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MAD DOGS series 3 returns on 4 June

exclusively to Sky 1 HD

Max Beesley, Philip Glenister, John Simm and Marc Warren return alongside guest star Jaime Winstone

The boys are back in town this summer as the third series of the critically-acclaimed, gutsy drama, Mad Dogs, comes to Sky 1 HD on 4 June at 9pm. Sky customers will be able to see the first episode even earlier as it will be made available via Sky On Demand from 29 May.

When we last saw Woody (**Max Beesley**), Quinn (**Philip Glenister**), Baxter (**John Simm**) and Rick (**Marc Warren**), en route to mainland Spain on the first stage of the journey they hoped would take them back home. When they docked in Morocco they realised their nightmare was far from over. Met by armed guards, a new chapter was set to unfold in this holiday from hell.

The story picks up with the four hapless friends in worse shape than ever before. Held captive in what appears to be a dilapidated prison in the desert; they are all enduring various forms torture and interrogation. They're not the only inmates either as the feisty Mercedes (**Jaime Winstone**, *Donkey Punch, Made in Dagenham*) quickly makes their acquaintance but how well acquainted should they get? Can they trust her? Judgement has never been their strong suit and, behind the wire prison fence, home has never looked farther away.

Mad Dogs launched in 2011 and set the benchmark for Sky's future slate of homegrown dramas, receiving a BAFTA® nomination along the way. The series continues as part of Sky's commitment to increase its investment in original British content by 50% over the next three years.

By 2014, Sky expects to invest £600 million a year in British programmes across its portfolio of channels. This commitment follows the success of home-grown content across the entertainment portfolio including Stella, Moone Boy, An Idiot Abroad and forthcoming series including The Smoke and The Tunnel.

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About On demand and Catch-up:

The On Demand and Catch Up services are available at no extra cost to more than 5 million homes with a Sky TV subscription, a compatible Sky+HD box and a broadband connection. The On Demand service has proven extremely popular with weekly downloads from On Demand reaching 4.5 million in the first three months of the year, an increase of 460% on the same time last year. The award-winning Sky Go service is available on selected smartphones, tablets and PCs and continues to grow, with 3.3 million unique users.

MAX BEESLEY plays WOODY

As the owner of the most recognisable tones in the UK, Max is king of the voiceover - and plenty more besides.

Best known for the huge TV hits Hotel Babylon and Bodies, Max's roles have also included Talk To Me, Survivors, and The Last Enemy, and he is now working on his own film, set in 1960s Manchester.

Max is also an accomplished musician and has performed for Robbie Williams, Take That, Paul Weller and James Brown.

He is from showbiz royalty - his father, also called Max, was a musician and actor, his step-brother is actor Jason Milligan and his sister-in-law is Angela Griffin.

How good is this series?

God, it's fantastic. The scripts are so good.

Honest to God, I feel like it has got loads of humour back again, like the first series, which I am really pleased about.

It starts off where we left off last time, but then we all have to leave each other and go off on our own.

It's so mature, and so clever and beautiful.

Is it a different pace now that we've fast forwarded in time?

Yes, I think that's inevitable. In a third series you have the opportunity to retrace your steps, look back a bit and do a bit more explanation.

The first series is explosive, then people want to understand more and find out why certain things have happened, so the tempo slows down a bit for the second.

The amazing thing is the audience loved it. They loved the flashbacks, the explanations. They loved knowing more and more about it and we were really lucky that we actually built on the audience, which is fantastic.

But now we're up to all sorts of stuff again, and it's exciting.

It's almost like four films rather than a four-part TV series. It's absolutely epic, it looks amazing.

How's it been, filming in South Africa?

It's been absolutely amazing. This place, honestly, you can just point a camera anywhere in these locations and get a bit of dialogue going and it just looks great.

I'm not just being a Humble Harry, but every other day I've said to the other boys, 'We are so lucky to be here, filming this job'.

The crew is amazing, and Adrian is the Governor.

We love each other. We actually all care about each other a lot.

What changes has Woody been through?

It's weird, but I've played him a lot more like me this time.

The thing with acting is you just try and put as much of yourself into the character.

Even if you're playing a psychotic serial killer, you try and find something in there like the family man or some humour or something.

With this, I don't know if it's where we're at as actors, or whether it's Chris' brilliant writing, because he knows our characters inside out and he knows us, but whenever we get on set it all feels very natural.

We know each other's dynamics and increments. It's the third year, so we kind of know what we're doing.

And without giving too much away, he is close to a young kid in this series, isn't he?

Yes, there's a kid in it, he lives in the same village and Woody is close to him.

I just got a vibe straight away with the actor. I love kids.

He came to meet me in my trailer and I started showing him some drumming, built up some trust with him and made him laugh a bit.

It's funny because some of the crew said he could be a cheeky little bleeder sometimes but I didn't see any of that! He was like a little prince around me.

Jaime Winstone is in this series, and she's an old friend of yours, isn't she?

Yes. It has been lovely having her around. I've known her since she was eight.

She calls me Uncle Maxy, and she has told everyone I'm her godfather, although she's designated herself as that - [her dad] Ray has argued the point that I'm not really!

But I say to her, 'I am, kid - secretly'.

She's an amazing girl, and she's come on so well as an actress.

On the first day I was like a peacock: I was so proud of her.

She is not only a presence, but she has smashed it. She's very professional and she is going to be a massive, massive weight to contend with, that girl. She is going to do very well.

And your dad, Max Senior, has a part in it too?

Yes, we got him out there, he loved that. He plays a British consul.

We've never done anything before but he always comes out on set to visit and he loves the boys, and the boys adore him.

He's such a great guy, my old man. He was here for two weeks.

Are you pleased to be doing a fourth series?

Yes, because it's so great.

I'm hoping it's my turn to either get a bird, or get kidnapped.

Normally I'm the one running around trying to save everyone, all the time!

Where would you like it to be set?

That's an interesting question. It depends partly on costs and tax breaks, doesn't it?

But I'd love to go to Argentina. That's a beautifully sexy city.

It can't just be a jolly-up, but that would work because it's a claustrophobic city rather than this huge space we have in South Africa, so it would be a new vibe again.

And then who knows, maybe bring them back to London eventually?

PHIL GLENISTER plays QUINN

Phil is one of the UK's busiest actors, barely pausing for breath in recent years in between roles.

His biggest triumph was arguably playing the larger than life Gene Hunt in *Life on Mars* and *Ashes to Ashes*, but the rest of his CV is equally impressive, with roles in classic dramas including *Cranford*.

Mad Dogs marks the fifth collaboration for Phil and John Simm, after they paired up for *Life On Mars*, *State of Play*, *Clocking Off*, and the 2008 crime film, *Tuesday*.

Brother to actor Robert, Phil has also taken lead roles in Sky1's *Treasure Island* and BBC1 drama *Hidden* recently as well as movie *Bel Ami*, in which he co-starred with Uma Thurman and Robert Pattinson.

How does the third series begin?

Well, as you know we ended the second series in Morocco, and at the beginning of the third we are just in more s*** really - that's the only way to describe it!

Because of all sorts of reasons, we have to move out here, to South Africa, and we don't see each other for a while until the story cuts drastically to two years in the future.

Is it different in pace?

Yes, we had to move, we couldn't stay in Majorca.

So we needed to crank up, and move it on a pace, and move location, which works really well.

I think these are the best scripts so far.

How have you enjoyed filming in South Africa?

It's great. This place is used so much for film and television, but it's never used as Cape Town - it's always doubling up for somewhere else.

So what's been nice is to come here and say, 'Right, we're in Cape Town, let's not build a mini-London here, let's just show South Africa off'. So that's been quite liberating.

The nice thing with a show like this is that we're amongst friends. That's the secret of making good work - surrounding yourself with the best people.

What about the tone - is that different too?

Yeah. We see how the friendship between the four of them actually works, and how some are more reliant than others.

Their characters come out much more in this I think, what they are actually about as people.

It is also funny and it's very melancholic as well.

It's very moving in places, some of the scenes, and it's awkward in that way that only male friends can do - do you just shake hands or do you hug?

It's got all those little elements going on.

How does Quinn get on with the separation?

Actually, he says, 'Right, have a good life, I'm off'.

I suppose he's always been slightly detached from the rest of the group and I always feel that you never know what quite his thinking is.

There is an ambiguity about Quinn when you think, 'What is he thinking?'. He is quite annoying in that respect!

So for him, this is a complete new beginning. He intends to seize that opportunity to start afresh.

That compares to Baxter who is desperate to get back to his family, or Rick who is trying to live in the past and stay young.

Out of all of them, Woody and Quinn are the two who make something of the change. Woody finds a purpose in life and both him and Quinn adapt best to their new circumstances.

Have you enjoyed exploring Cape Town?

Well, there is a weird thing about Cape Town - you could be anywhere, you could be in Europe, the States.

It's very cosmopolitan. It's not until you get out of it there that it starts to be a bit more like real South Africa, you see the townships and stuff.

Quinn gets a girl this year, doesn't he?

He does. That was one of my requirements for series three.

I said to them, 'I want a very nice car, some nice clothes, and a bird'.

I just thought we should give Quinn a lady and they cast this wonderful actress, Sylvie, who plays Christina but I don't know, she might turn out to be not all she is meant to be.

It was nice to see him interact and get a bit of action.

Did it cheer him up at all?

Well that's true, he is a miserable f**** really, you know. Somebody has got to be, haven't they?

Are you pleased to be doing a fourth series?

Yes, I'm p for it!

It's a great job, and a fun job, and we feel confident about this series being the best script so we can only build on that.

Where would you like it to be set?

The Isle of Wight would be nice. Or Richmond Park, so that I can go home on an evening.

We have talked about starting off abroad somewhere then setting some of it back in the UK, so maybe it could be half and half.

But that's not really my department, so we'll see.

JOHN SIMM

You're back! Is series three as good as the previous two?

Honestly, I think episode one of this series is the best episode of Mad Dogs I've ever read. I closed the script and went, 'Oh my God'. It was fantastic.

How does this series differ from the last one?

Well, in the first episode, we pick up straight after we left off, but then there's a big time lapse and we fast forward two years.

I think that's shocking, and quite exciting. You think, 'Oh my God, what are they going to be like, and what's happened?'

Beforehand, the whole series has been set within the space of a few days or a week, with added flashbacks to give you a bit of a backstory.

But now we've fast forwarded it a little bit.

And is it tonally very different? The first series was surreal and claustrophobic, and the second was a road movie. Is this one different again?

Yes. It's a bit more poignant, I think.

We get to do a lot of nice stuff because we've been dragged away and we're never allowed to go home again. Can you imagine that?

That's heartbreakingly for them all, especially because Baxter's got kids.

To see how they deal with that is quite interesting.

These guys aren't heroes, they're ordinary guys, so it's easy for the viewer to put themselves in their place and imagine how they'd react to the same thing.

As an ongoing series, do you open each script and pray that it's as good as the last one?

Yes. We're always pleasantly surprised when we get the script because Chris is great and he's developing as well.

As he gets to know us, and as we get to know the characters, he can write much more easily for us all.

Sometimes we find little phrases in our script and think, 'Did I actually say that out loud a few weeks ago?'.

Do you have anything in common with Baxter?

I really hope I'm not like Baxter. He's quite compassionate and he can be quite nice, but he's a bit annoying! I think him and Rick are so annoying.

If I was watching at home, I'd be like, 'aargh!'.

What kind of changes has Baxter undergone?

Well, he's working as a lawyer and he's very good at it, but he's not that successful. He's living in an office, he's got a pull-down camp bed, and you see him looking at his daughter's Facebook pages and that's absolutely heartbreakingly.

It's a really horrible thing that they've had to do, go away and lose touch.

So I think he's very different when you first see him - I think they all are, until they get back together and immediately fall into what they were like before and start arguing, which is funny, and nice.

I think they need each other and they don't really want to admit it.

And you've lost your goatee...

Yes, I used to moan about my goatee all the time but I used to hide behind it.

I didn't realise that until I saw in the script that I had to shave it off and I thought, 'I know I used to moan about it, but do I really have to lose it, are we sure about this?'

They wanted me to lose my glasses as well but I said, 'I've got to keep the glasses'.

So I kept the glasses, but it's a running thing that he keeps getting them smashed.

How have you enjoyed filming in South Africa?

Oh, it's fantastic. I love Cape Town. I was here before when I did The Devil's Whore.

It was winter then so it wasn't as nice weather, but this time we went at just the right time and it was so beautiful. We arrived in Cape Town in January when it was snowing, and I hear it was constantly raining in the UK, so it was lovely being in South Africa for most of winter.

Majorca for the second series was much hotter - too hot to sunbathe. But the good thing about that is that you can jump on EasyJet and be home in two hours.

We've had a great time though. We've been horse riding, on boat trips, and we've eaten fantastic food.

MARC WARREN plays RICK

From crime dramas *The Vice* and *Hustle* to fantastical productions *Dracula* and Sky1's *The Hogfather*, Marc has played both heroes and villains to critical acclaim.

One of our most loved faces, his talents have also been recognised on the other side of the pond, with roles in HBO's *Band of Brothers* and more recently, the Emmy Award-winning *The Good Wife*.

His successes on stage include playing Cool Hand Luke - where he had to eat a boiled egg every night for its entire run, as well as learning the banjo.

How does Rick cope with being separated from the other three?

Well, he doesn't really. He feels like he's been abandoned by the boys, and he gets involved in some pretty dodgy stuff. He turns into a bit of a wrong'un.

There's a lot of comedy with Rick's character this time round, isn't there?

Yeah, he's the one who has more of the extremes – he's the one who's more likely to cry and more likely to say the stupid thing, so I kind of get a lot of the funny lines.

He does all the crazy stuff which is great, which is what I wanted.

I think I tend to perform better as a performer when I'm doing more extreme stuff.

As an ongoing series, do you open each script and pray that it's as good as the last one?

I don't really think like that, no, I just rock up and do it really.

But when we read it, I knew it was good. Chris puts a lot of work in it and I consider Chris a friend and I think he's done a fantastic job, so I'm really pleased for him personally.

How does it compare to the previous series?

I don't know really. It all feels fantastic, but you just never know until it goes out.

With this one, it's nice because it's more about their individual journeys in the time they've been apart so it's a bit more personal.

Do you have anything in common with Rick?

I like to think I don't really do much that Rick does. He's a nightmare!

I like to think I'm not like him at all, but I'm sure some people would argue against that...

How have you enjoyed filming in South Africa?

It's been strange. It's been very pleasant and we've done some really good work, but I can't explain it.

South Africa is an extraordinary place and I haven't even scratched the surface, there's so much to offer.

But I just liked the feeling of Majorca. I had a lot of a personal history and involvement with Majorca so maybe that's why.

I'm not a great tourist, to be honest.

I went horse riding with John one evening and that was pretty special, and I went up Table Mountain and all of that.

Can you tell us about the fourth and final series?

I wanted to do a fourth series. I think the story needs to be finished off.

I won't give away his idea but he's let me in on it and I like it!

He's got it all mapped out. He's very clever, Chris.

Now there are tax breaks in the UK, it could be filmed there...

Yeah, that's true, maybe we will do the fourth in the UK. When we were doing Hustle, we had to shoot in Birmingham because London was too expensive.

So maybe more things will be shot in London now as well, which I think is great.

But with Mad Dogs, the location is almost a character in the piece: Majorca was a character in the second series and Cape Town is a character in this series, so I think that's kind of the joy of this programme.

And anyway, we've spent the past 20 years of our careers working in London, so I don't particularly want to go back yet!

JAIMIE WINSTONE plays MERCEDES

From her first role in the edgy film Bullet Boy, it was clear that Jaime's career was not going to be conventional.

She burst onto the scene and followed up the gritty role with others in acclaimed films Kidulthood and Donkey Punch, before shaking things up with diverse roles in Elfie Hopkins, which she also produced, as well as Made In Dagenham and Wild Bill.

The daughter of Ray Winstone, Jaime has also appeared in music videos for The Streets and Madness, among other bands, and is noted for her interest in fashion, having walked for Vivienne Westwood.

This part seems made for you...

Yes! I am so excited, because it just feels a really good part.

She is just very upfront and very in your face. I guess I have played people like that, but never as much as this.

I've made her very cockney and very in your face, very geezer birdie. To be one of the guys really, hence the shaved head!

Well, you look stunning - not many girls can get away with that look.

Oh, thank you very much!

I was quite nervous about it but I'm not really prissy when it comes to things like that.

I was a bit like, 'Okay, get it off, it's just a new style, it will be nice'.

I finished doing a play, then jumped on a plane the very next day, and when I got off the plane I had my head shaved and I was Mercedes.

It was kind of hard but it was probably the best thing to do, to morph immediately into the character.

What's Mercedes like?

She's wicked. You don't really get the opportunity to play girl parts in such a man-led cast, and this strong. I just really liked her from the start.

The thing I love about it is that there are four men, who aren't gangsters, they're just very normal men who are in a really twisted and messed up situation.

And this girl comes in and just goes, 'Here I am, this is my deal'. She's a soldier, military-trained.

She is quite angry and violent at first because she's defensive, but she ends up becoming an unlikely friend to them and being a bit like, 'Sort it out, guys, man up a bit'.

Without giving too much away, she gets Quinn in a headlock at one point. Was that fun to film?

That was so much fun. I also gave him a 'wet willy', which is a finger in the ear. It was brilliant!

I've never been asked to do a close-up on a wet willy before. I was like, 'Sorry, what?!

Phil is really tall and I'm very small so it was hilarious.

Do we find out much of her backstory?

Well although she's really tough, and really funny, that's all bravado stuff and she is actually alone.

Why is she on her own? There has got to be this other side to her, a touch of kindness.

There's a vulnerable side to her which I think is really important because otherwise you would think, 'Who is this tough annoying bird with no hair?'.

What was it like to come into a drama where the four main actors are so tight?

They are all so good, so giving,

I was very nervous, as you are when you walk onto a set where they have been doing it for a couple of years and they are all very tight.

I'm very close to Maxy and I knew John, I worked with his wife Kate on Alfie Hopkins, and I knew that Adrian had worked with my dad, but it was very different to anything I've done before so it was quite nerve wracking.

But I loved it. I absolutely loved it. The boys are so giving, they are so sweet, I love them all. They're all big teddy bears, really.

What was it like working with Max?

It was terrifying, really.

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