



# THE WOLFMAN: why the big paws?

Re-shoots, budgets and hairy palms - the full story behind Universal's monster delays.

Way back in June 2008, *Buzz* ran its first look at *The Wolfman*, unveiling Benicio Del Toro as the drooling man-beast and announcing a release date of 1 May 2009. And then nothing – nothing but the sound of internet howls and yelps as the studio shifted the release date not once but twice, first to November 2009 and then to February 2010, while sparking up London-based reshoots this spring. A sign of trouble on the lupine blockbuster or simply a determination by Universal to get this remake of one of their horror crown jewels right? *Buzz* spoke to *Wolfman* producer Scott Stuber to find out.

“The visual effects work was so complex that some of the stuff wasn’t ready,” explains Stuber. “There’s so many textures we had to create, like landscapes of London and all the elements within the London sequence – they just weren’t where they needed to be.”

But never mind 19th Century skylines, surely the toothiest challenge has been the Wolfman himself – what’s the split between Rick Baker’s make-up and CGI? Any truth to the chatter that CGI has tipped the scales?

“It was never our intention for this to be a CGI-fest. Our whole thing was to honour Lon Chaney Jr, and the spirit of the original,” insists Stuber. “It’s an authentic, make-up driven film, but there are transitional pieces that we needed to do in CG, so you didn’t have to cut away

during the change in the monster. Integrating the make-up and the effects to make them feel like one cohesive whole was always going to be a challenge, and it’s something we’ve had to work through.”

*The Wolfman* ramps up the quality quotient with its cast: Del Toro as haunted aristocrat Lawrence Talbot, lured back to the family estate following the bizarre death of his brother; Anthony Hopkins as his enigmatic father; and Emily Blunt as his brother’s fiancée. The 1941 movie may be Del Toro’s favourite film, but the remake was nearly defanged when original director Mark Romanek walked off the project after his vision proved too pricey for the studio. With the film on the cusp of shooting, however, Universal didn’t want to bail, and hired Joe Johnston (*Jumanji*) as a safe



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**WE ADDED A NEW SCENE DURING THE POST-BITE, PRE-TRANSFORMATION SEQUENCE**



Fangs for the help: Benicio Del Toro stars opposite Emily Blunt.



pair of hands for hairy circumstances. “Joe got up to speed really quickly, having been a guy who’s been around forever,” says Stuber. “And he did an excellent job.”

Nonetheless, the first test screening exposed a few cracks and *The Wolfman* went back before cameras in April. “We needed one more piece between Benicio and Emily,” says Stuber. “We added a new scene during the post-bite, pre-transformation sequence when he’s starting to realise something’s wrong.”

They also beefed up the action in the film’s London set-piece, which piled more work onto the special effects team. Still, the add-ons have put Stuber in a bullish mood: a second test screening yielded terrific results and the latest

trailer ramps up the period monster flick’s thrill factor, with a grunge score and livelier lycanthropic rampaging than the first offering.

Stuber knows that plenty is riding on *The Wolfman*’s success – he has a *Frankenstein* remake in development with Guillermo Del Toro, and Universal are also percolating new versions of *Dracula* and *Creature From The Black Lagoon*. But he remains adamant that it will all be worth the wait. “It’s a big quality piece of entertainment. It’s beautiful, rich, gothic, tragic – it’s everything you’d hope it would be.” **MM**

**The Wolfman opens 12 February 2010. For the latest features and video check out [tinyurl.com/tfwlfnm](http://tinyurl.com/tfwlfnm)**

## WALL STREET 2: MONEY NEVER SLEEPS

ETA 23 APRIL 2010

But it does talk.

Here’s the first shot from Oliver Stone’s magnificently opportune sequel. It shows young trader Jacob Moore (Shia LaBeouf) rubbing shoulders with Gordon Gekko (Michael Douglas), freshly released from prison for his misdeeds (and having clearly acquired a taste for pastel).

The shoot’s been trundling merrily along in New York, and *Wall Street 2* will arrive 23 years after Stone’s scathing indictment of financial avarice and corruption into a climate where amoral Gekko-alikes came damn close to pushing the planet into a financial abyss. LaBeouf’s ambitious greenhorn, who’s dating Gekko’s estranged daughter (Carey Mulligan), turns to the disgraced tycoon for advice after his original mentor commits suicide.

Is greed still good? Will Gekko be triumphant? The men behind the monster aren’t saying. “I think it’s time to take another hard look at trading and the economy, and what went wrong in the last few years,” Douglas muses. “Whenever I mention *Wall Street 2*, everybody goes, ‘Yeah. I’d see that.’”

Susan Sarandon, Frank Langella, Josh Brolin and Charlie Sheen, reprising his role as Bud Fox, round out Stone’s cast. Javier Bardem, however, has passed on playing a hedge-fund super-villain. Shame – Anton Chigurh would have fit right in on the trader floor. **MM**

