



Ridley Scott: Building Cinematic Worlds

Black Rain

Black Rain

Director: Ridley Scott

©: Pegasus Film Partners, Jaffe-Lansing

Productions, Michael Douglas, Paramount Pictures

Executive Producers: Craig Bolotin, Julie Kirkham

Producers: Stanley R. Jaffe, Sherry Lansing

Line Producer (Japan): Yosuke Mizuno

Associate Producer: Alan Poul

Production Associate: Mimi Polk

Unit Production Managers: Michael Tadross,

William Watkins, Mel Dellar, David Salven

Production Office Co-ordinators: Debbie Schwab,

Terry Ladin, Patt McCurdy

Location Managers: Ken Haber, Eric Klosterman,

Robert Doyle, Sheldon Shkolnik

Location Managers (Japan): Atsushi Takayama,

Kenichi Horii, Susumu Ejima, Kazuaki Enomoto

2nd Unit Director: Bobby Bass

Assistant Directors: Aldric La'auli Porter,

Benjamin Rosenberg, Jodi Ehrlich,

Bettiann Fishman, Bob Lewis, Eric Wall

Casting: Dianne Crittenden

Additional Casting: Melissa Skoff

Casting (Japan): Nobuaki Murooka

Screenplay: Craig Bolotin, Warren Lewis

Director of Photography: Jan De Bont

Additional Photography: Howard Atherton

Aerial Photographer: David Nowell

Camera Operators: Craig Haagensen,

Alexander Witt

Video Co-ordinator: Mary Ellen Brennan

Special Effects Supervisors: Stan Parks,

Kenneth Pepiot, Kevin Quibell

Editors: Tom Rolf, William Gordean

Additional Editor: Jacqueline Cambas

Production Designer: Norris Spencer

Art Directors: John Jay Moore, Herman Zimmerman

Art Director (Japan): Kazuo Takenaka

Set Designers: Alan S. Kaye, Robert Maddy,

James Bayliss

Set Decorators: John Alan Hicks, Leslie Bloom,

Richard C. Goddard, John M. Dwyer

Set Decorator (Japan): Kyoji Sasaki

Illustrator: Sherman Labby

Scenic Artist: Robert A. Woolfe

Art Department Technical Adviser:

Michael W. Hirabayashi

Costume Designers: Ellen Mirojnick,

Jennifer L. Parsons, Elaine Maser, Joseph L. Gruca

Wardrobe Supervisors: Melissa Stanton,

William A. Campbell

Wardrobe (Japan Supervisor): Kazuko Shimada

Make-up Artists: Richard Dean, Christina Smith,

Monty Westmore, Fred Blau, Neal Martz

Make-up (Prosthetics): Richard Alonzo,

Allan A. Apone, Kenneth David Walker, Mark Maitre,

Arnold Gargiulo

Make-up (Tattoo Artist): Michael Hancock

Main Title Design: Anthony Goldschmidt,

Cinema Research Corporation

Music: Hans Zimmer

Music Conductor/Orchestrations: Shirley Walker

Music Supervisor: Dick Rudolph

Supervising Music Editor: James Flamberg

Music Recording: Jay Rifkin

Sound Recording: Keith A. Wester, James J. Sabat

Sound Re-recording: Don Mitchell, Kevin O'Connell,

Greg P. Russell

Supervising Sound Editors: Milton C. Burrow,

William L. Manger

Additional Sound Effects: Stephen Dewey,

Musikwerks

Stunt Co-ordinator: Bobby Bass

After discovering the *Black Rain* screenplay by Craig Bolotin and Warren Lewis, Michael Douglas brought the project to producers Stanley R. Jaffe and Sherry Lansing, who had worked with him on the high-grossing *Fatal Attraction*.

'When Michael invited us to produce *Black Rain* with him, Sherry and I were thrilled,' Jaffe remembers.

Black Rain was filmed on locations in New York City, Osaka, Japan and environs, and at Paramount Studios in Los Angeles. The movie is the first American film to have been produced in Osaka, Japan's third-largest metropolis (after Tokyo and Yokohama). Osaka is a city that is unfamiliar to moviegoers. Even local productions are rarely shot in Japan's big cities as narrow streets packed with pedestrians, motorists and bicycle riders make crowd control a problem.

'If you look at most contemporary Japanese movies, you'll see very few extras and very few staged scenes on city streets,' Jaffe comments. 'Our production is unique in that we were able to shoot some of our scenes in the streets under controlled circumstances, as would be done in the United States. It wasn't easy to arrange, but this was important to us.'

'Beyond learning a different culture and a different language, one also has to know the subtleties of Japanese customs to do business there,' Lansing remarks. 'Fortunately, we had excellent interpreters on the set at all times. And we were especially lucky that our associate producer Alan Poul spoke fluent Japanese.'

During the pre-production period, Ridley Scott travelled to Japan many times during a period of eight months. 'There was extensive location-hunting, which was more than looking at buildings and various cityscapes,' Scott says. 'This was a time to get a feel for the country and to try to understand the people. Throughout the pre-production period and the shooting of the movie, it was a continual learning process; observing and absorbing more and more about the Japanese culture.'

When Scott first arrived in Japan, he found the country to be very different from his expectations. 'Most of Japan's cities are modern and utilitarian, so the production designer Norris Spencer and I had to endlessly search beneath the surface to find the unique textures. Like most of the big cities in the world, those in Japan are rapidly becoming homogenised behind plexiglass and concrete surfaces.'

Prior to principal photography, Michael Douglas began researching his role of NYPD homicide cop Nick Conklin. His technical advisor was police detective Mike Sheehan. During the late summer and early fall of 1988, Douglas accompanied Sheehan as he worked in the Manhattan North precinct above 59th Street. Most of the time Douglas went entirely unrecognised. 'He went with me to the scene of an assault in Harlem,' Sheehan recalls. 'The crowd assumed he was another detective.'

Sheehan also took Douglas to gathering spots favoured by NYPD detectives, who told him about their lives. Just prior to travelling to Japan, Douglas was with Sheehan on the headline-making night two New York City policemen were shot and killed. Sheehan and Douglas attended the investigation at the scene of the crime.

Cast:

Michael Douglas (*Nick Conklin*)
Andy Garcia (*Charlie Vincent*)
Ken Takakura (*Masahiro Matsumoto*)
Kate Capshaw (*Joyce Kingsley*)
Yusaku Matsuda (*Sato*)
Shigeru Koyama (*Ohashi*)
John Spencer (*Oliver*)
Guts Ishimatsu (*Katayama*)
Yuya Uchida (*Nashida*)
Tomisaburo Wakayama (*Sugai*)
Miyuki Ono (*Miyuki*)
Luis Guzmán (*Frankie*)
John Costelloe (*The Kid*)
Stephen Root (*Berg*)
Richard Riehle (*Crown*)
Bruce Katzman (*Yudell*)
Edmund Ikeda (*Japanese businessman*)
Tomo Nagasue (*Japanese translator*)
Clem Caserta (*Abolofia*)
Tim Kelleher (*Bobby*)
George Kyle (*Farentino*)
Vondie Curtis Hall, Joe Perce, Louis Cantarini (*detectives*)
Doug Yasuda (*Japanese/American translator*)
Toshio Sato (*Japanese Embassy official*)
Jun Kunimura (*Yoshimoto*)
Roy K. Ogata, Shiro Oishi (*Sato's men*)
Toru Tanaka, Rikiya Yasuoka, Joji Shimaki (*Sugai's men*)
Goro Sasa, Taro Ibuki, Daisuke Awaji (*Ohashi's men*)
Keone Young (*karaoke singer*)
Jim Ishida (*escort officer*)
Shotaro Hayashi, Toshishiro Obata (*mediators*)
Michiko Tsushima (*noodle woman*)
Linda Gillen (*Peggy*)
John Gotay (*Danny*)
Matthew Porac (*Patrick*)
Ken Kensei (*Masahiro's son*)
Josip Elic (*bartender*)
Mitchell Bahr (*friend*)
USA 1989
125 mins
Digital

Become a BFI Member

Enjoy a great package of film benefits including priority booking at BFI Southbank and BFI Festivals. Join today at bfi.org.uk/join

Sight and Sound

Never miss an issue with **Sight and Sound**, the BFI's internationally renowned film magazine. Subscribe from just £25*

* Price based on a 6-month print subscription (UK only). More info: sightandsoundsubs.bfi.org.uk



BFI Player

We are always open online on BFI Player where you can watch the best new, cult & classic cinema on demand. Showcasing hand-picked landmark British and independent titles, films are available to watch in three distinct ways: Subscription, Rentals & Free to view.

See something different today on player.bfi.org.uk

'I purposely avoided going to Japan for preliminary research,' Douglas relates. 'In *Black Rain* Nick Conklin finds himself in Japan for the first time and I thought it would help my characterisation if my experiences could be similar to his.'

To research her role, Kate Capshaw worked one four-hour shift at Arujan, an exclusive Osaka hostess club. Capshaw devoted her attention to one man at each of the six tables that she was assigned, spending 45 minutes per table. 'We were expected to dance with men, spoonfeed them, rub their backs, keep their drinks filled, and giggle at their jokes,' she relates.

Upon their arrival in Japan, the filmmakers were invited by Osaka's mayor, police chief and Prefectural Governor to official welcome meetings, which were attended by dozens of local media crews. The filmmakers were presented with special medallions and keys to the city.

Principal photography for *Black Rain* began in Osaka on October 31, 1988 after the arrival of the American crew of 45 and the Japanese crew from Tokyo of more than 100. Each shot of the action sequences filmed in Japan had to be carefully planned by Scott, who used storyboards as a communication tool for the Japanese crew.

Realism was Scott's objective. Japanese characterisations had to be authentic. Scott spent many weeks involved in the process of placing the Japanese actors in the roles. 'I wanted to present the Japanese as the world now perceives them: a modern, advanced nation. I didn't ignore traditional cultural aspects, but I wanted to provide glimpses of contemporary Japan that would be very different from those of a tourist.'

'The story takes place at a time when two cultures are coming together because of history, politics and economics,' Warren Lewis comments. In writing the action sequences for the film with Craig Bolotin, Lewis observes that 'the goal was not achieving the biggest explosion or shoot-out, but a consistency of story with the environment and people.'

Production designer Norris Spencer was in Japan for five-and-a-half months, working with Ridley Scott to find locations and coordinating the extensive preparatory work. The production team included art directors, set decorators, draftsmen, illustrators and technical advisors. In Japan there were four teams of set dressers; with two teams working during filming in New York and Los Angeles.

During the first week, filming took place in Osaka's magnificent Prefectural building. Built in 1929, the Art Deco-style building served as the offices of the Osaka police for the film. The following week, the company relocated to the narrow streets of Osaka's Kyobashi district for exterior scenes. 'I'll never forget the way the Japanese reacted upon seeing Ken-san,' Douglas says. 'I haven't seen that kind of adulation in the United States for anybody but Bruce Springsteen.'

The Dotonbori district, the center of Osaka's night life with more electrical pyrotechnics than Times Square, was the location for a week of night shooting after Ridley Scott selected the newly constructed Kirin Plaza building, dominating the Ebisubashi Bridge, as the exterior for the film's Club Miyako.

Black Rain also filmed in Osaka at two steel mills, the Hankyu Arcade, and at a metropolitan three-tiered golf driving range. Location shooting in Japan concluded at Osaka's Central Fish Market.

Production notes