

THE BROTHERS GRIMSBY (2016) - RT: 1 hr 23 mins

- Released March 11th, 2016
- Louis Letierre directed
- 35 million budget
- Columbia Pictures

QUICK OVERALL THOUGHTS

- MARISA:
 - Should've known the ridiculousness that I was walking into/sat through. Wanted to walk out.
- PHIL:
 - I enjoyed it overall but I think Cohen suffers from putting in too many literal dick jokes
 - I laughed so hard when "The-rapist" joke played
 - It was overall quick and fun but uncomfortable at times to watch

DEVELOPMENT

- In October 2013, Sacha Baron Cohen was spotted attending a football match between Grimsby Town and Cambridge United. Baron Cohen, who was dressed in a Grimsby shirt, was also spotted talking with Town fans in a nearby pub after the game. It was later confirmed that he was scouting towns for the film, and had also checked out Scunthorpe, Hull and Newcastle in order to find inspiration for his new role.
- On 3 December 2013, Louis Leterrier was set to direct

WRITING (Sacha Baron Cohen, Phil Johnston, Peter Baynham)

- Loved the word "Grimsby" - Melded the accents. Yorkshire, Bolton accents together.
- *Johnston- Cedar Rapids, The Brothers Grimsby & Zootopia*
- "You could not have two more radically different movies. One is for my parents and kids to see and one is for my dirty-minded friends. I've been on GRIMSBY for a lot longer. I don't think WRECK-IT RALPH had even come out when I pitched Sacha Baron Cohen the idea. We started working on it probably in 2012." - Johnston
- Idea was: If you took James Bond, who would be his most embarrassing brother?
- Anthony Hines- Producer - did a lot of on-set writing, helping the improv and stuff like that.
- Adam McKay was there helping a lot with the writing
- Repellent scene- It actually turned out as well or better than I ever could have imagined. I hate to admit it, but that's true.
- Just as in his previous films, Baron Cohen puts the emphasis on a commitment to making the character seem as real as possible. "When writing for Ali G and Borat and Bruno, everything had to be believable. Ali G or Borat could never do anything out of character," he says. "So when it comes to writing our movies, everything comes from that kind of basis, that pure idea - what would the character do? Sometimes we think of really funny jokes, but they wouldn't come out of that character's mouth. It has to be

authentic and believable, so we create this real world around the characters for the comedy to exist in."

- "When Sacha makes a movie, there's not a quota of outrageousness, but there is a quota of comedy," says Todd Schulman, Baron Cohen's producing partner. "It is a credit to Sacha's ambition and creates a huge challenge for everyone involved, because he is always pushing to make the scene funnier, to take it further, to make it bigger and better."

STORY/CAST (Casting Director Lucy Bevan)

- POINT OF DISCUSSION: Comparing his "episodic" vs scripted/plotted work: He seems boxed in, rather than liberated by, the spy movie, which of course is already self-parodying, as illustrated in the opener of "Grimsby," which crams an entire franchise of action-movie clichés under the credits
- POINT OF DISCUSSION: Brothers story?
- POINT OF DISCUSSION: Favorite moments
- For the movie, creating a world of spies as real, as believable, was as serious as for any action franchise. In short, it couldn't be a spy spoof. "We wanted to create a real action movie, with the stakes, the great stunts, and the jeopardy of a real action movie - and then throw an idiotic character in the middle of that, and see how that character changes the course of the movie," says Baron Cohen.
- Brought in tough kids from real working class backgrounds, North England. Shot interior scenes in South Africa with these kids
- An early contender for the Mark Strong role was Colin Farrell, who, according to the emails, performed well in test screenings. Colin was by far the funniest. Farrell turned down the role
- Guy Pearce and Clive Owen were also both contenders
- Had 4 weeks of rehearsal
- On 25 April, Annabelle Wallis joined the cast of the film
- On 11 June, Ian McShane, Gabourey Sidibe, David Harewood, and Johnny Vegas joined the cast
- On 12 June, Baron Cohen's wife Isla Fisher joined him in the film to play a supporting role
- The story of Gabourey Sidibe joining the cast is a tale that could have been written by an old-school Hollywood publicist. At the exclusive Academy Awards party thrown by Madonna and her manager, Guy Oseary, there were Sidibe and Baron Cohen, one Oscar nominee chatting up another (Sidibe's nomination is for her performance in Precious; Baron Cohen's for writing the screenplay for Borat), about a role in an upcoming movie. "He was telling me how funny he thought I was, and I didn't believe him," says Sidibe. "But he asked me if I could do an African accent, so I lied and said yes, and then he asked me who represents me, and I was there with my manager, so I pointed her out and they talked. Two weeks later, my manager emails me - 'remember that movie you talked to Sacha Baron Cohen about at the party?' Well, I guess he was serious and he really did think I was funny."

SACHA BARON COHEN (NOBBY)

- *Da Ali G Show, Borat, Bruno, The Dictator*
- Fan of Monty Python. Have written sketches since 7 years old
- Went up to the North of England to hang out with a lot of real-life Nobby's. Went under cover to get into character- set up a bunch of interviews with real people as Nobby, and then I workshop the character that way.
- "Creative, unique. Something alluring about comedy and can make you laugh"- Strong about Cohen
- The look of Sacha Baron Cohen's character, most particularly the hair and sideburns, is heavily reflective of that of Liam Gallagher, frontman of world famous 90s - 00s rock band Oasis
- "Watching Sacha do comedy is like watching Michael Jordan shoot hoops," says Isla Fisher, who plays Jodie, Sebastian's love interest in the film. "It is an education in how to be hilarious and I've learned so much. For the rest of us, though, we had to play it straight - Sacha's character is so heightened that we needed the whole rest of the world to feel very real."
- Sacha Baron Cohen plays the part of the older brother of Mark Strong's character but is in fact eight years younger than him
- Nobby Butcher's spy voice and persona are spoof of Sean Connery's interpretation and characterization of James Bond

MARK STRONG (SEBASTIAN)

- *Kingsman, Imitation Game, Low Winter Sun, Zero Dark Thirty, John Carter*
- On 24 April 2014, Mark Strong joined the film to play a British black-ops spy and brother of Baron Cohen's character
- "I had to do a lot more action than I had to do in other films. This one was different because there's a ton of action and involved and also a kind of anarchic comedy that Sacha Baron Cohen loves to create. There was never a dull moment on set."
- ELEPHANT SCENE: sleeping bag-sized silicon sheath basically. And we had to cuddle like lovers for about three days because there was absolutely no room in there (the set of the elephant's uterus) to stretch out or even lie side-by-side. You've got to suffer for your art. We were in a very hot, very wet, very sticky, uncomfortable environment for three days in order to mine for the laughs.
- "We cast someone who we thought could actually be cast in a real action franchise, and Mark Strong is that guy," says Baron Cohen. "He's incredibly tough. He does all his own stunts. He's a brilliant fighter. And he's totally real - you completely believe him."
- "I knew Sacha's past films, but I didn't know what it would entail, to be honest," says Mark Strong, about joining a Sacha Baron Cohen comedy. "The process is quite extraordinary. Sacha is on a mission to poke fun at everything he can and create disorder wherever possible. But within that anarchy, the process of finding the laughs is actually quite scientific. There's a very structured narrative and the writers are specific

about the lines they write and the words you speak. If I missed a word here or there, it's important, because the word is in there so that the comedy flows and works in that way."

- With Sacha Baron Cohen's surreal mind, as a co-writer of the screenplay, he dreamed up quite a bit of punishment for the actors. "One particular day, Sacha fell on me and smashed a bottle over my head repeatedly," says Mark Strong. "Then I was drowned in a car; I was trapped in a tiny, sleeping bag-sized costume; I had a day on the African plain in freezing cold winds; and I was subjected to three days in a small house with Nobby's entire family. It wasn't just Sebastian enduring these tasks - it was me."

REBEL WILSON (DAWN GROBHAM)

- *Pitch Perfect, How to Be Single, Night at the Museum 3, Pain & Gain, Bridesmaids*
- Rebel Wilson started work on this picture around just a fortnight after completing her duties on *Pitch Perfect 2*

PENELOPE CRUZ (RHONDA GEORGE)

- *Vanilla Sky, Blow, Zoolander 2, Vicky Cristina Barcelona, Sahara,*
- The villain
- Rhonda George is the name of Sacha Baron Cohen's real-life personal assistant
- "I was excited about being part of this movie because there's no one like Sacha," says Cruz. "It's fun to let go of your inhibitions."

TRIVIA/EASTER EGGS

- Sony's Spain director Ivan Losada - "objected to the fact that the final World Cup football match was between England and Germany, writing: "not having Spain playing the finals is just not realistic"
- The referee in the final football match of the tournament is an actual professional referee, Jabulani Mahono, who officiates in the South African Premier Soccer League and National First Division matches

DIRECTING (LOUIS LETERRIER)

- Directed *Now You See Me, Clash Of The Titans, The Incredible Hulk, Transporter 2, Unleashed, Transporter*
- The filmmakers approached Louis Leterrier - one of the most in-demand action-film directors (*Now You See Me, The Transporter*), to take the helm. Leterrier says that when he was approached to direct *Grimsby*, he was gratified by the chance to work with a star he had long admired. "I remember, at the beginning of the DVD era, people were passing around DVD box sets of 'The Ali G Show' - 'Have you seen this stuff?'" Leterrier recalls. "I remember going to see *Borat* on the day it came out - the 11 am show, first show, and crying laughing, and going to see it again that weekend with friends. That's what I love about Sacha's movies - you want to be the first one to see it, and then you want to bring your friends to see their reaction. I was quite starstruck with Sacha, because he was one of the guys that I truly admired."

- Louis Leterrier, the movie's director, says that shooting comedy was unlike any other kind of filmmaking he's ever done before. "I had longer takes, 45 minute takes. I was putting several cameras on a scene, doing crossing overs. It was a new kind of filmmaking for me," Leterrier says. But that's what you have to do when Sacha Baron Cohen is performing. "In this movie, he's like a stream of consciousness - he never stops. He has a surreal mind."
- Of director Louis Leterrier, actress Isla Fisher, who had previously collaborated with Leterrier on *Now You See Me*, said: "It's great to see him branching out and doing comedy, because Louis has a fresh and exciting way of shooting things," she says. "He keeps the camera continually moving - it has a mercurial, animal feel. He can create this spy world but still has a great sense of humor."
- "Whatever Sacha asks of other actors, he'll do ten times worse. Sacha will do anything to get a laugh," says director Louis Leterrier. Plus, Leterrier explains, he wasn't about to let the actors get all the fun - the director thought it was only fair that he himself endure whatever he was requiring of Baron Cohen and Strong. "When they were wet, I was wet. When they were cold, I was cold. When they were naked, I was naked. Sacha was one of the writers of the movie, so he was prepared, but I didn't want Mark to feel abused. So, I was with him in there."
- Studied filmmaking in NYU

PRODUCTION/CINEMATOGRAPHY (Oliver Wood)

- *Fantastic Four, Anchorman 2, Safe House, Other Guys, Step Brothers, Scooby Doo 2, I Spy*
- Ilya Naishuller (*Hardcore Henry*) consulted on the POV (point of view) shots in some of the action scenes. He was invited to work on the film but ended up as a consultant due to schedule conflicts
- Principal photography of the film commenced on 4 June, at North Weald railway station, and around the Epping Forest area in Essex, England
- The shooting lasted for six weeks in the UK and then moved to South Africa
- Didn't have a big budget, but wanted an action-style film. "But we realized if we create this new style of action, this POV shooter kind of action, we could make the action film more visceral and alive. I saw this video online called "Bad Mother F*cker" that had point of view action. And we called the guy up and said "Hey we want you to help us on this movie." "And we got the main stunt guy who does the stunts for the Marvel movies, you know he's the real Captain America, and we got him out and got him to choreograph real four-minute scenes. And have people do some of these things for real. And we thought, alright, if we can actually do that, that would be a much more visceral experience and make the action feel old fashioned." - Cohen
- "What happens is we write the basic scene, we shoot the basic scene a few times, and then we say, "okay let's do a completely improvised take." Then we do variations of the scene, try to change the dynamics, try and change the lines with particular jokes, and we try to give ourselves as much space as possible with the particular scene, so that the best idea will come out."

EDITING (Jonathan Amos, Evan Henke, James Thomas)

- Jonathan - *Scott Pilgrim*
- Evan - *Muppets, The Interview, Inglourious Basterds, For a Good Time Call...*
- James - *Borat, Bruno, Hot Tub Time Machine, Muppets, Fanboys*
- Had a lot of issues with the NPAA making sure the movie was not NC-17. Had to shorten the elephant scene to 3 ½ mins
- Cohen had a 6 month fight with MPAA (unelected officials as he calls them)
 - Violence vs sex

SOUND/MUSIC (David Buckley, Erran Baron Cohen)

- David - *The Good Wife, The Town*
- Erran - *Borat, Bruno, Dictator*
- Ed Sheeran's New Album- one of the songs in the new album will be featured in the forthcoming film "The Brothers Grimsby." The said song will be part of the film's official soundtrack.

MARKETING

- On 13 February 2014, the film moved from Paramount Pictures to Columbia Pictures, and it was announced that the film would be released in the U.S. on 31 July 2015
- On 21 January 2015, the film's U.S. release date was moved back to 26 February 2016
- The film was then scheduled to be released on 4 March 2016, but was again moved back, to 11 March 2016
- One of the film's main movie posters, featuring Nobby, Rebel Wilson, and Gabourey Sidibe, is a parody of a typical James Bond movie poster with the Bond character depicted alongside two Bond Girls
- Sony pulled back on promotion for the movie due to the Donald Trump controversy
- Kim K shared videos and photos of her family watching the movie before it came out and were laughing hysterically:
<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/video/news/video-1271137/Kim-Kardashian-shares-reaction-Brothers-Grimsby-movie.html>
- Presented as Ali G at the Oscars and commented racial issues and promoted this movie
 - Oscars didn't want him to do it, but he snuck into a bathroom with his wife for 45 minutes to change
- Did a parody announcement like Apple would do to promote movie
(<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0vuFV7iWP94>)
- Appeared as various past characters to promote the movie (Borat on Jimmy Kimmel)

BOX OFFICE/RECEPTION

- Domestic: As of March 23th, \$6,527,980
- Foreign: \$16,700,000
- Worldwide: \$23,227,980
- Domestic Summary

- Opening Weekend: \$\$\$3,258,327
 - (#8 rank, 2,235 theaters, \$1,458 average)
- Widest Release: 2,235 theaters
- In Release: 6 days / 0.9 weeks
- It was originally projected to gross \$7–8 million in its opening weekend
- Finished 8th at the box office
- *Forbes* attributed the film's poor opening to its British content and marketing tactics alienating American audiences, much like *Eddie the Eagle* several weeks prior, with *Deadline.com* adding some possibly saw the film as Baron Cohen "doing the same shtick."
- Sony Pictures' distribution head said, "[We] certainly wanted more... we tried to crack the code on it, but it just didn't happen for us."
- On Rotten Tomatoes, the film has a rating of 38%, based on 114 reviews
- Consensus reads, "*The Brothers Grimsby* showers viewers with a steady stream of Sacha Baron Cohen's edgy humor, but too many gags hit the wrong side of the line between audacious and desperate."
- Audiences polled by CinemaScore gave the film an average grade of "B+"
- Scene in which Donald Trump contracts HIV, a development that's offensive to both Donald Trump and people with HIV. Sony- is reportedly trying to bury the film now that Trump has become the likely Republican Presidential nominee. The studio has reportedly cut down on marketing the film
- A number of residents of Grimsby were angry with Baron Cohen portraying their town as a rubbish-strewn, violent ghetto in which drunks urinate from windows and mothers hand children cans of beer in the street
 - Once this film was announced, the mayor of Grimsby produced a promotional film showing Grimsby as a nice place to live, not as depicted in Cohen's movie
- Film opened on 11 March 2016 alongside *10 Cloverfield Lane*, *The Young Messiah* and *The Perfect Match*
- Not screened in advance for critics
- Never did a sequel (wanted to do that with Borat but at the time it seemed "stupid")

FINAL THOUGHTS