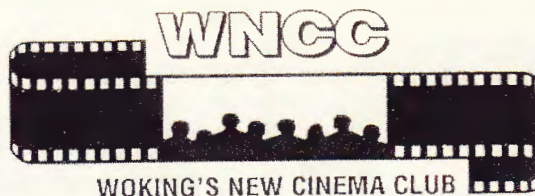


The Main Feature



Season 31 - Issue Number 3

The Hurt Locker

USA

131 minutes

Cert 15

UK release date 28 August 2009

Director	Kathryn Bigelow
Writer	Mark Boal
Director of Photography	Barry Ackroyd
Sound designer	Paul Ottoson
Editing	Chris Innis and Bob Murawski

Cast	
Jeremy Renner	William James
Anthony Mackie	JT Seaborn
Brian Geraghty	Owen Eldridge
Guy Pearce	Matt Thompson
Ralph Finnes	Contractor Team Leader
David Morse	Colonel Reed
Christian Camargo	Lt Col John Cambridge

In case you were worrying, this isn't another "Iraq war movie" with a political message, it's an action movie that just happens to be set in Iraq.

Director Bigelow gave the following explanation for the title in an interview:

"I came to know about it from my writer-producer friend Mark Boal. According to him, "hurt locker" is military slang that means "a bad and painful place." Army's elite Explosive Ordnance Disposal soldiers use it as a form of poetic understatement: If an improvised explosive device (IED) goes off while you're trying to disarm it, the 'hurt locker' is likely to mean a white box draped in a flag and shipped home with full military honours. That's how I decided to name my film *The Hurt Locker*. "

"*The Hurt Locker* is a traditional war movie that takes place in a combat situation and puts the audience in the soldiers' shoes," says Mark Boal, who wrote the script.

He should know: in 2004, he cut his way through a forest of red tape to be accepted as an embedded journalist with the EOD – the crack bomb disposal unit – in Baghdad, where he spent two weeks. "It was eye-opening to see the tidal wave of bombs erupting all over the city and the everyday courage and professionalism of the people trying to deal with it," Boal, says with dry understatement.

"The EODs had become the central tactic of the insurgency and were thrust into a role that they had never played before in any other war. It was an incredibly lethal, unpredictable environment, between the bombs and the gunfire. Not to mention the kidnappings and executions. Journalists were a high-





value target for propaganda reasons, like Danny Pearl [murdered in Pakistan in 2002, as dramatised in Michael Winterbottom's *A Mighty Heart*] and Michael Kelly [killed in Iraq in 2003]. It was difficult to quantify the threat when you don't speak the language and the enemy is not wearing a uniform or engaging in traditional warfare but using hit-and-run ambush tactics. I tried to capture all this in *The Hurt Locker*."

Bigelow stated "my intention as a filmmaker — (was) to

parachute the audience into the day in the life of a bomb tech in Baghdad circa 2004."

Asked about the filming process, she was asked about how much CGI (computer generated images) was in the film "None to speak of. Maybe a crew reflected in a visor was about it."

For the main characters, Bigelow made a point of casting relatively unknown actors because "it underscored the tension because with the lack of familiarity also comes a sense of unpredictability".

Producer Greg Shapiro spoke about security concerns of filming in Jordan, "It was interesting telling people we were going to make the movie in Jordan because the first question everybody asked was about the security situation here." The film's security advisors told Bigelow that they could not film in Iraq as the crews safety could not guaranteed, especially from snipers. Some of the final locations chosen were 3 miles from the Iraqi border in Jordan.

Principal photography began in July 2007 in Jordan and Kuwait where temperatures averaged 120 degrees and lasted 44 days.

"You can't fake that amount of heat" Anthony Mackie said, adding, "When you are on set and all of the extras are Iraqi refugees, it really informs the movie that you're making. When you start hearing the stories from a true perspective ... of people who were actually there, it gives you a clear viewpoint of where you are as an artist and the story you would like to tell. It was a great experience to be there."



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Producer Tony Mark recalled some of the lengths taken by those involved in the film:

- a) armory expert David Fencl's finishing a 12-hour day and staying up all night to create proper ammunition for a sniper rifle when the supplies did not clear Jordanian customs in time for the scheduled shoot;
- b) Due to import restrictions on military props, the film's special effects artist Richard Stutsman used Chinese fireworks for gunpowder. One day, he was assembling a prop and the heat and friction caused the fireworks to blow up in his face. Two days later, he returned to work.
- c) The film shoot had few of the normal Hollywood perks; nobody on the set got an air-conditioned trailer or a private bathroom.

Often four or more camera crews filmed simultaneously, which resulted in nearly 200 hours of footage. In staging the film's action sequences, Bigelow did not want to lose a sense of geography and used multiple cameras to allow her to "look at any particular set piece from every possible perspective."

The *Hurt Locker* had its world premiere at the Venice Film Festival on September 4, 2008, and the film received a 10-minute standing ovation at the end of its screening. The festival gave it four awards and it has gone on to receive a further 69 awards, including 6 at the 2009 Oscars – Best Picture, Best



Director, Best Original Screenplay, Best Sound Editing, Best Sound Mixing, and Best Film Editing.

Bigelow became the first female to win the Best Director Oscar award. She was only the fourth woman to be nominated for that award - the previous female nominees were Sofia Coppola for *Lost in Translation* in 2003, Jane Campion for *The Piano* in 1993, and Lina Wertmüller for *Seven Beauties* in 1975.

She dedicated the Oscar to the people of Jordan and to the "women and men in the military who risk their lives on a daily basis – may they come home safe".

Bigelow herself is often reluctant to be referred to as a female director, making no reference to her gender in her Oscars acceptance speech. After the ceremony she said: "I'd love to just think of myself as a film-maker, and I long for the day when a modifier can be a moot point. But I'm ever grateful if I can inspire some young, intrepid, tenacious male or female film-maker and have them feel that the impossible is possible and never give up on your dream."

In the build up to the Oscars the media tried to build up a rivalry between Bigelow and her ex-husband James Cameron, who directed *Avatar*, which had received nine nominations.

It was the subject of jokes from the hosts of the ceremony, Steve Martin and Alec Baldwin: "She was so pleased to be nominated with him she sent him a beautiful gift basket – with a timer," Baldwin said.

In interviews after the ceremony, Bigelow resisted reporters' attempts to encourage her to gloat about her victory. "I think he is an extraordinary film-maker," she said. In the end *Avatar* was awarded 3 Oscars, for technical awards but did go on to be the highest ever grossing movie.

I have not seen either film, but I'm **really** looking forward to tonight's film.



Iain McGlashan

Reactions to

Le Premier Jour de reste de ta vie – 23rd September 2010

Score	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Votes	~	~	~	~	~	1	2	10	21	1	~

Total received - 35 Average Score – 7.54

Your Comments

Good characters, well acted and well produced

Excellent choice – very moving: thank you

Really enjoyable

Families – who'd have them?

Very unusual film – enjoyed it

A very enjoyable film

Such a life – amusing, annoying, poignant – a lovely film

A most enjoyable film, beautifully acted – a real "family" film

Blood is thicker than water

Different and very enjoyable

Totally engrossing – congratulations to our reserve projectionist

Most enjoyable – subtitles were refreshingly easy to read, with enough time to do so (once they were on screen!)

Enjoyed it more than any Monty Python film!

Film	Average Score	Position
An Education	7.83	1 st
Le Premier Jour de reste de ta vie	7.54	2 nd

Our next presentation on Thursday 28 October at 8pm:



Presented to mark One World Week, Ushpizin (Cert PG) is set among the ultra-Orthodox Jews of Israel,

The film uses light comedy to unpick the workings and traditions of a culture often hidden from view.

It was the first film made by members of that community in collaboration with secular filmmakers and provides a touching and unique look at their daily lives as they question and explore their faith.

Repropoint

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