

## **IN CONVERSATION WITH STUNT LEGEND VIC ARMSTRONG, OCTOBER 30, 2011**

*Interview by Anders Frejdh, Editor of From Sweden With Love.*

**You worked as a stuntman on Live and Let Die (1973): which scenes were you involved in?**

[VA] The fight where Bond is tied up with Solitaire above the Shark pen and he swings down and fight the Black Guy.

**How was it to work alongside Roger Moore on his first James Bond movie? Are you still in touch with him?**

[VA] I am occasionally invited to Roger Moore's Bond days at Pinewood and I worked closely with him on Escape to Athena.

**Tell us about the atmosphere on the set of the Bond movies, how was it like?**

[VA] A Bond is no different to any other movie; you just do your job.

**What was your reaction (yours and also the fellow stuntmen) when you heard about the sudden death of Martin Grace in January 2010?**

[VA] I was surprised and very sad. Martin and I started together in the business and he was always so extremely fit.

**Could you share some anecdotes both about Roger Moore and Martin Grace? What do you think about Martin's work and career; I understand he became Roger's "official" stunt double over the years?**

[VA] Martin became a very good stunt coordinator and Roger's official double and he also had a terrible accident on one of the Bonds on a train. We most recently worked together on The Last Crusade and I used to see him all the time here in LA.

**Can you tell us about the test fight scenes for The Living Daylights (1987) – I know you were involved at an early stage and were going to be the stunt coordinator at one point.**

[VA] I was asked to choreograph some fight scenes for three actors that they were testing for Bond and I used Simon Crane as one of the protagonists and he went on to coordinate Bonds later on.

**Are you disappointed you weren't promoted to direct a Bond film the way former 2nd unit directors, Peter Hunt and John Glen, were?**

[VA] Of course, but I did not really expect to get a shot, times have changed since those days.

**How did working on the Bond pictures change over the years. Did it lose the "family" feel? Or was that reinforced?**

[VA] It has always had a family feel and is one of the great franchises to work on.

**You worked on Escape to Athena (1979): which scenes were you involved in for this film?**

[VA] Just about every part of the film and every piece of action, the motorcycle chase in the movie is extremely good and I learned a lot shooting it.

**You directed Swedish action star Dolph Lundgren in Joshua Tree (1993) and worked with him on Cover Up (1991), Universal Soldier (1992) and Johnny Mnemonic (1995). How was it directing Dolph and what are your best memories/anecdotes of working with him?**

[VA] Dolph is a lovely man and we had a good time on all those movies and they were all very different movies. I enjoyed best directing him in Joshua Tree though and have been asked several times to make a sequel.

**What movie(s) has been absolutely the most fun to work on and why?**

[VA] People get confused with fun working on movies and successful movies it is rarely the successful movie that is fun but Air America was great fun because of the location and my crew. The same goes for On Her Majesty's Secret Service (1969) with all the skiing and parties.

**Do you agree if I say stuntmen are truly a family?**

[VA] In most cases yes, but it is a business and there is a lot of competition as in any other business.

**Nowadays, most stuntmen are credited in the after credits for movies, but very often it pops up information about others who haven't been credited. What are your thoughts on why every stuntman who works on a movie aren't always credited?**

[VA] Sometimes it is a union thing, sometimes a contract thing, and sometimes they have only been on a short time. There are all sorts of reasons and of course lack of time and place in the credits.

**About finding correct credits to older films - including the Bonds - is it possible to learn about this somewhere apart from IMDB? I am particularly interested in A Bridge Too Far (1977) where you worked with another stunt legend, Alf Joint.**

[VA] I would not know where to start looking for old credits. Alf Joint was an incredible stuntman and a great friend.

**What is your view on the new generation of stunt people? Is there anyone you see who can become a great stunt man / coordinator in the future after Bob Simmons; Alf Joint; yourself & Simon Crane?**

[VA] There are loads of guys (and girls) coming along and coordinating big movies, it is a very competitive field and they have all learned their trade and are good at it.

**I know your family is very much involved in the movie industry, could you tell us about the new generation of "Armstrong stunt performers"?**

[VA] I have a large family presence in the business. My son, Bruce, who mainly does special effects but is also a brilliant driver, my son, Scott, who is a top class stuntman and coordinates for me and my daughter Nina. Nina is a top class stunt woman and horse rider who works on all the big movies. My youngest daughter, Georgina, who lives in LA is an actress but does stunts as well and is an international horse show jumper. My wife, Wendy, who doubled all the girls in the first 3 Indys (Raiders of the Lost Ark 1981, Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom 1984 and Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade 1989) and lots of Bonds and Superman. She now coordinates my brother, Andy, who does exactly what I do. Then there is my nephew, James, who is a really good stuntman and coordinator and my other nephew, Jesse, who again is a classy stunt man who coordinates and has directed 6 or 7 movies. Finally, my father in law, George Leech, who coordinated many movies like OHMSS and Chitty Chitty Bang Bang (1968).

**You directed a series of commercials or the motor company Lincoln, tell us about that.**

[VA] I directed about six commercials all over the world and some won awards. I enjoyed it very much and would not mind doing some more these days.

**Any more 1st unit directing on the horizon? I can imagine you must be offered endless amounts of scripts to read as a director.**

[VA] I get loads of scripts to read regarding directing but sadly none ever come up with the money.

**About your autobiography, it has received rave reviews since its release in May, what is the story behind it and for how many years were you working on it?**

[VA] It took 6 years to write the book. I wrote it because I thought it would something nice to leave behind for my descendants.

**As FSWL is made from a Swedish point of view, have you ever filmed and/or privately visited Sweden?**

[VA] I came to Sweden when I was prepping Bear Island (1979) to test the hydrocopters there that were made by Leif Johansen and his father in Vikbolandet near Uppsala.

**Finally, what are your thoughts of the From Sweden With Love website?**

[VA] It is very good and inventive and obviously an aficionado runs it.

THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR YOUR ANSWERS, VIC, VERY MUCH APPRECIATED!