

INTERVIEW WITH OLA RAPACE ABOUT JAMES BOND & HIS ROLE IN SKYFALL (JUNE 2013)

By Anders Frejdh, Founder and Editorial Head of From Sweden with Love. Photo: Anette Tidholm

How did you get the role of Patrice in SKYFALL?

I auditioned alongside a thousand other Europeans or something like that, it was a lot of people. First test was filmed in Stockholm, they came over for me then toured throughout Europe and watched the rest of the people.

Sam Mendes wanted an actor but they needed to find someone who was physical. Immediately after he saw my audition from Stockholm he said he wanted me to do the role. Then the stunt team questioned if I really could do it so then I had to go over and work with them to prove that I could ride a motorcycle, fighting and all that. [Laughs] I have motorcycle license. I was there for a week and they tested me in all kind of ways. Then Sam Mendes called me into his office and told me I got the role.

In the beginning, I was not a real fan of the Bond movies, but when you are working on something, you got to get yourself into it. Now I have learned to like the movies. But what attracted me originally was to work with director Sam Mendes, it's really great to have done that. It was an honour and an incredible school to work with him. He comes from the theatre and is an actor's director with tremendous clarity and accuracy in every single moment of the scenes. From there he goes to the photo, and other departments. I do not think they did it like that before in the Bonds.

Was there any discussion that you would have a dialogue in any scene in SKYFALL?

No, there was no dialogue at all in the script; it's just said "opening for the villain." At first I thought it was nice to not have that kind of acting, and just to "play" and have fun and not have any psychology. But then, after a few months I began to think that it would have been nice to have a real scene, a dialogue scene, but then it was just to accept it.

I was not allowed to say anything about my role during the filming. There were lots of people who assumed that my role was much, much bigger and more important than it was, but I did not comment on it at all. It was super secret.

Did they expand your scenes in SKYFALL or was it just the chase in Turkey and fight in Shanghai that was in the original script? Was anything cut?

No, they did not cut anything really. In the opening sequence, I just had "to be there" so I did not need to be worried about being cut. I knew it could not be cut differently as it would affect the continuity.

About Shanghai, no one was there, not even the second unit. They only sent a photographer, it was not even a team. The idea was to first shoot more there but MGM did not get along with the Chinese government. And when Skyfall was shown there it was a bit censored. One of the stunt guys was Asian of Chinese origin and I shot him in the motorcycle chase but they had cut away just because he was Chinese, but he did not die in the film.

In the motorcycle chase on the roofs in Turkey in the film, did they digitally put your face on stuntman?

My face is digitally inserted on the stuntman just before the jump; the rest of the scenes in the film is me. I got to do all that was allowed. I was not allowed to make the final jump, I wanted to try it but I was not

allowed. I figured that the worst that could happen is that you crash, but, this type of risk is regulated by the unions in the U S what is allowed for the actors to do.

How much of your motorcycle scenes were green screen?

None, all these scenes filmed in Turkey. Sam [Mendes] don't thinks that the Bond films shouldn't use CGI so they feel more real and he is right in my opinion, there is something extra when it's for real.

What are your impressions of Barbara Broccoli and Michael G. Wilson as producers?

Wonderful people! It felt like the mother and father of a family, it was incredibly intimate and generous but also very tough of course, they had a great responsibility to stitch together this movie. It was a bit of "make or break" in a way. Unless this movie had gone well then perhaps there would not been any more Bonds. They were really warm and you really got a sense of family feeling about it.

I remember that Barbara Broccoli was worried when I and Daniel [Craig] were up on the train. Especially the short periods he was there, I worked mostly with the stunt guys for the scenes on the train roof. I do not think Barbara cared so much about me. [Laughs]

What was it like working with Daniel Craig?

Amazingly good! He was one of the guys, very simple, straightforward and generous. It was like working with a colleague in Sweden, natural. We still have a little contact but has not yet met up really, just a little text contact. You know, one decides to be meet up, but it has not happened yet. Personally think Daniel is a better actor than, say, Sean Connery.

What do you think about your participation in SKYFALL?

Basically, a job is a job regardless if you make a small television series for kids' TV or if you make a film for a billion dollars, it's the same thing. It's really not so much that I have worked on a Bond film but to have made a film on this level, having met people and achieved it, is great. It feels important gives you confidence to work in the industry in general. It was after all my first American film. I've made films in Europe but that does not count for some people; generally it only counts if you made a film in Hollywood, even though it's made a lot more films in India, for example.

Can you tell a personal anecdote from the filming? Any funny incident?

It was when Sam Mendes called me when I had gone to Turkey with the second unit, and he had received daily shots of London. He woke me up in the middle of the night and wondered what I was doing ... "What, I have not been in the scene yet," I said. -"You are in the scene, if you are up on the train all day yesterday." "Yes, but then I was not seen in the scene," I said. "Well, you were," he said. "When you are up on the train you can expect that you will be in the scene now and then, you have to be acting" he continued. I thought you had not shot the film in my direction throughout the day, which they had not really done, but it was cool that he noted it when I first felt wrongly accused because I do not have any information about what we did. But then I felt incredibly "seen", and got confident that he saw every single thing I did up there even though we were on location in Turkey. It meant a lot to me that they took me seriously; that I should be credible in every second when we shooting.

Sam later came down and he basically did on almost all second unit as **Alexander Witt** done before. But it's a little gamble with the second unit, you do not always know how it will fit into the "big picture".

This year is the 60th anniversary of the first Bond novel was published, why do you think James Bond is still so popular around the world?

Difficult question, I have no good answer to that. It must be because it is wide entertainment; so many people can find it enjoyable. It must be the fact that both grandfather and son might like it. I do not understand why it is so big, I should be asking this question to you, the Bond expert...

Have you read any of Ian Fleming's Bond books?

No, unfortunately not. But if you recommend one of them I'll read it. [FSWL recommended *From Russia with Love* or *Kamrat mördare* as it is called in Swedish.]

Five quick questions about Bond:

- What is your favourite of the Bond films? I heard you haven't seen all of them?

That's right, have not actually seen all so I'll probably say *Skyfall*.

- Best Actor as James Bond?

Daniel Craig

- Favourite among Bond villains?

Besides Javier Bardem [Silva in *Skyfall*], I like "Jaws" (Richard Kiel), he is a classic villain.

- Favourite amongst the title songs?

Besides Adele, I like Gladys Knight "Licence to Kill". The latter, I remember it very clearly because it sat like a sticker in the brain after I saw that movie.

Do you have any personal favourite movies?

Most often a little heavier drama films, more realistic and naturalistic. Love thrillers but not kitchen sink dramas. *State of Grace* (1990) and *Little Odessa* (1994) are two of my absolute favourite movies.

Did they scan you for the video game 007 Legends, or have they taken your entire personal digital from film?

I really didn't do anything for the game, but it looks good and I got paid for it.

Are you going to film more films based on the Maria Lang books?

No, it is only the six that we just filmed. [*Mördaren ljuger inte ensam, Kung liljekonvalje av dungen, Inte flera mord, Rosor, kyssar och döden, Farliga drömmar och Tragedi på en lantkyrkogård.*]

Do you have time to sing and play guitar in your rock band now that film jobs are booming?

No, not much these days I'm afraid. At the moment, I'm only playing a bit with my son.

When will the Anita Lindblom & Bosse Högberg movie that you and Naomi are producing and will play the lead roles in start filming? Is the film still called "Knock Out"?

I still hope that we can do it. I do not really know what is happening, cannot talk about right now. I just hope it solves itself.

Do you have any contact with any of the Swedes who have been involved in the Bond films?

No, no actually, not even **Jens Hultén**. We have actually never met, not even during the shooting. But I hope to get the opportunity when we do your charity thing.

MANYS THANKS TO OLA RAPACE FOR TAKING TIME TO DO THIS INTERVIEW & TO ANNIKA KILDÉN FOR ARRANGING IT.

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