

SKYFALL

BULLET TRAIN

James Bond gets his ticket punched in the opener to end all openers...

How do you keep an invulnerable hero interesting? That's the question Sam Mendes and co faced in Bond 23 – and it's answered straight away with an opening chase so break-neck you need a safety harness to watch it.

Speeding after spook Patrice (Ola Rapace) across Istanbul, 007 (Daniel Craig) propels himself onto the roof of a train, losing his motorcycle and his footing in the process. Making use of the handy JCB on board, he sends VW Beetles

flying – almost killing sidekick Eve (Naomie Harris), who, like the rest of us, is trying to keep up. Hooking the digger onto the next carriage, he dives in with a trademark quip and a tweak of his cuffs. Moments later, he's back on the roof, grappling with Patrice as the train screams onto a vertiginous bridge – where Eve is ready to take a shot. Bang! It's Bond that's hit and he plummets towards the waters below. Is our hero dead? He's certainly in a bad way, but there's no denying he's interesting again. 📺



SETTING THE SCENE

► MGM's financial troubles delayed production from April 2010 to January 2011. Director Mendes remained, though writer Peter Morgan was forced to move on.
► Mendes had previously directed Craig in *Road To Perdition*, plus Judi Dench and Ralph Fiennes onstage. He originally advised Craig not to play Bond, but *Casino Royale* changed his mind.
► Initially planned for India, the chase was relocated to Turkey, with Adana doubling for Istanbul, and the nearby Varda Bridge providing the climax. The sequence took a third of the entire shooting schedule to complete.



"To me what's special about the sequence is that he fails. The tradition of Bond opening sequences is that there's a great moment and it's triumphant."

Sam Mendes, director

THE CAMERA

Cinematographer Roger Deakins avoided handheld shots in order to give the film a classical look. This meant locking down the cameras on moving vehicles to minimise juddering.

THE ACTOR

Craig volunteered to do some of the Varda Bridge stunts himself, with just a tiny safety wire. Mendes called it "right on the edge of being insane".

ONE SKYFALL...

The climactic dive was shot in two sections. In the first, on the actual Varda Bridge, stuntman Andy Lister toppled - backwards - off the stationary train while attached to a safety rig.

...TWO SKYFALLS

The second section was shot on a backlot, with Craig filmed against greenscreen, falling from a fake carriage onto a crash mat. The two shots were then stitched together digitally.

THE ACTRESS

Naomie Harris did eight months of special training for her role. During the chase, former *Top Gear* 'Stig' Ben Collins controlled her Land Rover from a special driver's pod on the roof.

THE SPLASH

Varda Bridge actually stands over an empty gorge. The filmmakers shot local rivers, then added them in with SFX. So it's a digital Bond hitting real water somewhere completely different!

THE BEETLES

The production was criticised generally for its excessive product placement. Craig's justification: "The simple fact is that, without them, we couldn't [afford to] do it."

THE HENCHMAN

Despite being on screen for about 15 minutes, Patrice (played by Swedish actor Ola Rapace, ex-hubbie of *Prometheus* star Noomi) doesn't speak a single word of dialogue.



"The plan was to wipe the slate clean, begin again, then start using all that we have. Sam and I were like, 'What's the best Bond movie we can make?'"

Daniel Craig (James Bond)



"The fight between the two guys... I was sitting on the train with my heart in my mouth."

Barbara Broccoli, producer



"There was a moment where I went, 'Fuck me, he's going 50mph over a 400-foot drop on a wire that's thinner than my forefinger!'"

Sam Mendes, director



"Obviously, we have safety cables when Daniel is up there, but Daniel is up there. He ran up the arm and [it's him] on the train fighting."

Gary Powell, stunt coordinator