

NO TIME TO DIE

Cary On Bond

★★★★★ EXTRAS ★★★★★

▶ **RELEASED OUT NOW!**

2021 | 12 | Blu-ray (4K/standard)/DVD

▶ Director Cary Joji Fukunaga

▶ Cast Daniel Craig, Ralph Fiennes,

Léa Seydoux, Rami Malek

➤ **At the beginning of *No Time To Die***, Daniel Craig's James Bond seems the most content we've ever seen him, the perma-scowl of earlier movies replaced by the summery smile of a man with love in his eyes. But there's a question that *NTTD* struggles with throughout: if you jettison so many of those character tick points – the ferocious skirt-chasing, the extravagant drinking, the licence to kill – is that person even James Bond any more?

If Bond, James Bond, himself feels alarmingly unfamiliar here,

at least the movie is happy to remind us what franchise we're watching. Where *Casino Royale* seemed eager to junk those oft-mocked Bond tropes – the gadgets, the quips, the underground lairs – *No Time To Die* welcomes them back with an “all is forgiven” embrace.

Craig's final film as 007 (though he isn't even a double-0 for most of its running time) is a mostly successful marriage of the most trad Bond movie we've seen in 20 years and the most radical, pioneering one we've had since *On Her Majesty's Secret Service*. Purists will beam at Ana de Armas's endearingly ditzy but kickass CIA agent and disfigured bad guy Lyutsifer Safin's sleek, Ken Adam-styled base, even if they grimace at the sight of Bond

preparing a fruit breakfast for Madeline's toddler daughter.

This is Daniel Craig's best performance, with even the Moore-like one-liners delivered with a twinkle. With *No Time To Die*, Craig has given us the most fully rounded, human Bond of all. Whether it's actually the same James Bond we fell for nearly 60 years ago is a moot point.

➤ **Extras** “Anatomy Of A Scene: Matera” (11 minutes) takes us through the crazily complicated pre-titles sequence. “Keeping It Real” (six minutes) is a more general look at the movie's action sequences, with everyone keen to remind us how much in-camera work goes into making a Bond

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flick. “A Global Journey” (eight minutes) takes us on a tour of the locations, while “Designing Bond (11 minutes) explores the artistic choices the designers made for Bond 25. All of these are fine, if a little YouTube-y.

Much better is “Being James Bond”, a refreshingly candid 46-minute retrospective on the Daniel Craig era, in which the actor (alongside producers Barbara Broccoli and Michael G Wilson) reflects on the “James Bland” and CraigNotBond nonsense, and spills some fascinating titbits (he celebrated his casting with homemade vodka martinis, and later met his personal trainer while holding a bacon sandwich and a hand-rolled cigarette!). Important note: this doc is only available on the 4K release. **Steve O'Brien**

➤ For a stunt of Bond clearing a wall on a motorbike, Coke was sprayed to make the cobbles less slippery – 8,400 gallons!



VIRGIN WITCH

★★★★★ EXTRAS ★★★★★

▶ **RELEASED OUT NOW!**

1971 | 18 | Blu-ray

▶ Director Ray Austin

▶ Cast Ann Michelle, Vicki Michelle, Patricia Haines, Neil Hallett

BLU-RAY DEBUT “I can sell any product with a nude,” declares modelling agent/coven leader Sybil Waite. It's an attitude that informs this underdressed clash of sexploitation and sorcery, which baited the British censors in the early '70s.

Pseudonymously written – and essentially secretly produced – by Hazel Adair, co-creator of long-running ITV soap *Crossroads*, it finds two sisters seeking fame and fortune in the fashion world, only to tumble into the louche clutches of occultists. Despite the ever-leering camera it's notable that one of the sisters at least is granted a certain amount of agency, hinting at a feminist take on witchcraft that's never quite explored.

The nudity isn't gratuitous; it's clearly the *entire point* of this unabashed skin-flick, directed by Ray Austin with a lurid energy reminiscent of Jess Franco. A world of Double Diamond pub signs, rotary dial telephones and a laissez-faire approach to clothing, *Virgin Witch* entwines titillation and black magic in a uniquely '70s way, like a Dennis Wheatley paperback cover come to life.

➤ **Extras** An insightful interview with Charles Marriott, son of Hazel Adair, reveals among other things Ray Austin's black belt credentials, which came in handy one night (32 minutes). Plus: trailer; gallery; reworked reproduction of Adair's original novelisation; six postcards. **Nick Setchfield**



Jumper by Royal Navy, Mk 18 Mod 0 model's own.