



## ROOTS, RITUALS AND PHANTASMAGORIA

# The Hunger

### The Hunger

Director: Tony Scott

Production Companies:

Richard Shepherd Company,  
MGM/UA Entertainment

Producer: Richard A. Shepherd

Production Manager (New York): Alex Ho

Production Supervisor: Terry Clegg

Production Co-ordinator: Loretta Ordewer

Production Co-ordinator (New York):

Ingrid Johanson

Location Manager: Gerry Levy

Location Manager (New York): Peter Pastorelli

Assistant Directors: David Tringham,

Michael Stevenson, Debbie Vertue

Assistant Directors (New York): William Hassell,

William Eustace, Roger Pugliese

Screenplay: Ivan Davis, Michael Thomas

Based on the novel by: Whitley Strieber

Director of Photography: Stephen Goldblatt

Director of Photography (New York):

Tom Mangravite

Additional Photography: Hugh Johnson

Camera Operators: Bob Smith, John Palmer

Camera Operator (New York): Michael Stone

Special Effects: Graham Longhurst

Monkey Effects: David Allen, Roger Dicken

Additional Electronic Music/Effects: David Lawson

Editor: Pamela Power

Production Designer: Brian Morris

Art Director: Clinton Cavers

Art Director (New York): Vicky Paul

Set Decorator: Ann Mollo

Set Decorator (New York): Janet Rosenbloom

Scenic Artist (New York): Beverly Miller

Costume Designer: Milena Canonero

New York Costumer (Men): Al Crane

New York Costumer (Women): Beverly Cycon

Wardrobe Supervisor: Brenda Dabbs

Wardrobe Master: Kenny Crouch

Make-up Supervisors: Jane Royle, Ann Brodie

Make-up (New York): Paul Gobel

Special Make-up: Anthony Clavet

Make-up Illusions: Dick Smith, Carl Fullerton

Opticals: Peerless Camera Company

Music: Michael Rubini, Denny Jaeger

Music Arranged and Supervised by: Howard Blake

Sound Recording (New York): Dan Neroda

Sound Mixer: Clive Winter

Sound Mixer (New York): John Bolz

Sound Re-recording: Bill Rowe, Ray Merrin

Sound Editor: Peter Pennell

Sound Effects Editor: Campbell Askew

Special Assistant (Los Angeles): Angelo Pacifici

Studio: Shepperton Studios

Cast:

Catherine Deneuve (Miriam Blaylock)

David Bowie (John Blaylock)

Susan Sarandon (Sarah Roberts)

Cliff De Young (Tom Haver)

Beth Ehlers (Alice Cavender)

Dan Hedaya (Lieutenant Allegranza)

Rufus Collins (Charlie Humphries)

Suzanne Bertish (Phyllis)

James Aubrey (Ron)

Ann Magnuson (young woman from disco)

John Stephen Hill (young man from disco)

Shane Rimmer (Jelinek)

Bauhaus (disco group)

Douglas Lambert (TV host)

Bessie Love (Lillybelle)

John Pankow (phone booth youth 1)

Willem Dafoe (phone booth youth 2)

*The Hunger* helped challenge my perception of what dark fantasy could be. It didn't have to be epic in scale, but by employing a quieter register and mood it was possible to weave an entrancing story. It's a film that oozes gothic style thanks to its incredible cinematography and production design. If you didn't already know, it stars David Bowie as an aged vampire whose no less voluptuous lover, played by Catherine Deneuve, is drawn to Susan Sarandon's gerontologist.

Daniel Kokotajlo

Often lambasted as an exercise in style over content, Tony Scott's take on the vampire genre is indeed a little showy, though given Scott's background in TV commercials it's perhaps not surprising. Pop-video clichés from the 1980s abound: doves fluttering among drapery, Bauhaus singing 'Bela Lugosi's Dead' in a goth club, soft-core lesbian scenes and even a rollerblader grooving to Iggy Pop amid dry ice. But despite this *The Hunger* has dated surprisingly well. Catherine Deneuve is convincing as a centuries-old vampire in modern New York, and David Bowie turns in an unusually understated performance as her doomed lover. The influence of Nic Roeg is in evidence here, in particular that of Roeg and Donald Cammell's *Performance* and the Bowie vehicle *The Man Who Fell to Earth*.

Ronnie Hackston, *Sight and Sound*, December 2004

As Ridley Scott was preparing *Blade Runner*, a script came to his agent for a film called *The Hunger*. Ridley's agent is also Tony's, and as the one Scott was busy the project was suggested for his brother, who had been working on a screenplay called *My Dog's on Fire* by David Peoples ('very strange, set in the year 3000, basically about gangs of kids called Mousepacks patrolling the streets of New York'). Tony Scott, who in partnership with Ridley has been making commercials ever since he emerged from the Royal College of Art, created two films for the BFI Production Board but has otherwise found his career thwarted by the collapse of two major productions, cancelled at the last minute – one for Paramount, the other for Filmways. He met Dick Shepherd, head of production at MGM in the era of *The Goodbye Girl*, *Fame* and *Clash of the Titans*, by the time-honoured process of sitting next to him in a plane, and when Shepherd saw a reel of his commercials ('What really got to me was the Hovis and the Lee Cooper jeans') there was no problem with *The Hunger*, which turned out to be a Shepherd project.

As it happens, *The Hunger* is a film about accelerated ageing and the hunt for eternal life. Based on a novel by Whitley Streiber (who wrote *Wolfen*), it stars Catherine Deneuve as an immortal being masquerading as human, who drifts through the centuries in parasitical symbiosis with a succession of lovers. Her current partner, played by David Bowie, discovers that he has reached the limit of the extended youthfulness his mistress has been able to confer upon him, and begins to decline rapidly into senility. They find in New York a specialist in gerontology (Susan Sarandon), who is researching the possible reversal of the ageing process, and she is drawn into the ménage with interestingly horrific results.

Sophie Ward (*girl in London house*)  
Philip Sayer (*boy in London house*)  
Lise Hilboldt (*waiting room nurse*)  
Michael Howe (*intern 1*)  
Edward Wiley (*intern 2*)  
Richard Robles (*skater*)  
George Camiller (*Eumenes*)  
Oke Wambu (*Egyptian slave*)  
Kent Miller, Fred Yockers, Susan Hunter,  
James Wassenich, Allan Richards, Hilary Six,  
Carole-Ann Scott (*cadavers*)  
USA 1983  
97 mins  
Digital

## ROOTS, RITUALS AND PHANTASMAGORIA

### The Shout + Lonely Water (aka The Spirit of Dark and Lonely Water)

Wed 18 Sep 18:10 + Q&A with filmmakers Daniel Kokotajlo and Mark Jenkin; Sat 21 Sep 15:00; Wed 2 Oct 20:50

### The Hunger

Thu 19 Sep 20:35; Sun 6 Oct 18:10

### Little Otiik Otesánek

Sat 21 Sep 17:45

### Don't Look Now

Thu 26 Sep 20:50; Sun 29 Sep 18:10

### Eraserhead

Tue 1 Oct 21:00; Mon 7 Oct 18:10

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Scott admits cheerfully that the death-in-life theme has always fascinated him. Both his BFI films, *One of the Missing* and *Loving Memory*, poised their central characters on the edge of death, and for *The Hunger* the shells of unburied corpses preserved in an eerie semi-death at the Mexican town of Guanajuato (and in attendance at the credits of Herzog's *Nosferatu*) were a particular inspiration. Echoing *Blade Runner*, *The Hunger* includes references to progeria, an appalling disease whose ten-year-old victims have the physical characteristics of people in their seventies, and to the centres which already exist for life-prolongation. 'We place the Susan Sarandon character in a "sleep clinic" modelled on those places in California where they believe that through sleep pattern and diet you can stretch your life by 15 to 20 years. There's one in Austria, where they actually recycle your blood.'

There could be other cross-references between the two Scott films by the time *The Hunger* is finished. Both productions have their allusions to ancient Egypt, both indulge in symbolism by means of a white dove (and with equal risk), and both have been shot through the gentle haze of smoke that seems to be a Scott trademark and which guarantees stunning quality of camerawork. Both films are themselves replicants of a kind, shot-for-shot simulacra of the detailed storyboards which the Scotts, each a brilliant designer, prepare in advance, drawing out their films on paper like miniature *Heavy Metal* comic strips. Above all, both films rely on a wholly modern artifice, the often invisible application of special effects to impersonate reality. For *The Hunger*, the puppetmaster is Dick Smith, who in 35 years has altered states for everyone from Dan Curtis to Ken Russell and for everything from *The Cardinal* to *The Exorcist*. Linda Blair's revolving head, Marlon Brando's jowls in *The Godfather*, De Niro's bloodbath at the end of *Taxi Driver*, Katharine Ross' 'double' in *Stepford Wives*, Smith has faked them all. Turning David Bowie into a 200-year-old for *The Hunger* has been no more daunting than making veins burst from the faces of the contestants in *Scanners*.

'The quantum leap,' says Smith, 'has been in the last dozen years. Now everybody wants make-up illusions, and the technical and chemical developments have come up with the materials for us to do the job. We discovered, for example, that the cleaning fluid trichloroethane causes foam latex to swell, and so we could raise words on Linda Blair's skin in *The Exorcist* or make an actor's face burst open from snake venom in *Death Bite*. It's no problem for us to make any kinds of limbs and do anything to them. We can make entire people if need be. Make them wholesale.'

Philip Strick, *Sight and Sound*, Summer 1982