



THE SPY WHO LOVED ME

LIVE AND LET DIVE

Lotus blossoms...

This classic 1977 Roger Moore-era sequence has it all: exotic Sardinian climes; exciting, multi-vehicle action; raised-eyebrow asides; two Bond girls; iconic henchmen; and a sting in the tail—fins courtesy of Q’s souped-up, transforming Lotus Esprit. The series would not make such waves again until *Casino Royale* (2006).



01

James Bond (Roger Moore) and Major Anya Amasova (Barbara Bach) speed off towards the north Sardinian coastal roads in a Lotus Esprit. A motorbike-and-sidecar begins pursuit.



02

The sidecar turns into a missile! Bond swerves and it hits a truck, which explodes in a shower of feathers. The biker de-cliffs. “All those feathers and he still can’t fly,” quips Bond.



03

Jaws (Richard Kiel) and buddies give chase. Bond sprays their windshield with oil and they plummet through a local’s roof. “Mamma mia!” he exclaims, as Jaws emerges unscathed.



04

Helicopter pilot Naomi (Caroline Munro) then appears, spraying the road with gunfire. “Ever get the feeling somebody doesn’t like you?” asks Bond as he drives straight off a pier.



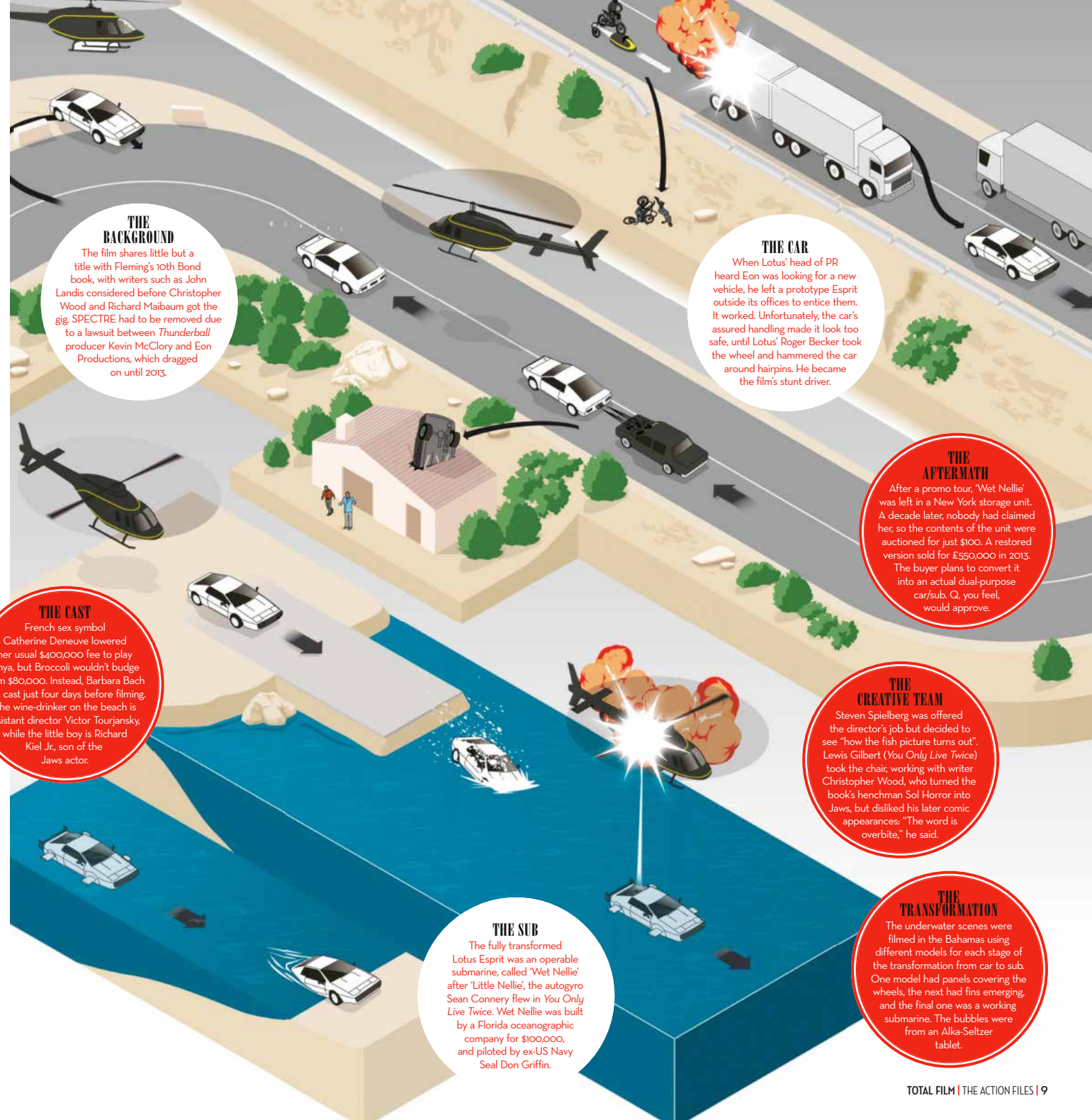
05

Underwater, the Lotus Esprit turns into a submarine and begins gliding through the depths. “It’s time we said goodbye to an uninvited guest!” smarms Bond as he torpedoes the helicopter.



06

The Lotus Esprit emerges from the ocean and drives up the beach as a disbelieving sunbather checks his booze bottle. Bond defenestrates a fish, and drives off...



THE BACKGROUND

The film shares little but a title with Fleming’s 10th Bond book, with writers such as John Landis considered before Christopher Wood and Richard Maibaum got the gig. SPECTRE had to be removed due to a lawsuit between *Thunderball* producer Kevin McClory and Eon Productions, which dragged on until 2013.

THE CAR

When Lotus’ head of PR heard Eon was looking for a new vehicle, he left a prototype Esprit outside its offices to entice them. It worked. Unfortunately, the car’s assured handling made it look too safe, until Lotus’ Roger Becker took the wheel and hammered the car around hairpins. He became the film’s stunt driver.

THE AFTERMATH

After a promo tour, ‘Wet Nellie’ was left in a New York storage unit. A decade later, nobody had claimed her, so the contents of the unit were auctioned for just \$100. A restored version sold for £550,000 in 2013. The buyer plans to convert it into an actual dual-purpose car/sub. Q, you feel, would approve.

THE CAST

French sex symbol Catherine Deneuve lowered her usual \$400,000 fee to play Anya, but Broccoli wouldn’t budge from \$80,000. Instead, Barbara Bach was cast just four days before filming. The wine-drinker on the beach is assistant director Victor Tourjansky, while the little boy is Richard Kiel Jr., son of the *Jaws* actor.

THE CREATIVE TEAM

Steven Spielberg was offered the director’s job but decided to see “how the fish picture turns out”. Lewis Gilbert (*You Only Live Twice*) took the chair, working with writer Christopher Wood, who turned the book’s henchman Sol Horror into Jaws, but disliked his later comic appearances: “The word is overbite,” he said.

THE TRANSFORMATION

The underwater scenes were filmed in the Bahamas using different models for each stage of the transformation from car to sub. One model had panels covering the wheels, the next had fins emerging, and the final one was a working submarine. The bubbles were from an Alka-Seltzer tablet.

THE SUB

The fully transformed Lotus Esprit was an operable submarine, called ‘Wet Nellie’ after ‘Little Nellie’, the autogyro Sean Connery flew in *You Only Live Twice*. Wet Nellie was built by a Florida oceanographic company for \$100,000, and piloted by ex-US Navy Seal Don Griffin.