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Friday, September 19, 2008

Actor's IRA views rejected by producers

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MICHAEL DWYER, Film Correspondent

THE PRODUCERS of the controversial Northern Ireland film *Fifty Dead Men Walking* issued a statement yesterday, strongly opposing comments made by cast member Rose McGowan during a press conference at the Toronto International Film Festival last week.

At the time she said: "I imagine, had I grown up in Belfast, I would 100 per cent have been in the IRA. My heart just broke for the cause. Violence is not to be played out daily and provide an answer to problems, but I understand it."

The film is based on the experiences of IRA informer Martin McGartland in the late 1980s. He had threatened legal action to stop the Toronto premiere going ahead, claiming that the film misrepresented him, but he withdrew his objections on the eve of the premiere.

Ms McGowan (35), whose father is Irish and whose mother is French, was born in Florence and moved to the US when she was 10. She has acted in over 30 films, including Quentin Tarantino's *Death Proof* and Brian De Palma's *The Black Dahlia*. In *Fifty Dead Men Walking*, Ms McGowan plays a fictional character, Grace Sherwin, who is captioned as an IRA intelligence officer.

The producers yesterday said that they regret any distress Ms McGowan's comments may have caused to the people of Northern Ireland and "particularly those who were victims of or caught up in the shocking events that existed during the Troubles". They said her views "are not shared nor endorsed by anybody associated with the production".

Kari Skogland, the film's Canadian director, added: "Rose's personal opinions of Northern Ireland do not reflect the perspective of the film in any way." Martin McGartland had earlier said: "Rose McGowan's comments were insulting to victims of IRA terrorism and she should apologise. It's easy to say this sort of thing when you live in LA."

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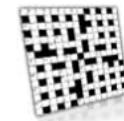
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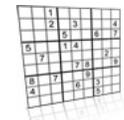
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