

= The International (2009 film) =

The International is a 2009 German ? American political thriller drama film directed by Tom Tykwer . The film follows an Interpol agent and an American district attorney who investigate corruption within the IBBC , a fictional merchant bank based in Luxembourg . It serves organized crime and corrupt governments as a banker and as an arms broker . The bank 's ruthless managers assassinate potential threats including their own employees .

Inspired by the Bank of Credit and Commerce International (BCCI) scandal of the 1980s , the film 's script , written by Eric Warren Singer , raises concerns about how global finance affects international politics across the world . Production began in Berlin in September 2008 , including the construction of a life @-@ size replica of the Guggenheim Museum in New York for the film 's climactic shoot @-@ out scene . The film opened the 59th Berlin International Film Festival on 5 February 2009 . Reviews were mixed : some praised the sleek appearance and prescient themes ? The Guardian called it a thriller with " brainpower as well as firepower " ? but The New Yorker criticised the development of the characters .

= = Plot = =

Louis Salinger , of Interpol , and Eleanor Whitman , an Assistant District Attorney from Manhattan , are investigating the International Bank of Business and Credit (IBBC) , which funds activities such as money laundering , terrorism , arms trading , and the destabilization of governments . Salinger 's and Whitman 's investigation takes them from Berlin to Milan , where the IBBC assassinates Umberto Calvini , an arms manufacturer who is an Italian prime ministerial candidate . The bank 's assassin diverts suspicion to a local assassin with political connections , who is promptly killed by a corrupt policeman . Salinger and Whitman get a lead on the second assassin , but the corrupt policeman shows up again and orders them out of the country . At the airport they are able to check the security camera footage for clues on the whereabouts on the bank 's assassin , and follow a suspect to New York .

In New York , Salinger and Whitman are met by two New York Police Department (NYPD) detectives , Iggy Ornelas and Bernie Ward , who have a photograph of the assassin 's face when he arrived in New York airport . Salinger , Ornelas , and Ward locate Dr. Isaacson to whose practice the assassin 's leg brace has been traced . They find the assassin and follow him to the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum .

Jonas Skarssen , the chairman of the IBBC , reveals to his senior men White and Wexler that the bank had Calvini killed so that they could deal with his sons to buy missile guidance systems in which the bank has invested . Since the bank knows that Salinger and Whitman are close to finding their assassin , they send a hit team to kill him at a meeting between him and his handler , Wexler . Wexler leaves and is arrested by Ornelas . As Salinger speaks to the assassin , a spectacular gunfight at the Guggenheim erupts when a number of gunmen attempt to kill them with automatic weapons . They escape , but the assassin is mortally wounded .

In interrogation , Wexler , a former Stasi colonel , explains to Salinger that the IBBC is practically untouchable because of its utility to terrorist organizations , drug cartels , governments , and powerful corporations of all complexions . Even if he succeeds in bringing the IBBC down there are hundreds of other banks which will replace them . If Salinger wants justice , he needs to go outside the system , and Wexler indicates a willingness to help . In Italy , Salinger tells the Calvini brothers of the IBBC 's responsibility for their father 's murder , prompting them to cancel the deal with the bank and have White killed .

Salinger then accompanies Wexler to Istanbul , where Skarssen is buying the crucial components from their only other manufacturer . Salinger attempts to record the conversation so that he can obstruct the deal by proving to the buyers that the missiles will be useless , but he ultimately fails . Both Wexler and Skarssen are then killed by a hitman contracted by Enzo and Mario Calvini to avenge their father 's murder by the bank . Salinger is left stunned , his investigation , pursuit , and determination to bring down the IBBC , have led him to nothing .

During the closing credits , it is indicated that the bank is successfully continuing with its operations despite the death of its Chairman ? as Skarssen had predicted to Salinger before he was killed . However with the new and more aggressive chairman , it is hinted that the IBBC 's increased expansion and aggression will ultimately lead to its downfall , as shown by the last panel , revealing the beginnings of a United States Senate investigation , headed by Whitman .

= = Cast = =

Clive Owen as Louis Salinger
Naomi Watts as Eleanor Whitman
Armin Mueller @-@ Stahl as Wilhelm Wexler
Ulrich Thomsen as Jonas Skarssen
Brían F. O 'Byrne as The Consultant
Michel Voletti as Viktor Haas
Patrick Baladi as Martin White
Jay Villiers as Francis Ehames
Fabrice Scott as Nicolai Yeshinski
Haluk Bilginer as Ahmet Sunay
Luca Barbareschi as Umberto Calvini
Alessandro Fabrizi as Inspector Alberto Cerutti
Felix Solis as Detective Iggy Ornelas
Jack McGee as Detective Bernie Ward
Nilaja Sun as Detective Gloria Hubbard
Steven Randazzo as Al Moody
Tibor Feldman as Dr. Isaacson
James Rebhorn as New York D.A.
Remy Auberjonois as Sam Purvitz
Ian Burfield as Thomas Schumer
Axel Milberg as Klaus Diemer
Ben Whishaw as Rene Antall

= = Production = =

The screenplay was written by Eric Warren Singer after he developed an interest in the banking scandals from the 1980s and 90s , he was looking for " a paranoid thriller vibe " from that period ; " The Godfather III was really the only film up to this point that dealt with the banking scandals , because it was really gangster warfare on a corporate level , and I thought that was the best part of the film . " Later reviewers compared it directly to The Parallax View (1974) and All The President 's Men (1976) . Ridley Scott initially expressed an interest in directing the film , and the studio agreed to finance the project , only for Scott to drop out . A year later Tom Tykwer got involved through his agent , but decided a contemporary setting would work better . In April 2007 , Clive Owen agreed to perform in The International . He said the script interested him because he was reminded of " those ' 70s paranoia pictures " and because it combined a factual , intelligent basis with an international thriller plot . The following July , actress Naomi Watts was cast opposite Owen . In August , the film received US \$ 5 @.@ 4 million from the German Federal Film Fund toward its budget . The following month its funding increased to \$ 7 @.@ 9 million , based on the board 's assessment that two @-@ thirds of The International would be produced in Germany and that a number of Germans were in important roles , such as actors Armin Mueller @-@ Stahl and Axel Milberg , cinematographer Frank Griebe , and production designer Uli Hanisch . Filming began in Berlin on 10 September 2007 . Part of the production took place in Babelsberg Studios .

Clive Owen called the shoot @-@ out scene " one of the most exquisitely executed sequences I 've been involved in " . Tom Tykwer planned the scene in detail and toured the museum with the principals months in advance . The lobby entrance scene was filmed in the Solomon R.

Guggenheim Museum in New York , but for the shooting sequences a one hundred and eighteen foot wide , life @-@ size replica , including an audio visual exhibition with works of Julian Rosefeldt , was built in Germany . This set was too large for the studio , so it was instead built in a disused locomotive warehouse outside Berlin ; its construction took ten weeks . Having filmed in the real museum interior and on the sound stage in Germany , the film crew had to track the lights and camera angles carefully throughout to ensure continuity . The scene includes a sequence in which the protagonist sends a huge art @-@ chandelier hanging from the ceiling crashing to the ground ; the entire stunt was created using computer generated imagery .

= = Themes = =

Clive Owen , discussing the film 's relevance , said it " ultimately does ask questions about whether banks use people 's money appropriately , and if they 're completely sound institutions . " More baldly put , Philip French , reviewing the film in The Observer , surmised the sentiment as " Let 's kill all the bankers " , a modern day version of Dick the Butcher 's " First thing we do , let 's kill all the lawyers " from Shakespeare 's Henry the Sixth , Part II . Salinger 's (Owen) central revelation is that the world is governed by anonymous forces , staffed by disposable individuals . The powerlessness of the ordinary citizen is symbolised by the huge , impersonal buildings that the villains inhabit .

The film draws on a number of macabre incidents from international banking : the Bank of Credit and Commerce International crisis in 1991 , the murder of Roberto Calvi , an alleged banker to the Sicilian Mafia , in London in 1982 , and the assassination by poisoning of Georgi Markov in London in 1978 . The bank is making large loans to rogue states and simultaneously acting as their munitions broker . The script offers the chilling insight that the creditors are the real winners of any conflict . A.O. Scott commented on the opportunity to make a film critical of international finance , " that multinational weapons manufacturers can be portrayed as more decent , civic @-@ minded and principled than global financiers surely says something about the state of the world . "

= = Reception = =

= = = Box office = = =

The International was first screened on 5 February 2009 at the 59th Berlin International Film Festival and was released in the United States and Canada on 13 February 2009 . In a six @-@ week run in America , it earned \$ 25 million at the box office . It was released in Australia on 19 February and the United Kingdom on 27 February 2009 . Its total theatrical earnings worldwide were \$ 60 @, @ 161 @, @ 391 .

It was released in France under the title " L 'Enquête " (" The Investigation ") on 11 March 2009 , it earned ? 264 @, @ 054 during a three @-@ week theatrical release .

Reviewers called the film " topical " and " remarkably prescient " , due to its release just after the financial crisis of 2007 ? 08 during the start of the Great Recession . The film was released on DVD and Blu @-@ ray in the United States on 9 June 2009 . It contains a digital copy for portable devices .

= = = Critical reception = = =

The International has received mixed to positive reviews from critics . Based on a sample of 201 reviews the film has a 59 % rating on Rotten Tomatoes and has been certified " Rotten " . The consensus statement reads " The International boasts some electric action sequences and picturesque locales , but is undone by its preposterous plot . " Metacritic gives the film a 52 % rating based on 34 reviews .

In his review for The Guardian , Peter Bradshaw wrote , " I felt occasionally that Owen 's rumpled

performance is in danger of becoming a little one @-@ note ... but this is still an unexpectedly well made thriller with brainpower as well as firepower ". Philip French , in his review for The Observer , called the film a " slick , fast @-@ moving conspiracy thriller " and the gunfight in the Guggenheim " spectacular " . In his review for The Independent , Anthony Quinn wrote , " It 's reasonably efficient , passably entertaining , and strenuously playing catch @-@ up with the Bourne movies : flat @-@ footed Owen doesn 't look as good as Matt Damon sprinting through city streets , and the editing doesn 't match Paul Greengrass 's whiplash pace " . The New Yorker magazine 's David Denby wrote , " And there 's a big hole in the middle of the movie : the director , Tom Tykwer , and the screenwriter , Eric Warren Singer , forgot to make their two crusaders human beings " . In his review for The New York Post , Lou Lumenick wrote , " There , an anticlimactic rooftop chase reminds us that Tykwer , the German director who reinvented the Euro thriller with Run , Lola , Run a decade ago , has been far surpassed by Paul Greengrass and the Bourne adventures , yet thankfully lacking the rampant and nonsensical roller @-@ coaster style of editing , where no shot lingers for longer than a nano @-@ second . " . A.O. Scott , in his review for The New York Times , wrote , " The International , in contrast , is so undistinguished that the moments you remember best are those that you wish another , more original director had tackled " . Citing the climatic shoot @-@ out in the Guggenheim , hailed by other critics as spectacular , Scott wonders if another , such as Brian de Palma could have " turned into a fugue of architectural paranoia " ?

In his review for the Los Angeles Times , Kenneth Turan wrote , " It 's got some effective moments and aspects , but the film goes in and out of plausibility , and its elements never manage to unify into a coherent whole " . Claudia Puig , in her review for USA Today , wrote , " The dialogue by screenwriter Eric Warren Singer is spotty . There are some great , pithy lines and others whose attempt at profundity ring false " . Roger Ebert gave the film three out of four stars and wrote , " Clive Owen makes a semi @-@ believable hero , not performing too many feats that are physically unlikely . He 's handsome and has the obligatory macho stubble , but he has a quality that makes you worry a little about him " . Entertainment Weekly gave the film a " B ? " rating and Lisa Schwarzbaum wrote , " the star of the pic may well be NYC 's Guggenheim Museum and Istanbul 's Grand Bazaar , both of which figure in cool action chase sequences that pay handsome dividends " .

The film earned an average rating of three stars from five from French critics according to AlloCiné . Le Monde , which gave the film one star , said that the modern , destructive forces of political fantasy and derivative finance which power the film 's plot should have created sparks , " but in reality , the film trudges along . While the film constituted a thrilling geographic tour of the genre tropes , it forgot to focus on characters and mood . "