



ON SET!

One man army

CORIOLANUS | Shakespeare's super-soldier enters *The Hurt Locker* for Ralph Fiennes ferocious directorial debut...



➤ It's got more battles than any other Shakespeare play and its flawed hero's been compared to Rambo – it might be the bard, but you won't be bored.

For his directorial debut, Ralph Fiennes charts the path of destruction of a brilliant, fearless general undone by pride and arrogance. Updated to a contemporary timeframe, Fiennes is filming in authentic war-torn terrain when *Buzz* meets him on *Coriolanus*' Serbian set. The bombed-out Hotel Yugoslavia in Belgrade is today playing host to a silent stalk through dark, ghostly corridors as Coriolanus and his troops

seek out their sworn enemies' ruthless leader Aufidius (Gerard Butler).

Fiennes and *Gladiator* scribe John Logan spin the Romans as an imperial superpower and their enemies, the Volscians, as ragtag paramilitaries (with their look modelled on Chechen guerrillas). But despite this adaptation's modern twists, Fiennes is determined to keep the verse intact. "Pretty much every word is Shakespeare's," he tells *Buzz* in his trailer, his shaved head coated in fake blood. "But I didn't want it to be too poetic. The best Shakespeare I can hear is when I believe it's being spoken by real people."

On set, Fiennes appears methodical, efficient, quietly orchestrating the scene with DoP Barry

Ackroyd (no surprise the film has a heavy *Hurt Locker* vibe) before stepping into frame for a mano-a-mano duel with Butler after Aufidius and his men have emerged like spectres from the mist.

Both look brilliant: menacing, moody, dangerous. For Fiennes, performing in front of a camera instead of an audience gives space for a more dynamic portrait of Shakespeare's military monster. Call it the power of the close-up. "I was so excited about getting into Coriolanus' face," he enthuses. "To do it with intimacy is going to make a huge difference..." **MM**

ETA | AUTUMN *Coriolanus* opens later this year. For the latest features and video check out totalfilm.com



RALPH FIENNES

The well versed thesp on why Gerard Butler's like a lion...



What inspired you to direct a film version of Coriolanus?

Playing Coriolanus on stage 10 years ago was the original spark. I loved it and came away with the strong instinct that the narrative drive of the play would lend itself to a film. As a story of power, politics and unbending wills, it has so many resonances to things that are happening now.

You've set the film in the present day. Did you find any modern-day examples of Coriolanus?

Someone who's steeped in vigorous nationalism and authoritarian stance would be Putin. He's the person I looked at. And the tougher Israeli leaders, like Ariel Sharon. They reflected aspects of Coriolanus – that intransigence and unbending nationalism.

Gerard Butler seems an odd fit. Why did you cast him?

Well, his star profile was great for us but actually it was his charisma and his energy. Aufidius needs to be dynamic, dangerous opposition – Coriolanus says, "He's a lion that I am proud to hunt" – and Gerard has that leonine quality.

Why are you the first director to tackle a big-screen version?

It's not a comforting play, it has no lyricism in it and Coriolanus is tough to like – that's why I like him! [Laughs] I think you like having high-definition characters in movies that are not necessarily likeable but their outline demands that you follow them. Like the character Daniel Day-Lewis played in *There Will Be Blood*. He was hard to like but compelling. I like those complicated, challenging characters.



Man of war: (main) Ralph Fiennes as General Coriolanus; (inset) director/star Fiennes and cinematographer Barry Ackroyd on set.



RED LIGHT GREEN LIGHT

What's stopping, what's starting in movieland...



● Ryan Gosling is set to star in '70s sci-fi redo, *Logan's Run*. The troubled project is now back on track with *Bronson* director Nicolas Winding Refn taking the reigns. The story surrounds a "utopian" society where everyone is put to death at the age of 30.

● Will Smith's return to the slick black suit for *Men In Black III* has been further delayed among claims of script problems. On the bright side, Alice Eve has now joined the cast as the young version of Emma Thompson's character, MIB head agent Olivia.



● Michelle Pfeiffer will join Johnny Depp in Tim Burton's *Dark Shadows* – a vampire film based on a TV soap opera from the '60s. Helena Bonham Carter is in talks for a part – we think it's a fairly safe bet... Burton's also working on animation *Frankenweenie*, reunited with *Beetlejuice*'s Winona Ryder.

● Colin Firth and Nicole Kidman are slated to star in *Oldboy* director Park Chan-wook's first English-language film, *Stoker*. Kidman plays the mother of a teenage girl visited by a "mysterious uncle" (Firth). Nothing to do with *Bram Stoker*... **PS**

NEW FILMS!



Movie insights and a bit of star gossip from the folks behind the scenes...

Have you ever met Tom Cruise?

Yes! A long, long time ago on a film called *Legend*. He came to my studio in Mayfair, but I really didn't pay much attention as he wasn't anything very special at the time.

You worked on a massive range of films – do any stand out in particular?

I did the foley on *The Shining*. Kubrick never used to want to spend any money so we did it in his garage. We had to recreate all those footsteps in the snow when the boy's being chased through the maze. Walking about in cornflower is the best thing to do. It's messy but it makes a crunching sound like snow does.

You met Chaplin once, didn't you?

I met him when we were dubbing music over a silent film called *A Woman In Paris*. He was in a wheelchair and we didn't have a lift down to the basement so we had to carry him. When I worked on *Chaplin* I was the only one who'd actually met him.

You've just done Wake Wood. Is it harder to do films with screaming and crying?

Yes and no really, sometimes the performers quite enjoy it. Some are better at it than others. Harrison Ford did 300 lines for *Raiders* in one day – which was amazing as there was a lot of screaming and shouting in the film so it was really heavy stuff. **RF**

ETA | 25 MARCH *Wake Wood* opens this month. For the latest features and video check out totalfilm.com



Name Lionel Strutt
Job ADR coordinator
What's that, then? Automatic Dialogue Replacement. Re-records the actors' dialogue in a studio in post-production.
Filmography *The Empire Strikes Back, The Shining, Raiders Of The Lost Ark, Aliens, The King's Speech, Wake Wood.*

