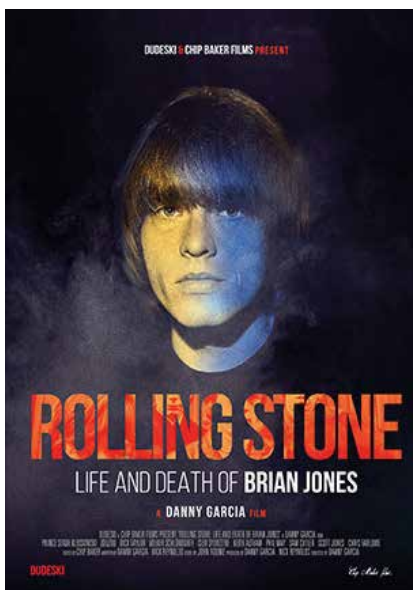


V NOW WE'RE TALKIN

By Helen Marketti

A chat with Director Danny Garcia about upcoming Brian Jones documentary

There will soon be a comprehensive documentary about the late Brian Jones of The Rolling Stones. Brian started the band during the early 60s and contributed to shaping their sound and influence. While his bandmates are going to embark on another tour this summer, over 50 years after his passing, we cannot forget or overlook the life of Brian Jones and the mark he left on the 60s era, as well as on The Rolling Stones. Film director Danny Garcia has released other rock



DG: It's been 50 years since Brian's death and it was a dream of mine for years to produce a documentary on him. Brian was to me the most interesting Stone and there's been a lot of bullshit written about him in the last 25 years, so it was the perfect time to tell the story as accurately as possible.

NCV: What is it about Brian Jones that still appeals to fans? Is it because he passed away at a young age?

documentaries, such as STIV No Compromise, No Regrets about the life of Stiv Bators (The Dead Boys), Looking for Johnny, The Legend of Johnny Thunders (New York Dolls) and The Rise and Fall of The Clash. He takes some time from his busy schedule to share a Q and A with the North Coast Voice about his latest project.

NCV: Please share a little about yourself and how you became interested in directing documentaries about rock stars.

DG: In the 90's I started writing for music magazines and by the year 2000, I was producing and directing short documentaries for the local TV station in Barcelona, which is where I'm from.

NCV: Were there documentaries you enjoyed that sparked your interest?

DG: For sure, lots of stuff but I especially enjoy the work of directors like Nick Broomfield and Don Letts, among others.

NCV: What was the inspiration to create a documentary about Brian Jones? Why now?

DG: I think the character Brian created was pretty amazing, just his look alone was remarkable. And then add to that his musical prowess and tons of charisma and you really have something extraordinary. That's why artists like Bob Dylan, Jimi Hendrix, George Harrison and others were drawn to him. Mick Fleetwood was his buddy in the mid 60's before he did Fleetwood Mac. He used to go to Brian's flat in Elm Park Mews often and spend the night drinking, smoking, and messing around with the witchy board. I asked Zouzou (former girlfriend) about that and she totally remembers him hanging out there with The Pretty Things and others.

NCV: It may be difficult to speculate, but do you wonder how the music of The Rolling Stones would be if Brian had lived and remained the in the group?

DG: The way things were going in '67, '68 and '69... Brian would have never remained in the Stones. He wasn't showing up to the recording sessions, he wasn't interested in the band anymore. If you read his last interview with Bravo magazine in '69, just after he left the band, he talks

about producing and doing other stuff. He had just recorded the Masters of Joujouka in Morocco and he was thrilled by it. So, Brian was also a pioneer of World Music.

NCV: He started the band and then was booted out so to speak. Was that the downward spiral for him or was it starting before? I know that his girlfriend, Anita Palenberg, eventually ended up with Keith. I had read Brian did not treat her well.

DG: I've spoken to a few ex-girlfriends of Brian and none of them experienced those violent episodes. Zouzou mentions in the film how Marianne Faithful asked her if Brian ever beat her up and she says, "He never touched one hair. He never did anything bad." Brian lost the plot with Anita. And despite being totally unfaithful to all the women he dated, he was, according to Prince Stash, quite possessive. So, you mix that with big doses of LSD and whatever else they were doing in '65, '66, and '67, and you have all the ingredients for something messed up to happen. Brian was insecure and emotionally he was a child, so that wasn't going to end up well for him. I saw Anita when she came down to the premiere of Looking for Johnny in

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London and even in her old age, she was a very powerful woman. I'm surprised she didn't kick Brian's ass.

NCV: What do you think his contribution is/was to the Rolling Stones and British/60s pop culture?

DG: According to Bill Wyman, Brian was the embodiment of The Rolling Stones. His contribution was huge because he was the man who brought the band together. He was a pioneer of slide guitar in the UK and thanks to his musical education he could play clarinet, saxophone and piano before he picked up the guitar, so by the time the Stones started recording *Aftermath*, he was more than ready to show his skills, as you can hear on "Under My Thumb" with Brian on marimba, or on "Lady Jane" where he plays the dulcimer. He was arranging those songs and turning them into timeless classics thanks to his contributions, which is what he did with "Paint it Black" with the sitar line, for example. But you pick up albums like *Between the Buttons* or *Their Satanic Majesties Request* and you can hear Brian all over those records playing all sorts of instruments.

NCV: Can you share who some of the individuals are that were interviewed and provided insight to Brian in the documentary?

DG: When co-producer Nick Reynolds and I started getting in touch with people for this project, our idea was obviously to get as many friends and collaborators of Brian's as possible to join the party. Unfortunately, the Stones and Bill Wyman declined our invitation but I think we did pretty good.

Dick Taylor from The Pretty Things who, as you know, was also an original member of The Rolling Stones, graced our film not only with his stories but also with a couple of instrumentals he recorded for it. Phil May, the singer of The Pretty Things is also in the film and he recalls the time in '64 when Brian lived in the basement of 13 Chester St. in Belgravia, London and The Pretty Things lived in the flat above, and the stories are pretty funny, actually.

Prince Stash Klossowski is one of those true friends of Brian that are still around. He got arrested with Brian in '67, when he was busted for the first time and he was friends with the Stones, The Beatles, Hendrix, etc. So, he had a lot of firsthand information to share with us. Keith Altham is another insider who doesn't need much introduction. He was Hendrix's PR and he knew the Stones very well. In fact, he was in the studio with the Stones on the night of Brian's death. Zouzou, the French actress and singer who went out with Brian in '64 and '65, and remained friends with him until the end, is also in the documentary and she's really great. Another old



Brian Jones, Statesboro, Georgia, May 4, 1965 by Steve Denenberg



Brian Jones 1967 by Ben Merk Anefo

friend of Brian is Richard Hattrell, who is also from Cheltenham. He actually bought Brian his first pro guitar and stayed at the infamous flat in Edith Grove where Brian lived with Mick and Keith in '62 and '63. Graham Ride was also friends with Brian in Cheltenham where they shared a few flats, and then he went on to marry the mother of Brian's second child, so he stayed very close to Brian all these years. He also wrote a book called "Foundation Stone," where he talks about his experiences with Brian and it's really interesting.

Sam Cutler is another star in the documentary. He was organizing the Hyde Park show with the Stones when Brian's death occurred so he was not only in the Stones office on July 3, 1969, but he was obviously very familiar with everybody around the Stones' camp, including Tom Keylock, one of the main characters involved in the tragedy. Then there's Terry O'Neill and Gered Mankowitz who between them were the "official" Stones' photographers from '64 to '67. They also gave us great insight into Brian's psyche and what was going on inside the Stones' camp during those years. Phill Brown, who was the tape operator at Olympic Studios in '68 and worked with the Small Faces, Hendrix and with the Stones on *Jumping Jack Flash* and *Beggars Banquet* talks very candidly about Brian and how he was doing during those

days when he was being harassed by the press and the police. Then there's the actress and singer Cleo Sylvestre, who was friends of Brian since the early days of the Stones. Brian used to go to Cleo's mom's flat in Euston and eat with them often and she was still in touch with Brian just before he died, when he asked her to sing in a new band he was putting together.

Pam Wynn, John Mayall's ex-wife, is also a great insider because she went down to Cotchford Farm a few times with her children, just before Brian died, and spoke with him on the evening of July 2, 1969. Pam had never been interviewed before about any of this and her testimony is quite compelling. Volker Schlöndorff, the director of "A Degree of Murder," gave us also a really insightful interview and the

great singer Chris Farlowe is also included in the film. To have these guys recall those days is just priceless and that's why we have 57 minutes of deleted scenes in the DVD, because I wanted to include as much information as possible for the fans. Then we have a few authors and filmmakers like Stephen Woolley, the director of "Stoned," who spent over 10 years investigating what happened to Brian before shooting his film; Simon Wells, author of many great books including "Butterfly on a Wheel" and the newest "She's a Rainbow" on Anita Pallenberg. Also, Chris Salewicz, author of "Dead Gods: The 27 Club" and many others, and who is a great raconteur, so it's always good to have him help connect the dots. And last but not least we have Scott Jones, who's the only investigative journalist that has seen and studied in detail the Brian Jones' police files. So, he's the most reliable source of information regarding the events that took place in Cotchford Farm on the night of July 2 and 3, 1969. I also have to mention Barbara Anna Marion, who is Brian's daughter, and was kind enough to sit down and talk to us and share some of the information she's learned about her father's death.

NCV: There are many stories surrounding his death. He drowned in his swimming pool and it was an accident or was it something else at the hands of another? What are your thoughts?

DG: Brian didn't just slip into unconsciousness and die in his swimming pool; he was murdered. Technically, it may be manslaughter, but Brian didn't die by himself. It's also well known that Brian was a strong swimmer, as his Cheltenham friends will tell you. There were a few people that night at Cotchford Farm who saw it happen. But I don't want to spoil it for the viewers, so I'm going to leave it there and have Scott Jones explain it to them properly.

NCV: When will the documentary be available on DVD?

DG: April.

NCV: What do you want an audience to come away with after they watch the documentary?

DG: I would like them to feel that they spent their money wisely supporting an indie film.

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