

SCOTT PILGRIM
VS. THE WORLD

Word on all things Pilgrimage, direct from the set

➔ "I'M ABOUT TO DIE," LAUGHS EDGAR WRIGHT. "I'M ALREADY ON MY LAST LEGS!"

He's kidding. The director of *Shaun Of The Dead* and *Hot Fuzz* is on Day Two of the punishing five-month shoot for his third and most ambitious movie to date, yet so jazzed is he that he's rung *Empire* on his way into work — "the only time I've got free during the day, this 15 minutes in the car" — to give us an update.

"It's akin to being a kid at Christmas — on your first filming days you just want to get up and in there, you know?" he says. "I woke up ridiculously early yesterday, around six o'clock, overexcited. I've been in Toronto since January, gearing up for this, and I think the feeling's doubled by being away from home."

This is, in fact, the first time the Wells-reared Wright has shot outside the UK. Another first: in his mission to bring Bryan Lee O'Malley's sparky, wildly entertaining series of *Scott Pilgrim* graphic novels to the screen, he's parted ways for now with Simon Pegg and Nick Frost, his friends and leading men of choice in everything from *Spaced* to *Don't*. Instead, to occupy the all-important role of Scott Pilgrim — a likable Canadian loafer who must defeat the seven evil ex-lovers of gorgeous Ramona Flowers (Mary Elizabeth Winstead) to win her hand — he's cast 20-year-old comedy star Michael Cera.

"What's funny is that (*co-screenwriter*) Michael Bacall and I worked on the first draft of *Pilgrim* back before *Hot Fuzz*, when I was watching a lot of *Arrested Development*," says Wright. "And at the time I told Michael, 'It's a shame the kid who plays George-Michael isn't older, because he'd be perfect.'"

The director and actor finally crossed paths in 2007, first during the *Fuzz* publicity tour, then >>

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➔ ELLEN DEGENERES DRINKS HALLE BERRY'S PERFUME ON AIR ➔ DRAGON BALL 2 ALREADY WRITTEN

➔ SPINAL TAP TO PLAY WEMBLEY ARENA ON JUNE 30 ➔ TARSEM'S SWAR OF THE GODS DELAYED ➔



again when Judd Apatow asked Wright to play a rude British journalist in a viral video for Superbad. Wright and Cera became friends and the latter agreed to step into Pilgrim's battered sneakers. "He's just an amazing performer," Wright enthuses. "He reminds me of Simon in some respects, in that he's got a great Everyman appeal and his timing is just incredible. I think people are going to be surprised at some of the things he does in the film."

Scott Pilgrim Vs. The World is, as its director puts it, "the story of someone who believes he's the hero of his own universe but frequently has reality come crashing in". Like Spaced, the movie will twist between the everyday and the fantastical, letting Wright put his own spin on US teen comedies (he rewatched Ferris Bueller's Day Off the day before shooting began), while also giving him ample licence to orchestrate bonkers mêlées between Pilgrim and his foes. At Quentin Tarantino's suggestion, he spent seven weeks fight-training alongside his actors, practising wirework and learning martial arts

from Jackie Chan's Hong Kong team. With Bill 'The Matrix' Pope as cinematographer, surely we can expect the man who dipped his toe into the action pool with Hot Fuzz to now dive in headfirst?

Well, not quite. When we ask what Day One of the shoot involved, Wright laughs. "It just so happened that scheduling allowed us to start with the very first line of the first scene of the film. And we outdo Quantum Of Solace — except instead of having a car chase we start off with four people sitting around a kitchen table talking. One of them is playing a Nintendo DS. Zelda, to be precise. So I'm confident this should go down as one of the great opening sequences of all time, along with Raiders and any of the Bonds."

Kitchen conflabs aside, Scott Pilgrim is a big deal. Documented by Wright in the form of a photo a day on his online blog — "From August onwards it will just be pictures of coffee" — it's his largest production by far, with an



international crew (though studded with long-time Wright collaborators, including producer Nira Park) and a cast that includes Fantastic Four's Chris Evans, Jason Schwartzman and erstwhile Superman Brandon Routh, as well as plenty of previously untapped talent. "It's weird — on Hot Fuzz I was kind of the youngest guy on set, but here everyone is younger than me," muses Wright. "I can still be the naughty kid, but I've probably only got one more year of that. Once we're into the edit and the grey hairs show up, I'll have to start going respectable!"

>SCOTT PILGRIM VS. THE WORLD IS OUT IN 2010.

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KEN WORTNER (2)

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