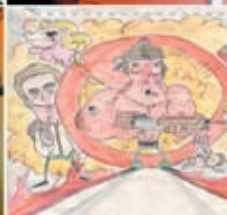
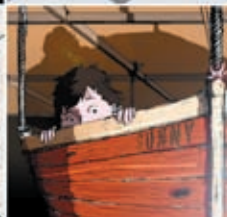


SON OF RAMBOW

Written & Directed by Garth Jennings











Reason Pictures/Good and Celluloid Dreams present
A Hammer & Tongs film



Sundance Film Festival 2007 – Premieres
SON OF RAMBOW

Directed by Garth Jennings

UK/France – 2007 – color - 94min – 2.35 - Dolby SRD

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SYNOPSIS

Will Proudfoot is the eldest son of a Plymouth Brethren family. The Brethren regard themselves as God's 'chosen ones' and their strict moral code means that Will has never been allowed to mix with other people, listen to music or watch TV. That is until he finds himself caught up in the extraordinary world of Lee Carter, the school terror. Carter exposes Will to a pirate copy of Rambo: First Blood and from that moment, Will's mind is blown wide open and he's easily convinced to be the stuntman in Lee Carter's diabolical home movie. Will's imaginative little brain is not only given the chance to flourish in the world of film making, but is also handy when it comes to dreaming up elaborate schemes to keep his partnership with Lee Carter a secret from the Brethren community.

Will and Carter's ambitions mean that making their film is a rollercoaster ride that will eventually lead to true friendship. They start to make a name for themselves at school as movie makers but when popularity descends in the form of Pied Piper-esque French exchange student, Didier Revol, their unique friendship and their precious film are pushed, quite literally, to breaking point...







Garth Jennings on Son of Rambo

Origins

The story of Son of Rambo started as a bundle of scribbled notes I had made of all the great stuff I remembered from growing up. The most intriguing characters and events often revolved around the home movies I used to make with my friends. We had seen a pirate video copy of First Blood and it blew our tiny minds! Up to this point, we had all played around in the forest and now here was this amazing man who could leap from a cliff, sew up a cut in his own arm and take on a whole army just by using bits of the forest around him! The context of the Vietnam war went right over our heads, all we saw was a man who could take on the world with his bare hands.

We instantly set about making our own Rambo movies and even joined the local army cadet force to add to our 'combat skills'. Our stories, stunts and special effects were outrageous in both ambition and stupidity but we thought our films were fantastic. Trying to capture our ludicrously ambitious attitudes and those extraordinary friendships we made at that age was an extremely exciting prospect for Nick and I. In fact, the hardest part was working out what not to put in.

Very early on during the writing process it became clear that Son of Rambo wasn't going to be completely autobiographical or a gritty slice of real life. Instead we opted to make the film in a much more romantic way – or rather how we remembered life seeming to us as kids. Days were long and sunny, forests were huge and exciting,







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school corridors were endless and French exchange kids seemed like they were from another planet. It also became apparent that my own life had been far too pleasant and easy to be of any real interest to anyone and it was difficult to capture the effect that Rambo had on a normal kid, so we moved the story to my neighbours who were a Plymouth Brethren family. Their strict moral code and lack of contact with the world around them served as a much more curious place for our imaginative hero to emerge from. In fact, our hero's first experience of any moving image is watching First Blood and this was a much better way to capture what it felt like to us at that age.

Nick and I took these notes and spent the best part of 6 years turning them into a script that we felt captured just the right feeling. It is true to say that we share the same ambition as the kids in the film and that their movie-making process echoes some of the highs and lows you can experience as an adult filmmaker.

I don't want to encourage kids to play in dangerous places or put their lives at risk in any way but these brushes with disaster and stupid stunts are seen from the point of view of the characters, and they do not consider the consequences until it is too late. Like the kids in 'Stand By Me' firing guns, dodging a train and smoking, the characters in Son of Rambow find themselves in all kinds of scenarios that they think are exciting, even cool, but no adult would ever condone. When I look back I shudder at some of the dangerous things we did as kids but we were naive and it all seemed like such a good idea at that time.

The Plymouth Brethren

I grew up next door to a Plymouth Brethren family but as they keep themselves to themselves, I never got to know them personally. They would preach in the high street on a Saturday and have their religious meetings in a private location. They followed a strict moral code that avoided anything that could be described as a distraction from serving God. So no TV, no radio, no music, no fiction, no fancy clothes, all women must wear headscarves and are not allowed to cut their hair (except to get rid of the dead ends). The Brethren children used to attend the same schools as the rest of us but had to leave at 16 years old. One of my relatives now teaches at an exclusive Brethren school and he helped me fill in any details with background.

As we started to write the script we researched the Brethren community a lot more and interviewed some ex-members. Due to its fairly tough approach to members who break with the rules, there are quite a lot of people who leave the Brethren. This is called Shutting Up. If you are Shut Up you are out for good and there can be no contact with the Brethren again, not even your own family members. In our story, the hero's mother is having to deal with her grief, her son's behaviour and the threat of being Shut Up. All of her dilemmas are based on our interviews with ex-members as well as feelings I imagine most parents would have when they feel like they have lost control.





England in the 80's

We grew up in the 80's and it seemed natural to keep the story in this period for all kinds of reasons - for instance - if we set the story in the present day it would be far too easy for the heroes to make their movie with great effects etc. on a Mac. The video camera was primitive compared to today's gear but it was the first time anyone could have a go without any of the fuss you have to go through using film. We wanted to portray the excitement we found in this 'wonder gadget' even though the camera's were heavier than our bicycles and the batteries only lasted a ludicrously short time.

I liked how clunky everything was back then and how it forced you to be inventive. I'm not entirely sure to what degree we were influenced by the video revolution but unfortunately there wasn't a cinema near us so we watched a lot of videos instead.

Influences

This is going to sound very strange but although we were influenced by all kinds of movies we watched while growing up (E.T, Stand By Me, Rambo, Harold & Maude etc) the one that most influenced our script was "Midnight Cowboy" (I told you it was going to sound strange!) We saw comparisons in the unlikely friendship between the Dustin Hoffman and Jon Voight characters. The sixth form common room scene, for instance, was directly inspired by the psychedelic party scene where Ratso ends up alone on the stairs while Joe Buck is the belle of the ball.

The 6th form common room

The 6th form common room was forbidden to anyone but 6th formers (even teachers) so until you actually reached that age it was a place that seemed exciting and exotic. Of course, the reality was hugely disappointing so the scene in our movie is based on what we imagined happened behind those closed doors. This is also a scene where the rift in Carter and Will's friendship gets a little deeper so we used all of the temptations that were around at that time to illustrate this. Space Dust Candy, scented erasers, infectious synth pop music, lick-on tattoos and the heady fashions of the time were all designed to entice Will away from Carter.



Lee Carter & Will Proudfoot

Carter's character is an amalgamation of lots of people I knew growing up, but one kid in particular who lived on my street. I have never met a braver, crazier or more loyal little kid than him. Most of my friends at that time had older brothers whom they regarded as heroes which was odd because whenever they were together, the older brother would normally be clouting them round the ear or embarrassing them in front of their friends. I think the choice to have these two boys come from unconventional backgrounds came simply from the fact that when we were young, we made more unlikely friendships because we were far less complicated. You only had to like the same stuff to be best mates. In this story, it's about how two kids who become





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friends just by making a film together. It doesn't matter that they don't have anything else in common; they both enjoy making the film and being together.

Son of Rambow is really a love story, except with two little kids. But it's also a very romantic view of growing up too. It seemed natural for the boys' friendship to be born out of the film making process and then for their characters to sort of rub off on each other.

Casting the film took a long time and we met with hundreds of excellent young actors, but as soon as we met Will Poulter and Bill Milner it all fell into place. They were so perfect for the roles in every way that all we had to do was find them some costumes and give them a call sheet. And you couldn't hope to meet two more lovely little people on set each day. They had never acted in film or TV before but they were naturals and learned to hit their marks and play their parts as if it was an exciting game. Every day would involve some kind of stunt or exciting action and I know that if I had been their age I would have been in heaven. They both became the best of friends during the shoot and still stay in touch despite living miles apart.









Hammer & Tongs

The transition from videos and commercials to feature films has been an exciting one for Nick and I. Directing and producing *The Hitchhikers Guide To The Galaxy* as our first film was certainly a leap in at the deep end but we found it much like our previous shoots, only instead of a 3 day shoot it was 17 weeks! But the stuff with cameras and lights and people fiddling with bits of sticky tape are all still the same. 'Hitchhikers' ended up looking and playing the way we wanted it to and although I haven't watched it since it was released in 2005, I remember being really pleased with the result. We did learn a lot from this experience though, mainly that we can do a lot more with a lot less.

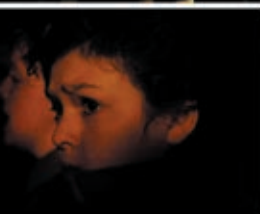
Making *Son of Rambow* has been a triumph for us not just as a final movie that we are extremely proud of but also in the way we made it. I don't think I have ever enjoyed myself this much on a shoot and we have certainly never captured what we envisaged so closely before.

Nick and I work very closely on everything. To be honest, we wrote the script together but I get the credit because I did all the typing! It's only as we approach production that our roles become more official or defined. We're both very hands-on type of people. We can't bear sitting behind a monitor while someone else does something we could easily do ourselves (in fact, we never had a monitor or playback on set.) For example, Nick was the safety diver when we shot the scene when Will is drowning in the lake. He was out there all day long in a wet suit – never happier! And when we need someone to puppeteer scarecrows or hurl objects accurately into camera – I'm your man! We have been friends for so long now that I don't even think about how we work but to other people on our crew I suppose we appear to know what we're doing and there is very little fuss so we keep going.

BIOGRAPHY HAMMER & TONGS

Hammer & Tongs (GARTH JENNINGS - director & NICK GOLDSMITH - producer) Garth Jennings made his feature directorial debut with THE HITCHHIKER'S GUIDE TO THE GALAXY. Since 1999, Jennings has been partnered with producer Nick Goldsmith in the innovative music video production and television commercial company Hammer & Tongs. Thirteen years and a ton of videos later, Hammer & Tongs is still going strong. They are best known for music videos that include "Coffee & TV" for Blur, "Right Here, Right Now" for Fatboy Slim, "Pumping on Your Stereo" for Supergrass and "Imitation of Life" for REM. Along they way, they've put Jarvis Cocker on a stairlift, Joan Collins in a bathtub and picked up countless awards.
www.tongsville.com









Cast

Bill Milner
Will Poulter
Jules Sitruk
Jessica Stevenson
Neil Dudgeon
Anna Wing
Ed Westwick
Adam Godley
Adam Buxton
Eric Sykes
Tallulah Evans
Charlie Thrift
Amy Brooks
James Clarke
Sam Kubrick-Finney
Emile Chesnais
Paul Ritter

Will Proudfoot
Lee Carter
Didier
Mary Proudfoot
Joshua
Grandma
Lawrence
Brethren Leader
Science Teacher
Frank
Jess Proudfoot
Duncan
Tina
Shaun
Danny
French Teacher
Geography Teacher



Crew

Written & Directed by

Produced by

Executive Producers

Associate Producer

In association with

Director of photography

Production Designer

Editor

Sound

Music by

Art Director

Costume Designer

Make Up Designer

Production Company

Post Production

Audio Post Production

GARTH JENNINGS

NICK GOLDSMITH, Hammer and Tongs

HENGAMEH PANAHİ Celluloid Dreams

BRISTOL BAUGHAN and BENJAMIN GOLDBIRSH, Reason Pictures/GOOD

CHRISTIAN BAUTE, Celluloid Dreams Productions

MICHEL REILHAC, Arte France Cinéma

PETER NADERMANN, Network Movie

MEINOLF ZURHORST, ZDF/Arte

Soficinema 2 & 3

JESS HALL

JOEL COLLINS

DOMINIC LEUNG

GUILLAUME SCIAMA, JOSEPH PARK-STRACEY, OLIVIER DÔ HÙU

JOBY TALBOT

ROBYN PAIBA

HARRIET CAWLEY

NATHALIE TISSIER

HAMMER AND TONGS

GLASSWORKS/SCRATCH PRODUCTIONS and DUBOIS

SIS



HAMMER&TONGS



GOOD

the directors label



NETWORK
MOVIE

arte

