



The script for the CBC mini *Guns* came together during Toronto's deadly summer of 2005

Sutherland, Holness playing with Guns

BY TRACY NITA PENDER

THE opening of *Guns* – the new, two-part miniseries from director David “Sudz” Sutherland – will seem familiar to viewers in Toronto when a six-year-old girl is gunned down on Yonge Street.

At press time, the scene was scheduled to be shot at the downtown corner of Yonge and Gould Streets. That’s less than a block from the site of the city’s infamous Boxing Day shooting where 15-year-old Jane Creba was killed and six other bystanders were wounded in 2005 – innocent victims of a shootout between two youth gangs. The shooting shocked the city and led to calls for a crackdown on gangs and gun violence.

But producer and cowriter Jennifer Holness says the scene is meant to portray the randomness of gun violence. *Guns*, she says, pushes the audience to realize “that it can happen anywhere, at any time.”

The husband and wife team began writing the script just before the city’s violence-plagued “summer of the gun” in 2005.

“As we started writing it, all hell broke loose. Every week there was another headline about gun violence,” she recalls, adding that the \$8.5-million 2 x 120 “takes you behind the headlines to the people who run the guns... We focused on one arms dealer and his relationship with people – how they all affect each other.”

“When someone’s arrested, there’s family involved,” adds Sutherland. “There’s not just this single bad man – they’re people who exist in context of their job, their family, their relationships. Every bad apple has a mother.”

Colm Feore (*Bon Cop, Bad Cop*) plays the arms dealer, starring with Elisha Cuthbert (24), Shawn Doyle (*The Eleventh Hour*), Lyriq Bent (the *Saw* franchise), Stephen McHattie (*300*) and K.C. Collins, seen last summer in Sutherland’s *MOW Doomstown*. Arthur Cooper, who worked with Sutherland and Holness on *Love, Sex and Eating the Bones*, is back as DOP.

Guns is also shooting in nearby Hamilton, ON, with a few days each in the suburbs and downtown core of Toronto, and is expected to air in fall 2008 with a big push from the network, according to Holness. Minis are out of favor at CBC these days, but Sutherland says the network has stuck with the project, despite its recent programming changes.

“We survived their regime change, the project survived the turf wars, and now we’re shooting,” he says. *Guns* is produced by Hungry Eyes Film & Television, under the banner of High Calibre Productions. *