

WELSH, from page 8

there was a bit of trepidation," Welsh said. "We had to find something that wasn't going to make people think we were in search of a quick buck."

They certainly could not be accused of rushing it. In the intervening two decades, three of Welsh's other books hit the big screen: "The Acid House" (1998), "Ecstasy" (2011) and "Filth" (2013). Finally, all the pieces fell into place for "T2."

"I thought all the ingredients are there, we can't fuck this up. But I was blown away by how good it was. It's much, much stronger than the first film. It's got all that energy of the first film, but it's also got much more depth. It's a film student's wet dream. There's so much subtext to it, so much going on, they'll be looking at it, talking about it and debating it for years.

"The way it references the first film, we don't make films of that scale, with that epic ambition, in Britain anymore. It feels like a European Godfather."

Where *Trainspotting* was set in Edinburgh's mid-1980s heroin culture, "T2" finds Renton, Begbie, Sick Boy (Miller) and Spud (Bremner) older and grayer. The Cool Britannia hedonism and chaos that underpinned *Trainspotting* makes way for a theme we can all relate to: aging.

"Trainspotting was fundamental to so many people's culture growing up," Welsh said. "When people see 'T2,' they'll think about what they were doing when they saw the first movie, how their lives have gone. They will identify with the characters as they are also engaged in that quest.

"We've lived in such a narcissistic, individualistic culture for 30 years. I don't think that people get old in the same way now. We rebel and fight against it. You go to a rave these days, and there's three generations of the one family jumping around. But we do age. There's a reality of the looming mortality.

"We're also doing this within a disintegrating society, a society that's falling apart, that can't afford to pay people wages. It's facing up to these big existential crises. It's such an interesting and vibrant place for all of this to play out. It's very hard to say that one movie



Ewan McGregor plays Mark Renton and Jonny Lee Miller plays Simon in "T2 Trainspotting."

PHOTO BY SONY PICTURES

can capture all of this. But it does. And it captures it all on an incredible emotional level."

Welsh had first-hand experience of the poverty and drug addiction that his novels depict. Today, his life is unrecognizable from those days. He lives in Chicago with his wife, Beth Quinn, dividing his time between the Windy City and Miami, with the odd trip back to Edinburgh.

Politically motivated throughout his career – he has spoken candidly about the deterioration of his once-treasured Labour Party and was strongly in favor of Scottish independence in 2014 – Welsh keeps a close eye on politics. He acknowledges that living overseas offers a different viewpoint to the circus back home.

"You see the good things, and you see the lunacies," he said. "Everything is up in the air. We're aware that we're transitioning, but we've no idea what kind of society we're transitioning towards. We listen too much to opportunistic loudmouths who don't have a fucking clue, but because they make most noise, we fall in line with them."

"T2" premiered in Welsh's birthplace two

days after Donald Trump was sworn in as the 45th president of Welsh's adopted homeland.

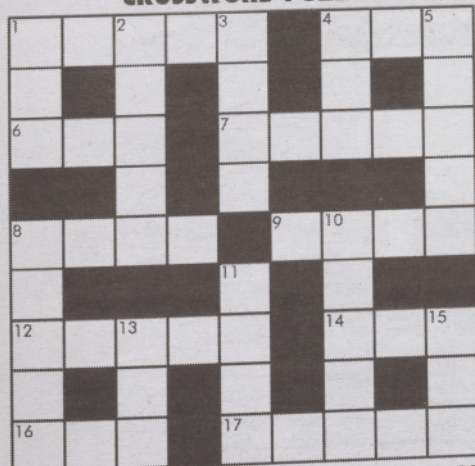
"It's strange," he said. "If there's one guy who was never equipped to be president, it was him. They've probably elected the very last guy you want to be president, particularly in this day and age. From the point of view of people living here, it's going to get quite horrible for some, but from my own point of view as a writer and artist, you want as many pricks – and the biggest fucking pricks – in power to kick against. Brexit and Trump are a cloud, but there's a silver lining if you're an artist. It becomes more interesting and galvanizing, and for me, it's going to be fascinating.

"These things never exist in a vacuum. I can see a lot of resistance and opposition to Trump. I can see Trump falling out with the Republican Party and all sorts of weird stuff going on," he said. "It's definitely not going to be dull."

"T2" will be released in the United States on March 17.

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ACROSS

- 1. Fermentation agent
- 4. Have a bite
- 6. Tree fluid
- 7. Cake ingredient
- 8. Three-ply cookie
- 9. Hook's henchman
- 12. Ground grain
- 14. The gift of ___
- 16. Tease or ridicule
- 17. Francis or Kevin?

DOWN

- 1. Affirmative
- 2. Type of fritter
- 3. Analyze or try
- 4. Cake ingredient
- 5. Tres
- 8. Deal
- 10. Potter's practice
- 11. Nosh!
- 13. Late rapper; abbr.
- 15. ___ appétit

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