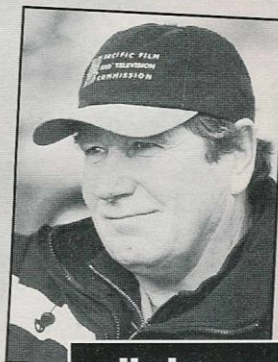


Agent of Action

*Stunt supervisor
Vic Armstrong is a
key component in the
James Bond franchise*



dialogue

during the course of his 200-plus film career, Vic Armstrong has given thousands of thrills to millions around the globe. He's doubled for Harrison Ford on all three "Indiana Jones" films and numerous other projects and served as stunt coordinator and second-unit director on movies ranging from 1990's "Total Recall" to 2000's "Charlie's Angels." But Armstrong probably is most closely identified with the James Bond franchise, which he joined as a stuntman for 1967's "You Only Live Twice." He spoke to **Todd Longwell** for **The Hollywood Reporter** about the challenges he's faced on the three most recent 007 spectacles, including "Die Another Day."

The Hollywood Reporter: The James Bond films have been something of a family affair for you.

Vic Armstrong: My father-in-law, George Leech, worked (as a stuntman) on (1962's) "Dr. No" and coordinated on (1969's) "On Her Majesty's Secret Service." My wife, Wendy, was Michelle Yeoh's double on (1997's) "Tomorrow Never Dies" and has worked on several other Bond films. My 22-year-old daughter, Nina, is working on this one as a stuntwoman.

THR: One of the trademarks of the 007 franchise is the superspectacular precredit action sequence. What are you giving us this time out?

Armstrong: The opening sequence is a hovercraft chase (filmed in Hawaii), which is pretty spectacular. We fight, fight, fight to try to come up with a unique opening sequence. No matter how many thousands of people I talk to to find even the suggestion of an idea, it always involves a parachute or a fall.

THR: What's the most spectacular stunt sequence in the new film?

Armstrong: A chase between an Aston Martin Vanquish and a Jaguar XKR across a frozen lake in Iceland amongst icebergs. We also did a huge explosion for the finale of the film (filmed in England yet set in North Korea), in which mines start exploding all around. We had 88 kilos of explosives and about 450 gallons of gasoline spread over half a mile.

THR: One thing that makes the Bond series great is its continued dedication to real, live stunts. It's so much more exciting and dynamic than action created with CGI and blue-screen effects.

Armstrong: I'm 100% in agreement. We've got one sequence in ("Die") that does have some computer-generated stuff, but I have nothing to do with it. I've always fought for taking the truth and stretching it on the screen by 10% but delivering as much realistic action as you can. If you look at the boat-chase sequence (staged on the Thames River) in "The World Is Not Enough," there's not an ounce of CGI or blue screen in it — apart from two (special effects) torpedoes in the water — until you get to the balloon as Bond is floating over the Millennium Dome at the end — which we couldn't physically do in the air because of the nearby airport. So the realism is there; that's what we really have to stick to with Bond.



Cars, 'copters and stunt people in constant flux