



# ROBOT OVERLORDS

## Production notes

**Director**  
**Jon Wright**

**Screenplay**  
**Jon Wright and Mark Stay**

**Produced by**  
**Piers Tempest**

**Producers**  
**Justin Garak, Ian Flooks, Steve Milne**

## Cast

**Ben Kingsley**  
**Gillian Anderson**  
**Callan McAuliffe**  
**Ella Hunt**  
**James Tarpey**  
**Milo Parker**  
**Tamer Hassan**  
**Geraldine James OBE**  
**Roy Hudd OBE**  
**Craig Garner**

***“If you leave your home, the robots know about it”***

Perhaps it was all the Steven Spielberg films he had watched as a child in the 1980s, but when British writer-director Jon Wright had a particularly vivid dream about not being able to leave his house for fear of attack from robots one night, he knew he had found the plot of his next movie.

“I woke up one morning having dreamt the first two minutes of the film,” says Wright. “It was a father and son playing a cat-and-mouse game with Nerf guns in a house. They threw open the curtains, revealing a massive robot that leaned in and threatened to annihilate them. They dropped their weapons immediately and I woke up and thought, ‘That’s good!’”

Wright assumed his dream was a pastiche of scenes absorbed from watching other films. But the more people he began to tell, the more the Belfast-born filmmaker was convinced a robot invasion film about humans trapped in their own homes by an extraordinary and sinister occupying force, was an original storyline.

ROBOT OVERLORDS is a breath-taking family adventure film about a group of teenagers headed by Sean (Callan McAuliffe), Alex (Ella Hunt), Nathan (James Tarpey), and young Connor (Milo Parker). They have been trapped in their homes for three years, since an invading force of deadly robots arrived on Earth to study the human race. When the group of friends unexpectedly discover a way of evading the deadly robots that monitor their every move, they grab it gleefully and head off in search of Sean’s missing father.

At the time of his dream, Wright was putting the finishing touches to his second feature *Grabbers*, a well-received comedy monster film that premiered at the Sundance Film Festival and went on to win five audience awards at top international film festivals and was released by Sony Pictures UK and IFC Films in the US in 2012.

Wright’s first film was the teen horror *Tormented* in 2009. It starred Alex Pettyfer as a bullied schoolboy who wreaks revenge on his former schoolmates from beyond the grave and had marked the director as a talent to watch. The film was released by Pathe in the UK on 200+ prints.

Piers Tempest, one of the producers of *Grabbers*, visited Wright in the film's edit suite, and remarked that he was next interested in making a sci-fi film. Wright immediately told him about his idea and Tempest was impressed.

"Jon is a big fan of sci-fi, which is critical if you are going to direct a sci-fi film – as we are creating a whole new world, it has to make complete sense." says Tempest of what he liked about Wright's pitch. "Going through the process of making *Grabbers*, which is a very visual effects-heavy film, I realised he is one of the few directors who can actually understand and deliver great visual effects *and* also deliver performance. That is a critical thing for these effects movies – we wanted to go for substance as well as spectacle."

Tempest is an experienced British producer whose credits also include *Killing Bono* and the AFI best picture nominated *Oyster Farmer*. He took the idea of *ROBOT OVERLORDS* to the BFI Film Fund, which agreed to fund the project's development and co-finance production.

In addition to the BFI Film Fund, Tempest, who produced the film through Tempo Productions, (his Yorkshire and London based production company which he runs with Jo Bamford) put together a financing package that comprised Pinewood Pictures, Isle of Man Film and Northern Ireland Screen. Further financing came from Wasted Talent, Justin Garak and Aqeel Zaman's Canadian-based equity outfit Umbra Telegraph Pictures, and Steve Milne's British Film Company. Hugo Grumbar and Tim Haslam's Embankment Films is handling international sales and the London boutique VFX house Nvizable, which also worked on *Grabbers*, is producing the visual effects and a partner in the production.

Mark Stay, an actor, playwright and screenwriter, who had previously written a few scripts with Wright, came on board to co-write the screenplay. "Mark is extremely talented," says Wright. "He's a very collaborative spirit and loves to work with people. I'm the same."

"We work really well together," Stay agrees.

"I ploughed ahead with the script and Jon came in and tidied up after me. We would occasionally have weekends where we would work intensively. I like working with other writers. A lot of writing is about problem solving and a little bit of psychology as well. Two heads are always better than one when it comes to that."

Working together on the script also meant that, at every stage, Wright and Stay could talk through the fantastical elements of the sci-fi story and ensure they were at least partly grounded in a believable reality.

“We wanted to keep the characters as real as possible so everyone could relate to them,” Stay explains. “We did not want any of them to make an unrealistic decision. We would constantly ask ourselves, ‘Would I do that? Would my kids do that?’”

It was very important to Wright, Tempest and Stay that the characters of *ROBOT OVERLORDS* were authentic, that the teenagers behaved like real British teenagers. It is not surprising to discover that Wright and Stay are inspired by the Hollywood films of their 1980s childhoods, particularly Steven Spielberg’s *The Goonies*, as well as by Rob Reiner’s bittersweet coming-of-age classic *Stand By Me* and George Lucas’ original *Star Wars* trilogy. They used these as markers in particular for casting.

“The children in those films spoke to each other like real kids did,” Wright explains. “They used playground slang and there was something a bit rough-around-the-edges about it. “They were not special kids. They were neither especially poor nor especially rich. They felt like average kids in an average world to whom something extraordinary happens. There was a spirit and a heart in those movies that I feel is missing in our contemporary blockbuster world. The blockbusters all seem to have become a bit cold, serious and dour. I wanted our kids to feel like the kids I remember from the playground. To insult each other and be neither overly respectful nor too romantic.”

The filmmakers felt they knew these kids. “They are based on us when we were kids and our own children,” says Stay. “Sci-fi is essentially a ‘what-if?’ What if we were confined to our homes? What would that do to us? What would that do to a teenage child? We knew exactly where they would go when they first escaped. We knew the kind of alleyways they would be running down, the kind of woodland they would be running through.”

*ROBOT OVERLORDS* is set in a fictional British seaside town rather than a futuristic, dystopian metropolis. “You don’t typically see robots in a small seaside town,” smiles Wright. “Our heroes are average in the best sense of the word. The place where they live is the kind of town a lot of people will recognise as the kind of town they live in.”

“Why should all robot invasions happen in small-town America?” adds Tempest. “If robots ever did invade, most people’s experience of such an extraordinary circumstance would probably be in a really normal environment like our seaside town. We can all recognise elements of our own lives in the film.”

“The notion of people being contained within their houses by an occupying robot force felt fresh and different,” says Wright. “The unconscious very kindly presented me with a gift and I accepted it. It has never happened to me before or since.”

***“It’s more than just another robot film...”***

As well as its eye-popping effects and thrilling adventure story, *ROBOT OVERLORDS* offers a tender portrait of family and friendship. It also explores the dark and difficult social politics of war, occupation and collaboration. It was these themes that attracted Sir Ben Kingsley and Gillian Anderson, to play the two main adult characters.

Kingsley plays Mr Smythe, a former geography teacher, who has sided with the robots and joined the loathed Voluntary Corps. Anderson is Kate, a former English teacher and Sean’s mother. “Sir Ben and Gillian Anderson were at the top of my casting wish-list,” says Wright. “We sent them the script and they simply responded to it.”

Smythe patrols the suburban streets, ensuring no one crosses the threshold of their front door and leering hopefully at Sean mother’s Kate. When the children escape, the hated Smythe is the one who heads after them in hot pursuit. But Smythe is no one-dimensional villain. Instead, we might think he is a pragmatist who has seen which way the wind is blowing and has decided to do what he thinks is for the best for himself.

The character of Smythe fascinated Kingsley. “This is a science-fiction film that has its roots in 20<sup>th</sup> Century history, when a lot of Europe was occupied,” says the acclaimed British actor, who won an Academy Award for his lead role in *Gandhi* in 1983, and was nominated a further three times for *Bugsy*, *Sexy Beast* and *House Of Sand And Fog*. “The results were divisive and devastating and people turned against each with terrible consequences. To inhabit the invented world of *ROBOT OVERLORDS*, I rooted myself in patterns of human behaviour that sadly have been around for a long time. That’s the energy I bring to science fiction. There should be no difference between one’s approach to character in a science-fiction film to one’s approach to a character in a classically-rooted film in a narrative sense.”

Kingsley drew on his experience of playing the Jewish accountant Itzhak Stern in Steven Spielberg’s award-winning *Schindler’s List* in 1994. The actor draws a parallel between that film about a group of people living through an intolerable, extraordinary time and a British population subjugated under robots.

“There were three beautifully-written and hopefully-conceived characters, Oskar Schindler, Amon Goeth and Itzhak Stern in Schindler’s List,” Kingsley explains. “If you’d asked any of those characters at the end of that terrible Second World War, ‘What put you in that situation?’ the answer from each one of them would have been, ‘What else would you expect me to have done?’ This has to be my starting point. I never judge my character. What else do you expect Smythe to have done in a situation like that? Do you join the weakest? Or do you join the strongest? I imagine this chap has been pragmatic. I will never judge him.”

Kingsley and Wright enjoyed fascinating on-set conversations about what motivated Mr Smythe. “It was very important to him that he believed Mr Smythe was ultimately a good man, trying to do good, trying to his best to survive in difficult times,” says Wright. “Like all the best villains, they are the heroes of their own stories.”

Initially the actor stayed in character on set. “I give the director an opportunity to direct not me, but my character,” says the actor, offering a tantalising insight into his technique. “The director’s job is perhaps made more interesting by him placing my portrait of my character in his narrative where he needs me to be. So Smythe would arrive on set with all his layers and complexities and hungers and Jon would put his camera in the right place, I mean this as a larger metaphor for filmmaking, and say, ‘I know what you’re up to.’ It’s much better for the camera to discover what I’m doing. It enables the audience to lean in and join in. It’s a fascinating process.”

Gillian Anderson, the Golden Globe-winning star of TV series *The X-Files*, whose feature credits include *The Last King Of Scotland*, *Johnny English Reborn* and *Shadow Dancer*, is the feisty, strong-willed Kate.

“We didn’t want Gillian to be the stereotypical damsel in distress,” says Wright. “She plays Kate with incredible strength.”

Anderson was intrigued to play a woman who has been kept inside for years, looking after her son, who is finally given a chance to show of what she is capable.

“What I found interesting about the process is thinking about how an English teacher, who is not a secret agent, would handle this situation?” muses Anderson. “How would an English teacher run in the woods? What kind of fear would be playing across her face? I usually play characters that

are the boss or the one in control or the secret agent. I usually know how to handle situations. So what happens when I don't? What if I'm just a mum and robots have taken over the Earth?"

Kate is the object of Smythe's affections, putting her into an uncomfortably complex situation.

"It is an interesting balance Kate has to strike between not being unkind to him and accepting his generosity," says Anderson. "There have been times when Smythe has saved people's lives to impress her. That all counts for something in the currency of the world of ROBOT OVERLORDS. There's a moment of real end-of-the-world dilemma for her when he says, 'When this is over we can go to a beautiful place at the edge of the world'."

ROBOT OVERLORDS appealed to Anderson because it is a family film. "There are not that many family films," she says. "This is a proper family outing."



### ***Discovering four new stars***

“In the very broadest terms we wanted a hero, the beautiful girl, the funny guy and a kid,” says Wright.

The extensive search for the four young actors took the production team to stage schools, open casting sessions and established actors. “It took us six or seven months to find our four kids that we were really happy with,” says Tempest.

The net was thrown very wide with Australian-born, California-based Callan McAuliffe, the first to be cast.

“Sean was the hardest role to fill,” Wright recalls. “We wanted to discover a star. What you realise when you start searching for people like that is that they are far and few between. There aren’t many stars. But Callan is.”

He was looking for an actor who could play an everyman, who would not alienate the teenage boys in the audience and who would appeal to the teenage girls. What they found in McAuliffe, best known for roles in *I Am Number Four* and *The Great Gatsby*, was an actor with the charisma, personality and intelligence they were looking for.

15-year-old British newcomer Ella Hunt plays Alex. *ROBOT OVERLORDS* is the first screen role for the talented teenager.

“Ella came in and auditioned and I just thought, ‘It’s her’. We stopped the search,” Wright recalls. “ This is her first movie and she brings such confidence and presence to it. You don’t often come across an actor like Ella.”

Hunt was thrilled to get the chance to star in a film she saw in many ways as a dynamic coming-of-age drama.

“When we first meet Alex, she and her younger brother Nathan have been trapped inside on their own, without their parents, for three years. They are going stir crazy,” says Hunt. “Alex has seen death and has grieved for her parents. What happens in the film, when they all escape, allows her to explore the freedom of being a teenager. It’s a great family story. The characters are all so well developed in themselves. “

Rising British actor and BRIT school-graduate James Tarpey plays Alex’s younger brother Nathan.

“James has got great comedy timing,” says Tempest. “He’s a great actor and provides a lot of the moments of humour.”

Nathan contrasts perfectly with Sean. Where Sean is soft-spoken, a man of few words and ultimately heroic, Nathan is a man of many words and often a coward. Of all the characters, he is the one who is the most afraid. He uses humour to mask his fear.

Tarpey hugely impressed Wright. “James is very quick-witted and has a kind of composure about him, on camera and off camera. He knows who he is and where he fits in life.”

The gang is rounded out by 10 year-old Milo Parker for whom *ROBOT OVERLORDS* is also his first film. “He’s full of energy, full of beans and really interested in the whole process,” says Tempest. “Milo is a great joy to work with.”

Parker plays Connor, the youngest of the group, whose father is killed in the street in front of him by the robots. “He is brilliant,” says Wright of Parker. “He had done very little on camera before but when he gets in front of the camera something magical happens. I don’t know where that comes from!”

To get the best out of his four young and mostly inexperienced stars, Wright used the rehearsal period to encourage them to improvise and build their characters together. “Jon liked us to do it in our own words to make it as natural as possible,” Parker explains. “He asked us what we would do if we were in this situation or that situation. We didn’t stick to the script.”

“It all came to life when we got on camera,” reveals Hunt “Magic happened when Jon called ‘Action!’”

### ***Creating the world of Our Robot Overlords***

ROBOT OVERLORDS has an edgy, restless vibe, echoing the electrifying moment in a teenager's life when they are finally propelled out of childhood. The pacing of the film was determined while the project was still in development with editor Matt Platt-Mills providing invaluable early input.

"As an editor I like to get involved with the script, pre-shooting," he explains. "I can give notes like what would be a good cut, what to do to make it more lovely or give the scene a beat. Hopefully it adds a kinetic feel to the film. Often scenes will be slightly over-written at the script stage. I can look at a script and say, 'These four lines aren't necessary'. I know in the edit I will cut them if I can."

When principal photography began, Platt-Mills was on set, editing as he went along with an iPad. "I can deliver cuts to production and the director by the end of the following day," he explains. "We can talk about what is working well."

Every aspect of ROBOT OVERLORDS is firmly rooted within a real-world scenario, from the clothes the characters wear which are all tatty and slightly off-kilter after three years quarantined inside, to the robots themselves, which are scratched, dirty and rusting. Designed by concept artist Paul Catling, whose credits include *Prometheus*, *Spiderman* and *Iron Man*, the robots of ROBOT OVERLORDS creak and crank and make noises as they walk about.

"It is a reaction against this kind of Apple aesthetic you can see in a lot of recent science fiction, where everything is beautiful and glassy and perfect," explains Wright. "These robots are very imperfect. They have chosen function over form. They are not elaborate Transformer robots. I wanted to create something that looks like a piece of heavy machinery, like a JCB or a bulldozer. I wanted it to look like you could see how they fitted together, with no sleight-of-hand. They are simple and brutal and that makes them very scary."

The result is that we are unable to tell where the visual effects begin and end. Director of photography Fraser Taggart used a technology called N-Cam that allowed his team to put the pre-rendered visual effects into the camera while it was filming. This meant Taggart knew exactly where the robots would be and could frame a scene around them accordingly.

“Using NCAM technology allows you to anchor the robots in the scene, it’s a bit like augmented reality – it’s a very efficient way to shoot VFX plates,” says Tempest. “We knew exactly how the camera would move around the robots and could show the kids, through the viewfinder, where the robots were. With this process, as opposed to shooting in front of a blue screen, you can shoot out on location and really move the camera more. We ended up with a whole different realm of production value.”

It helped the cast immensely, with many of the actors playing a scene with nothing to react against. What’s more, Wright and his team found further innovative ways to support them. “We would show them the concept art right before a take,” says Wright. “Or sometimes we’d let off klaxons or loud bangs to frighten or shock them, to make them jump and be startled. Pretending has come back into movies. You have to make believe you are looking at things. That’s where somebody like Sir Ben becomes very useful because he has an overactive imagination and he can picture these things and see them.”

ROBOT OVERLORDS is a film where character and emotion are served by the visual effects and not the other way around. We are not bombarded with relentless spectacle. Paddy Eason, the film’s VFX supervisor, says Wright always kept the concept simple. “He described it as, ‘If you leave your home and you don’t get back in time you’re going to die and get killed,’” Eason explains. “That helped the story. If the robots get to you, you are gone. It was that straightforward.”

When he was helping to design the houses in which Kate and the kids live at the beginning, Eason showed Wright a book called ‘Punk House: Interiors In Anarchy’. “They were almost squats and some of them were fantastic, and had used found-objects and had decorated the walls,” Eason describes. “So we sprayed the walls with graffiti, and used the walls at the exterior gable ends as the place where the characters could express themselves. I think Gillian was quite shocked when she saw the interior, but

that was the idea as well, because it's not her home, they have been put there by the robots.”

Principal photography took place in Belfast in Northern Ireland and on the Isle of Man in June 2013. Interior sets were built on the Isle of Man with much location work done in the Northern Ireland countryside.

“There is a very diverse landscape within an hour of Belfast,” says Tempest who has shot three features in Northern Ireland. “There is the ancient forest of Tollymore, the Mourne Mountains and some amazing castles that we used. You can get around everywhere very quickly and we have used a brilliant crew, a lot of whom have great experience from working on *Game of Thrones* and big budget Hollywood films that are now shooting in Northern Ireland. The Isle of Man was perfect for the movie and we shot the seaside town there, in Castletown. It has a studio where we did all our blue screen work, we also brought in the spitfire which features in the end sequence of the film to the Isle of Man which was great fun.”

Sir Ben Kingsley in particular, enjoyed shooting in Belfast. The city itself helped to inform his work. “It's really good to be working in and among a community that has had its scars, that does understand its history and will collaborate with us in a way that is fresh and enthusiastic,” says the veteran actor.

## **ABOUT THE CAST**

### **Sir Ben Kingsley (Smythe)**

After earning an Academy Award, two Golden Globes and two BAFTA Awards for his riveting portrayal of Indian social leader Mahatma Gandhi, Sir Ben Kingsley continues to bring unequalled detail and nuance to each role. In 1984, Kingsley was awarded the Padma Sri by Indira Gandhi and the government of India. Kingsley went on to earn three additional Oscar nominations for *Bugsy* (1991), *Sexy Beast* (2000) and *House of Sand and Fog* (2003), his roles have been as diverse as his talents, from a sturdy vice president in *Dave* to the scheming Fagin in *Oliver Twist*. Since being knighted by Queen Elizabeth II in the New Year's Eve Honours List 2001, Kingsley has continued to earn accolades as a truly international star.

Last year, Kingsley was seen in the blockbuster film *Iron Man 3*, as "The Mandarin". The film has grossed over \$1 billion worldwide. Last year Kingsley was also seen in Summit Entertainment's *Ender's Game* about an unusually gifted child who is sent to an advanced military school in space to prepare for a future alien invasion. Based on the novel of the same name, the film was directed and written by Gavin Hood.

Kingsley's other roles include Sacha Baron Cohen's *The Dictator* following his role in Martin Scorsese's *Hugo*. Released in 2011 the film earned five Academy Awards. Kingsley was also seen starring in Martin Scorsese's 1950s drama *Shutter Island* as well as Jerry Bruckheimer's *Prince of Persia*. He also starred in the sexually charged *Elegy*, directed by Isabel Coixet, for which he was nominated British Actor of the Year by the London Critics Circle Film Awards.

### **Gillian Anderson (Kate)**

Gillian Anderson gained worldwide recognition in *The X-Files*, garnering awards and critical praise over the show's nine-year run. Other notable credits include *The House of Mirth*, BBC's *Great Expectations*, *The Last King of Scotland*, *Johnny English Reborn*, and the acclaimed miniseries *Bleak House*. Her stage credits include *What the Night is For*, *The Sweetest Swing in Baseball*, and an Olivier-nominated performance as "Nora" in *A Doll's House* at the Donmar Warehouse. Her most recent film credits include: Ursula Meier's *L'Enfant D'en Haut*, Sandra Nettelbeck's *Mr Morgan's Last Love* opposite Michael Caine, Richie Mehta's *I'll Follow You Down* and Jeffrey D. Brown's *Sold* with David Arquette. Her most recent TV credits are NBC's *Hannibal* and the BBC2 series *The Fall*. She is currently working on the NBC series entitled *Crisis*.

### **Callan McAuliffe (Sean)**

Callan has most recently been seen starring in *The Great Gatsby*, directed by Baz Luhrmann playing the young Jay Gatsby, in *Flipped* directed by Rob Reiner, and in *I Am Number Four*, directed by DJ Caruso. He recently

wrapped Kite directed by Ralph Ziman and Beneath The Harvest Sky directed by Aron Gaudet and Gita Pullapilly.

### **Ella Hunt (Alex)**

Ella has most recently starred in Tom Hooper's multiple Academy Award-winning Les Misérables, and previously has starred in Juan Carlos Fresnadillo's Intruders. ROBOT OVERLORDS is her third feature film.

### **James Tarpey (Nathan)**

James trained at the BRIT school for Performing Arts and made his film debut starring in award-winning short film Callum, directed by Michael Van Der Put. Since then, James has starred in Edgar Wright's The World's End and John William's directorial debut The Beat Beneath My Feet. ROBOT OVERLORDS is his third feature film.

### **Milo Parker (Connor)**

Milo did his first audition for the part of Connor in ROBOT OVERLORDS. This is his first feature and acting debut.

### **Craig Garner (Mediator 452)**

Craig trained at Lincoln College of Performing Arts before landing a role in a national tour of Daphne Du Maurier's Don't Look Now. Following his tour he was offered a part in Harry Potter as one of 60 short actors where he was approached by the director, David Yates who singled him out to play Harry Potter for resizing shots filming with Robbie Coltrane for Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows Parts 1 & 2.

Craig is possibly best recognised as himself in the seven part Channel 4 Seven Dwarves documentary.

Craig's other film credits include: Snow White and the Huntsman directed by Rupert Sanders, Maleficent directed by Robert Stromberg, Kenneth Branagh's Cinderella, London Fields, a novel by Martin Amis adapted for film directed by Mathew Cullen, Jupiter Ascending directed by Andy & Lana Wachowski, Goblins Market directed by Anna Blandford, Filth directed by Jon S. Baird and Tarzan directed by Reinhard Klooss.

### **Steven Mackintosh (Danny)**

A prolific screen and stage actor, Steven previous most notable film credits include: Jeff Wadlow's Kick Ass II, Nick Love's The Sweeney, Scouting Book For Boys directed by Tom Harper, Aisling Walsh's The Daisy Chain, The Escapist directed by Rupert Wyatt, Len Wiseman's Underworld: Evolution, John Maybury's The Jacket, Guy Ritchie's Lock Stock And Two Smoking

Barrels, Hanif Kureishi's London Kills Me and Michael Caton Jones' Memphis Belle.

Steven's past television credits include: The Other Boleyn Girl directed by Phillipa Lowthorpe, Antonia Bird's Care for which he received a BAFTA nomination for Best Actor, Our Mutual Friend directed by Julian Farino and Phil Davis' Prime Suspect.

### **Geraldine James OBE Monique)**

Recent film work includes Oliver Hirschbiegel's Diana for Ecosse Films; David Fincher's The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo for Sony Pictures, both Guy Ritchie's Sherlock Holmes and his Sherlock Holmes: Game of Shadows for Warner Bros. and Tim Burton's Alice in Wonderland for Disney. Other film work includes: Jason Winer's Arthur, Nigel Cole's Made in Dagenham, Richard Attenborough's Gandhi, Stuart Orme's The Wolves of Willoughby Chase, Pilar Miro's Prince of Shadows, Marleen Gorris' The Luzhin Defense and Nigel Cole's Calendar Girls.

Geraldine trained at The Drama Centre and was awarded an OBE in 2003.

### **Tamer Hassan (Wayne)**

Since shooting ROBOT OVERLORDS, Tamer Hassan has gone on to shoot Dracula for NBC/Sky with Jonathan Rhys Myers. Tamer will soon be seen starring in Drew Hall's Son's of Liberty.

Tamer's previous credits include Alex De Rakoff's Calcium Kid, Nick Love's The Football Factory and The Business and Guy Ritchie's Layer Cake. Hassan has skillfully moved in and out of a plethora of feature and ensemble roles, including Matthew Vaughn's Kick Ass, Christopher Nolan's Batman Begins, 50 Cent's Dead Man Running, Louis Leterrier's Clash of The Titans and Michael Brandt's The Double.

### **Roy Hudd OBE(Morse Code Martin)**

Roy's television career began with BBC's notorious Not So Much A Programme More A Way of Life, which lead to countless appearances in entertainment and drama productions. He went on to appear in Dennis Potter's Lipstick on Your Collar, The Memoirs of Sherlock Holmes, Common As Muck, Karaoke, April Fools Day and Heavy Weather to name a few. Roy's theatre credits are equally as extensive with credits ranging from music hall and comedy performances such as Roy Hudd's Very Own Music Hall and Friends Like This to Stephen Sondheim's A Funny Thing Happened On The Way To The Forum at Regents Park and Hard Times at The Theatre Royal, Haymarket.

Roy has featured on radio consistently since the 1960's, his BBC radio show, The Hews Huddlines celebrated 25 years on air in 2000 and he has won various awards from TRIC, The Sony Radio Awards and British Comedy



Awards. In 2003 Roy was awarded an OBE in the New Year's Honour for his continued contribution to entertainment. Granada TV cast him as Archie Shuttleworth in Coronation Street which he played to great acclaim for four years.

## **ABOUT THE CREW**

### **Jon Wright (Director and Screenwriter)**

In 2009 Jon completed his first feature *Tormented*, released by Pathé, the first British film under £1 million to get a “studio level” release. *Grabbers* had its world premiere at the 2012 Sundance Film Festival, and its international premiere at the Edinburgh Film Festival. Element Pictures released the film on 65 screens in Ireland. Leading lady Ruth Bradley won Best Actress at the Irish Film & Television Awards, where it was also nominated for best film, and it has since won five Best Film audience awards at international film festivals. Distributors include Sony Pictures in the UK and IFC in the US. *ROBOT OVERLORDS* is Jon’s third feature.

### **Piers Tempest (Producer)**

Piers started his career at Working Title Films and then worked for directors such as Philip Kaufman on Fox Searchlight’s *Quills*. He co-produced the James Toback directed *When Will I Be Loved*, the Toronto winning *Cochochi* and executive produced *Coffin Rock* for producer David Lightfoot. More recently Piers has produced the AFI Best Picture nominated *Oyster Farmer* and *Like Minds* starring Toni Collette and Eddie Redmayne. In 2010 Piers produced *Killing Bono* released by Paramount and in 2010 he produced *The Caller* starring Rachelle Lefevre, Stephen Moyer and Luis Guzman. In 2011 Piers produced the Sony backed *Grabbers* which was his first collaboration with Director Jon Wright which was swiftly followed by *ROBOT OVERLORDS*.

Piers was on the board of the successful Bradford City of Film UNESCO bid and is an alumni of the UK’s prestigious Inside Pictures course.

### **Tom McCullagh (Production Designer)**

Tom began his production design career with the BBC in Belfast working as an Art Director and Designer on various in-house film dramas with directors such as Alan Clarke, Danny Boyle and Pat O’Connor. He has been working as a freelance Production Designer for 20 years designing for both film and television productions. His television credits include large-scale dramas for BBC such as *Ballykissangel*, *Murder Rooms*, *Rebel Heart*, *Eureka Street*, *Hidden* and most recently, *The Fall*.

His film credits include *Mickybo* and *Me* directed by Terry Loane, Pearse Elliott’s *The Mighty Celt*, Steve McQueen’s *Hunger* (for which he won an IFTA for Design), Nick Hamm’s *Killing Bono*, Jon Wright’s *Grabbers*, Oscar winning short *The Shore*, directed by Terry George, Dominic Harari’s *The Food Guide to Love* and most recently David Mackenzie’s *Starred Up*.

### **Fraser Taggart (Director of Photography)**

Fraser Taggart’s recent work as Director of Photography includes *All You Need Is Kill* for Warner Bros. directed by Doug Liman. Fraser’s most notable

past film credits as Director of Photography include: Tomb Raider directed by Simon Crane, Wolfgang Peterson's Troy, Ron Howard's Da Vinci Code, Prince of Persia directed by Luke Scott, Gulliver's Travels directed by Rob Letterman, Jerry Bruckheimer's Pirates of the Caribbean: On Stranger Tides and Tim Burton's 47 Ronin.

### **Paddy Eason (VFX Supervisor)**

Paddy Eason is a London-based visual effects supervisor and part owner of Nvibile, the company that is creating the robots for Our Robot Overlords. A graduate of Bournemouth University's well-regarded National Centre for Computer Animation, Paddy has been working in digital film effects in London since the early '90's, first as a compositor at Framestore-CFC, and later as a lead artist and supervisor at Double Negative and the Moving Picture Company. Paddy was VFX supervisor on Vantage Point directed by Pete Travis, Nick Parks' Wallace & Gromit - Curse of the Were Rabbit, Sleepy Hollow, Tim Burton's Big Fish and Nick Parks' Chicken Run - the last three of which he received BAFTA nominations for. Paddy was VFX Supervisor for Jon Wright's first two features - Tormented and Grabbers.

### **Rosie Blackmore (Make up Designer)**

Rosie Blackmore trained in Fine Art, then worked in makeup for portrait and fashion photography. This brought her to the Film and television industry as well as commercials. Rosie's past notable film credits include: Dominic Harari's The Food Guide To Love, Steph Green's Run & Jump, TV's 13 Steps Down, Kevin Connor's Chasing Leprechauns and Honeymoon for One, Roadkill directed by John Dahl and Billy O'Brien's Ferocious Planet.

### **Hazel Webb-Crozier (Costume Designer)**

Hazel's previous film and television credits include: Jon Wright's Grabbers, BBC's world war one drama Wipers Times, Closing the Ring directed by Lord Attenborough and Terry Loane's Mickybo and Me, for which she won an Irish IFTA in 2005.

### **Amy Hubbard (Casting Director)**

Amy has recently completed work on Peter Jackson's The Hobbit: There And Back Again, Clio Barnard's The Selfish Giant, and TV's Sleepy Hollow. Amy's past notable film credits include: Peter Jackson's The Hobbit: An Unexpected Journey and The Lord of the Rings Trilogy, Ghosted, The Devil's Double, The Arbor, Lasse Hallstrom's Chocolat.

Her past television credits include: Kevin Reynolds' Hatfields & McCoys, ITVs 13 Steps Down directed by Marek Losey, Rouge Bresil directed by Sylvain Archambault, Syfy's Neverland directed by Nick Willing and Ben Hur for ABC directed by Steve Shill.

**Stefano Pepin (SFX Supervisor)**

Stefano Pepin latest film project is director Rob Marshall's Into The Woods. His past film credits include Marc Forster's World War Z, Ridley Scott's productions of Prometheus and Robin Hood, Mike Newell's Prince of Persia: The Sands of Time, The Golden Compass directed by Chris Weitz, Syriana directed by Stephen Gaghan, Antoine Fuqua's King Arthur, TV's Band of Brothers, and Stefan Schwartz's Shooting Fish.

**Matt Platt-Mills (Editor)**

Matt Platts-Mills' incredibly successful editing career began in documentaries. He has edited over fifty projects including the EMMY winning series' Simon Schama's The Power of Art: Bernini, and The Ascent of Money, and BAFTA and BROADCAST awarded Richard Dawkins: The Genius of Charles Darwin. In 2008 Matt edited his first feature film, Jon Wright's Tormented. Since then he has cut the horror comedies, Grabbers, also directed by Jon Wright and Andy De Emmony's Love Bite and recently finished BAFTA Cymru-winning science fiction thriller The Machine directed by Caradog James.

**Derek Hehir (Sound Mixer)**

Derek Hehir is based in Belfast and has spent sixteen years working in the film and television industry as a location sound mixer. He has just finished shooting Gary Shore's Dracula for Universal Pictures. His previous notable film credits include: Paul Angunawela's Keith Lemon The Film, Hooley directed by Lisa Baros D'Sa and Glenn Leyburn, Your Highness directed by David Gordon Green, Ger Leonard's Five Day Shelter, Chris Hartwill's Ghost Machine and Kari Skogland's Fifty Dead Men Walking. His notable television credits include: Game of Thrones, BBC's Dani's Castle and ITV's Single Handed.

**Gil James (VFX Producer)**

Gil James crafted his VFX knowledge and production career at pioneering visual effects facility the Peerless Camera Company before joining MPC's film department as VFX producer. His notable film credits include Wolfgang Petersen's Troy, Around The World in 80 Days directed by Frank Coraci, Oliver Stone's Alexander, Tim Burton's Corpse Bride and Wolfgang Petersen's Poseidon. After stints as a senior commercials VFX producer at highly renowned Soho companies The Mill and Golden Square, Gil joined Nvibile where he VFX produced Peter Kosminsky's BAFTA nominated The Promise, before his first outing with Jon Wright on Grabbers. Following this came Tim Burton's Frankenweenie and the epic action sequel, Jonathan Liebesman's Wrath of the Titans. More recently, Gil was studio based for VFX producing on Jeff Wadlow's Kick Ass 2 before returning to Soho for the post.