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## Interview: 'Crossfire Hurricane' shows Rolling Stones' image nearly killed them (Photos)



The [Rolling Stones documentary “Crossfire Hurricane,”](#) which will be released on [DVD](#) in the U.S. May 21 by Eagle Rock Entertainment, isn't 50 years jammed into two hours, but then it was never supposed to be, according to the film's director, Brett Morgen.

“The way it came together was that Mick (Jagger) wanted to do something to commemorate the 50th anniversary,” he said in a phone

interview. "The only dictate was he wanted a movie. He didn't want a miniseries. I think I said something in our first conversation, 'Well you can't do 50 years in two hours.' It's just not possible. The only way I could think to approach this was to find a story, lock on to it, and that's going to dictate what goes into the film and what doesn't."

He says the story they settled on was the foundation of the Rolling Stones.

"In that sense, how when they were introduced to the world, they were playing the role of the anti-Beatles. And then at some point in the '60s, they went from playing the role to actually becoming the role and really embracing that role. They became the characters that they had set out to start playing. And at some point, that character, that role, nearly devours and kills them. It's not until Keith liberates himself from heroin that they come through to the other side."

### **Only four months**

Morgen says his plan for the film, which he only had four months to work on, was to not to mention their albums by name because there was too many to mention. In fact, he said he told Jagger, "There's a good chance we make this movie and you don't hear the word 'satisfaction.'"

But not only did it work, it worked incredibly well. Morgan describes "[\*\*Crossfire Hurricane\*\*](#)" as "a bit sloppy on the edges, jagged rough cuts here and there, but that was a visual style that was the embodiment of the band."

One thing quite noticeable is how the Stones all open up with extraordinary honesty. That includes Mick Jagger. How did that

happen?

“I did 12 sessions with Mick,” Morgen said. “And when we started the project, he probably thought we could do it all in about three or four sessions max. I think he thinking of four or five hours of interviews. We did about 20 hours total.” He said he and Jagger spent 2 ½ hours alone discussing the last couple of months of Brian Jones' involvement with the band.

One amazing revelation is that Jagger admits he cried before the Hyde Park memorial to Brian Jones.

“He was saying things he never would have been able to say 30 years ago, but I think it's only now because he's a father and has children that come of age and he's 70 and looking back on his life.”

Morgan also said Jagger told him, “We didn't know about drug rehab back then. We didn't know what to do with Brian. Plus we were in our early 20s. We were totally self-centered and selfish. That sort of epiphany only comes from time,” Morgan observed.

### **Keith Richards an 'open book'**

Keith Richards, on the other hand, is always ready to talk.

“Keith's an open book. Keith is one of the greatest subjects to interview because not only does he have an amazing memory for someone who was on drugs as long as he was, but the way he tells it. He's got a wonderful sense of narrative. Nothing is off limits with Keith.”

Morgan said when he told him he'd be asking quite a lot about drugs, he said Richards told him (imitating Richards' raspy voice), “It is what

it is, man. Ask whatever you want.”

He says the great thing about Mick and Keith is “nothing that they say is going to bring them down.”

Does Mick Taylor now think it was a mistake to leave the group?

“He says in the film he doesn't because it would have destroyed him if he stayed, but I cannot imagine he believes it was one of the best decisions of his life. The irony is he says he wanted to leave because he didn't want to destroy his family, but he ended up becoming a full-blown junkie once he left the band. You just don't leave the Rolling Stones. In Bill Wyman's case, it was a different story. He had served with them for 30 years and had to get out for his piece of mind.”

The film ends with Ron Wood's entry into the band, which Morgan says was crucial.

“Ronnie was necessary for the band's evolution. When Ronnie came in, it wasn't so much that Ronnie was the better guitarist. What Ronnie contributed wasn't necessarily his guitar playing or his song writing. It was his spirit. And Ronnie is a true Rolling Stone the way Mick Taylor never was.”

“The reality,” Morgan says, “is Mick wanted the story to be told. He understood he's probably not going to be around for the 100th anniversary, and there's probably not going to be a 60th anniversary film, so ([“Crossfire Hurricane”](#)) was it.”