



Tom Cruise

Valkyrie

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Directed by: Bryan Singer

©: United Artists Production Finance LLC

Production Company: Bad Hat Harry Productions

Co-production: Achte Babelsberg Film GmbH

Presented by: Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, United Artists

Production services in Germany provided by:

Studio Babelsberg Motion Pictures

Supported by: DFFF - Deutscher Filmförderfonds

Executive Producers: Chris Lee, Ken Kamins, Daniel M. Snyder, Dwight C. Schar, Mark Shapiro, John Ottman

Produced by: Bryan Singer,

Christopher McQuarrie, Gilbert Adler

Co-producers: Nathan Alexander,

Henning Molfenter, Carl Woebcken,

Christoph Fisser, Jeffrey Wetzell

Line Producers: Chris Brock, Oliver Lüer

Line Producer (Additional Photography - US):

Robert F. Phillips

Executive in Charge of Production (Additional

Photography - US): Steven Harding

Unit Production Manager: Chris Brock

Production Manager (2nd Unit): Gerry Toomey

Production Supervisor (Additional Photography -

US): Jennifer Campbell

Production Co-ordinators: Judy Britten,

Tine Hoefke

Production Controller: Gavin Behrman

Location Manager: Klaus Große Darrelma

Post-production Supervisor: Isabel Henderson

2nd Unit Director: Eric Schwab

1st Assistant Directors: Jeffrey Wetzell, Lee Cleary

2nd Assistant Directors: Peter Soldo,

David K. Arnold

Script Supervisor: Gabriella Gobber

Casting by: Roger Mussenden

Written by: Christopher McQuarrie,

Nathan Alexander

Director of Photography: Newton Thomas Sigel

2nd Unit Director of Photography: Ross Emery

Aerial Unit Director of Photography: John Marzano

B Camera: P. Scott Sakamoto

Camera Operator (Additional Photography - US):

David Luckenbach, Paul Babin, Greg Schmidt

Steadicam Operator: P. Scott Sakamoto

Visual Effects Supervisor: Richard R. Hoover

Visual Effects Producer: Maricel Pagulayan

Special Visual Effects/Animation:

Sony Pictures Imageworks Inc.

Visual Effects by: Imageworks India,

Savage Visual Effects, Frantic Films,

Pacific Title & Art Studio

Previsualization by: The Third Floor

Special Effects Supervisor: Allen Hall

Edited by: John Ottman

Associate Editor: Dylan Firshein

Visual Effects Editor: Andrew Loschin

Production Designers: Lilly Kilvert, Patrick Lumb

Visual Consultant: Eric Schwab

Supervising Art Directors: John Warnke,

Keith Pain, Ralf Schreck

Supervising Art Director (Additional Photography -

US): Seth Reed

Art Director: Cornelia Ott

Set Decorator: Bernhard Henrich

Property Master: Dave Gulick

Construction Manager: Colin Fraser

Costume Designer: Joanna Johnston

Assistant Costume Designer: Jeremy Turner

Military Costume Supervisor: David Crossman

Costume Supervisor: Dulcie Scott

Make-up/Hair Designer: Sarah Monzani

In the film that marked the beginning of Cruise's collaborations with his recent *Mission: Impossible* writer-director Christopher McQuarrie, Cruise plays Claus von Stauffenberg, the German Colonel who led the near-successful attempt to assassinate Adolf Hitler. Initially restrained, Cruise's performance grows in intensity as the tension increases. He leads an all-star cast of British thespians and the result is a richly detailed, well-constructed and often unbearably suspenseful historical thriller.

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Before shooting had even been completed on director Bryan Singer's *Valkyrie* – an account of the failed attempt by Colonel Claus von Stauffenberg and members of the German resistance to assassinate Hitler – the film threatened to become overshadowed by the storm of controversy it had provoked in the German media. Much of the furore centred around the casting of Tom Cruise as Stauffenberg, with the actor's professing of scientology (categorised as a 'dangerous cult' by the German government) central to most concerns. A spokesman for the German Protestant church went so far as to say Cruise's involvement would 'have the same propaganda advantages for scientology as the 1936 Olympics had for the Nazis'. Stories circulated that filming had been hampered by restrictions, with permission to shoot at Berlin's Bendlerblock initially denied. A relative of Stauffenberg was quoted as saying, 'I fear that only terrible kitsch will come out of this project.'

'The press reaction did surprise me,' recalls Singer. 'But I could understand the hesitation: it would be like a German coming over here and making a film about Lincoln. The immediate reaction was "Here's the director of *X-Men* and *Superman*, and the star of *Mission: Impossible*, what kind of film will they make?" But once people saw our attention to historical accuracy, the controversy calmed, even if it still echoed in the press. It didn't have any practical impact on the production.'

Fears that the film would sensationalise the plot as a kind of *Mission: Impossible*-style exploit are wide of the mark, for, if anything, the film is at times an overly linear and sober depiction of the events that led up to the attempt. Aside from some compression of the chronology and the omission of some of the minor figures involved in the plot, the script by Nathan Alexander and Christopher McQuarrie is meticulous in its fidelity to the historical facts.

'I had meetings with members of the Stauffenberg family and with experts in the German resistance,' Singer explains. 'I had lunch with Hitler's bodyguard, who was also the communications man who reestablished contact between the Wolf's Lair (the Nazi base where the assassination attempt took place) and the propaganda ministry following the assassination attempt. As eerie as it was, we had first-hand conversations about that day.'

'Mostly the references I used weren't other films; I looked more to old newsreel and photography of the time. I was very keen that the film should look vibrant. So often films set during the Nazi-era are desaturated because filmmakers want to make it look like black-and-white images. I tried to make a film that looked like it would have to people at the time.'

Key Make-up/Hair Artist: Ailbhe Lemass
 Music by: John Ottman
 Conducted by: Pablo Heisenberg
 Sound Designer: Erik Aadahl
 Production Sound Mixer: Chris Munro
 Re-recording Mixers: Craig Henighan,
 Skip Lievsay, Michael Herbick
 Supervising Sound Editors: Craig Henighan,
 Erik Aadahl
 Sound Effects Field Recordists: John P. Fasal,
 Bob Kellough
 Effects Editors: Warren Hendricks, Wayne Lemmer
 Stunt Co-ordinator: Greg Powell
 Research: History at Work, Torsten J. Halsey
 Aerial Unit Co-ordinator: Mike Woodley
 Action Consultant (Additional Photography - US):
 Victor Armstrong
 Shot at: Babelsberg Studios
 Cast:
 Tom Cruise (*Colonel Claus von Stauffenberg*)
 Kenneth Branagh
 (*Major-General Henning von Tresckow*)
 Bill Nighy (*General Friedrich Olbricht*)
 Tom Wilkinson (*General Friedrich Fromm*)
 Carice van Houten (*Nina von Stauffenberg*)
 Thomas Kretschmann (*Major Otto Ernst Remer*)
 Terence Stamp (*General Ludwig Beck*)
 Eddie Izzard (*General Erich Fellgiebel*)
 Kevin R. McNally (*Dr Carl Goerdeler*)
 Jamie Parker (*Lieutenant Werner von Haefen*)
 Christian Berkel (*Colonel Mertz von Quirnheim*)
 David Bamber (*Adolf Hitler*)
 Tom Hollander (*Colonel Heinz Brandt*)
 David Schofield (*Erwin von Witzleben*)
 Kenneth Cranham (*Field Marshal Wilhelm Keitel*)
 Halina Reijn (*Margarethe von Oven*)
 Werner Daehn (*Major Ernst John von Freyend*)
 Harvey Friedman (*Dr Joseph Goebbels*)
 Matthias Schweighöfer (*Lieutenant Herber*)
 Waldemar Kobus
 (*Police Chief Wolf-Heinrich von Helldorf*)
 Florian Panzner (*Second Lieutenant Hagen*)
 Ian McNeice (*pompous general*)
 Danny Webb (*Captain Haans*)
 Chris Larkin (*Sergeant Helm*)
 Matthew Burton
 (*Lieutenant-General Adolf Heusinger*)
 Philipp von Schulthess (*Tresckow's aide*)
 Wotan Wilke Möhring (*Sergeant Kolbe*)
 Christian Oliver (*Sergeant-Major Adam*)
 Bernard Hill (*confidant general - desert*)
 Julian Morris (*young lieutenant - desert*)
 Helmut Stauss (*Dr Roland Freisler*)
 USA-Germany 2008©
 121 mins
 35mm

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The first half of the film is careful to explain the background influences that led
 Stauffenberg and the other members of the resistance to risk the assassination
 attempt. There was a strong class aspect to the resistance. Men like
 Stauffenberg were drawn from the aristocratic Prussian military class and
 viewed the Nazis as a bunch of thugs led by a lowly Austrian corporal.
 'Stauffenberg came from a 900-year-old family who had served kings,' says
 Singer. 'He had great pride in the longevity of Germany as a great nation.
 These people were not Nazis, they had never been party members.'

Stauffenberg was also a Catholic, something only touched on in the film. 'I
 wasn't making a biopic,' Singer clarifies. 'It was important for me that the film
 be a thriller about the assassination attempt. I left out anything that didn't help
 to get us to the assassination. His Catholicism was just one facet of his drive.'
 Was Singer worried that such a complex figure would be smothered by the star
 baggage Tom Cruise inevitably brings to any film? 'We made a conscious effort
 for Tom to give a contained performance, to embrace the reputation for calm,
 cool grace under pressure that Stauffenberg had. The action and the deed are
 so great that the performance should be as contained as possible.' Alongside
 Cruise is a who's who of heavyweight British talent: Kenneth Branagh, Terence
 Stamp, Tom Wilkinson and an unusually restrained Bill Nighy among them. 'I
 was looking for the best actors,' says Singer, 'and I have a history with British
 actors like Patrick Stewart and Ian McKellen.'

Early previews of the film have met with a mixed response from German critics,
 with many claiming that Cruise's performance fails to capture Stauffenberg's
 aristocratic bearing, but Singer has shown it to members of Stauffenberg's
 family, who expressed their approval. 'It went extremely well. People thought
 we were going to make some other kind of movie, but the story is so tense that
 we didn't need to change any of it.'

James Bell, *Sight and Sound*, February 2009