

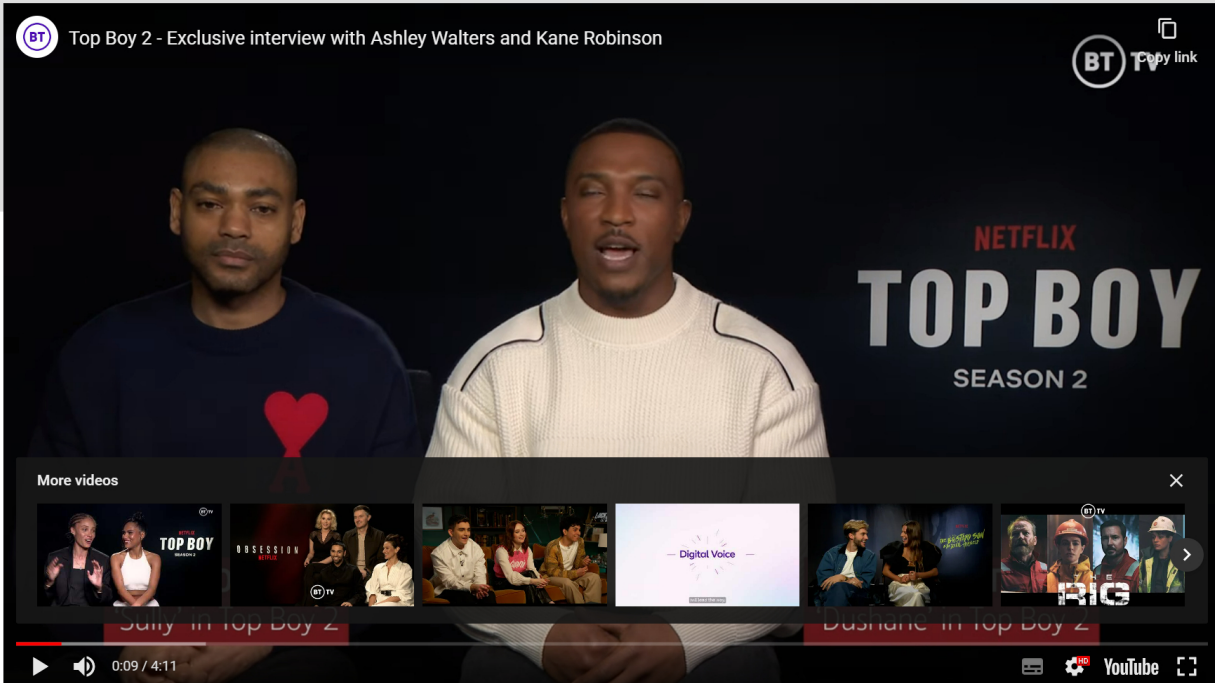


Top Boy 2: Exclusive interview with Ashley Walters and Kane Robinson – 'The take-away will be greater for the audience this series'

We caught up with deadly duo Dushane and Sully, aka Ashley Walters and Kane Robinson – the stars of Netflix hit Top Boy 2 – to get the lowdown on the new series.

By James Descombes

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Top Boy is back for its second season on Netflix and the hype is bigger than ever. In fact, London's biggest billboard at the BFI IMAX cinema in Waterloo features portraits of the key cast and the new season's slogan "Loyalty before everything".

So, expect relationships and allegiances to be pushed to the limit in [Top Boy 2](#). And none more so than with the show's key protagonists, Dushane and Sully.

We caught up with [Ashley Walters](#) (Dushane) and Kane Robinson (Sully) to get the inside scoop on everything Top Boy 2.



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Sully and Dushane (played by Kane Robinson and Ashley Walters) have always had a complex relationship on the show. In fact, when I mention “Sully and Dushane”, Ashley Walters interjects with a broad smile on his face, “Dushane and Sully”. He’s keen to claim top billing – a hint that maybe he enjoys being the real-life Top Boy, too. Kane may have something to say about that though, “don’t apologise for that” he quips back, deadpan.

Dushane and Sully (I’m following Ashley’s orders) have been running the drugs trade on the Summerhouse Estate in East London for over a decade now. From the show’s original home on Channel 4 to its Drake-saving debut on Netflix (rapper-producer Future and NBA legend LeBron James are also Executive Producers), the duo has dealt with rival gangs, dodgy distributors and friendship-damaging disagreements.

Walters says he’s not really surprised about how big the show has become during that time but has been taken aback by the support it’s received:

“It can be overwhelming and we’re always grateful for the amount of love that it’s had even when it wasn’t coming back and people didn’t know when it was coming back. People still loved the show and showed us a lot of love. We’re always trying to reach the corners of this planet where people don’t watch the show. If they haven’t watched, our aim is to broaden the horizons and the audience of this show.”



A lot has changed since those early days on terrestrial TV. Walters reveals, “It does feel a lot more mature this season. It’s a lot more character-driven and the take-away will be greater for the audience.”

It’s something Kane reinforces, admitting that the character scenes often require more thought than the high-octane set pieces:

“I think some of those moments, especially the action ones, they’re not really the ones we focus on. They’re not really the ones we talk about every day for the month leading up to it. That happens when it happens.

“Sometimes it’s like the conversations we have in the café, after meeting each other for the first time in a year of not seeing each other. It’s about getting those key moments right. That’s what means more to us. Sometimes it’s the smaller things, the more intricate moments that actually bring the show to life.”

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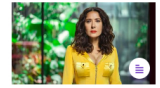
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Dushane and Sully's relationship is arguably the most complex in the show, with lots of ups and downs over the years. Sully has felt betrayed in the past and shown a desire to do things his own way, free of Dushane's controlling ways. And Dushane has always had love for Sully but has been conflicted with what's best for business. But when tense scenes between the two are filmed, do the two friends start acting differently towards each other off-screen? Maybe being a bit frosty towards each other?

Walters reveals, "Kane tries to do that to me, but he can't resist talking to me. Out of the two of us, if I can talk for Kane, he's a bit more like that than I am. I'm a bit more open. I probably talk too much on set sometimes when we're not actually filming. Kane's a bit more in character the majority of the time."



And what about the future of Dushane and Sully? Walters has previously stated that he'd prefer to play various roles and not be known as an Ian Beale type character – which prompts laughter from Kane who says, "too late". But with the original Top Boy dropping in 2011 and the show's popularity showing no signs of slowing down, has he reassessed his options?

"100%. I just embrace it. There was a time when I'd walk down the street and people would be like 'Ashley!' and now it's like, 90% of the time it's Dushane. So, I guess that's what my new name is."

And Top Boy fans should be heartened by Robinson's response, too: "For me it's just about doing the best with the character while you're playing it. It's just that way. The minute it starts to feel stale or unchallenging or uninspiring, the show's over at that point. At the moment there feels like there's a lot to play, especially between the relationship of Sully and Dushane. I still don't feel like it's come to a resolution yet. It feels fun on set with the possibilities of where this relationship could go."

Top Boy 2 is available to watch on Netflix from 18 March

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[Check out our exclusive interview with Saffron Hocking and Adwoa Aboah, who play Lauryn and Becks in Top Boy 2](#)

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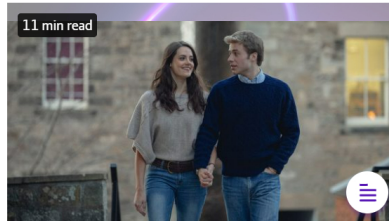
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