

# **THE WORLD'S FASTEST INDIAN**

**STARRING: ANTHONY HOPKINS**

**WRITTEN AND DIRECTED BY ROGER DONALDSON**

### ***The World's Fastest Indian synopsis***

Anthony Hopkins stars as Burt Munro, a man who never let the dreams of youth fade.

After a lifetime of perfecting his classic Indian motorcycle, Burt set off from the bottom of the world to test his bike at the Bonneville Salt Flats in Utah. With all the odds against him, he set a new speed record and captured the spirit of his times. Burt Munro's 1967 world record remains unbroken and his legend lives on today.

## ***The World's Fastest Indian* production information**

Burt Munro was the quintessential New Zealander. Born and raised in Invercargill, New Zealand, he dreamed of making his 1920 Indian Twin Scout the fastest bike on earth.

Roger Donaldson (whose credits include *The Recruit*, *Thirteen Days*, *Dante's Peak*, *Species*, *The Getaway*, *White Sands*, *Cadillac Man*, *Cocktail*, *No Way Out*, *The Bounty*, *Smash Palace*), himself from Australia and New Zealand, is a local boy made good in the world of Hollywood. Anthony Hopkins is one of the world's great actors (who first worked with Donaldson 20 years ago, starring in *The Bounty*, opposite Mel Gibson).

Earlier this year, the paths of these three men crossed on the white sands of Bonneville, Utah and the wind swept shores of Oreti Beach in Invercargill, New Zealand.

For Donaldson this was to be the culmination of a dream he has held for more than 30 years. As a young filmmaker (working on the documentary, *Offerings to the God of Speed*), Donaldson met a local Invercargill man with a remarkable story.

*The World's Fastest Indian* is a script based on Burt Munro's journeys to Bonneville during the 1960's. It follows the road to fulfilling a dream – and the magic in the true story of a man who believed, "If it's hard, work harder; if it's impossible, work harder still. Give it whatever it takes, but do it."

Playing this eccentric and lovable character is Academy Award Winner® Anthony Hopkins. *The World's Fastest Indian* captures Munro with all his power, his determination, his creativity, his charm, his eccentricity -- told through the eyes of a director who knew the man personally, and has never wavered from his own dream of making Munro's story.

## ***The World's Fastest Indian* director's statement**

This project has been a passion of mine since I completed a documentary about Burt Munro back in 1972 (*Offerings to the God of Speed*).

Burt Munro was a most extraordinary New Zealander. . . a "one-off" original.

I first met him late one winter's night in Invercargill in 1971. Burt was excited that some young filmmakers had come all the way down from Auckland to meet this old man and discuss the possibility of a documentary about his exploits. In his enthusiasm he wheeled an old 1920 Indian Scout motorcycle out of the cinder-block shed where he lived and jumped on the kick-starter. The engine roared to life; a sound to split your eardrums. Lights started coming on in the neighbors' houses. When Burt finally stopped revving the engine and you could once again hear, the night was filled with the yells of his disapproving neighbors suggesting that 11 p.m. was an inappropriate time to start "demonstrating" his un-muffled motorcycle.

I WAS HOOKED . . . and so I set about with my hand-wind Bolex making my short film about Burt Munro's life . . . shooting him in the South Island and accompanying him to the Bonneville Salt Flats as he attempted to set a land speed record on his ancient bike.

After the documentary was shown to a favourable reception on New Zealand television, I couldn't get Burt out of my mind. I felt that my film really didn't do this eccentric and talented New Zealander justice and so after Burt died in 1978, I decided to try and make a feature film based on his exploits.

I had a particular vision for this project: the story of a man of extraordinary belief in himself and his dream. Several times over the past two decades I had offers to fund this film if I re-wrote the script to tell what others considered to be a more 'marketable' story. I was determined not to compromise my vision of the story in this way and was prepared to wait until I could make this film as I intended.

Two years ago, after I completed production on *The Recruit*, I decided that rather than sign up for another Hollywood movie I would return to Burt's story. It was now or never. I believed this could be an uplifting and inspirational story in the spirit of such films as *Rocky*, *Billy Elliot* and *Chariots of Fire*. I re-wrote the script until I felt I had finally cracked it. I had what I believed to be the basis for an entertaining film without any compromises; a story that really captured the spirit of Burt Munro.

I have been intrigued by Burt's story for many, many years; some would say my obsession with this film matches Burt's obsession with his bike.

***Roger Donaldson***

## ***The World's Fastest Indian* cast**

### **Anthony Hopkins is Burt Munro**

In a career spanning more than three decades, Hopkins has more than 90 film and television credits to his name.

In 1991 he won the Best Actor Academy Award® (for his unforgettable performance as Hannibal Lecter in the thriller *The Silence of the Lambs*). He was subsequently nominated in the same category for his performance in *Nixon* (1995) and *The Remains of the Day* (1993) for which he received the BAFTA Best Actor Award.

Hopkins recently appeared in the feature adaptation of Stephen King's *Hearts in Atlantis*; *The Human Stain* opposite Nicole Kidman and as Ptolemy in Oliver Stone's historical epic *Alexander*. He will next be seen alongside Gwyneth Paltrow in John Madden's adaptation of the critically acclaimed West End stage play *Proof*.

Anthony Hopkins' many other films over the years include: *The Lion in Winter*; *Shadowlands*; *Red Dragon*; *Bad Company*; *Hannibal*; *Dr. Seuss's How the Grinch Stole Christmas*; *Meet Joe Black*; *Instinct*; *Titus*; *The Mask of Zorro*; *Howard's End*; *Bram Stoker's Dracula*; *Legends of the Fall*; *The Road to Wellville*; *Surviving Picasso*; *The Edge*; *84 Charing Cross Road*; *The Elephant Man*; *Magic*, and *A Bridge Too Far*.

*The Bounty* was his first collaboration with Roger Donaldson.

### **Chris Lawford is Jim Moffit**

Christopher Kennedy Lawford grew up in the glamorous and powerful worlds of Hollywood and Washington. From his birth to famous parents he has navigated these two worlds as an actor, writer, lawyer, activist and public speaker.

The son of Peter Lawford and Patricia Kennedy, Christopher began his acting career in 1988 with the film *Mr. North* directed by legendary director John Huston's son, Danny Huston. John Huston was scheduled to star in the picture but was replaced by Robert Mitchum after becoming ill before filming started. When Danny Huston asked his father about casting Mr. Lawford in the role of Virginia Madsen's love interest, John Huston rose from his deathbed and asked: "Is he tall, dark and handsome?" When Danny nodded yes, his father said: "Cast him. That's all you need."

Mr. Lawford followed with *Spellbinder* and *The Suicide Club* and after moving to Hollywood starred in number of high profile studio films, including *Impulse* with Theresa Russell, *Jack the Bear* with Danny Devito, *The Russia House* with Sean Connery and Michelle Pfeiffer, *Run, The Sixth Day* and *Terminator 3* with Arnold Schwarzenegger, *The Confession* with Alec Baldwin and Ben Kingsley and Oliver Stone's *The Doors*. In 2000 Mr. Lawford co-starred with Kevin Costner in the film *Thirteen Days*, which was a dramatic recreation of the events of the Cuban Missile Crisis. After the release of the film Mr. Lawford and Mr. Costner traveled to Cuba to screen the film For Cuban president Fidel Castro and the Cuban people.

Mr. Lawford's television appearances have been numerous. In 1992 he signed on for three years to play Charlie Brent on the popular daytime television drama, *All My Children*. He has guest starred on *100 Center Street* directed by Sidney Lumet, *The OC*, *Frazier*, *Chicago Hope*, and many others. He was also a series regular on *Copshop*, the groundbreaking series for PBS starring Richard Dreyfuss.

Mr. Lawford has spent much of his career as an actor and producer in the independent film world. He starred in the indie hits *Sex Monster*, *Londinium* and was executive producer and co-star in the film *Kiss Me Guido*, which along with *Drunks* were critically acclaimed selections of the Sundance Film Festival.

### **Chris Williams is Tina Washington**

Chris was born and raised in Westchester County, New York. As the son of two music teachers, he was involved in the arts from an early age learning to play both the saxophone and oboe. He performed in plays from nursery throughout high school and continued his education receiving a Bachelor's degree in Psychology from Georgetown University.

An extremely versatile performer in film, television and on stage (like his well known sister Vanessa), Chris is no stranger to the entertainment arena both on and off camera ranging between comedy and drama.

Recent film credits include a lead in *The World's Fastest Indian* playing a transvestite opposite Sir Anthony Hopkins and a role in *Bam Bam and Celeste* both making their world premieres at the upcoming Toronto Film Festival. He had a lead in the 20<sup>th</sup>

Century Fox comedy *Dodgeball: A True Underdog Story* and roles in *Anchorman* and *Spiderman 2*.

As for television, Chris is best known as *KRAZEE EYEZ KILLA* on the HBO show, *Curb Your Enthusiasm*. The episode, named after his character, won an Emmy Award. He recently guest starred on *CSI: Crime Scene Investigation* and *Listen Up* for CBS, was recurring on the FX's *The Shield* and appeared in the HBO movie *Trailer Trash* for Tracey Ullman.

### **Annie Whittle is Fran**

Annie is well known throughout New Zealand as an actress, singer and television presenter, having been in the industry for over three decades.

In 2003 Annie was a Best Supporting Actress finalist at the NZ Television Awards for her role as Barbara Heywood in the long running television series, *Shortland Street*.

### **Aaron Murphy is Sam**

Aaron Murphy's acting career started at the age of 8 in the critically acclaimed feature film *Rain* and now only just turned 13 he has appeared in three other highly anticipated feature films the most recent being *The World's Fastest Indian*, the other two being *Boogeyman* and *Perfect Creature*.

He has also appeared in two television productions *Revelations – all that Glistens* and two episodes of *Power Rangers*.

He is a very good soccer player, has excellent computer skills, model maker, animal lover and has his own motor bike which he rides on a farm.

## ***The World's Fastest Indian* key crew biographies**

### **Roger Donaldson Writer/ Director/ Producer**

In 1971 Roger Donaldson and his collaborator Mike Smith filmed *Offerings to the God of Speed*, a documentary about the life of New Zealander Burt Munro, one of the oldest people ever to set a land speed record at the famed Bonneville Salt Flats in Utah. This became the inspiration for a script to be written by Donaldson entitled *The World's Fastest Indian*.

In 1977 Donaldson directed his first movie *Sleeping Dogs*, starring Sam Neill in his feature film debut.

In 1982, after completing his hit film *Smash Palace*, Donaldson moved to the United States and was signed to direct *The Bounty*. The epic retelling of the famous mutiny on the Bounty starred Anthony Hopkins, Mel Gibson, Liam Neeson, Daniel Day Lewis, and Lawrence Olivier.

Roger Donaldson's films include:

**SLEEPING DOGS** starring Sam Neill  
**SMASH PALACE** starring Bruno Lawrence  
**THE BOUNTY** starring Anthony Hopkins & Mel Gibson  
**NO WAY OUT** starring Gene Hackman & Kevin Costner  
**COCKTAIL** starring Tom Cruise  
**WHITE SANDS** starring Willem Dafoe & Samuel L. Jackson  
**THE GETAWAY** starring Alec Baldwin & Kim Basinger  
**SPECIES** starring Natasha Henstridge & Ben Kingsley  
**CADILLAC MAN** starring Robin Williams & Tim Robbins  
**DANTE'S PEAK** starring Pierce Brosnan  
**THIRTEEN DAYS** starring Kevin Costner  
**THE RECRUIT** starring Al Pacino & Colin Farrell



## **Gary Hannam** **Producer**

A key figure on the New Zealand film scene, producer Gary Hannam first made his mark with *Smash Palace* (1981), where he served as an executive producer with Donaldson directing. In 1981, Hannam and his *Smash Palace* investors paid Donaldson to write *The Worlds Fastest Indian*. "Roger reminded me that he offered to buy back the scripts several times. I refused him saying, it's too valuable to sell" noted Hannam.

Hannam collaborated with New Zealand Director Vincent Ward as co-producer on two films which both screened in competition at the Cannes Film Festival: the critically acclaimed *Vigil* (1984) and the award winning fantasy *Navigator: A Medieval Odyssey* (1987).

To mark 21 years of business for The Film Investment Corporation group in 2002, Hannam founded the Film Investment Corporation Foundation, a charitable trust, to assist young New Zealanders to obtain international experience.

Having moved to Europe in 2002, he recently co- founded Swiss-based EuroAsset partners GmbH with Australian entertainment financier Justin Pearce, and they jointly established with Commerzbank AG, a €300 million film fund.

In 2004 he founded Tanlay AG to finance, produce and sell new projects, including *The Worlds Fastest Indian*.

## **John Gilbert** **Editor**

John Gilbert was nominated for both an Academy and a BAFTA award for Best Editor for *Lord of the Rings: The Fellowship of the Ring*.

He has edited a range of feature films including Gaylene Preston's *Perfect Strangers*, Annie Goldson's *Punitive Damage*, Alison Maclean's *Crush*, Anna Campion's *Loaded*, and Anthony McCarten's *Via Satellite*. He was associate editor for Peter Jackson's *The Frighteners*.

Gilbert has also executive produced seven short films, which have variously screened at the Cannes, Berlin, Venice, Sundance and New York film festivals .

## **J. Peter Robinson** **Music Composer**

Classically trained at the Royal Academy of Music in London, Robinson's first major film composition was the eerily percussive score to John Schlesinger's horror/ thriller *The Believers*. Soon after, he composed the score to Philip Noyce's action/ thriller *Blind Fury*, which grabbed Roger Donaldson's attention. He scored Donaldson's films *Cocktail* and *Cadillac Man*, followed by *Wayne's World* and *Encino Man*. More recently Robinson scored John Herzfeld's *Fifteen Minutes*, starring Robert De Niro and Ed Burns.

His extensive performing career includes producing, arranging and writing songs for Phil Collins, Eric Clapton, Melissa Etheridge and Al Jarreau.

**David Gribble**  
**Cinematographer**

David Gribble has worked previously with Roger Donaldson on the 1990 feature film, *Cadillac Man*, starring Robin Williams and Tim Robbins.

Since then Gribble has worked on numerous feature film and television productions including US features, *The Quest*; *The 13th Warrior*; *Chill Factor* and the New Zealand film, *Crooked Earth*.

Gribble has been an accredited member of the Australian Cinematographers Society since 1996.

**Rob Gillies**  
**Production Designer: New Zealand**

Rob Gillies is a production designer who over 25 years has worked on a variety of New Zealand feature film and television productions.

He has designed projects as diverse as Gaylene Preston's New Zealand movie *Ruby and Rata* through to production design for over 400 episodes of the successful TV series', *Xena: Warrior Princess* and *Hercules*.

His current work includes theatrical design for *Whale Rider on Stage* and Sam Raimi's *The Boogeyman* for Ghosthouse Pictures .

**J. Dennis Washington**  
**Production Designer: USA**

J. Dennis Washington comes from an architectural design and theater background. His film design work aims for a sense of reality to support and enhance the film experience.

Washington has designed many films including *Prizzi's Honor*, *Stand By Me*, *The Dead*, *No Way Out*, *The Fugitive*, *Dante's Peak*, *The General's Daughter* and *Thirteen Days*. Washington has worked with directors such as John Huston, Sydney Pollack, Ron Shelton and Rob Reiner.

Working with friend and collaborator Roger Donaldson has always been a pleasure, never more the case than with *The Worlds Fastest Indian*.

**Masaharu Inaba**  
**Executive Producer OLC/Rights Entertainment**

OLC/Rights Entertainment (Japan) Inc, is a wholly owned subsidiary of Oriental Land Co Ltd, which is Disney's theme-park operator in Japan with revenue of over US \$3 billion. *The Worlds Fastest Indian* is their first film project.

OLC/Rights Entertainment's Masaharu Inaba is a former banker who has arranged financing for a number of acclaimed independent films and who previously worked with Anthony Hopkins on *Howards End*.

**Charles Hannah, Megumi Fukasawa, Satoru Iseki, Barrie M. Osborne  
Executive Producers 3 Dogs & A Pony, LLC**

3 Dogs & A Pony was established in 2002 by Barrie M. Osborne, Megumi Fukasawa, Charles Hannah & Satoru Iseki.

As General Manager of Publicity at leading independent Japanese distributor, Nippon Herald, Megumi Fukasawa had a significant role in the acquisition of *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy and the release of the first film *The Fellowship of the Ring*. This gave her the opportunity to form a friendship with Barrie M. Osborne, the Academy Award® winning producer of the trilogy and to find a common interest in Asian stories that resonate with international audiences. This had been a dream cherished by Fukasawa, Iseki and Australian producer Charles Hannah since meeting in the early 90's when Hannah moved to Tokyo to broker productions and production finance.

Soon after forming 3 Dogs & A Pony as a production/production financing company with Osborne and Iseki, Fukasawa and Hannah met with Roger Donaldson and his wife Marliese in Los Angeles. When on a subsequent visit Donaldson passed the screenplay for *The World's Fastest Indian* to Fukasawa, they felt confident they could attract substantial investment in the film in Japan.

After securing interest from Masaharu Inaba, who as a banker had co-financed a number of successful independent films with Iseki (including *Howard's End* and *The Crying Game*), Hannah, Fukasawa and Iseki worked closely with Donaldson and Hannam to secure the rest of the film's finance. Since the film's completion Osborne has played an important role in advising the producers on the sale of the film to a number of key markets.

### ***The World's Fastest Indian cast list***

Burt Munro	Anthony Hopkins
Ada	Diane Ladd
Fernando	Paul Rodriguez
Tom	Aaron Murphy
Fran	Annie Whittle
Bob Higby	Chris Bruno
Cabbie	Carlos La Camara
Wendy	Jessica Cauffiel
Rusty	Patrick Flueger
Marty Dickerson	Walton Goggins
Jerry	Bruce Greenwood
Otto Donner	Joe Howard
Jim Moffet	Chris Lawford
Mike	Gavin Grazer
Rolly Free	William Lucking
Earl	Eric Pierpoint
Ali	Laurel Moglen
Tina	Chris Williams

### ***The World's Fastest Indian key crew***

Directed by	Roger Donaldson
Written by	Roger Donaldson
Producers	Roger Donaldson
	Gary Hannam
Co-Producer	John J. Kelly
Executive Producers	Megumi Fukasawa
	Charles Hannah
	Masaharu Inaba
	Satoru Iseki
	Barrie M Osborne
Director of Photography	David Gribble ACS
Editor	John Gilbert ACE
Music by	J. Peter Robinson
Visual Effects Supervisor	Kent Houston
Production Design (US)	J. Dennis Washington
Production Design (NZ)	Rob Gillies
Casting (US)	Dianne Crittendan
Casting (NZ)	Diana Rowan
Costume Designer (US)	Nancy Cavallaro
Costume Designer (NZ)	Jane Holland
Line Producers	Don Schain
	Murray Francis

## ***The World's Fastest Indian interviews***

### **Roger Donaldson interview**

#### ***What attracted you to Burt Munro's story?***

One thing about New Zealand is that if you are determined to do something, this is a country where things can happen. You don't get held back by bureaucracy or people having a preconceived idea of what a film maker is or what sort of training you should have or if you've got the wherewithal to go out and do it. This is a country that's always been very sympathetic to the 'go, do it' mentality and Burt Munro really did have that mentality.

He really did decide that he was going to make this old 1920 Indian motorcycle into the world's fastest motorcycle, and he set about it in a way only New Zealanders really know how to do. We call it a number eight wire mentality: take what you have around you and make the most of it and don't bitch and moan about what you don't have.

I came to meet Burt Munro because my partner in my photographic business, Mike Smith and I were both crazy about motorbikes. We heard about this old boy Burt Munro, down in Invercargill, who had a motorcycle that was supposedly a land speed record holder. We made contact with Burt and he invited us down here to Invercargill; he said "come down here and see my bike".

I still remember when we turned up on Bainfield road where Burt lived. It was about ten o'clock at night by the time we got down there and Burt was so pleased to see us that he had to demonstrate his bike to us immediately. So he wheels his motorcycle outside to the back yard and gets it cranked up. Then there's screaming, the noise, you can't hear yourself talk let alone think, the lights are coming on at the neighbours' houses, people are screaming and yelling "Burt you old bastard turn that motorbike off". That was Burt Munro.

And from that first meeting with Burt I wanted to make a film about him. So we persuaded Burt, who didn't plan on going back to America - this was in 1971 - but we said we'll pay your fare one more time. So Mike and I went with Burt to America. I remember we had rented a Mustang car and Burt had bought himself a old Chev and the Chev was about as fast as the old Mustang. We were trying to do traveling shots of him making his way from Los Angeles to Bonneville; we'd race ahead of him at a hundred miles an hour and just get the camera nearly set up and Burt would stream past.

We went with Burt to Bonneville and there we shot some film about him which became the documentary that was screened on Television New Zealand, in 1973, called "*Offerings to the God of Speed*", which were words that he had written in chalk in his old shed that he lived in.

### ***On the background to making the film***

Such humble beginnings, the documentary on Burt was made with no money and I was at the beginning of my film-making career. I've learned a lot and I always thought that I never really did justice to the subject, I guess that's why I became obsessed with making this movie about Burt.

It started out in 1979 before I even made my second feature film (*Smash Palace*, 1981) I think we've nearly had this movie financed several times already. After I finished my last feature film in the States, I just thought, I've been talking about this movie for so darned long and if I don't make it I might as well admit that I'm never going to make it. So for the last 2 years I rewrote the script and then set about trying to raise the money for it. Gary Hannam, who's been in there from the beginning, and I set out to track down money around the world, and one of the things that really happened and got it off the ground was a Japanese investor, in fact, a woman who I had met through doing publicity for movies in Japan. My wife, Marliese, kept in contact with her over the years and Megumi asked if I had any scripts that may be suitable for investing in and I said I just happened to have one here in my back pocket, *The World's Fastest Indian*.



Megumi took the script back to Japan and they said we're going to invest in this; they loved it, they really were just knocked out by it. So once I had their commitment, I had something that I could hang trying to raise the rest of the money on. But it's been a torturous, torturous trip to get there....

Next I got Anthony Hopkins to commit to making the movie. So once I had some real serious casting in place for Burt then I knew I had a movie, if I could get the finance together. And then I also realized that I had the problem that the Bonneville Salt Flats are only available and suitable at a certain time of the year so unless I did it this year (2004) I'd have to wait at least a year. The chances (in a year's time) of it happening really were pretty slim as Tony has many offers. Gary and I realised we would have to start spending our own money.

It was a go movie 3 weeks before production started, having built the bikes, having got a film crew working in Utah, with Gary and I paying the bills. A situation that everybody tells you is not really the greatest place for a filmmaker to be... but in a way I think that I was, and Gary too, were so determined that we were going to make this movie. And I think that the fact that we were prepared to spend our own money, and a lot of it, to make it come this far, gave other people a confidence to maybe get involved as well and they saw the passion that we had for it.

### ***On Burt Munro***

He was a character and I think that if we can capture that great quality that he had about what he was doing with his life, we will have a great film. He was really, really happy although there were things that happened in his life that I'm sure had an impact on him, like when he was 14 his twin brother was killed. I'm sure that must have had an impact on him. Not that he ever admitted it but this was a guy who, as his grandson said, wanted to die with his boots on...

This was a guy who really loved motorcycles and was obviously very talented in riding them and was also very talented in making them go fast. He also had an interesting philosophy on his life. And it is that philosophy about growing old and

having dreams and ambition... that's what I think that this movie is about, it's less about his motorbike in a way, it's less about motorcycles, it's more about just the philosophy of life and what we've tried to do is build an entertaining, amusing, hopefully touching, script.

## **Anthony Hopkins interview**

### ***On getting involved with the project***

Well I worked with Roger Donaldson back 20 years ago on *The Bounty*, 1983, in Tahiti and New Zealand. Then years passed by and I hadn't seen Roger for along time and then we were going to do a movie called *Papa*, about Ernest Hemingway and that didn't work out. And Roger was kind of disappointed and so was I; but that's the way life is sometimes in movies.

And then he phoned - a strange coincidence - a few months ago, I just thought I would give him a call and see how he is, I wanted to know how he was after the disappointment of Hemingway, and he asked " Tony did you get my message?" I said "no", he said "I just left you a message", "What?" He said "I've got a script", he said "You're not phoning me to answer my message". I said "No", I said, "I haven't even picked up my messages this morning". He said "Oh, well this is propitious or fortuitous", and he said "I've got the script here called *The World's Fastest Indian* and he said "a beautiful story -I don't know if you would be interested in playing a racing driver, a racing bloke.

So I got the script that afternoon and I thought it was just terrific. It is a unique script, I don't know what it is about it; it is just well written, very very well written, beautifully written, and so refreshing. It's not the bang bang, of big Hollywood movies. It's got much more variety and for me it's a big change because it's a real winner of a guy. I've had a good career playing psychopaths or uptight people, and I'm fed up with those, I don't want to play any more of them. This is my life now, I'm a very happy guy and Burt Munro's philosophy and character suits my temperament.

### **Comments on 'The Bounty' (1983), and Roger as director**

Roger and I had our moments of animosity. Roger had his methods of dealing with people. He's an Australian, and he had that, as we say in England, a kind of an antipodean chip on his shoulder. He was different, and I was younger and arrogant and all the rest of it. I was very impatient with people and especially directors, and if they wanted too many takes I would question ... and he used to do a lot of takes, he's a perfectionist.

Now 20 years have passed and I'm not only tolerant but I am respectful of what he does, and what directors do. He does it for a reason. I know that he knows that he wants a good movie and I don't care if he does 50 takes. I hope he doesn't have to do 50 takes because it's a lot of time, but I respect him as a director and I like him as a guy, I think he's a terrific fellow. You know the first few days I was wondering if he thought I would go berserk any moment. But those days are over you know... I was temperamental, I would get impatient with things. Now I think oh it's only a movie... But I don't mean that in a cynical way. It is finally [that] nothing is that important to get upset about and I just roll with the punches and roll with the conditions now.

And he's a great director to work with, one of the best I have worked with. I've worked with Spielberg and Oliver Stone and he's there with that lot you know. He really is, in his films like *No Way Out* and *Thirteen Days* and, a wonderful director.

### **On Burt Munro**

Well I'm no speed freak myself but Burt Munro, in the documentary that Roger filmed, Burt loved speed. He was, I don't know if he was obsessed with it, but he loved the thrill of speed, he said that you can live more in 5 minutes on a motorbike going high speed than you can in your whole lifetime. That was the challenge. I suppose there are obviously people who flirt with mortality. I mean, you're taking a huge challenge, a courageous challenge to risk your life... Donald Campbell was the same, to break the world speed water record. And he was killed in the process,

breaking the actual record, and he said he was scared every time he got into Bluebird.

But that was it - to overcome fear is the greatest virtuous courage and I think Burt is one of those characters, one of those guys. That's his whole philosophy of life, to live life to the full, because "When you're dead you're a long time dead" he says, and "Once you're dead you never come back". I'm not a speed thrill freak though - I'm a careful driver, so I don't like speed. I used to when I was younger but now, I like to live.

### ***On establishing the character, Burt Munro***

Well, I'm kind of mellowing into the part; getting the New Zealand accent... And this is where Roger Donaldson is so easy. "Listen, it doesn't matter, down in New Zealand they will probably criticize you for your accent" he said "but worldwide you'll probably get away with it." He said "It doesn't matter anyway, do it your way make him yours, you're Burt Munro". But he checks me. He says "Flatten the vowels sounds out a bit and watch the R sounds". And when I hear Burt Munro he sounds almost Cornish to me, or almost Irish, Devonshire or Cornish. He's got those very beautiful round R sounds and it really sounds like Cornish to me.

### ***On the script***

It is such a good script, Roger wrote it and I'll add little things here and there; it's not written in stone. But it is such a good script you don't need to change the structure of it, and I don't want to replace lines. But I sometimes make a line sound more natural because I may have difficulty with the consonant sound which is too New Zealand for me and I'll say well can I...? For example, I've got one coming which is "No harm in asking". Well I don't know if I can handle that, so I'll say "Well I thought I would ask". I don't know, maybe I will just put it that way and say "I thought I'd ask", which is easier. Little things like that, anything to make it simpler.

### ***On working with Roger***

If you have a director who has an equanimity in his temperament, that's good. If you get someone shouting and screaming - and that can come from an actor as well and I've done that in my past and I admit it; that doesn't help anyone - if you can express irritability take it aside instead of being public about it... Some directors are vociferous and noisy and scream and shout and you can't work like that.

With this crew, which is the best crew I have worked with in many years, why create trouble? Just get on with your job, learn your lines, as the guy's preparing his lighting and the sound guys are doing their stuff, and the props and wardrobe people, everyone's doing a job and that's what it is... That's what it is, it's a job and I've taken some years to learn how to settle into this kind of respect for people for what they're doing. And maybe Burt's spirit is around us, because he seemed to be such a decent fun man and I liked his wonderful sense of humour, when he only loved the ladies and says, "Well I think a nice couple of ladies around can help a party go". You know, I love that bloke Burt, he was, he's a great, great personality, probably a very generous man as well.

## **Chris Williams interview**

### ***On the movie and Burt***

I think people will get a sense of hope from this movie. One of the things that I love about the movie is that it's got a huge heart, and it's all about the characters. You can feel the heartbeat and feel the heart of this movie and it starts with the Burt Munro character and you feel for him and you pull for him and you love him.

It gives you a really good sense of hope of that it is possible that this man coming from thousands of miles away with a dream of setting a record on almost an impossible dream, and he actually achieves it. I mean it's an amazing story so it gives people a sense of hope. I think his unbridled joy for life really is infectious. He touches so many people along the way in this story and I imagine in his life he touched so many people, giving them hope and giving them a piece, a little piece of him, to take with them.

Like with my character, I feel like she's a better person for knowing a person like Burt, as well as his wide-eyed, sunshiny - if that's even a word- but his wide-eyed view on life and going for your dreams. You can't help but get caught up in his affection. I would have loved to have met the real Burt Munro years ago, but I'm very glad that I get to know him in a certain sense by playing with Anthony in this role. So his dream lives on and it will always live on it seems.

### ***On working with Roger***

Working with Roger is very interesting to me, first of all being a little intimidated by all the actors that he's worked with and seen tremendous performances coming out of in his movies. It is an intimidating thing working with a fabulous director like Roger and especially doing a role so different for myself, knowing that he trusts that I can do what he needs me to do. I'm always very careful to hear his feedback on if it's going correctly, and I believe Roger is a type of the director that if everything is going fine, then he's not going to say anything at all.

So you know if things are going wrong then he'll let you know. He's had a great amount of communication with me on exactly what he want, but he lets me do what I want to do and if he has any tweaking he'll let me know that. It's been really, really wonderful and I completely trust him as a director knowing that I'm going to be taken care of and that I'm going to look good and that's important. As a woman, I know he's going to make me look good. So it's been a wonderful experience, its been great and knowing that this is a very close and dear project to him, it's like a baby and that he would entrust me with this character is a blessing for me it's just, it's just been really, really wonderful...

## **Chris Lawford interview**

### ***On Roger Donaldson***

Roger Donaldson as a director is... first of all, he's a guy who knows what he wants. One of the great things about doing this movie is that this was Roger's entry into film, he made a documentary about Brut Munro, he wrote the script 25 years ago. This is his passion, this is his dream, and to be a part of somebody's passion and dream is an unbelievable honour and also a great time because it's joy. There's no stress here it's just a wonderful experience. He is a director who knows what he wants, in my experience with him I've never felt that sense that you can feel with some directors: "oh my god the ship is going down".

He's pretty much non-flustered even when he's not getting what he wants. He'll take the time to get what he wants, he's very tricky, he'll shoot rehearsals... Like the other day we were doing a scene and he was going "We're just going to do a scene where you walk up, and you just walk up to Tony and you do that" and then he'll cut it, and the next time I did it he kept the cameras going, so I had to go through the whole scene. So it's almost like I wasn't ready to do it, and it was probably much more organic, which I love.



## ***On Anthony Hopkins***

Well I'll tell you a story about Anthony Hopkins; first of all let me just say that being able to work on a film with Anthony Hopkins is probably the pinnacle of any actor's career, certainly of my career. When I came to California I was an actor and it was about 15 years ago.

I knew Tony because he was friends with my father and one day I saw him and I said "Would you have lunch with me and talk to me about acting?" and he said "Absolutely", and we had lunch, and *Silence of the Lambs* had just come out and I said I had seen it and his work in it was just amazing and I said "How did you do that, how did you find that character, how did you find the voice, and that walk that he had at the end of it?", He replied "I prepare the same way every time for every role" and I said "well how's that?", he said "Well I read the script out loud 100 times, and I make these little wagon wheels on it, each wagon wheel signifies 5 times".

So he has 20 little wagon wheels across and he reads the whole script giving nothing to it and just lets it sit there for 48 hours and it starts to boil inside of him. He said, "I went and we had a read through in Salt Lake City with Jonathan Demme and Jodie Foster, but I drove back to California and by the time I got back to LA, Hannibal Lecter was just screaming to get out of me" and Tony said, "If you want to share that with other actors, if it helps them, please do".

He's one of the most generous human beings I have ever met, and then he said something that really struck me "All my life, I've wanted to drive down Sunset Boulevard and look up and see a movie that I was in, a big movie on one of those billboards with my name above the title", and he said "This morning I did it, and you know what, it doesn't really mean that much", and that's Tony Hopkins.

He's a genius at what he does and he's a genius human being, I mean I learn as much from him about my humanity as I do about the craft of acting. It's just wonderful to be around people like Roger Donaldson and Tony Hopkins who are so good at what they do and so fundamentally human and are wonderful people, it's a.... you wouldn't have to pay me to do this, I'll do it for free."