

“No, Mr Bond, I expect you to die”

The villains of 007 have always reflected the anxieties of their age.
In a time such as ours, who will the baddies be?

By Christopher Frayling

In his autobiography, the James Bond producer Albert “Cubby” Broccoli recalls that the original treatment of *Dr No*, the first James Bond book to be filmed, dispensed with Ian Fleming’s character of Julius No altogether because the screenwriters reckoned that the old-style melodramatic villains of clubland days would no longer work in the 1960s. He quotes the screenwriter Richard Maibaum in support of this:

When Wolf [Mankowitz] and I began working on the script, we decided that Fleming’s *Dr No* was the most ludicrous character in the world. He was just Fu Manchu with two steel hooks. It was 1961, and we felt that audiences wouldn’t stand for that kind of stuff any more. So, bright boys that we were, we decided that there would be no *Dr No*. There would be a villain who always had a marmoset monkey sitting on his shoulder, and the monkey would be *Dr No* . . . Cubby was outraged, in his usual good-natured way . . . “No monkey, d’you hear? It’s got to be the way the book is.”

In reality, the original treatment, dated 7 September 1961, didn’t exactly turn *Dr No* into a monkey – someone’s memory was playing tricks – but it did feature a capuchin monkey called Li Ying, a creature that belongs to a Cuban-backed bad guy who disguises himself as the late *Dr No* while trying to destroy the locks on the Panama Canal. At the fade-out, after the obligatory chase and explosion, the monkey jumps on to Bond’s

shoulder, “gibbering ironically”. Maibaum and Mankowitz were trying hard – too hard, as it turned out – to ring the changes on the overcooked clichés inherited from such pre-war writers as Sapper, John Buchan and Sax Rohmer. But Cubby Broccoli knew better. The second draft of the treatment, dated 28 September 1961, dropped the monkey and reinstated the devil doctor in all his faded glory. “I didn’t remember a monkey chattering around in Fleming’s book,” concluded Broccoli, “and I’m a great believer in not tampering with an original winner.”

The “original winner” in book form, yes – but *Dr No* represented risky film territory. As the novelist Len Deighton has noted, “One must remember that spy stories were neither fashionable nor particularly popular in those early days of the 1960s.” Alfred Hitchcock had made *Secret Agent* and *The Lady Vanishes* in the 1930s; some of Eric Ambler’s stories had been adapted by Hollywood in the 1940s; there had been a few “red menace” thrillers in the 1950s and a CBS adaptation of the James Bond novel *Casino Royale*, as well as, in the early 1960s, *The Avengers* and *Danger Man* on television. But in 1961, spy films were in danger of looking out of date and a bit European, despite the rising temperature of the cold war. Ken Adam, who was the designer of seven of the best James Bond films, recalls that “the original treatment read like a small whodunnit with a chaotic secret agent plot attached”. Joseph Wiseman, who played

Dr No, called it “just another grade-B Charlie Chan mystery”.

Eight years earlier, Richard Usborne had published his classic book on thrillers of the interwar period, *Clubland Heroes* (1953) – what he called a “nostalgic study” of “romantic fiction” – in which he concluded:

I suppose no one reads them now. We are not as cavalier about race, nor so certain about the greatness of Britain as we once were; and the moral code of [Richard] Hannay and Bulldog Drummond is singularly unfashionable . . . The Englishman’s traditional mistrust and dislike of the foreigner, the dago and the lesser breeds, is . . . less and less proudly displayed.

This was the year when Ian Fleming’s *Casino Royale* appeared, the first of the 14 James Bond books published between 1953 and 1966, all of which were to prove Usborne wrong on almost every count. Fleming, by his own admission, specialised in updating the king-and-country clubland stories of his youth – which he had first devoured at his hated prep school, Durnford, near Swanage in Dorset, and at Eton – for a consumer age, with the addition of an active sex life for his hero, memories and fantasies of intelligence work in the Second World War, a smattering of “the style of Raymond Chandler and Dashiell Hammett” to pep up his journalistic craft, and exotic tourist brochure locations. In short, as Fleming confessed, it was reading matter customised



for use by “warm-blooded heterosexuals in railways, trains, aeroplanes or beds”.

Ian Fleming certainly had his finger on a common pulse in the 1950s: a mix of kiss kiss with bang bang, nostalgia for the empire on which the sun never sets and an increasingly shrill reassurance that whatever the Americans might be saying about Britannia losing her role in the modern world and although “the liberation of our colonies may have gone too fast . . . we still climb Everest and beat plenty of the world at plenty of sports and win plenty of Nobel Prizes”.

And we don’t just win Nobel Prizes but protect the world (with a little help, not much, from the CIA) from Soviet agents and international criminals. Fleming’s villains

are larger than life. They have cartoonish facial features and they are, above all, foreign – or, in Sapper’s words, “odious, scheming foreigners”. We encounter, in order of appearance, a French character “with Prussian or Polish strains”, “a Negro gangster” (now known in commentaries as “a Harlem gangster”), Germans, Italian Americans, Russians, German Chinese, Koreans, Polish Greeks, and so on.

Several of them try to assimilate into the British establishment but can’t hide their origins. A few years after *Goldfinger* was published in 1959, two Harvard undergraduates satirised Fleming’s novels in a slim parody called *Alligator*, in which the 4ft 11in villain Lacertus Alligator has a head

the size of a football (like Mr Big and Auric Goldfinger), steel teeth, bad table manners and a network of purple veins covering his face (in the Bond villain Hugo Drax’s case, this ailment was the result of botched plastic surgery); he sprays everyone he meets with the colour purple from an aerosol can to get his revenge on the whole pack of them. Alligator resembles most of Fleming’s villains from the 1953-59 period and neatly captures what Alan Bennett called (in his play *Forty Years On*) “that school of snobbery with violence that runs like a thread of first-class tweed through 20th-century literature”. Sydney Horler, the prolific purveyor of interwar clubland thrillers, put it a little differently: “Give me a pretty girl, a likeable ▶

► young man, a Bentley sports car and a spot of trouble round the corner – then I’m working at my trade.”

Fleming had also learned from Arthur Conan Doyle, whose “Napoleon of crime” (“extremely tall and thin”, this time), Professor James Moriarty, had entered popular culture as a suitably charismatic adversary for Sherlock Holmes, albeit a character study painted in just a few deft strokes. Moriarty is prominent in only two stories and Doyle appears not to have been interested in him. But in countless plays, films and radio dramas, he became Holmes’s great nemesis. It was as if the public needed to invent a foe worthy of Holmes.

In popular mythology – started by William Gillette’s play *Sherlock Holmes* (1899), the silent film version of which was recently rediscovered – Moriarty has moved centre stage. In the story “The Final Problem” Holmes tells Dr Watson that the narrative of how to find evidence against Moriarty and his organised network of criminals could prove to be the greatest Holmes story of all – but Watson never writes it. Ian Fleming better understood his public when it came to both the villain (Ernst Stavro Blofeld, introduced in the 1961 novel *Thunderball*, has often been called “the Moriarty of the Bond novels”) and the organised network. Public demand has added embellishments to favourite characters that were unaccountably missing from the originals: Moriarty operates from a lair beneath the streets of London; Holmes always wears a deerstalker; Fu Manchu gained a moustache (the invention of Hollywood); and Blofeld keeps a white cat on his lap, never mentioned in the books.

Fleming’s villains had to be easily identifiable, colour-coded, memorable and described with adman-style hyperbole: Mr Big is “probably the most powerful Negro criminal in the world”; Dr No is “one of the most remarkable men in the world”; Goldfinger plans “one of the greatest conspiracies of all time”; and Blofeld is – it almost goes without saying – “the biggest crook in the world”. This has proved difficult for film-makers to translate into visual images, except through the grandiose Führerbunkers from which they operate: Renaissance palazzos for private quarters, with hi-tech laboratories, plus gantries for public activities. And, based on the novels, serious physical defects: Dr No’s prosthetic hands become Oddjob’s cleft palate becomes Largo’s missing eye becomes Blofeld’s scarred face becomes Jaws’s cobalt-steel teeth or Elektra King’s missing ear.

The early Bond films – like the novels – combine Second World War folk memories with cold war anxieties. Fleming’s books coincided with the heyday of Dan Dare and his co-pilot Digby hurtling through outer

space, in the *Eagle* comic, which kept alive the fiction that the Battle of Britain spirit would win the space race and defeat the Mekon. Ken Adam, a former fighter pilot in the RAF, recently said to me, “When the Bond films came out, coinciding with the later books, the war was very much in people’s minds, especially the minds of some of the people involved in making the films. But the films also began in the early 1960s, when the Cuban missile crisis was at its height. So stories about nuclear weapons were also on people’s minds.”

This was mirrored by Fleming’s villains: Hugo Drax is an ex-Nazi officer and employs two of Wernher von Braun’s rocket scientists; Rosa Klebb was an executioner

SPECTRE represents an armed version of global casino capitalism

for Stalin in the Spanish civil war; Blofeld learned his trade spying for the Germans in the war. And the early-to-middle period continued the tradition, pitting James Bond – with technological back up from the boffin Q, a 1960s version of a 1940s scientist – against megalomaniacs who behave like Nazis. “The things I do for England,” says Sean Connery’s Bond in *You Only Live Twice*, quoting Charles Laughton from *The Private Life of Henry VIII*, not long before he saves the world yet again.

But in the books, up until roughly 1960, it was also James Bond *v* the top-secret department of the Soviet government called SMERSH (a contraction of the Russian *Smiert Spionam*, meaning “death to spies”). SMERSH is a kind of synonym for “the Bolshies” in Sapper and Buchan. Agents of SMERSH in different territories include Le Chiffre (1953); Mr Big (1954); Hugo Drax (1955), who acquires his atomic warheads from the Russian army; Rosa Klebb (1957), the head of the executions department; and Auric Goldfinger (1959), the global banker for SMERSH.

James Bond has personal reasons for getting back at SMERSH: in *Casino Royale*, one of its agents carves a Russian letter on the back of his hand with a stiletto, branding him as a spy; he later has it removed by a cosmetic surgeon. But, from the appearance of the agency’s founder and chairperson Blofeld onwards, the great game moves from SMERSH to SPECTRE, a “large and very powerful” supergroup made up of “the world’s great criminal organisations”, including the Mafia, the Unione Corse, the Gestapo, Tito’s secret police – and ex-members of SMERSH. It’s a mix of Second World

War veterans and cold war spies. Although no members of the organisation are British – of course they aren’t – the acronym SPECTRE stands for the “Special Executive for Counter-Intelligence, Terrorism, Revenge and Extortion”. Why Blofeld chose the English language for the name of his organisation is never explained. When the script of *Dr No* was being prepared, SPECTRE was on the writers’ minds. The original plan had been to start the series with *Thunderball* (just published), but this was postponed because of legal problems about who owned the story. So Richard Maibaum worked on *Dr No* instead. As Jim Smith and Stephen Lavington argue in their detailed study of the Bond films:

In changing the central villains from the communists to a criminal organisation which owed its allegiance to no country or creed, Broccoli and [Harry] Saltzman essentially decided that the Bond films should be apolitical. Throughout the cold war Bond would fight criminal masterminds with private armies who were above international politics. However, these objectives would often involve the manipulation of the two sides, relying on their mutual distrust.

Apolitical is not quite right. The politics is more subtle than “the US *v* the Reds”, or “the Brits *v* the Nazis” – SPECTRE is about private enterprise, an armed version of global casino capitalism – but there are still many political implications and a lot of encoded information about public attitudes. The only time SMERSH features in a Bond film made by Eon Productions is in *From Russia with Love*, in which SPECTRE uses SMERSH to destabilise the British secret service as a way of getting to Bond. In that film and in *Thunderball*, Blofeld’s face is never seen – he is just a seated figure, stroking a white cat and addressed by his minions as “Number One”, like in the television series *The Prisoner*. In *On Her Majesty’s Secret Service* (after his full-body debut in *You Only Live Twice*) he at last becomes a fully fledged character, based in his mountaintop headquarters in Switzerland, having diversified into germ warfare and “Virus Omega”. Because nine Bond novels had already been published – *Casino Royale* to *Thunderball* – by the time Eon filmed *Dr No* the scriptwriters were able to reconfigure the early novels with SPECTRE rather than SMERSH as the big adversary.

The “manipulation of the two sides” by agents of SPECTRE, in the films, has often taken the form of big technology getting into the wrong hands and a British secret agent returning it to the right hands. The films celebrated big technology even when it ceased to be fashionable to do so in the

1980s, while playing to audience anxieties about where that technology might be leading and who was in control of it. What if a wealthy fanatic or a rogue state got hold of a weapon of mass destruction? Dr No uses his nuclear-powered fortress at Crab Key in Jamaica as a base from which to sabotage the US space programme; Goldfinger wants to irradiate Fort Knox with an atomic bomb (he seems to be working for communist China); in *Thunderball*, hijacked nuclear bombs are pointed at a major city in the US; in *You Only Live Twice*, American and Soviet spaceships are destroyed in an attempt to start a third world war; in *On Her Majesty's Secret Service*, the world is held to ransom by the threat of biological warfare; in *Diamonds Are Forever*, a satellite is host to a deadly laser that threatens to destroy Washington, DC; *The Man with the Golden Gun* concerns a "solex agitator", which can transform the sun's rays into electricity and potentially solve the world's energy crisis.

Since *Golden Gun*, the big threats have included stolen nuclear submarines, deadly poison gas, a top-secret military targeting device, a nuclear bomb on a US military base, an attempt to dominate the microchip market by pulverising Silicon Valley, a process for dissolving heroin in gasoline, a media tycoon who provokes war in order to secure broadcast rights, an undersea bomb that threatens an environmental holocaust and a plot to manipulate climate change.

Stolen atomic bombs, maverick weapons systems in space, biological warfare, multinational computer and media companies, climate change – the anxieties may have moved with the times yet the villains have remained megalomaniacs who have not toiled to earn the rewards of scientific and technological research but have stolen the prototype; they are international gangsters who do not play by the rules and are interested only in profit. So, while Q invents gadgets, Dr No and friends pervert the course of science and technology and prevent our good scientists from making proper use of them. Weapons of mass destruction are OK in our hands but not in theirs.

The recent Daniel Craig films seem to have made a special effort to keep up with the latest anxieties while continuing to personalise them. In the 2006 film *Casino Royale*, Le Chiffre specialises in playing the financial markets by shorting airline stocks; in *Skyfall*, the cyberterrorist Raoul Silva hacks government computers WikiLeaks-style and launches a virus against Bond that was probably inspired by the Stuxnet virus, deployed in 2010 to stymie Iran's nuclear ambitions. In the same film, Q finally graduates from Second World War boffin to 21st-century computer geek.

Meanwhile, the bad guys generally don't live in Führerbunkers any longer but have become peripatetic, operating in several of Fleming's "thrilling cities", which has rather diminished their charisma. *Skyfall* ended not with the blowing up of the villain's lair but with the torching of James Bond's ancestral home in Scotland.

The Bond formula has proved extraordinarily resilient – surviving self-parody, different Bonds and *folie de grandeur* to become by far the most successful franchise in the history of cinema. Who might the villain be in 2015? We know that the film is to be called *SPECTRE* but Christoph Waltz – who is playing a high-up villain in the organisation – has denied in print that his character is called Blofeld: he will go by the name of Franz Oberhauser.

Will the new villain be a nostalgic throwback to the era of the clubland heroes, only this time in inverted commas and without Fleming's chauvinistic reflexes? *Skyfall* was full of references to the back numbers. But the only acceptable Fleming-esque short cuts these days, where the villain is concerned, seem to be to make him or her **a)** a kind of Nazi, like Darth Vader; **b)** a North Korean; **c)** a Mexican drug baron; or **d)** British, gone to the bad. Chinese audiences are now a major commercial consideration (*Skyfall* had scenes removed for release there). Grandstanding Russians are no longer amusing, post-Ukraine crisis. As for crazed Middle Eastern fundamentalists – forget it.

Or will the villain use drones and/or robotic warriors, or manipulate social media for nefarious ends (perhaps to found a bogus

religion), while remaining all but invisible? Will he inhabit a steam-punk world in which Victorian technology has somehow been projected into the present – a collector who is wealthy and mad enough to elide *Chitty Chitty Bang Bang* with *The League of Extraordinary Gentlemen*? Will the plot be a variation on the ancient legend of Theseus and the Minotaur – as Umberto Eco reckoned most of the Bond novels were – with 007/Theseus entering the labyrinth, being distracted along the way by a siren or two, getting captured and possibly tortured, escaping, blowing up the lair at the centre of the labyrinth and getting together with one of the converted sirens for the final joke?

Will *SPECTRE* consist of renegade members of the world's best-known terrorist organisations? That was one of Richard Maibaum's original ideas, among many others, for the 1977 movie *The Spy Who Loved Me*, with the Red Brigade, Black September and other groups known in their day taking over from the Second World War and SMERSH veterans. Broccoli judged this to be "too political" – even then – and vetoed the idea. It was not the right formula for "an exciting Bond movie".

Or, post-Jason Bourne, will the villain be James Bond's alter ego – his inner demon – with the 2015 Bond confronting his unreconstructed clubland predecessor? Who knows? As Bond himself observes in *Casino Royale*, "History is moving pretty quickly these days, and heroes and villains keep changing parts..." ●

Christopher Frayling's latest book is *The Yellow Peril: Dr Fu Manchu and the Rise of Chinaphobia* (Thames & Hudson)

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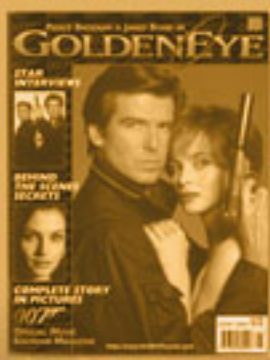
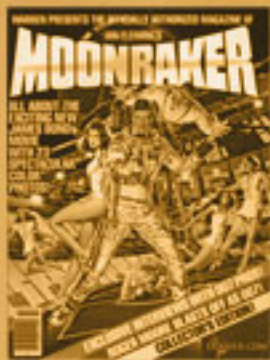
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But Bond is discovered and strapped to a slab with a deadly laser-cutter inching up toward his groin (eek!). 007 is sweating bullets. A frantic Bond will give the evildoer any information he wants, "Do you want me to talk?" But this time, it's Goldfinger who gets the last word: "No, Mr. Bond. (laughs) I expect you to die!" Touche, Mr. G. Touche. Now we expect you to check out the clip. Where you've heard it. Where have you heard this Goldfinger gem? Post with 1473 votes and 80279 views. Tagged with cat; Shared by jilesc. You expect me to talk? No Mr. Bond I expect you to DIE! Ears folded back, lips twitching and eyes that say "Hooman, I will fuckin end you"...yeah. Kind of saw the bite coming. Reply. But the immortal words "No, Mr Bond, I expect you to die" were not actually Fräb's, however, as the German actor's lines were dubbed into English by Michael Collins. Nevertheless the film, in which Auric threatens to destroy 007 with a giant laser, has become so iconic its stars cannot escape the association. Current Bond actor Daniel Craig, whose latest film Skyfall has become the highest-grossing Bond film so far taking more than £100m at the UK box office and £1bn globally, responded to the poll by saying: "Yes, that [quote] would take some beating". Craig makes an appearance in the list of top Bond moments in fourth place for his chase across a building site in Casino Royale; while Roger Moore's daring car jump in The Man With The Golden Gun came fifth.