

## Interview: ‘The Boondock Saints II: All Saints Day’ Director Troy Duffy on Hollywood’s ‘Financial Irresponsibility’

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CHICAGO – “There’s not a bigger ‘f\*ck you!’ from Hollywood than when they say: ‘Eh, we’re not going to release this film.’” But then the fans say: “Oh, you know what? About \$100 million says that you are retarded. It says that you made a bad decision,” “The Boondock Saints II: All Saints Day” star Sean Patrick Flanery said in a Chicago interview with HollywoodChicago.com.

Flanery added: “Everybody thinks they know. Executives say: ‘We do this for a living.’ Well, you f\*cked up. You f\*cked up! You didn’t put this in the theater, and with no advertising, people just picked it up and said: ‘You’re an idiot. This is a good film.’”



Left to right: Sean Patrick Flanery, Billy Connolly, Norman Reedus and Clifton Collins Jr. in “The Boondock Saints II: All Saints Day”.

*Photo credit: Stage 6 Films*

While the sequel (actually) received a theatrical release on Nov. 13, 2009, “The Boondock Saints” opened in 1999 on a mere handful of screens financed solely by writer and director Troy Duffy. Duffy says he went broke over the initial theatrical release. Even more, he went crazy. This was later depicted in the documentary “Overnight,” which was the story of Troy Duffy’s release of “The Boondock Saints”.

“We got a theatrical release this time. The first time, I took it out in five theaters that I paid for. I was literally hoping people would walk by and be enticed enough by the poster to go in. But there was nothing,” Troy Duffy said in a Chicago interview with HollywoodChicago.com. “There was a contract saying we couldn’t take it to more theaters because it would have infringed on the video window of two weeks. In hindsight, it wasn’t a good idea because I spent every last cent I had four-walling five theaters.”

Duffy says *Columbine* was the reason his first film was muzzled from theaters.

“It was *Columbine*,” Duffy said. “When *Columbine* hit, we were having our test screenings for the industry. We were hoping a studio would



buy it and get behind it. Then when Columbine happened, we were told we were blacklisted from U.S. screens.”

He added: “The quality of the theaters I got was not quite up to snuff. One was a double feature that you got for four bucks. And they were all out in the weeds. So, it virtually went straight to video. This time, we’re getting a theatrical release. For the sequel, we were in 68 theaters in the first weekend. Boondock fans showed up and liked it. And then we platformed to 225 theaters on Nov. 13, 2009.”



“The Boondock Saints II: All Saints Day” stars Sean Patrick Flanery.

Image credit: Stage 6 Films

Despite hardly any love from U.S. theaters (the first film only grossed \$30,471 in total theatrically), Blockbuster’s exclusive release of “The



Boondock Saints" on home video caused a cult film explosion to the tune of more than \$100 million in home-video sales.

"You can say virtually no one saw [the first film] in theaters, but on video, Blockbuster did us a favor there. They saw what happened with Columbine. They hated what happened to the movie. They felt it was a much bigger film. So, they gave us an exclusive. We got 60 to 120 copies in every store. Kids found it and it spread like wildfire. Blockbuster released it as if it were a big movie," Duffy said.

The second time around, Duffy got almost his entire cast back. He added: "Fans would have burned my house to the ground if I didn't bring Sean Patrick Flanery back and all the other roles you just don't replace."

Over the course of a decade between the first and second film, Flanery says he kept in contact with Duffy the whole time.

"There were some false starts," Flanery said. "This has been my most recognizable film. I read a few drafts. Of course I wanted to make another one. I've never had that much fun on a movie set until I did part two. That superseded the first one. It's not just a good movie. The process is fun as well. It was just hanging with buddies. It's totally outside of Hollywood filmmaking. I'd do 20 of these things, man. Seriously. I would."

Duffy describes the process of getting such a complete cast and crew to return for the sequel as an easy one.



Norman Reedus (left) and Sean Patrick Flanery in "The Boondock Saints II: All Saints Day".

*Photo credit: Stage 6 Films*

"People ask us how we got everyone back, but they never went anywhere," Duffy said. "They were all ready to go from day one. They understood what happened with this film. I'm not a famous dude, but the actors go out in public and feel that stuff. A lot of films try to convince you they're like a big family, but it's probably crap. With us, we actually had a lot of crew – and not just cast – from the first Boondock film who wanted to return. I don't know what it is about this particular group of people."

"It's just like-minded individuals," Flanery said. "In every single film I've been on, everybody has said the set was just like a big family. It's such bullsh\*t. At wrap parties, [people] say we'll exchange numbers and keep in contact. But nobody ever calls anybody. I've got a laundry list of people I've worked with and they never call me. I'm probably not going to call them."

He added: "With [the second] Boondock [film], this was different. I kept in contact with everyone. It's just one of those odd occurrences where all the elements come together. I always knew the second would happen. Any time the first movie makes that kind of money, they're going to make a sequel. Nothing else matters. They're **going** to make a sequel. There just was some legal wrangling."

Duffy describes the process of funding his sequel as a waiting game. He says it wasn't about *if* it was going to happen. It was merely about *how much* money he'd need to finance the film.

"There were some default starts on the second film, but that was us walking [away] from deals because they weren't giving me enough [money] to make it the right way," Duffy said. "I knew my bottom-line number. I just kept waiting until someone gave me my number. In the meantime, I just watched the first movie continue to gross and gross and gross [more money]."

He added: "At some point – and the fans don't know this, I'm sure – it's like they put a gun to Hollywood's head and said: 'You're making this f\*cking sequel.' The fans demanded it. It became financially irresponsible for [Hollywood] not to do it. They gave me my number and then I called Sean and sent him a plane ticket."



Julie Benz (left) and Clifton Collins Jr. in "The Boondock Saints II: All Saints Day".

Photo credit: Stage 6 Films

Following his first cult classic, Duffy knew he'd have to up the ante the second time around. He described what he believes makes a successful sequel.

"I had a really clean theory," Duffy said. "Sequels usually suck, but there are some exceptions like 'The Godfather: Part II,' 'Rocky II,' 'Terminator 2: Judgment Day' and 'Aliens'. These are undeniably good follow-ups. Whether they're as good as the first is a matter of argument, but nobody's disappointed with these sequels. Why are these successful? Why are these films the percent of a percent of a percent that were successful?"

He added: "What I found was that you give them everything they love about the first movie plus a brand-new plot they could have never predicted. The cleanest example is 'Terminator 2: Judgment Day'. Suddenly Arnold [Schwarzenegger] is a good guy. We ate that sh\*t up. Those filmmakers were brave for doing that. Behind the scenes, I'm sure there were a bunch of 'experts' saying: 'Don't break the f\*cking mold. He's gotta be a bad guy or you'll destroy the franchise.' Nobody f\*cks up like an expert."

Duffy continued: "But they did the brave thing and it was the right thing. With a sequel, you're almost in the position where you have to take big risks. In the [Boondock] sequel, we threw as many curveballs as I could think of. We have a female lead in [the second] Boondock [film]. The fan base said: 'What the f\*ck are you doing?' That was not well-received initially, but now they can't live without her."

He concluded: "We also went into period-piece flashbacks in 1950s New York. Saints fans are not used to seeing this. We even had the whole history of a killer winding into the present-day story. Finally, we pushed the fantasy scenes quite a bit further in this one. These are new things that Boondock fans aren't used to. We've been getting the thumb's up on these. We had to take a lot of risks."

*From writer and director Troy Duffy, "The Boondock Saints II: All Saints Day" stars Sean Patrick Flanery, Billy Connolly, Julie Benz, Clifton Collins Jr., Peter Fonda, Norman Reedus, Paul Johansson, Judd Nelson and David Della Rocco. The film, which opened on Nov. 13, 2009 with a running time of 105 minutes, is rated "R" for bloody violence, language and some nudity.*



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