

Jeremy Renner: The ‘Kill the Messenger’ Interview

Jeremy Renner starred in The Hurt Locker, which won a half-dozen Academy Awards, including Best Picture and Best Director (Kathryn Bigelow). For his portrayal of Sgt. William James, he received many accolades, including his first Academy Award nomination, in the Best Actor category.

The following year, he was again an Academy Award nominee, this time as Best Supporting Actor for his performance as James Coughlin in The Town, directed by Ben Affleck. Moviegoers worldwide also know him for his starring roles as Hawkeye in The Avengers, as William Brandt in Mission: Impossible: Ghost Protocol, and as Aaron Cross in The Bourne Legacy.

Jeremy’s breakthrough movie role was as Jeffrey Dahmer in Dahmer. And his other films include American Hustle; The Immigrant; Hansel & Gretel: Witch Hunters; The Assassination

of Jesse James by the Coward Robert Ford; 28 Weeks Later; Take; North Country; S.W.A.T.; and Neo Ned.

Here, he talks about his new film, Kill the Messenger, directed by Michael Cuesta. The two previously collaborated on 12 and Holding which was nominated for the Independent Spirit Awards’ John Cassavetes Award.

Kam Williams: Hi Jeremy. I’m honored to have this opportunity to speak with you.

Jeremy Renner: Thank you, Kam. My pleasure.

KW: I told my readers I’d be interviewing you, so I’ll be mixing in my questions with theirs.

JR: Okay, great!

KW: Editor Lisa Loving



CELEBRITY INTERVIEW

by Kam Williams

says: Oh my God! Oh my God! You made a movie about Gary Webb. Thank you. Wow! You are ripping my heart out right now. I am not going to cry. I just forgot what the heck I was supposed to be doing today. Jeez! I’m giving myself permission to cry a little. Jeremy, to me, this is one of the most important stories of the Modern Age. And the way Gary’s life was systematically destroyed—not just by the CIA but by the newspapers that mindlessly colluded with them—makes me weep for all time. His book, “Dark Alliance,” is one of my most treasured possessions. She asks: Mr.



Jeremy Renner as Gary Webb, Michael K. Williams as “Freeway” Ricky Ross and Tim Blake Nelson as Alan Fenster in ‘Kill the Messenger.’

Renner, did either your role in Kill the Messenger or The Hurt Locker change the way you regard the world or our nation?

love to watch an Everyman rise to the occasion under extraordinary circumstances, like in David and Goliath. I think that univer-

story. But what I still really enjoyed the most was learning about Gary Webb’s personal life as a father and husband, as well as a journalist.

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JR: Yeah, but not in a political sense. Just five minutes ago, I was talking to someone else about The Hurt Locker’s not being a political movie, whereas it could have quite easily been spun into one very heavily-handedly. Kill the Messenger is a little more obviously a political picture, but I didn’t really want politics to weigh-in on that, even though I might have my opinion and thoughts about it. I think politics and religion are personal belief systems that have nothing to do with anybody else. That’s where I stand. And I don’t like to make movies that try to force people to change their opinions. However, while the backdrop of Kill the Messenger involved politics and journalism, what was important to me was the underdog story. I

sal theme resonates with almost anyone, since most people are trying to do the best they can. Like The American way. I pride myself in sort of representing that, as an actor, especially with Gary Webb coming from the same area as I. It was a tragic situation all the way around, and a big story that’s impossible to tell in two hours, which is why we focused more on Gary Webb personally.

KW: Lisa also asks: What did you learn by immersing yourself in Gary’s life story?

JR: I’d always been on the other side of journalism, just being asked questions. This afforded me a chance to learn a lot about newspapers, satellite stations, and the work of an investigative reporter, and how they get a

KW: Lisa’s last question is: Do you think Gary committed suicide, or do you think he was killed by the CIA?

JR: I have an opinion about it, but I don’t care to address that on the record. I’ll let the movie speak for itself. What matters more to me is what other people think.

KW: David Roth thinks that since you’re one of the producers, you must feel pretty passionate about this project. He asks: Why do you think this story took a back seat to the Monica Lewinsky scandal?

JR: [LOL] The Monica Lewinsky story... [Laughs some more] and I do say this laughing... is just more entertaining to follow. Dark Alliance was talking about the CIA connection to cocaine and crack as opposed to blow jobs,

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