



# DARK STAR

IAN CURTIS, THE CREEP, AND SOON IAN BRADY... SEAN HARRIS CERTAINLY LANDS THE ROLES THAT ARE THE EPITOME OF THE DARKER SIDE OF THE INDUSTRY. MARK KEBBLE IS GRANTED A RARE AUDIENCE WITH THE INTENSE EAST ENDER TO TALK ABOUT THE ROLES, AS WELL AS HIS PART IN A NEW BRITISH FILM THAT COULD BE THE NEXT 'TRAINSPOTTING'

**STUCK IN THE SMALL OFFICE OF SILLWOOD FILMS IN N16**, interviewing Sean Harris isn't the easiest of propositions. Known as a shy, but intense actor, Bethnal Green's Sean rarely does interviews – and it shows. "What attracted me to Eddie?" he finally answers question one, after a pause that cuts through the silence. "I thought the script was really good, and the part was well written."

The question revolves around Sean's leading role in 'Saxon', a British film that has been written and directed by Greg Loftin. After seeing the trailer, it's clear it has a lot going for it. Soon after leaving prison, Sean's character Eddie has an eye cut out by a loan shark chasing an old debt, and his other eye will only be spared upon repayment. Desperate for cash, Eddie heads back to the place he grew up, Saxon – a ghost-town of grim flats run by a corrupt council – where a comically gruesome journey ensues as he searches for the solution that will save his sight.

Despite his initial silence, it is clear that Sean feels a great deal for the project that is now in post-production (something you can help with – find out how later). "I was surprised that there was no major money involved," he says. "If there was, I probably wouldn't have even got a look in. Any young, British 'named' actor would jump at playing such an extreme role. I like the idea of playing people outside of society. That is where I tend to be drawn."

This seems something of an understatement when you look at his resume to date. Back in 2002, he had the unenviable task of playing legendary Ian Curtis, the lead singer of Joy Division who took his own life at 23, in '24 Hour Party People'. Then came his performance as the titular 'Creep', where he was covered in full body make-up as a genetically mutated monster roaming the London Underground. "'Creep' was so extreme," he reflects. "I was really able to disguise myself and disappear."

Both were great performances for very different reasons, and before we get the chance to see 'Saxon' (where insiders assert that he gives another astonishing acting masterclass) Sean will be seen on TV in May as the notorious Ian Brady. 'See No Evil' is a two-parter that marks the 40th anniversary of the trial of Brady and Myra Hindley. How did Sean prepare to play such a person? "What do you have to do?" he quizzes himself, looking out the window. "You have to be interested in people, how they work, how man does what he does and why. As an actor I am interested in people."

"The one thing everyone says about Ian Brady is that he is evil," he continues, gathering pace. "That is a very simple way of not understanding the problem. It is deeper than that." One thing that is for sure is the role will throw Sean under the public spotlight. "I am starting to understand there's going to be a bit of fuss about it," he nods at another understatement. "I will be keeping my head down."

Does he get a buzz from playing these darker than dark parts? "It's not that I love playing them," he muses, "it is what the industry sees me as. They don't see me as a light, funny guy. I don't get to kiss the girl very much – I get to kill her. If you have a dark character they usually come to me. What's interesting is that it's getting darker, things aren't getting lighter..."

Which brings us nicely back to Eddie and 'Saxon'. "I loved the shoot," Sean looks back to last summer. "We were on this estate that was half empty, so we kind of had the place to ourselves. I lived in one of the flats, which was broken down like a squat. Everyone was very together on the shoot, which you usually get on these low budget productions. A lot of people are first-timers (like Greg as director), so they bring a lot of enthusiasm with them. Whereas you could work on big productions and people are just lazy. They are not passionate about it." It's clearly a subject that gets to the heart of Sean Harris. In the space of 30 minutes, he has gone from quietly mumbling an answer reluctantly to jumping in when he feels a point needs to be made. "It's important that films like 'Saxon' get made, and directors like Greg are supported, because I think there's a lot of fluff about."

"There are so many Eddies around. They don't have much chance to escape, or find anything better. There are no answers, but they just keep going. For the ordinary man, life is incredibly difficult and I find that interesting. Why do some people get up in the morning? They do and they keep going, and that's admirable. Some of us are lucky to get a break, whereas others don't." Which is why Sean doesn't go for the publicity machine, the free parties, the 'do you know who I am?' approach. It is why he appears shy when you first meet him. He is, quite simply, a mighty fine actor.

**Sean was happy to talk to us because of his belief that 'Saxon' is a great film, and you have the chance to help it over the finishing line.**

**The high-risk phase (the shoot) is over, but they still need another £50,000 equity investment to ensure the very best post-production.**

**Find out how you can help, and how you can become an Executive Producer on the film, by calling producer Elise Valmorbidia on 07952 066 252 or emailing [elise@sillwoodfilms.co.uk](mailto:elise@sillwoodfilms.co.uk)**

*Portrait shots of Sean Harris by Anton Artemenkov*



### A CHAT WITH DIRECTOR, GREG LOFTIN

#### **How did 'Saxon' come about?**

"It is seven years since I began writing the script. The original inspiration was when I had a holiday to Grenada. There was something about the culture there, people running their businesses out of their front rooms. This is a feature of 'Saxon'. At a certain point, 'Unforgiven' also came into play, but there are also shades of 'The Third Man' in this too."

#### **Did you envisage Sean Harris playing Eddie?**

"I can't think of any actors who are quite like Sean. I have been living with this script for so long and I didn't see any actors in that time who were quite like Eddie until I saw '24 Hour Party People'. I could see that there was an intensity in Sean's portrayal of Ian Curtis that seemed to be absolutely right for Eddie."

#### **You shot the film on a run-down estate last summer – how was it?**

"On the second day we were there, it was quite disturbing to see a bunch of youths playing around with a chainsaw... There are very few residents left on the estate, and precisely because of that there are people lighting fires or smashing windows. But I swear the people we met were terrific and actually play roles in the film!"

#### **Where do you go from here?**

"It is a low budget movie, but we have really high ambitions for it. You want it to be seen most of all, so we are going to pull out every stop to make it happen." *Image depicts Greg on the set with Sean, copyright Sillwood Films*

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