

# There Will Be Blood: Interview with horror writer David Moody

By Daniel Collacott

Apocalyptic horror author David Moody became a household name amongst zombie genre lovers and horror enthusiasts alike when he made his novel 'Autumn' available for free. Half a million downloads later and the following two books in the trilogy were published on his own 'Infected Books' label. But it wasn't until the chillingly savage novel 'Hater' was released in 2006 that the author really started to find himself a man in demand. 'Hater' tells the tale of an ordinary family man experiencing the breakdown of society, as an unknown social event starts to turn people against each other without warning and for no apparent reason. A US production company snapped up the film rights to the book; 'Hater' the film is now to be produced by the legendary pairing of Guillermo del Toro and Mark Johnson (Chronicles of Narnia) and directed by J A Bayona (The Orphanage). We wanted to find out more about 'Hater' and how an ordinary family man deals with a level of success that is likely to spread as quickly as a zombie plague.

## Hate: To feel hostility or animosity toward

'Hater' is a bleak and dystopian tale that deconstructs the failings within modern society. David adds "One of the big inspirations for the plot was the July 2005 bombings. One of the things that burnt into my head from that was that one of the terrorists was an assistant from a school, they had footage that showed one week him teaching people and showing them the best ways to live, and the next we have him on crowded public transport with a rucksack full of explosives. I know it wasn't something that

immediately happened to the guy, but I tried to picture a situation where people would turn on each other for no apparent reason. Also what divisions that could bring up and what it would do to the old divisions that we've got. With these terrorists there is always a cause, but with 'Hater' there is no apparent cause. That chilled me because you could have a division between families, between husband and wife, parents and teachers and their kids. It's just a natural extension of what the world is going through at the moment, just taken to its most extreme level.

"Growing up David found inspiration in the horror film genre. "When I was way too young I went round a friend's house during a thunder storm; his dad had a laser disc of 'Night of the Living Dead' so we watched it in the middle of an afternoon, and the sky was virtually pitch black with thunder outside, that was literally a life changing moment. Cronenberg's 'The Fly' was another huge influence because of what happens to the character Seth Brundle. The deterioration of him as a human being from start to finish on a personal level is like what I write about with society. It's a great piece of film."

So what books also inspired the weaver of screams? "The book that I always quote is 'Day of the Triffids' which I think is about to get ruined again by the BBC, after what they've done with 'Survivors'....it makes me angry that they are always recycling old ideas when there are so many new ideas about. My Mrs wouldn't watch 'Survivors' with me because I write this sort of thing for a living so I

always end up completely deconstructing it."

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We asked David if there were any similarities between him and the character of Danny McCoyne in the book? "I think Danny was a vision of where I could have

gone if I hadn't pulled my finger out. I worked for a while in operations departments and they were like the parking fines office in the book, and everything was referred to by its initials. So Danny McCoyne is me where I would have been had I not got off of my butt and done something."

Unlike many books or films where a virus or global event threatens humanity, 'Hater' moves at a break neck speed, but was this intentional? "Very much so, because I think if things ever did go wrong in that kind of way then things would fall apart that quickly, there isn't going to be time to sit back and have a look at the situation and hold committees and meetings, it's just going to happen so you have to deal with it. It was a conscious decision to make it one person's story, the idea being by making it so personal and the character so identifiable it gives the whole thing a broader audience."

We broached the subject about how Guillermo del Toro became involved with 'Hater' the film? "Unfortunately I've not spoken to him yet and I'd love to as I was a big fan way back before this happened. I try not think about the whole thing too much as it is too scary. I first (self) published 'Hater' in July 2006 and it was doing ok, it got up to 500 copies sold in the first month. I was sitting at home and I got this email purporting to be from this production company in LA who said they were interested in the film rights to 'Hater', and I just thought someone was having a laugh, so I phoned round all my mates saying 'what's going on who is it?' but it was genuine. After some research I got back to them and had this great

conversation with this chap in LA. I had no idea how big this company were until he organised a phone call between me, him and Martin Johnson who was producer of the recent 'Chronicles of Narnia' films, as well as 'Rain Man'. I had the most surreal evening of my life, it was a Tuesday about 8pm and I had to get the kids to bed, clean up after dinner, and put the dog out because it was barking, and I'd got Martin Johnson on the phone! He dropped in the middle of the conversation, 'had I seen Pan's Labyrinth?', and I thought it was just a general question so started to say how good I thought it was and then he said, 'because we are going to get Guillermo to direct this' - I think I woke up ten minutes later! Unfortunately then 'The Hobbit' came up so he couldn't do it but we are now having Juan Antonio Bayona who did 'The Orphanage' direct it. 'Hater' will be his first English film. Obviously he and Guillermo work together and I understand Guillermo very much decided the look of 'Orphanage' and did some of the storyboarding. I don't know yet to what extent he will be involved in producing 'Hater', but obviously having him on the posters will be amazing enough."

Not all horror books translate well to film as David is well aware. "When you write a book every scene you watch in your head like a film, I can lie down and close my eyes and watch a book from start to finish. So when I look at someone else's interpretation it can be quite jarring. The script for 'Hater' is being written by the chief script editor for 'The Shield', Glen Mazzara. I'm just keeping back a little bit, answering all their questions and obviously I will try and get involved when it gets filmed; I managed to get a cameo in 'Autumn' as a zombie getting in the way of Dexter Fletcher which was cool, something to tell the kids."

David seemed keen if possible to extend his involvement in 'Hater's' movie adaptation. "I'd love to have a cameo, it's hard to know how far you can push though. An old story I was told when I first started talking to people in film was when a writer first decides to sell a book to a production company, they meet in the middle of nowhere and the writer chucks the book over, the production company chuck loads of money in, and then the two never see each other again! And that is said to make the best film. 'Autumn' has actually been made as a film, this time last year I was in Canada on the set for a week, it's a very small scale production but it's got Dexter Fletcher in it and David Carradine, it should be coming out about June time. For the budget they had they've done a brilliant job, but

what I've learnt is I'm the worst critic in the world when watching somebody's interpretation of my stuff, so I can imagine the people making 'Hater' wouldn't want me near them at all!"

So how did 'Hater' differ from David's other novels? "In internet circles the 'Autumn' series was the main thing people knew me for and they're zombie books, but I tried to give them a more realistic slant. 'Hater', when I look back at it, is actually like a zombie novel in reverse, it's like it's written from the point of view of one of the dead, if that makes sense? It has a lot of similarities to the 'Autumn' books and things like '28 Days later' but it has that shift of perspective which I think keeps it fresh."

David expanded on his plans to continue 'Hater's' epic story. "I'm contracted for two more books. The second book 'Dogblood' is almost finished, I've got about another couple of weeks of revisions, I think it will be released in about 2010. The third book I've tentatively called 'Instinct' but we are not sure yet on that; I'm going to write that in the middle of this year. 'Dogblood' is very different to the first book, which is about how the main character goes about his day to day life and focuses on what's happening, and how that affects his everyday normality. Obviously at the start of the second book that's all gone. So it's a more traditional science fiction horror kind of opus."

**If you find the end of civilisation an intriguing prospect, especially delivered coldly and brutally with a bitter yet original twist then, 'Hater' is the book for you.**

**Guillermo del Toro**

'Hater' is available now from Amazon and other good book stockists. You can read the first four chapters of "Hater" for a limited time at: [www.liberationfrequency.co.uk](http://www.liberationfrequency.co.uk)

The film adaptation is slated for a 2010/11 release.



David Moody & Dexter Fletcher on the set of 'Autumn'

