



## W H E N D A V I D M E T

David Yates (above) joined the Harry Potter

franchise on the fifth instalment and is now seeing it

through to the bittersweet end with Deathly Hallows

Parts I and II. It's been an extraordinary journey –

one he now shares with Total Film... WORDS **DAVID YATES**

If you've ever walked up a mountain, you know you don't look at the top, you only look at each step it takes to get to the top. Although we have a massive schedule on *Deathly Hallows*, I refuse to count the days. I'm just enjoying each one – if I thought too much about the number of months we're filming, my knees would buckle.

It's surprisingly calm on set but also exciting. We all know this is our last opportunity to play in this world. There's a real sense of closure approaching, which adds an interesting atmosphere. We all want the final two films to be special.

It's funny now to look back at the beginning. When I was first approached

about directing the fifth film, I was a wee bit arrogant. My first response was, "Why would I want to do that? Somebody has already created that world." One of the most exciting things on everything I've done is coming in at the ground floor. It's like designing a house: you get to put everything where it should be. But my agent said, "You'd be nutty to walk away from this." So I read the first book and I just fell in love with this glorious world.

The pitching process wasn't blatant. I was developing another film for Warner Bros and I'd have the odd script meeting with them. I realised over that period that they were sizing me up discreetly for

other things. They liked my work: they'd seen *Sex Traffic* and *State Of Play*. I met [producer] David Heyman twice before an actual offer came. He raised *Harry Potter* as a world and how much fun it was to work in. Then I had an afternoon where he said, "Come and talk to me about the fifth book, come and pitch it to me."

I turned up at his office and did the worst pitch in history. About halfway through, I said, "This isn't really working." I got into the taxi to leave and thought, "I blew that one!" On the way to the station, my phone rang and it was David. He said, "Listen mate, don't worry about it." I was about to meet the Warner Bros execs and



# HARRY



**Potter-ing about:** (clockwise, from left) Yates and Daniel Radcliffe on the set of *HBP*; with Jim Broadbent as Prof Slughorn; Yates and Radcliffe with Emma Watson and Rupert Grint.

he said, "Just be yourself." I knew there were other directors in the frame, I knew they were meeting Jean-Pierre Jeunet, who I adore. But somehow it all fell into place. So even though I delivered the worst pitch in history they still gave me the job!

I first met Dan on the set of *Goblet Of Fire*. He was on a broom at the time and he came down off it to say hello. They're all such a nice bunch of people. We all clicked. There's a great sensibility here, which is very healthy. It's about respecting and encouraging people; it's about the quality of the work. It's as far removed from that machismo world of über filmmaking as you can get, which is also very healthy.

Everything I've made has been run along this same ideology: to inspire work out of people rather than shout it out of them.

## GROWING PAINS

I came along when the franchise was just starting to grow up a bit and we're growing it up more and more on each film. There's a bipolarity to what I do. I love truth, I love reality. But equally I'm comfortable with expressive and expressionistic approaches to storytelling. I think Warner Bros have responded to the fact that I've brought a certain Britishness to the franchise.

They like what I've done with the actors too. On *Deathly Hallows*, I've been getting

some terrific emails from the studio saying how impressed they are with what we're doing. But I've hit a point in the stories where they're getting more nuanced and I'm benefiting from it. To a certain extent in *Half-Blood Prince*, but even more so in *Deathly Hallows*, we're doing some dark, interesting stuff that feels very adult.

*Deathly Hallows* is a powerful spiritual journey for Harry, who realises what his ultimate destiny is. I'm trying to give both parts a slightly different swing. *Part One* is dynamic, adrenalised, visceral and takes place on the road – we never go anywhere near Hogwarts. It's a refugee story about these three kids cut off from everything >>



Magic moments: (clockwise, from right) Broadbent and Radcliffe; Harry and Luna (Evanna Lynch); Harry and Dumbledore (Michael Gambon).



**'IT'S HARD TO SWITCH OFF**

**WHEN YOU HAVE THIS**

**WORLD IN YOUR HEAD.**

**IT'S TOO INTOXICATING,**

**TOO ADDICTIVE'**



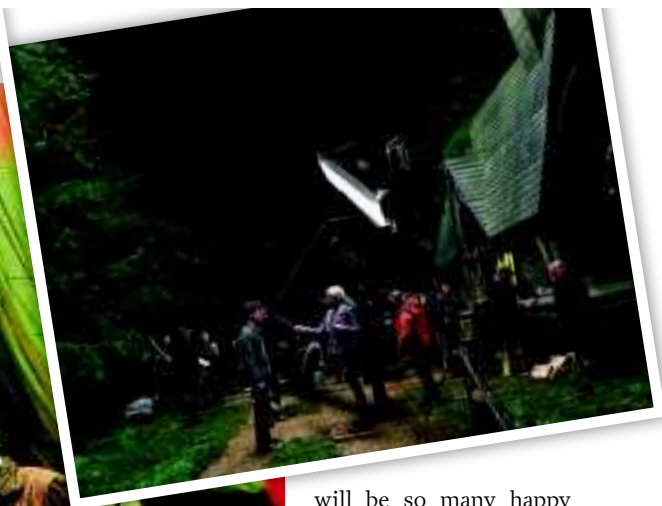
they know and everybody they love, being pursued relentlessly by people who want to murder them. It's a gritty road movie within this magical universe.

*Part Two* is more elegiac and operatic. It's where the heart and soul of the story comes home to roost. They're as different as *Order Of The Phoenix* is to *Half-Blood Prince*, which is quite European in flavour. The world is rich enough to allow you to go exploring in how you present it.

When they asked me back for *Deathly Hallows*, there were about 30 seconds where I wasn't sure I wanted to do it. But you just go for it, because how many directors get the opportunity to a) conclude a franchise like this, and b) direct half of it? When I get tired, I just remember that these movies don't come along every day. Equally, when you're in the middle of a 14-month shoot, the truth is the end is like a lifeboat and you go, "We've not far to swim now!"

It is tough pacing yourself on these productions. I'm rubbish at looking after myself. I'm like a teenager with a car: my body is the car and I drive it too hard and then wonder why I feel loopy. But it's the hardest thing to switch off when you have this world in your head. You can't stop thinking about it — it's too intoxicating, too addictive. Sometimes it wakes me up in the middle of the night, but it's not anxiety, it's over-excitement. It's thinking, "Tomorrow we're shooting the scene in the Room of Requirement where Harry, Ron and Hermione are being chased by Fiendfyre and it's a very cool scene."

It's not just making them either, it's the responsibility of bringing them into the world and knowing that there's a global audience waiting to go, "We're glad you left that in, but why did you leave that out?" There's a subliminal pressure all of the time. But as tough as it's been, there



will be so many happy memories of the people I've worked with. Rupert Grint's corpsing [*cracking up during a take*] will stay with me for the rest of my life. He's a terrible corpsor and he always tries to hide it. I was doing a shot today where he walks towards Emma — he started to go before he was within seven feet of her and then tried to hide behind her so we couldn't see. It's so sweet. We're looking into how to achieve ageing up Dan, Emma and Rupert for the final epilogue in a really

interesting way — seeing Dan with a bit of a paunch will be great!

## FOND FAREWELLS

It will be a poignant moment when we call that last take and I say, "Check the gate" for the last time on this extraordinary run of films. I'm certainly going to miss it when it's over. There are people involved in these movies, like David Heyman and some of the creative team, who have been on them with Dan, Rupert and Emma from the get-go. For them it's going to be difficult to say goodbye. In the years these movies have been made, children have been born, people have died, people have got married — the whole run of human life has flown through this studio and suddenly it's all going to stop. It will be very strange.

After it's all over, I'm going to take six months off and do some travelling. I need to get out into the real world and just connect again. As a storyteller, you need to experience life. After that, I've got a few projects that I'm developing. My plan is to chequerboard work where I do a low-budget film and then follow it with a big blockbuster. I find it exhilarating making films on an industrial scale but I can't wait to work on a small-scale film where I go out and shoot with a crew of five. My career ambition will be to switch from one to the other. I want to shake it up. **TF**

***Harry Potter And The Half-Blood Prince* opens on 15 July and will be reviewed in a future issue of *Total Film*. For the latest features and video, check out [tinyurl.com/tfpotter](http://tinyurl.com/tfpotter)**

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# UNSEEN POTTER

Stuff from the books that never made it into the films...



## PROFESSOR CUTHBERT BINNS SHOULD HAVE BEEN IN PS – OOTP

The only ghost teaching at Hogwarts – he died in his sleep one day years ago, didn't notice and just carried on turning up to take his lessons. The students wish he hadn't though: he's legendarily dull, making his History Of Magic lessons a war of attrition. The only excitement in his classroom is when he drifts in through the blackboard. Dad's Army's private Godfrey would have been perfect for the role. And he's dead – that's Method for you.

## PEEVES THE POLTERGEIST SHOULD HAVE BEEN IN PS – OOTP

Pesky prankster Peeves is an anarchic poltergeist whose only goal is to create chaos. His sworn enemy is Argus Filch, the school caretaker, who has to clear up after him. Rumours that he could be the ghost of Jeremy Beadle remain unfounded. Rik Mayall filmed a scene as Peeves for *Philosopher's Stone*, but it ended up being chopped out.



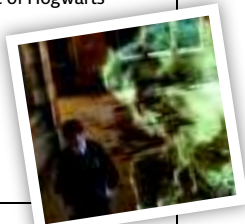
## BORGIN AND BURKE'S SHOULD HAVE BEEN IN COS

Tenpole Tudor front man (and *Crystal Maze* presenter) Ed Tudor Pole did film a scene as Mr Borgin – proprietor of the shop in Knockturn Alley that buys and sells objects of dark magic and other dangerous artefacts – for *Chamber Of Secrets*, but it was cut. Despite the character appearing in the book of *Half-Blood Prince*, there's no sign of Mr Tudor in the cast list. Time for that Tenpole reunion tour, perhaps?



## SIR NICHOLAS DELANEY-PODMORE SHOULD HAVE BEEN IN COS

This deceased Sir is the head of the Headless Hunt – a group for spirits that has a zero-tolerance entrance requirement: you're barred if your head isn't completely cleaved from your body. Such rules are much to the annoyance of Hogwarts spook Nearly Headless Nick (John Cleese in the film), whose bouncing bonce clings on by a sinew.



## THE ORIGINS OF THE MARAUDER'S MAP SHOULD HAVE BEEN IN POA

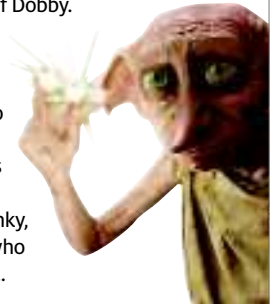
If you've never read the book, the magic map given to Harry in *Prisoner Of Azkaban* seems to have 'lazy plot device' written all over it. In fact, what it actually had written all over it is 'Messrs Mooney, Wormtail, Padfoot and Prongs', which is a clue as to its origins and a whole subplot about Harry's dad, Sirius Black and the other map creators being animagii – those with the ability to turn into animals.



## SPEW

SHOULD HAVE BEEN IN GOF AND OOTP

By *Goblet Of Fire*, huge swathes of the novels had to be ejected, but few mourned the loss of a subplot that would have seen the return of irritating house elf Dobby. Hermione forms SPEW – Society for the Promotion of Elfish Welfare – to champion the rights of house elves. She's spurred on by the maltreatment of Winky, a female house elf who became an alcoholic.



## RON'S QUIDDITCH EXPLOITS SHOULD HAVE BEEN IN OOTP

Quidditch was a casualty in *Order Of The Phoenix*. An entire comedy subplot about Ron becoming the unlikely Keeper in the Gryffindor Quidditch team was completely excised, to the disappointment of Rupert Grint, who'd been looking forward to some broom action. This meant we were also sadly robbed of the Slytherins' terrace chant: "Weasley cannot save a thing, He can't block a single ring." No innuendo in that. Not at all.



## LUDO BAGMAN

SHOULD HAVE BEEN IN GOF  
A smooth-talking rogue who manages to charm his way into the role of Minister of Magical Games and Sports. He's in charge of the Quidditch World Cup and even commentates on the matches. A gambling man who owes a lot of gold to some Goblins, he bets on Harry to win the TriWizard Tournament then uses his influence to try and fix the result.

## QUIDDITCH WORLD CUP

SHOULD HAVE BEEN IN GOF  
The Quidditch World Cup is a major set-piece that chews up a massive chunk of *Goblet Of Fire*, with a succession of matches leading to a spectacular final between Ireland and Belgium. In the film we get an opening ceremony, a bit of scarf waving and a jarring jump cut. OK, it's not essential to the plot, but the lack of any Quidditch action after all the build-up (and the stunning stadium) is a gaping absence in the film. Shame – *The Apprentice's* Nick Hewer could have cameo-ed as the ref.

## MARIETTA EDGEcombe

SHOULD HAVE BEEN IN OOTP

Dirty rotten sneak Marietta is the grass who betrays Harry's secret army to Hogwarts headmistress Dolores Umbridge. Daringly in the film, this betrayal is given instead to Harry's girlfriend Cho, which is much more dramatically satisfying. Sadly, Cho doesn't share the unfortunate fate of the book's traitor: a vengeful Hermione jinxes her so that her forehead erupts with zits spelling out 'SNEAK'.



## PERCY WEASLEY: TRAITOR

SHOULD HAVE BEEN IN OOTP

In the film, elder Weasley sprog Percy – now working for the Ministry of Magic – comes across as a slimy yes-man. In the books he's an all-out traitor, disowning his family and sending Christmas presents back unopened (then again, it's probably just another naff jumper). The film could have run with the



idea of Percy going really evil – fiddling his expenses and claiming on a second Gnome or something.



## KREACHER'S HOARDING

SHOULD HAVE BEEN IN OOTP

Aged house elf Kreacher would have been a no-brainer to cut from the fifth film, but JK Rowling herself insisted on his appearance. His role though was snipped to a virtual cameo, wandering around the Order of the Phoenix's HQ (Sirius Black's family home) grumbling and cursing. In the book, the sour creature has a major role to play in betraying Sirius to the Malfoys. A big plot point about him hoarding old Black family heirlooms was left out, but will have to be addressed at some point in the film series. **Dave Golder**