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Novice film-makers coax Dunaway into the valleys

- **Oscar winner agrees to low fee**
- **Actress 'loved the ghost story script'**

Dalya Alberge, Arts Correspondent

Two novice film-makers have managed to woo Faye Dunaway to the South Wales valleys to take the lead role in their first feature.

Rik Hall, producer, and David Howard, writer and director, persuaded the Oscar-winning actress to take a fraction of her normal fee on the strength of their script for *Flick*, a ghost story.

Hall, 30, said that after sending out hundreds of copies of their script, it eventually found its way into the hands of Dunaway. "We got the script to her and she loved it. She called me up directly and said she'd love to do it, that it was a really original story."

Dunaway, who became one of the most desired women in the world after appearing in *Bonnie and Clyde* with Warren Beatty and *The Thomas Crown Affair* with Steve McQueen, is reported to command fees of more than £1 million for each film.

At the weekend she was on location near Cardiff, having agreed to take on a very different role — a one-armed American detective in a lowbudget independent film about a teddy boy who returns from the grave to seek revenge on his tormentors. Her exact fee for *Flick* has yet to be disclosed, but is thought to be as little as a five-figure sum.

Now aged 66, Dunaway became an overnight sensation in 1967 after she was cast as the notorious gangster Bonnie Parker in Arthur Penn's crime saga. Known for her haunting beauty, sculpted cheeks and mesmerising on-screen mix of toughness and vulnerability, she went on to appear opposite Dustin Hoffman in *Little Big Man*, Jack Nicholson in *Chinatown*, Robert Redford in *Three Days of the Condor* and Marlon Brando in *Don Juan DeMarco*. She won an Oscar for her portrayal of a ruthless TV executive in the black comedy *Network*.

In the new film, she plays Lieutenant McKenzie, called in to investigate a murder after a fight at the "Memo" — the Newbridge Memorial Hall, the historic Art Deco social club. The building was recently restored to its former glory after becoming a runner-up in the BBC TV series *Restoration*, in which viewers vote to save important buildings at risk.

Now the Memo is one of *Flick*'s main locations in a four-week shoot, along with sites in Pontypool, Cardiff and Port Talbot.

Hall, who studied politics at University College London, and Howard, 31, who trained as a lawyer, have previously made documentaries for Channel 4 and Five on subjects ranging from history to strange-but-true phenomena. That was how they met five years ago.

Both had long dreamt of breaking into films, but had struggled to get their ideas off the ground.

Having written the script of *Flick* two years ago, they tried approaching potential investors at the Cannes Film Festival and beyond. Hall said: "We sent out packages and scripts to literally hundreds of people and companies. It was getting people to read the thing and not chuck it in the bin that took the time."

“Coming from television, it’s a whole different set of people to approach, so you’re starting at the beginning.” They refused to let themselves be affected by rejection.

Their perseverance eventually paid off. *Flick* is due to be released this year, having received financial support from the Film Agency for Wales, the Arts Council of Wales lottery funds and private backers.

Dunaway was unavailable for comment.

http://entertainment.timesonline.co.uk/tol/arts_and_entertainment/film/article1295189.ece