



Director Jesse Johnson returns to the pages of *Impact* with the forthcoming arrival of his latest project, the sci-fi action thriller *The Last Sentinel*. The film marks the return to action of former kickboxing champion Don Wilson as the lead, backed by a solid supporting cast, which includes Katee Sackhoff, Bookeem Woodbine, David Keith and Steven Bauer.

The film is set in a dark future where mankind is ruled by a 'Drone' army of mechanical peacekeepers originally designed to serve mankind, but now slowly but surely helping to wipe man from the face of the Earth. A courageous resistance force is fighting a losing battle to make a change, and finds a shot at salvation in a seemingly unlikely hero.

Tallis (Don Wilson) is the last surviving member of an elite fighting unit known as 'The 700th', trained in a variety of combat and survival techniques, but he has spent the last few years in semi-seclusion without anyone to give him orders. A chance encounter with one of the freedom fighters (Katee Sackhoff), reignites his fighting spirit giving him a purpose in life once more, and a final mission to complete.

Since we featured Jesse and *Pit Fighter* in the Dec 2004

issue of *Impact*, the film has had a very strong worldwide release and Johnson has kept busy with work behind the scenes on such projects as *War Of The Worlds*, *Mission Impossible 3* and Robert Zemeckis' upcoming adaptation of *Beowulf* for which he served as stunt co-ordinator and second unit director. For *The Last Sentinel*, Johnson was approached by Wilson's producing partners who want to showcase Wilson's abilities alongside strong supporting casts and with directors who understand the genre and push the limitations of their budget to deliver a solid final project.

Viewers can look forward to seeing a very different Don Wilson than previously seen in action. While 'The Dragon' made his debut in the American lensed HK flick *New York Chinatown*, his film career really began in earnest when uber-producer Roger Corman offered him the lead role in a movie revolving around a secret tournament of martial arts. The movie was *Bloodfist* and while the film did well and Wilson has since gone on to star in 25 movies, I've always felt that he was never really given the opportunity to showcase his abilities as both a fighter and an actor to full effect. A phenomenal, ring proven fighter who was known for his exceptional technique, too often Wilson has been hampered by choreography that didn't highlight his physical abilities, and directors who seemed unwilling to let Wilson stretch his dramatic

A dark future where war and violent death has been almost second nature, a courageous band of freedom fighters battle to defeat an unstoppable army that is driving mankind towards extinction. One man just might be the only hope for mankind's survival. That's the scenario for the latest project from *Pit Fighter* director Jesse Johnson, *The Last Sentinel* starring Don Wilson and Katee Sackhoff from *Battlestar Galactica*. *Impact's* Eastern Editor Mike Leeder brings you the first look at a film that looks set to introduce the world to a very different Don Wilson...

THE LAST SENTINEL

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muscles. His appearances in such films as *Say Anything* as John Cusack's trainer, *Batman Forever*, alongside Michael Worth, and more recently *Stealing Harvard* have hinted at more. It would appear that Wilson and his producing partners felt it was time for a change, and approached Jesse Johnson about developing a project that would introduce the world to a different Don Wilson. He's dropped 'The Dragon' and changed his appearance, to play the battle hardened and jaded Tallis in *The Last Sentinel*.

Joining Wilson in the cast are a number of *Impact* favourites including the lovely Katee Sackhoff who has made the role of Starbuck her own in the new *Battlestar Galactica* series, Bookeem Woodbine from *The Big Hit*, and the great David Keith (*They Live*, *The Thing*).

Sackhoff plays the freedom fighter known only as 'Girl' and, in a recent interview had this to say about the film. "We had a million dollar budget with 50 million dollar stunts - and I got to do all my own stunts. That was my big thing and that's why I did the film. I was so excited to do my own stunts and work with Jesse because he is such an amazing stunt coordinator... I loved *Pit Fighter*. So it should be good. I have no idea what it's going to look like, but I know the fighting's going to be great because I had to learn to knife fight for it."



From the footage we've seen of the film, Johnson has done it again putting every dollar of the budget and more onscreen, and delivering plenty of high octane gunplay and pyrotechnics as well as some bone crunching martial arts action, he's given Don Wilson a whole new look when it comes to both the acting and the action scenes and it looks like there's finally a project that does Wilson justice. Sackhoff and Wilson make for an interesting screen team, with Wilson kicking butt and taking names, while Sackhoff gets to crack wise and more than a few heads herself.

Serving as both scriptwriter and director for the film, Johnson has been able to stay true to his vision of the project, and we'll be talking to him at length about this film and his other projects in an upcoming issue of *Impact*. After delivering a powerful and bone crunching tale in *Pit Fighter* that far surpassed expectations and its US\$600,000 budget it's good to see Johnson being given a larger budget and an established leading man who is prepared to change his image and the audience's expectations of him. We'll be running a full review of the film as well as interviews with members of the cast and crew in upcoming issues of *Impact*. For a first look at the trailer log onto:

http://www.gorillapictures.net/index_content.html

MIKE LEEDER

