

THE MUMMY (2017)

- Released by June 9th, 2017
- 1 hour 50 minutes
- \$125,000,000 (estimated) budget
- Alex Kurtzman directed
- Universal distributed, produced by Perfect World Pictures, Secret Hideout, Conspiracy Factory, Sean Daniel Company
- Rated PG-13 for violence, action and scary images, and for some suggestive content and partial nudity

QUICK THOUGHTS:

- Demetri Panos
- Phil Svitek
- Marisa Serafini

DEVELOPMENT

- Filmmaker Sean Daniel, who has had quite a storied history of his own with Universal—serving in 1985 as the youngest production president since the studio began—has been fascinated with the subject material since he was a boy. Not only did he produce the most recent Mummy trilogy, the now-independent producer approached Universal more than four years ago about reimagining and rebooting the anti-hero for a new generation of audiences...ones ready to be transfixed and terrified by this dark creature, just as generations before them had
- It was Daniel's deep belief that this immortal character—who speaks to us all in the darkest of the night—draws us under its spell. Indeed, it's drawn this godfather of the modern Mummy movies back to fascinating source material since 1994. "From my early days at Universal, I've advocated that we continue to be in the Mummy business. I feel that this character speaks to people's sense of what life and death are about, and who has the power over that," the producer reflects. "It's mysterious, dark, exciting and scary. Over the years, I have always wanted to see Mummy movies in theaters, and that's why I've championed them. I just believe in monster movies as a genre, and that these compelling characters and stories are meant for global audiences."
- Once the Universal-based team of director/producer Alex Kurtzman and producer Chris Morgan, who serve as the narrative architects of the Universal monsters saga—partnered with Daniel, it was decided that *The Mummy* would be the first chapter in Universal's new series
- Over the course of development of *The Mummy*, global superstar Tom Cruise, who portrays soldier of fortune Nick Morton, joined the production as star and creative partner. As did his fellow collaborators, Cruise offers that he grew up watching monster movies, and that not only inspired him to become an entertainer, but it is what drove him to this particular labor of love. "I love *The Wolf Man*, *Dracula* and *The Mummy*," he says. "It was terrifying as a child seeing these films. This movie is genuinely terrifying as well, yet it has the kind of scope and elegance of the original ones."
- In their initial conversations, Cruise and his producers made a pact to honor the tradition of these monster movies, and respect what the characters mean to audiences...while giving them something entirely unexpected. Explains Cruise: "You want to see the monsters win. That's what is interesting about the way these stories are told. They both terrify us and yet you feel sympathy for them. It's transcendent."
- The producers appreciated Cruise's involvement at every step of the process in making *The Mummy* a reinvention, one that drew its key elements from the cinematic canon. "In pre-production, Tom would gather us together to watch films such as *The Shining* and *Seven*," recounts Daniel. "He drove everyone to think creatively throughout all phases of pre-production, shooting and post."
- Universal Pictures first announced plans for a modern day reboot of *The Mummy* franchise in 2012
- The project went through multiple directors, with Len Wiseman leaving the project in 2013, and a second director, Andrés Muschietti, in 2014

WRITING (David Koepp, Christopher McQuarrie, Dylan Kussman, Jon Spaihts, Alex Kurtzman, and Jenny Lumet)

- The movie already had a close collaborator of Cruise's signed on as a screenwriter before the actor came aboard, Christopher McQuarrie, who has written and directed Cruise movies "Jack Reacher," "Mission: Impossible — Rogue Nation," and the upcoming "Mission: Impossible 6." But Cruise then brought on two more screenwriters to beef up his role.
- *"His writers beefed up his part. In the original script, Morton and the Mummy (played by Sofia Boutella) had nearly equal screen time. The writers also added a twist that saw Cruise's character become possessed, to give him more of a dramatic arc. Even though Universal executives weren't thrilled about the story — which feels disjointed and includes Russell Crowe as Dr. Jekyll — they went along with Cruise's vision."*

STORY/TOPICS

- Defining original franchise and comparing to this one
- Was the mummy strong enough?
- Who was truly the mummy?
- Love story
- Motives of Nick
- Vail as a exposition vehicle
- Action pieces
- Tie in with dark universe
- The ending? Strong enough?

CAST:

- To portray the two female leads, the team would turn to Sofia Boutella, the breakout star of Kingsman: The Secret Service and Star Trek Beyond, as well as Annabelle Wallis, who was riveting with her portrayals in King Arthur and television's Peaky Blinders. "With Sofia as The Mummy, Ahmanet, and Annabelle Wallis as Egyptologist Jenny," Cruise commends, "the women in this film are both strong, powerful, smart, and driven."

TOM CRUISE (Nick Morton)

- In 1976, if you had told fourteen year-old Franciscan seminary student Thomas Cruise Mapother IV that one day in the not too distant future he would be Tom Cruise, one of the top 100 movie stars of all time, he would have probably grinned and told you that his ambition was to join the priesthood. Nonetheless, this sensitive, deeply religious youngster who was born in 1962 in Syracuse, New York, was destined to become one of the highest paid and most sought after actors in screen history.
- Tom is the only son (among four children) of nomadic parents, Mary Lee (Pfeiffer), a special education teacher, and Thomas Cruise Mapother III, an electrical engineer. His parents were both from Louisville, Kentucky, and he has German, Irish, and English ancestry. Young Tom spent his boyhood always on the move, and by the time he was 14 he had attended 15 different schools in the U.S. and Canada. He finally settled in Glen Ridge, New Jersey, with his mother and her new husband. While in high school, he developed an interest in acting and abandoned his plans of becoming a priest, dropped out of school, and at age 18 headed for New York and a possible acting career. The next 15 years of his life are the stuff of legends. He made his film debut with a small part in Endless Love (1981) and from the outset exhibited an undeniable box office appeal to both male and female audiences.
- Though below average height and not particularly handsome in the traditional sense, within 5 years Tom Cruise was starring in some of the top grossing films of the 1980s including Top Gun (1986); The Color of Money (1986), Rain Man (1988) and Born on the Fourth of July (1989). By the 1990s he was one of the highest paid actors in the world earning an average 15 million dollars a picture in such blockbuster hits as Interview with the Vampire: The Vampire Chronicles (1994), Mission: Impossible (1996) and Jerry Maguire (1996) for which he received an Academy

Award Nomination for best actor. In 1990 he renounced his devout Catholic beliefs and embraced The Church Of Scientology claiming that Scientology teachings had cured him of the dyslexia that had plagued him all of his life. A kind and thoughtful man well known for his compassion and generosity, Tom Cruise is one of the best liked members of the movie community. He was married to actress Nicole Kidman until 2001. Thomas Cruise Mapother IV has indeed come a long way from the lonely wanderings of his youth.

RUSSELL CROWE (Dr. Henry Jekyll)

- The director explains a bit about this storied character: “Jekyll has the ultimate definitive split personality. He’s an English gentleman that has to be grounded in the modern world. Russell embodied that.”
- For Cruise and Crowe, the film represented a welcome chance both had long hoped would happen, but had to wait decades in order to occur. Kurtzman offers: “Tom and Russell have known each other for years but they have never had the opportunity to work together. It’s crazy for me to have two actors who I have admired so much in the same movie.”

ANNABELLE WALLIS (Jenny Halsey)

- About a year prior to her landing the role of Jenny, Wallis had heard that the studio would be reawakening its monster universe. “I was very intrigued,” the British performer admits. “I knew the film would be set in London and that there had to be a female in there somewhere. I got my agents on the case, and then I met with Alex. It was an instant connection. There were so many throughlines between Jenny and me that were so similar. I found a lot of my own truth within her, and I was excited to play a character like her. Then the match among Alex, Tom and me...it was a dream team.”
- A big fan of the series *Peaky Blinders*, Tom Cruise personally requested Annabelle Wallis audition for the film

SOFIA BOUTELLA (Ahmanet)

- When it came to casting, Kurtzman knew exactly the performer he wanted in the film’s title role, and she was actually brought onto the production before Cruise himself. “I saw Sofia in *Kingsman*, and then I stalked her until she said, ‘yes’ to this movie. She brings a real humanity to the princess, and audiences will feel for her. Even when she is doing horrifying things, you always feel that it is being done by someone who’s not that far from us...and who’s just crossed a line that maybe we wouldn’t.”
- Boutella admits that what especially drew her to the part was the empathy she felt for the character. “It would be too easy just to make it obvious that she’s just mean or hate-able, and I liked that Alex never wanted to ‘monster-ize’ Ahmanet,” she reflects. “Even though she is technically a monster, it was important for all of us to find the psychology of her character and understand why she did what she did in that time to survive. You begin to feel for her. I don’t see her as a monster; she’s a survivor.”
- Kurtzman cast Boutella after seeing and being impressed by her largely mute performance in *Kingsman: The Secret Service*. Kurtzman noted that “if you look at her eyes, and this is what I got from watching *Kingsman*, there’s a whole performance going on here. And in not saying anything but conveying that much to me, I thought oh my god, no matter how much prosthetics we put on her, no matter how much CG we put on her face, if I see this, she’s going to convey something very emotional to me.”
- The Mummy’s design and gender were altered due to Apocalypse’s look during the post-credit scene in *X-Men: Days of Future Past*
- On licking Tom’s face: You’re always looking for moments that are spontaneous and different and interesting and frankly weird. I had this strong instinct that there needed to be a laugh at a very weird moment. And I said, ‘I think you have to lick his face.’

JAKE JOHNSON (Chris Vail)

- Jake Johnson, who plays Vail, Nick's military pal and partner in crime. Of his casting, Cruise lauds: "Jake's great. He's an incredible dramatic actor who understands character comedy. It's just very natural, and I'm really impressed by him."
- Johnson is the first to admit that he never signed up for doing a great deal of his own action. He did, however, soon realize that on a Tom Cruise set, all bets were off. "Alex asked if I wanted to do this movie, and I said, 'yeah!' Then he said Tom is going to be in it, and I said, 'sounds great!' When we talked about the fact that Tom does his own stunts, I said, 'You better get a good stunt guy who looks just like me...'"
- Johnson soon learned that, with Cruise, that wouldn't be an option. "When I met Tom, I learned that the opening scene of the movie is Nick and my character galloping across sand. I told Alex that I'm afraid of horses and wouldn't be riding anywhere. When I met Tom, he said, 'Well, it's going to be you galloping.' When I told him I was afraid of them, he said, 'You better learn how to hold on because we're riding next to each other and I might take off fast.'" After twice weekly lessons, Johnson did indeed learn to hold on.
- When Jake Johnson was offered his part in the movie, he loved the idea and the opportunity to work with Tom Cruise, knowing that Cruise does most of his own stunts. He signed on immediately, but when he read the full script and learned what kind of dangerous actions were expected of him, he admitted to getting cold feet. However, Cruise allowed Johnson access to his private facilities for a rigorous 4.5 month training course, making him well prepared for all the stunts he was required to do

SYMBOLISM/TRIVIA/EASTER EGGS

- At the fight in Dr. Jekyll's office a big golden book falls out of one of the book cupboards. Clearly a link or reference to the "Golden Book of Amun-Ra" which was significant to the plot of the 1999 Mummy movie
- There are several Easter eggs to the upcoming movies in the dark universe such as the Swamp thing's hand and vampire skull at Dr Jekyll's headquarters, and the Book of the Dead in his office, which made its appearance in the two original Mummy films
- Henry Jekyll, played by Russell Crowe, plays a prominent role in this movie. Before the climactic battle scene between good and evil, Jake Johnson's character tells Tom Cruise, "This is the moment. This is the moment." "This is the Moment" is the title of the signature song from the Broadway musical "Jekyll and Hyde." Jekyll sings it just before he's about to take the potion he's designed to separate good from evil.

DIRECTING (Alex Kurtzman)

- This film marks Alex Kurtzman's second directorial after People Like Us (2008)
- Alex Kurtzman was born on September 7, 1973 in Los Angeles, California, USA as Alexander Hilary Kurtzman. He is a producer and writer, known for Transformers (2007), The Amazing Spider-Man 2 (2014) and Star Trek (2009). He is married to Samantha Counter

PRODUCTION/CINEMATOGRAPHY (Ben Seresin)

- The Mummy lensed in three countries—with its base of production back at Universal Studios in Los Angeles—and shot more than one million feet of film, which was Kurtzman's and cinematographer Ben Seresin's preference from the beginning. "One of the great joys has been shooting anamorphic for a truly wide and epic feel," says the director. "It adds a classic look, just like shooting on actual film."
- The DP similarly appreciates the challenges of the production: "The process of shooting film is more interesting in that it has an impact on the methodology. There's something fantastic about the journey of discovery of the images that is interesting in film, as you don't see the results until the next day or so. That's a certain sort of magic that digital just doesn't have."
- A massive undertaking that spanned three continents, 50 sets, 64 zero-gravity weightless sessions (mid-flight), 300-pound sarcophagi, thousands of special and visual effects, decades of imagination, more than one million feet of film—not to mention countless moving parts and pieces—the world creation and cinematic launch of The Mummy represents a labor of deep love

for the hundreds of cast and crew who have spent endless hours painstakingly developing and crafting an epic action-adventure that has been 5,000 years in the making

- It was crucial to Kurtzman and his key design team, led by production designers Dominic Watkins and Jon Hutman, to keep this film as one that is wholly set in the real world. Their team built 50 sets in Europe and Africa—from England to Namibia to France—and half of the sets were crafted at the historic Shepperton Studios...just on the outskirts of London
- **London:**
 - How apropos to start months of photography on *The Mummy* at night...by shooting in one of the most historic places in England: the prestigious university town of Oxford.
 - What they discovered were cobblestone-aged streets, oil lamps illuminating through the fog, and authentic architecture that's impossible to duplicate on a sound stage. "A lot of English villages are brick, but when we went to Oxford and saw those cobblestone streets rich with history—and saw that dark alley—Alex and I had the same reaction," says Hutman. "This was exactly what we were looking for."
 - Oxford sets the tone for *The Mummy*, as Nick has his very first vision of Ahmanet in a dark alley close to the well-known Bridge of Sighs landmark near the Hertford and New School colleges. For the director, that was one of his favorite moments of the production. Reflects Kurtzman of his full-circle moment: "The first night of shooting in Oxford, with the way Sofia as Ahmanet walks creepily towards Tom as Nick—her spider- and crab-like movements, alongside 100 live rats running in a dimly lit ally—had that tone of the classic Universal monster movies."
 - To accomplish their Herculean task, designers Hutman and Watkins and their art department team, including supervising art director FRANK WALSH, took over Shepperton Studios stages and back lot for filming. With more than 150 craftspersons, their art-, props-, and set-decorations departments equaled a small city on the studio lot
 - A plaster workshop made requisite molds and casts, while the sculptor shop created objects out of foam and fiberglass. Indeed, it required a 24/7-workforce to prep for the shoot. As well, there was a 200-person-plus construction department—led by construction manager BRIAN NEIGHBOUR—that was active from the build beginning
 - In the Charing Cross tube station the cast and crew climbed many sub floors underground. As well, they would lens in the shafts of the subway system and the financial district on Cornhill Road as Ahmanet where conjured up the sand storm. Finally, the old Central St. Martins Art School became a morgue set where we discover Nick post-plane crash
 - The magnitude of the production was not lost on the team. "It was fascinating to shoot in the Financial District on a Sunday when it was largely deserted," reflects Daniel. "On a weekday, there are 350,000 people who come here to work. It's also the sign of the original Roman colony of Londinium. Under us were so many dead Romans, crusaders, and everyone else who ever fought over this territory. In the movie, they come to life in the final battle."
 - Among the many locations used in Central London included the 1857 Warrington Hotel Pub in Maida Vale, which was transformed to look like a pub in Oxford; in reality, it used to be a brothel
- **Prodigium:**
 - For three days, the production was honored to lens at the London Natural History Museum (NHM). *The Mummy* filmed outside the main entrance, inside the main lobby, in the Mineral Room, and inside one of the basement rooms that contained actual specimens Charles Darwin discovered in the 19th century and labeled with his own handwriting.
 - One of the most impressive set builds and signature set piece for the movie was for the secret society called Prodigium. This set represented a hidden basement loft space under the Natural History Museum in London, one where Dr. Jekyll and his army of technicians could not only protect the world from the monsters, but protect the monsters from the world.

- As the script for *The Mummy* evolved in pre-production, so did the Prodigium set. “This set had to be scary, and then scarier,” relays Kurtzman.” The end result was a two level, 15,000-square-foot set that felt ominous to anyone who entered.
- It is difficult to believe, but there 25 million specimens in eight rooms inside the NHM. It was important to Kurtzman that the set-decorations department add their own touch to the creature contents inside the specimen room. Says set decorator Azis: “The specimen room was a huge challenge. We had to create specimens in jars that would look convincing. We bought plastic snakes and octopi—and created shrunken heads, creature arms, and a skull with fangs. Then, we hustled to make everything look like it had been aged in formaldehyde. We literally created 100 enormous specimen jars with objects that looked convincing, and mixed them up among the real-life specimens.”
- **Ahmanet’s Haunts:**
 - The first Shepperton Studios-based set where film shot was on the studio back lot; there, the art department crafted a huge build of a decrepit pier. Here, we first see Ahmanet crawl out from her sarcophagus casing, and feed on her victims. This large-scale build was complete with a bridge, 70-foot abandoned ship, and a running body of water—one that emulates a nondescript part of the embankment on the Thames river.
 - Continuing along the Shepperton lot, the production ventured deep into the series of tomb sets needed to tell the story: The Antechamber, Cavern and Mercury Tomb. These tomb set environments needed to link together in the story, as the characters began their adventure in discovering the sarcophagus of Ahmanet.
 - The reveal and unearthing of the sarcophagus happens in the Mercury Tomb set. This eight-week build took hundreds of craftspersons to pull off. Indeed, this is where the coffin—strapped to the center by a snake chain—sits in a CGI pool of mercury. “We wanted this set to set the tone for the whole movie,” shares Hutman. “It had to feel real, textural and gritty—like you were actually 1000 feet underground.”
 - When you look at the Mercury Tomb set, it is difficult to believe the back side is wooded framework. Carpenters and plasterers made the stones, then the painters used many shades of grays—some matte and others shiny—to make the rocks look authentic. Supervising art director Walsh proudly states: “We made molds from real rock quarry faces; we didn’t try and sculpt them. They simply looked fantastic.”
 - The greens department put the finishing touches on the set by systematically placing 30 tons of shale—which they had sourced from mines in North Wales— on top of the constructed set. On the day of filming, props and SFX added the finishing touches...by adding dust motes and cobwebs into the air.
- **Crusaders and Final Chambers:**
 - One of the other huge builds on the Shepperton Stages was the equally impressive Crusaders Chamber, the catacombs where the knights are buried. This large-scale set, which was complete with a running waterfall and detail map of the old world, felt just as real as Ahmanet’s supposed-eternal resting place. There was also a river running through it, and stone walls that look like they had crumbled with the passing of time.
 - Head set painter GARY CROSBY discusses that it required 60 painters to complete the work on the Crusaders Chamber set. “It was massive. The pigments and chinks we used for realism, along with the intricately placed faux green and brown moss around the stone layers, took time and artistry by our team. But that is what will sell it as real to the audience. It was worth every second.”
- **Egypt:**
 - The ancient Egypt sets built on the stage included Ahmanet’s Chamber, where the princess seduces Nick. The area then became the King’s Chamber, and then was repurposed one more time to serve as the Mummification Chamber.
 - Set decorator JILLE AZIS echoes the proud feelings of much of the crew as she concludes this section: “Ancient Egypt has been a real privilege to design because I love history and archeology. We wanted to create a new version of ancient Egypt...something fresh for the audience, and we worked with consultants to understand the detail of the

period. For example, if you had a terra-cotta pot on set, they would tell you what would be stored inside this pot in ancient Egypt. In every scene—and even behind the scene—the detail is absolutely there.”

- **Cargo Plane Sequence and Zero G:**

- All hell breaks loose when Ahmanet’s sarcophagus is being flown from Iraq to London and ravens begin to crash thru the cockpit window. As one might imagine, things go downhill from there...and the plane begins to dive. Kurtzman and Cruise were vocal from the jump with special effects department head DOMINIC TUOHY that they wanted everything to happen for real; this Zero G stunt was no exception.
- For The Mummy’s pivotal plane-crash sequence, the cockpit action was shot on a stage at Shepperton Studios, while the VFX ravens were added digitally during post production. However, as soon as the sequence called for shooting the interior of the body of the plane during the crash, all movement was done practically, safely on stage.
- “There is meticulous craftsmanship and attention to detail on our sets for this film,” raves Kurtzman. “Every set tells a story and reveals something about the character- these sets are a gift for any filmmaker. I constantly walk on these sets and my jaw just hits the floor. This cargo plane set build is a huge artistic and engineering feat.”
- On stage S at Shepperton Studios, this huge 20-ton steel frame cargo plane set was constructed and mounted onto a hydraulic base...proving to be the most complex build for the production. This gimbal allowed for continuous rotation with the actors inside. Simultaneously, it provided a 15-degree tilt—front and back—to simulate take off and start of the crash.
- This cargo plane set was built from the ground up by Tuohy and his team of 30. SFX began working on the plane build for 16 weeks, then began working with the stunts department. To accomplish this stunning feat of movie magic, there were skilled technicians drawing the rigs—as well as model makers, engineers, power technicians and senior technicians...many who have worked on Dominic’s team for more than 30 years.
- Tuohy underscores the pride the crew took in their work: “We didn’t want this stunt to look contrived. We wanted it to use physics and real time. As far as I am aware, this is the first time this has been done for a film, and we embraced that.”
- The first 20 feet of the plane matches an actual C130 plane, and the rest is the set. So that more effects and movement were possible, the plane set interior was made slightly bigger than a real plane that size.
- As the plane had to go from a static position to a tumbling position, everything in the plane had to be re-created in rubber and foam. Cast would actually slide from one side of the plane set to the other as the SFX rig rotated at different speeds. Cannily, the SFX team could ramp up or slow down the tumbling speed...as well as the angle of the set with computers.
- “We had to copy every single item in the C130 plane—from window frames to ladders to control boxes—and make them in rubber,” reveals props master DAVE CHEESMAN. “The walls and floor were all rubber, as well, as the set dressing needed to bounce from side to side. That is all real, not CGI.”
- Supervising art director Walsh explains that matching an already existing environment and taking it one step further is a challenge on any set, much less one as expansive as the Zero Gravity set. “In our research, we spoke to the Royal Air Force investigative plane-crash division to find out what the step-by-step logistics are when a plane crashes,” he offers. “It was just fascinating to try and replicate.”
- Tuohy offers that accomplishing this would take the efforts of scores of crew: “Moving 20 tons is one thing, but stopping 20 tons is another. We had to do that safely and controlled. We used real physics as our tool, and you can’t beat that. The rotation is to give the effect of Zero G.”

- Never been done before for a film, the production then introduced a real plane at Novespace headquarters, housed in Bordeaux, France, into the mix to complete and film this Zero G sequence.
- At Novespace a real Airbus A310 aircraft was flown, with 40 cast and crew members inside to experience the Zero G effect. The cast crew did 16 parabolic flights within a two-hour period, twice a day over two days. For the stunt, the pilots enacted a total of 64 parabolas (repeated weightlessness sessions). Each parabola allowed for the filming of a key sequence in the scene.
- The 20 seconds of weightlessness audiences will see on film leads the crash sequence, with Nick trying desperately to grab parachutes from the plane wall and pass one to Jenny. Each take filmed was unpredictable as the cast and crew floated weightless around the plane cabin...at the mercy of physics.
- Again the interior of the set was all rubber, this time with obvious weight and safety restrictions for the in-flight journey. This real plane set was 10% less wide and 40% lower in height than the cargo plane set rig that was built on the studio stage.
- Wallis was ready and willing for the challenge: “We did months and months of stunt training in padded rooms getting our bodies ready for this, to make sure you are supple—more like a dancer. That way, you can move in any which direction this rig and the actual Zero G may take you.”
- Tuohy concludes that the interplay between the Zero G flight and the cargo set had to be perfect. He ends: “We wanted to keep everything as real as possible, so the trick is for us to try and do that seamlessly between the real Zero G flight and the physical SFX done on stage.”
- Picture vehicle supervisor GRAHAM KELLEY explains the challenges in this riveting scene: “For the ambulance crash, myself and my team of 11 guys—who all come from a motor-racing background and fabrication—turned the ambulance into a high-performance, off-road vehicle. We used three ambulances for the sequence, plus two to roll in the ravine—seven ambulances in total. The ravine cars were rigged so there was a lot of metal to protect the driver.”
- **Namibia:**
 - It was important for the filmmakers that the opening action scenes that take place in Iraq feel real, without unnecessarily using a great deal CGI, therefore locations soon turned international. So the production traveled from the U.K. to Namibia in southeast Africa for two-and-a-half weeks of shooting
 - “When you think of The Mummy you think of the desert and Lawrence of Arabia,” says Kurtzman. “Namibia served as a double for ancient Egypt and modern-day Iraq. It’s humbling when you look around and you are in the middle of absolute nowhere, but when you put a camera and actors in there, the world becomes real. It’s an environment you can’t create with CGI.”
 - In Namibia, filmmakers replicated a drone attack on an Iraqi village, and also created Egyptian flashbacks and Nick’s vision from the story. The production office and U.K. crew based in the beautiful coastal town of Swakopmund.
 - “We began building our sets in Cape Town, South Africa and then trucked them over to Namibia where they were set down in the middle of the desert,” offers Namibia art director JULES COOK. “From there, a huge work force kicked in to perfect pre-built, pre-designed, pre-fabricated set elements. Those were then attached to a scaffold structural system. It was mind-boggling to watch these empty sand dunes transform into our sets.”
 - One of the highlights of Namibia was when the SFX department built a three-story high, collapsing-building rig in which the floor would begin to shake. Subsequently, Nick and Vail fell toward the sinkhole as the building collapses. It was amazing to watch, but equally as enthralling to witness this falling-building rig get reset and put back together for another take...in just minutes!

- While on location in the country, the crew of Namibians, South Africans—along with the U.K.-based crew—grew to a thousand strong, by the time all of the local crew and vendors that were on board were factored in.
- Production’s main set in Namibia was the Iraq village set on Rossing Mountain, not far from the other shooting location of the stunning Sunrise Dunes and Phoenix Dunes. The landscapes in Namibia are unmatched anywhere else in the world, and the cast and crew of *The Mummy* were welcomed with open arms by the Namibian Film Commission and the local community.

PROPS

- As props master Cheesman and his 40-person prop team conduct research for the film, they would rely heavily upon the British Museum, which has the largest Egyptian collection of artifacts in the world outside of Cairo
- The prop team had been working on *The Mummy* for eight months prior to the cameras rolling. Skilled artists including sculptors, painters, carpenters, 3D designers, prop dressers, engineers, miniature painters, mold makers and many more worked round the clock to ready handcrafted items for production start.
- It’s impossible to mention props without discussing Ahmanet’s sarcophagus, one of the most impressive ones made for the film. Measuring nine feet in length and four feet in height, the tomb was made in two pieces...so it could house Ahmanet’s mummified body inside.
- In making the sarcophagus, Cheesman and his team had to be mindful of all the different scenes in which the tomb was featured in—from inside the cargo plane and its suspension inside the Mercury tomb, to under the pier and being towed by a helicopter. As well, regular structural changes had to occur so the sarcophagus could be made lighter or more easily accessible inside. In sum, six unique sarcophagi were made in different materials from fiberglass to rubber.
- To start the sculpt of the sarcophagus, the prop department began with the type of insulation foam that is used in a home. After carving, shaping and texturing, the tomb was painted. To finish the look, various techniques of wrapping in silicone—as well as coating in fiberglass—were conducted.
- The result was a stunning, bronzed, aged two-piece sarcophagus that weighed 300 pounds. Of note, this was slight in weight compared to a real sarcophagus (which could weigh 1,000 tons). On the outside of the piece—in addition to the alarming open-mouthed face, and markings on the side that emulate the ribs of an animal—is the actual story of Ahmanet, which is told in hieroglyphics. The sarcophagus alone took more than 40 people to conceptualize and build, from the first concepts to the final bronze-realized version.
- In addition to this hero fiberglass version of the sarcophagus, the rubber sarcophagus was made to be used for the stunt work inside the cargo plane. As well, other versions were constructed, including a heavier one that hangs from a helicopter in the film.
- Inside the mercury-tomb set, the sarcophagus was held in place by a long, thick metallic-looking snake chain, which in reality was made of rubber. To create, the prop department cast a rubber mold on top of actual rope. Says Cheesman: “We designed a two snake-faced look and made 720 feet of the rope, casting 15 feet at a time in a mold, and then painting it to look metal.”
- Impeccably researched, this snake chain and hundreds of other intricate items such as the dagger—as well as the ancient Book of the Dead—were sculpted from scratch for this film. As well, the rich London history was emulated, right down to the grave stones for the church set that was Waverly Abbey. Including tombs for the undead inside the Crusaders Chamber, to the coffins that rise from the ground during the London sandstorm, each item was handcrafted inside the prop workshop at Shepperton Studios

MAKE-UP (Lizzie Georgiou)

- The *Mummy*’s makeup and hair designer, Lizzie Georgiou, and her team began their prep on the film five months before the beginning of principal photography. She found quite the collaborator in her director, commending: “Alex has been great to work with, and we wanted to make him proud

and make the make-up and hair look for the film feel different. We didn't want it to look like other films that have Egypt references, and this deserved something more cutting edge."

- First off, she designed a handcrafted mummy make-up palette that would take the princess from her look in ancient Egypt all the way to today's London. "Ahmanet has been through quite a lot in her lifetimes," says Georgiou, "and as part of our research we used a number of music videos for our inspiration—from artists such as FKA twigs."
- The appearance of Ahmanet in her ancient Egypt flashbacks proved very important in the design of her hair and make-up. Says Georgiou: "We looked into Ahmanet's backstory and what part of Egypt she was in at what time. We looked toward what kind of symbols would have worked for her."
- As Ahmanet slips deeper into her darker side, rune-style writing appears on more and more of her body. Her hand-drawn rune tattoos were individually placed one onto Boutella's face, and on her body a tattoo transfer was used. As one might imagine, it was a very time-consuming process, but the results were extraordinary. Upon close inspection, Ahmanet's facial tattoos are slightly raised on her skin, and look as if they have grown out of a painful, torturous existence.
- The makeup process to create the princess could take anywhere from three to five hours. It was labor intensive and quite often the makeup team and Boutella would report for work at the hair and make-up trailer at 3 AM in the morning...just to be ready for the shooting call.
- For the creation of Ahmanet's undead, Georgiou worked closely with the VFX department to make these zombies look skinny and gouged in. Explains the designer: "We went out of our way to do different types of undead, all who would be living underneath London and dredged up from underground. They were so much fun to create as there were no limits. These creatures stand alongside Ahmanet as she comes back to life herself and brings others from the grave to help her."
- Georgiou and her team wanted to keep the hair and makeup for archeologist Jenny true to form for an Egyptologist on the run. At the same time, her look gives audiences a view into her backstory. "Jenny is intelligent and beautiful too," says the designer, "and we wanted to bring that out by keeping with her gorgeous naturalism."

COSTUMING (Katherine Aspinall)

- costume designer Penny Rose would make every effort to stay away from stereotypical ancient Egyptian costumes that had been seen on screen. Rose offers: "That is so unnatural, and we have made every effort to go for natural."
- The legendary costume designer, who has worked on all of the films in the Pirates of the Caribbean series, likens the work from her team does to that of fashion shows. She explains: "There, they make each garment up to 20 times before the catwalk version is approved. It started out that Ahmanet needed a huge amount of dresses, and now she is down to five dresses for the film."
- Rose would design the princess' look using illustrations and small maquettes, which would allow for a 3D experimentation of color and shape. The most important item to the costumer was that all dresses on the maquettes were made from exactly the same amount of material. This allowed Rose to experiment how to wrap one piece of fabric to create Ahmanet's Egyptian dress looks.
- The designer reveals that it was Boutella's olive skin that dictated the chosen cream tones. "We had to be careful because if they looked too much like an Oscar gown, then they didn't look Egyptian," says Rose. "We did find a way to make long trains work, and it was stunning how fabulous they looked against the Namibian landscape on the sand dunes."
- Rose also assembled a fantastic in-house team at her wardrobe workshop that crafted Egyptian jewelry. By giving them references and inspirations she had researched during prep, she worked with her jewelers to make sure their creations appeared as if they were extraordinarily heavy. Yet, through the magic of moviemaking, they were light as air. She employed the same technique for all of the jewelry that was used for stunt work.
- The costumer is the first to admit that creating the actual Mummy wardrobe was an enormous challenge. They knew that a fabric design was not practical for long-term wear and comfort on the

set, so prosthetic make-up designer DAVID WHITE and his SMUFX (Special Make-Up Effects) team began to do what they do best...and designed a Mummy costume.

- The SMUFX (Special Make-Up Effects) department came up with a clever idea that Ahmanet would have been mummified in her dress, with bandages wrapped over her as she was mummified alive. If you look closely, you can see the disintegration of the dress underneath the Mummy costumes bandages.
- A few months prior to the beginning of principal photography, SMUFX began prepping Ahmanet's suit. They designed a two-piece mummy suit with a diagonal zip, one that was intricately constructed and sewn together with silicone and fabric bandages. Each bandage was hand-molded and made to look different than the others....needless, a very labor-intensive process. On the back of the suit a large spine protruded. Says White: "We knew the skin tone of the suit couldn't be too green or grey, so we paid a great deal of attention to that."
- To complete Ahmanet's transformation, SMUFX also made Mummy hands and feet, as well as blackened nails that would show the different stages of transformation and desiccation. To complete her look, Mummy accessories included subtle jewelry, such as a nose ring and snakelike earrings.
- The SMUFX Workshop was constantly repairing Ahmanet's Mummy costumes and creating prosthetic replacements of hands and feet. Not just for Boutella, but also for her stunt doubles, it was a nonstop repair process to keep the Mummy costumes looking top notch. In sum, more than 30 Mummy suits were crafted for filming.

EDITING/VFX (Gina Hirsch, Paul Hirsch, Andrew Mondshei)

- Visual effects supervisor ERIK NASH and his team from VFX expert vendor MPC in Toronto had their challenges cut out for them as they entered into the VFX making of The Mummy.
- Some tried-and-true movie tricks like skip framing, walking backwards and running the footage forward was the easy part. These cinematic sleight-of-hands had been implemented for decades, back to early cinema itself. Nash knew it would take a lot more complex techniques than that to do this right. "From the get go, above all, Alex wanted realism," says Nash. "Even though it is a Mummy movie, he wanted it completely ground in reality."
- For these early stages of Ahmanet as The Mummy, production either utilized Boutella in a motion-capture suit or relied upon a contortionist on set—also in a motion-capture suit—to film the unusual body movements of the Mummy in her 21st-century infancy.
- By the time Ahmanet evolves to her final Mummy stages, there was little CGI augmentation. "One of the real challenges is the extremes of Ahmanet are so far apart," states Nash, "that we have to make a logical progression without adding huge leaps, ones in which the audience wouldn't recognize the Mummy from stage to stage. Our biggest VFX task—and a real tightrope walk—has been to make the steps between different developmental stages not so huge that you feel like you missed something. It had to be seamless."
- The visual effects supervisor and his team discovered some curious factoids as they delved into the macabre or human anatomy and pathology. "One of the things we have found by researching and looking at more corpses than we have ever cared to look at was that the first things that goes is the nose," grimaces Nash. "We get a lot of mileage out of that. Also, because eyes are 80- to 90-percent liquid and dry up soon after death, you will notice most of the undead have no eyeballs."
- Cruise brought on his longtime editor Andrew Mondshein to work with the editors already on the project, Paul and Gina Hirsch, to lock the picture. Cruise also spent a lot of time in the edit suite as well, Variety reports

SOUND/MUSIC (Bryan Tyler)

- Composer Brian Tyler will be giving music to The Fate of the Furious too, another Universal studio produced movie

PROMOTION

- On December 20, 2016, IMAX released a trailer with the wrong audio track attached; this unintentionally prompted the creation of memes and video montages featuring the mistakenly included audio track, which was missing most of the sound effects and instead featured Tom Cruise's grunts and screams. IMAX reacted by taking down the trailer and issuing DMCA takedown notices in an attempt to stop it from spreading
- Following the 2017 Manchester Arena bombing on May 22, Universal cancelled the film's U.K. premiere, which had been scheduled to take place in London on June 1
- After promoting the film on *The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon: Tom Cruise/Kate Mara/Bleachers/Mike McCready (2017)*, Tom Cruise surprised the audience by inviting them to the premiere of the film immediately after the interview, transporting them in shuttle buses
- The “Dark Universe” is based on name recognition only—the idea that since people have gone to see *Frankenstein*, *Dracula*, and *Mummy* movies for decades, it'd be easy to get them invested again. But the big mistake the studio seems to have made is assuming that franchises need to be mega-budgeted action films. *The Mummy's* marketing campaign was muddled from the start. Was this a scary monster movie, as the portentous posters seemed to suggest? A high-octane thriller, as seen in the trailer (homed in on a plane crash set-piece)? Was it a Tom Cruise movie, and if so, why wasn't he playing the title character?

BOX OFFICE

- Total Lifetime Grosses (As of June 12th): \$34,259,300
- Domestic: \$34,259,300
 - + Foreign: \$140,757,046
 - = Worldwide: \$175,016,346
- Domestic Summary
 - Opening Weekend: \$31,688,375
 - (#2 rank, 4,035 theaters, \$7,853 average)
 - % of Total Gross: 92.5%
- > View All Weekends
 - Widest Release: 4,035 theaters
 - In Release: 6 days / 0.9 weeks
- The biggest global debut of Tom Cruise's career
- In North America, the film was released alongside *It Comes at Night* and *Megan Leavey*, and was originally projected to gross \$35–40 million from 4,034 theaters in its opening weekend.
- However after making \$12 million on its first day (including \$2.66 million from Thursday night previews), weekend projections were lowered to \$30 million
- It ended up debuting to \$31.7 million, marking the lowest of the *Mummy* franchise and finishing second at the box office behind *Wonder Woman* (\$58.2 million in its second week)
- Deadline.com attributed the film's underperformance to poor critic and audience reactions, as well as “blockbuster fatigue”
- Outside North America, the film opened in 63 overseas territories, with China, the UK, Mexico, Germany, Ireland, Australia, New Zealand, Brazil and Russia receiving the film the same day as in North America, and was projected to debut to \$125–135 million

RECEPTION

- IMDB: 5.9
- Cinemascore: B-
- RT: 17% Tatometer, 45% Audience
- *The Mummy* received negative reviews, with criticism aimed at its incoherent narrative and shoehorned plot points setting up the Dark Universe
- The site's critical consensus reads, “Lacking the campy fun of the franchise's most recent entries and failing to deliver many monster-movie thrills, *The Mummy* suggests a speedy unraveling for the Dark Universe.”

- Vince Mancini of *Uproxx* gave the film a negative review, writing: "If you like incomprehensible collections of things that vaguely resemble other things you might've enjoyed in the past, *The Mummy* is the movie for you."
- David Ehrlich gave the film a D-, calling it the worst film of Cruise's career and criticizing its lack of originality, saying: "It's one thing to excavate the iconography of old Hollywood, it's another to exploit it. This isn't filmmaking, it's tomb-raiding."
- Owen Gleiberman of *Variety* wrote: "The problem at its heart is that the reality of what the movie is — a Tom Cruise vehicle — is at war with the material. The actor, at 54, is still playing that old Cruise trope, the selfish cocky semi-scoundrel who has to grow up. ... The trouble is that Cruise, at least in a high-powered potboiler like this one, is so devoted to maintaining his image as a clear and wholesome hero that his flirtation with the dark side is almost entirely theoretical."
- Writing for *Rolling Stone*, Peter Travers gave the film one star out of four, saying: "How meh is *The Mummy*? Let me count the ways. For all the huffing and puffing and digital desperation from overworked computers, this reboot lands onscreen with a resounding thud."
- Glen Kenny of *RogerEbert.com* gave the film 1.5/4 stars, writing: "I found something almost admirable about the film's cheek. It's amazingly relentless in its naked borrowing from other, better horror and sci-fi movies that I was able to keep occupied making a checklist of the movies referenced."
- *Entertainment Weekly's* Chis Nashawaty wrote that the film "feels derivative and unnecessary and like it was written by committee."

SEQUEL/LEGACY

- Director Alex Kurtzman did state that there is no post end credit scene because, "That's Marvel's domain."
- "This is a brand they're trying to create, and it's a horrible start," said Jeff Bock, a box-office analyst for Exhibitor Relations. "There is a learning curve, and that's what Universal will probably write this off as."
- Studios have always relied on sequels and reboots to capitalize on the popularity of well-known material. But now entertainment companies are taking the concept further, creating "cinematic universes" made up of films with overlapping narratives and recurring characters that keep people coming back to the theaters and feed toy lines, video games and theme parks.
- On May 22, 2017, Universal Pictures announced that its series of films reviving the studio's long-running Universal Monsters film series would be known as Dark Universe, and that Bill Condon will direct the second installment, *Bride of Frankenstein*, to be released on February 14, 2019.
- In November 2016, Kurtzman stated that the studio has ideas for various rebooted versions of "their monsters", and that he helped the studios' production team with creating updated designs for each of the characters.
- Each of these individual monsters were stated to be the focus of stand-alone installments first, before any crossovers would occur, with Kurtzman stating: "There might be reasons for this character and that character to come together, because the story tells us that's what the story wants. The story is what drives the choice. And if down the line, there's a big reason to bring them together, then great. But I promise, we're not starting there."
- In March 2017, producer Chris Morgan revealed that the studio is in the process of deciding the chronological order of each of the films, and when they will be released.
- The 2014 film *Dracula Untold*, starring Luke Evans as the titular character, was originally considered to be the first film in the Dark Universe; however, since the film's release the connections to Dark Universe was downplayed and *The Mummy* was re-positioned as the first film in the series
- Nick Carpou, president of domestic theatrical distribution for Universal Pictures, stressed that although the movies will have overlapping elements — including a secretive global organization that tracks, studies and sometimes destroys monsters — they do not depend on each other like the Marvel or DC movies

- “They each operate with their own identity and each has their own approach,” Carpou said. “They’re not dependent on previous films. In ‘Bride,’ there’s no reference to a Mummy character in the concept. There’s no plan to have them all team up and fight a bad guy.”
- **Cruise Control:**
 - In the same way that he commanded the stage at the film’s premiere, leaving his cast standing awkwardly by his side, several sources close to the production say that Cruise exerted nearly complete creative oversight on “The Mummy,” essentially wearing all the hats and dictating even the smallest decisions on the set. On stage, Cruise admitted his own perfectionist tendencies. “I don’t just make a movie. I give it everything I have and I expect it from everyone also.”
 - Universal, according to sources familiar with the matter, contractually guaranteed Cruise control of most aspects of the project, from script approval to post-production decisions. He also had a great deal of input on the film’s marketing and release strategy, these sources said, advocating for a June debut in a prime summer period.
 - “Tom approaches every project with a level of commitment and dedication that is unmatched by most working in our business today,” the statement read. “He has been a true partner and creative collaborator, and his goal with any project he works on is to provide audiences with a truly cinematic moviegoing experience.”
 - Cruise’s controlling behavior comes as Hollywood’s star system is in tatters. In the 1990s and early aughts, studios shelled out big money for the likes of Mel Gibson, Julia Roberts, and Harrison Ford, confident that their names above the title could guarantee ticket sales. In exchange they were offered big perks, hefty salaries, and a sizable share of the profits. Along with the money came the power to veto key decisions. But as comic book movies and special effects-heavy productions took over, top actors found themselves in less demand and with less influence. Cruise has navigated the new landscape better than some—the “Mission: Impossible” franchise still makes money but other efforts such as “Oblivion” have disappointed. Going forward, he may have difficulty exerting the same kind of sway over other films.
 - And the crew fell in line too, behind Cruise as the boss. “This is very much a film of two halves: before Tom and after Tom,” said Frank Walsh, the supervising art director, at a London screening of “The Mummy” this week. “I have heard the stories about how he drives everything and pushes and pushes, but it was amazing to work with him. The guy is a great filmmaker and knows his craft. He will walk onto a set and tell the director what to do, say ‘that’s not the right lens,’ ask about the sets, and as long as you don’t fluff what you’re saying to him ... he’s easy to work for.”
 - “It’s a constant back-and-forth, a constant partnership,” Kurtzman told Business Insider about working with Cruise. “Breaking down how we approach the filmmaking, everything is a conversation, nothing is taken for granted. He’s extremely thorough, he’s extremely knowledgeable, he’ll step on set and he’ll know exactly what is going on everywhere and that’s a tremendous benefit. When you’re making a movie this big, it’s a benefit because there’s so much to handle in it and having his basic knowledge was great.”
 - Kurtzman added of directing Cruise, “He’s never not done anything I’ve asked him to do.”