

The Big Interview Bruce Willis

A Die Hard

Give him a hand gun, a building to jump off or a room full of broken glass to navigate barefoot and Bruce Willis is right at home. Pass on a compliment, however, and the veteran action movie star surprisingly doesn't know what to do with himself.

'I'm blushing,' he says, slightly taken aback to hear that Dame Helen Mirren, his co-star in new action comedy Red, recently admitted she has a crush on him. 'I'm a big fan and she's a really charming person in real life. I'm very flattered.'

It's 22 years since Willis's first outing as John McClane, the wise-cracking tough guy in Die Hard, turned him into a bona fide movie star. But no one could have predicted that he'd still be doing action movies at 55, even if Red is a bit of a unique proposition. Like The Expendables, it's been nicknamed a 'geri-actioner': Willis, Mirren, Morgan Freeman and John Malkovich play retired CIA agents who find themselves targeted by a hit squad. When we meet Willis's character, Frank Moses, he's bored to tears of suburban life and rediscovers his mojo once the explosions kick in. You get the sense retirement clearly wouldn't suit the actor either – but there's no danger of that happening any time soon.

'In the life going on in my head, I feel like I'm only about 28 years old,' he says. 'I'm always surprised when I'm reminded that I'm actually 55 years old. To think that some day I'll not be able to do the things I can still do now... I don't think about retirement.'

Willis is endearingly self-deprecating – twice he describes himself as 'incredibly old' – and nothing is no-go, especially the kinds of things that might be sensitive

No snow, no boats, no jungles, no desert. Just cake, all the time. And tuxedos. And great-looking women

The action movie star talks to KATE BUSSMANN about his role in new action flick Red and why his young-at-heart attitude means retiring isn't on the agenda

topics for other actors, such as his receding hairline. 'I was hoping you'd have hair,' sighs his love interest in the movie, played by Mary-Louise Parker. ('I will kick anybody's ass who tries to tell me that I'm not a man because my hair's thinning,' he once said. No danger of any dodgy hair plugs on this movie star.)

And he has an infectious sense of humour made all the funnier by a laconic, deadpan delivery that repeatedly makes you wonder whether he's joking or serious. Just ask what he won't put up with for a role any more: 'No snow, no boats, no jungles, no desert. Just cake, all the time. And tuxedos. And great-looking women. When you have to stand around in snow for weeks at a time and you get cold, it's all I could do not to burst into tears. I am close to my emotions when it comes to cold weather.'

But he wasn't always this mellow. In 2006, he lost his temper at a press conference, railing at everyone from the government to celebrity magazines to Oprah Winfrey. Today, though, he chooses his words much more carefully.

'I keep my mouth shut a lot more now,' he says. 'I was just way too impressed with myself. Now I have a much clearer point of view on how important things I have to say are.' Which is to say: 'Much less important. A lot not important.'

One thing he should be doling out advice on, however, is how to stay friends with your ex. After divorcing first wife Demi Moore, he swore he'd be a bachelor for the rest of his life. But last year, he married 32-year-old British Victoria's Secret model Emma Heming at a small ceremony in Turks and Caicos. He and Moore are on such good terms that not

Brucie Bonus His Five Best Action Moments

Taking Out A Chopper With A Police Car (Die Hard 4)

Cyberterrorist Thomas Gabriel (Timothy Olyphant) has shut down the US traffic infrastructure, trapping John McClane (Willis) in a road tunnel. A baddie helicopter lurks outside, blocking his exit. What does our hero do? He drives a police car at top speed through said tunnel, jumping out before it ricochets off a toll booth, and knocks the 'copter out of the sky (pictured) – because 'I ran outta bullets'. Of course!



before settling on a samurai sword – is one of many iconic moments in Quentin Tarantino's cult movie.

Picking The Best Weapon (Pulp Fiction)

When prize fighter Butch Coolidge (Willis) and mob boss Marsellus Wallace (Ving Rhames) are inexplicably kidnapped by two pesty pawn shop owners, Butch exacts his own escape by knocking out a gimp before going back to get Wallace. The moment where he scours the shop for possible weapons – first a hammer, then a baseball bat, then a chainsaw,

Punching A Man's Nose Through His Brain (The Last Boy Scout)

'Touch me again and I'll kill ya,' warns Willis's private detective, Joe Hallenbeck, to captor Chet (Kim Coates), henchman of a dodgy football team boss Joe is investigating. Chet sucker-punches him again, so Joe drives Chet's nose into his brain with a single punch. Well, he did say.

with a soft side



only did he attend her wedding to Ashton Kutcher but she and Kutcher later went to his.
 'I still love her and I have a lot of respect for how she lives her life,' he said after her wedding. And if there's any doubt what his

decades younger bride sees in him, it vanishes when I play back the interview: it's only then that it's obvious quite how seductive his soft-spoken drawl is. Dame Helen didn't stand a chance.
Red is in cinemas from Friday.

Yippee ki-yay:
 Bruce Willis plays a retired CIA agent in new action flick *Red*
 Picture: Frank Masi

Separating A Rapist From His Testicles (*Sin City*)

Robert Rodriguez's stylish adaptation of Frank Miller's dystopian graphic novel casts Willis as a world-weary cop with a dodgy ticker. His final thwarting of Nick Stahl's yellow-skinned child rapist is sick but triumphant as he rips off the family jewels - 'I take away his weapon - both of them,' he narrates, helpfully.

Fire Hose Bungee Jump (*Die Hard*)

Willis had to do many ludicrous things to rescue himself and the fellow incumbents of the Nakatomi Plaza skyscraper, held hostage by Alan Rickman's brilliantly eccentric terrorist Hans Gruber - and throwing himself off an exploding roof using a fire hose as a bungee rope was one of them. The film turned him into a bona fide action star and ensured there would be many more 'yippee ki-yays' to come. Hurrah!
Sharon Lougher

Coming Soon The Little House

Rising young actress Lucy Griffiths (pictured) likes an intense thriller. Not long ago, she was on our screens in stalker drama *U Be Dead*. Soon we'll see her in the lead role in ITV1's two-part adaptation of Philippa Gregory's novel, *The Little House*, about a new wife and mum who feels suffocated by her interfering in-laws when she moves into the 'little house' at the end of their driveway. 'My character, Ruth, was orphaned at quite a young age and in quite traumatic circumstances,'



says the 24-year-old. 'You realise just how much a bearing it's had on the way she feels about events in her own adult life. She's bombarded with dreadfulness.' In *U Be Dead*, Griffiths starred alongside the ubiquitous David Morrissey. In this, she's joined by Francesca Annis and Tim Pigott-Smith as the overbearing in-laws. 'They are both a lot more fun and funny than the piece would lead you to believe,' she laughs. 'Francesca is like an eternal bubbly goddess and Tim is just so cool and funny. He's the kind of person where he walks into a room and everything's OK.'
The Little House starts in November on ITV1.