

= Live and Let Die (film) =

Live and Let Die (1973) is the eighth spy film in the James Bond series to be produced by Eon Productions , and the first to star Roger Moore as the fictional MI6 agent James Bond . Produced by Albert R. Broccoli and Harry Saltzman , it was the third of four Bond films to be directed by Guy Hamilton . Although the producers had wanted Sean Connery to return after his role in the previous Bond film Diamonds Are Forever , he declined , sparking a search for a new actor to play James Bond . Moore was signed for the lead role .

The film is adapted from the novel of the same name by Ian Fleming . In the film , a Harlem drug lord known as Mr. Big plans to distribute two tons of heroin free to put rival drugs barons out of business . Mr. Big is revealed to be the disguised alter ego of Dr. Kananga , a corrupt Caribbean dictator , who rules San Monique , the fictional island where the heroin poppies are secretly farmed . Bond is investigating the deaths of three British agents , leading him to Kananga , and is soon trapped in a world of gangsters and voodoo as he fights to put a stop to the drug baron 's scheme .

Live and Let Die was released during the height of the blaxploitation era , and many blaxploitation archetypes and clichés are depicted in the film , including derogatory racial epithets (" honky ") , black gangsters , and pimpmobiles . It departs from the former plots of the James Bond films about megalomaniac super @-@ villains , and instead focuses on drug trafficking , a common theme of blaxploitation films of the period . It is set in African American cultural centres such as Harlem and New Orleans , as well as the Caribbean Islands . It was also the first James Bond film featuring an African American Bond girl to be romantically involved with 007 , Rosie Carver , who was played by Gloria Hendry . The film was a box office success and received generally positive reviews from critics . It was also nominated for the Academy Award for Best Original Song for " Live and Let Die " , written by Paul and Linda McCartney and performed by their band Wings .

= = Plot = =

Three MI6 agents , including one " on loan " to the American government , are killed under mysterious circumstances within 24 hours of each other in the United Nations , New Orleans and a Caribbean nation , San Monique , while monitoring the operations of the island 's dictator Dr. Kananga . James Bond , agent 007 , is sent to New York City to investigate the first murder . Kananga is also in New York , visiting the United Nations and representing San Monique . Just after Bond arrives , his driver is shot dead by Whisper , one of Kananga 's men , while taking Bond to meet Felix Leiter of the CIA . Bond is nearly killed in the ensuing car crash .

A trace on the killer 's licence plate eventually leads Bond to Mr. Big , a ruthless gangster who runs a chain of Fillet of Soul restaurants throughout the United States . It is here that Bond first meets Solitaire , a beautiful tarot expert who has the power of the Obeah and can see both the future and remote events in the present . Mr. Big , who is actually Kananga in disguise , demands that his henchmen kill Bond , but Bond overpowers them and escapes unscathed . Bond flies to San Monique , where he meets Rosie Carver , a CIA double agent . They meet up with a friend of Bond 's , Quarrel Jr . , who takes them by boat near Solitaire 's home . Bond suspects Rosie of working for Kananga . She is shot dead , remotely , by Kananga , to stop her confessing the truth to Bond . Inside Solitaire 's house , Bond uses a stacked tarot deck of cards , that show only " The Lovers " , to trick her into thinking that seduction is in her future , and then seduces her . Solitaire loses her ability to foretell the future when she loses her virginity to Bond , and decides to co @-@ operate with Bond as she has feelings for him and has grown tired of being controlled by Kananga .

Bond and Solitaire escape by boat and fly to New Orleans . There , Bond is captured by Kananga . It transpires that Kananga is producing two tons of heroin and is protecting the poppy fields by exploiting San Monique locals ' fear of voodoo priest Baron Samedi , and the occult . Through his alter ego , Mr. Big , Kananga plans to distribute the heroin free of charge at his Fillet of Soul restaurants , which will increase the number of addicts . Kananga also believes that other drug dealers , namely the Mafia , cannot compete with his giveaway , to which Kananga can later charge high prices for the heroin , after he has simultaneously cultivated huge drug dependencies and

bankrupted his competitors .

When Kananga finds out that Bond slept with Solitaire , he turns her over to Baron Samedi to be sacrificed . He is angry because her ability to read tarot cards is gone , and he wanted to be the one to take her powers away . Meanwhile , Kananga 's one @-@ armed henchman , Tee Hee Johnson , leaves Bond to be eaten by aligators at a farm in the Louisiana backwoods . Bond escapes by running along the animals ' backs to safety . He sets a drug lab on fire and steals a speedboat . He is then pursued by Kananga 's men , as well as Sheriff J.W. Pepper and the Louisiana State Police .

Back in San Monique , Bond has set timed explosives throughout the poppy fields . He rescues Solitaire from the voodoo sacrifice and throws Samedi into a coffin of poisonous snakes . Bond and Solitaire escape below ground into Kananga 's lair . Kananga captures them both and proceeds to lower them into a shark tank . Bond escapes and forces a shark gun pellet into Kananga 's mouth , causing him to inflate like a balloon , float to the top of the cave , and explode .

After the job is done , Leiter puts Bond and Solitaire onto a train and out of the country . Tee Hee Johnson follows Bond and Solitaire onto the train and tries to kill Bond , but loses his prosthetic arm in a fight with him and is flung out of the window . As the film ends , a laughing Samedi is revealed to be perched on the front of the speeding train .

= = Cast = =

Roger Moore as James Bond : A British agent who is sent on a mission to investigate the murder of three fellow agents .

Yaphet Kotto as Dr. Kananga and Mr. Big . A corrupt Caribbean Prime Minister who doubles as a drug lord .

Jane Seymour as Solitaire : Kananga 's psychic and the love interest of Bond .

Julius Harris as Tee Hee Johnson : Kananga 's henchman who has a pincer for a hand .

David Hedison as Felix Leiter : Bond 's CIA colleague . Leiter is also investigating Mr. Big .

Gloria Hendry as Rosie Carver : A CIA agent in San Monique .

Clifton James as Sheriff J.W. Pepper : An uncouth Louisiana sheriff .

Geoffrey Holder as Baron Samedi : Kananga 's henchman who has ties to the Voodoo occult .

Bernard Lee as M : The Head of the Secret Intelligence Service

Roy Stewart as Quarrel Jr . : Bond 's ally in San Monique and son of Quarrel from Dr. No .

Earl Jolly Brown as Whisper : Kananga 's henchman who only whispers .

Tommy Lane as Adam : One of Dr. Kananga 's henchmen who pursues 007 through the Louisiana Bayou

Lois Maxwell as Miss Moneypenny : M 's secretary .

Madeline Smith as Miss Caruso : An Italian agent whom Bond romances and strips of her clothing by way of his magnetic watch .

= = Production = =

While filming *Diamonds Are Forever* , *Live and Let Die* was chosen as the next Ian Fleming novel to be adapted because screenwriter Tom Mankiewicz thought it would be daring to use black villains , as the Black Panthers and other racial movements were active at this time . Guy Hamilton was again chosen to direct , and since he was a jazz fan , Mankiewicz suggested he film in New Orleans . Hamilton did not want to use Mardi Gras since *Thunderball* featured Junkanoo , a similar festivity , so after more discussions with the writer and location scouting with helicopters , he decided to use two well @-@ known features of the city , the jazz funerals and the canals .

To develop a better feel of how Voodoo was practised , Saltzman and Broccoli escorted Hamilton , Mankiewicz and production designer Syd Cain to scout New Orleans further and then the islands of the West Indies . Haiti was an important destination of the tour and not only did Fleming connect it with the religion , there were many practitioners available to witness . Despite viewing actual demonstrations , due to political unrest in the country at the time , it was decided not to film in Haiti .

While searching for locations in Jamaica , the crew discovered a crocodile farm owned by Ross Kananga , after passing a sign warning that " trespassers will be eaten . " The farm was put into the script and also inspired Mankiewicz to name the film 's villain after Kananga .

= = = Casting = = =

Broccoli and Saltzman tried to convince Sean Connery to return as 007 , but he declined . The two producers then approached Clint Eastwood , who was fresh from his success as Dirty Harry , also turned down the offer , stating that 007 should be played by an Englishman . Among the actors to test for the part of Bond were Julian Glover , John Gavin , Jeremy Brett , Simon Oates , John Ronane , and William Gaunt . The main frontrunner for the role was Michael Billington . United Artists wanted an American to play Bond ; Burt Reynolds , Paul Newman and Robert Redford were all considered . Producer Albert R. Broccoli , however , insisted that the part should be played by a British actor and put forward Roger Moore . After Moore was chosen , Billington remained on the top of the list in the event that Moore would decline to come back for the next film . Billington ultimately played a brief villainous role in the pre @-@ credit sequence of The Spy Who Loved Me (1977) . Moore , who had been considered by the producers before both Dr. No and On Her Majesty 's Secret Service , was ultimately cast . He tried not to imitate either Connery 's or his own prior performance as Simon Templar in The Saint , and Mankiewicz fitted the screenplay into Moore 's persona by giving more comedy scenes and a light @-@ hearted approach to Bond .

Mankiewicz had thought of turning Solitaire into a black woman , with Diana Ross as his primary choice . However , Broccoli and Saltzman decided to stick to Fleming 's description of a white woman , and after thinking of Catherine Deneuve , Jane Seymour , who was in the TV series The Onedin Line , was cast for the role . Yaphet Kotto was cast while doing another movie for United Artists , Across 110th Street . Kotto reported one of the things he liked in the role was Kananga 's interest in the occult , " feeling like he can control past , present and future " .

Mankiewicz created Sheriff J.W. Pepper to add a comic relief character . Portrayed by Clifton James , Pepper appeared again in The Man with the Golden Gun . Live and Let Die is also the first of two films featuring David Hedison as Felix Leiter , who reprised the role in Licence to Kill . Hedison had said " I was sure that would be my first and last " , before being cast again .

Madeline Smith , who played Miss Caruso , sharing Bond 's bed in the film 's opening , was recommended for the part by Roger Moore after he had appeared with her on TV . Smith said that Moore was extremely polite to work with , but she felt very uncomfortable being clad in only blue bikini panties while Moore 's wife was on set overseeing the scene .

This was the only Bond film until 2006 not to feature ' Q ' , played at this stage by Desmond Llewelyn . He was then appearing in the TV series Follyfoot , but was written out of three episodes to appear in the film . By then , Saltzman and Broccoli decided not to include the character , feeling that " too much was being made of the films ' gadgets " , and decided to downplay this aspect of the series , much to Llewelyn 's annoyance .

= = = Filming = = =

Principal photography began in October 1972 , in Louisiana . For a while only the second unit was shot after Moore was diagnosed with kidney stones . In November production moved to Jamaica , which doubled for the fictional San Monique . In December , production was divided between interiors in Pinewood Studios and location shooting in Harlem . The producers were reportedly required to pay protection money to a local Harlem gang to ensure the crew 's safety . When the cash ran out , they were " encouraged " to leave . Some exteriors were in fact shot in Manhattan 's Upper East Side as a result of the difficulties of using real Harlem locations .

Ross Kananga suggested the stunt of Bond jumping on crocodiles , and was enlisted by the producers to perform it . The scene took five takes to be completed , including one in which the last crocodile snapped at Kananga 's heel , tearing his trousers . The production also had trouble with snakes . The script supervisor was so afraid that she refused to be on set with them ; an actor

fainted while filming a scene where he is killed by a snake ; Jane Seymour became terrified as a reptile got closer , and Geoffrey Holder only agreed to fall into the snake @-@ filled casket because Princess Alexandra was visiting the set .

The boat chase was filmed in Louisiana around the Irish Bayou area , with some interruption caused by flooding . Twenty @-@ six boats were built by the Glastron boat company for the film . Seventeen were destroyed during rehearsals . The speedboat jump scene over the bayou , filmed with the assistance of a specially @-@ constructed ramp , unintentionally set a Guinness World Record at the time with 110 feet (34 m) cleared . The waves created by the impact caused the following boat to flip over .

The chase involving the double @-@ decker bus was filmed with a second @-@ hand London bus adapted by having a top section removed , and then placed back in situ running on ball bearings to allow to slide off on impact . The stunts involving the bus were performed by Maurice Patchett , a London Transport bus driving instructor .

= = Music = =

John Barry , who had worked on the previous five themes and orchestrated the " James Bond Theme " , was unavailable during production . Broccoli and Saltzman instead asked Paul McCartney to write the theme song . Since McCartney 's salary was high and another composer could not be hired with the remainder of the music budget , George Martin , who had been McCartney 's producer while with The Beatles , was chosen to write the score for the film . " Live and Let Die " , written by McCartney along with his wife Linda and performed by their group Wings , was the first true rock and roll song used to open a Bond film , and became a major success in the UK (where it reached number nine in the charts) and the US (where it reached number 2 , for three weeks) . It was nominated for an Academy Award but lost to " The Way We Were " . Producers hired B. J. Arnau to record and perform the title song , not realising McCartney intended to perform it himself . Arnau 's version was featured in the film itself , when the singer performed it in a night club which Bond attends .

The Olympia Brass Band has a notable part in " Live and Let Die " , where they lead a funeral march for a (soon to be) assassination victim . Trumpeter Alvin Alcorn plays the killer . The piece of music the band plays at the beginning of the funeral march is " Just a Closer Walk with Thee " . After the agent is stabbed , the band starts playing the more lively " Joe Avery 's Piece " (aka " New Second Line ") .

= = Release = =

The film was released in the United States on 27 June 1973 . The world premiere was at Odeon Leicester Square in London on 6 July 1973 , with general release in the United Kingdom on the same day . From a budget of around \$ 7 million , (\$ 37 million in 2016 dollars) the film grossed \$ 161 @. @ 8 million (\$ 862 million in 2016 dollars) worldwide .

The film holds the record for the most viewed broadcast film on television in the United Kingdom by attracting 23 @. @ 5 million viewers when premiered on ITV on 20 January 1980 .

= = Reception = =

Despite poor reaction to the racial overtones , reviews were mostly positive , with praise for the action scenes , and Rotten Tomatoes gave the film a 66 % " fresh " rating .

Ian Nathan of Empire magazine wrote " This is good quality Bond , managing to reinterpret the classic moves - action , deduction , seduction - for a more modern idiom without breaking the mould . On one side we get the use of alligators as stepping stones and the pompous pitbull of rootin ' tootin ' Sheriff Pepper caught up in the thrilling boat chase . On the other , the genuine aura of threat through weird voodoo henchman Tee Hee and the leaning toward - what 's this ? - realism in Mr Big 's plot to take over the drug trade from the Mafia . " He concluded that " Moore had got his feet

under the table . "

Roger Ebert of the Chicago Sun @-@ Times stated that Moore " has the superficial attributes for the job : The urbanity , the quizzically raised eyebrow , the calm under fire and in bed " . However , he felt that Moore wasn 't satisfactory in living up to the legacy left by Sean Connery in the preceding films . He rated the villains " a little banal " , adding that the film " doesn 't have a Bond villain worthy of the Goldfingers , Dr. Nos and Oddjobs of the past . " Chris Nashawaty similarly argues that Dr. Kananga / Mr. Big is the worst villain of the Roger Moore James Bond films . BBC Films reviewer William Mager praised the use of locations , but said that the plot was " convoluted " . He stated that " Connery and Lazenby had an air of concealed thuggishness , clenched fists at the ready , but in Moore 's case a sardonic quip and a raised eyebrow are his deadliest weapons " . Reviewer Leonard Maltin rated the film two and a half stars out of four , describing it as a " barely memorable , overlong James Bond movie " that " seems merely an excuse to film wild chase sequences " . Danny Peary noted that Jane Seymour portrays " one of the Bond series 's most beautiful heroines " but had little praise for Moore , whom he described as making " an unimpressive debut as James Bond in Tom Mankiewicz 's unimaginative adaptation of Ian Fleming 's second novel ? The movie stumbles along most of the way . It 's hard to remember Moore is playing Bond at times ? in fact , if he and Seymour were black , the picture could pass as one of the black exploitation films of the day . There are few interesting action sequences ? a motorboat chase is trite enough to begin with , but the filmmakers make it worse by throwing in some stupid Louisiana cops , including pot @-@ bellied Sheriff Pepper . "

IGN ranked Solitaire as 10th in a Top 10 Bond Babes list . In November 2006 , Entertainment Weekly listed Live and Let Die as the third best Bond film . MSN chose it as the thirteenth best Bond film and IGN listed it as twelfth best .