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FRESH FACE

RADIO MAKES THE MOVIE STAR GEORGINA REILLY SURROUNDS HERSELF WITH ZOMBIES IN *PONTYPOOL*

Georgina Reilly is following in the footsteps of many young starlets by making her feature film debut in a horror movie. The 22-year-old actress stars in director Bruce McDonald's *Pontypool*, a zombie flick with a twist that premiered this past September at the Toronto International Film Festival.

"My mom's Welsh, so when she heard the title of the film she got really excited," says Reilly, who herself was born and raised in England, though you wouldn't know it to hear her speak. "I didn't know there was such a place in Wales – I was like, is it a Welsh movie?"

In the film, a virus breaks out in the rural town of Pontypool, *Ontario*. The deadly infection first affects the ability to speak. As Reilly describes it, it spreads through language, slowly dehumanizing its victims. "I don't think we're calling them 'zombies.' We were calling them 'the Conversationalists' because it's to do with language, but I don't know," she laughs.

Pontypool isn't your typical horror film: most of its horror elements happen off-screen, leaving it to the viewer (and the characters) to fill in a lot of the blanks. The story focuses on the crew at a community radio station – Reilly plays one of the three leads, along with Stephen McHattie and Lisa Houle. We follow them as they collect information on what's happening outside the station and try to disseminate what they believe to be going on.

"It's kind of interesting, because it's just all based on hearing. A lot of the film centres on the question of 'Is it going on, is it not going on?' and we don't know what's real," says Reilly. "There's some psychological stuff happening, which I like – it's not just gore, though we definitely have some red corn syrup."

The film marks Reilly's second time working with McDonald – the two previously made the CBC movie *The Dark Room* together. The director has referred to her as "the next Ellen Page," a major compliment from the man who last year directed Page in *The Tracey Fragments*, for which she received a Genie nomination.

When asked about the future, Reilly jokes, "Give me a career like Rachel McAdams or Natalie Portman or Cate Blanchett. I like the movies they've done. I'd be good with that." But before stardom comes, as audiences wait for *Pontypool's* theatrical release in 2009, Reilly is back doing what actors do – hustling for her next part.

"I go into auditions and see a room full of short brunettes with pale skin." She adds, "I like when there are more blondes, because you know if [casting] is going blonde, then they're going blonde and I can justify why I didn't get the role. I have an out." ☺

The Hype section is written by
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