelve*, also directed by Dominic Savage.

In addition to film, Leo has also appeared on stage, including roles at the Royal Court and Hampstead Theatres, and on television, in programmes such as *From Bard to Verse* (BBC3), where the UK's hottest acting and comedy talent perform Shakespeare's masterpieces, *Menace* (Channel5), and *The Jury* (ITV).

Leo started acting at the age of 13, winning his first role in the US television film *Jewel*, a romantic drama based on the novel by Danielle Steele, and directed by Roger Young. He was highlighted by trade bible, Screen International, as one of the UK's brightest 'Stars of Tomorrow' in May 2004.

Leo currently lives in London.

MARC WARREN – Steve Dunham

Marc Warren is one of the UK's most instantly recognizable and gifted young actors. Born in Northampton, he joined his local youth theatre at the age of 12 and at 17 he made the move to London. With no agent to represent him, Marc began promoting himself by writing to theatre producers and directors and his persistence and talent soon paid off when he won a part in '*Godspell*'. This was followed by five years of work in rep where he honed his acting skills.

The turning point in his career came in 1989 when he was appearing at The Gate Theatre in London as Eduard in *Summer Breeze*. He was spotted by his current agent, who was amazed to discover that he didn't have representation, and immediately took him on. Marc's career soon took off, initially with his appearance as Bonario in the high profile Almeida Theatre's production of *Volpone* and then with his move into television and film work.

Always selective about the roles he has taken on, Marc has been seen in a wide range of highly respected television shows that have brought him into the homes of a worldwide audience. His most recent role is that of Danny Blue in the highly popular BBC drama *Hustle*. Now in its second series, the show is based on the shady, but often amusing, exploits of a group of high class con men and also stars Adrian Lester and Robert Vaughn. Marc's other television work includes: Granada TV's *Poirot – Five Little Pigs*; Dominic Foy in BBC's *State of Play*; the lead role of Dr Ivo Steadman in BBC Film/Alliance Atlantis produced *No Night is Too Long*; Mac in Channel 4's *Men Only*; PC Dougie Raymond in the acclaimed Carlton TV series *The Vice*; and Rymer in ITV's highly regarded period drama series *Sharpe's Company*. Marc also played Dyson, alongside Helen Mirren, in Granada TV's *Prime Suspect IV* and Private Albert Blithe in the internationally renowned HBO/Dreamworks mini series *Band of Brothers* which was produced by Steven Spielberg and Tom Hanks. He won the prestigious Royal Television Award for Best Actor in 2000 for his performance as Monks in Diplomat Films four part series of *Oliver Twist* in which he appeared alongside a cast that included Julie Walters, Robert Lindsay and Andy Serkis.

Among his film appearances are: Billie in Film Four's *Principles of Lust*; Supervacuo in Alex Cox's comic horror *The Revengers Tragedy* with Christopher Eccleston, Eddie Izzard and Derek Jacobi; Vic in *Dad Savage* alongside Patrick Stewart, Helen McCrory and Kevin McKidd; Clint in the Scala Films comedy *Bring Me the Head of Mavis Davis* with Rik Mayall and Jane Horrocks; Terence in Michael Radford's romantic thriller *B Monkey*; Ray in the multi-award winning feature *Shine* with Geoffrey Rush, Noah Taylor and Lynne Redgrave; and Paul Hills coming of age movie *Boston Kickout* where Marc appeared as Robert alongside John Simm and Andrew Lincoln. Before

his appearance in 'GREEN STREET HOOLIGANS' he filmed the part of Hudd in Brian Cook's *Color Me Kubrick*. The film features John Malkovich as the con man who went around publicly posing as the famously reclusive director, Stanley Kubrick, during the making of his last film.

Marc has continued his work in theatre and was last seen in *Clubland* at London's Royal Court.

CREW BIOGRAPHIES

LEXI ALEXANDER – Director and Screenwriter

A former World Karate and Kickboxing Champion, Lexi Alexander found her calling to become a filmmaker while travelling around the world competing and teaching martial arts seminars. Born in Mannheim, Germany, Lexi dreamed of eventually moving to Hollywood and made it a point to attend every karate tournament that took place in the United States. Finally, at age 19, after winning the Long Beach International Karate Championship, Lexi decided to stay in California, equipped with nothing more than two duffel bags and a pair of boxing gloves.

Pursuing her dream of becoming a filmmaker, Lexi enrolled in the renowned Joanne Baron Studio of Dramatic Arts and the Piero Dusa Acting Conservatory while simultaneously taking classes in directing, producing and writing at UCLA. To finance her education and living expenses, Lexi worked as a stuntwoman specializing in martial arts, giving her the opportunity to learn about the filmmaking process from a practical side as well. Her short films, *Pitcher Perfect*, about the struggle of a teenage baseball prodigy, and *Foolproof*, another teenage comedy, as well as several school projects, opened the door for many commercial assignments, most notably for extreme sports companies.

After co-producing her first feature film *Wheelmen*, Lexi combined her extensive knowledge of boxing with her passion for filmmaking in her third short film, the 2003 Academy Award Nominated *Johnny Flynton*.

GIGI PRITZKER – Producer

Gigi Pritzker began her career as the youngest child in a family of many strong personalities. Her siblings have long admired her ability to get them to listen by calmly stating, repeatedly, that she would begin her comments from the beginning if they did not hang on her every word at the dinner table...by 5 years old she had them all well trained!

Later she studied anthropology at Stanford University where she taught autistic and schizophrenic children at the local United Way center. Unable to decide on whether to be Margaret Mead or Bruno Bettelheim she moved to Nepal for a year to study and find adventure. She returned having done more of the latter and moved onto the next phase of her life.

After a year of study at a very offbeat film school in Santa Fe, New Mexico her red station wagon took her to New York where she worked as an assistant to many people and learned to make a mean cup of coffee. She longed to go back to Asia and in 1985 began a project that took her back, on and off, for the better part of 18 months working on a documentary in Bhutan (a small Himalayan kingdom). During that time she had a “real job” working as the assistant producer on a television documentary series. While there, she met Deborah Del Prete. They defected and began Dee Gee Productions, an entertainment company that specialized in not specializing. After hundreds of successful corporate videos and films, music videos and commercials the company decided to move into the feature film arena.

Since 1993, Dee Gee Entertainment/Odd Lot Entertainment has completed the feature films: *Mean Creek*, *The Wedding Planner*, *Ricochet River* and *Simple Justice*; the HBO film, *Hostile Intent*; as well as documentaries for ABC, BBC, CBS, NHK, PBS and syndicated television.

Gigi is involved in a variety of organizations ranging from the esoteric (Tibetan Alliance of Chicago) to the more mainstream (Chicago Children’s Museum). She lives in Chicago with her husband Michael Pucker and their three daughters.

DEBORAH DEL PRETE – Producer

Deborah Del Prete is co-owner with partner Gigi Pritzker of Dee Gee Entertainment. Dee Gee is a full service entertainment production company dealing in film, television and theatre. It is the parent company of one of LA’s landmark cultural institutions, The Coronet Theatre, as well as the feature film producing entity, Odd Lot Entertainment.

Together with partner Gigi Pritzker she has produced the feature films *The Wedding Planner* with Jennifer Lopez and Matthew McConaughey for Sony Pictures; *Ricochet River* (Porchlight Entertainment), Kate Hudson’s feature film debut; and *Simple Justice* starring Cesar Romero and the Emmy award-winning actors, Doris Roberts and John Spencer. The team executive produced the HBO film *Hostile Intent* starring Rob Lowe and *Mean Creek* (Paramount Classics) with Rory Culkin and Scott Mechlowicz, which was a Director’s Fortnight selection at Cannes 2004.

As a director, Deborah’s first feature film assignment was the independent film *Simple Justice*. She then directed *Ricochet River*, which also starred John Cullum (Northern Exposure) and Jason James Richter (Free Willy I, II, III) alongside Kate Hudson. She has produced and/or directed numerous television programs, music videos, commercials, industrials and documentaries. Some of these other credits include *The People Versus*, a five-part dramatic series starring Meg Ryan for Viacom; the musicals, *Something’s Afoot* starring Jean Stapleton for Showtime and Barry Manilow’s *The Drunkard* starring Tom Bosley for the Arts & Entertainment Channel; *Journey To Adventure*, a long-running syndicated travel series; *Maintenance Men’s Lounge* (comedy pilot-ABC); *Gifts From the Fire*; and *The Architect and the City* (Host - Edwin Newman for WTTW Chicago).

She has also directed many theatre and screenplay readings at the Coronet Theatre featuring well-known talented actors including: Tim Allen, Nancy Travis, Scott Bakula, Bruce Davison, Pamela Reed, Fred Savage, Dan Lauria, Marion Ross, Stephanie Zimbalist, Kathleen Noone, Paul Winfield, Dana Delaney, Gary Cole, Ron Perlman, Cathy Moriarty, Penelope Ann Miller, Gregory Harrison, Sean Astin, John Glover, Lou Diamond Phillips, Carol Kane, Joely Fisher, Polly Draper, David Paymer, Jay Thomas, Harold Gould, Shelly Berman, Michael Lerner, Wayne Rogers and Charles Durning.

She resides in Santa Monica, California with her husband and son.

ALEX BUONO – Director of Photography

Alexander Buono was raised in Portland, Oregon and moved to Los Angeles, California to attend the University of Southern California School of Cinema/Television. The day after graduating with degrees in Film Production and Photography, Alex drove 1,200 miles to Oklahoma to join the crew of *Twister* as a camera assistant. He spent the next few years working in the camera department on studio films such as *Conspiracy Theory*, *Hard Rain*, and *Armageddon*, learning from top ASC cinematographers such as Dean Cundey, Don Burgess, Conrad Hall, and John Schwartzman.

Between jobs as a camera assistant, Alex shot short films, music videos, and eventually his first feature film in 1997: *The Others*. He finally hung up his assistant belt in 1999 and began working exclusively as a cinematographer, shooting commercials and feature films such as *Snipes*, *Dead End*, and *The Orphan King*. In addition, Alex has been the cinematographer for the *Saturday Night Live* Film Unit for the past 5 seasons.

Alex met Lexi Alexander in 2001 when they shot their first short film together: *Foolproof*. The following year Alex both photographed and helped produce another short film with Lexi – *Johnny Flynton* – for which the two share a 2003 Academy Award Nomination for Best Short Film.

'*GREEN STREET HOOLIGANS*' is Alex's third film with Lexi Alexander and his eighth feature film. Alex currently lives in Venice, California.

TOM BROWN – Production Designer

Tom Brown has served as production designer on DNA/Film Council's comedy *The Parole Officer* starring Steve Coogan; Ed Bye's cult teenage comedy *Kevin and Perry Go Large* starring Harry Enfield, Kathy Burke and Rhys Ifans; and *Guesthouse Paradiso* starring Rik Mayall alongside the film's director Ade Edmondson.

His television work includes *Hillsborough*, the two hour Granada drama depicting the tragedy and loss that occurred at Hillsborough football Stadium when a stand collapsed during a game; BBC series *Pie in the Sky* which starred Richard Griffiths; Channel 4's *Hearts and Minds* and SelectTV's *An Independent Man*.

As art director, Tom's work includes: *A Christmas Carol*, starring Patrick Stewart and Richard E Grant; cult sci-fi series *Farscape*; Lucasfilm Ltd/Paramount Television's *Young Indiana Jones Chronicles*; and Granada Television's celebrated crime drama series *Prime Suspect III*. Feature films in this role include: Dreamworks/Paramount Pictures *Saving Private Ryan* directed by Steven Spielberg; Jim Sheridan's *In the Name of the Father* starring Daniel Day-Lewis; and David Leland's *The Big Man* starring Liam Neeson.

LESLEY LAMONT-FISHER – Make-up and Hair Designer

Lesley Lamont-Fisher has numerous film and TV make-up credits to her name. She has received a Bafta nomination for Best Make-up for her work on ITV's adaptation of *Oliver Twist* starring Robert Lindsay, Julie Walters and Lindsay Duncan and an RTS Nomination for Best Make-up for the BBC/Irish Screen series set in 18th Century, *Aristocrats*, starring Sian Phillips, Ben Daniels and Geraldine Somerville.

Her film work includes sci-fi thriller *Alien vs Predator*, Istvan Szabo's romantic comedy drama *Being Julia* which stars Annette Bening, Jeremy Irons, Michael Gambon and Bruce Greenwood; Columbia Tristar's *Stella Street the Movie*, a feature length version of the cult BBC TV series; and 17th Century drama set in India, *The Warrior*, which won three BAFTA awards; Harold Ramis' *Bedazzled*, which starred Brendan Fraser and Liz Hurley. Lesley was personal make-up artist to David Bowie for the contemporary thriller *Everybody Loves Sunshine*. Among her other film work is *The Scarlet Tunic*, the Thomas Hardy adaptation set during the Napoleonic wars which starred Jean-Marc Barr, Simon Callow and John Sessions; and *Feast at Midnight* starring Christopher Lee, Edward Fox and Robert Hardy.

Lesley's television work includes: *Pepys* starring Steve Coogan, Nathaniel Parker and Tim Piggott-Smith; the BBC's adaptation of *Other Peoples' Children* starring Emila Fox and Denis Lawson; Channel 4's *The Rector's Wife* with Lindsay Duncan and Steven Dillane; children's popular comedy drama series *Just William*; Showtime Networks *Eye of the Storm*, adapted from the Jack Higgins thriller and starring Rob Lowe and Deborah Moore.

PAT JOHNSON – Stunt Coordinator/Fight Arranger

'*GREEN STREET HOOLIGANS*' is the second time that Pat Johnson has worked with Lexi Alexander as he was fight/stunt coordinator on her short film *Johnny Flynton*.

His career as one of the top fight coordinators in motion pictures began more than 30 years ago when he appeared as a stunt actor in the classic martial arts film *Enter the Dragon*. He had initially become interested in martial arts when he trained in the Korean martial art of Tang Soo Do whilst stationed in Korea with the US Army. He was soon also an accomplished Karate expert and Kick Boxer.

After his return to the States he became captain of the Chuck Norris Black Belt Competition Team and during seven years of national and international Karate competition under his leadership the team remained undefeated. Johnson's personal record was 196 wins, one loss and one draw during that period and he was particularly noted for his brilliant strategy in fighting opponents who were larger, stronger or faster than himself. He continues to use his inside knowledge of fighting to make his fight scenes both realistic and believable, and has choreographed and/or stunt coordinated seven of the top ten grossing martial arts films of all time including *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles 1 & 2* and *The Karate Kid 1 & 2*. Other films on which he has fight and/or stunt coordinated include: *Mortal Kombat* and its follow up *Mortal Kombat – Annihilation*; *Wild, Wild West*; *Batman and Robin*; *Shootfighter*; *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*; *Showdown in Little Tokyo*; William Friedkin's *To Live and Die in LA*; *The Cannonball Run*; and *The Ultimate Warrior*. He was second unit director on *Force Five* and has written five screenplays including the classic Chuck Norris film *A Force of One*, *Kick and Kick Back* and *Chinatown Squad*.

Johnson has been inducted into the NASKA, A.K.K.F. and Black Belt Halls of Fame and, in 2000, was selected by 'Black Belt Magazine' as one of the top 25 most influential Martial Artists of the 20th Century.