

## Running down the "KILL LIST"

Written by Samuel Zimmerman  
Monday, 09 January 2012 13:13

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On January 4, Ben Wheatley's KILL LIST was unleashed on VOD so that stateside audiences may bear witness to the ferocity with which the UK filmmaker entered the horror landscape. It's a remarkable film, but sadly one that's hard to discuss pre-viewing. When I spoke to Wheatley in anticipation of the KILL LIST piece in FANGORIA #310, we briefly veered in an enlightening, but admittedly more revealing direction. So, for those who dived into the film this past weekend and want to talk its endgame, check out what Wheatley had to say, and leave your thoughts below! [SPOILERS AHEAD]

**FANG:** Aside from reference points, do you have any sort of fascination with the occult?

**WHEATLEY:** Yea, a lot of the stuff in KILL LIST, I've done it before in other instances. A lot of it's come from nightmares and recurring dreams and stuff. I think it was interesting the kind of line of questioning we got in the states where people were asking, "you've obviously seen THE WICKER MAN, is it based on that?" But the thing is, in the UK, I think the idea of paganism and that kind of worship is more to the surface in general. It's not that unusual. Especially, we live down on the coast in this town called Lewes. All sorts of stuff goes on there, and they have all these big festivals, so it's not as unusual as it might be in the States; that kind of processions and weird alternate religion stuff, and stuff that's very old. So, I think on the surface it might look like it's taking a lot of cues from THE WICKER MAN, but I think WICKER MAN means something very different in the UK, than it does abroad.

**FANG:** Can you expand on yours and the UK's relationship to the occult?

**WHEATLEY:** It's very much on the surface and you kind of feel it around you. It's a feeling of, you can see the levels of religion in the U.K.: where the Christians have built on top of those religions, especially with lots of standing stones and stuff like that all around. Specifically, with

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KILL LIST, it's not an actual cult. We made great pains not to riff too closely to an actual known religion. I didn't want to be in a situation of taking someone else's beliefs and using them in genre—to use their beliefs in vain and take a religion and demonize it. We made up all of their rituals. We didn't copy them, or crib them from known religions. I think that's quite important.



**FANG:** And you designed their symbol?

**WHEATLEY:** Exactly, that was quite funny, that. I had designed it and I was very proud of that, and then I thought, "God, that's really familiar," and then we looked it up and thought, "oh my god, it's the fucking BLAIR WITCH thing." We said to the poster people, "please don't put it on the poster, it's going to look like we're ripping off THE BLAIR WITCH PROJECT, that's a disaster." So it got kind of suppressed in the PR and marketing, and the film came out and no one said anything about it. We thought, "Oh my god, no one's noticed" and then Deathly Hallows came out and it's exactly the same logo as they have in that, which was, "oh, fuck."

**FANG:** Do you think you had an overall point about religion?

**WHEATLEY:** I had this idea that it's a bit into why religions do sacrifices and it's this thing about the idea of crops failing. I had this idea that this particular cult were a kind of religion that sat behind all religions, a very ancient religion, but were always there kind of manipulating stuff, and they've adjusted with the times. Now the times are saying that the crops have failed, but the crop is now the financial market and so they've adjusted their rituals to adjust to that. So, instead of killing pigs or something outside of wheat fields, they're hanging people covered in money and stuff like that. That was the kind of vague thinking behind it, but it's not absolutely necessary to be able to read these things in the movie or understand them

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particularly to make the movie work, but they're details within it that we have thought about them and worked them out.

KILL LIST is now available on VOD, and hits NY and LA screens on February 3.