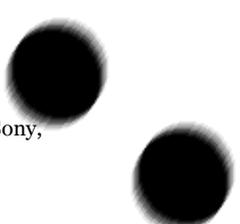
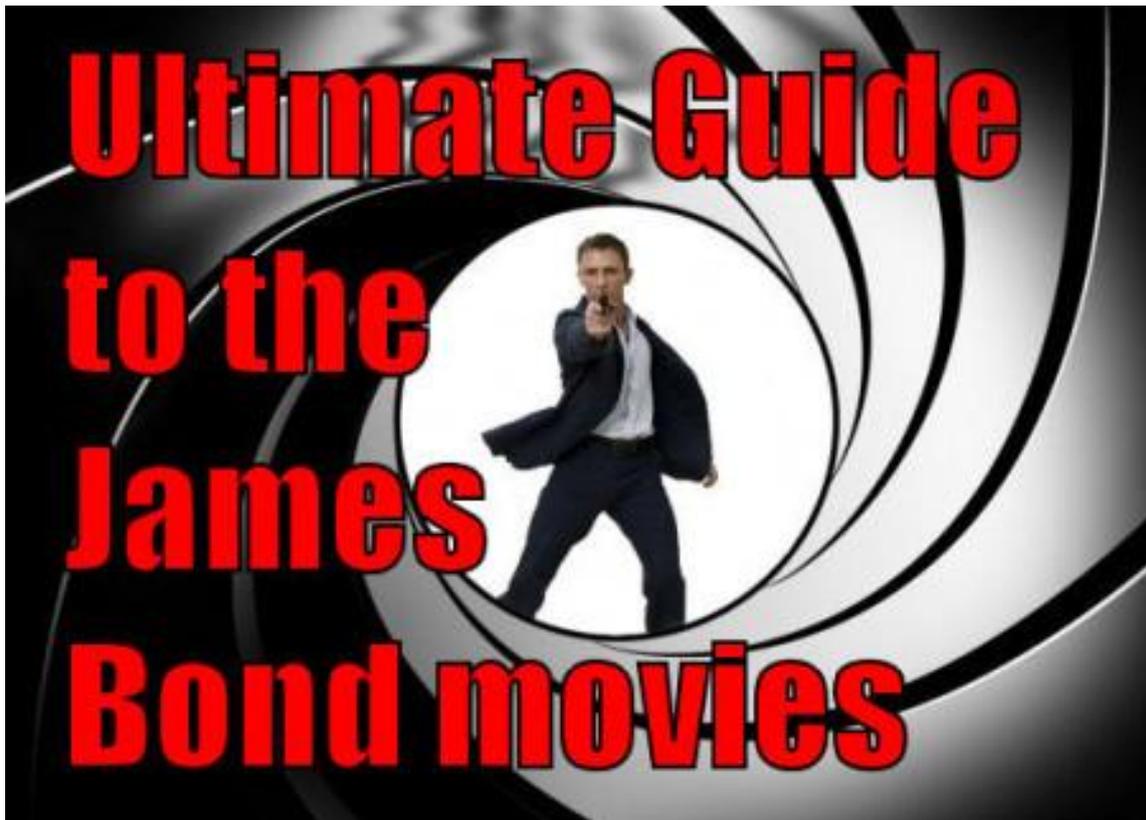




Ultimate guide to the James Bond movies





The James Bond Dossier

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It's hard to imagine a world without the James Bond films, which have been with us since *Dr No* hit the big screen in 1962, catapulting Sean Connery to fame and introducing us to an exciting and, for many, unimaginably sophisticated world.

The impact of *Dr No* on cinema audiences of the time was dramatic – there had never been anything like it before – and it took James Bond from being a successful success series to an unprecedented worldwide phenomenon.

Dr No (1962)

When in 1961 Albert R “Cubby” Broccoli found that Harry Saltzman had a six-month option to film the James Bond novels he initially tried to buy him out. When Saltzman refused they teamed up to create Eon Productions and put 007 on the big screen.

Their first Bond film was originally going to be *Thunderball*, but when Kevin McClory sued Ian Fleming for plagiarism the producers decided to film *Dr No* instead. While it remains a fairly faithful adaptation the screenwriters added a number of scenes, such as Bond visiting Miss Taro, and the addition of Felix Leiter, who did not appear in the book.

Sean Connery makes a memorable opening at the casino and many of the elements we now associate with 007 were introduced in *Dr No*; the gunbarrel sequence, the James Bond Theme arranged by John Barry, the exotic locations, the car chase, the women and the vodka martinis.

However, it lacks the John Barry score and the music is, with the exception of the James Bond Theme and the use of Three Blind Mice, largely unmemorable.

From Russia With Love (1963)

When *Dr No* proved to be a hit Eon Productions quickly followed it up with *From Russia With Love*, considered by Fleming to be his best work.

However, rather than the Cold War plot pitting the Russians and SMERSH against 007 the screenplay features SPECTRE play the Russians against MI6 in order to assassinate 007 and get hold of the Lektor code machine.

The second Bond film makes great use of the location work in Istanbul, as well as the scenes on board the Orient Express as Bond, Tania and Kerim flee with the Lektor. Bond's claustrophobic fight with Red Grant, highlighted by Peter Hunt's groundbreaking editing, has rarely been equalled in the series.



Goldfinger (1964)

In many ways the quintessential James Bond movie, in introducing the gadget-packed Aston Martin DB5 *Goldfinger* simultaneously began to shift the series away from Ian Fleming's vision of James Bond and onto a trajectory of its own while turning the generations of boys that followed into avid collectors.

While broadly faithful to the novel, the film improves on the book substantially by making a small but important change to the villain's scheme. Rather than stealing the US gold reserves at Fort Knox, Auric Goldfinger plans on rendering them worthless by irradiating them, playing on the Cold War paranoia of the 1960s and the ever-present threat posed by nuclear weapons.

It also features one of the most memorable Bond girls in the shape of Pussy Galore and a pre-title sequence to which few of the films that followed have even come close in equalling. Whether or not *Goldfinger* is the best film in the series is a moot point. Without a doubt though, it is the most iconic Bond film.

Thunderball (1965)

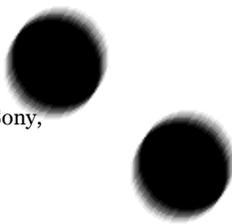
Where *Goldfinger* went big, *Thunderball* went bigger. Back came the DB5 for the pre-title sequence as well as a Bell-Textron jet pack in this story of SPECTRE holding the West to ransom after hijacking a Vulcan bomber loaded with two atomic bombs; again the series taps into the threat of vaporisation by nuclear weapons.

The book landed Ian Fleming in court, sued by Kevin McClory and Jack Whittingham for plagiarism as it was based on unfilmed screenplays the three had contributed to without permission or attribution.

The resulting settlement required future editions of the book acknowledge McClory and Whittingham and, crucially, McClory being awarded the film rights to *Thunderball*.

Because of this, Broccoli and Saltzman brought in McClory to produce the fourth film in the Eon series. The move not only allowed them to film *Thunderball*, one of two James Bond stories they did not own the rights to (the other was *Casino Royale*) but also ensured he didn't set up a rival Bond series of his own; at least for the time being as it turned out.

Filmed largely in The Bahamas, the underwater scenes are sometimes criticised for slowing the film down and making it difficult to follow, but it has a great John Barry score and Sean Connery is in fine form as 007.





You Only Live Twice (1967)

After the success of *Thunderball*, Eon radically shifted the series in a new direction with *You Only Live Twice*, dropping Ian Fleming's story completely and retaining the Japanese locations and the character names.

Instead the producers brought in Roald Dahl to write a screenplay that sees SPECTRE meddling in the space race between the United States and USSR going on at the time. To put it in context, *You Only Live Twice* was released 18 months before Apollo 8 became the first manned spacecraft to orbit the Moon and a two full years before the Apollo 11 Moon landing.

With Sean Connery announcing the film as his last appearance as 007 the pressure was really on the producers; Sean Connery WAS James Bond. How could the series continue without him?

On Her Majesty's Secret Service (1969)

Although it may have been inconceivable for many that the James Bond films could continue without Sean Connery, the producers had every intention of ploughing on regardless.

George Lazenby had huge shoes to fill after Connery and his lack of acting experience shows. However, offsetting that are some great action sequences in Swiss Alps, the terrific Piz Gloria and what many fans consider to be the best John Barry score.

On Her Majesty's Secret Service is also notable for returning the films to Ian Fleming's work and is a faithful adaptation of the novel.

Lazenby quit after just one film following bad advice from his manager, but if he had remained no doubt he would have grown into the role and had the physicality required of Bond.

His determination in landing the role is a lesson to us all that if there is something you want badly enough you should just keep going and make it happen. That much he achieved absolutely.

Diamonds Are Forever (1971)

Sean Connery negotiated hard for his \$1.25 million salary in his comeback as 007 and then immediately gave it away, setting up the Scottish International Education Trust. In the four years since his last outing as 007 Connery had put on weight and with the 1970s came a new fashion sense for Bond.



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In many ways *Diamonds Are Forever* is the first film of what we typically think of as Roger Moore era, with an excessive use of comedy that verges on slapstick and further distances the series from Ian Fleming.

While *On Her Majesty's Secret Service* ended with the murder of Tracy, *Diamonds Are Forever* doesn't even acknowledge her death. Instead we get a mishmash that takes 007 first to Amsterdam and then Las Vegas in a sci-fi plot in which Blofeld plans on auctioning nuclear supremacy to the highest bidder after using his laser-equipped satellite to destroy weapons in the US, USSR and China.

The film has its moments, such as the first fight in the lift in Amsterdam and Connery, although not at his prime, sometimes delivers some good one-liners. But that car chase seems more Dukes of Hazard than James Bond and prefigures Sheriff JW Pepper, introduced with Roger Moore's debut as 007.

Live And Let Die (1973)

Eon Productions' second attempt at replacing Sean Connery was much more successful, with an actor they had considered years before and who had featured in the popular TV shows *The Saint* and *The Persuaders!*

Roger Moore played Bond as very different character to Connery, playing up the charm and humour while downplaying the physicality. The Roger Moore era became known for the double entendre and girls falling into bed with him at the mere hint of an eyebrow raise.

Live And Let Die has little to do with Ian Fleming, even dropping Jamaica as a setting (although partly filmed in Jamaica it was set on the fictional Caribbean island of San Monique) and much of the action takes place in Louisiana. Borrowing heavily on the Blaxploitation movies popular at the time, *Live And Let Die* was a world away from the films made just a decade before.

This is also the era of the bimbo Bond girl and it is unfortunately this portrayal of female characters in the series that seems to have stuck most in the public perception (and of all the recent Bond girls, who always claim "my Bond girl is different"); no matter that recent Bond girls are entirely capable.

Following on from *Diamonds Are Forever*, the film saw more of the same in substituting speedboats for cop cars in a high speed chase in the Louisiana bayous and the introduction of Sergeant JW Pepper; while he has some good lines, he is out of place in Bond film, stepping well over the line between humour and outright comedy.



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Roger Moore's first Bond film does at least retain the voodoo contained in the book, and even expands on it, making Baron Samedi one of the most recognisable characters of the entire series.

The highlight though is the theme song, by Paul McCartney and Wings. Abandoning the style of all the early films, *Live And Let Die* boasts an energetic rock track later covered by Guns n' Roses inspired and cited by Chris Cornell as the inspiration for *Casino Royale's* theme song, *You Know My Name*.

The Man With The Golden Gun (1974)

Quickly following on from *Live And Let Die* came Roger Moore's second Bond film. While it is dismissed by many Bond fans as one of the weakest in the series it does at least have the benefit of a great villain in the shape of Scaramanga, played by Christopher Lee, and one of the most collectible items in the shape of the Golden Gun.

While hardly a classic, it does at least have a John Barry score, but the film sees the return of JW Pepper and Mary Goodnight, played by Britt Ekland, appears to be in the film only so she can be rescued from whatever trouble she gets herself into.

On the other hand, Bond is saved by two nieces of Lieutenant Hip, whose kung fu skills take out an entire dojo in pursuit of Bond; like *Live And Let Die* borrowed from Blaxploitation movies, *The Man With The Golden Gun* took its cues from early 1970s martial arts craze.

There is another speedboat chase, played more for laughs than for thrills followed by a car chase through the streets of Bangkok. But the film's great stunt, a 360 degree aerial twist across a broken bridge, is ruined by the comedy whistle, something John Barry later regretted.

Set against this, it does have one of the great Bond villain lairs, an island northeast of Phuket now known as James Bond Island.

As it turned out, *The Man With The Golden Gun* proved to be Harry Saltzman's final Bond film. He had borrowed heavily to finance the takeover of Technicolor in 1969 but the boardroom battles that followed saw him ousted. Eventually Saltzman defaulted on interest repayments and sold his 50 percent stake in Danjaq to United Artists.

The Spy Who Loved Me (1977)

Three years after *The Man With The Golden Gun* and the first with Cubby Broccoli as sole producer, *The Spy Who Loved Me* is the film in which Roger

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Moore found his feet as Bond; perhaps the reason he cites it as his favourite Bond.

Early drafts of the script were worked on by a number of writers, but in the end Richard Maibaum and Christopher Wood received writing credits. The latter was brought in by director Lewis Gilbert in order to move the character away from Sean Connery's portrayal of 007 and in a new direction and while the story is certainly over the top, gone is much of the silliness of the two previous films.

Originally the film would once again see Bond pitted against Ernst Stavro Blofeld and SPECTRE, but faced with legal action by Kevin McClory over the use of SPECTRE and inevitable delays that would result, Broccoli decided to write SPECTRE out of the script.

The film is the second by Lewis Gilbert as director and remarkably similar to *You Only Live Twice* in several respects. Rather than hijack spacecraft in orbit the villain captures submarines mid-ocean in a supertanker with a bow that opens in exactly the same way as Blofeld's spaceship in *You Only Live Twice*.

The film has what have become classic moments from the Bond films. There is the sickening leap into the abyss after the pre-titles ski chase, ending with a Union Jack parachute; there is Jaws; and of course there is the submersible Lotus Esprit.

While many Bond fans would not want this style of gadget to return to the series they do recognise them as being as iconic to the Roger Moore era as the DB5 and vodka martini were to Sean Connery.

Moonraker (1979)

After the success of *The Spy Who Loved Me*, the next James Bond film planned *For Your Eyes Only*.

However, after the huge success of *Star Wars* in 1977 Broccoli decided to ride the science fiction boom that followed and put 007 into space. Continuing with unrealistic gadgets, in Venice Bond is equipped with a gondola that turns into a hovercraft.

Moonraker was the one Ian Fleming title that suggested space, although it has little to do with Ian Fleming's book. Instead of Hugo Drax designing and building an independent nuclear capable ICBM for Britain, he finances a fleet of space shuttles out of his own pocket.

The film is again directed by Lewis Gilbert who essentially remakes his previous film. Whereas the previous film sees the villain planning to wipe out humanity



by starting a nuclear conflict, Drax plans on doing the same with nerve gas; he would eventually repopulate the planet with his crew of genetically perfect humans.

Today the film is widely thought of as one of the worst by Bond fans.

For Your Eyes Only (1981)

After the excesses of *Moonraker* 007 was brought back to earth with a film that revisits the Cold War and successfully combines two of Ian Fleming's short stories (the title story and *Risico*).

John Glen's directorial debut tones down the gadgets and instead relies more on action sequences and includes the scene from the novel *Live And Let Die* in which Bond and the girl are towed by a boat over razor-sharp coral, which had not been used in the film of the same name.

After the threat of a lawsuit prior to *The Spy Who Loved Me*, the pre-title sequence features an unnamed character, clearly intended to remind the audience of Blofeld, who is unceremoniously dumped down a chimney; the message is clearly aimed at McClory.

Despite having scenes with real tension in *For Your Eyes Only* the sight of Lynn-Holly Johnson lusting after the 53 year old Roger Moore can be hard to stomach. However there is a memorable car chase in which Bond drives a Citroen 2CV, slightly spoilt by moments of comedy and the scenes set in Spain seem displaced as they feature Mexican mariachi music.

Other memorable moments include the assault on the Monastery in Greece and the moment Bond flips Locke over the side of the cliff in his car. Moore didn't want to do that scene as he wanted to portray Bond as a reluctant killer, but here was Bond back with the same kind of ruthlessness that shot Professor Dent all those years previously in *Dr No*.

Octopussy (1983)

After several years of legal wrangling, in 1983 *Octopussy* was in the unusual position of having a rival James Bond film to contend with.

Taking the title of a short story by Ian Fleming the story takes elements of *The Property of a Lady*, while the game of backgammon in which Bond exposes Kamal Khan as a cheat is clearly inspired by Bond's card game against Sir Hugo Drax in *Moonraker*.



Little else of Fleming is retained in the film, although the back-story of the title character's father, completely thrown away in the film, is based on Fleming's story.

Some of the Indian locations are memorable, but comedy sneaks in far too often, such as when Bond delivers a Tarzan yell or ordering a tiger to "sit!". And James Bond really should have been spared the indignity of a gorilla costume or dressing as a clown.

A View To A Kill (1985)

Roger Moore's swansong is one of the more forgettable of the series, with the actor too old to be credible as either action hero or eyebrow raising seducer.

The film's title comes from the short story *From A View To A Kill*, although for some reason it was felt necessary to shorten it. The only tenuous connection the film has with Ian Fleming's original though is Paris, with neither characters nor plot being used in any form.

Instead the story is contemporary, with villain Max Zorin planning to destroy Silicon Valley in order to monopolise the production of microchips. While 007 is at least spared dressing as a clown, there is just too much wrong with the film; the car stunts in Paris are pure slapstick and Bond's escape on a fire engine in San Francisco seems tired.

All in all, it was definitely time to bring in a younger actor and rethink the direction of the series.

Some years before, during the *For Your Eyes Only* shoot, Cubby Broccoli had been impressed by a young actor married to Cassandra Harris (Countess Lisl von Shlaf), whom he visited on set. Pierce Brosnan went on to star in the TV series *Remington Steele* and when it was cancelled in 1987 Broccoli offered him the role of James Bond.

Unfortunately for Brosnan it was not to be, for the time being, at least; the publicity surrounding the offer revived interest in the TV series and the producers renewed it, forcing Brosnan to turn down James Bond.

The Living Daylights (1987)

The next actor to land the role of 007 was Timothy Dalton, who had first been offered the role for *On Her Majesty's Secret Service*.



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A much more serious actor than Roger Moore, Dalton had performed on stage with the Royal Shakespeare Company in the early 1970s and, as a fan of Ian Fleming, reread the original books to prepare for the role.

Although for many it was a change too far, *The Living Daylights* was still something of a missed opportunity, although Michael G Wilson has since said he wanted to reboot Bond at the time. Despite doing away with the juvenile humour the over the top gadgets were still there and all 007 often needed to do to get out of trouble was flip a switch; Wilson finally got his wish to reboot the series 20 years later with *Casino Royale*.

The film uses the Fleming story from which it takes its title, although it is stripped right to its core and lacks the drama of the original short. And because this was the era in which AIDS first came to prominence, with doomsayers predicating the end of humanity, the producers decided that Bond wouldn't sleep with any women in the film; and it is only suggested towards the end.

Post 9/11 it seems out of place for James Bond to help the Mujahedeen, but it was made in a time when the West saw them as the good guys fighting the Soviet invaders.

There are some good action scenes, particularly the fight on the cargo plane, and the film marks a welcome return towards taking themselves more seriously again.

Licence To Kill (1989)

Although not everyone was convinced by Dalton's take on James Bond, his first film beat Roger Moore's last two Bond films in box office takings.

His second Bond film though, *Licence To Kill*, was not so successful and saw a considerable drop in box office revenue; in fact, when adjusted for inflation it is the least successful Bond film of all.

Although it is the first Bond film not to use a Fleming title, *Licence To Kill* was once again partly based on Ian Fleming; part of the story, including Felix Leiter being fed to the sharks, is taken from *Live And let Die*. The film sees Bond go rogue after being suspended from MI6, a plot device overused in the recent films, and was more violent than any previous entry in the series.

Although in international markets the film performed relatively well, the film saw a big drop in the vital US market, often attributed to a couple of factors.

These include a last minute title change from *Licence Revoked* after test screenings revealed that US audiences associated the phrase with a suspended



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driving licence, but also the stiff competition from films such as *Lethal Weapon 2*, *Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade* and *Batman*.

Although it does have its fans many movie goers failed to connect with its grittier realism; perhaps in retrospect it was the right idea at the wrong time as the Daniel Craig era has been praised for exactly that.

Whatever the reasons for it not performing well at the box office, legal wrangling meant that there would be a six year hiatus until the next Bond film hit the big screen. When the dust had settled Dalton decided not to return for a third film.

Goldeneye (1995)

Pierce Brosnan was finally announced as 007 in June 1994 after *Remington Steele* had derailed him the first time and he became a massively popular choice over his four films.

Goldeneye not only introduced a new James Bond, but was the first film of the series to be released after the fall of the Berlin Wall and many wondered if James Bond was still in a post-Cold War world.

Apart from a new 007, the series brought in a female M for the first time in the series, played by Judi Dench, while Samantha Bond was brought in as the new Miss Moneypenny; and the real life MI6 headquarters at Vauxhall Cross was used for the first time.

Not everything changed though and so Desmond Llewelyn appeared again as gadget-meister Q.

Stylistically, Brosnan's Bond was much lighter than Dalton's and his films saw a return to some of the humour of the Moore era, such as when Bond is racing Xenia Onatop on the winding roads above Monte Carlo and a line of cyclists topple like dominoes.

This is also the first Bond film that was an all-out action movie, a long way from the series' earliest films, but was a massive success and proved that whether or James Bond was a "sexist, misogynist dinosaur" and a "relic of the Cold War", he could still draw audiences.

Worldwide *Goldeneye* took more than double the box office of *Licence To Kill*, with takings in the US more than three times that of its predecessor, thus ensuring the continuity of James Bond, Cold War or not.



Tomorrow Never Dies(1997)

Pierce Brosnan's second Bond film starts out well but suffers from a largely bland villain, Elliot Carver, although he was modelled on larger than life media mogul Robert Maxwell.

The story is inventive enough and brings 007 right up to date, something done frequently in the series, but somehow just isn't sufficiently Bondian. News broadcasters creating the news just doesn't compare well against nuclear blackmail or a simple Cold War thriller, despite Carver's aim of provoking a war between China and the UK and the eventual aim of getting exclusive broadcast rights in China.

This is also the first attempt at featuring a female counterpart of Bond who is his equal in the shape of Michelle Yeoh as Wai Lin, an idea too politically correct for its own good. While all the best Bond Girls are strong, capable characters, this Chinese spy tries to outdo 007 in every respect.

Brosnan does well enough in the role, although mostly can't get the hang of the one-liners. In the end it is Samantha Bond Miss Money Penny who has the best line of the film (and probably the dirtiest of the entire series). In bed with his Danish tutor, Bond is summoned back to London. "You always were a cunning linguist", says Money Penny as she finishes the call.

While Elliot Carver makes for a pretty uninteresting villain, there are some good characters. Terry Hatcher appears as his wife, Paris, eventually becoming the sacrificial lamb. A previous girlfriend of Bond, Paris Carver provides a glimpse into Bond's past and, for him, some soul searching.

At one point Bond is sitting in his hotel room drinking vodka, ruminating on meeting Paris for the first time since leaving her several years before. This is one of Pierce Brosnan's best scenes as 007 and seems inspired by Ian Fleming's sometimes brooding character.

Dr Kaufman also had potential but his true menace is somewhat diminished when he is turned into a comedy act, berating henchman Stamper when he deafens Kaufman in a hail of static to let him know he is unable to get into Bond's car, and later pleading for his life as Bond turns the tables on him.

The film is also notable for being the first to feature music by David Arnold, who became the house composer until prior to *Skyfall*.

The World Is Not Enough (1999)

Pierce Brosnan's third 007 movie opens with what could have been the almost the perfect pre-title sequence but it goes on for much too long, underlining the



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less is more when it comes to pre-titles. Interestingly, the pre-title sequence was originally planned to end just after he escapes from the office in Bilbao, with the London scenes following the titles.

These scenes are spoilt by being too jokey, with the introduction of John Cleese as Q's assistant and not taking the action seriously enough; Bond straightening his tie underwater while in the Q-Boat for example.

The ski case doesn't quite work either. Although James Bond and snow go well together, there is no point in overcomplicating the sheer thrill of a high speed ski chase shot well; that also applies to car chases.

The film is the first to be written by the much-maligned Neal Purvis and Robert Wade (Bruce Feirstein also received a credit) and is notable for using some elements of Ian Fleming's books, however small; Valentin Zukovsky's gun stick is borrowed directly from *Casino Royale*, for example.

The World Is Not Enough also appears to borrow from *Colonel Sun* (written by Kingsley Amis under the pseudonym Robert Markham), which also features M being captured and held by the villain, although no acknowledgement of this is made. It seems unlikely that Eon could have been unaware of this similarity.

Some other problems include Christmas Jones, played by Denise Richards; she isn't credible as nuclear physicist and her name seems to have been chosen only for Pierce Brosnan to utter a joke at the end of the film; as they watch the fireworks over Istanbul heralding the New Year (and New Millennium), Bond quips, "I thought Christmas only came once a year".

Renard would have made a pretty decent villain except for one thing. While it is plausible he cannot feel pain (which is what we are told), that doesn't mean he would be immune to injury, which is what he later demonstrates to be his superpower. In doing so a potentially memorable villain is rendered to the scrap heap of what could have been.

Die Another Day (2002)

Die Another Day is one of the films held in least regard by Bond fans, which is curious since it is partly based on *Moonraker*, the film version of which is also reviled.

More than anything though it is an uneven film, with the first half being reasonable enough (except for the pre-title sequence, which once again is far too long); the point in which the film declines is when 007 is briefed by Q and the invisible Aston Martin introduced; "Aston Martin call it the Vanquish. We call it the Vanish".

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The film coincided with the fortieth anniversary of *Dr No* and so it was decided to include a number of nods to previous films. While this may have seemed like a good idea, rather than take a subtle approach most were glaringly obvious. Perhaps the best was the inclusion of the book *A Field Guide to Birds of the West Indies* by the ornithologist James Bond while Bond is in Cuba.

Part of the problem with the plot is that the audience is asked to believe that the villain, North Korean Colonel Tan-Sun Moon, could radically alters his appearance through gene therapy to become the western-looking Gustav Graves; it just isn't believable. And what is it about borrowing from Colonel Sun without acknowledgement again?

The film again introduces another Bond Girl with pretensions as would be equal of 007 in the shape of Jinx Johnson and their dialogue when they meet on the beach in Havana is some of the most squirm-inducing in the entire series.

The film also introduces a treacherous MI6 agent, Miranda Frost (originally to be called Gala Brand, the heroine of *Moonraker*), and starts a sequence of Bond films in which the MI6 agent goes rogue.

Pierce Brosnan was massively popular as 007 and widely expected to appear in a fifth Bond film and Barbara Broccoli says as much in a documentary included with the *Die Another Day* DVD. However, while negotiating his fee for the next film Brosnan suddenly stopped receiving calls from Eon.

After *Die Another Die*, and perhaps because they now had the rights to *Casino Royale*, they decided to take the series in a new direction, one that required a new actor in the role. Despite his popularity as 007, Pierce Brosnan once again had the role of James Bond snatched from under his feet.



Casino Royale (2006)

Given that Brosnan was long the pretender to James Bond it is perhaps somewhat brutal that Eon disposed of him after just four films and for many the move was unthinkable, particularly when it was announced that blond haired Daniel Craig would take over the role.

Craig's introduction in October 2005 was greeted with outright hostility by some fans and when filming started in the following January the British tabloids had a field day with stories designed to undermine the actor, including that he'd had a tooth knocked out while filming and that he couldn't drive the Aston Martin DB5 as he could only drive automatics.

While Cubby Broccoli had rejected Wilson's idea to reboot the series in 1987 with *The Living Daylights*, that is exactly what he and Barbara Broccoli decided to do with *Casino Royale*; and by bringing back the grittiness first seen in Timothy Dalton's films it underlined that the back to basics approach could work as long as the timing was right.

After the huge anti-Craig campaign it must have been gratifying for all involved for the film not only to be a commercial success, but also hailed as a critical success; this was completely unexpected.

Make no mistake, moving away from the tired old formula was a brave move and one that alienated some fans. However, it revitalised the series and gave it the shot in the arm that it had needed since Roger Moore was still Bond and which neither Timothy Dalton nor Pierce Brosnan's films had managed.

Casino Royale was the Bond film many of the older fans had been waiting for decades. Returning to the first Ian Fleming novel as its basis and then enlarging the plot to allow much more action, it was the best Bond film for years and clear that James Bond could continue to remain popular for twenty-first century audiences.

While Daniel Craig had not been an obvious choice and was unpopular with some, his portrayal of James Bond proved to be exactly what was needed.

Quantum of Solace (2008)

After *Casino Royale* there was huge excitement that the follow up would be so soon after. Initially planned for release in May 2008 with Roger Michell announced as director, the release was soon pushed back to late 2008 when Michell pulled out as the project lacked a script.

Purvis and Wade returned to work on the screenplay with Paul Haggis, who had successfully polished the *Casino Royale* script, brought back to complete the



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final draft. However, this was rushed because of the planned writers strike with the result that Daniel Craig and director Marc Forster continued working on the script during filming.

As well as being the first direct sequel in the entire James Bond series, *Quantum of Solace* is also the shortest Bond film, coming in at 106 minutes, and stylistically very different.

On the whole fans were disappointed by the new film after the success of *Casino Royale*, and sequences like the car chase in the pre-title sequence were rendered less successful than might have been expected because of extremely fast cuts and shaky camera work. This technique had been used in the Jason Bourne films and designed to add a sense of urgency to the action, but was widely criticised for use in a James Bond film.

Despite not being as well received as its predecessor, *Quantum of Solace* still did well at the box office and underlined Craig's popularity as James Bond and David Arnold provides the film with an excellent score.

Skyfall (2012)

After *Quantum of Solace* audiences would be forced to wait four years until the next James Bond film. At the end of 2010 MGM entered into bankruptcy after running into financial problems and was subsequently taken over by the studio's creators, seeing work on the next Bond film suspended for the better part of a year.

This was the largest gap between films without a change in actor, but when *Skyfall* was released it was to phenomenal success. *Skyfall* marked the fiftieth anniversary of cinematic James Bond and perhaps because of that it became the biggest ever Bond film, the first to gross more than \$1 billion at the box office.

Directed by Sam Mendes, much of *Skyfall* was shot in the UK, and a large part of the film is set in London and Scotland. However, it does get bogged down in the second act in the scenes in which M is questioned during a parliamentary inquest and while that may present a more realistic picture of what life at MI6 can be like for the top brass, it hardly makes for riveting viewing; and gone is David Arnold, with Sam Mendes using his usual composer Thomas Newman to provide the score.

The London setting may have been done for budgetary reasons, but while London is an essential location to James Bond it should never be the main one. Ian Fleming made a similar mistake when he wrote *Moonraker*, which largely



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took place in London and Kent and led a number of readers to complain to Fleming.

The good news is that the film picks up again as soon as James Bond turns on the engine of his Aston Martin DB5 and the success of *Skyfall* ensured that the producers went out of their way to entice Sam Mendes back for the next film.

SPECTRE (2015)

With Eon gaining the rights to use SPECTRE and Blofeld after reaching an agreement with the heirs of Kevin McClory in 2014, they not only decided to use the villainous organisation in the 25th film in the series but name the film after it.

Although Blofeld is expected to return, he is unlikely to be the camp version portrayed in the earlier films and whether he has a white cat is anyone's guess at the moment. Watch this space for the new film when it hits our screens in November.