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PRESENTS

# **ATTACK THE BLOCK**

**Written and Directed by**

**Joe Cornish**

**Starring**

Jodie Whittaker, Luke Treadaway and Nick Frost

**And introducing**

John Boyega, Alex Esmail, Franz Drameh,  
Leeon Jones, Simon Howard, Jumayn Hunter

**Release Date: December 1, 2011**

**Running Time: 88 mins**

**Rating: CTC**

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## **SYNOPSIS**

ATTACK THE BLOCK is a fast, funny, frightening action adventure movie that pits a teen gang against an invasion of savage alien monsters. It turns a London housing estate into a sci-fi playground. A tower block into a fortress under siege. And teenage street kids into heroes. It's inner city versus outer space.

Trainee nurse Sam is walking home to her flat in a scary South London tower block when she's robbed by a gang of masked, hooded youths. She's saved when the gang are distracted by a bright meteorite, which falls from the sky and hits a nearby parked car. Sam flees, just before the gang are attacked by a small alien creature that leaps from the wreckage. The gang chase the creature and kill it, dragging its ghoulish carcass to the top of the block, which they treat as their territory.

While Sam and the police hunt for the gang, a second wave of meteors fall. Confident of victory against such feeble invaders, the gang grab weapons, mount bikes and mopeds, and set out to defend their turf. But this time, the creatures are bigger. Much bigger. Savage, shadowy and bestial, they are hunting their fallen comrade and nothing will stand in their way. The estate is about to become a battleground. And the bunch of no-hope kids who just attacked Sam are about to become her, and the block's, only hope.

## **BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

It's an age-old question, posed by scientists and philosophers the world over: what would happen if ferocious aliens invaded a South London council estate?

Well, at long last we have the answer, thanks to Joe Cornish and his debut movie *ATTACK THE BLOCK*. And that answer is, they'd soon meet their match, in the form of a group of teenaged youths – or, if you prefer, hoodies – who start the film as the de facto bad guys, mugging an innocent nurse (Jodie Whittaker) on her way home from work. It was exactly that intriguing dichotomy, that clash between outward menace and inward steel, that compelled Cornish to take a group often condemned and demonised by society and turn them into heroes over the course of one crazy night.

“That’s what excited me, starting with a kid who did something bad, like mugging somebody,” says Cornish. “That was a fun thing to write, the challenge of trying to turn your empathy around over the period of the film.”

Although *ATTACK THE BLOCK* – the title of which is an homage to the little-known South Korean movie, *Attack The Gas Station* – is a pure sci-fi film, transporting the tropes and conventions of the genre to a tower block teeming with life, its origins are much more mundane. “A gang of quite young kids nicked my wallet and phone through sheer force of numbers,” recalls Cornish, citing an incident that took place in 2001. “I’m a typical coward and I gave them everything.”

Well, not quite. They may have made off with his material goods, but the mugging – or, to be more accurate, enforced borrowing – set Cornish’s thoughts racing. “I was struck by how young they were, and I thought to myself, I probably see you in the park every day. We’re probably on the same level of *Call Of Duty!*”

A few months after that, he saw M. Night Shyamalan’s sci-fi horror, *Signs*, and that sealed the deal. “*Signs* reminded me of a script that John Sayles wrote called *Night Skies*, which became *ET* and *Gremlins*,” says Cornish. “I’ve always loved the idea of a siege, and humans on earth under siege

by aliens, and it struck me: what would happen if that happened in my neighbourhood where I grew up, in South London? Then I thought, what would happen if something like that went down during my mugging? Those kids who some people are frightened of would suddenly become quite important – suddenly all their strengths would be usable for a good reason. It went from there, really.”

### **BEGIN THE BLOCK**

That, of course, was back in 2001. *ATTACK THE BLOCK* – Cornish’s debut as a director – will be released in 2011. During that time, Cornish was working on his successful TV and radio career, often working in tandem with his old friend Adam Buxton, while beavering away on a succession of screenplays. “I’ve been trying to write a screenplay since I was about 13,” he laughs. “I could never finish one. I had amazing first acts and loads of ideas for endings, but I had what everyone has, which is the middle act black hole.”

But eventually one of those screenplays – *The Astonishing Ant Man*, co-written with his old friend, *Shaun of the Dead* and *Hot Fuzz* director Edgar Wright – made it to the finishing line, and that gave Cornish the impetus to give *ATTACK THE BLOCK* one more go.

Having secured funding from Film4 to write the screenplay, Cornish took the idea, along with several others, to two producer collaborators he’d long known, Nira Park and Jim Wilson. Park’s Big Talk was the production company responsible for the success of *Hot Fuzz* and *Shaun of the Dead*. “I came to Nira and Jim with three or four ideas, and this was the one that everybody leapt on,” says Cornish.

Recognising the potential in the idea, Big Talk took advantage of a slate deal it had recently struck with the UK Film Council and Film4 to fund the development of a series of British-set comedies. *ATTACK THE BLOCK* fit in perfectly with their plans. “What stood out was the idea of a genre film in which the protagonists are London council estate teenagers,” says producer, Jim Wilson “but which subverted the stereotypes of that world and those characters.” The Attack had begun.

## DEVELOP THE BLOCK

His film may have its roots in science-fiction, but from the off, Cornish was adamant that *ATTACK THE BLOCK* would feel as realistic as possible, with dialogue and characters torn straight from the streets and estates he'd grown up around in South London. In the case of phrases like Moses' "allow it", and "believe, bruv", the film seems like a ready-made treasure trove of golden quotes in waiting.

"The language for me was a really attractive thing," admits Cornish. "I love *A Clockwork Orange* and remember novels I've read like *The Colour Purple* and *Butcher Boy* that are written in argot. For the first couple of pages, they're impenetrable but then something magic happens and you pick it up by osmosis. So I thought there was an opportunity to maybe do a similar thing. Those kids have their own little language and it's a sci-fi film, so it's Klingon, isn't it? For me, that's a sci-fi element."

To get fully acquainted with that language, Cornish and Associate Producer, Lucy Pardee, embarked on a year-long tour of youth clubs in South London, interviewing kids there in an attempt to get inside the heads – and lingo – of his would-be characters. "Despite having grown up in South London, I'm not as street as I might be," laughs Cornish. "So we did a lot of research. I wrote the story in a quite cartoony way, the outline of what I wanted to happen, and got a friend to do illustrations of what the creatures looked like. We blew them up onto big bits of card and we talked to groups of kids who were the real thing, and talked them through the story, recording everything they said."

The sessions were incredibly rewarding for Cornish. "The amazing thing is that they pretty much would follow the story without being told," he marvels. "We would say, 'What would you do?' 'If it jumped on me, I'd fucking kick it!' It was very satisfying. They endorsed the story and often went in the same direction we had hoped they would go."

They also provided Cornish with the phrases he sought to establish both the shorthand between his five heroes, and the authenticity of the world he was building. "It was fun to learn what all the

little words mean,” he says. “We built ourselves a lexicon of about ten words. I thought it would be best to keep the lexicon to about ten and then use them repeatedly, so eventually by context you know what they mean.”

Executive Producer, Matthew Justice was also blown away by that first script draft and Joe’s attention to detail, “Watching him do the painstaking research that he did and the amount of thought that went into all of his choices, even though he hadn’t directed a movie before, you knew that he had a huge amount of film knowledge and was incredibly film literate.”

Eventually Cornish had a script he was happy with, and a good idea of the sort of film he wanted to make. “More like a John Carpenter movie, or a sort of early low-budget high-concept 80s monster action film, really,” he says. “It’s definitely influenced by Carpenter, trying to be a little minimal with dialogue and make it a bit less dialogue-driven than your average British film and make it about kinetics and action and movement.”

He also had five unique selling points; a quintet of heroes that would be unlike anything else that British cinema had given us before.

“It struck me that there was a chance to make a genre film, that these kids looked fucking great, like they were ninja or out of a western,” says Cornish. “They have vehicles like mopeds and bicycles and mini-mopeds. Not only do they have great costumes and great vehicles, they have very cinematic weaponry as well, with samurai swords and baseball bats and fireworks.”

Sounds great. Now all he had to do was find them.

## **CAST THE BLOCK**

ATTACK THE BLOCK starts with Jodie Whittaker's nurse, Sam, walking home from a tube station following a hard shift, where she soon runs into trouble, in the form of a mugging by five hooded youths. The clumsy mugging is interrupted when a meteor falls on a nearby car, allowing Sam to make her escape in the confusion.

Most films would follow Sam, but ATTACK THE BLOCK stays with the kids – Moses, Pest, Dennis, Jerome and Biggz - as they encounter and kill a tiny but ticked-off alien that emerges from the blasted wreckage of the car.

As a first-time director, Cornish was aware of the risks of casting five similarly inexperienced actors in his lead roles – but it was a challenge he also embraced, attending drama workshops and the same youth clubs he had been to before with Casting Director, Nina Gold and Lucy Pardee. And one by one, he found his gang.

## **MOSES**

The gang is led by the stoic, strong, silent Moses, a young boy torn between his innate decency and the chance to escape the drudgery of the block by entering the employ of local druglord, Hi-Hatz (Jumayn Hunter). Continuing the John Carpenter theme, Cornish saw Moses as a throwback to one of that director's iconic heroes. "I had a Snake Plissken thing going on for Moses," says Cornish, comparing him to Escape From New York's one-eyed hero, played by Kurt Russell. "He doesn't have an eyepatch, but he has three scars on his cheek and he gets arrested and they cut the cuffs off, so he ends up with these two little handcuff bracelets on. He's got a combat jacket which gives him a little bit of agitprop rebelliousness. I did think of the characters in terms of little action figures – I imagined what Kenner would do with my cast!"

Eventually, he found his own life-sized action figure, with fully articulated, posable parts, in the form of John Boyega, a young actor who already had some experience under his belt in the form of a number of plays. "When they gave me the full synopsis, I was like, 'I'm in this film. I don't care. I'm getting in this film!'" laughs Boyega. "Moses is a silent and brave type. He's a good kid in bad

circumstances and he deals with what he's got and you can't really blame him – he has no choice. He's silent because he doesn't want to open up too much. He doesn't want people to ask questions and he finds it hard to trust anyone.”

## **PEST**

A sharp-tongued motormouth who takes something of a shine to Sam, and who has an ever-ready array of fireworks at his disposal, Pest often lives up to his name. So it was important to Cornish that he find an actor who wouldn't overstep the mark. “What was important for Pest was that he was sweet and loveable and endearing despite being annoying, because he's got the most lines in the film,” says Cornish.

Enter Alex Esmail, a first-time actor whose only experience of acting came from drama class at his school. There, he was handpicked by the Block casting agents and went through several auditions before getting the role. “Pest is a weed-smoking, crazy, firework wielding idiot,” explains Esmail. “He's always doing some craziness – you might be in a room and something will explode and everybody will turn around and look at Pest and he'll just be sitting there with a big grin on his face.”

## **DENNIS**

Moses's right-hand man, Dennis is a cool cat whose unflappable nature and skills with a samurai sword come in handy when facing off against the worst that space can throw at the kids. “He's a cocky, good-looking Han Solo roguish type,” says Cornish, “and we found a kid like that. We were lucky in that way, I think.”

That kid was Franz Drameh, who had already acted on screen, in Clint Eastwood's *Hereafter* (which shared a location with ATTACK THE BLOCK). But Dennis is a part that the actor welcomed with open arms. “He's the hothead of the gang. He's fascinated with bikes, motorbikes, mopeds and BMX's,” he explains. “He's the rash one. When I read the script, I was happy with the way that the gang was portrayed. As the film goes on, the audience begins to see that a gang is more than just youths that go and rob people, and you see how they're just normal people too.”

## **JEROME**

With his big NHS specs and school uniform peeking out from under his street clothes, Jerome seems the most incongruous member of the gang; a level-headed and studious young man who tags along with his mates. “He’s a good kid, basically,” says Cornish. “He’s probably the most timid and the most unlikely to be involved in the mugging at the start of the film. He’s quite sensible. Leeon had exactly what we wanted in his personality, and had an intelligence and gentleness that was a really nice counterpoint to the rest of the gang.”

Leeon in this case is newcomer, Leeon Jones, who admits to having given the premise almost as much thought as its director. “There’s no movie like this really, because you’ve seen all these movies of aliens, but then you always ask yourself what would happen if aliens attacked my hood,” he says, “and I thought this is exactly what would happen and the weapons we use and everything is so realistic as to what we’d do in the situation. Joe’s written a believable gang – there’ll always be the Moses character who’s the leader, there’s definitely a hot head, the one that’s always fighting, and there’ll be a young guy who wants to be ahead of his age. And there’s always someone who’ll be high. That’s what makes the gang a family; we look out for each other.”

## **BIGGZ**

Last, but not least, is the wiry and wired Biggz, one of the most youthful members of the group and who winds up spending most of the movie in a decidedly unusual and uncomfortable position. “The kid we cast, Simon Howard, was a really stylish kid and he would come to the castings with really cool clothes,” recalls Cornish. “We let him choose his own costumes and he ended up looking like a little Inspector Gadget”. For Simon Howard, acting was a new experience. “Biggz is the youngest in the gang and the others all look out for him. I think he’s probably the most scared, but he wouldn’t show it because he wants to big up himself in front of everyone,” he says. “The script came to my house on Christmas Eve. It was a happy Christmas present! I was like, this is gonna be a sick film because I’ve always thought there’s gangs in films, but why can’t there be like a gang versus a ghost, or a gang versus an alien? And now the film’s finally come!”

Aware of the strain that could be placed upon his young, inexperienced cast, Cornish was cautious to slowly indoctrinate them into their new world. "I think the big jump was getting them to work with the script," says Nira Park. "It's one thing being brilliant in an improvised group, but learning and delivering lines from the script without losing the naturalness of their performance, which was what excited us about them as performers in the first place, was a much harder challenge. But Joe did a lot of rehearsal with them and it made them really connect to him as a group. It was like they could talk to Joe about anything. They obviously felt very comfortable and totally trusting of him and they definitely wanted to do their very best for him." According to Cornish, the boys never flagged. "It was lovely to come onto set every day and have a group of actors who were as naïve and enthusiastic as I was," laughs Cornish. "It didn't wear off. They loved it. At the end of the shoot, I said to them, 'imagine if this was the first day of the shoot – could you go through all that again?' And they looked at me and said, 'yes!'"

Cornish actually let the kids have genuine input into their characters, particularly the look of the gang. "That was very important, actually," he admits. "There are all sorts of codes and signifiers in young people's clothing. They were like, 'I can't wear a purple bandana! I'm a South London kid!' It's all very codified. The kids chose their own trainers, they chose their own bandanas and their own clothes from within the designer's selections. We learned a lot about how you will wear two pairs of trousers, like a pair of jeans and then over the top a tracksuit so they can hide shit in the pockets if they get patted down by the police. We learned how important it is to wear dark clothes if you're out on the rob and how the colour of a bandana indicates your territory or your turf. How you swagger and when you swagger and when you don't swagger."

The script also changed as the cast was cemented, with Cornish penning the final couple of drafts to reflect certain characteristics in his young cast. "We used them as a resource," he says. "For example, they were much more harsh on Sam, because she snitches on them and tells the police. I originally had them being nicer to her faster, and one of the things that we did when they came in was try and make it a bit more truthful in that respect."

With his five kids safely locked in, Cornish turned his attention to the other major roles in the movie – trainee nurse Sam, the posh boy Brewis, trapped in the block after stopping off to buy some weed, and Ron, a drug dealer based in the block whose cannabis garden proves crucial in the fight against the invading hordes.

For Sam, he turned to Jodie Whittaker, the star of *St. Trinian's* and *Venus*. "I was looking for an actress who was natural and unmannered enough for her style to blend with the less experienced actors around her" says Cornish. "Jodie was one of the last actresses I met for the part. Meeting her was a very big relief, because I hadn't felt I'd met the right person before, and I'd been starting to get worried. Luckily, she was perfect."

Once she had been cast, Jodie attended the final shortlisted auditions for the gang parts, as ensuring the chosen gang had chemistry with Sam was crucial to the character arc in the film. "It's a very different type of casting than what I'm used to... all these kids were sat in rows, learning their lines and they come in and do group workshops and let me sit in on that," explains Jodie, who particularly cherished that opportunity as it has allowed her to forge close friendships and watch the boys grow as actors, "They're such intelligent lads...this incredibly sparkly group of lads and it's so exciting to think that they are potentially a next generation of actors."

Having moved to London from Huddersfield herself several years ago, Jodie could easily identify with Sam's fish out of water character. "Sam has moved to this block very recently and it's kind of a world away from what she's been brought up with...It's that thing of moving to London, finding an area, moving in, and standing out like a sore thumb...It's so obvious my character's not from there."

Up-and-coming actor Luke Treadaway got the nod as Brewis, a character that Cornish admits may have been modelled upon his younger self. "When I was in my 20s, I sometimes enjoyed the occasional 'jazz cigarette', and I would occasionally go to the local 'jazz club' to get some 'jazz herbs'. Sometimes I would be left sitting alone in the 'jazz club', while the lead trumpeter was out getting some more 'reeds', and I'd think, anything could flipping happen right now. A rival gang

could burst in, or the police could raid the block. Once I saw this dealer wrap a machete in a towel and pop it in the airing cupboard...”

Luke describes his character further as “that kid who’s at university who’s dealing a bit of weed to make a bit of money and he probably thinks he’s very good at skateboarding but maybe doesn’t have a skateboard. He loves his old school hip hop but he comes straight out of Chiswick, not Compton. He’s a little bit of a pretender, but he’s a sweet enough lad.”

For Ron, based on the owner of that Jazz Café, Cornish turned to an old friend, *Shaun of the Dead*, *Hot Fuzz* and *Paul* star, Nick Frost. “Ron’s this drug dealer who runs this grubby little cannabis-growing factory in a disused flat at the top of the block,” explains Cornish. “Nick was wonderful to have on the set. He was easy to direct... He was with us for a couple of weeks and it was exciting for the kids. It was really inspiring for them to be working with an actor who had made it in the business without any kind of high-falutin’ training...”

Frost, who describes Ron as “like the Child Catcher from *Chitty Chitty Bang Bang*, but not as camp and with more weed”, is self-effacing about his contribution to the film, and the kids’ development. “Yeah, it fell on deaf ears, that advice!” he laughs. “To their credit, they weren’t fazed at all. The first time I was on a film set, it was *Shaun of the Dead* and I was a mess for a week, so either they don’t think about it, or it doesn’t bother them. Either way, that’s pretty cool. They were courteous to everyone, they listened and they did a great job.”

## SHOOT THE BLOCK

ATTACK THE BLOCK takes place in Wyndham House in South London, but there's no point trying to seek it out on Google Maps. It doesn't exist. Instead, it's a composite of a number of London locations – a bit of Islington here, and a lot of the Heygate Estate in Elephant & Castle there. Heygate has been seen in the likes of *Hereafter* and *Harry Brown* and gave Cornish exactly what he was looking for. "That place was fantastic," he remembers. "It was a completely deserted estate that you could lock off without disturbing the neighbours. Although we did stir up the neighbourhood during the police van attack. We did set off some quite loud fireworks on residential streets late at night."

In his director's statement, written during development, Cornish sets out what he wants to do with the eponymous block, mentioning it in the same breath as the Nakatomi Plaza from *Die Hard*, *Alien's Nostromo* and the Poseidon from, erm, *The Poseidon Adventure* – self-contained single locations that became iconic and ultimately defined the action that took place within their walls. For Cornish, Wyndham House could stand alongside them. "Estates are amazingly peculiar environments which, when first conceived, were fantastic, escapist and futuristic," says Cornish. "Now, to modern eyes, they seem extremely retrograde and downbeat and nasty. But when you look at 70s movies like *Logan's Run* or *A Clockwork Orange*, they use that architecture as a futuristic thing, not a depressing thing. Like a kind of sci-fi playground".

To that end, Cornish knew exactly how he wanted to play with his sci-fi toys. "The ambition was to make the tower block feel like a spaceship," he says. "We put big lights on the roof like rocket engines. We had sound design that gave it a rumble, like the sound design they give spaceships." In fact, one shot which goes under the block recalls the camerawork of James Cameron or Ridley Scott on their respective *Alien* movies, while the interior of the block is all tube lighting and ominous sounds, designed to make corridors and flats seem dark, claustrophobic and maybe even alive. "You get amazing distorted sounds in tower blocks," he explains. "You hear a scream, you can't tell whether it's a baby or someone laughing or someone being attacked. The stairwells in tower blocks act like pipe organs because they have these hinged windows. When the wind blows through, if you adjust the windows, you can hear this massive note on them and get these amazing tones."

It's indicative of Cornish's meticulous preparation and his approach to the visual side of the movie, something he was very clear on from the start, to the point where he drew a map of the estate as he was writing the script. "I was just trying to apply as many fantasy ideals to the film as I could. I remembered reading *The Hobbit* as a kid in the school library and how exciting it was to see a map on the fly-leaf. Then, walking around my neighbourhood, I saw all these maps outside various estates and it's the same. Nobody gives the maps a second look, but what if there was an amazing incident in that park over there, and then an amazing chase up that walkway, and then an explosion up there? We wanted to stamp a clear layout on the audience's minds early, and since we couldn't afford to show an aerial shot of the estate as it doesn't exist, the way to show it was by showing this top shot of the map at the very beginning of the film."

ATTACK THE BLOCK started filming in March 2010, for eleven weeks. Six of those were on location and, in keeping with a decision taken very early on, that meant six weeks of night shoots.

"We decided to shoot it all after dark, which was very important," says Cornish, who loved the thrill of shooting at night. "We thought that would immediately make it different from other British movies that take place in a similar place. And we wet down every single street, which gives it that look that *The Warriors* and *Streets Of Fire* had, where you double your money with the lights. We tried to use similar lenses to what they used in *The Warriors* to get the same depth of field, so that the lights in the background become jewels glistening in shadow."

Anyone who knows Cornish's masterful work as a parodist of Hollywood movies – particularly with an assortment of stuffed teddy bears on *The Adam & Joe Show* – would know that, like the likes of his Big Talk stable-mates Simon Pegg and Edgar Wright, he's astonishingly cine-literate. So it's not exactly a surprise to find him name-checking the likes of Walter Hill's seminal gangland movie as an influence. It wasn't alone.

"We looked at *The Outsiders* and *Rumble Fish* and *Escape From New York* and *The Warriors* and *ET*, and lots of different movies," admits Cornish. "*Diva*, for the moped chase, *Subway* for the foot

chases. My favourite movies are movies where you forget the director's style, and you become absorbed in the moment-to-moment action."

To achieve the look and style he was after, Cornish needed a director of photography who knew his way around in the dark. He looked at a host of candidates but couldn't find the right person for the job. Until he was watching TV one night and happened upon a Virgin Mobile advert that saw its protagonist drop into a game of *Halo*. "It was brilliant," says Cornish. "It was all at night and it was legible. It wasn't grainy. We investigated it online, found out the name of the guy who shot it and gave him a call."

It turned out that the advert was shot by Tom Townend, who, like Cornish, had yet to cut his teeth in the features world. "I met lots of DOP's but no one was as good as Tom – his work was never grainy or shaky-cam or bleak. All those things that British films so often are."

Nira Park says "Because Joe was a first-time director, for the last year of development we started putting together a team of the very best HOD's around him, so that he could really begin to make the film he had in his head a reality and work through his ideas. Tom was absolutely Joe's choice, and was an inspired one. Joe does his due diligence. He knew what he wanted from a DOP. He watched tons of show reels and met lots of people. We shot a little test early on, which Tom did, and he did a fantastic job and Joe knew he was the right person for the film. And now I think Joe won't ever work with anyone else but Tom!"

Park laughs as she recalls Cornish's early days as a director, struggling to get to grips with the idea that a crew was there for him, after years of self-contained DIY existence. "Coming from *The Adam & Joe Show* and other things that he'd done that were much smaller, he was used to doing pretty much everything himself," she says. "It was a massive learning curve for him, which I think he really enjoyed."

On his radio show with Adam Buxton, Cornish has been known to dabble in songwriting. But when it came to the soundtrack for *ATTACK THE BLOCK*, he didn't want to go down the John Carpenter

route and write it himself. Instead, he handed over composing duties to Steve Price, another first-timer, and Basement Jaxx. "Score is a hugely important thing," he propounds. "It affects the tone, it affects everything." So he turned for inspiration once again to the minimalist electronic-infused music of John Carpenter. "It's got orchestral elements and percussive contemporary urban elements," he says of the score. "We listened to a lot of John Carpenter's stuff. The brilliant thing about his stuff is it's percussive but you stay absorbed in the story."

Cornish was keen to stay away from source music. "If you stick a source cue on there, or a pop song, you often end up having to shape the action to the track in the editing room" he says "which can turn things into a pop video. We went totally the other way. There's no ATTACK THE BLOCK rap! We had the picture locked well before the score was composed."

### **ATTACK THE BLOCK**

Giger's *Alien*. Joe Dante's *Gremlins*. *The Thing* from that man Carpenter's film of the same name. All great movie monsters that were also all great practical effects – something that Cornish was keen to emulate with his aliens. "The technique we used is quite old-school," he concedes. "I didn't want to do CGI creatures because a) we couldn't afford them and b) I wanted there to be something in front of the camera. I'm fed up with the aesthetics of CGI creatures. They're overly detailed and too ornate. I used to enjoy drawing the Stay-Puft Marshmallow Man from *Ghostbusters*, but you try drawing a four-headed hydra from *Harry Potter* and you need a fine art degree!"

He also wanted to help out his young cast as much as he could by scaring the bejesus out of them with face-to-face encounters with the real thing. Which in this case meant guys in suits. But when one of those guys is Terry Notary, a highly-respected movement coach who Cornish claims "can chase you on all fours in a terrifying way", the real thing might make for a welcome change. "Our aliens are quadrupeds," explains Cornish. "And Terry's the best quadruped runner in the world. He ran Tim Burton's Ape School for *Planet of the Apes*, was the movement coach on *Tintin* and the Viperwolves in *Avatar*. Having him there meant we could put a creature in the room with the kids. If an alien crashed through the window, it would actually crash through the window. If it landed on

them, it would land on them. If they had to slice it with a samurai sword, it was there and they could slice it.”

From the off, Cornish knew that he wanted the aliens attacking the block to be different from pretty much any space alien that had gone before. In the film, the gang refer to them as "big, alien, gorilla-wolf motherfuckers" – and that’s pretty much on the money. They’re large, nasty, savage, hairy beasts, hell bent on killing virtually anything that gets in their way with their razor-sharp claws and glow-in-the-dark teeth. It’s virtually impossible to come up with a new concept for a screen alien in today’s cinema – but Cornish and his team, including Oscar-winning genius Mike Elizalde, of US company Spectral Motion, have managed it with aplomb. “The creatures are like shadow puppets,” Cornish says. “A bit like the wolf at the beginning of *300* or the *Dark Riders* in Ralph Bakshi’s *Lord of the Rings* animation. It’s almost a rotoscope technique we use to create them.”

For Cornish, it was hugely vital to make his “nasty space bastards” truly scary, which meant that they had to slice and rend and tear and kill major and minor characters with those teeth and claws, to create a sense of jeopardy. “It was important to me that they were beasts,” says Cornish. “They’re all the things that the press and people call those kids, made into a monster. People call these kids monsters, they call them feral, they call them animalistic, they say they’ve got no morals or values and all they care about is territory and competitiveness. So what if there was a creature that really was like that, and then you pitted the kids against it? The aim was to bring out all the humanity and character in the kids by facing them off against something that genuinely was all those things.”

As Moses and his crew try to escape the alien infestation on mopeds, bicycles, and on foot, it gave Cornish a chance to flex muscles he’d been waiting to for a long time: his love of action cinema. From the van attack – where Dennis and the kids try to rescue Moses from incarceration – to Moses’ heroic last stand, or the sequence where the kids first try to get back to the block when the aliens first land, *ATTACK THE BLOCK* is filled with visceral and thrilling action sequences. “I absolutely loved that stuff,” he laughs. “I’m most at home when people stop talking and start running around and jumping over things and fighting things. I don’t think there’s enough movement

and action in British cinema – good movies for me are movies you could watch with the sound down and still follow. I wanted to make a film that was about action, not talk.”

It's been an experience that, for Cornish, has been draining (it's taken two and a half years), challenging but hugely rewarding. “It's the movie I set out to make,” he says. “If anything, it's more fun and escapist. I'm pleased about that. The whole thing is a chase, basically. It starts with the mugging and doesn't stop. It rattles along. It's 87 minutes – I love shorter films. Maybe it's an age thing – I just want to skip to the last act!”

But, is the last act ever really the last act in a genre film? Or is there a chance that Cornish, and his cast (what's left of them, at any rate) could return to Wyndham House at some point for another go at attacking the block? “Inevitably we all ended up riffing on sequels while we shot it, especially the kids,” laughs Cornish. “They all liked to imagine what would happen next. I could definitely think of something – but not immediately. I've got lots of other ideas first. But it would be fun.” His eyes twinkle. “After all, these things could land anywhere...”

## **ABOUT THE CAST**

### **John Boyega – Moses**

Boyega is currently training at the Identity Drama School. His theatre credits include *Six Parties* at the National Theatre and *Category B* at the Tricycle Theatre.

ATTACK THE BLOCK marked his film acting debut. Since completing principal photography John has performed in *Junkhearts* alongside Eddie Marsden and Romala Garai. He has also played the guest lead in *Law & Order:UK* and has appeared in BBC's *Becoming Human*.

### **Jodie Whittaker – Sam**

Jodie Whittaker graduated from Guildhall in 2005 with the Gold Medal for Acting. She first came to the public's attention as Jessie in Roger Michell's *Venus* for which she was nominated for a British Independent Film Award as Best Newcomer, a Critic's Circle Award for Best British Newcomer and a Satellite Award for Best Actress in a Motion Picture.

She recently finished shooting on Lone Scherfig's '*One Day*'. Other films include the two Ealing Studios '*St. Trinians*' films directed by Barnaby Thompson and Oliver Parker, Dana Lustig's '*Veil of Maya*', Nick Moran's '*The Kid*', Ian Fitzgibbon's '*Perrier's Bounty*', Conor Mcdermottroe's '*Occo vs the World*', Jann Turner's '*White Wedding*', Vicente Amorim's '*Good*' and Dana Lustig's '*A Thousand Kisses Deep*'.

On television, Whittaker has appeared in BBC productions of *Nightwatch*, *The Oaks*, *The Accused*, *Royal Wedding*, *Cranford*, *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*, *This Life +10*, *Dalziel & Pascoe*, *Billy Two-Sheds* for which she was awarded a Royal Television Society Midlands Award for Best Actress and *Doctors*, an ITV production of *Wired* and a Channel 4 production of *Tom Hurdall*.

Whittaker's theatre credits include Michael Attenborough's Almeida productions of *Awake and Sing!* and *Enemies* for which she was nominated for an Ian Charleson Award, Tamara Hervey's Trafalgar Studios production of *Bash* and Tim Carroll's Globe production of *The Storm*.

**Alex Esmail – Pest**

ATTACK THE BLOCK marks Esmail's film acting debut. Alex was spotted during a drama class at Acland Burghley School in Tufnell Park. He is an extreme sports enthusiast, specializing in martial arts, skateboarding and parkour free running. This natural ability with balance and movement has no doubt helped him to develop his acting talents.

**Franz Drameh – Dennis**

Trained at the Young Actors Theatre, Drameh's film credits include Clint Eastwood's *Hereafter*, Justin Donaldson's *Right Side of God*, Barney Cokeliss' *Be Good* and Sally Aprahamian's *There for Me*.

On television, he has worked on BBC productions of Dominic Brigstocke's *Parents of the Band* and episodes of *Casualty* and *Living It*, in addition to Disney's *Break Kids*, Zenith's *Byker Grove* and the Discovery Channel's *Space*.

Drameh's theatre credits include *Peter Pan* for the Young Actors Theatre.

**Leeon Jones – Jerome**

ATTACK THE BLOCK marks Jones' film acting debut. He was taking part in a summer project with Mayhem Theatre in the South Bank Centre when his teacher put him forward for auditions. As well as acting, he has a keen interest in basketball, cooking oriental foods, manga comics and all things superhero.

**Simon Howard – Biggz**

ATTACK THE BLOCK marks Howard's film acting debut. He was discovered in a drama class at John Ruskin College in Croydon. Simon is an aspiring rapper and actor from South London who has been attending workshops at Peckham theatre and London Youth Committee, where he recently performed in *Much Ado About Nothing*.

### **Luke Treadaway – Brewis**

Following his graduation from LAMDA in 2006, Treadaway's feature film credits include Nick Hamm's *Killing Bono*, Larysa Kondracki's *The Whistleblower* and *Viko*, Louis Leterrier's *Clash of the Titans*, Philip Ridley's *Heartless*, Simon Ellis' *Public Sex* which was selected for the 2009 Rotterdam International Film Festival, Wayne Holloway's *God's Wounds* and Lou Pepe and Keith Fulton's *Brothers of the Head*, for which he was nominated for a British Independent Film Award for Most Promising Newcomer and which won the Michael Powell Award for Best British Film at the Edinburgh Film Festival.

His television credits include David Kennard's *Mist: Sheepdog Tales*, Adrian Shergold's *Clapham Junction* and Bill Anderson's *The Innocence Project*.

On stage, Treadaway has appeared in Ed Dick's production of *The Cure at Troy* for the National Theatre Workshop, Michael Attenborough's *Through a Glass Darkly* at the Stockholm Ingmar Bergman Festival, Ramin Gray's *Over There* at the Royal Court Theatre, Duncan MacMillan's *Cradle Me*, Lisa Goldman's *Piranha Heights* and National Theatre productions of Marianne Elliott and Tom Morris' *War Horse* and Marianne Elliott's *Saint Joan*.

### **Nick Frost – Ron**

Frost first came to prominence as the gun-mad character Mike Watt in Channel 4's *Spaced*. Since then, Frost has become one of the U.K.'s most sought-after actors. He earned a nomination for Most Promising Newcomer by the British Independent Film Awards for his role in the cult zombie movie *Shaun of the Dead*, starring opposite Simon Pegg. Frost again starred with Pegg in the hugely successful hit comedy *Hot Fuzz*. Frost's other film credits include *Kinky Boots*, *Penelope*, *Wild Child* and *The Boat That Rocked*.

Frost demonstrated his acting credentials in the BBC's adaptation of Martin Amis' best seller *Money*. Amis added his voice to the critical approval Frost garnered for the role. He has also appeared in the Channel 4 sitcom *Black Books*, with Dylan Moran and Bill Bailey, and hosted the Channel 5 series *Danger! 50,000 Zombies!* and *Danger! Incoming Attack!* Frost was the lead role

in *Hyperdrive*, a sci-fi comedy series for BBC Two, and starred in two seasons of *Man Stroke Woman*.

2011 sees the release of *Paul*, written and starring Nick and Simon Pegg once again. They can also be seen in the upcoming Steven Spielberg picture *The Adventures of Tintin: The Secret of the Unicorn*.

### **Jumayn Hunter – Hi-Hatz**

Hunter's feature film credits include James Watkins' *Eden Lake* and *Little Terrors*.

On television he has worked on films including Ian Rickson's *Fallout* and Sean Conway's *Kings of London*. He has also appeared in television series such as the BBC's *Casualty*, Thames Television's *The Bill* and *Torn* for ITV.

On stage, Hunter has been seen in Arcola Theatre productions of Max Stafford Clark's *Macbeth* and Deborah Paige's *Afterbirth* as well as a West Yorkshire Playhouse production of *Safe* and a Westminster Kingsway production of *The Tempest*.

## **ABOUT THE CREW**

### **Joe Cornish – Writer/Director**

Joe Cornish is best known as one half of British comedy duo *Adam and Joe*. As well as writing and directing *ATTACK THE BLOCK* for Film Four and Big Talk Productions, Joe recently co-wrote *The Astonishing Ant Man* with Edgar Wright for Marvel Studios, and Steven Spielberg and Peter Jackson's *Tintin* for Dreamworks, along with Wright and Steven Moffat.

Joe first appeared on British TV screens in 1997 as co-star and co-creator of *The Adam and Joe Show*, a home-made comedy show famous for its sketches, songs and animations satirizing pop culture. The show found considerable cult and critical acclaim, winning the Royal Television Society's Best Newcomers award in 1998 and running for four seasons.

The success of *The Adam and Joe Show* led to spin-off comedy series on both Channel 4 and the BBC, including *Adam & Joe's Formative Years*, *Adam and Joe's American Animation Adventure*, and *Adam and Joe Go Tokyo*. Joe also worked as director for Channel 4 comedy shows such as *Modern Toss* and *Blunder*, as a writer for BBC2's *Big Train*, and as a presenter for *BBC2* and *BBC Radio 4*.

Alongside his film work, Joe maintains a successful radio career with Adam. The duo took over from Ricky Gervais on radio station *XFM* in 2003, spawning a popular series of podcasts. They moved to *BBC 6music* in 2007, where their Saturday morning show was awarded the 2008 Broadcasting Press Guild Award for Radio Programme Of The Year, three Silver Sony Awards in 2009, and Sony Gold for Best Radio Comedy in 2010.

*ATTACK THE BLOCK* is Joe's first feature film.

## **Nira Park – Producer**

Nira Park founded Big Talk Productions in 1995, through which she produced both series of Simon Pegg and Jessica Hynes' award-winning comedy series *Spaced*, directed by Edgar Wright, all three series of double BAFTA award-winning sitcom *Black Books*, and the Rose D'Or nominated comedy/drama series *Free Agents*, all for Channel 4.

Following the success of *Spaced*, Nira went on to develop and produce the hit movie *Shaun Of The Dead*, for which she received a Carl Foreman Award nomination at the 2005 BAFTA Awards. Nira was also selected as one of Variety Magazine's Top Ten Producers to Watch.

In 2006, she produced Ringan Ledwidge's debut feature *Gone* for Working Title/Universal and she collaborated again with Simon Pegg and Edgar Wright on their follow up movie, *Hot Fuzz*.

In 2007, Nira expanded Big Talk Productions and created Big Talk Pictures and is now CEO of both companies.

Nira recently produced Edgar Wright's *Scott Pilgrim Vs The World*, starring Michael Cera, which was released internationally in August 2010 to outstanding critical acclaim. She also Executive Produced BBC Three's hit sitcom *Him & Her*, which has been commissioned for its second season, and Channel 4's *Friday Night Dinner*, written and produced by Robert Popper.

Nira's most recent production is *Paul*, penned by and starring Simon Pegg and Nick Frost and directed by Greg Mottola for Working Title/Universal. The film opened number one at the box office in the UK and will be released in the US in March.

In December 2010 she was the recipient of 'Producer of the Year' at the UK Women in Film and TV awards. Nira continues to produce and develop across a diverse range of Film and TV projects for Big Talk Productions and Pictures.

### **James Wilson – Producer**

Before becoming an independent film producer, James Wilson was a production executive at Fox Searchlight Pictures and Film4. Over eight years he worked on the development, production and acquisition of a range of films including *Sexy Beast*, *Dancer In The Dark*, *The Filth and The Fury*, *The Low Down*, *The Last King of Scotland*, *Nil By Mouth*, *The Ice Storm*, *Shaun of the Dead* and *The Full Monty*. He is next producing Jonathan Glazer's *Under The Skin*, with Nick Wechsler. Jim is also a Director of Big Talk Pictures.

### **Matthew Justice – Executive Producer**

Matthew Justice joined Nira Park at Big Talk in 2007, as Managing Director.

Matthew has over twenty years' experience in Film and Television. Through his label Lunar Films he produced a number of movies including David Mackenzie's Berlin Silver Bear-winning *Hallam Foe*, Cedric Klapisch's multiple César-winning *The Russian Dolls* and Raul Ruiz's *Klimt*, amongst others.

Prior to Lunar, he looked after Business Development and Production at *Invicta Capital*, one of the leading providers of structured finance to the international Film and TV industry. Before *Invicta*, Matthew was Stephen Norrington's producing partner; together they worked on *Blade*, *The Last Minute*, and *Death Machine*. He also produced Michel Gondry's award-winning commercials for *Levis* and *Smirnoff*, after starting his career at The Moving Picture Company.

Since joining Big Talk, Matthew has overseen the transactional side of the BBC Worldwide acquisition of a minority shareholding in Big Talk's television company, Big Talk Productions, and the first look arrangements Big Talk's film company, Big Talk Pictures, has with Optimum/Studio Canal and Film4. He has served as Executive Producer on Big Talk's *Free Agents*, *Him & Her*, *Rev.* and continues to work across the Film and TV slate. Matthew sits on Pact Council as Chair of Film, and also on the Film Industry Training Board.

## **Edgar Wright – Executive Producer**

Although he's only in his mid-thirties, award winning filmmaker Edgar Wright's list of credits reads like that of a seasoned veteran. With projects like the UK television series turned international cult phenomenon *Spaced*, the rom-zom-com feature film debut *Shaun of the Dead*, and its follow up action/comedy opus *Hot Fuzz*, he's evolved from a young film geek wanting to prove himself into one of the most sought after geeks working in film today. He was also tapped by directors Quentin Tarantino and Robert Rodriguez to contribute the faux trailer *Don't*, for the epic *Grindhouse* and was brought on-board by Peter Jackson and Steven Spielberg to co-write *The Adventures of Tintin: Secret of the Unicorn*. Last summer Wright released his first U.S. production of the comic book movie *Scott Pilgrim Versus The World* for Universal Pictures starring Michael Cera. He has a number of upcoming projects in development.

### **Tom Townend – Director of Photography**

Townend has worked as Director of Photography on Samantha Morton's *The Unloved* and also as 2nd Unit Director of Photography on Danny Boyle's *28 Days Later* Daniel Barber's *Harry Brown* and Lynne Ramsey's *Ratcatcher*.

He has worked as a Camera Operator on Joe Wright's *Pride and Prejudice*, John Madden's *Proof* and Lynne Ramsey's *Morvern Callar*.

Very successful in the commercials field, Townend has recently won the Gold Award for Cinematography at the London International Awards for his work on the Virgin Media campaign. Amongst his numerous other commercials credits are campaigns for Samsung, Sony Playstation, Sky HD, Bacardi, McDonalds, Bailey's and Vodafone.

He has also worked on many music videos including a CADS win in 2007 for his work on Kasabian's *Empire*, a CADS nomination for The Horrors and a UK MVA Award nomination for Take That. Other music video credits include Florence & the Machine, Will Young, Craig David, The Verve, Duffy, Snow Patrol and Arctic Monkeys.

### **Jonathan Amos – Editor**

This year Jonathan received an ACE nomination for his work as (shared) Head Editor on Edgar Wright's *Scott Pilgrim Vs. The World* for Universal Pictures. Jonathan has also worked as additional editor on Edgar Wright's *Hot Fuzz* and Don Mancini's *Seed of Chucky*.

Jonathan has worked on a number of television comedies and dramas with a variety of directors, including Justin Chadwick, James Griffins, Julian Holmes, Sam Miller, Catherine Morshead and Tristram Shapeero. His TV credits include *Free Agents*, *Ashes To Ashes*, *Spooks*, *The Fixer* and *Peep Show*.

### **Marcus Rowland – Production Designer**

A long-time collaborator with Big Talk, Rowland has designed Edgar Wright's *Scott Pilgrim vs the World*, *Hot Fuzz* and *Shaun of the Dead*.

On television he has worked on seven episodes of *Spaced* directed by Edgar Wright, fourteen episodes of *The Comic Strip Presents...* for Directors including Peter Richardson, Keith Allen, Robbie Coltrane and Paul Bartel and Peter Richardson's *Glam Metal Detectives* for the BBC.

### **Rosa Dias – Costume Designer**

Dias' film credits include Ringan Ledwidge's *Gone*, Christian Levering's *Dogma '95 – The King is Alive*, Philippa Cousins' *Happy Now* and she is currently designing the costumes for *The Inbetweeners* TV movie.

For television she has designed BBC productions of Richard Laxton's *Hancock and Joan*, Claire Beaver's *Daphne* and Lucy Carter's *Churchill* in addition to numerous series and sitcoms including Channel 4's *Free Agents* for Big Talk, *Cinderella* and *Jack and the Beanstalk*, and the docudramas *Queen of Sheba* and *Ceremonies in Egypt*.

Rosa has also worked in opera, including Christopher Newell's Welsh National Opera productions of *The Magic Flute*, *The Bartered Bride* and *The Marriage of Figaro* and Jamie Heinz's *Yarico Musical*, and has worked extensively in commercials including campaigns directed by Ringan Ledwidge, Graham Linehan and Jim Hoskins.

### **Jane Walker – Hair and Make-Up Designer**

Jane Walker is another long-time collaborator with Big Talk, having most recently worked on Greg Mottola's *Paul*, in addition to Edgar Wright's *Hot Fuzz* and *Shaun of the Dead*. Other film credits include Robert Weide's *How to Lose Friends and Alienate People*, David Schwimmer's *Run Fat Boy Run*, Sho Igarashi's *Chosyu 5*, David Mackenzie's *Asylum*, David Dobkin's *Shanghai Knights*, Simon Cellan Jones' *The One and Only*, Stephen Sommers' *The Mummy* and *The Mummy Returns* and Phil Agland's *The Woodlanders*.

On television, Walker has previously worked with producer Nira Park on *Spaced* and *Black Books* and amongst her numerous other television credits are *Harry and Paul – series 2* starring Harry Enfield and Paul Whitehouse, *Pincohet's Progress*, *The Trial*, *Man Stroke Woman – series 1 and 2*, *The Lenny Henry Show*, *Murder in Suburbia – series 1 and 2*, *Randall and Hopkirk Deceased*, *The Smell of Reeves and Mortimer* and *'Allo, 'Allo*.

### **Paul Herbert – Stunt Co-Ordinator**

Herbert has worked as Stunt Co-Ordinator on numerous films, most recently *Johnny English Reborn* David Gordon Green's *Your Highness*, Neil Marshall's *Centurion* and *Doomsday*, Richard Curtis' *The Boat that Rocked*, Steve McQueen's *Hunger*, Gerald McMorrow's *Franklyn*, Beeban Kidron's *Hippie Hippie Shake*, Robert Weide's *How to Lose Friends and Alienate People*, Martin McDonagh's *In Bruges*, David Cronenberg's *Eastern Promises* and Mikael Hafstrom's *1408*.

Herbert has also been Stunt Co-Ordinator on Edgar Wright's *Hot Fuzz*, Robert De Niro's *The Good Shepherd*, Tom Vaughan's *Starter for Ten*, Alek Keshishian's *Love and Other Disasters* and Jonny Campbell's *Alien Autopsy* amongst numerous others.

As a stunt performer and double, Herbert has worked on many films including Brian Singer's *Valkyrie*, Iain Softley's *Inkheart*, Alfonso Cuarón's *Children of Men*, Ron Howard's *The Da Vinci Code*, Christopher Nolan's *Batman Begins*, Edgar Wright's *Shaun of the Dead*, Tim Burton's *Sleepy Hollow* and James Cameron's *Titanic*.

### **Spectral Motion and Mike Elizalde – Alien Design**

Mike entered the industry in 1987 and quickly established his career as a makeup designer, sculptor and one of the top animatronic engineers in his field. He has since worked on over 60 feature films, including *Hellboy*, *Men In Black*, *A.I. Artificial Intelligence*, *Fantastic Four*, *X-Men: The Last Stand* and *Hellboy II: The Golden Army*. Elizalde and his wife Mary established Spectral Motion Incorporated in 1994 as a vehicle for producing and successfully marketing a series of original model kits sculpted by Elizalde. Spectral Motion participated in the creation of creature and

makeup effects in successful collaboration with such top-level effects companies as Rick Baker's Cinovation and Stan Winston Studio in the years that followed.

Today, Spectral Motion is recognized as one of the leading makeup and creature effects studios in the industry. Elizalde received an "Achievement in Makeup" nomination by the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences for his work on *Hellboy II: The Golden Army*. Elizalde was awarded a Saturn Award for "Best Makeup" from the Academy of Science Fiction, Fantasy and Horror Films in 2004 for his *Hellboy* designs.

Spectral Motion has also produced creatures for *Paul*, another Big Talk Pictures film, as well as *Your Highness*, *Land of the Lost* and *X Men: First Class*.

### **Double Negative – Visual Effects**

Double Negative, located in the heart of London's Soho, was set up in 1998 with a team of 30 staff. Since then the company has grown to 900+ staff, making it Europe's largest provider of visual effects for Film. Their approach ensures films both small and large receive the same high standard of creative and technical service and makes for a winning combination that has resulted in Double Negative being recognised with several Visual Effects Society awards for films such as *Inception* and *Sherlock Holmes* and being nominated for both the BAFTA and Academy Awards for vfx for *The Dark Knight* and *Inception*.

Over the past 12 months, Double Negative has completed work on projects including; *Paul*, *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows - Part 1*, *Inception*, *Scott Pilgrim vs. the World*, *The Sorcerer's Apprentice*, *Iron Man 2*, *Kick-Ass*, and *Prince of Persia: The Sands of Time*. DNeg is currently in production on *John Carter of Mars*, *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows - Part 2* and *Captain America: The First Avenger*.

ATTACK THE BLOCK's Visual Effects Supervisor Ged Wright received an Oscar nomination this year for his work on *Iron Man 2*.

## **About Big Talk**

Big Talk is a multi-award winning Film and TV Production Company, founded by producer Nira Park in 1995.

Its credits include *Spaced*, *Black Books*, *Free Agents*, *Rev*, *Him & Her* and *Friday Night Dinner* and the hit movies *Shaun of the Dead* and *Hot Fuzz*, as well as last year's critically acclaimed *Scott Pilgrim vs. The World*.

In October 2007 Big Talk's film arm, Big Talk Pictures completed a slate development deal jointly funded by Film 4 and UK Film Council under which it developed *ATTACK THE BLOCK* and in September 2009 the company completed a first look financing and distribution deal with Optimum/Studio Canal to continue to expand its film ambitions.

Big Talk's most recent release is *Paul* – written by and starring Simon Pegg and Nick Frost and directed by Greg Mottola for Universal/Working Title Films. *Paul* opened in February in the UK to record numbers and follows in the US in March.

## **About Optimum Releasing**

Established in May 1999, Optimum Releasing is a key element within Studiocanal, the pan European film, production and sales distribution arm of French media group, Canal+. Optimum Releasing has established a reputation for an innovative approach to distribution and has enjoyed success with a varied mix of film titles across all genres. A passion for film and commitment to creativity is central to all of Optimum's activity.

2011 will see the release of a host of exciting and varied titles including Jaime Collet-Serra's *Unknown*, Duncan Jones' *Source Code*, Luc Besson's *Adele Blanc-Sec*, Tomas Alfredson's *Tinker Tailor Soldier Spy* and Francois Ozon's *Potiche*. Past theatrical releases include Guillermo del Toro's *Pan's Labyrinth*, Paul Haggis' *In the Valley of Elah*, Marjane Satrapi's *Persepolis*, Garth Jennings' *Son of Rambow*, Darren Aronofsky's *The Wrestler*, Woody Allen's *Vicky Cristina Barcelona*, Armando Iannucci's *In the Loop*, Anne Fontaine's *Coco avant Chanel*, Kathryn Bigelow's *The Hurt Locker*, Jacques Audiard's *A Prophet*, Roman Polanski's *The Ghost Writer*,

Chris Morris' *Four Lions* and Florian Henckel von Donnersmarck's *The Tourist*.

Established in 2004, Optimum Home Entertainment has quickly become one of the leading distributors in the UK Home Entertainment sector, boasting an active catalogue of more than 1500 titles. With sales handled by its joint venture Elevation, consistently ranked amongst the top ten UK distributors, Optimum Home Entertainment has aggressively grown its market share year on year by combining classic library titles with critically and commercially successful new releases.

On the production front, Optimum's ambitious plans include Rowan Joffe's *Brighton Rock* starring Sam Riley, Andrea Riseborough and Helen Mirren, which had its World Premiere at the Toronto Film Festival and opened in the UK on February 4; Nick Murphy's debut feature *The Awakening* starring Rebecca Hall, Dominic West and Imelda Staunton - both in post production - and the establishment of Warp X with Warp Films, the Film Council and Film4. The first two films from Warp X are feature directorial debuts from Paddy Considine with *Tyrannosaur*, which had its World Premiere in Sundance and won two major prizes, and from Richard Ayoade with *Submarine*, both of which will be released by Optimum this year.

#### **About Film4**

Film4, headed by Tessa Ross, is Channel 4 Television's feature film division. Film4 develops and co-finances films and is known for working with the most innovative talent in the U.K., whether new or established. Film4 has developed and co-financed many of the best UK films of recent years, films like Danny Boyle's *Slumdog Millionaire*, Martin McDonagh's *In Bruges*. Steve McQueen's *Hunger*, Mike Leigh's *Happy-Go-Lucky and Another Year*, Ken Loach's *Looking For Eric*, Sam Taylor Wood's *Nowhere Boy* and Chris Morris' *Four Lions*.

Currently on release are Danny Boyle's *127 Hours* and Peter Mullan's *NEDS*, and due for release in the first half of this year are Mark Romanek's *Never Let Me Go*, Kevin Macdonald's *The Eagle* and Richard Ayoade's *Submarine*. Miranda July's second film *The Future* and Paddy Considine's debut feature *Tyrannosaur* premiered at the Sundance Film Festival and will be released in the UK later this year.

As well as *The Iron Lady*, Film4's current productions include Pawel Pawlikowski's *The Woman In The Fifth*, Steve McQueen's *Shame*, Lone Scherfig's *One Day*, Walter Salles' *On The Road*, Ben Wheatley's *Kill List*, Andrea Arnold's *Wuthering Heights* and Ben Palmer's *The Inbetweeners* movie.

### **About the UK Film Council**

Since its creation in 2000 the UK Film Council has backed more than 900 films, shorts and features, which have won over 300 awards and entertained more than 200 million people around the world generating £5 for every £1 of Lottery money it has invested.

Our Film Fund funds exciting new British films and develops new filmmakers and our Distribution and Exhibition initiatives get a wider choice of films to audiences throughout the UK. We also invest in training British talent, promoting Britain as an international filmmaking location and raising the profile of British films abroad, and we fund the British Film Institute.

British films developed and funded over the past 10 years by the UK Film Council include Tom Hooper's *The King's Speech* (the UK's most successful film to date with \$108 million in its first few weeks of release), the UK's first 3D film *Streetdance 3D*, *Another Year*, *Made in Dagenham*, *Africa United*, *Bright Star*, *Fish Tank*, *In the Loop*, *Tamara Drewe*, *Bend it like Beckham*, *The Constant Gardener*, *Gosford Park*, *Happy-Go-Lucky*, *The Last King of Scotland*, *Man on Wire*, *Nowhere Boy*, *Red Road*, *St Trinian's*, *This is England*, *Touching the Void*, *Vera Drake* and *The Wind That Shakes the Barley*.

Current and forthcoming films that we have supported include Clio Barnard's *The Arbor*, Terence Davies's *The Deep Blue Sea*, Peter Mullan's *Neds*, Rowan Joffe's *Brighton Rock*, Lynne Ramsay's *We Need to Talk about Kevin*, Justin Chadwick's *The First Grader*, Andrea Arnold's *Wuthering Heights*, Ayub Khan-Din's *West is West*, Gillian Wearing's *Self-Made* and John Akomfrah's *The Nine Muses*.

<b>WRITER/DIRECTOR</b>	<b>JOE CORNISH</b>
<b>PRODUCERS</b>	<b>NIRA PARK, JAMES WILSON</b>
<b>EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS</b>	<b>MATTHEW JUSTICE, TESSA ROSS, JENNY BORGARS, WILL CLARKE, OLIVER COURSON, EDGAR WRIGHT</b>
<b>DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY</b>	<b>TOM TOWNEND</b>
<b>EDITOR</b>	<b>JONATHAN AMOS</b>
<b>PRODUCTION DESIGNER</b>	<b>MARCUS ROWLAND</b>
<b>COSTUME DESIGNER</b>	<b>ROSA DIAS</b>
<b>HAIR AND MAKE-UP DESIGNER</b>	<b>JANE WALKER</b>
<b>STUNT CO-ORDINATOR</b>	<b>PAUL HERBERT</b>
<b>CREATURE EFFECTS</b>	<b>MIKE ELIZALDE - SPECTRAL MOTION</b>
<b>VISUAL EFFECTS</b>	<b>DOUBLE NEGATIVE</b>