



Maria Slough catches up with Australian-born, LA-based actor Martin Dingle Wall

“Time is elastic,” Marty says and smiles. Ten years have passed since our paths last crossed, since we had shared time talking love, life and all things animals. When we last met we were, as now, both passionate about our work — about animal welfare. Not much has changed in a decade, aside from our mutual transgression to a fully plant based lifestyle.

When I began my vegan life five years ago I had a long running internal debate about veganism in my mind. As a vegetarian of nearly 20 years I didn’t extend the connection to the egg and dairy industries.

My journey first began when I went into the slaughterhouses, battery cages and piggeries. Saw it. Smelt it. It was arresting. The fear in the air is palpable. When you have that experience, the switch is flicked. No negotiation. No compromise. Done. Then five years ago I was invited to a rough cut screening in LA of an animal rights documentary. Any philosophical grey areas were addressed and resolved that night on screen. After that screening I was vegan. The film was ‘UNITY’ directed by Shaun Monson.

Describing his connection to animals Martin said: “It comes down to something as simple as my desire to not die or be killed today. All other living beings share that same desire each and every day. The convenient idea that they don’t is the problem.”

Sat on the grass in the afternoon sunshine Martin shared some of his on set stories with me.

“On the set of rom-com All That Jam, which was filmed in Russia, I played the lead. The film was all about food and love. The team were so polite turning every scene dish in the script into a vegan friendly option. Last year I shot Gun Shy in Chile with Antonio Banderas, directed by England’s own Simon West. The catering on set is usually very broad, so there was no problem there but there was a scene in the film set in a seafood market. I was overjoyed to get to set and discover all the fish, prawns and octopus were rubber!”

Martin’s latest film is ironically called Happy Hunting and tells the story of an annual hunting festival on the plains of Bedford Flats. With no animals left to

hunt, drifters become the targets. Martin’s character Warren is one of the hunted. The film has received critical acclaim becoming the fifth most watched film of its genre on iTunes.

With Christmas just around the corner I asked Martin who his ultimate guests would be for a vegan feast.

“My beautiful wife Peta and our young son ‘Lucky’ Lakota both of whom share my passion for animal welfare and plant based lifestyle, and I am fortunate to consider (sic) Shaun Monson a good friend so he would be at the table, alongside a number of people in LA whose documentaries have impacted me greatly. Many are vegans and we have gatherings of cruelty free celebrations every Thanksgiving and 4th July. I’d invite Jim Morrison and Salvador Dali both who seemed to wander back and forth through the door of the linking dimensions. Morgan Freeman and Sir Anthony Hopkins, who are like my acting mentors, and probably Spielberg or Coppola.”

Before he left I asked Marty how he felt being a vegan defined him.

“The answer to that question is so vast. I was asked by a Vegan Festival in Australia to be its ambassador but I was unable to attend in person so I did a piece to camera about this question. I choose not to be a part of the silent majority that supports animal trade with their purchasing dollar.

“If you are coming at veganism from your head, go gradually, reduce intake and you will feel the positive difference in your body. Watch some documentaries until the decision is purely in your heart. That is where this world changes.”

Happy Hunting can be viewed in the UK now on iTunes and Amazon.

Follow Maria Slough on Twitter and Instagram for even more behind-the-scenes content.

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