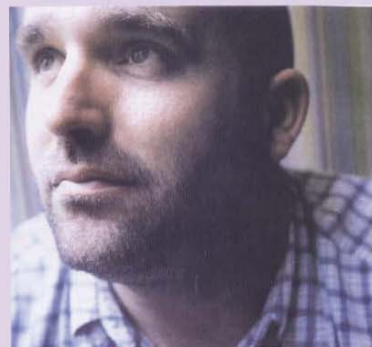


Dead Man's Shoes

## The Shane & Mark Show



Director of Dead Man's Shoes Shane Meadows

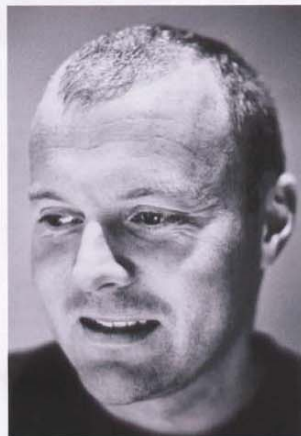
Anyone who attended the Reel Deal will know how inspiring Shane Meadows and Mark Herbert were. Here we have transcribed their talk to delegates for anyone that missed it.

MH: I'd seen these films that Paddy and Shane had shot in a day there was about four I saw and I was amazed at the quality. Obviously it was Paddy Considine so you would get that, but there were qualities that you don't get in 10 minute shorts. At the end of watching these four short films I said to Shane I think we could actually do a feature. You, Paddy, an idea, a character. Let's go! Why don't we sent ourselves a goal to start filming and what ever I can raise in the next... we met in Feb. Feb.22, so this was a week later.

Paddy was available for just over a month for the whole of May, because he was doing My Summer Of Love. We set ourselves this task of making a film then. Whether on Mini DV, Super 8 we just didn't know. I said what ever I could raise in the next week that's what we will go with, and that's the way Dead Man's Shoes came off. One of the things I got trapped in as a producer was this waiting for funding scenario, where you wait and wait for

someone else to tell you when to go. So I said if I can 50 grand, we'll make a feature for 50 grand. We'll keep the rights we'll see what we'll do back end. Luckily we managed to raise a bit more than that. The important thing to me as a producer was that thing of moving and taking a step forward and not waiting for anybody to tell us when to do it. I guess the shorts inspired it. Literally went out raised the money and we set off on a journey. To make a film, to get people to trust in Paddy and Shane.

This was a huge stepping-stone in my career as a producer because I'd always been waiting for someone to say you can go and make the film now. This is no excuse anymore for people not to make a feature film. Even if you make something not a lot of people see, it's about making something. At the end of the day we are filmmakers you get trapped in this development hell of writers. What I learnt from this is you don't need to know everything when you set off on the journey, you discover stuff.

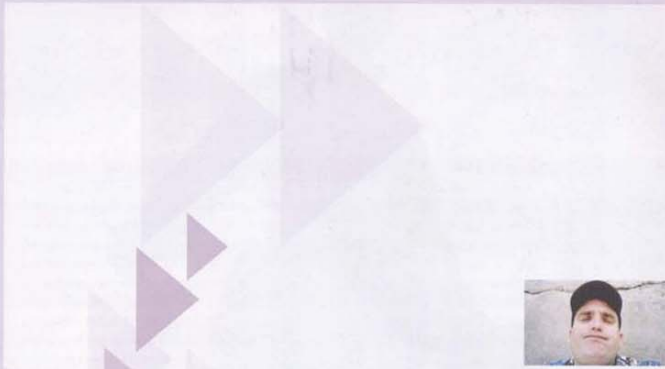


Producer of Dead Man's Shoes Mark Herbert

SM: The position I found myself in was I'd made Once Upon A Time In The Midlands and it was the highest budget I'd had, by far the biggest cast and the longest development time. I remember Paddy had been in America making In America with Jim Sheridan and I showed a copy of the film, I'd really been struggling with the film in the edit and Paddy said he thought it was a heap of shit. Me and Paddy have always had that type of relationship. Doctor Sleep was recently on BBC 2 a role he thought he'd buried, so I rang him up to congratulate him on his heap of shit.

We bat it back and forwards, we have always been very honest with each other and I think Paddy... When you show something to someone who you respect you end up thinking the same thing yourself. I don't think it's the worst film in the world, but in terms of what I set out to make... There's a short film on the Once Upon In The Midlands DVD called Three Tears For Jimmy Prophet that was the inspiration for the story that was supposed to lead on from. And what had happened from having all this money and having these stars and Mark's saying about waiting for the financiers to say when I could go. I ended up developing the script for 12 months and over that 12 month period I developed all the great ideas out of the script. I've sat round tables having conversations with people who have no idea what I was about. It was a huge learning curve and when I got to the end of that I was in a position that I felt I had betrayed what I had done with those short films.

From the first shorts I made I had been able to retain it somehow with 24:7 and Romeo Brass and I fell into that trap of I had a million for 24:7, 2.5 for Romeo Brass and thinking you always have to improve on your budgets. So when Mark came around I had no idea what I was going to do. When I showed Mark these shorts, and he was the first person who actually said there is a technique you're using there, because he knew I wasn't happy with the previous film. From a directors standpoint it's very easy to pretend that you can... if you're on something for 12 months it's virtually impossible to not listen to other people because when you're running things



around in your head the whole thing about relationships with people and that I've got with Mark is one of trust.

You do have to put your trust in the people that are around you and sometimes you can't see the wood for the trees and if the people around you are not the right people it can take a lot of the good out of what you're doing. I've never worked with the same producer twice until I worked with Mark. Now we've made Dead Man's Shoes I feel I formed a relationship, and at that point Mark hadn't made a feature film, I was in the position where I could of gone out and worked with many different producers in this country, but I realised it was a matter of getting the right personality to work with me and someone that believed in that process.

It was Mark and Paddy that got me off my arse and said you've got to take a step backwards rather than thinking you have to always take one forwards. Now having made Dead Man's Shoes, we're looking to making the next one in High Definition. I embraced technology 10 years ago, making film on Hi8 that went out and won awards and then I got into that security that 35mm gives you. I was able to play playstation while they set up the lights, on Dead Man's Shoes there was no where to even sit, we were on set, we were working, there wasn't a single gap. This is what bought me back to life, making the lowest budget feature film I've made to date has turned out to be the most rewarding and has given me the most freedom.

MH: One of the things we found, both being of a similar age, there is this TV and film snobbery. You have got some great talent in TV and you have pretty naff talent as well. You also have naff and great in film. I never bought this TV/Film snobbery; there is just this need to work. If you look at the dramas that ITV are producing they're better than most British features.

That was our attitude: how people can you get in a transit - that's our crew. We had one light. Everything was very practical. Also this is something Shane and I both believe, if you give people a set up, an example is we have an art director, we made him production designer and he was the art director on Crossroads, but he just got the characters. We met people who worked on Full Metal Jacket and they didn't. You know you are going to get 110%, sometimes they may do things wrong but you

knew come midnight on the shoot they would be there working away, and they where. Everyone on this film had that set up which created an energy and momentum. When I used to be a line producer on short



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films I was always annoyed with sparks or stunt men standing around talking about being on the latest Bond film and how crap your food is compared to the Bond film, and they are all wearing these big jackets with Bond of Harry Potter written on them and on those films their isn't an energy like we had on Dead Man's Shoes. There was one guy that was going to get killed straight away, but he came and did some scenes and Shane saw this before anyone else of how funny he was and said I don't think we can kill him first, we're going to have to kill someone else first and we should keep him and kill him at the end. And we were like... OK, let's do that. Shane is such an instinctive filmmaker and has shown me that there is so many ways of making a film. There is no right and wrong. Because of Shane's way of directing we decided we would spend time in the rehearsals.

SM: The thing with actors is... it's almost like a superstitious thing. When I first started making short films I'd wanted to be an actor myself, but when I stood up in front of a teacher in Drama College I felt these nerves and tension. I went from what I thought was Al Pacino to Benny Hill. I froze up; I couldn't perform in front of people. I had this incredible knack of being around friends I was comfortable with and when I was in the car on my own I could run off some brilliant monologues.

That's how Where's The Money Ronnie? Was born out of. Where's The Money Ronnie? Is basically a series of interviews, and I shot mine on my own. I was always baffled why I could do it. I started to realise I was using people up the street, single mum next door, unemployed family up the road. Because I understood that fear factor, which I had to make myself relaxed so I gave that to other people, and that's something that has stayed with me on the films. I truly believe from Mark's side giving the crew a step up was massively beneficial, to



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using people who have never been on a film before and telling them that you believe in them. It's like using Dustin Hoffman when he's come off a big film and he's going onto another big film you don't end up getting the commitment you get off someone who thinks that's the last job they're ever get.

Paddy and I wrote a 30-40 page document, and this is the key thing for me. I down as a writer and a director, but I detest writing, I hate it, because I can write a film with four or five people without having to write anything. I can say I have this idea for a scene and then I can start improvising and the actors and I write a scene together that way.

The problem is that the industry was telling me that there has to be this long drawn out process so when you did get on set and say I don't want to kill this guy I want to kill this guy. On my other films they would say, well he's going off to do this. You're trapped. So what we did for this film was buy everyone out for the whole film and then everyone had to earn their screen time. That philosophy of saying to everyone you might be in it for a day, you might be in it for four weeks, we don't even know what the story is, was really exciting. It

took a leap of faith by people like Filmfour but they went with it and we have set a nice precedent for future projects.

what the story is, was really exciting. It took a leap of faith by people like Filmfour but they went with it and we have set a nice precedent for future projects.

MH: One of the main things on this. Is that technology has moved on so much. Final Cut Pro has just been a godsend. Shane had cut things on it before, we just thought to buy an edit suite for 3 grand and not have a facility that was not haemorrhaging money throughout the production meant because this film was constructed so quickly, the edit took so long.

Shane was editing for over 9 months. What was great about it was there wasn't this dripping cash. Everyone had done it for a fee, which meant we could have the time for the film to find itself. There were things that were reshot 6 months into the edit. Because of all this it means to make a low budget film now would cost 500,000 as opposed to 2.5 million a couple of years ago.

Dead Man's Shoes will be released on DVD on the 21st March, 2005