

## JAMES HETFIELD On Playing A Lawman In Western Thriller 'The Thicket': 'I'm Grateful I Got Asked To Do It'

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During an appearance on a recent episode of "**The Metallica Report**", the podcast offering weekly insider updates on all things **METALLICA**, **METALLICA** frontman **James Hetfield** spoke about his acting role in **Tubi Films**' upcoming dark western thriller "**The Thicket**". Based on **Joe R. Lansdale**'s novel of the same name, "**The Thicket**" will be released in theaters on Friday, September 6.

**Hetfield** said (as transcribed by **BLABBERMOUTH.NET**): "**Peter Dinklage** contacted me through management, just saying, 'Hey, I got a part for you in something we're putting together. And I just thought of you, and that's it.' It's, like, 'Okay, cool.'"

"I'm not into acting at all," **James** explained. "I mean, I act enough on the stage, like projecting. For us on stage, projecting big, it's almost more like Broadway. When you're in a movie, you do just a little thing and that's, 'Whoa,' that's enough. I like big projecting. So for me to be invited to be part of a film where I don't have to go and audition or something, 'cause that doesn't interest me, really. I've done that before, and it's not my bag, really. But he invited me along. There was a couple of other things that I had done before. [Director] **Joe Berlinger** asked me to do something

similar in the **Ted Bundy** doc that he put together. It was, like, 'I got this part. You'd be perfect for it. Come on, let's do it.' And that's kind of similar to what, I guess, **Peter Dinklage** or the director had in mind. Like, 'Hey, this is a part. You don't have to do anything, you don't have to train, you don't have to do nothing. Just be you.' It's, like, 'All right, I can do that.'"

**Hetfield** went on to describe the tedious process of making movies and how it is so drastically different from performing on stage.

"While I'm sitting in a trailer, and it's probably minus 10 degrees out up in Canadia [sic], we're outside of Calgary and I'm sitting there in period clothing, 1800s turn of the century," he said. "I mean, the wool's great, but the shoes [are] not so great. I'm sitting there with [my assistant] **Ray**. It's, like, 'Hey, you're shooting today.' And then the end of the day, it's, like, 'Ah, we didn't get to you today.' And I told **Ray**, I said, 'Hey, next time I'm asked to do something like this, remind me to say no.' [Laughs] But that's how it was in the moment. When it's all done, the work you put into it, it's, like, 'Ah, yeah, that was nothing.' But just when you're sitting in it and waiting. Music is not about waiting. 'I got an idea. Hey take this down. Let's do this.' Practicing your line and waiting to say it five days later is, like, oh, driving me nuts."

**James** continued: "When I'm doing interviews or, like, 'Hey, say hi to this,' 'Congratulations on blah, blah, blah.' I just want it to be natural, one take, go. Let's do it. I don't know. Call it the **Lou Reed** method. 'Well, why should we do it again? We already did it.' That's what I like. And the movies is not that — not so much. But it was fun being out there, being, obviously, in a Western, getting to wear a hat, carry a gun, have a badge on. And I don't wanna give it all away, but period-correct clothing and riding horses and all that shit. It's in my DNA. I love it. It's just the other part, making a movie. But I'm grateful to be in it. I'm grateful I got asked to do it. I hope it comes out cool. That's another one of those things. I'm just another dude there playing a part for the greater good. When we're out here [on tour playing music], it's, like, 'Hey, this is all under our control,' and out there it's not. So, just trusting the process and having as much fun as I can with it."

**Hetfield** added: "It's certainly not a career choice for me. I love what I do and I wanna continue to do that till my last breath. But just something fun. I love that someone just asks you. They see you, they picture you in a part and then you go and you do it. I think that was very cool of **Peter**."

**Peter Dinklage** plays **Shorty**, a bounty hunter enlisted to find a woman who has been kidnapped by a violent killer. The movie, which is set at the turn of the 20th century, follows **Shorty** and his fellow trackers as they travel into a violent and chaotic place known as the Big Thicket.

"**The Thicket**" also stars **Juliette Lewis** ("Yellowjackets"), **Esmé Creed-Miles** ("Hanna"), **Levon Hawke** ("The Crowded Room"), **Leslie Grace** ("In The Heights"), **Gbenga Akinnagbe** ("The Old Man"), **Macon Blair** ("I Care A Lot"), **Ned Dennehy** ("Peaky Blinders"), **Andrew Schulz** ("Infamous") and **Arliss Howard** ("Mank").

Production on the film took place last year with "**Blitz**" director **Elliott Lester** behind the camera and **Christopher Kelly** penning the script.

**Lester** told Collider about adding **Hetfield** to the film: "The casting of **James Hetfield** in '**The Thicket**' is a story that feels almost destined. It all began with a dream — one morning I woke up with a clear vision that **James** had to be in the movie. **James Hetfield**, a Rock God, embodies a raw poetry that fit perfectly with the character we envisioned. From that moment, **Peter Dinklage** and I were relentless in our pursuit. We tried every possible avenue: his manager, mutual friends, anyone who could help us reach him. Our breakthrough came when writer/director **Sacha Gervasi** ['**Anvil! The Story Of Anvil**'], who had a connection to **James**, stepped in. Despite our efforts, we were unsure if **James** would even consider the role. We sent him the script, along with a Hail Mary, and waited. To our delight, within days we heard that **James** was interested. The meeting that followed confirmed our hopes. **James** could not have been more humble. He revealed that he had always wanted to do a dark western, aligning perfectly with our film's vision. From that point on, **James** was incredible. He was hard-working, diligent, and fully embraced his role with a passion that brought a unique intensity to the film. The journey with **James** has been extraordinary, and his presence truly elevates '**The Thicket**' to a new level."

Back in 2019, **Hetfield** had a part in the Netflix thriller "**Extremely Wicked, Shockingly Evil And Vile**". That film followed the relationship between notorious serial killer **Ted Bundy**, played by **Zac Efron**, and his longtime girlfriend, played by **Lily Collins**, who at the time had no knowledge of the crimes. **Hetfield** played officer **Bob Hayward**, a no-nonsense Utah highway patrol veteran who was the first law enforcement officer to arrest **Bundy** in 1975 after pulling the killer over and discovering burglary tools in his car but wisely suspecting much worse. While **Hetfield** had played himself in other films and television productions, this was his first dramatic role taking on a different character.

Five years ago, **Efron** praised the **METALLICA** guitarist/vocalist's acting chops during an appearance on "**Jimmy Kimmel Live!**", saying: "**James Hetfield**, to his credit, and absolutely nailed the part, he just crushed it. It's like he's been acting his own life. He had no fear. He did a great job. I was ready to maybe give **James Hetfield** [an acting] tip, but he didn't ask for a single one. **James Hetfield** is the shit!"

