

Preoccupations

When dreams of playing professional basketball didn't go as planned, Aaron Glenane turned to acting. Several commercials and guest TV spots led to a role in **The Black Balloon**, and now the 26-year-old can be seen surfing alongside Sam Worthington in **Drift**. He tells Emily Blatchford about his career so far.



I GREW UP IN Ballarat in a sporting family. I wanted to play in the NBA but I didn't grow tall enough, so then I thought, 'OK, what else can I do?'

Then Mum got me this audition for this local show, *Oliver*, and I was like, 'Why did you do that? I can't do singing or dancing or anything!' But I went in there and sang 'Power of the Dream' which was the Olympic song at the time and the only one I knew. Once I was on stage I thought, 'Holy sh-t, this is awesome.'

I did a bit more acting in high school and then got into a school in Sydney - Brent St Studios - and studied there full time for two years. That was awesome, that was culture shock to the max. Coming from Ballarat to a metro dance school where kids have been doing this since they were three... There were girls coming up to you and kissing you on the cheek, guys coming up to you and kissing you on the cheek - the closest you got back home was a handshake.

The Black Balloon was sort of my first taste of film and TV and that was kind of like, I don't know, going to Disneyland for a little kid. We went out to set, all these trucks were there, people were running around, it was just like "Ah man! This is what I'm meant to be doing!"

And then *Drift* came along. I did the audition and came out thinking, "I think that went alright," and then I didn't hear anything back for two and a half months. When they eventually

told me [I got the role] I just went mental pretty much.

I researched the hell out of it. I spent time in [King's] Cross soaking up the vibe, went to the injection room and did a tour of that and talked to the guys. I spoke to an addict who has been 15 years sober. We talked for four hours and he told me heaps of stories - just that level of desperation you get to. I did the same with polio. My Mum has family friend who has polio and we talked for ages how it affects you physically and psychologically and what you do because of that, and how it makes you deal with things in a different way.

And then I'd just take it all out on the street - there would be days when I would be walking around with polio. To take it out on the street - you have to be as believable as you can, otherwise people just look at you going 'what is this guy doing?'

Patrick footage draws foreign buyers

SOME 20 MINUTES OF *Patrick*, director Mark Hartley's re-imagining of Richard Franklin's 1978 Australian psychological thriller, was screened for US and international distributors at the Cannes Film Market.

Producer Antony I. Ginnane was pleased with the feedback and is hoping the film will be selected for the Toronto International Film Festival in October, which he believes would be the launch pad for a raft of sales.

In Cannes the international sales agent Banksie Films sold the pic, which stars Charles Dance, Sharni Vinson and Rachel Griffiths, to distribu-

tors in Turkey and the Middle East. *Patrick* will premiere at the Melbourne International Film Festival in July and will open in cinemas in October via Umbrella Entertainment.

Ginnane produced the original, which starred Robert Helpmann, Susan Penhaligon and Robert Thompson. It was a breakthrough for the producer as it was snapped up by theatrical distributors worldwide. It made a ton of money in Italy where it sparked an unsanctioned 1980 sequel, *Patrick vive ancora* (*Patrick Lives Again*). Ginnane took legal action to stop the producers exhibit-

ing the film outside the country, although it was released on DVD in the US in April. He's seen that version and said it's dreadful.

In Cannes Ginnane acquired one title for IFM/Filmways, his Australian theatrical distribution co-venture with Robert Ward: *Ain't Misbehavin' (Un Voyageur)*, an autobiography of documentary filmmaker Marcel Ophüls, son of legendary director Max Ophüls. It will screen at MIFF followed by a limited theatrical release.

Also on IFM/Filmways' slate are Brian Trenchard-Smith's Gold Coast-set thriller *Absolute Deception*, which

stars Cuba Gooding Jr. and Emmanuelle Vaugier and opens in August; and Andrew Traucki's *The Jungle*, a thriller about a conservationist who goes to Indonesia to save the Java leopard and discovers something much bigger and nastier, which will go out in November/December.

Ginnane plans to launch *The Stolen*, first-time director Geoff Davis' WWII drama about three young Australians who leave their outback home to go to war and come back to find their family has been attacked by cattle rustlers, on Anzac Day 2014.

— Don Groves

Devils Playground tackles controversial topic

Devil's Playground, the Foxtel miniseries that deals with the cover-up of sexual abuse in the Catholic Church in the 1980s, "won't pull any punches," according to producer Helen Bowden.

Now shooting in Sydney, the six-part series stars Simon Burke as Tom Allen, a psychiatrist who is hired as a confessor to the clergy and gets embroiled in political and theological intrigue.

Burke played Allen as a 13-year-old schoolboy in Fred Schepisi's 1976 drama *The Devil's Playground*. The stellar cast includes Don Hany and John Noble as Bishops, Jack Thompson as the Archbishop, Toni Collette as a State Labor MP who campaigns for social justice, Andrew McFarlane as a priest and Max Cullen as a retired priest.

The screenplay by Blake Ayshford, Cate Shortland, Alice Addison and

Tommy Murphy is "complete fiction but drawn from events that happened," Bowden told IF.

Funded by Screen Australia and Screen NSW and produced by Matchbox Pictures, the series is being directed by Rachel Ward (*The Straits*, *Beautiful Kate*) and Tony Krawitz (*Dead Europe*). The producers are Bowden, Penny Chapman and Ayshford.

Burke, who also serves as an executive producer, said, "It's a total

dream to have the opportunity to revisit a character from such an iconic film and kind of go back to where I started. It's a full circle story."

The producers sent Schepisi the scripts and he gave his blessing, Bowden said. The series will air on showcase. International rights are being handled by NBC Universal, which owns a majority stake in Matchbox.

— Don Groves