



## The Hurt Locker

Directed by: Kathryn Bigelow

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Voltage Pictures *presents in association with* Grosvenor Park Media, LP and F.C.E.F. SA a Voltage Pictures/First Light/Kingsgate Films production

Executive Producer: Tony Mark

Produced by: Kathryn Bigelow, Mark Boal, Nicolas Chartier, Greg Shapiro

Co-producer: Donall McCusker

Associate Producers: Jack Schuster, Jenn Lee

Production Supervisor: J. Gibson

Production Accountant: Debbie Chesebro

Production Manager: Karima Ladjimi

Unit Production Manager: Tony Mark

Location Manager: Fawaz Zoubi

Post-production Supervisor: Jack Schuster

Production Consultant: Fuad Khalil

1st Assistant Director: David Ticotin

2nd Assistant Directors: Nick Harvard, Yanal Barakat

Script Supervisor: Aslaug Konradsdóttir

Casting by: Mark Bennett

Screenplay: Mark Boal

Director of Photography: Barry Ackroyd

2nd Unit Director of Photography:

Niels Reedtz Johansen

Canadian Unit Director of Photography: Tom Sigel

Camera Operators: Scott McDonald,

Duraid Munajim

Third Eye FX Hi-Speed Camera Operator:

Dory Aoun

1st Assistant Camera: Stewart Whelan,

Oliver Driscoll, Imad Rechiche

2nd Unit 1st Assistant Camera: Russell Kennedy

Canadian Unit A 1st Assistant Camera:

David Lourie

Canadian Unit B 1st Assistant Camera: Robin Smith

2nd Unit 1st Assistant Camera: Thomas Taylor,

Glenn Coulman, Mouna Khaali

2nd Unit 2nd Assistant Camera: Max Glickman

Canadian Unit A 2nd Assistant Camera:

Jeremy Spofford

Canadian Unit B 2nd Assistant Camera:

Andy Capicik

Key Grip: Mher Keshishian

Canadian Unit Key Grip: Dave 'Bucket' Walker

Gaffer: Matthew Moffatt

Canadian Unit Gaffer: Jim Swanson

Video Assist Operator: Sami Sahweil

Stills Photography: Jonathan Olley

Visual Effects Provided by: Company 3, Encore Visual Effects

Special Effects Supervisor: Richard Stutsman

Special Effects Foremen: Blair Foord,

Ernst Gschwind

Editors: Bob Murawski, Chris Innis

SFX Editors: Jamie Hardt, Bernard Weiser, Rick Franklin

1st Assistant Editor: Sean Valla

Production Designer: Karl Jüliusson

Canadian Unit Production Designer: Paul Joyal

Art Director: David Bryan

Assistant Art Director: Nadeer Ibrahim

Set Decorator: Ameen Al-Masri

Storyboard Artist: Gary Thomas

Property Master: Mike Malik

Construction Co-ordinator: Marwan Kheir

Costume Designer: George Little

Assistant Costume Designers: Daniel Lester, Hanadi

Hair/Make-up Designer: Daniel Parker

Prosthetic Make-up Artist: Robin Pritchard

## Close to the Edge: The Films of Kathryn Bigelow

# The Hurt Locker

Jeremy Renner plays Sergeant First Class William James, a loose-cannon explosive ordnance disposal expert, whose unorthodox approach to his job in the second Iraq War unsettles his colleagues. Bigelow made history as the first woman to win the Academy Award for Best Director with this tense, but insightful, portrait of soldiers addicted to adrenaline and duty. Handheld close-ups combine with precise framing to deliver a visceral and immersive exploration of the chaos, horror and psychological toll of war.

## Kathryn Bigelow on 'The Hurt Locker'

Kathryn Bigelow's latest feature confirms her reputation as one of the world's foremost directors of action. Set in the chaotic streets of Baghdad in 2004, *The Hurt Locker* follows a group of 'EOD techs' (Explosive Ordnance Disposal – i.e. bomb-disposal – technicians) as they go about their work dismantling often crudely made bombs. Developed from a script by Mark Boal, who worked as an embedded reporter in Iraq in 2004, Bigelow's film has a visceral, immersive, documentary impact that vividly conveys the ever-present dangers such units face from snipers and suicide bombers. Though Guy Pearce and Ralph Fiennes have memorable cameos, the central cast is made up of lesser-known names such as Jeremy Renner, who plays the mercurial but brilliantly skilful Sergeant William James.

*We've seen much of the Iraq war from the perspective of the soldiers on the ground, through postings to YouTube and similar sites. Did this affect how you approached the look of the film?*

I was keenly aware of the footage that the soldiers had shot. Those images were quite seminal in helping to inform the visceral, raw nature of the film. But that also goes back to Mark on his 'embed': we wanted to protect that reportorial nature. [DoP] Barry Ackroyd and I agreed we wanted to keep it presentational, immediate and unmediated. Whether such on-the-ground footage means the death of a more conventional-looking war film, I don't know. It's certainly an option, but the spirit of this began in deep reporting, and so necessitated a 'you are there' quality. It really wasn't an aestheticised choice – it was more observational, from Mark's reports in or outside the Humvee.

*You often cut to small details of street life in Baghdad – a passing herd of goats, a bystander in a doorway. Were those details drawn from Mark Boal's script?*

I've not been there myself, but certainly from what I understand, you're very aware of your immediate environment in Baghdad, and that was very specifically delineated in the script. You're in an environment I would call a '360-degree threat' – the guy on the third-floor balcony could be hanging out his laundry or planning a sniper strike, and you won't know until it reveals itself. I tried to capture that extremely random and chaotic sense.

*The sensory impression of 'being there' is not just visual – the sound design is also immersive*

The sound designer Paul Ottosson is truly an artist. I wanted the sound to be as full as the image, to really complete the environment. It was also key that the audience be as aware as possible of the geographical space in relation to the

*Digital Intermediate Provided by:* Company 3  
*Music by:* Marco Beltrami, Buck Sanders  
*Guitar Performed by:* Buck Sanders  
*Violin Performed by:* Endre Granat  
*Cello Performed by:* Andrew Shulman  
*Bass Performed by:* Mike Valerio  
*Erhu Performed by:* Karen Han  
*Voice/Ethnic Instruments Performed by:* Yorgos Adamis  
*Music Supervisor:* John Bissell  
*Music Co-ordinator:* Sarah Ferguson  
*Music Editor:* Julie Pearce  
*Music Mixed by:* John Kurlander  
*Sound Design:* Paul N.J. Ottosson  
*Sound Mixer:* Ray Beckett  
*Boom Operator:* Simon Bysshe  
*Re-recording Mixer:* Paul N.J. Ottosson  
*Dialogue Editors:* Robert Troy, Kimberly Harris  
*ADR Editors:* Robert Troy, Kimberly Harris  
*Foley Editors:* John Sanacore, Alex Ullrich  
*Military Adviser:* Csm James Clifford USA/EOD (Retired)  
*Technical Consultants:* Ben Thomas, Barrie Rice, Matthew Thompson  
*Jordanian Military Liaison:* Marwan Abadi  
*Stunt Co-ordinators:* Robert Young, Barrie Rice  
*Weapons Specialist:* David Fencel  
*Cast:*  
 Jeremy Renner (*Staff Sergeant William James*)  
 Anthony Mackie (*Sergeant J.T. Sanborn*)  
 Brian Geraghty (*Specialist Owen Eldridge*)  
 Christian Camargo (*Colonel John Cambridge*)  
 Suhail Al-Dabbach (*black suit man*)  
 Christopher Sayegh (*Beckham*)  
 Evangeline Lilly (*Connie James*)  
 Ralph Fiennes (*contractor team leader*)  
 David Morse (*Colonel Reed*)  
 Guy Pearce (*Sergeant Matt Thompson*)  
 Nabil Koni (*Professor Nabil*)  
 Sam Spruell (*Charlie, contractor*)  
 Sam Redford (*Jimmy, contractor*)  
 Feisal Sadoun (*Feisal, contractor*)  
 Barrie Rice (*Chris, contractor*)  
 Imad Daoudi (*Iraqi police captain at UN*)  
 Erin Gann (*mortuary affairs officer*)  
 Justin Campbell (*Sergeant Carter*)  
 Malcolm Barrett (*Sergeant Foster*)  
 Kristoffer Winter (*soldier at intersection*)  
 J.J. Kandel (*guard at Camp Liberty market*)  
 Ryan Tramont (*guard at Liberty Gate*)  
 Michael Desante (*Iraqi translator*)  
 Hasan Darwish (*DVD merchant*)  
 Wasfi Amour (*insurgent in the stairwell*)  
 Nibras Qassem (*Nabil's wife*)  
 Ben Thomas (*US army medic*)  
 Nader Tarawneh (*insurgent sniper*)  
 Anas 'Topsy' Wellman (*soldier at UN*)  
 Omar Mario (*butcher*)  
 Fleming Campbell (*soldier at tarmac*)  
 USA 2008©  
 131 mins  
 35mm

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men in the bomb suits and the bomb itself. This is a contained area, and you move closer to the bomb until you're in the kill zone. I tried to create a fundamental understanding of what that man in the suit is experiencing emotionally, physically and psychologically as he approaches.

### *How did you find shooting in Jordan?*

Many of our locations were very close to the Iraq border, where the architecture is very similar to that in Iraq. That was especially important as we were working with this 360-degree world, because there wasn't a bad angle. The great bonus that none of us anticipated was working with Iraqi refugees. Some of them were actors: the man who plays the suicide bomber at the end of the film was a fairly well known actor in Baghdad before the occupation, and probably thought he would never act again, so that was gratifying. All the extras are Iraqi. Shooting in the summer heat was punishing, especially for Jeremy Renner because that's a real bomb suit he's wearing, made of Kevlar and ceramic plates. It weighed close to 100 pounds. Just getting him through the day was a task.

*The film hints that the EOD techs are motivated by both a desire to do good and an addiction to danger.*

It's hard to generalise. I think the film examines the existential aspects that go beyond the addictive excitement of their job – that's just one aspect. James' bravado and hubris are married to a remarkable skillset – perhaps where those two things intersect is what keeps him alive. The men and women I met were all incredibly smart: it takes a high IQ to be invited to become an EOD tech. You also have to possess highly dextrous motor skills – like those of a surgeon – and your coping ability under extreme pressure is significant.

*There's a macho bravado to the characters, which threatens to get them into trouble.*

They're nuanced characters: on the one hand James' bravado brings a confidence and a swagger, and yet he is capable of being unmoored in his desire to almost stem the tide of the insurgency single-handedly, as in the scene where he heads off alone into Baghdad. I look at it as his Captain Ahab moment, and yet you also realise – especially when he's speaking to his son at the end – that he's not immune to the effects of war. It's the price of heroism.

Interview by James Bell, *Sight and Sound*, September 2009