

Irvine Welsh

The 'Trainspotting' author discusses the film sequel, 'T2' – or, as he calls it, 'a European Godfather'

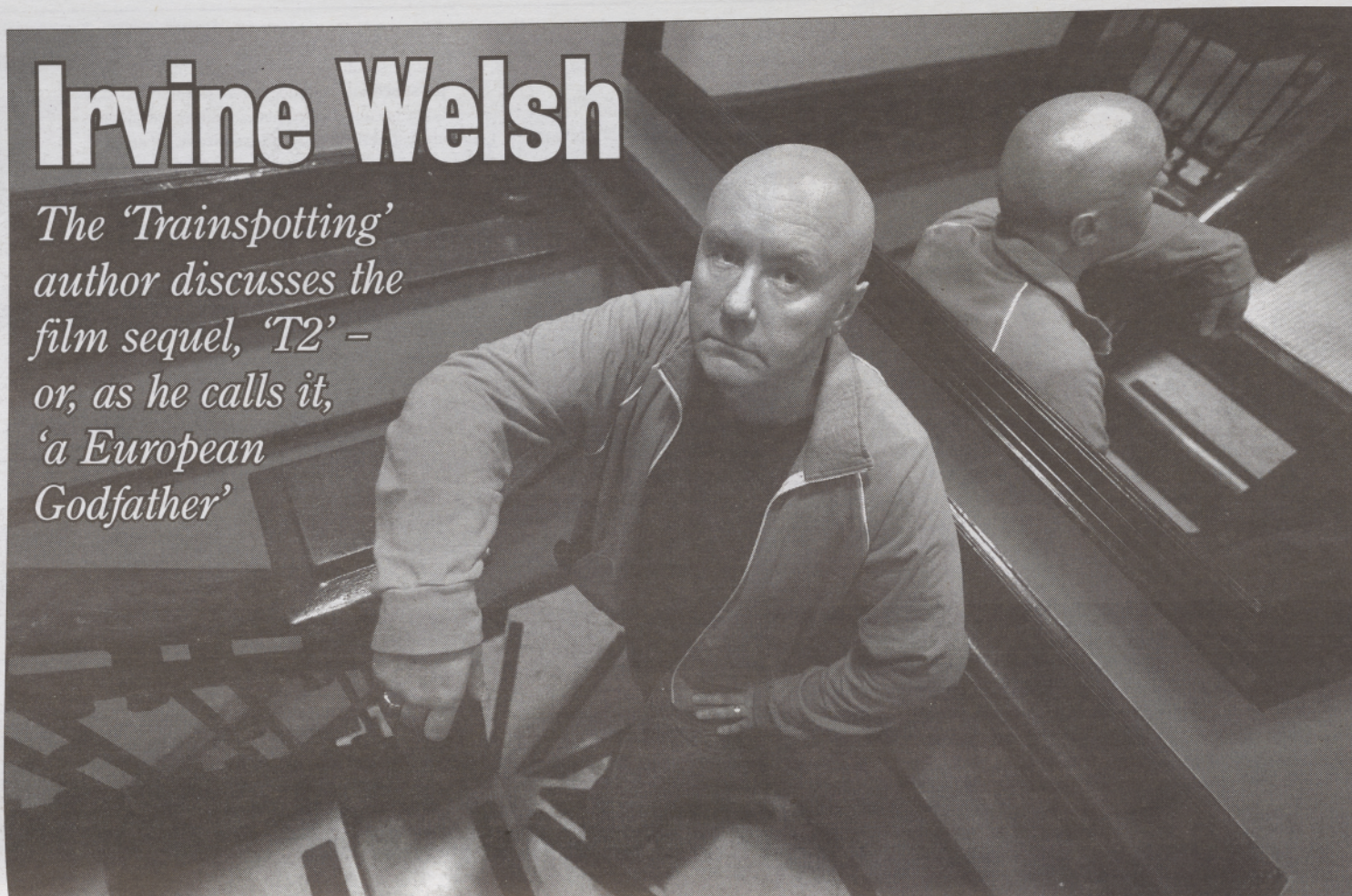


PHOTO BY SHANNON STAPLETON/REUTERS

Scottish author Irvine Welsh is best known for his novel "Trainspotting." He has also written a short story for the International Network of Street Papers.

BY ANDREW BURNS
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

Irvine Welsh, the best-selling Scottish author of "Trainspotting," points to the autumn of 2013, when he wrote "He Ain't Lager." The short story was penned exclusively for the International Network of Street Papers, which includes Street Roots. It is about one of his most memorable characters, Trainspotting's unpredictable violent psychopath Francis Begbie. It was crucial in setting the wheels in motion for a "Trainspotting" reunion, he said.

"I always associate Christmas with psychopaths," Welsh said. "Then when you (The UK street paper, Big Issue) got in touch, I decided it was time to update Begbie. I thought, what if he was the calmest person in the room? Then I began to think, what would make him this way?"

The 59-year-old recently reprised his cameo role as drug dealer Mikey Forrester in "T2 Trainspotting," the long-awaited sequel to Danny Boyle's 1996 adaptation of the 1993 debut novel that brought Welsh fame and fortune.

After this initial reprise generated a rapturous response, Welsh announced Begbie was getting his own novel, "The Blade Artist."

"I didn't really think anything would happen with it, but I got interested again and began to think, what if he's not this reformed guy, he's just faking it? What if he's just become more cold-blooded and he's still a killer?"

Around the same time, Welsh, Boyle, "Trainspotting" screenwriter John Hodge and producers Andrew Macdonald and



PHOTO BY SONY PICTURES

From left: Danny Boyle, Irvine Welsh and Robert Carlyle work on "T2 Trainspotting."

Christian Colson got together to flesh out two decades' worth of notes and ideas for "T2." Finally, it was reality.

"Being back in there with these characters again, it was very interesting," Welsh said.

Coming out of nowhere, at the height of Britpop in 1996, the film adaptation – starring Robert Carlyle, Ewan McGregor, Ewen Bremner, Jonny Lee Miller and Kelly Macdonald – was the defining British film of its era. It saw Boyle dubbed the "British Tarantino," transformed Welsh into a household name and catapulted its stars to Hollywood.

A sequel, loosely based on Welsh's 2002 book "Porno," struggled to get off the

ground for more than a decade, beset by various spats that included McGregor, who played central character Renton, and Boyle.

"Obviously people had fallen out with one another and had their differences, which has been patched up now," Welsh said. "But far more significant is that everybody has been so busy. It had to be the same creative team, the same actors. Once you decide on that, it becomes difficult, as you need to get everyone to say yes at the same time. To sync up these people, with the best will in the world, becomes very hard. The logistics operate against you.

"No one wants to trash the legacy, and

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