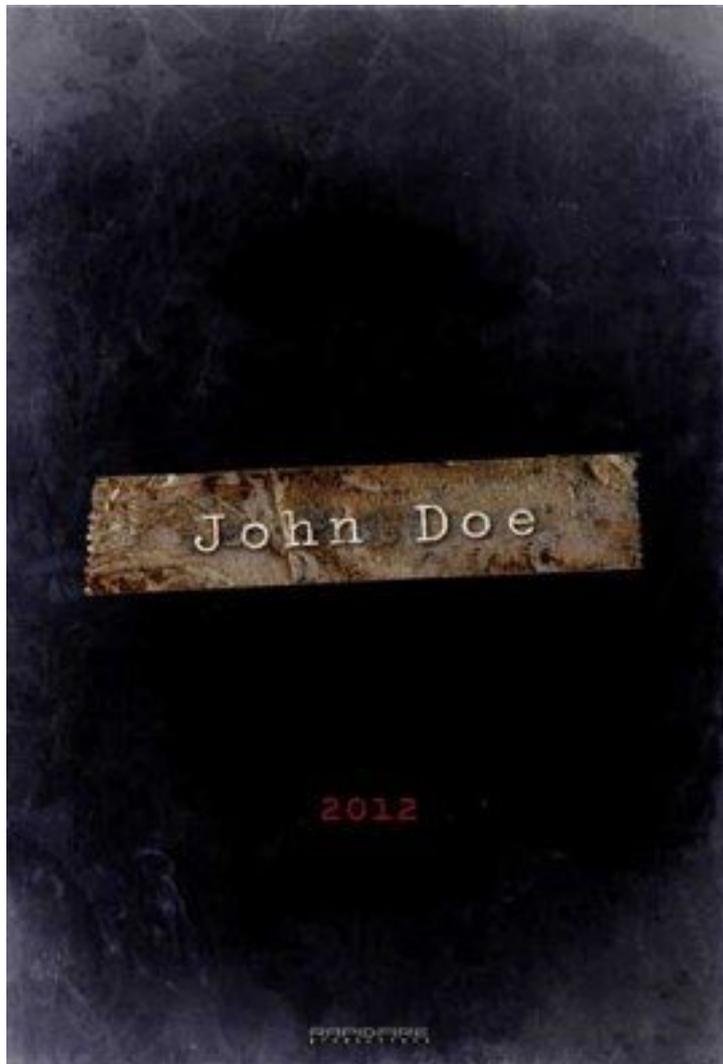


FILM INK

Aussie Anti-Hero

by Cara Nash | February 09, 2011 09:53 | Edited February 09, 2011 09:53

With casting about to get underway, a new Australian crime thriller will commence shooting in Melbourne this year.



Set to start shooting in May is *John Doe*, a new Australian feature film that its Executive Producer, Rob Woodburn, describes as "*Seven* meets *District 9*." Influenced by such distinct and powerful films, *John Doe* documents the actions of an often misunderstood anti-hero as he attempts to rid his community of criminals while striking out at those he knows are about to commit crimes.

The idea behind *John Doe* was conceived by its director, Kelly Dolen (*The Gates of Hell*), who wrote the first draft of the script 15 years ago. Woodburn says that the story "really came to life" when screenwriter Stephen Coates came on board to help pen the story that Dolen had been carrying with him for so long. "Having lived with the idea for that long, he's thought of every possible scenario, characters and visual style that is needed to make this a unique and powerful film," Woodburn explains.

The film - which unravels as a controversial court case - was inspired by reading about the numerous instances of injustice that plague the judicial system worldwide. "The more cases and issues they [Dolen and Coates] uncovered, the more they were inspired to write something that would connect with the audience on an emotional level, but was also visceral and real. There is a real message behind this story."

Shot in Melbourne - the city whose criminal underbelly has been exposed recently in a string of Australian movies and shows - *John Doe* was informed by its location but Woodburn insists it resonates universally. "Incidents that occurred in Melbourne were most definitely used as inspiration and motivation to make this film as real and as meaningful as possible. However, it could quite literally be set anywhere in the world. It is just as relevant in Los Angeles or London as it is in Melbourne. It is without doubt a global issue.

"At the end of the day, this is a story about one man's actions affecting the world. Kel and Steve have really worked to put something on the page that will challenge and entertain audiences morally, mentally and emotionally. If we do our job right, maybe we can get people talking about topics that are usually discussed behind closed doors," Woodburn reflects.

With a polished script and a date marked on the calendar to start shooting, Woodburn says the team is just about to start casting roles and they're not necessarily after the big names. "We have some 'name' actors in mind for the lead, but we want to really dig in and go through the casting process," he explains. "If we can break a new face, we think that could be very special..."

John Doe is being produced by John Doe Productions and **Woodburn Sweitzer Management**.