

On Set Interview: David Duchovny Talks X-Files



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While visiting the set of X-Files: I Want to Believe in Vancouver, the IESB along with a group of journalists, sat down with star David Duchovny to talk about the new film!

Duchovny is a crack up. Read the entire interview below and, yes, he really did say that about how he likes a directors' hands on him...I kid you not.

Read the entire David Duchovny interview from the set of The X-Files: I Want to Believe in Vancouver below -

Q: When the series started, it sort of captured the zeitgeist in the country in a way other shows hadn't before. How is the X-Files different now that the world has completely changed since the last film?

David Duchovny: Has the world completely changed? (laughter)

Q: Since 1998, I say it has, since 9/11.

DD: People say the world has changed...it's all different. Yet, human nature remains the same. Good stories are going to be the stories people are going to see. I don't think people go to movies because of what's going on in the world. I think people want escapism in a way and that usually remains the same. I think what changed is the size of our cell phones.

Q: Artistically, why now for you is it the right time to make this movie?

DD: I don't know. I felt always at any time it would have been fine. Whenever Chris [Carter] was ready to come up with a script...whenever his burnout was over. You know, as actors our burnout was probably a little shorter than his. I think he carried a heavier load producing and writing, directing. I know it took me about a year to feel, you know, whole after the show was over. So, after that point I was waiting. It was always my intention, my desire, that the show would continue on in movie form. It was never my intention, when I wanted to leave the television series, to sabotage the show in any way. It was, yes we've done all we can on television, let's take this into movies like we always said that we would.

Q: Do you see it as a series of X-Files movies, maybe?

DD: Yeah, I wouldn't see any reason to do it unless it were. It's a serial show by its nature, it starts as a television show, which is a serial. The frame and the characters throw up an infinite number of stories and situations. You know, it's a classic, archetypical relationship with a believer and a non-believer with this, kind of, unrequited love in the middle of it and that all works, that can work forever, as long as your stories are good.

Q: How excited were you to get back into the character again?

DD: Well, I was very excited to do it, and then as the date approached nearer, I started to wonder if I needed to start to work more to kind of get back here. So there was a certain amount of fear that because I had maybe changed, to go back on my word. What, I think, happened is my facility and maybe my range or my interests might have changed. And so this character might have represented a narrower Fox than the one I had been working on the last 4 or 5 years since I left. So, it was how to bring what I've learned in the last 4 or 5 years into this Fox. And you know, it was interesting last night, they have internet access here and somebody pulled up one of these homages to the show that has a song, a romantic song, and all these kisses between Gillian and I and that was actually really helpful for me to kind of feel the show again. Because it was kind of this overview, you know, and it was very romantic and it was very sweet and it was like, "Oh, I could watch that and then that would help me get into character." So maybe I'll do that. Maybe I'll watch, whoever put that together, I thank them.

Q: Is there any input you had in the writing of this script?

DD: Not in the initial conception or the first writing of it and hardly at all. We kind of signed off on the script right as the writer's strike happened. So, we had discussions about particular scenes and things we might try once we get there. But, you know, it's a tightly plotted thriller. In essence, there's very little...if you have a tightly plotted thriller, there's not a lot of rewriting that should be done, hopefully. There's not a lot to do. The story drives forward. If you fuck around in the scenes, you don't drive the story forward. So it's not really a form that tolerates improvisation. And it was well enough put together when it was presented to me and Gillian. I thought there was really nothing to add.

Q: Rumor has it that this one goes for more of a supernatural feeling, more back to the horror, scary roots of the show. What kind of a relief was that for you to kind of break outside the mythology?

DD: Well, I like the mythology stuff. I always liked it, actually more when we were doing the show because it usually gave Mulder kind of an emotional stake, either through his sister or he was personally involved in the episode. And that was a relief and more fun for me as an actor to approach. During the yearly grind of the show, so it was like, "Oh, you know, I understand this one. I can chew that up a little bit rather than just being a Law and Order procedural, did he do it, did he do it? He didn't do it. This is my theory. Get out of this." So, in a way, I think I had the opposite reaction. So, you know, I wish this was more about me (laughter). But this is more about the show. It's about establishing the parameters of the show for those that don't know it, for those who have

forgotten it, and even for those who love it will get that part as well. So, if there is another one, and I hope there is, I think we would get into a story with more of the mythology because I think that is the heart of the show.



Q: You directed an episode of the series. You directed your own movie. How interested would you be, if there is another X-Files, in taking the helm?

DD: Yeah, I'd be interested but it's not in my wheelhouse to direct a big action film like this. I would feel out of my element, which is probably a good thing. I wouldn't offer it to me. I might try to get it, I don't know. No, I think I'd stay away from this. I might be interested in directing an action film, but I don't think it'd be wise to direct myself in an action film or to screw around with this actual franchise. I don't feel like I need to. I feel like there are other opportunities for me to direct, and I have other interests. If it was like my only way in to directing and like, "Please let me!" Then I might. I don't think so. I think it would be fun and great, but I think there are better people.

Q: A lot of actors who headline hit series often worry about being typecast for the rest of their careers. Coming back into this, you apparently are comfortable now that you've moved on and done other things...

DD: Well, it's interesting, I get asked questions by you guys. The first question is, "Have people forgotten?" And the second question is, "Well, nobody has forgotten, aren't you typecast?" I don't know. I gave up a while ago worrying about the whole phenomenon of typecasting once I realized that it happens across the board. It doesn't just happen in terms of television shows. So, comedy actors get trapped in there and dramatic actors can't do comedy and, you know, all this stuff with people, or even movie actors who have had long careers have two or three roles that they get stopped for, unless you're Brando. There's only a couple that have done so much that it's even hard to yell something stupid to them on the street. So, I don't worry about that. I think what overcomes that is just my kind of sense of love for the show and belief in its legitimacy as an interesting movie franchise with a lot to offer, the thriller aspect and the horror aspect and also an intelligence and, like I said, this great frame of man and woman and the believer and the nonbeliever. I think all those things make it a very kind of fertile area to move on it.

Q: Why do you think people love the characters of the show? Could you speak a little about your character and why people love the character?

DD: That's more for you to speak of. I think it was a very classic, not a contentious love relationship between Mulder and Scully. I think why I love Mulder is because first and foremost it was always the truth and the case and yet he wasn't so single-minded that he it was kind of a drag, he was never a drag. It's that kind of character. So, I always liked that he was so, kind of, narrow-minded in his pursuit And I think that's attractive. I think people respect that in somebody And I think they also yearn for it. He's a guy on a quest, He will always be.

Q: Will you get beat up and lose your gun in this movie?

DD: I can't answer that, but I'm sure if I ever get my hands on a gun, you can be pretty sure that somebody will take it out of my hands. (laughter)

Q: How do you relate to working with Gillian on this now?

DD: Yeah, it's good.

Q: Was it very different from what it was working on the series?

DD: Yeah, it's probably different in that we are not both exhausted all the time. We're kind of excited to come and do what we think is the heart of the movie, the relationship. So, we'll do these scenes that are action orientated and has to do with this particular

plot and Billy Connelly. Then we come back to scenes like what we're doing today, and we're aware that this...we feel like this is where the heart of the movie is and that we have to trust each other and hold each other up in these scenes and to bring back whatever it was that was there.

Q: Is there still a sense of discovery? Is there still a journey for you guys in doing productions like this, reuniting with Gillian and Chris or is like you guys are back in you're groove?

DD: No, I think there's a real sense of which we don't just want to cash in on the past. We want to all do something new. We all want to make it good. We don't want to throw a piece of crap out there and grab people to go look at it for nostalgia's sake. When I started there was certainly a boyishness to the guy, which, I feel, I can't play anymore physically.

Q: Has it changed any working with Chris [Carter]?

DD: Yeah, I have ways I like to work and he has ways he likes to work and they are not always the same, with respect, and probably we deal with it. That's a matter of getting older too, being a professional. It happens. It's not a big deal. It's like telling a lover, "You know with that finger there? That wasn't great. I know a lot of people like it. But me personally? Not me. Just so you know. Somebody else may love that." (laughter) So I know how I like to work now, I know how I like the director's hands on me.

Q: Does this film strike a balance between the shout-outs to the series and then like in the first film making it accessible for people who've never seen it?

DD: Well, I'm not a fan of the shout-outs. But they're just little things. They're like little "Where's Waldo" things. I think this movie is actually a lot more accessible to the non-fan in terms of story, plot, everything else. In terms of, maybe this water bottle having the name of one of our producers on it, this movie probably has tons of those things. I'm not even paying attention. There's a lot of that going on and I think it's fun. And for most people it's just going by the boards and for people that are into it are going to love that, I guess.

Q: There was some exhaustion on the fanbase's behalf as the series entered its final seasons, do you think the film will lure them back?

DD: I don't know. You know there were nine years of one-hours. I can't think of another show that did that with the same cast, although I wasn't in most of the ninth year. You look at any drama, any long-running drama, and they don't run that long normally. So, the exhaustion is mutual. (laughter) But I would think in the good will of trying to tell new stories you ultimately reach further in all directions. Probably by the seventh or eight years, the writers were forced to reach and I think there are fans who sit on that moment and wait for that sign of creative bankruptcy which has to come, naturally. A show like this is idea driven, it's not like, "Oh, we've got good jokes, you'll watch." It's not like a sitcom that can run twelve years. If they were exhausted, and they fell in love with the show for the characters and the premise, for the execution and the writing, then that's what we're back to. This is more of a story we would have told in season three or four.



Q: How scary does this movie get? When those early seasons you refer to went for scary, they were scary...

Duchovny: It gets scary. It's pretty dark, there's some nasty stuff going on. In a way you could do more on TV. Some of those TV shows were getting close to an R, but I know the mission is to make a PG-13 film. It's more of the ideas behind it. What is Saw, is Saw rated R?

Q: Yeah.

DD: That should be X. [This film] has some of, you know, there's some danger in there. There's some twisted, weird...

Q: Torture?

DD: I said danger. There's no torture because there's always, you know, like to me Saw doesn't really have a point. It's like a guy teaching somebody a lesson. Right? Torturing them.

Q: And that's entertainment.

DD: Well, obviously for a lot of people it is. I think The X-Files was never just about the nasty stuff. Hopefully there was a story behind it. You'll know we'll always torture for a reason. We're like the American government. We want something; we'll torture for it. (laughter)

Q: I'm just curious if the film leans into my favorite episode which was "Home."

DD: There's some of that, but I don't know how much of that you'll see, but it's in the story. You'll come away with, Wow, that's what you were doing? Home is probably the most controversial show we ever made and it was pulled out of rotation and yet it's one of maybe four or five shows somebody always brings up. Obviously, people have enjoyed that part of the show also.

Q: There's always been a place for humor with Mulder's dry wit. Does the new film feature any laughs?

DD: There's a place for it, I was always looking for a place in the TV show and it's an essential part of the character so I certainly always look for those moments. We've done them here, but whether or not they stay in the film, it's always a matter of juggling the tone. In the show, it was, "Is Mulder going to deflate the danger of the scene?" In my opinion, it never did, but Chris and the writers and producers have different ideas, so I don't know. I like to have some funny stuff in there.

Q: When the episodes of the old show come on, do you watch them or do you flee like hell?

DD: : I don't flee. I don't seek them out. I'm not an appointment television watcher. I guess I'm a child of the '70s television watcher. I'll leave myself sometimes open to watching an X-Files because I'll be just flipping around but I don't TiVo or anything, I'm really silly that way. So if something comes on, I won't watch it alone. But if I'm in bed with [my wife] Tea and we're just going to sleep and just watching, maybe, watching 10 minutes before we go to sleep, and it comes on she'll say, "Oh, I've never seen that one!" And I say, "Yes you have. I think you've seen them all." "No, no, I've never seen this one." And I say, "No, you've just forgotten. No you really have seen this one."

Q: Do you know of any major DVD extras that are planned for this film's release?

DD: Yes, a lot because I think there's a lot of extra gore and stuff. We're not just shooting a PG-13 version. What was the first movie? PG-13? I think it was. It's so confusing to me.

Q: What's next after this?

DD: I have to go back and we'll do another year of "Californication," starting late April.

Q: Will it change at all in the second season?

DD: In what way? It'd be better? (laughter) It lives right in between comedy and drama. Comedy tends to maintain the same characters and the same situations. Dramas tend to change. So I think we'll change a little bit. You know, it's still a new show and, especially on cable, you only do 12 a year. I think we're still finding our way.



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