



It's not just on film and television where the action is hotting up. Continuing *Impact's* commitment to cast a watchful eye over the interwebs, we take another look at action online...

**W**ith the popularity of online movies and web series on the rise, a dynamic new action short recently hit YouTube and is already causing quite a stir. *Hit Girls*, the new short film from Rosebud Pictures, was recently released online following a successful set of screenings at BAFTA, Working Title and Electric Cinema in London. Differentiating itself from video game franchises like *Street Fighter* and *Mortal Kombat* (the subject of other recent web films and series), *Hit Girls* remains action-packed while still grounded in reality. The story portrays two female assassins who spitefully kill each other's boyfriends, delivering a blend of action and dark humour. The short also capitalises on some great up-and-coming talent and bodes very well for the planned feature film which is currently in development. With the online platform offering such a good forum for new films and franchises, *Hit Girls* also places a new Brit filmmaking team on the map and action cinema fans are advised to take note.

The story follows flat mates (and assassins), Emma (Rosie Fellner, *The Life and Death of Peter Sellers, Age of Heroes*) and Megan (Gillian MacGregor, *A Lonely Place to Die, Father's Day*). Megan has taken Emma off a job for falling in love with their target so Emma kills Megan's date (Joey Anshah, *The Bourne Ultimatum, Street Fighter: Legacy*) to retaliate. While burying him in the depths of the forest, their arguing reaches breaking point. With neither willing to back down, the normally cool and calculating *Hit Girls* lose their temper and all hell breaks loose!

**Meet the Hit Girls:**

**Rosie Fellner as Emma:**

Rosie is an actress and producer who also setup Rosebud Pictures, her company were the producers behind *Hit Girls*. With other work behind her including *The Crew, The Life and Death of Peter Sellers, Age of Heroes* and the forthcoming *Patent 001*, she will be reprising her role in the *Age of Heroes* sequel.

**Gillian MacGregor as Megan:**

On her character, Emma, Rosie comments: "She made me think of that little girl in the old Toyota Corolla advert who ran out of school and got into another mum's car and when the woman said: 'Jenny, isn't your mummy over there?', she'd say: 'just shut up and drive!' [Laughs] Emma is a sweet looking girl but has a real temper on her. You really need to watch out for her!"

**Gillian MacGregor as Megan:**

Gillian is an actress and the writer behind *Hit Girls*. After establishing herself on the stage, she turned her attention to film and recent highlights include *Father's Day* and Julian Gilbey's *A Lonely Place to Die*. She recently won her first boxing match for *Models Fight Night 2011* and is currently shooting a number of new films. She will also co-star in the forthcoming TV series, *Ninety Eight Percent*, while developing the new full length *Hit Girls* film.

"She's hard as nails and maybe comes across a bit cold but it's because she's very guarded," Gillian describes Megan. "I always wanted to be one of the boys, playing with guns and getting into fights but roles like that are few and far between so I thought I'd just write one myself. I was never really interested in being the damsel in distress or whatever. I just wanted to kick some ass!"

Capitalising on a slick mix of drama and action, *Hit Girls* arrives courtesy of some great talent including writer/actor, Gillian MacGregor, actor/producer, Rosie Fellner, director, Adrian Vitoria (*Age of Heroes, The Crew*) and actor/fight choreographer, Joey Anshah. The film looks stylish, visually engaging and the short concludes with a hard-hitting fight scene between two trained female assassins!

Describing how *Hit Girls* was first conceived, Rosie Fellner says: "I first saw the script a few years ago when I was approached as an actress by a producer Gillian had sent the script



to. Originally the idea was for an experimental 3D film but this never evolved any further. Eventually, sometime later in Cannes I was at the Grand Hotel and saw that same producer. After he told me he still had it I asked if I could take it on as a producer myself! It wasn't long before other producers around us were saying 'if you do it, I'll put in some money' and so we were able to get some finance and it all grew from there. When I got back I spoke to Gillian about it, we developed the concept and enhanced the action element to take it further."

"I wrote the script a few years ago because while I was getting a lot of work, I seemed to always get cast as the same type of character. This story was about a rethead and a blonde who keep killing each other's boyfriends. I thought these could be recurring characters in a series of shorts, combining into a feature later. Eventually Rosie called me and asked if I still had the script because she really wanted to do it, and it grew from there," Gillian MacGregor explains.

"I'm a big fan of action! The concept of these girls kicking ass and doing it well was really appealing and something I became very interested in," director Adrian Vitoria explaining the reason he originally came on board. "I knew we wouldn't have long to shoot but at the same time I could see we had all the elements to make a really good short film."



Gillian MacGregor, Joey Anshah and Rosie Fellner star in *Hit Girls*



Adrian Vitoria and Rosie Fellner in *Hit Girls*

Rosie and Gillian were great to work with and of course we were very lucky to have Joey as well."

Tackling the action and martial arts aspects of the film, Joey Anshah explains: "I'd worked with Rosie before so when they were looking to add this fight element to *Hit Girls*, she called me because she'd seen what I'd done in *The Bourne Ultimatum* and asked if I'd come in to do the fight scene. I also ended up playing James, the male character. There was a narrative to the fight scene which was dictated by things like me being in the grave, the girls holding spades which would become weapons, and so on, but it was also a strong collaboration with Adrian. We used a lot of boxing and trapping techniques and I put the girls through a bit of a training boot camp. Later we also got Cecily Fay and Helen Steinway Bailey to double for the girls as well, so we had a good team. I think it was a really nice fight scene and people weren't expecting something of that level. You really get a sense of the characters in that fight!"

"We decided really early on that if we were doing this fight scene, we were doing a real fight scene and it wasn't going to be girls pulling each other's hair or anything like that! We were also lucky because we had Joey to choreograph our fight and he even came in about a month before to train us. He and Christian Howard, the assistant fight choreographer, really put a lot of energy into the scene and worked with us patiently," Rosie Fellner adds.

"I was very excited about the fight scene because it wasn't in the original script but was added during development. Rosie knew Joey so she was able to bring him on board and although I didn't know him then I'd seen *The Bourne Ultimatum* so was really looking forward to working with him. I'm a very physical actress and don't mind getting stuck in so I really enjoyed the training. We did pick up some injuries during the fight scene but that's just part of the process!" Gillian MacGregor continues.

"I love a good fight scene and wanted the action in this to be impressive but not totally removed from reality. This is where I would try to incorporate ideas about the characters into Joey's action. For example, in real life if men fight and it turns into a bit of a brawl, guys get hit in the groin all the time, so here we had one

**“ We decided really early on that if we were doing this fight scene, we were doing a real fight scene and it wasn't going to be girls pulling each other's hair or anything like that! We were also lucky because we had Joey to choreograph our fight and he even came in about a month before to train us. He and Christian Howard, the assistant fight choreographer, really put a lot of energy into the scene and worked with us patiently... ”**



of the girls getting hit in the breasts which would really hurt as well!" Adrian Vitoria, laughs, addressing working on the action. "I've worked with guys from the Royal Marines because they really know how to perform action in film so this is something I've come to expect from the actors, to be the real deal. Joey definitely brought this to the table!"

After a successful set of screenings in London, *Hit Girls* arrived on YouTube and the response was extremely impressive. The film picked up well over 1000 views in a matter of days and the comments show that viewers want more. So what's next for these *Hit Girls*? Rosie Fellner explains: "We're now developing the short into a feature film. Originally we were exploring the idea of a TV series and there were some companies in LA who were really interested. However, we decided against it as it can lead to you losing control of the project and getting caught up in development hell. So we want to do it ourselves and I really believe *Hit Girls* is a new franchise that can take over the world! It's all about girls on top!"

"It's definitely not the end of *Hit Girls* and there's a lot more to come. It's all about doing it at the right time and in the right way. We could probably bang something out in a year but this has to be brilliant. The short captured something quite unique and it was a different slant on the genre, so it would mean building on this and taking it to the next level. Looking at the idea behind it, in this day and age

women can have anything. In *Hit Girls* this is taken to an extreme where if they want that guy, they'll get that guy. If they want that apartment, they'll get that apartment. But the *Hit Girls* have got themselves into a world where killing is no big deal, so the price they have to pay means losing part of their souls. But on top of all that it's kickass and sexy!" Gillian MacGregor adds.

Despite not being well known for its action output, *Hit Girls* once again shows that the UK can produce quality, eye-opening action entertainment with the right talent. Even as a

short film, *Hit Girls* proves there's plenty more to come from this exciting new franchise and marks the team as one to watch out for. Genre fans are strongly encouraged to watch this space and stay tuned for what comes next. Finally, if you haven't seen the film already, what are you waiting for?

Check out [www.hitgirlsmovie.com](http://www.hitgirlsmovie.com)

