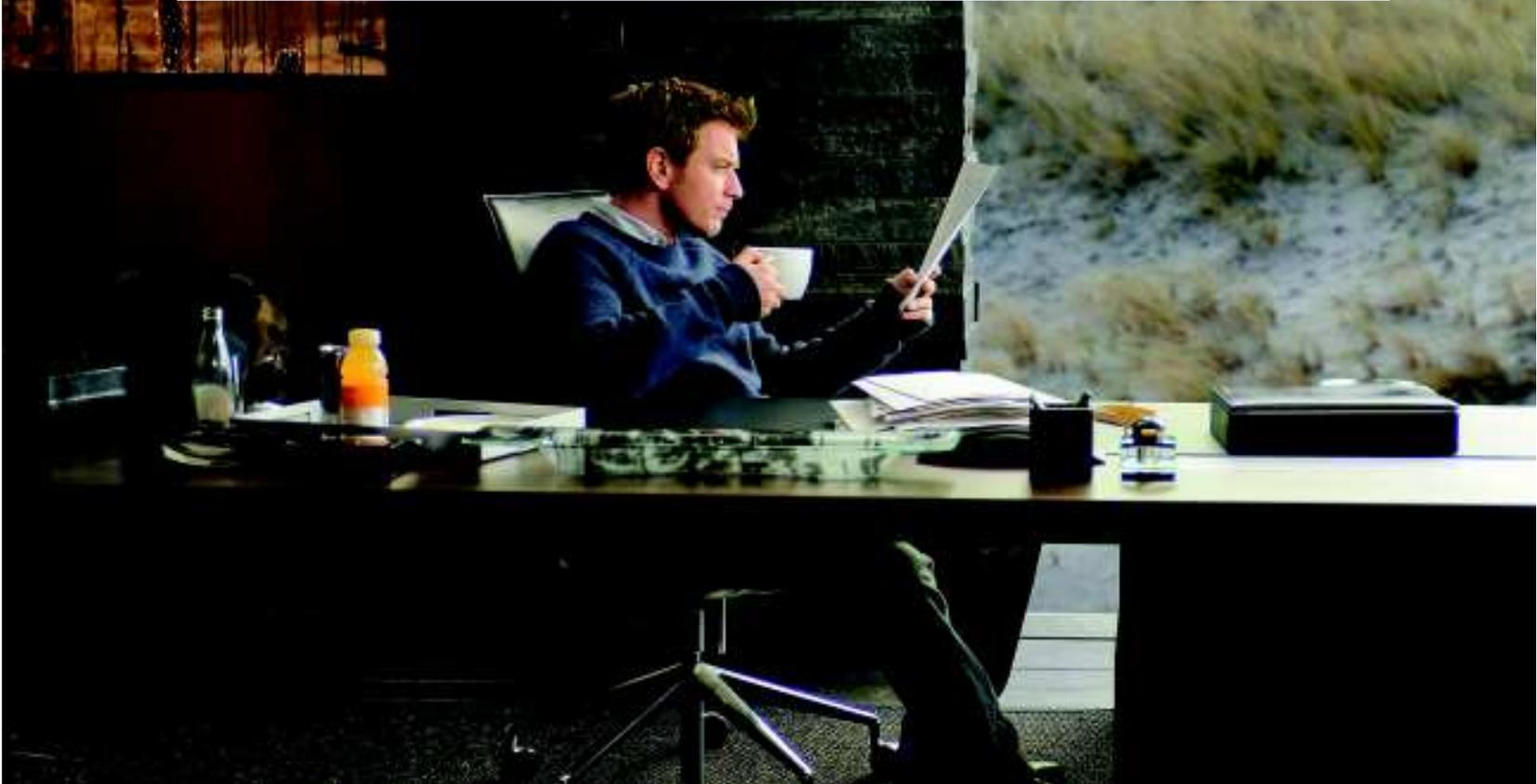


Roman's soldiers

The stars and writer of Roman Polanski's *The Ghost* reflect on working with their leader and his possible extradition to the States...



ROBERT HARRIS (author and screenwriter of *The Ghost*) He rang me in January 2007 out of the blue to say that he wanted to make a movie of [Harris' novel] *Pompeii*. So I went off to Paris to write the screenplay with him and meanwhile I was also writing *The Ghost*. When *Pompeii* collapsed over the threatened actors' strike, I sent Roman a copy of *The Ghost* with a half-joking

inscription which said, "To dear Roman, perhaps we should make this instead. No togas, no volcanoes..." He rang a week later and said, "You're right! Let's make this. It's like Chandler." He wanted to make a contemporary thriller – another *Chinatown*-like movie where the plot gradually unfolds.

PIERCE BROSNAN (ex-British Prime Minister Adam Lang, who's about to be

charged with war crimes) I met Roman for lunch in Paris and my first question was, "Am I playing Tony Blair?" And he said, "No, no, no... Forget about that, just play." That was liberating because I didn't want to do an impersonation of Tony Blair.

HARRIS Roman's main focus was the characters and their interplay – the ghost writer, the powerful man, the sexual tension between the two women and the two men, the isolated setting. It's classic Polanski territory.

OLIVIA WILLIAMS (Adam Lang's steely wife, Ruth) I was apprehensive – he has a reputation for being tough on his actors. I watched the *Chinatown* DVD extras and there were great anecdotes of him falling out on a grand scale with Faye Dunaway. On one occasion a hair of hers kept ping-ponging into the shot and he just pulled it out. She understandably stormed off the set.

EWAN MCGREGOR (the ghost writer of Lang's memoirs) We were challenged by Polanski all the time, to work hard and to work very long hours. We shot for 20

MY FAVOURITE POLANSKI FILM



BROSNAN As a young actor, Roman first came into my life with *Rosemary's Baby*, which terrified me having been brought up a good Catholic boy with visions of Heaven and Hell and Satan. But life goes on and you really begin to understand the vastness and the complexity and the sheer brilliance of his filmmaking.



MCGREGOR I've always been a massive fan of his *Macbeth* [*The Tragedy Of Macbeth*, 1971]. It's an incredible piece of work, not only because it succeeds at being an accessible adaptation of Shakespeare but also because he made it at that time of his life [it was Polanski's first film after the 1969 murder of pregnant wife Sharon Tate by the Manson family].



WILLIAMS I'm completely from the *Tess* generation. I saw it when I was about 15. I was obsessed with Hardy and I couldn't see that Nastassja Kinski was about as far from Dorset as it's possible to be – but the film absolutely broke my heart. Roman nailed the bleakness of the last scenes. It brings tears to my eyes now.



Spectral: Ewan McGregor, Olivia Williams and Pierce Brosnan in *The Ghost*.

hours on my first day and I thought, "Here we go – four months, is it?"

BROSINAN My first day on set was my baptism by fire. It was the scene on the Gulfstream 5, a seven-page scene and the 'high C' of my character. He called me in California and said, "Do you mind if we start with the scene with Ewan and you on the plane?" So come the first day, Ewan and I ran the lines and Roman said,

when you've got your head in your hands, as an actor that's a little distressing. Can I help?" And he said, "I'm trying to remember in my head the original model and I'm trying to drag everything – the light, the set, the actors – back to that original model." So once I knew that, I stopped being offended.

MCGREGOR Roman doesn't sugarcoat his notes to anybody – he tells it as he sees it. We were doing the scene in the diner and Roman wanted a pillar moved two inches to the right, so there was a props guy

ROMAN DOESN'T SUGARCOAT ANYTHING – HE TELLS IT AS HE SEES IT EWAN MCGREGOR

"Let's shoot." And then we did everything *but* shoot as he futzed over the suitcases, futzed over the security guy, just futzed. I thought he was messing with me but Ewan said, "This is what he does."

WILLIAMS He'll sit with his head in his hands. The first time was after the crying and shagging scene, which is always tough as an actress, and I said, "Roman,

with a drill trying to unscrew this pillar. I was running the lines and Roman just grabbed my script and said, "No! Why would you fucking play it like this? You would play it..." Then he walked away and grabbed the drill out of the props guy's hands and said, "Why are you doing it like this? You fucking drill it like that!" Once you learn not to take it personally,

POLANSKI ON POLANSKI



ON SURVIVING THE KRAKOW GHETTO
"Believe it or not, I had quite a cool childhood."

ON HIS FAVOURITE OF HIS FILMS
"Films are like women. You always love the last most until the next one comes along."

ON LOOKING AHEAD
"Whenever I get happy, I always have a terrible feeling."

ON FALLING IN LOVE
"If you have a great passion, it seems that the logical thing is to see the fruit of it and the fruit are children."

ON THE FRENCH NEW WAVE
"People like Truffaut, Lelouch, Godard are like little kids playing at being revolutionaries. I've passed through this stage. I lived in a country where these things happened seriously."

TO CHINATOWN'S FAYE DUNAWAY ON HER CHARACTER'S MOTIVATION
"Motivation? Say the fucking words. Your motivation is your salary."

ON HIS ARREST FOR SLEEPING WITH A 13-YEAR-OLD GIRL
"If I have killed somebody, it wouldn't have had so much appeal to the press, you see? But... fucking, you see, and the young girls. Judges want to fuck young girls. Juries want to fuck young girls – everyone wants to fuck young girls! I knew then, this is going to be another big, big thing."

ON RETURNING TO THE UNITED STATES TO FACE TRIAL
"As far as those events are concerned, I would not even start to justify myself. What I did was wrong and I don't see why I should go back to this for the purposes of this trial... I made one mistake and I am still suffering for that."

BUZZ



it's fantastic and he's like your mother – annoyingly, usually right.
BROSINAN A friend of mine in Berlin texted me about Roman's arrest. I was very saddened and wondered, "Why now after such a long time?"

I WOULD LIKE TO SEE THIS STORY FINISHED. HE'S SERVED HIS TIME... PIERCE BROSINAN

HARRIS It's baffling. One only has to see [*Marina Zenovich's*] documentary to see how flawed the whole thing is. Their own judicial malpractice is as exposed

as much as Roman's crime is exposed. It seems to me a battle no one can win.
BROSINAN Ewan went to see him in Gstaad and I thought about it but my schedule is jammed. I spoke to him on the phone – as we said good night

last night, he asked me to let him know how today [*the press junket*] went. He's sad that he can't be with us and there's

a mighty space in our hearts for him.
MCGREGOR It's a shame he's not with us because I feel he's as responsible for my performance as I am. I don't think

I would have ever been able to say that before of a director, but it's like he has his hands on my performance.

WILLIAMS He never pulled a hair out of my head during the shoot, although I would have been honoured to have Roman be my depilator.

BROSINAN I feel mixed emotions. There's a sadness for Roman and his family and a deep desire for closure for them and for the family of the young woman. On a personal level I would like to see this story finished. OK, enough, let it go. He's served his time... **MM**

The Ghost opens 16 April and is reviewed on page 60. For the latest features and video check out tinyurl.com/tfgho

DRAGON FIRE

Moby Dick with dragons and Vinnie Jones.

ETA 2011 Not sure we need to say anything else here, really, but for the sake of clarity this is the first image from upcoming indie *Dragon Fire*. It's a re-imagining of Herman Melville's whale obsession story *Moby Dick*, set in a fantasy world where people hunt dragons for their special powers. Danny Glover plays the unstable Ahab, whose need for revenge on one white dragon puts his crew in danger. We will sadly not get to call Vinnie Jones Ishmael instead he plays Stubb, the good-humoured, articulate, pipe-smoking second mate. Ishmael will be played by Corey Sevier, the star of classics such as *Decoys 2: Alien Seduction*, *Surf School* and



Summer Of The Monkeys, opposite newcomer Sofia Pernas, who plays Ahab's feisty adopted daughter and Ishmael's love interest (we don't remember that from the book...). Shooting began in February in Utah with Ryan Little at the helm (he's made some films, we haven't heard of them), and Metrodome are currently listed as the movie's UK distributor. Wow. Just, kind of, wow. **RF**

For the latest features and video check out tinyurl.com/tfdrgr

YOUR TWITTER NAME AS A MOVIE

What if your Twitter name was the title of a film? Buzz imagines...

@Crazy_Russian

DIRECTOR Martin Scorsese
STARS Robert De Niro, *The Monolith* from 2007
CERT 18

RUN TIME 7hrs 47 mins.
 Scorsese's pawn-ographically violent reconstruction of the 1997 chess match between Russian grand master Garry Kasparov (De Niro) and IBM supercomputer Deep Blue (*Monolith*). Amped up with the usual flashy edits, crane shots, jump-cuts and a killer soundtrack – brutal scenes of 'castling' litter the Vegas boxing match-style finale, as a man in a suit and a silent, immobile machine are locked in epic, board-based combat punctuated by the occasional cough. The *Raging Bull* of chess movies.

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