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## McDowell's cricket gear inspired 'Clockwork' thug

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CANNES, France (AP) — One of cinema's most stylish psychopaths got his look because Malcolm McDowell happened to have his cricket uniform with him while talking over his "A Clockwork Orange" character with Stanley Kubrick.

They had been pondering just how McDowell's gleefully brutal thug Alex should dress for the 1971 film, which screened Thursday at the Cannes Film Festival ahead of a 40th anniversary Blu-ray release coming May 31.

Typical for Kubrick, who had great love for the blackly comic, they settled on a mash-up that brought an air of perverse gentility to the menacing young hooligan played by McDowell.

"I said, 'Well, I've got my cricket gear in the car. We could try that,'" McDowell recalled in an interview at Cannes.

Kubrick loved how McDowell looked in the crisp white uniform and suggested that he wear the outfit's groin protector on the outside, like a giant codpiece.

That left the head gear. McDowell was given a big box of hats to choose from.

"I chose the bowler, because it symbolized the city and respectability, and I just wanted to give a real (screw) you to the establishment," McDowell said. "And then the eyelash."

That was the finishing touch, inspired by a gag gift called "Yard of Eyelash" that McDowell had bought for Kubrick. The director told him to cut off a hunk of the fake eyelash and try it on, just over one eye.

Kubrick told him, "The one is really sinister, because you can't really tell what it is. There's something wrong with your face, but you're not really sure what it is. So that's what we'll go with," McDowell said.

The outfit and makeup helped make Alex one of Hollywood's most memorable big-screen bad boys, a get-up many people since have copied for costume parties and Halloween bashes.

Adapted from Anthony Burgess' novel, the film follows the ultra-violent adventures of Alex and his teen gang as they rape, beat and rob their way through a future England where law and order has become almost meaningless.

Alex revels in his bloody actions, crooning "Singin' in the Rain" as he ferociously kicks a prone victim and blissfully listening to Beethoven after his violent deeds.

"It adds to the evil if you're completely without a conscience. In the middle of a rape, you're having fun?" said Christiane Kubrick, wife of the filmmaker, who died in 1999. "You think it's wonderfully funny. The poor woman is being done over, and you're having the time of your life. That is so much more than just a rape. ... That hopelessness in that moment, for the onlooker, it rubs it in much more."

Christiane Kubrick said her husband settled on McDowell as the ideal person to play Alex after seeing him as the rabble-rouser who leads a revolt at a stuffy British boarding school in 1968's "If..."

McDowell worked closely with Kubrick in the months leading up to the production, then suddenly got a case of stage fright a week before shooting began, uncertain how to embody the character. He had the costume and the trappings, but not the core of Alex, McDowell said.

When he raised his doubts with Kubrick, the director "just looked at me as if I was nuts. He said, 'Hey, gee, Malc, I'm not RADA (the Royal Academy of Dramatic Arts). That's why I hired you,'" McDowell said.

So McDowell passed the script on to "If..." director Lindsay Anderson and asked for advice. Anderson called him over to his house the next day and told him the way to play the part was to adopt the bearing his character copped in one particular closeup in "If..."

"When you open the doors of the gymnasium, you step in there to be beaten, and you look at the prefects, you look at them and you smile. That's how you play this part," McDowell recalls Anderson saying.

"I went, 'Lindsay, that's genius. It's so simple.' And that got me through the first day of



Photo 1 of 3



Actor Malcolm McDowell poses for photos during an interview with the Associated Press at the 64th international film festival, in Cannes, southern France, Thursday, May 19, 2011. (AP Photo/Joel Ryan)



### Map



shooting," McDowell said. "I never thought about it again. It just kicked in, and I knew how to do the part and took it from there."

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