

Simon Rumley talks his new-to-DVD films, “GEORGE ROMERO” movie and more



Prior to his transition to the (very) dark side with films like *THE LIVING AND THE DEAD* and *RED WHITE & BLUE*, British independent filmmaker Simon Rumley made his big break into feature-length filmmaking with his “youth culture trilogy”—*STRONG LANGUAGE* (2000), *THE TRUTH GAME* (2001) and *CLUB LE MONDE* (2002, pictured above). The loosely connected triad is getting a long-overdue DVD release in North America today via Jinga Films, and Fango spoke with Rumley about these seminal works as well as what he’s got coming up.

“It’s very exciting that *STRONG LANGUAGE*, *THE TRUTH GAME* and *CLUB LE MONDE* are all being released in America on DVD for the first time ever,” Rumley, pictured below (with cap) on the *TRUTH GAME* set, tells Fango. “I think they’re getting quite a small release, but it’ll be nice just to have them out there.”

Although not directly connected storywise, the three films all take place in the heart of London in the 1990s, exploring common themes such as relationships, British pop culture and self-discovery. “It took me about five years to do those three films, maybe six,” Rumley recalls. “At the end of it, I’d had great reviews for two out of the three, and they’d been released on a fairly small scale in the UK, but I felt that I hadn’t really gotten any further on in my filmmaking career. I was inspired mainly by Richard Linklater [*SLACKER*, *DAZED AND CONFUSED*, *SUBURBIA*] and, to a lesser extent, Eric Rohmer, but I felt that [there wasn’t] much request or enthusiasm for these films in the UK. So I thought that if I was going to carry on making films, struggling to do so, I should try and shoot something a little bit more commercial. Somewhere along the way, that was kind of lost in translation; I ended up making *THE LIVING AND THE DEAD*, which is arguably my least commercial movie.”

STRONG LANGUAGE dramatizes the narration of a young man who recalls a night gone awry that changed his life forever; intertwined with that main plot line are the recollections of 16 individuals. Topics such as drugs, music, pop culture, sex and politics are discussed, and a piercing discovery as to how the characters are connected is revealed. *THE TRUTH GAME* portrays a seemingly typical dinner party among friends—but as guilt over past mistakes and true feelings are revealed, they are given reason to reconsider their relationships with one another. *CLUB LE MONDE*, arguably the most subversive and comical entry, is an invasive look at one crazy, event-filled night at a British dance club. This film, like the others, contains several interweaving subplots, but the main storyline follows a vengeful girl who sets out to humiliate an



Youth Culture Photos: © Simon Rumley

ex-boyfriend who cheated on her. Each of these DVDs includes Rumley's commentary and premiere featurettes; LANGUAGE and TRUTH also have photo galleries, while CLUB additionally comes with deleted scenes.



Rumley, who also created the LITTLE DEATHS segment "Bitch," most recently helmed an even shorter subject, the cringe-inducing "P is for Pressure" for THE ABCs OF DEATH. This segment received mixed reactions, primarily due to its suggestive portrayal of extreme animal cruelty, which was inspired by the sickeningly sadistic real-life trend of "kitten crushing." "I had seen this whole thing on-line about it and read a few articles on the subject, and I have to say I was pretty shocked by it," Rumley explains. "I wondered, 'Do people really get off on this, does this really happen?'" And I thought of it in terms of trying to push cinema—I'm not that interested in tons of violence or that kind of stuff, but rather the mental conceit of the reality of, 'Why would you want to squash a kitten to death, or why would you want to squash a little rabbit?' Frankly, it's beyond comprehension. I just felt it was an interesting thing to explore, and I actually wrote a feature script around that kind of subject matter."

Rumley adds that being approached for THE ABCs OF DEATH also gave him the opportunity to explore specific subject matter and methods of filmmaking that can be extremely difficult when it comes to making a feature. "I liked the idea of thinking outside the box in terms of doing a death that wasn't actually a human death. And I also enjoyed the challenge of making a film that was telling a story but had no dialogue whatsoever—something I wanted to do with a feature, but is incredibly hard."



The responses that "P is for Pressure" has elicited bring some interesting points to mind, the filmmaker notes. "It seems like a lot of people have double standards, really—that you can do imaginable cruelty to your fellow man, and it's somehow OK because it's a horror film and it's only escapist reality and it's not actually real, but as soon as you bring an animal into this, it suddenly becomes a very different proposition."

Rumley currently has a few features in the works, but as it stands, the details he can share are few. "I've actually landed my first

[feature] horror-directing gig, but it hasn't been announced, so I shouldn't say too much about it," he says. "We were supposed to shoot it in August, but now it's pretty much [set for] September; we're going back and forth on the script at the moment, so I'm not sure quite how that will turn out. If all goes well, I should [start in] September; if it doesn't go well, then it might be later or not at all.

"I have another project—I guess it's kind of a homage to, but a sub-version of, the zombie movie—called GEORGE ROMERO'S BIGGEST FAN. I've actually got a really great executive producer who has just come on board. He's someone who's been in the business a long time and has produced some of my favorite films over the years, so that's sort of exciting. Again, it's a matter of timing as to what happens and when. Hopefully—fingers crossed—one of these will happen quite soon."

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