

The Sherlock Holmes 2 Interview: A Conversation With The Director Guy Ritchie

Written by Kam Williams

Monday, 02 January 2012 19:28



Born in London on September 10th, 1968, Guy Ritchie got his start in the UK film industry in 1993 as a runner on Wardour Street. He worked his way up the ranks by shooting music videos and TV commercials before making his directorial debut with "Lock, Stock & Two Smoking Barrels."

The movie became one of the UK's biggest box office hits and received a BAFTA Award nomination for Best British Film. Ritchie followed that offering with "Snatch" which featured an ensemble cast including Brad Pitt, Dennis Farina, Jason Statham, Vinnie Jones, Alan Ford, Lennie James and Benicio Del Toro.

After "Snatch," Guy directed a remake of the 1974 Lena Wertmuller classic "Swept Away," starring Madonna, who was still his wife at the time. Next, he continued to explore new challenges with the edgy crime thriller "Revolver" with Jason Statham, Ray Liotta, Vincent Pastore and Outkast's Andre Benjamin.

More recently, Ritchie directed "RocknRolla" and the smash hit "Sherlock Holmes" which opened on Christmas Day 2009 and went on to gross more than \$516 million worldwide. Successfully bringing Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's famed detective to the big screen for a new generation, the film starred Robert Downey Jr. in the title role and Jude Law as Dr. Watson. Here, he talks about that picture's new sequel, " Sherlock Holmes 2: A Game of Shadows."

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KAM WILLIAMS TALKS TO GUY RITCHIE:

Kam Williams: Hi Guy, thanks for the interview.

Guy Ritchie: Thank you, Kam.

KW: Editor/legist Patricia Turner [of Mega Diversities] asks: What intrigued you enough about Sherlock Holmes to make movies about the character?

GR: Ever since I was a child, I've always been fascinated with Sherlock Holmes.

KW: Rudy Lewis asks: Why is your Sherlock Holmes more macho, more sexual and more humorous than the stiff-lipped Basil Rathbone?

GR: Because I truly believe that if Sir Arthur Conan Doyle were alive today, this is how he'd prefer to have the character presented.

KW: Judyth Piazza would like to know a little about Professor Moriarty, the villain in A Game of Shadows.

GR: True to Conan Doyle, Moriarty keeps himself distanced from his crimes, which is why Holmes has such a hard time linking him to the crimes. But it's really the size of Moriarty's ambitions that make him unique. We've tried to stick to the idea that he's an academic who hides away at a university, and who seems like the least likely villain imaginable.

KW: Harriet Pakula Teweles asks: How would you characterize the cat-and-mouse relationship of Holmes and Moriarty?

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GR: Because they're intellectual equals to a degree, the game is stimulating to them both. They almost need one another. Holmes needs Moriarty as much as Moriarty needs Holmes. That's authentic to the books.

KW: How did you go about casting Moriarty?

GR: It was a challenge, because Moriarty is arguably the most famous super-villain in terms of literature. But I'm very fond of Jared [Harris] who seemed perfect for the role, and I believe was the right man for the job.

KW: Attorney Bernadette Beekman says: The trailer looks fabulous! I cannot stand watching the commercials much longer. The anticipation is almost painful. The second film looks like it has more spectacular effects than the first. Did you feel any pressure to outdo the original in order to meet audience expectations? Did that make you feel intimidated?

GR: No, I was enthusiastic, but with some reticence. Since we'd introduced a certain amount of technical toytory in the first one, I assumed that the audience was expecting more on this one. So, we had to come up with some sensational ideas for the action and up the stakes in general. In that respect, I had my work cut out for me.

KW: Larry Greenberg says: I loved your first Sherlock Holmes and I can't wait to see A Game of Shadows. He asks: Was it hard recreating the chemistry between Robert Downey, Jr. and Jude Law this time around?

GR: Well, now that they've slept with each other, they've got a lot of issues out of the way. [Laughs] No, obviously their relationship is fundamental since Holmes and Watson's relationship is the spine of the entire narrative.

You care a great deal about their characters. Robert and Jude sorted it out between themselves. They're both very creative and my job really is to harness that energy and to calm them down when they're about to swap spit and take long walks in the moonlight. Their

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characters are butch guys who need a feminine edge.

KW: Bernadette also asks: What's the difference between working with American versus European actors?

GR: None, really. Great actors are great actors.



KW: Tell me how you came to cast Noomi Rapace and Stephen Fry?

GR: Noomi felt fresh. And she's passionate and ambitious in all the right ways. She's a tour de force. Every time I was trying to have a discussion with the actors, she'd be pulling out a blade out from underneath her gypsy skirt and menace someone saying, "Maybe I should slit your throat." So, I had to keep a close eye on her. [Chuckles] And Stephen is a very capable, intellectual heavyweight who could've played Sherlock or Moriarty. He's very intimidating, until he takes his clothes off. In fact, even then, he's quite intimidating. [Laugh Out Loud]

KW: Film school student, Jamaal Green, asks: From concept to completion, how long did it take to get Lock, Stock and Two Smoking Barrels made?

GR: About four years. Finding the financing was really hard. We nearly gave up because we had the money pulled from us a few days before shooting. But we got it together eventually.

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KW: Kate Newell says: I loved Lock, Stock and Two Smoking Barrels. Do you have any plans to channel your inner hoodlum again?

GR: I'm definitely open to it. Lionel [producer Lionel Wigram] and I have a few movies in the pipeline, but exactly in which order they will manifest, I'm not sure.

KW: Reverend Florine Thompson asks: How important is spirituality to you and what role does it play in your life?

GR: It's very important to me, but I don't care to elaborate because it means different things to different people.

KW: Is there any question no one ever asks you, that you wish someone would?

GR: No.

KW: What is your guiltiest pleasure?

GR: I'm not telling.

KW: What is one of your favorite dishes to cook?

GR: Chilean sea bass.

KW: What advice do you have for anyone who wants to follow in your footsteps?

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GR: Don't try to follow in my footsteps. Forge your own path.

KW: Thanks again for the time, Guy, and best of luck with the film.

GR: My pleasure.

Guy Ritchie's filmography:

1995 *The Hard Case*

1998 *Lock, Stock and Two Smoking Barrels*

2000 *Snatch*

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2001 *The Hire: Star*

2002 *Swept Away*

2005 *Revolver*

2007 *Suspect*

2008 *RocknRolla*

2009 *Sherlock Holmes*

2011 *Sherlock Holmes: A Game of Shadows*

2013 *Sherlock Holmes 3*

About the author of this interview: Kam Williams is a syndicated film and book critic who writes for 100+ publications around the U.S., Europe, Asia, Africa, Canada, and the Caribbean. He is a member of the New York Film Critics Online, the NAACP Image Awards Nominating Committee, and Rotten Tomatoes. He is a contributor to TheLoop21.com, eurweb.com and so on. He is also a columnist for

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erudite Attorney who holds a BA in Black Studies from Cornell University, an MA in English from Brown University, an M.B.A. from The Wharton School, and a J.D. from Boston University. Kam Williams can be reached at

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