



AWARD-WINNING INDIE FILM 'EMR' TO RECEIVE UK'S FIRST EVER SIMULTANEOUS MULTI-PLATFORM RELEASE

24 June, London. Newly formed company Dogwoof Digital today announced that 'EMR' would be the first film in the UK to be simultaneously released in cinemas, on the Internet and on DVD.

The film will be premiered at the Genesis Cinema, Mile End and on Tiscali's on-line Film Club on Tuesday 12 July. On Friday 15 July, 'EMR' will open in selected cinemas across the UK and be available both online - downloadable exclusively through Tiscali for £2.50 - and on DVD, where it can be bought at an rrp of £12.99 from SilverScreen's high street outlets and other good stores. DVDs will also be available to buy at Play.com, amazon.co.uk and other on line retailers.

Commented 'EMR's producer John Lentaigne, "Whilst there has been talk of multi-platform releases in the US recently, this is the first time in the UK, in Europe and, as far as we know, in the world that a film has been simultaneously released in this way. The filmmakers believe that the choice as to how consumers view films should rest with the consumer and that theatrical, DVD and Internet forms of distribution need not threaten each other, and may indeed be mutually complimentary."

Added Dogwoof Digital's CEO, Andy Whittaker: "Dogwoof Digital has been created to promote talented filmmakers and to give exposure to their films by releasing them in the UK. We believe the films we pick deserve to be seen, and we are delighted to have 'EMR' as our launch title. We've been very lucky to find such supportive partners and we hope that this will be the beginning of a fruitful relationship that will bring to UK audience first-rate indie films that, because of market constraints, are very unlikely to get the release they deserve."

Already the recipient of several major awards including Best UK Feature at the 2004 Raindance Film Festival and a veteran of many prestigious film festivals, from Korea to Germany, San Francisco to Oklahoma, 'EMR' is a triumph of the spirit of Indie film making under adverse circumstances. Shot for less than £40,000, it was filmed in High Definition, the same technology used by George Lucas on the latest 'Star Wars' film and Michael Mann on 'Collateral'.

Shot on location in both the US and the UK and described by Time Out as "compelling and suspenseful", 'EMR' is a deft thriller that cleverly weaves together a host of urban myths: from kidney-stealing and alien-abduction, to manipulative drug corporations.

Co-directors, writers and producers James Erskine (*Jeffrey Archer: The Self-Made Man, EastEnders, Holby City, Oil Storm*) and Danny McCullough (*The Invitation, Closing the Deal*) have assembled a superb Anglo-American cast, many of whom are household names. Making his feature film debut in the lead role of Adam Jones is British actor Adam Leese, whose television credits include *Bad Girls, Holby City* and *Waking the Dead*. Also making her first feature film appearance as CyberBunnyLily is Whitney Cummings, best known for her work on MTV's *Punk'd* alongside Ashton Kutcher.

Adam and Whitney are ably supported by such talented actors as Gil Bellows (*Ally McBeal*); George Calil (*Band of Brothers*); Guy Henry (*Bright Young Things*); Jemma Walker (*EastEnders' Sasha Perkins*); Kate Buffery (*Trial and Retribution*); Tom Hardy (*Layer Cake, Star Trek: Nemesis; Black Hawk Down*) and Jeremy Edwards (*Holby City, Celebrity Big Brother*).

SYNOPSIS

Londoner Adam Jones (Adam Leese) is stuck in a dead end job; lives alone with his cat and spends his free time obsessing over the latest conspiracy theories on the Internet.

Taking an experimental drug for his epilepsy, manufactured by the Pfenal corporation, Adam begins suffering from seizures, black outs and terrifying visions. When he wakes up in a hotel room in Mexico missing a kidney, he becomes convinced that he's unwittingly stumbled into the middle of a conspiracy.

Drugged by a mysterious paramedic (Gil Belows), Adam finds himself back in his London flat. Just as he assumes it's all been a bad dream, the pain from the scar on his back convinces him that something dark and disturbing is indeed happening.

Worse still, Adam's one friend at work, Tracey (Jemma Walker), informs him that he's been missing from work for a week and as a result has been fired.

His only confidant is his beautiful and mysterious Internet correspondent, whom he knows by her screen name CyberBunnyLily (Whitney Cummings) and who lives in San Francisco.

With his reality becoming more and more fractured, and unable to trust anyone - let alone himself - Adam sets about trying to uncover the truth about the mysterious drug company Pfenal.

But just as he finally feels able to rid himself of the terrible and unforeseen side effects of his medication, Adam finds himself confronted by two of the drug company's agents (Guy Henry, George Calil). And the reality of his situation turns out to be worse than his wildest conspiratorial nightmares.

THE MAKING OF

Making 'EMR', like many films, was a battle against adversity. Made on a shoestring budget in two continents, we sought to bring together the neurosis of our times in the style of a thoroughly different British movie. There were times during this production that we raged and times when we were reduced to tears. At times we felt we were kings of the world, at others vain fools.

The project began when Danny and I were talking on the telephone in early 2003. We had struggled to get several scripts made (rather than live in the eternal "option" purgatory) and we determined that, one way or another, we would gather what resources we had and make a movie. At the time Danny lived in Los Angeles and I in London. This seemed to be a starting point, to use the backdrop of both cities. As for the story; what about the experience of a man who wakes up in a city on the other side of the world, not knowing where he is, or how he got there? Perhaps he does not even know the language. What if we saw this man's daily life in all its mundanity, and then we found him in a bathtub of blood in Mexico City? How did he get here? Was he really there at all? How would he get back home? Thus began our story that would weave together obsessive behaviour, the mystery of identity on the worldwide web, a love story and our darkest nightmares about the society in which we live.

The story, like the main characters Adam and Lily, bounced across the Internet as we wrote by email. I was invited to do some work for George Lucas and we spent some time in San Francisco. The power of the light and the city's iconic architecture plus its history as the centre of e-commerce seemed powerful reasons to set at least some of the story in the city.

As we continued to explore the script we began raising money, we wanted to be truly independent and retain control of the movie, so together with producers John Lentaigne and George Calil, we tapped up a few people we knew, each for a few grand. Not really enough to make the movie, even with the most extreme guerrilla tactics, but enough to pay the cast and crew a very small fee, hire a camera and a few lights and shout for lunch. Using the emerging HD technology we set about to shoot the spiralling pyramid of scenes that make up the movie in a meagre 18 days.

The first day of photography began with the warehouse scene, out in the wilds of Essex; having cajoled our estate agent friend and co-producer Phil Coady into persuading a client to lend an empty warehouse. However, our primary English location was to be an estate in Notting Hill where producer John Lentaigne and another pliable friend had flats. These would double for the East End flats where we imagined Adam lived. John persuaded his parents to lend us their house for the country scenes, my sister's friend let us use his hospital and suddenly two thirds of the film (or rather tape) was in the can. Then we set sail for San Francisco.

Our first stop-off in California was another friend's house where we recreated the Mexican bathroom. From there Danny managed to get a deal on an actual sound stage at Raleigh Studios for the alien spaceship. Then we headed up North to San Francisco, shooting in whatever patch of land the city would permit - the Mission, Twin Peaks, Oakland Bay - one friend lent us the use of the Dovre bar, another the club Il Pirata and the movie was shot. Exhausted but satisfied that we had somewhere, somehow produced enough tape to cut into a coherent movie we returned to England to begin the editing process.

As we struggled to form the scenes into a cohesive and yet still narratively-challenging riddle, we were offered much support and encouragement. In March of 2004, we showed an early cut of the film at the Washington DC Independent Film Festival, where it was awarded the Audience Prize. But the hard work was only beginning. It would be another five months before we had finished a cut we were proud of. Squeezing the editing in at night and on weekends, with the stalwart commitment of our team of part-time editors, we were finally able to lock picture: ten days before our first UK showing where the film was in competition at the Raindance Film Festival. But then we hit a wall with the sound, there had been some problems with the technology we were using and our friends at Molinare told us it would be impossible to finish the film in time. It was the day of my 31st birthday. I sat in a restaurant with my fiancée and was inconsolable.

But the next day, good news came - Mark Foligno, the managing director of Molinare promised to pull out all the stops and make sure that we could finish the film. Working through the night on the picture with the endlessly supportive Mine post-production, we were able to complete both picture and sound - just in time.

On the day of our screening, I sprinted down Shaftesbury Avenue with only an hour to spare and delivered the tape, which had been finished five minutes earlier to the waiting projectionist. Our micro-budget film was to be projected in a West End cinema, in competition against films that cost perhaps 40 times our budget. No one was more surprised than I when the film was awarded the prize for Best UK Feature.

But the story wasn't quite over. By this stage, we'd blown all our resources and still had not finished High Definition version of the film, fortunately Mark Foligno and the staff at Molinare pitched in and made sure that we were able to finally finish the film.

'EMR' has gone on to be selected for a range of prestigious film festivals from Korea to Germany, San Francisco to Oklahoma. It was truly a joint effort by all involved, from our long-suffering leading man Adam Leese, who we wrote the film for, to our editors, cameramen and all other who have worked on the film. That it was made at all seems a miracle, but is a statement that challenging independent filmmaking is possible in Britain.

JAMES ERSKINE, Director

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