

DRIVEN TO THE LIMIT, HE EXACTED
BLOODY CARNAGE ON THE INNOCENT
TOWNSFOLK OF HOLLYWOOD

HELLD WHEELS

'I want my movies to last for a hundred years. Two hundred years if the technology exists!' Quentin Tarantino (QT to his pals) isn't famous for his humility. In fact, meeting the director in the flesh is like being strapped into the 1969 Dodge Charger that roars through his latest film, *Death Proof*, a seat-of-your pants thrill-ride with a wild-eyed driver at the wheel. ➔



MOVIES

DEATH PROOF



DEATH PROOF 18

Strap yourself in, it's going to be a bumpy ride

Rent/Buy 14 January

Stars Kurt Russell, Rosario Dawson, Rose McGowan, Zoe Bell

Director Quentin Tarantino

Perfect for Hot rodders, adrenal junkies and thrill seekers

Always one to wear his heart on his sleeve, this full throttle action movie pays homage to Tarantino's beloved Grindhouse movies of the '70s (stuffed with car chases, violence and buxom ladies wearing skimpy outfits). But where the

original flicks were badly scripted and badly acted, this gem positively sparkles.

Tarantino has always been a master of dialogue and this is no different. Except that the characters spouting the pop culture witticisms and pedantic diatribes this time are women.

Kurt Russell is Stuntman Mike, a psychotic driver who lures nubile beauties into his car, where they soon come to a grisly end. But with a group of feisty stunt women has he met his match?

It may be trashy fun but the final car chase is heart-in-mouth stuff and it's done with true affection. The result is one of the most entertaining movies you are likely to see – until Tarantino gives us something else to watch.

DID YOU KNOW

• Zoe Bell was the stunt double for Uma Thurman in *Kill Bill* and does all her own stunts in this movie

Pacing around his Hollywood hotel room in jeans, T-shirt and beanie hat, QT is an electric presence. 'I know that there's some girl or boy who isn't born yet, and when they are 13, they're gonna see one of my movies and go, 'Wow! That was really cool, man! I wanna see something else by this guy!'

So is QT his own biggest fan? Hardly. Ever since *Reservoir Dogs* exploded onto screens in 1992, Tarantino has had an army of admirers who adore his snappy dialogue, cool retro sounds and ultra-violence. *Death Proof* is his pastiche of the slasher movies that filled the LA video store where he wrote his first scripts.

'I always knew I wanted to do a '70s-style Grindhouse film,' he says. 'Those high-octane things looked a blast and were always a real buzz. I couldn't wait to see them when they came out. So the starting point for *Death Proof* was the idea of making a slasher film, but not just a guy in a mask with a knife or machete.'

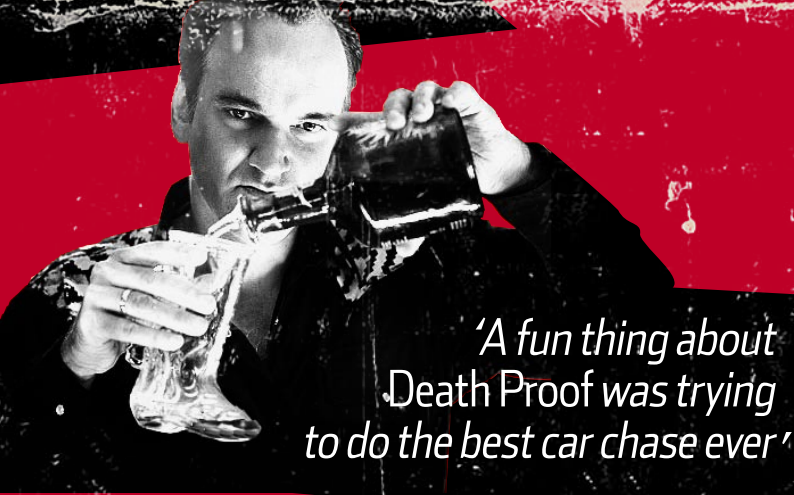
Fast cars and faster girls!

Despite *Death Proof*'s storyline – the deranged Stuntman Mike attacks beautiful women with a super-charged car – its strong female roles turn stereotypes on their head. 'The women are bad assed,' Tarantino explains. 'My women stand up for themselves. I don't consider that a male trait; it's a human trait. I'm proud of my female characters, because they're feminine and they talk like real women.'

But it's hard to take QT's political statements seriously, as moments later he's enthusing about cool car chases. 'One of the fun things about doing *Death Proof* was trying to do one of the best car chase scenes ever. It was exciting because I'd never done that before, and that's a scary place to put yourself. It was the same thing in *Kill Bill*, where I'd never done martial arts stuff, but had to teach myself.'

Tarantino has a history of resuscitating the careers of fading Hollywood stars, with 1994's *Pulp Fiction* catapulting both Bruce Willis and John Travolta back into the A-list. 'There are all these terrific actors I'd like to work with,' he says. 'When you give them a good role – especially if they haven't been doing stuff that's inspiring – man, you get a commitment and a passion from them you could never get from anybody else. It's like they're a fish and they're drinking water for the first time in years.'





'A fun thing about Death Proof was trying to do the best car chase ever'

Forbidden fruit!

Did he set out to help Kurt Russell in the same way? 'Kurt understands the Hollywood that Stuntman Mike knows,' QT reveals. 'I said to him: "You've played a real rogue's gallery of characters and I want to add a special one to your shelf."'

Of course, *Death Proof* wouldn't be a Tarantino film without a splattering of gore. But QT isn't apologising: 'I don't think my films are too violent, or influence people to be violent. I don't think either sex or violence in films is harmful, except when it comes to children. And that's up to parents to expose them or not. But it's all part of childhood. Part of growing up is looking at what you're not supposed to look at, the excitement of the forbidden fruit.'

Tarantino's next projects are a World War II film called *Inglorious Bastards* and a Spaghetti Western set

in the Deep South. 'I call it a "Southern"', he says, 'I want to deal with America's horrible past with slavery, but do it like a genre film. I want to address everything the country has never dealt with because it's ashamed. I think I'm the man to do it.' There's the characteristic QT modesty again.

Is there time for acting with all this directing? Tarantino gets serious again: 'I want to make movies. I have to make movies. The reason I don't make more is that when I make one it's an adventure,' he says, fizzing with energy. 'But when I get through with it, I get back to my friends and the opposite sex and everything I've put on hold for a year. I try and get some sleep.' With all that energy to control? Good luck, QT...

★ **Most-Rented** Quentin Tarantino

2005 *Sin City* (guest director)

2005 *Kill Bill Volumes 1 & 2*

1994 *Pulp Fiction*

1992 *Reservoir Dogs*

ENGINES AT THE READY

If *Death Proof* whets your appetite for a '70s car chase, these classic movies are all available for rental online at www.blockbuster.co.uk

Bullitt

Steve McQueen was never better than as Frank Bullitt – the epitome of cop against the system. San Francisco looks amazing during the movie's crowning moment, an astonishing chase that sees muscle cars hurtling around the city's streets at speeds of up to 150mph.



The French Connection

Gene Hackman won an Oscar for his performance as narcotics cop Popeye Doyle in this gritty, documentary-like thriller based on a true story. Don't miss the exhilarating sequence in which Jimmy races an elevated train in his car – into oncoming traffic.



Duel

This thrilling movie from Steven Spielberg is one long car chase – simple but unbelievably effective. Dennis Weaver stars as Mann, a driver who finds himself being relentlessly pursued by a truck driver who's intent on killing him. That's it. Brilliant.



The Getaway

Violent and chock-full of action, Sam Peckinpah's superb heist thriller stars



Steve McQueen as a convict who makes a deal with a corrupt cop. Needless to say things don't go well, and he soon finds himself on the run – from both the cop and a gang of crooks.



SMALL TALK

KURT RUSSELL

Kurt Russell has had his share of ups and downs in a long and colourful movie career, but he says he wouldn't have it any other way

Tell us about your character in *Death Proof*.

I took one word and ran with it – coward. Stuntman Mike is a guy who kills women. I think it's the core of all psycho-killer characters. He's a bad, bad psycho job, but also lots of fun to play.

Do you have anything in common with him?

When I was younger, I did stunts with horses and then with cars, because I used to drive cars seriously. I raced as a young guy and won six Nationals and one World Championship. Racing was a possible career for me, but then I chose baseball and focused on that instead. The stunt world was one that I was already very close to, as back in those days, the more stuff you could do as a stunt kid, the more work you got.

How authentic is all the film's crazy driving?

There are no special effects – just people driving cars. As my character says: 'Real cars driven by real stupid people'.

What was getting beaten up by three women like?

I knew what I was getting into. My hope was that I could make it so that women in the audience would scream and holler and stomp and cheer – and they do.

Are you proud of your career?

I've made some bad choices. Somebody once said to me: 'Your career looks like it was controlled by a drunk driver.' And that's actually true. It's funny, it's careless, it's been out of control. I can't deny it. But I enjoy the fun of it.

★ **Most Rented** Kurt Russell

2006 *Poseidon*

1982 *The Thing*

1981 *Escape from New York*

What's your ambition?

To carry on working for as long as I can, doing as many different kinds of roles and new challenges as possible. I love what I do now – I think it must be arrested development to remain as totally enthusiastic as I am. Perhaps a doctor will tell me that.

'I'm getting old but at least I look like I've lived a life. My face shows it and I realise that'