# JOHN TRAVOLTA JONATHAN RHYS MEYERS

# FROM PARIS WITH LOVE

by the director of TAKEN, PIERRE MOREL

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#### **SYNOPSIS**

A government agent's desire to shine beyond the shadows of his profession comes true when he is paired with his new partner in crime – Wax.			
As the two tear through Paris on an anti-terrorism peace mission, our young agent discovers the deadliest weapons are the one we love the most.			

# What attracted you to this movie?

As an actor I'm first attracted to what I can do with a character that's different than what someone else can do with it. This was an outrageous character and it gave me something to do as an actor. I was able to be someone different than myself. And Luc Besson was an attraction because he's an excellent filmmaker and he wrote the script, and I think Pierre's work was attractive because he proved through a few films that he could do this kind of movie, so all of these elements attracted me.

# How would you describe Wax?

A CIA operative that is unorthodox. He is one of those guys who, because he is so good at what he does, can afford to be a little unethical only because he delivers a product of excellence up and above your average CIA operative.

# Would you say you're an unorthodox kind of actor?

I guess it depends on what you think is unorthodox. In this case, I wouldn't personally do the things that Wax does at all, but that doesn't mean I don't have the right to play someone who does unorthodox things. I did that in *Pulp Fiction*, I did that in *Swordfish* and *Face / Off* and many, many movies where I play guys that are somewhat unethical, but that's the privilege you have when you are an artist or an actor, you get to do different things.

#### How did you define Wax's look?

Well I think it was myself and Pierre and Luc. I had just finished a movie with Tony Scott and Denzel Washington called *The Taking of Pelham 123* and I had sort of a rugged look going there and I thought, "Well, that worked, but how can I be different in this movie?" So we decided to get rid of the hair and give me a goatee and dress me like a soldier of fortune. These guys are almost stylish now for some reason. And we looked at pictures of these guys with guns and scarves and leather jackets and parachute pants and they looked glamorous and it was so bizarre to see this dichotomy of glamour with guns.

# Do you like your new "hair cut"?

A lot. Because it's a bald look and it allows me freedom to be bald. Just like in *Pulp Fiction*, this unusual kind of Dutch haircut gave a kind of euro-trash feeling to the character, this heroine hit man. It's very important because film's a visual medium and all you're looking at is what's on screen, so you have to have a look that you are completely happy with. It satisfies the character.

# Wherever Wax goes, at the airport when we first see him and on the streets, he makes a strong impression, brash, straight-talking...

Yeah, he gives the customs a hard time with a lot of foul language and a lot of threatening ideas and prejudices, and he's not letting up at all, and if I were to be more normally dressed and normal in my attitude it wouldn't be as appealing. When you're dressed the way I am, you're more entertained by it than you are offended by it. If I were in a three-piece suit it would be offensive because you'd say, "Who is that guy, talking like that?" But shaved hair, goatee, kind of gruff, for some reason it's not as offensive. He only uses foul language as punctuation for his bald ideas. I mean, it's not that it's involuntary, it's part of how he wants to communicate to either drug vendors, prostitution rings or government officials that he needs to fool in some way. So he uses it as a tool even more than a natural thing. It's an attitude. He puts the street attitude on to get through the streets. He's the kind of guy that would be hired, for a lot of money, to go into very dangerous situations, war zones and so on, to do espionage type of work, undercover type of work, and he's got it nailed. He's afraid of nothing because he's so capable of handling anyone at anytime in any way and he's not afraid of death. He has the war mentality.

# How would you describe Wax's relationship with Reese?

I think at first Wax is trying to estimate who this guy is and how much of a liability will he be or how much of an asset will he be? In doing so, he makes a continuous judgment of where he's at with this guy, but he knows that Reese is a balance to his act. He's got languages under his belt and he's got intelligence under his belt and he's got his own kind of savvy that balances my gruff savvy. My instruction was to help him become more like me, so I'm taking a guy who has potential and turning him into someone a little more rugged. So I have a job but at the same time I'm ascertaining what he's about.

#### And what was it like working with Jonathan Rhys Meyers?

He's lovely. He's a wonderful actor and he is agreeable and you can discuss anything with him in regards to your job or your approach, and he's a lot of fun. He's got a sense of humor and he is professional, one of the most professional actors I've ever worked with. He knows his lines, he's on time, he delivers great takes each time and you can depend on him and you can adjust—he'll adjust for you too if you need something adjusted.

# And Pierre Morel, the director?

I'd seen *Taken*, and he came very highly recommended by Luc. In meeting Pierre, I had seen that he has a high intelligence, a good sense of logic and a desire to really make a good movie. He's a very elegant man and a good communicator, very low

key and he knows what he wants because you could be doing a scene and he'll say, "Could you try it this way?" and I find myself usually agreeing with it. He's filled with good ideas, he's easy to be with and the crew I think respects him and they try to work very hard for him. He has a very strong passion for this.

# How does your training as a dancer still influence your acting?

I wouldn't be able to do half the stunts that I do today if I didn't dance because they look like dancers. It's the same with the John Woo movie. John Woo makes balletic stunts—slow motion and movement—and they're beautiful. Violent but beautiful. I think that if I didn't have this dancing, I could do it but it wouldn't be as fluent or as interesting perhaps.

# What do you like about making an action movie?

I like the movement and I like the different mindset. You use your body in a different way in an action movie and as long as it's well written and it's well directed, I love it. I have no interest in being in one that's not well written and not well directed just for action sake. In this movie, there's nothing gratuitous. One action sequence leads to the next and so and so forth because we're trying to get to a terrorist web, so it all makes sense.

# Did you enjoy the chance to work in France?

I wanted to do a movie in France for years. In thirty years this is the first movie that I've actually done here and I'm amazed that I haven't done one before but it's never too late, and, *Voilà*, here I am. *Je suis heureux*. I love the atmosphere on set. I'm a very affectionate person and I love that everybody hugs and kisses each other. But more importantly, I love that everybody is about the work only. I really appreciate that here there is a work ethic and there is a care factor that matters. I have enjoyed it tremendously.

# The script throws in a few clichés about France—food and sex, for example... Truth or myth?

Every myth has some truth based on some experience somebody had. I mean, there's the ugly American rumor. Are there some ugly Americans? Probably. But everyone? No. It's just a small thing that rumors are based on and you make jokes and clichés of them and you make story points of them, but it doesn't mean that they are true.

# What scene was the hardest for you?

I don't know because I've been so active in this movie. The whole movie has been demanding and I giggle because I'm older than I'm behaving. They're taking advantage of my ability to move my body but actually I laugh at the idea that I'm allowing myself to do half the things I do. Every time I do a stunt where I'm rolling over, jumping over a table or jumping in the air with two guns, I giggle because theoretically you should be winding down at my age and not winding up! This is probably the most action-packed film I've ever been in and I've done some classic action movies but this is more active than I've ever been. It's good.

# JOHN TRAVOLTA'S FILMOGRAPHY

**JOHN TRAVOLTA** has been honored twice with Academy Award® nominations, the latest for his riveting portrayal of a philosophical hit-man in Quentin Tarantino's *Pulp Fiction*. He also received BAFTA and Golden Globe nominations for this highly acclaimed role and was named Best Actor by the Los Angeles Film Critics Association, among other distinguished awards.

Travolta garnered further praise as a Mafioso-turned-movie producer in the comedy sensation *Get Shorty*, winning the Golden Globe Award for Best Actor in a Motion Picture, Musical or Comedy. In 1998 Travolta was honored by the British Academy of Film and Television Arts with the Britannia Award; and in that same year he received the Lifetime Achievement Award at the Chicago Film Festival. Travolta also won the prestigious Alan J. Pakula Award from the US Broadcast Critics Association for his performance in *A Civil Action*, based on the best-selling book and directed by Steve Zailian. He was nominated again for a Golden Globe for his performance in *Primary Colors*, directed by Mike Nichols and co-starring Emma Thompson and Billy Bob Thornton, and in 2008, he received his fourth Golden Globe nomination for his role as Edna Turnblad in the big screen, box office hit *Hairspray*; as a result of this performance, the Chicago Film Critics and the Santa Barbara Film Festival decided to recognize John with a Lifetime Achievement Award for his role in *Hairspray*.

He previously starred in some of the most monumental films of our generation, including earning his first Oscar® and Golden Globe nominations for his role in the blockbuster *Saturday Night Fever*, which launched the disco phenomenon in the 1970's. He went on to star in the big screen version of the long-running musical *Grease* and the wildly successful *Urban Cowboy*, which also influenced trends in popular culture. Additional film credits include the Brian DePalma thrillers *Carrie* and *Blowout*, as well as Amy Heckerling's hit comedy *Look Who's Talking* and Nora Ephron's comic hit *Michael*. Travolta starred in *Phenomenon* and took an equally distinctive turn as an action star in John Woo's top-grossing *Broken Arrow*. He also starred in the classic *Face/Off* opposite Nicolas Cage and *The General's Daughter* costarring Madeline Stowe. Recently, Travolta reprised the role of ultra cool Chili Palmer in the *Get Shorty* sequel *Be Cool*. In addition, he starred opposite Scarlett Johansson in the critically acclaimed independent feature film *A Love Song for Bobby Long*, which was screened at the Venice Film Festival, where both Travolta and the film won rave reviews.

Other recent feature film credits include the big screen musical sensation *Hairspray*, the box office hit comedy *Wild Hogs*, the action-thriller *Ladder 49*, the movie version of the wildly successful comic book *The Punisher*, the drama *Basic*, the psychological thriller *Domestic Disturbance*, the hit action picture *Swordfish*, the successful sci-fi movie *Battlefield Earth*, based upon the best-selling novel by L. Ron Hubbard, and *Lonely Hearts*.

Most recently, Travolta starred opposite Denzel Washington in director Tony Scott's remake of *The Taking of Pelham 123*, and he provided the voice of the lead character in Disney's animated hit *Bolt*. He will next be seen starring opposite Robin Williams and Kelly Preston in Disney's comedy feature *Old Dogs*.

Actor

2009 OLD DOGS

Directed by Walt Becker

2008	THE TAKING OF PELHA BOLT	AM 1 2 3 Directed by Tony Scott Directed by Chris Williams
2007	HAIRSPRAY WILD HOGS	Directed by Adam Shankman Directed by Walt Becker
2006	LONELY HEARTS	Directed by Todd Robinson
2005	BE COOL	Directed by F. Gary Gray
2004	A LOVE SONG FOR BOB LADDER 49 THE PUNISHER	BY LONG Directed by Shainee Gabel Directed by Jay Russell Directed by Jonathan Hensleigh
2003	BASIC	Directed by John McTiernan
2001	DOMESTIC DISTURBAN SWORDFISH	CE Directed by Harold Becker Directed by Dominic Sena
2000	BATTLEFIELD EARTH LUCKY NUMBERS	Directed by Roger Christian Directed by Nora Ephron
1999	THE GENERAL'S DAUG A CIVIL ACTION	HTER Directed by Simon West Directed by Steven Zaillian
1998	THE THIN RED LINE PRIMARY COLORS	Directed by Terrence Malick Directed by Mike Nichols
1997	MAD CITY FACE / OFF SHE'S SO LOVELY	Directed by Costa-Gavras Directed by John Woo Directed by Nick Cassavetes
1996	MICHAEL PHENOMENON BROKEN ARROW	Directed by Nora Ephron Directed by Jon Turteltaub Directed by John Woo
1995	GET SHORTY WHITE MAN'S BURDEN	Directed by Barry Sonnenfeld Directed by Desmond Nakano
1994	PULP FICTION	Directed by Quentin Tarantino
1993	LOOK WHO'S TALKING	NOW Directed by Tom Ropelewski
1991	SHOUT CHAINS OF GOLD	Directed by Jeffrey Hornaday Directed by Rob Holcomb
1990	LOOK WHO'S TALKING	TOO Directed by Amy Heckerling

1989	LOOK WHO'S TALKING EYES OF AN ANGEL THE EXPERTS	Directed by Amy Heckerling Directed by Robert Harmon Directed by Dave Thomas
1987	THE DUMB WAITER	Directed by Robert Altman
1985	PERFECT	Directed by James Bridges
	TWO OF A KIND ING ALIVE	Directed by John Herzfeld Directed by Sylvester Stallone
1982	BLOW OUT	Directed by Brian de Palma
1980	URBAN COWBOY	Directed by James bridges
1978	GREASE	Directed by Randal Kleiser
1977	SATURDAY NIGHT FEV	ER Directed by John Badham
1976	CARRIE	Directed by Brian de Palma
1975	THE DEVIL'S RAIN	Directed by Robert Fuest

# JONATHAN RHYS MEYERS - "James Reese"

# What attracted you to From Paris With Love?

I read the script and I wanted to do this type of movie. I wanted to work with Pierre Morel cause I'd seen *Taken*. I wanted to work with John and Luc Besson and Virginie. I get to play a guy who has something kind of childish about him, even thought he's a very grown-up guy and a very responsible guy, but he has this idea of what being a spy is all about and it's mainly stuff out of comic books. That element makes him like a child in a sense, but then slowly he starts to realize that it's not all James Bond cars and nice suits and covert operations. It's very dirty and bloody and messy and

disgusting—the real world. He is sort of living out his fantasy and the fantasy turns into a nightmare in front of him.

# What's your approach to a character like Reese?

In my head I have a backstory for him, what this kid could have been like, growing up, high school, night school, all these things. He's not somebody who went to Harvard. I think he probably went to a community college and he learned his mandarin at night school to try to get a good job somewhere. So he is somebody that has to wear a façade a lot. But he's not a character who's burdened by complexities. Reese has a heart, he is a hopeful guy. He wants to think the best of people.

# Reese is mesmerized by Wax. Was it the same for you working with John Travolta?

I wouldn't say I was mesmerized but I'm so fond of him. We've had the greatest time together because he is a generous person and he is a very warm person. He has been in movies a long time, so he's got a lot of great stories and a lot of experience. But he is just a really genuine guy, a very open and warm individual, and he is an icon of his time. When Reese sees Wax he's mesmerized because it's not what he expected. What he expected was somebody who's neat and proper and suited and booted, and what he gets is somebody who looks like he's from a biker club in Florida. So he's got that sort of chrome hearts jewelry, sort of very intense personality, very big American personality. So Reese is shocked by meeting the opposite of what he thought he was gonna be, he had a preconception in his head. I had no preconception about John, but I just had a great time with him. We were lucky because the chemistry works or it doesn't work and you don't know until you get there. So we were lucky that we liked each other and it seems to have worked out okay.

# Would you say they develop a buddy relationship?

It's a certain type of buddy relationship because it's like a mentor-student buddy relationship. I have to go through a lot of really dorky stuff, ethical issues and Reese is far more ethical than Wax. So it's a buddy movie where there are people who have different ideals and you're allowed to have different ideals, yet have the same goal which you're going towards.

# Could you tell us more about your female partner, Kasia Smutniak, who plays Caroline?

Kasia is just great, a wonderful girl. She is Polish which I like because I'm Irish and there's a weird similarity there. She's an exceptional actress and it's rare because she's an ex-model and you very rarely get an ex-model who really knows how to act. I don't know why, maybe because for years they have to focus on the appearance,

but she actually has chops as an actor. I just thought the world of her. She was a lot of fun to work with. I think people are really gonna like her in the movie.

# Were you excited to be making your first action movie?

Yes, but it's hard. When you're making an action movie, the more enjoyable things are when you're just doing acting scenes. And the reason is, action scenes look cool but are complicated, they are technically complicated to shoot. So there's no flow, it's all little bits, little vignettes and then you cut it together to make it look cool. But it's not cool to shoot, it just takes time.

# How would you describe Pierre Morel?

I love Pierre. I think he's nuts in all the right ways. He is a great technician, a great operator. He's an easy-going guy, he works very, very hard, he's got a lot of energy, he's very high energy. And he's smart. I like him very, very much. I find myself very at ease with Pierre. He's a cool guy and he's a really good director.

#### When you're shooting, do you often check scenes on the monitor?

I do. But I look at the monitor only to check that I'm not doing something really stupid. When I was a younger actor, I used to do stupid things with my hands or twitch or something. I remember one shot in particular, a beautiful shot where I was sitting at a table, in *The Tudors* season 3. I was sitting with Jane Seymour and it's the most beautiful composition except it's in profile and with the high boots on my foot is turned, and it destroyed the composition of the shoot. Things like that I watch for.

#### What was it like working in France?

When you work in foreign countries, and I have worked in foreign countries where I haven't been able to speak the language, this French crew in particular, they're just very nice to each other and to me. They've been nothing but really pleasant to me. There's a great camaraderie. The crew actually genuinely like each other and they support each other.

# JONATHAN RHYS MEYERS'S BIOGRAPHY

Jonathan Rhys Meyers first gained international attention and a London Film Critics Circle Award for his starring role in Todd Haynes' *Velvet Goldmine* with Ewan McGregor, Christian Bale and Toni Collette. Since then, Rhys Meyers has snatched up a Golden Globe Award for his starring role in the CBS television miniseries *Elvis* and was recently honored again when he received his 2<sup>nd</sup> Golden Globe nomination for his role as Henry the VIII in the *The Tudors*. Rhys Meyers continues to land leading roles opposite today's hottest film actors and directors, and has emerged as one of Hollywood's most sought after leading men.

Rhys Meyers can next been seen in the much anticipated fourth and final season of the Showtime original series *The Tudors*. The series, which has earned Rhys Meyers two Golden Globe nominations for his portrayal of Henry the VIII, focuses on the rarely depicted, turbulent early years of Henry's life including his romantic and political relationships. *The Tudors* was created by Michael Hirst and has been directed by a variety of award winning directors including, Charles McDougall. "The Tudors" enjoyed excellent ratings in its first, second, and third season.

Rhys Meyers can next be seen on the big screen in *From Paris with Love* opposite John Travolta. The film centers around a young embassy worker (Rhys Meyers) and an American secret agent (Travolta) who cross paths while working on a high-risk mission in Paris. The film, directed by Pierre Morel, will be in theatres February 5, 2010.

Rhys Meyers recently completed filming on the psycho-thriller *Shelter* opposite Julianne Moore for Swedish directors Mans Marlind and Bjorn Stein. In the film Rhys Meyers plays a man with multiple personalities with Moore playing his psychiatrist.

Rhys Meyers was last seen in the film, *The children of Huang Shi*, directed by Roger Spottiswoode. The film takes place in a war-ravaged China in the 1930's and co-stars Michelle Yeoh, Chow Yun Fat, and Radha Mitchell.

Rhys Meyers showed great range in the musical romance *August Rush* along side an all-star cast including Terrance Howard, Robin Williams and Keri Russell. The story centers around an orphaned musical prodigy who uses his gift as a clue to finding his birth parents, Rhys Meyers and Russell. The film was directed by *In America*'s Kirsten Sheridan.

Rhys Meyers received the great honor of a Golden Globe Award for "Outstanding Lead Actor in a Miniseries or Movie" for his portrayal of the young Elvis Presley in the television miniseries *Elvis*. In addition to this honor he received an Emmy nomination for his role. The flawless portrayal of the "king" by a young Irish actor floored critics and audiences alike.

Rhys Meyers was seen in the blockbuster action sequel *Mission: Impossible III* in which he co-stared with Tom Cruise, Laurence Fishburne, and Phillip Seymour Hoffmann under the direction of J.J. Abrams.

Rhys Meyers earned critical acclaim for his role in the edgy film by Woody Allen, *Match Point*. Dubbed as Allen's "comeback," the film was nominated for three Golden Globes including "Best Picture." *Match Point*, which co-starred Scarlett Johansson, debuted at the Cannes Film Festival in 2005 with Rhys Meyers winning the festival's Chopard Trophy for Male Revelation.

Rhys Meyers is also recognized for his role as the girls' soccer coach in the award-winning sleeper hit *Bend it like Beckham*, in which he starred with Keira Knightly and Parminder Nagra. Rhys Meyers other film credits include starring roles in Oliver

Stone's epic *Alexander*, with Colin Farrell and Angelina Jolie; and Mira Nair's *Vanity Fair*, with Reese Witherspoon.

On the small screen, Rhys Meyers has starred in a wide range of longform projects, both here and in the U.K. Among his television credits are the Showtime presentation of *The Lion in Winter*, with Patrick Stewart and Glenn Close; Alfonso Arau's *The Magnificent Ambersons*; *Gormenghast*; *The Tribe*; and *Samson and Delilah*.

Born in Dublin, Ireland, Rhys Meyers made his film debut in *A man of no importance*, and then played the young assassin in Neil Jordan's biopic *Michael Collins*. His subsequent film credits have included *The Maker*, *Telling Lies in America*, starring Kevin Bacon; *The Governess*, opposite Minnie Driver; the thriller *B. Monkey*; Mike Figgis' *The Loss of Sexual Innocence*; Ang Lee's Western *Ride with the Devil*; Julie Taymor's *Titus*, with Anthony Hopkins and Jessica Lange; *Prozac Nation*, opposite Christina Ricci; *The tesseract*; the crime drama *I'll sleep when I'm dead*, with Clive Owen and Charlotte Rampling; and *The Emperor's Wife*.

Rhys Meyers currently resides in Los Angeles and Ireland.

#### **FILMOGRAPHY**

2009	THE TUDORS (Season 3)	
2008	THE CHILDREN OF HUANG S AUGUST RUSH THE TUDORS (Season 2) SHELTER	HI Directed by Roger Spottiswoode Directed by Kristen Sheridan Directed by Björn Stein
2007	THE TUDORS (Season 1)	
2006	MISSION: IMPOSSIBLE III	Directed by J.J. Abrams

Directed by Woody Allen

2005 MATCH POINT

	I'LL SLEEP WHEN I'M DEAD VANITY FAIR ALEXANDER ELVIS (TV)	Directed by Mike Hodges Directed by Mira Nair Directed by Oliver Stone Directed by James Steven Sadwith
2003	THE TESSERACT THE EMPEROR'S WIFE	Directed by Oxide Pang Directed by Julien rebos
2002	BEND IT LIKE BECKHAM B. MONKEY	Directed by Gurinder Chadha Directed by Michael Radford
2001	RIDE WITH THE DEVIL TITUS PROZAC NATION	Directed by Ang Lee Directed by Julie Taymor Directed by Erik Skoldbjaerg
1999	THE LOSS OF SEXUAL INNOCENCE Directed by Mike Figgis	
1998	VELVET GOLDMINE THE GOVERNESS	Directed by Todd Haynes Directed by Sandra Goldbacher
1997	MICHAEL COLLINS	Directed by Neil Jordan

1995 A MAN OF NO IMPORTANCE Directed by Suri Krishnamma

# JOHN TRAVOLTA & JONATHAN RHYS MEYERS

Directed by Tim Hunter

Directed by Guy Ferland

# How would you describe working together?

TELLING LIES IN AMERICA

THE MAKER

JRM I don't think you really ever know whether it will perfectly match until you get there and you start shooting. Then the energy transfer happens. John is an incredibly warm, very open, very generous person, so I knew that I had somebody that had the potential to be very energetic with, to be very comfortable with. But you really don't know until you turn the camera on.

Jonathan and I both have a similar attack on acting, so we both approach it in a very naturalistic way, but our energies are similar in that we keep the fire lit throughout a scene and if we don't, we make it happen. So having that agreement where we trust each other and we're comfortable with each other allows for a scene to come alive. Then you really don't know until you see it on screen. We could be

having the best time in the world but you have to see it on the screen and then you, as an audience, have to say, "Oh, they have chemistry!" We could feel all the chemistry in the world but it may not be true. In this case, after we saw a little bit of footage together, I think it was, "Wow, that's pretty accurate."

# Where you familiar with each other's work?

IT I was very familiar with Jonathan's work because I'm in the wonderful position of when they ask me to do a movie and they give me some suggestions of who I'd like to be with, Jonathan was one of them and he was my first choice. Jonathan is a brilliant actor. I think out of all the young actors, he is probably the most gifted, because he can do anything. All his performances prove that because they are diversified and they're believable and they're classic, and he's got a tremendous future in my opinion. And that's not any news I'm telling you. It's empirical.

JRM There's been a ton of movies that I've liked with John. *Pulp Fiction*, obviously, was very effective, but that was effective not only from an actor's point of view, that was effective because it changed how people looked at films. Very, very important milestone in cinema. As a kid, *Grease* was a huge movie because I grew up at a time in Ireland when we didn't have VCRs or DVDs, so when an event movie came on the TV, the whole family looked forward to it and we watched it. *Grease* was one of those. I have to admit that I was kind of jealous that he got to be with Sandy a little. *Saturday Night Fever* is an extraordinary movie because I like the music, I like the clothes, I like the dancing. I like that whole thing. *Face Off* was quite brilliant and I think he did a brilliant job with being Nic Cage! It was a very difficult thing to do because you don't have the physicality to portray the person you are meant to play and I think he really nailed that.

IT That's very true. We both were built very differently. I mean we had little tricks that we would do to fool the camera but I think that's really accurate. And I don't think it gets much better than Jonathan in *Match Point*. I mean when you look at that performance, that's as kind as good as it gets. I was blown away by that as were many people. I'm very proud of Jonathan and Jonathan's series is just blowing everybody away.

#### Can you describe each other's character?

# JT Do you want to go first?

JRM I'll go first. Charlie Wax is a guy that would be wrong for any unsuspecting young woman to fall in love with because he is just that side of crazy. He likes to shoot first, he likes to ask all the questions later, in the morgue. He's got a body count which is quite extraordinary throughout this film. He creates a river of blood and guts for me to slip and slide through. But there's a certain sort of paternal thing Charlie Wax has for Reese, which is a very strange, almost immediate thing that he's

like this mentor. He's amused sometimes by the shock that Reese has with his behavior because it's become so functional to kill people. Wax is comfortable when he's in a dangerous situation, this is really his arena. This is where he becomes like a ballet dancer on stage. If he had to do something where he has to sit down in a shirt and tie, it would drive him nuts. There's a certain energy that happens in danger and he is so addicted to that buzz. That's why he travels around the world, not having family or a wife and engaging in these very dangerous conflicts, because that's the arena that he was born to be in.

JT Very good!

IRM You liked that?

JT Gorgeous. I don't know how to beat that one but I'll give it a go. Let's see. Reese is kind of the opposite of Wax in most areas but has the potential to be like Wax in some areas and it's my job to turn his character into that a little more as per the end of the movie anyway.

JRM We hope!

IT But you have a very well educated and also self-educated gentleman that is very well kept and groomed and smarter than a whip and bilingual and has all the assets that Wax doesn't have. He's elegant, sophisticated and thoughtful but his biggest vulnerability is his heart. He can really fall in love, really fall in love and mean it. He is so genuine in his ability to fall in love with a woman that it is to some degree a liability, especially to Wax's character. He's got to watch that. I think deep down Wax wishes he had more of a heart. Reese is the romance of the picture, he's the heart of the movie and he has to deal with this dichotomy of a person in Wax. And also deal with the dichotomies in himself because he has a killer in him, I just have to dig it out. When he lets loose on someone for love, when this young man steals his ring, you realize that if he had to fight for love, almost like a Roman soldier, he would be a better killer than Wax. He is a guy that has to have the right reasons to do everything, to kill, to love, to kill for love. All those have to be very clear in his mind. He's very clear that he wants to know exactly what's going on at all times, and wants to know the reasons why we're doing everything. He's very moral about it, he does not want to be doing immoral things. I justify my unusual ethics with excellent product. He thinks that's really despicable. But yet, he has an ability to confront the evil that I confront. Even though it's a little more difficult for him to confront the evil, he can do it. It's just that it's a rude awakening. That's an eye opener for him because I'm taking him on a ride that no one has ever taken him on.

JRM That was pretty good!

JT Was it pretty good?

JRM Did you rehearse that?

JT No.

JRM I did! I rehearsed mine.

KASIA SMUTNIAK - "Carolina"

# How did you become an actress?

By accident basically. I was working as a model and I got my first movie in Italy. I did casting and I got into it from there. I love it so much. I had a lot of fun. And I just decided to continue and it's been ten years now.

# How did you end up making this movie?

The same story. I was cast in Paris. I just came for a casting and I met Pierre and we did this very quick casting and I didn't think I might be doing the movie after. And that's it! A few weeks later they called me and said, "You got the part!"

#### What attracted you in the script?

My part is very interesting. Instead of being just a simple terrorist it's nice because she's very human. I think she's just trapped in-between. I tried to keep the thing of terrorism and everything very soft. I tried to give more humanity to the character. I wanted to keep her, in the first part, very sweet and very calm and that's what we need so that you don't know exactly who she is. Even in the movie we don't know exactly where she's from, why she's doing this and only in the last part she explains how she came to be a terrorist.

# Do you understand her sacrifice for what she thinks is right?

It's really hard to say because we're talking about very extreme feelings and I think that me growing up in Europe, in a good part of the world, let's say, it's hard to understand. But I was thinking about how you can get to decide to die for something. This I can understand. In a moment where you have nothing to lose, you just go for it. We don't know where Caroline is from, what her background is. The only thing we know is that she probably fell in love with a man who introduced her to his faith and with love and with the feeling that she is doing something right for the first time in her life, she follows this path. Of course, she has to, let's say, pretend that she is in love with Reese but then she really is, so she's trapped between one man and the other, plus there is religion and faith involved.

# How exciting was it to act with John Travolta and Jonathan Rhys Meyers?

Extremely exciting, it was a lot of fun. Working with people like John and Jonathan is very helpful and you can learn a lot of things and it was just fun. We meet twice in the movie but we had a very big, important scene during the party in my house, when my best friend dies because Wax kills her.

# How did you feel on your first day with them?

The first day I started with John and the first day I did all the action things. That was not a lot about acting, that was just about running, jumping from the roofs. I remember when I came back it was like, "This is great fun. I'm gonna have the best time. I knew it." Because I love all the running things and stuff. With Jonathan, my part in the movie is based on Caroline's relationship with him, so it was very important to make it real. We just clicked from the beginning. He's very easy to work with definitely.

# What about Pierre Morel's directing?

He is amazing. He helped me a lot. He's really very patient. He's the most patient person I've ever met in my life. He always puts you in a good mood and I felt safe. He always gives you a lot of space to improvise. When the character is there, you can do whatever you want, so we talked a lot about my character before, not to do it too obvious, not to give the character the "When I'm a terrorist I'm bad and when I'm in love I'm good" kind of thing. We played on that. I hope it will work and he helped me really a lot.

# What scene was the most difficult for you?

Definitely the most difficult scene was the one where I put the suicide vest on and I want to explode the whole place. That was definitely the most difficult scene in acting and technical terms. We did it a lot of times, so that was the most difficult, but also the most fun. Because when I see something that is difficult then I try to do it better and better, and I found myself having fun with difficult things like this.

# **And shooting in Paris?**

This was my first movie in Paris and I feel so lucky. I have to learn French, that's what I understand now about Paris. It's beautiful. Paris is amazing. From Paris with love!

#### KASIA SMUTNIAK'S FILMOGRAPHY

2009 LA PASSIONE Directed by Carlo Mazzacurati

2008 FROM PARIS WITH LOVE Directed by Pierre Morel
TUTTA COLPA DI GIUDA Directed by Davide Ferrario
BARBAROSSA Directed by Renzo Martinelli
SCONTRO DI CIVILTA PER UN ASCENSORE A PIAZZA VITTORIO
Directed by Isotta Tosi

2007 GOAL 3 Directed by Andrew Morahan CAOS CALMO Directed by Antonello Grimaldi

2006 PRIMO CARNERA (THE WALKING MOUNTAIN) Directed by Renzo Martinelli NELLE TUE MANI (IN YOUR HANDS) Directed by Peter Del Monte

2003/2004 ORA E PER SEMPRE (NOW FOREVER) Directed by Vincenzo Verdecchi

2002/2003 TREDICI A TAVOLA (THIRTEEN FOR DINNER) Directed by Enrico Oldoini RADIO WEST Directed by Alessandro Valori

2000/2001 AL MOMENTO GIUSTO (AT THE RIGHT MOMENT) Directed by G.Panariello HAKER Directed by Janusa Laorski

#### PIERRE MOREL - Director

#### After Taken, did you want to do something different?

Taken was a single character movie, one guy that had one goal, so it was a pretty straight-forward structure. This one is more complex because when you read the script, it starts out like a funny buddy movie and it was nice to make it evolve, slowly but surely, into a darker plot. From that super fun thing, slowly twist into something darker. The final twist makes it very dark in the end.

# Was it more complicated handling two actors?

It was a challenge, because in *Taken* we were on one character, staying with Liam all the way through. This one is more about the relationship between the two guys. It's a two-headed thing, which actually was fun. The two guys are not supposed to work well with each other but they have to, and that's what makes it fun—having to deal with those two guys, those two characters, and those two actors, actually, who are so different in the way they behave, the way they work.

# Where did the idea to match John Travolta and Jonathan Rhys Meyers come from?

John Travolta was Luc's idea and we offered it to John because when you see all the movies he has done in his career, you always see him change. He likes to play with

his image, he likes to dress and have his hair cut differently from one movie to another. He always changes, he likes playing different characters all the time. We never saw him play a character like this, so we thought it would be a good idea and he seemed to agree with that. Wax is a larger than life, over the top, itchy trigger-finger agent and we had a lot of fun creating the character with him. Jonathan is a way more classical actor. You can feel the difference on set. John is very American, very Actor's Studio—he likes to play with the character on set but it takes time and rehearsals to make it evolve. Jonathan, on the other hand, is very British in his approach. He works a lot beforehand, knows all his lines, so once he gets on set he knows precisely where to go. Actually, they're very similar to their characters. John's character, Wax, is the crazy guy that improvises all the time, while Jonathan's character, Reese, is a very meticulous, do-everything-by-the-book type of guy. So the two guys in the real life were very similar to the two guys in the movie.

# What was their first encounter like?

The first time they meet on screen is actually the first time they met on set. We planned it that way, so that their first scene together would be in sync with where their characters are at. I wanted to try that because they'd never acted together before, they didn't know what to expect from each other, so when their characters first meet in that French customs office, they were getting to know each other as actors too, and that was very helpful to the scene.

# How did you strike a balance between action and comedy?

The challenge was to make the super-fast-paced action thing that I like, but give it a funny twist. We had to choreograph scenes so that they wouldn't be as dark as I have done before. They still had to have the same pace, but there was a comic touch now too. Seeing as most of the action involves Wax, John Travolta's character, we thought it would be fun to use John's ability as a dancer. So we choreographed all his fights and moves and stuff in a very swinging and dancing way. It really is more like a choreography in the dance sense than fight choreography.

# Paris is again at the heart of the movie, but alternates between tourist Paris and real Paris...

I live in Paris and I'm from Paris. You're always torn between making it like a postcard and making it like Paris really is. In *Taken*, for instance, I really made it the way Paris is when you live in Paris—wherever you live you don't see the beauty of things anymore, so it's a dark and not a very funny situation. In this movie, because of the title *From Paris with Love*, we had to make it a bit more postcard-ish, but once again it evolves with the plot. In the beginning, we go to the Eiffel Tower and the nice parts of Paris and then, slowly but surely, we drift towards the edges, the places in Paris that people don't want to see.

# How did you choose Kasia Smutniak, the female lead?

Kasia, beautiful girl! Her character, Caroline, lives in Paris and she's supposed to be French. There are a lot of great French actresses but they hardly speak good enough English to play the part, so we started looking outside of France. Kasia is Polish but she's been living and working in Italy for years. I saw movies that she'd done and I was like "Wow, she is very, very good. Very attractive but very good." She was able to do a lot of the action stuff as well. She has some action in the movie and she was able to be light and funny and nice, and the next second very emotional or very dark. We did a test with her and she just nailed it right away.

# John Travolta's arrival in the movie is a big moment. How did you develop his character?

What I tried to do, which is something we talked a lot about with John, was to have John play the scene in a very logical straight-forward way and then have him do it in a funny way, almost over-acted, and then a much darker way, so that I would have a lot of options to make his character evolve within the scene. That was really fun—he could give you the super-serious straight one and then go crazy and then go even darker. By taking bits and pieces from one take to the other, you could build his character, who is a guy you never really know what to think of—is he someone you can trust or not? You never know and we enhance that by using different moods from different takes and building up his character. In contrast, Jonathan's character, Reese, always acts the same way—he's not at all as unpredictable as Wax. The relationship between the two became very interesting in editing because we could make it evolve in probably a more creative way than we ever did on set.

# What was the most difficult scene to shoot?

There are a lot of complex scenes. A couple of action scenes were pretty tough. The final chase on the highway was tough because it's always weird to have a guy hanging from the car at 100 mph but it's part of the thing and it was fun. The shootout in the sweatshop, where the Chinese guys are working, was really tough. Time was limited, there was a lot of pyrotechnics, shots and blasts all over the place. That was a difficult one.

#### VIRGINIE BESSON-SILLA - Producer

# <u>How would you define From Paris with Love? Buddy movie? Action thriller? Spy comedy?</u>

From Paris With Love is definitely a buddy movie between Wax and Reese. We follow them on a journey through Paris and in those 3 days Reese sees what it takes to become a real agent. So it's a buddy movie with a lot of comedic dialogue and situations, and also a drama because the backdrop to the story is terrorism, which of course is anything but comic. For that reason, Pierre Morel was the perfect director. Pierre has the subtlety to make a movie that combines comedy with a very dramatic story totally credible.

# Where did the idea to cast John Travolta and Jonathan Rhys Meyers together come from?

The idea stemmed from a desire to work with both actors. They are both brilliant, different generations but amazing actors. John Travolta was perfect for the role of Wax and then we looked at young actors who had enough presence to play opposite him. I think Jonathan is one of the very few who has that, and they look good together. I am a big fan of Jonathan's and I was convinced the first time I read the script that he was the one for this part.

#### How was their first encounter?

Actually, the first time Jonathan and John met was on set, when we shot their first scene together in the movie, when Reese comes to pick Wax up from the airport. Pierre wanted to have them meet that way to make the scene even more real.

# What are the difficulties related to shooting in Paris and in the projects around Paris?

What was difficult about filming in Paris was the fact that we had a big crew because of all the action and car scenes, a lot of equipment, a lot of trucks, and having someone like John Travolta we needed to have a lot of organization. So that was quite difficult logistically in Paris. Filming in the projects was not a problem when we were in Poissy where we were shooting for 3 days. That went very smoothly. We worked with people from the neighborhood and they were really happy to have us there with John Travolta. John is a very open, generous guy and he didn't mind signing autographs or whatever needed to be done.

# *Is it difficult to make a movie about terrorism?*

I wouldn't say it was difficult to talk about terrorism in the film because it is not the main storyline. We based our story around it, but what this film is about is the relationship between two people—a guy who wants to become an agent and a guy who has all the experience. We're focused on their relationship and terrorism is in the background.

# What was the atmosphere like on set?

The atmosphere on set was great, very calm and serene. Both actors, John and Jonathan, were wonderful people to work with, so that made the whole crew very comfortable and, even if he was probably a little stressed, Pierre did a great job. I think all the French crew and production team wanted to show to a big US star that it could be fun and easy to work in France. The fact is that at the end of the shoot John Travolta was quite impressed with our team, so that's something we can be proud of.

# What was the most difficult scene to shoot?

The most difficult scene to shoot? I wouldn't say any one scene was particularly difficult. There were a lot of stunts, a lot of car chases, which is all pretty complicated to organize, but once everything had been rehearsed, we got the scenes in the can with no particular complications. I guess we were lucky in that respect.

# Besides writing the script, what was Luc Besson's involvement in this movie?

Luc's main involvement was the script, then we both confirmed that we wanted Pierre Morel to direct it, and then we chose the actors. He participated in that process and that was all, because he trusted the director and production team to have everything going smoothly. He maybe came on set twice, just to have lunch with the actors and us and that was it. And then we sat him down in a chair to watch the movie when it was all edited. He had a good time, he laughed all the way through, so we took that as a sign that we'd done a good job.

# For you, what was most special about the movie?

The really special thing was having two brilliant actors performing together, to have so much emotion when there was just the two of them in the simplest scenes, like in the car. A soon as the director said "Action", the dialogue fizzed between them and it was just so good.

# **DAVE BUCKLEY - Composer**

# How did you get involved in From Paris With Love?

A friend of mine who scored a French movie, called *Les Deux Mondes*, passed on my name as someone who might be quite suitable for this. That was in December of last year. I was given the script and then a scene to do a demo for, and I sent it off and they liked it! They showed it to Pierre Morel, Pierre liked it, and the rest, as they say, is history.

# How do you approach the process of creating a film score?

For me, I like to find a theme or touch to something that I know is going to hold it together. It might even be a sound, it doesn't even have to be a melody, it could just be a cord or something like that. I can remember very clearly the night, it was very early on, I was at home, cooking pasta, and suddenly I was just humming something. I thought, that could be quite interesting, and I wrote it down because I often forget things. The next day at work I came in and started playing around with it and I think I sent a little thing to Pierre, who replied that he liked the theme. I wouldn't say it made the job easy, but to know that you've got something, the theme part of the film, is a useful tool, for me certainly.

Once you've found your theme, how do you develop it within the score?

The score is about an hour long but with quite a variety of music within the hour. Despite the fact that it's not a symphonic score, there is a theme, a very simple phonic theme, which is used in various ways. It ranges from a sort of emotional climax of the film, where one of the character dies—there's a sort of funereal lament where the theme is played by the strings and voice—but there are other times, like in some action sequences, when it's sort of hidden between beats and other kinds of electronic things. It's a very simple, straight-forward idea, rather like Beethoven's famous 5th Symphony, but you can do so much with it. To have a bigger theme, or something more complicated, means it would get lost in a score that could never be particularly melodic. There are moments of melody—there is a love interest in this film—and there are moments of sadness but, on the other hand, there's a number of cues which are very heavily guitar based – the Travolta character, Wax, is a bit of a badass, he needs some rock'n'roll behind him. And then during the action, there is another variety which is very driven. In terms of score, there are a lot of different components. My hope is that having a theme, however simple, somehow ties it together and makes it one.

# And your collaboration with Pierre Morel, the director?

It was an interesting process and a new one for me really because, obviously, we had an ocean between us in terms of me writing in L.A. and Pierre being largely in France. He came over to L.A. a couple of times and it was interesting because the second time he came over, we actually spent the whole day together going through my cues. Spending twelve hours with him in one go is more then I ever spent with any other director. Normally, you might see a director for half an hour, play back your stuff and then he'll give you notes. Pierre is a very collaborative director. It was like, here is my film, do what you want to do! He was always very open, which is a real pleasure. I think it's important to feel strongly about things, which you need to if you're committed—it's good for you to give your version and then, of course, you discuss it. Pierre was very gracious and he said, run with it, do what you want to do and we'll figure it all out later!

#### How would you describe the style?

I guess it's what you might call a hybrid score, a combination of synthetic elements, synthesizers, but with real strings, real piano, real harp and real voices. It's a combination of those two things, which is a route that people have taken before. I'm very fortunate because my recording studios are in bigger studios owned by Harry Gregson-Williams who has done many film scores, including all of Tony Scott's films in recent years. I think he is one of the greatest leaders in the world of synthesizers plus strings and I'm very indebted to him for all the tricks and processes that he uses and that definitely filtered down to me. Obviously I hope that I've brought something personal to the process, such as using some traditional instruments in this score. We recorded some hurdy-gurdy, which is a very old type of instrument. We used an electric trumpet, an electric violin, and we've done something a little bit different with them.

# Were there any particularly challenging moments?

The entire fifth reel of the film is an action sequence. It's eight minutes of car chase. I don't think I know any composers, who look at scenes like that and think, hooray, an eight-minute car chase! It's the traditional problem one's got during action sequences—lots of noise, explosions, dialogue, and musically you've got to keep the energy going. That was a real challenge, to keep that going, to keep the pace, drive things forward and not become repetitive. It was one of the scenes I waited to do. I wanted to explore other parts of the film and, by exploring those, it gave me some answers for that scene.

# ADI HASAK - Screenplay

# How did you become involved with this project?

I met Luc through India Osborne who was working with him at the time in Los Angeles. She had read a pilot that I had written for HBO and next thing I knew I was sitting down with Luc Besson in the Four Seasons in Los Angeles. It was just a wonderful meeting. I had been a fan of Luc's for years. I remember seeing *Subway*, I remember every movie that he made as a director, kind of a milestone in my life. He had this fleshed-out story that he wanted to talk about. It was simple and engaging, about an American hitman that comes to Paris, for 24 hours for a job, and he is driven around town by a guy who works in the Embassy. This character looks up to the hitman and wants to become the hitman. They have one hell of an adventure and at the end of those 24 hours, both come out a better man.

#### What was it like working with Luc Besson?

Fascinating. At that first meeting we had, he laid down the tone for the whole movie. He pitched me the scene where Wax and Reese go back to Reese's apartment and have dinner with Reese's girlfriend and her friend. In that one scene, everything was there. The humor was there, the buddy element was there, the relationship was there, the intrigue was there and the action was there. After that meeting, he asked me to prepare a treatment, so I wrote a 4-6 page treatment and a month later, I spent a week working with Luc to produce a full outline. Then I wrote a draft, submitted the draft to Luc, who had some notes. I made the adjustments he wanted and got a phone-call a year later saying that we were in pre-production! It was, by far, the best experience I've had in Hollywood.

# How did you develop the character of Wax?

The way Luc pitched him to me, Wax was a larger-than-life hitman, a government assassin with a comic streak in him. He is on a mission where he doesn't know exactly why he is killing people, why he is hunting them down, but nothing could stop this character from completing his mission. We discussed the airport scene, where Wax smuggles his gun into France in an energy-drink can, and the one that takes place in a Chinese Restaurant, where Wax has a conversation with Reese about who invented a certain Chinese dish and simultaneously kicks some ass. Between those two scenes, the character kind of came to life. The third crucial scene was when Wax lets some bad guys beat Reese up to teach him a lesson. After Wax shoots the bad guys, he turns to Reese and says, "I told you to shoot them when they came in." Once we had those three scenes down, we had the character down.

# And Jonathan Rhys Meyers' character, Reese?

Once we had fleshed out the character of Wax, Reese was kind of really easy to put together because Reese stood for the audience, he stood for everyman. I mean, who doesn't want to be a badass, packing heat and resolving issues by blowing people away? At the Embassy, Reese is the guy who preps the getaway car for the agents who make the getaway. He's never part of the action and he so much wants to be part of the action and prove that he can be a bad guy. The irony being that once he starts proving it and getting caught up in Wax's world, he realizes it's not what he thought it was. At that point, what Luc brought up, is that his main motivation becomes just going home and getting back to his girlfriend and trying to get as far away from Wax as possible.

# What was your reaction when you found out John Travolta was playing Wax?

It's always a great experience for a screenwriter to find out that an actor has been cast for a role that has been living in your mind for a year or two. When I heard that John Travolta was Wax, it just all connected. He is so wonderful playing these larger-than-life characters. When I saw the first cut of the movie, again that scene in the airport when he's giving the French policeman a hard time, he starts going off on him every way, really proving himself to be the ugly American but succeeding in smuggling in the gun. And Travolta can do that with such flair and it's just so wonderful. Not to mention his look. You've never seen Travolta like this ever before. It reintroduces him to a whole new group, a whole new audience. I thought it was absolutely wonderful, a great way to go.

# What was your take on the Parisian setting for the movie?

It was pretty insane. There I was sitting in Los Angeles writing a movie that takes place in Paris, about two Americans caught up in an action adventure. I've been to Paris once or twice, but what was really interesting—again, it goes back to that initial

meeting—was that Luc wanted to make use not just of locations we've all seen, like the Eiffel Tower, but he also wanted a very big part of the movie to be shot in the projects that surround Paris. Those are areas you don't see as a tourist, but they are extremely vibrant with a lot of different cultures there. It was really important for Luc, from the beginning, that we set a lot of the action, a lot of the story, in these different projects. That gave a twist to the movie and a fresh look to Paris that you haven't seen before.

## **CAST LIST**

CHARLIE WAX JOHN TRAVOLTA

JAMES REESE JONATHAN RHYS MEYERS

CAROLINA KASIA SMUTNIAK

AMBASSADOR BENNUINGTON RICHARD DURDEN

#### **CREW LIST**

DIRECTED BY PIERRE MOREL

EXECUTIVE PRODUCER VIRGINIE BESSON-SILLA

PRODUCTION MANAGER THIERRY GUILMARD

DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY MICHEL ABRAMOVICZ

PRODUCTION DESIGNER JACQUES BUFNOIR

COSTUMES BY OLIVIER BERIOT

CORINNE BRUAND

CASTING DIRECTOR SWAN PHAM

EDITOR FREDERIC THORAVAL

SOUND BY LUCIEN BALIBAR

FREDERIC DUBOIS

FRANCOIS-JOSEPH HORS

MUSIC BY DAVE BUCKLEY

BASED ON A STORY BY LUC BESSON

SCREEN PLAY BY ADI HASAK

SFX SUPERVISOR PHILIPPE HUBIN

STUNT SUPERVISOR PHILIPPE GUEGAN

CAR STUNT SUPERVISOR MICHEL JULIENNE