

BLACK BOOK

Official Selection 2006 Toronto International Film Festival

Directed by
Paul Verhoeven

Starring
Carice van Houten
Sebastian Koch
Thom Hoffman

Sony Pictures Classics will release on March 2nd, 2007.

Running Time: 145 minutes

Language: Dutch, German, English, Hebrew.

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SYNOPSIS

Holland 1944 – The final years of the Second World War find the beautiful singer Rachel Stein (Carice Van Houten) taking refuge with the Tsjempkema family in rural Holland. Once a popular and wealthy singer, Rachel has been waiting out the war like many Jews in Europe, separated from her family and a moment away from being caught by the Gestapo. Her temporary safe-house is destroyed by an Allied bomber under fire by a German fighter and Rachel is left in the arms of Rob (Michel Huisman), a sympathetic young boy, who promises to help her to safety. The next morning, Rob takes Rachel to her contact in town, who she hopes will help her find her family and escape across into liberated territory.

They arrive at the home of Mr. Smaal (Dolf de Vries) and his wife (Diana Dobleman), a compassionate lawyer who has worked secretly to help Jews escape from Holland. Reluctantly, Mr. Smaal arranges for Rachel to join her family and cross enemy lines into Allied territory, marking her name and rendez-vous point in a little black leather notebook. But during the dangerous crossing, the boat is ambushed by German troops. The Nazi's ruthlessly kill the boats' passengers and Rachel only narrowly escapes by jumping overboard into the river.

The next morning, Rachel is rescued by Gerben Kuipers, one of the leaders of the Dutch resistance. A kind and generous man, Kuipers offers Rachel a job and a safe place to stay. But embittered by the memory of the ruthless murder of her family, Rachel decides to become a resistance fighter to seek revenge against the Germans.

During her first mission, Rachel escorts Hans Akkermans (Thom Hoffman), another leader within the Dutch resistance, to smuggle guns and correspondence aboard a train. Posing as a couple, they hope to sneak past German troops patrolling the station, but when the Germans announce a thorough bag check, Rachel's quick thinking leads her into the arms of Ludwig Müntze (Sebastian Koch) the head of the Dutch SD. Rachel charms capture Müntze's attention, and as the soldiers ask for her bags he instructs them to leave them alone. Their brief encounter makes a lasting impression on both Rachel and Müntze, but as they part, both believe this to be their last encounter together.

That prediction, however, proves short lived after an accident reveals the resistances' attempt to transport weapons and ends with the capture of several top resistance fighters including Kuipers' son. Blinded by his love for his son, Kuipers solicits both Rachel and Akkermans to break into the SD headquarters to free the captives. Remembering her encounter with Müntze, Rachel volunteers herself to seduce Müntze and obtain the release of the captives.

Her initial meeting with Müntze results in her being hired as his assistant, assuring her close and intimate contact with the leadership of the SD forces. Befriending Ronnie (Halina Reijn), Rachel is confronted by the vicious ruthlessness of the Nazi regime and is even forced to print the execution orders for her captive compatriots. Rachel soon learns the dire condition of the prisoners, and realizes that the future of their survival lies in Müntze's hands. The merciless nature of the Nazi leadership would normally never yield, but Rachel discovers Müntze's resolve wavering under the weight his conscience. Before Müntze is able to finish secret negotiations with the resistance to cease fighting in exchange for the prisoners, his second in command Franken (Waldemar Kobus) reveals Müntze's secret negotiations to General Käutner (Christian Berkel). Müntze is arrested and summarily condemned to death for treason and aiding the resistance.

Seizing this moment of turmoil in the Nazi leadership, Akkermans mounts a rescue in an attempt to free the captured resistance fighters. But the surprise arrival of their small squad into the SD headquarters was anticipated by the Germans. Unable to save any of the captured prisoners, Akkermans is the only one to make it out alive. But unknown to the resistance fighters, Rachel helps Müntze, whom she has grown to love, to escape.

The failed escape leads the resistance to believe they were betrayed by a self-serving traitor. Learning of Müntze's escape, they begin to believe that Rachel exchanged information for his release. Now on the run from both the Nazi's and the resistance, Rachel and Müntze spend the next several weeks waiting out the war together.

Several months later, following the Allied liberation of Holland, Müntze and Rachel return to seek out Mr. Smaal's help to escape the harsh judgment of the victorious Dutch resistance. However, their return to the jubilant city is not a welcome one. Together, Rachel and Müntze are confronted with the harsh vengeance of the victor's justice as Müntze is recognized as the leader of the SD. Trying to flee the throngs of civilians demanding his arrest, Müntze is captured and executed on the orders of General Käutner, claiming yet one more victim for his ruthless regime. Alone once more, Rachel sets out to uncover the person who framed her as the traitor and right her blighted wartime record. But, as she delves deeper into the events of the past, Rachel uncovers trails of deceit pointing to compatriots she once counted as her closest friends and embarks upon a retributive justice of her own, to right the wrongs of this unforgiving period of history.

INTERVIEWS

PAUL VERHOEVEN Q & A

Paul Verhoeven has directed over 20 films throughout his career. Making his start in Holland with popular films including, *Wat Zien Ik?* (*Diary of a Hooker* - 1971), *Keetje Tippel* (*Katie Tippel* – 1975), *Soldier of Orange* (1977) and *Spetters* (1980) Verhoeven drew millions to the box office. But it was his 1973 Oscar Nominated success *Turks Fruit* (*Turkish Delight*), which was honoured as the best Dutch film of the 20th Century that catapulted him to worldwide recognition. After finishing *De Vierde Man* (*The Fourth Man* – 1983) the acclaimed and controversial director made his way to Hollywood where he found success with films like *RoboCop* (1987), *Total Recall* (1990), *Basic Instinct* (1992) and *Starship Troopers* (1997). Twenty years after leaving for the United States, Verhoeven has returned to the Netherlands to film *Black Book*. This film invites us to take a closer look at an unquestioned moment of history and see the grey areas between the black and white accounts of post-war Holland.

Were you happy to make a film in the Netherlands after twenty years?

Most of all, I was glad to have the opportunity to make a film from a script that Gerard Soeteman and I have worked on for twenty years. For a long time we couldn't get the story to work. The basic idea stayed the same: a group of Jews are betrayed and killed in the Biesbosch and the main character hunts down the traitor. Originally, it had a male lead. And that gave us a problem: we didn't know how to get him to credibly infiltrate the German command. Three years ago Gerard solved the puzzle: the lead should be a woman. Then all the scenes we envisaged suddenly fell into place.

How would you describe *Black Book*?

It's a thriller inspired by true events. All the story lines in *Black Book* have their basis in true events. Most characters are based on real people.

Did the 'black book' ever exist?

You mean the so-called 'little black book'? Absolutely. Plenty has been written about it. Gerard first came across it in the book *Moordenaarswerk* by Hans van Straten that was published in the 60s. Gerard immediately thought it was a good start for a script. The 'little black book' was the diary of a Mr. De Boer, a lawyer in The Hague who was shot in the Goudenregenstraat just after the war. The killers were never found. During the war, De Boer negotiated between the German army command in The Hague and the resistance to try and prevent unnecessary bloodshed. The resistance would assassinate people and the Germans would exact revenge by shooting hostages in the street. When I was six years old, I was made to walk past those bodies. De Boer's black book, which probably contained names of traitors and collaborators – all the way to the top – was never found.

If *Soldier of Orange* was a heroic story, how would you characterise *Black Book*?

As a correction to the heroic *Soldier of Orange*. *Black Book* is a more realistic depiction of history. That is the main reason why I wanted to make this film. I wanted to show in an absorbing way what reality was like then. Not black and white, but in shades of grey. The film follows on from the book *Grijs Verleden* by Chris van der Heyden from 2001, in which the writer reassesses the past. It used to be conventional wisdom that the Dutch and the resistance were heroes and the Germans and their Dutch sympathisers were villains. Van der Heyden takes a fresh look at the Netherlands during the war. A post-modern look with plenty of alternative interpretations. People were neither heroes or villains. They could be heroic while behaving like villains, and vice versa. Jan Campert's story is a good illustration of that (Campert, a resistance fighter and author of one of the most famous anti-German poems of the war, was recently claimed to have behaved dishonourably in concentration camp Neuengamme, and possibly killed by fellow inmates). He had been placed on a pedestal, but now his legacy is in question.

You emphasise that *Black Book* is also entertainment.

Of course, films are a wonderful cross between art and business. The ultimate goal is to combine those opposites in some brilliant way. That's what makes for a film of lasting value and commercial success. That's what I always strive for: an entertaining film that appeals to a broad audience, from professor to shop assistant, which remains worthwhile for decades. Apart from David Lean few people have achieved that.

Which of your films have this lasting value?

The films that have proved themselves these last twenty years are *Turks Fruit* (*Turkish Delight*) and *Soldier of Orange*. *De Vierde Man* (*The Fourth Man*) and *Spetters* I also like, but I don't think *Wat Zien Ik?* (*Diary of a Hooker*) or *Keetje Tippel* (*Katie Tippel*) will survive.

Why did you choose to make the heroic *Soldier of Orange* rather than a more realistic film like *Black Book*?

At the time, as I said, we didn't have a script for *Black Book*. Eric Hazelhoff Roelfsema's book had been very popular, and we got support from the royal family and the army, which helped to get the funding sorted out. Gerard read the book when we were working on *Turks Fruit* (*Turkish Delight*). The plan was to make it a TV series. Meanwhile we made *Turks Fruit* (*Turkish Delight*) and *Keetje Tippel* (*Katie Tippel*). When we discussed new projects with Rob Houwer our first idea was to make a remake of *De donkere kamer van Damocles* (*The Spitting Image*). That would have been closer to *Black Book* than to *Soldier of Orange*. But Rob didn't like the idea, because it was a remake. He proposed to try and realise *Soldier of Orange* as a feature film. When we researched that, we came across some remarkable events in The Hague in the last years of the war. About SD officer Munt and Frank of the Sonderkommando. Those stories didn't fit with *Soldier of Orange*, but they've now been incorporated into *Black Book*.

How many documents did you and Soeteman read for the film?

Between 700 and 800 over a period of some forty years. In 1967 I was doing research for the TV documentary *Portret van Anton Adriaan Mussert*. Jacob Zwaan, then archivist at the RIOD (National War Documentation Centre), alerted me to the report *Kamptoestanden* by Dutch Nazi party member reverend Van der Vaart Smit, who was imprisoned after the war, which gives prisoners' accounts of abuse and mistreatment in those camps. We have weaved some of those stories into *Black Book*. This is what makes the film so provocative, because nobody has yet shown how we treated our prisoners in 1945. But that wasn't our only source of inspiration for the film. Picture archives were another. For instance pictures of the camp guards. Members of the provisional army and resistance people. After all, after the war everybody claimed to have been in the resistance. There were lots of dubious people there. If you look at those pictures, you wouldn't have wanted to be at their mercy. They way they strut when they had arrested a Dutch Nazi, makes you fear the worst.

Are Rachel and Ronnie also inspired by real people?

In Rachel a number of people have been merged. Both resistance fighters like Esmée van Eeghen and Kitty ten Have, as well as an artist like Dora Paulsen. Gerard and I fused them into one character. Ronnie's character is fictional, but in those days there were a lot of girls like that. Those, who went wherever the wind blew them. Politically she's very naïve. Many people on both sides were at that time. The NSB, the Dutch Nazi party, had lots of members who were fanatical Nazis. And I don't mean people who joined in 1941 for opportunistic reasons, but people who had been members since 1933 and who had lost their jobs as a result, but were even more zealous as a consequence.

How did you and Soeteman divide the work on the script?

Gerard sets out the structure and the general drift. He monitors story development and character development. He writes the first draft and the next drafts. I then add things and change things, scenes as well as characters. If my memory serves, I came up with Ronnie, as I did with Maja in *Spetters*. The scenes at the end in the prison camp are mostly mine. I have made a significant contribution to the script. For most films I made with Gerard, the script was mostly his so I didn't get a credit. But this time my contribution was such that Gerard and I both felt that we should share the writing credits.

As with your previous films, *Black Book* is very pacy. More so than the scripts Gerard has written for other people. Was that your influence?

I think it comes out of our collaboration. When Gerard works alone or with others, the dynamics are different. Gerard and I have always clicked. We are from a similar background, even though our characters are very different. Gerard is only two years older than me. We were both children in the war, we went to grammar school, studied at Leiden University, and both did our national service. And then we met on the TV series *Floris*. With such similar backgrounds it's easier to work together than when you are from different worlds. Our different characters in practice really gel. The collaboration with Gerard is the most creative of my life. In America I worked with Eric Neumeier on *RoboCop* and *Starship Troopers*, but

working with Gerard is just the best because we have such a good balance as a team. Of course language is also an issue. In Dutch I am confident when I write dialogue, I know when it sounds right. When I write something in English, I first ask Stacy Lumbrezer, my co-producer to check it because usually the English is pretty poor, awkward or stiff. I don't feel secure writing in English. Perhaps that's why I've made so many genre films in America. I have writing credits on none of my films there. I can respond to American culture, I can add to it, I can criticize and be ironic. And I have. But I cannot really think in that culture. So I need a writer to give me a solid blueprint. And then I am enough of an architect to play with that and add minor scenes. On Dutch productions I understand the characters better. Especially after the political developments of recent years I have a hard time understanding Americans. Not so much the people in Hollywood, but mostly those of the Midwest. Eventually I will return to Holland. I haven't become such a fan of America that I want to spend the rest of my days there.

Apart from the script, were there other reasons why you were glad to be working in Holland again?

The best thing was to be able to work with the biggest acting talent, Carice van Houten, Thom Hoffman, Halina Reijn, Peter Blok and let's not forget the Germans, Sebastian Koch, Christian Berkel, Waldemar Kobus. These are actors of the highest quality. In America I had almost no access to that category. I would have loved to make a film with Nicole Kidman or Tom Cruise, but it's almost impossible. The only way is a special project that's tailored to the star. So in my American productions I have never been able to retain a fixed group of actors. The way in which in Holland I worked several times with Rutger Hauer, Monique van der Ven, Renée Soutendijk, and now again with Dolf de Vries and Derek de Lint.

How did you choose the leads?

Carice and Halina are both wonderfully talented and dedicated professionals. They are very gifted and have great intuition, which you need to really get under the skin of someone who lived 50 years ago. They're also very attractive, charismatic and have strong personalities. Because Carice is more introverted Rachel's part was better for her. Halina's extravertedness was better suited to Ronnie. She's a get up and go girl. And Carice and Halina are a great combination. We auditioned over thirty actresses for these parts, selected by casting directors Hans Kemna and Job Gosschalk, but they were head and shoulders above the others. After fifteen minutes I knew. And to think I presented a Golden Calf to Carice for *Minoes*.

And why Thom Hoffman?

I knew Thom from *De Vierde Man (The Fourth Man)*. But I didn't specify I wanted to work with him. Like so many other actors he was proposed by Hans and Job. We chose him because there is a sense of danger about him that fits the part, but mostly because of the chemistry between him and Carice. There were other actors that I thought were right for the part, but none of them had the necessary sexual chemistry with Carice. Thom and Carice did a scene when they're very close to each other on the train, and you felt the tension immediately.

Your earlier films in Holland were produced by either Rob Houwer or Joop van den Ende. Why this time San Fu Maltha?

Initially Rob was to produce the film. But we had disagreements about contracts, not for the first time either, and Rob pulled out. Rob and I have had plenty of disagreements over the years, but it has never affected our friendship. We have dinner together now as the best of friends. I then sent the script to Joop, but he never responded. I came to San Fu through Jos van der Linden, an old friend that Gerard and I have always stayed in touch with. Jos was executive producer on for instance *Spetters*. San Fu felt right immediately. Because of his collaboration with Jos, because he's increasingly putting himself on the map as a producer, and because he's got this international air about him. He's got lots of contacts abroad, and that was important for this film. After all, *Black Book* is a big international production. And I my intuition didn't lie, because San Fu has made some excellent financial deals. By finding co-producers in Germany, Britain and Belgium, but also negotiating distribution deals in many countries.

Any disadvantages about working in Holland again?

Well, I wouldn't call it a disadvantage, but in a Dutch context *Black Book* is an enormously big and complex production. There is not much experience in Holland with that kind of scale of production, and that can be difficult.

You didn't consider hiring experienced Americans?

No, I wanted Dutch people to gain experience so the film would also have social value. When Joris Ivens made a film in China, he would get a local crew, "so they take something away from it too. I'm only here for six months, but they'll learn a thing or two while I'm here." I thought that was a nice gesture, and I've always remembered it. Now I have the chance, I wanted to do something similar. In 1995 two special stamps were issued to celebrate the Year of the Film: one featured a scene from *Turks Fruit (Turkish Delight)* the other a portrait of Joris Ivens. And now I'm following in his footsteps. Gerard and I have had a number of heated arguments about Ivens. Gerard hates him for his communist sympathies and his falsified images but I'm a big fan. Ivens has made some wonderful films.

Were there many old friends in the crew?

A few, like Hans Kemna and Jos van der Linden, but most of the people I used to work with are retired or dead. On *BLACK BOOK* I was in the same situation as with *RoboCop*. A fresh start with a largely new team. We had to find a new camera man anyway. Jan de Bont, who shot *Turks Fruit (Turkish Delight)*, *De Vierde Man (The Fourth Man)*, *Flesh & Blood (1985)* and *Basic Instinct*, is now a director. Jost Vacano, who did *Spetters*, *Soldier of Orange*, *RoboCop* and *Total Recall* had retired. As *Black Book* is a co-production with Germany and Britain, it could be a German or a Brit. I spoke to Karl Walter Lindenlaub, who did *Independence Day (1996)* and *The Haunting (1999)*, in Los Angeles. We clicked. He wanted to get away from the American film industry for a while and do something smaller. Britain has made a massive contribution to the film in Anne Dudley. She's composed the score for *The Crying Game (1992)*, *The Full Monty (1997)* and *American History X (1998)*.

CARICE VAN HOUTEN Q & A

Carice van Houten: 'As soon as I read the script, I knew: I want to do this.'

Carice van Houten, 29, won Golden Calves for her leads in *Minoes (2000)* and *Suzy Q (1999)*. She has also performed in *Amnesia (2001)*, *De passievrucht (Father's Affair - 2003)*, *Lepel*, *Knetter* and *Ik omhels je met duizend armen (2006)*. In 2002 Carice won a Colombina for her performance in the stage play *Een Meeuw*. Other major stage parts include *Driekoningenvond*, *Ren Lenny Ren*, *Het bewijs*, *Hedda Gabler* and the musical *Foxtrot*.

What are your favourite Paul Verhoeven films?

Turks Fruit (Turkish Delight) and *Basic Instinct*, because they are about love. The relationships may be a bit twisted, but there is love even so. Another favourite is *Starship Troopers*. You can almost see Paul grinning behind his monitor. His unusual sense of humour shines through.

What did you think of him before you met him?

A friend of mine, a director and a big fan of Paul, had shown me a few documentaries about him, which were about the shooting of *Turks Fruit (Turkish Delight)* and *Soldier of Orange*. Terrible stories. Actresses having to be on the set for 24 hours and being given almost nothing to eat. Crew members would stand by and give the women a spoonful of muesli if they were about to faint. I thought: that is hell. It's fantastic, but it's hell.

Were you nervous when you first met him?

When Paul arrived, the entire casting agency was shaking. You could almost feel it tremble. He's here! He's here! I was pretty nervous. I kept thinking: here's this big Hollywood director coming to see what Holland's got in store. I can't disappoint him. But I felt at ease as soon as I shook his hand. I thought: what's all the fuss about this kind man?

How would you describe Rachel?

Strong-willed and pretty straight. A true heroine, but of flesh and blood. Quite different from the characters I tend to play. I have had to suppress the joker in me, my earthiness, for this part. Rachel does have some naive, childish sides, but she can look after herself. She stands up for herself and for the man she loves. When Müntze is put in prison, she asks the resistance to help him escape. You help him, even though he is a German. That takes guts. Rachel is a strong character that made it great to play her.

Rachel loses people she loves and has to survive in a hostile, violent and anti-semitic environment. How does she manage that?

She is a girl who can shirk off a lot of grief. At some point she says: "I can't cry about that now." She flees from her emotions. She puts her feelings aside, she is thoughtful, stays on the outside. That makes her the perfect spy. Particularly because when things get tight, she intuitively makes the right moves.

But she falls in love, despite putting her feelings aside.

Of course, everybody wants love. And everybody wants to share their pain. In Müntze, Rachel finds someone who just like her has had to overcome great losses.

The Rachel character is based on several young women who were in the resistance during the war. Did you study those too?

In the talks with Paul and Gerard Soeteman I had already got lots of historical information. When I read the script I sometimes thought: this is just too much, all the things that happen to Rachel in such a short time. But Paul and Gerard explained that all those events are based on facts. I did do some reading about women in the resistance movement, but I stopped. Rachel isn't a real character that I must play. That allowed me to bring my own interpretations to the part. That is what is so challenging about acting. And if it is wrong, the director will tell me.

Rachel has not turned out a typical Verhoeven character, she's not an opportunistic and manipulative woman.

That was a conscious choice. The script left that open, but we went for the feeling, the drama and Rachel's development. Paul wanted her to have a mysterious side. I'm glad, because otherwise the love scenes would have been pretty flat. But in Ronnie there is a typical Verhoeven female in the film. That's fine, because you need that humour.

How did the shoot for *Black Book* differ from your previous films?

It was good that things weren't rushed. Getting the light just right for a scene could take up to 45 minutes. And I also had the luxury of a stand-in, so I could stay in my trailer and prepare for the take. It gives you a sense of being taken seriously as an actress. The Dutch film business tends to be very matter-of-fact: we're all doing this film together and everybody should muck in. I've always gone along with that, but on *Black Book* I started to appreciate the value of being professional about every aspect of the film. And that is what Paul and assistant director Marc van de Bijl, who's worked on several international productions, bring to the film. And the sheer scale and complexity of this production was unparalleled in Holland.

Finally, how was Paul to work with as a director?

As an actor's director he gives you plenty of room. He feels that he's cast actors who know their art, and he relies on that during the shoot. After all, acting is what I do. After a take he'll only tell you when he's not happy. When he says nothing, apparently you did fine. You have to get used to that, because actors are vain and insecure and need constant reassurance. At the same time it was a great approach because it means there is mutual trust and confidence. Paul is a great motivator and very inspirational. He is full of energy and is always positive. That's how he creates such a good atmosphere on the set. I can be catty and moody in the morning, but he always cheered me up with a joke. The best example of that is the scene in which I was to be covered in a bucket of shit. I hated the idea and found it humiliating. When the scene was wrapped up, he came over right away. He didn't have to, but he insisted on standing in that pool of shit with me. That was just great. He has so much love and sympathy. He knows no fear and gives 100 per cent for his film and for his actors. Paul is a wonderfully strong, clever, headstrong and sensitive guy. When I have children, I'll ask him to baby-sit for me.

SAN FU MALTHA Q & A

Producer San Fu Maltha's resume features successful films like *Vet Hard (Too Fat Too Furious – 2005)*, *In Oranje (2004)*, *Phileine Zegt Sorry (Phileine Says Sorry – 2003)* and *Costa! (2001)*. In 2006 he produced the documentary *Vierluik* by Jiska Rickels, the action film *Jadesoturi (Jade Warrior – 2006)* by Antti-Jussi Annila and Verhoeven's thriller *Black Book*.

How did you come to produce Paul Verhoeven's film?

At A-film I released *De Bunker* (1992), a film by Gerard Soeteman produced by Jos van der Linden. I'd worked with him in recent years on *Costa!* and *Vet Hard*. Jos heard that Paul and Gerard were in Holland and suggested that I'd meet them. That was four years ago. I'm a great admirer of both Paul and Gerard, so I thought that would be very interesting. We had a good talk. The script for *Black Book* wasn't ready yet, but they promised to send it as soon as it was.

Why were you interested in *Black Book*?

First of all, as all Dutch film fans, I looked forward to Paul Verhoeven's return to Holland. Secondly, the script for *Black Book* was original and special. It's an important story, because it throws light on an unknown piece of Dutch WW II history. And my grandfather was in the resistance. And it is a gripping story that appeals to a broad audience.

In Dutch terms it was also an ambitious and costly production?

From the beginning Jos and I were really excited. We gave our views on the film in a meeting with Paul and Gerard. It was clear that it would be a major undertaking, with for Dutch standards a massive budget. Due to the complexity, the scale and the way Paul made it, it came to over seventeen million Euros. You can't raise that kind of money in Holland alone, so it had to be an international co-production. Motel Films joined as the Dutch producer and then we started looking for German and British co-producers.

What problems did you face during the shoot?

Lack of time was the worst. The script of *Black* a lot of plot points and it's perfectly constructed. We couldn't take any scenes out without hurting the story. At the same time we were shooting on a very tight schedule. So even the smallest mishap could put us in trouble, and of course there's always this or that. A few days of bad weather, Thom Hoffman had an accident, Paul got ill one day. In other countries that may be relatively easy to solve, in Holland changing the schedule leads to problems, because actors have such busy schedules. When they have a day off, they're rehearsing, they're on stage or they're shooting a commercial. So we've had to be creative once or twice.

What was it like to work with Paul Verhoeven?

It was great and very instructive, but also pretty exhausting to work with such a consummate professional who knows what he wants, who is very intelligent and creative and who brings so much experience to the job. I hadn't worked with anyone as talented and strong-willed as Paul. He is dominant and intuitive. He won't let people mess with him. He's constantly pushing the envelope. Pushing people to get the best out of them. That made *Black Book* a constant battle, but a battle to improve the film, not to settle personal scores.

How do you like the finished product?

It's exceeded all my expectations. In every area: the story, the actors, picture and sound, production, action scenes. Paul created a masterpiece *Soldier of Orange*, which was set in the same era, but that was 25 years ago. With all the experience he has gained, he has now made an equally convincing, but far more subtle film in terms of the story. And don't forget that it's a lot harder now to recreate 1945 than it was 25 years ago. Of course that's not just Paul's achievement, but that of the entire cast and crew. Karl Water Lindenlaub and Erik van Wouden, responsible for camera and lighting, have made the film look fantastic. There was never any doubt about Carice, but she has proved herself once more with a terrific performance. In fact, Paul's got top performances from all the actors. I'm proud that Holland has proved that it is world class in any area. Production design, costumes, make-up, editing, what have you. *Black Book* is a world class film, a first-rate calling card for the Dutch, Belgian, British and German film industries.

ABOUT THE CAST

Carice van Houten plays review star Rachel Steinn, who during the war goes into hiding and assumes the name Ellis de Vries. With a group of Jews she tries to escape to the liberated south of the Netherlands. The plan fails and the entire group is killed and robbed. Only Rachel survives.

In 1999 and 2000 Van Houten won Golden Calfs for her parts in the TV-film *Suzy Q* and the feature film *Minoes*. The Calf for *Minoes* was presented to her by Paul Verhoeven. She also played in TV films and feature films like *Storm in Mijn Hoofd*, *AmnesiA*, *Het Everzwijn*, *De Passievrucht*, *Lepel*, *Knetter* and *Ik Omhels Je met Duizend Armen*. Van Houten graduated in 2000 from the Amsterdam School of Acting, Musical Theatre and Cabaret. She has also appeared in stage plays like *Elektra*, *Hedda Gabler*, *Een Meeuw*, *Het Bewijs* and the musicals *Foxtrot* and *Ren Lenny Ren*.

Thom Hoffman plays the part of Hans Akkermans, a doctor who proves to be a cool-headed resistance fighter and who takes care of Rachel/Ellis.

Black Book is Thom Hoffman's second collaboration with Paul Verhoeven after *De Vierde Man* (*The Fourth Man*) in 1983. Hoffman, who is also a successful photographer, made his film debut in 1982 in *Lüger* (*1982*) by Theo van Gogh. In 1992 he starred in Gerard Soeteman's *De Bunker*. He appeared in over fifty international feature films and TV productions, such as *De Witte Waan* (*White Madness* – 1984), *Zoeken naar Eileen* (*Looking for Eileen* – 1987), *The Birdwatcher* (2000), *Force Majeure* (*Uncontrollable Circumstances* – 1989), *Dogville* (2003) and the series *Russen* (2000). Hoffman directed the documentaries *De Domeinen Ditvoorst* (*The Ditvoorst Domains* – 1992) and *Dennis Hopper: The Decisive Moments* (2002).

Halina Reijn plays the opportunistic Ronnie, who becomes a good friend of Rachel/Ellis. Ronnie works for the Germans to survive, but her heart is in the right place. Halina Reijn is a versatile film and stage actress. In recent years she appeared in such films as: *De Passievrucht* (*Father's Affair*), *Polleke* (2003), *Grimm* (2003) and *Moonlight* (2002).

Reijn also played many stage parts with De Trust, De Theatercompagnie and Toneelgroep Amsterdam, of which she is still a member. Last year she published her first novel, *Prinsesje Nooit Genoeg*.

Sebastian Koch plays Ludwig Müntze, head of the SD. His humanity and his innate decency keep this social democrat and keen stamp collector from lapsing into cruelty.

German Sebastian Koch is a busy film, TV and stage actor. He has recently appeared in such feature films as: *Das Leben der Anderen* (*The Lives of Others* – 2006), *Amen* (2002) and *Gloomy Sunday - Ein Lied von Liebe und Tod* (1999).

Christian Berkel plays SS general Käutner, a dangerous bureaucrat who follows orders to the letter.

Since his debut in 1977 German actor Christian Berkel has played in over fifty feature films and TV films. He recently played in *Der Untergang*, *Das Experiment* and episodes of the TV series *Tatort: Teufel im Leib* and *Bienzle und der Mann im Dunkeln*.

Waldemar Kobus plays SD officer Franken, a blood-thirsty and ruthless hunter of Jews and their possessions.

He has appeared in such films as: *Raumschiff Surprise* (2004), *Besser als Schule* (*Meet Your Star* – 2004), *Narren* (*Fools* – 2003), *Ober* (*Waiter* – 2006) and has also made many guest appearances in crime thrillers such as: *Schimanski*, *Ein Fall für Zwei* and various episodes of the *Tatort* TV series.

Michiel Huisman plays Rob, the boy who takes Rachel in when her hiding place is bombed.

Black Book is Huisman's sixth film, after *Costa!*, *Phileine Zegt Sorry*, *Floris* (2004) and *Johan* (2005). He also appeared in TV series such as: *Goede Tijden Slechte Tijden*, *Spangen*, *Costa!* and the TV films *Suzy Q* and *Uitgesloten*. In addition to his work as an actor Huisman is also lead singer and guitarist in the band Fontana.

Derek de Lint plays communist Gerben Kuipers, leader of a resistance group.

For Derek de Lint *Black Book* is his second film with Paul Verhoeven. In *Soldier of Orange* he played Alex, a Dutch Nazi party member who joins the SS. De Lint frequently appears not only in Dutch films, but also in many international productions. In the Netherlands he was cast in feature films such as: *Kort Amerikaans (Crew Cut 1979)*, *Van de Koele Meren des Doods (The Quiet Lakes – 1982)*, *Bastille (1984)*, *De Aanslag (The Assault - 1986)* and in successful TV productions like *Willem van Oranje*, *Herenstraat 10*, *Dossier Verhulst* and *Mevrouw de Minister*. His work on international feature films includes: *Three Men and a Baby (1987)*, *The Unbearable Lightness of Being (1988)*, *Deep Impact (1998)* and the series *China Beach* and *Poltergeist: The Legacy*.

Peter Blok plays the part of Van Gein, a shameless and ruthless war profiteer.

In 2005 Peter Blok starred in *Leef!* the opening film of the Netherlands Film Festival. Film and stage actor Blok has appeared in such feature films as: *Stille nacht (1995)*, *In Oranje (2004)*, *Madelief (Daisy – 1998)* and *De Jurk (The Dress – 1996)*.

Dolf de Vries and **Diana Dobbelman** play Mr. Smaal and his wife. Mr. Smaal is a decent and trustworthy notary, to whom Jews entrust their money and valuables.

Both De Vries and Dobbelman go back many years with Verhoeven. Diana Dobbelman played Floris' love Countess Ada in the TV series *Floris*. She later appeared in films *Pastorale 1943 (1978)*, *De Stilte rond Christine M (A Question of Silence - 1982)*. and *De Mannetjesmaker (1983)* and in popular TV series like *De Fabriek*, *Sanne*, *De Brug*, *De Zomer van '45*, *In Naam der koningin* and *Goede Tijden Slechte Tijden*.

De Vries appeared in earlier Verhoeven films such as: *Turks fruit (Turkish Delight)*, *Soldier of Orange* and *De Vierde Man (The Fourth Man)* and in Gerard Soeteman's *De Bunker*. His resume also includes his work on feature films such as: *Het Debuut (The Debut – 1997)* and *Vroeger is Dood (Bygones the Horseman 1987)* and TV productions like *Dossier Verhulst* and *Onderweg naar Morgen*. Dolf de Vries has published 26 novels, collections of short stories, children's books, columns, poems and in recent years travel books entitled 'In Een Rugzak.'

ABOUT THE CREW

Paul Verhoeven - director

Paul Verhoeven directed his first film *Een Hagedis Teveel* in 1960, followed by the TV series *Floris* and the box office hit *Turks Fruit (Turkish Delight)* starring Monique van der Ven and Rutger Hauer. His next exploits were *Keetje Tippel (Katie Tippel)*, *Soldier of Orange*, *Spetters* and *De Vierde Man (The Fourth Man)*. In 1999 *Turks Fruit (Turkish Delight)* was honoured as the Best Dutch Film of the Century; it was also nominated for the Oscar for Best Foreign Film. Verhoeven's international breakthrough came with *RoboCop*, followed by the box office hits *Total Recall* and the trailblazing *Basic Instinct*. In 1997 he made *Starship Troopers*, an indictment of the establishment; *Hollow Man (2000)* is his most recent Hollywood film.

Gerard Soeteman – original story and screenplay

Gerard Soeteman as from 1969 wrote the scripts for Verhoeven's TV series *Floris* and his films *Wat Zien Ik? (Diary of a Hooker)*, *Turks Fruit (Turkish Delight)*, *Keetje Tippel (Katie Tippel)*, *Soldier of Orange*, *Spetters*, *De Vierde Man (The Fourth Man)* and *Flesh & Blood*. Soeteman continued to write scripts for him when Verhoeven went to America. Films about an attack on Mandela and on Robert van Gulik's character *Judge Dee*, however, never materialised. Currently, Soeteman is working for Verhoeven on the script for *Batavia*.

In 1992 Soeteman directed *De Bunker* from his own script about resistance fighter Gerrit Kleinveld. Soeteman also wrote the scripts for *Max Havelaar (1976)*, *Mijn Vriend (1979)*, *De Aanslag (The Assault - 1986)*, *Floris* and the TV series *Recht voor z'n Raab*.

Karl Walter Lindenlaub, asc, bvk – director of photography

Karl Walter Lindenlaub was director of photography on many American films including *Guess Who (2005)*, *Maid in Manhattan (2002)*, *One Night at McCool's (2001)*, *The Haunting (1999)*, *The Jackal (1997)*, *Red Corner (1997)*, *Independence Day (1996)*, *Rob Roy (1995)*, *Stargate (1994)* and *Universal Soldier (1992)*.

Wilbert van Dorp – production designer

Wilbert van Dorp was production designer or art director on *Bye Bye Blackbird (2005)*, *The Emperor's Wife (2003)*, *8½ Women (1999)*, *The Pillow Book (1994)*, *1000 Rosen* and *Theo en Thea en de Ontmaskering van het Tenenkaasimperium (1989)*.

Yan Tax – costume designer

Yan Tax was costume designer on *De Ontdekking van de hemel (The Discovery of Heaven - 2001)*, *2 koffers vol (Left Luggage – 1998)*, *Le Huitième Jour (The Eighth Day – 1996)*, *Between the Devil and The Deep Blue Sea (1995)*, *De Flat (House Call – 1994)*, *Daens (Priest Daens – 1993)*, *Eline Vere (1991)*, *Amsterdamned (1988)*, *De Schorpioen (The Scorpion – 1984)*, *Het Meisje met het Rode Haar* and *Spetters (The Girl with the Red Hair – 1981)*.

Job ter Burg & James Herbert – film editors

Job ter Burg edited the films *Suzy Q*, *AmnesiA*, *De Grot (The Cave - 2001)*, *Loenatik – De Moevie (Loonies – 2002)*, *Van God Los (Godforsaken – 2003)*, *Liever Verliefd (Love to Love – 2003)*, *Het Zuiden (South – 2005)*, *Snowfever (2004)*, *Off Screen (2005)*, *Staatsgevaarlijk (2005)*, *Knetter (Bonkers – 2005)* and *Het Schnitzelparadijs (Schnitzel Paradise - 2005)*. James Herbert edited the films *Revolver (2005)*, *Road to Damascus (2004)* and *Devil's Harvest (2003)*.

Anne Dudley - composer

Anne Dudley composed the soundtracks of *Tristan & Isolde (2006)*, *Bright Young Things (2003)*, *A Man Apart (2003)*, *The Gathering (2002)*, *Pushing Tin (1999)*, *American History X (1998)*, *The Full Monty (1997)*, *Hollow Reed (1996)*, *When Saturday Comes (1996)* and *The Crying Game (1992)*

Harry Wiessenhaan – special effects

Harry Wiessenhaan did special effects on over a hundred Dutch and international feature films, among which recently *European Gigolo* (2005), *Kameleon 2* (2005), *Vet Hard!* (2005), *Floris* (2004), *Amazones* (2004), *Ocean's Twelve* (2004), *De Dominee* (2004), *George and the Dragon* (2004), *Phileine Zegt Sorry*, *Van God Los and Loenatik - De Moevie*.

ABOUT THE PRODUCERS**Fu Works – San Fu Maltha**

San Fu Maltha started his film career as marketing and publicity manager with Warner Bros and later with Columbia TriStar. At Meteor Films he was involved in distribution and film acquisitions and made his first steps into production. When Polygram took over Meteor Film, he became head of acquisitions for Polygram International, acquiring films such as: *Twelve Monkeys* (1995) and *Trainspotting* (1996).

After RCV, he co-produced *Rent-a-Friend* (2000) with his company Fu Works and was executive producer on *The Delivery* (1999). In December 1999 Paul Ruven asked him to produce a new film by Johan Nijenhuis, the rest is history. *Costa!* marked the beginning of a new era in Dutch film making. In recent years Fu Works and Motel films jointly produced the successful films *Phileine Zegt Sorry*, *In Oranje en Vet Hard*. This year, Fu Work is producing Jiska Rickels' documentary film *4 Elements*.

Hector – Jos van der Linden

Jos van der Linden was executive producer on Paul Verhoeven's *Spetters* and produced Gerard Soeteman's *De Bunker*. In recent years he produced *De Hoogste Tijd*, *Hector* and *De Aanslag* (*The Assault*), and *Costa!* jointly with Van de Ende, Nijenhuis and Maltha. He was executive producer on *Vet Hard*, production manager on *Shouf Shouf Habibi* and *Girl with a Pearl Earring*.

Motel Films – Jeroen Beker and Frans van Gestel

Founded in 1995 by Jeroen Beker and Frans van Gestel, Motel Films produces films, documentary films and TV plays. Motel Films was the driving force behind the film series *Route 2000* and *No More Heroes* that gave young directors the chance to make a feature film on contemporary issues.

FILM CREDITS

Rachel /Ellis	Carice van Houten
Ludwig Müntze	Sebastian Koch
Hans Akkermans	Thom Hoffman
Ronnie	Halina Reijn
Günther Franken	Waldemar Kobus
Gerben Kuipers	Derek de Lint
General Käutner	Christian Berkel
Notary Smaal	Dolf de Vries
Van Gein	Peter Blok
Rob	Michiel Huisman
Tim Kuipers	Ronald Armbrust
Kees	Frank Lammers
Joop	Matthias Schoenaerts
Theo	Johnny de Mol
Maarten	Xander Straat
Mrs. Smaal	Diana Dobbelman
Anny	Rixt Leddy
Linda	Lidewij Mahler
Herman	Pieter Tiddens
Cas	Gijs Naber
Siem	Dirk Zeelenberg
David	Michiel de Jong
Driver Müntze	Jobst Schnibbe
Joseph	Boris Saran
Mr. Stein	Jack Vecht
Mrs. Stein	Jacqueline Blom
Brother Max	Seth Kamphuijs
Skipper Willi	Herman Boerman
Ronnie's husband	Skip Goeree
Mr. Tsjepkema	Bert Luppés
Mrs. Tsjepkema	Marisa van Eyle
Steinte Tsjepkema	Heleen Mineur
Jantje Tsjepkema	Bas van der Horst
Children Tsjepkema	Foeke Kolff Merel van Houts Charlotte Rinnooy Kan Maaïke Kempeneers
Lady in Fur Coat	Janni Goslinga
Female Prison Guard	Wimie Wilhelm
Prison Guard with baret	Theo Maassen
Prison Guard with Accordion	Tjebbo Gerritsma
Canadian Colonel	Timothy Deenihan
Captain British Intelligence	Nolan Hemmings
British General	Garrick Hagon
Dutch SD in train # 1	Ronald de Bruin

Dutch SD in train # 2	Menno van Beekum
Henk	Marcel Mutsers
Shock Trooper	Hugo Metsers
Drunken Woman in Prison # 1	Rian Gerritsen
Drunken Woman in Prison # 2	Susan Visser
Siegfried	Maiko Kemper
German Sentry	Carsten Sasse
Receptionist	Liza de Weerd
Property Man	Willem de Wolf
Husband of Rachel Rosenthal-Stein	Oded Menashe
Daughter of Rachel Rosenthal-Stein	Roni Yedid
Son of Rachel Rosenthal-Stein	Tomer Agami
Tour Guide	Gabriela Lewis
director	Paul Verhoeven
producers	FU WORKS PRODUCTIONS San Fu Maltha HECTOR Jos van der Linden MOTEL FILMS Frans van Gestel Jeroen Beker
producer UK	CLOCKWORK PICTURES Teun Hilte
producer Germany	EGOLI TOSSELL FILM Jens Meurer
co-producers Belgium	MOTION INVESTMENT GROUP Adrian Politowski Jeremy Burdek Nadia Khamlichi
co-producer	Marc Noyons
co-producer NL	AVRO Justine Paauw
executive producers	VIP Andreas Grosch Andrea Schmid Marcus Schöfer STUDIO BABELSBERG MOTION PICTURES Henning Molfenter Carl Wuebcken CONTENTFILM INTERNATIONAL Jamie Carmichael Graham Begg
original story by	Sara Giles Gerard Soeteman
screenplay by	Gerard Soeteman Paul Verhoeven

director of photography Karl Walter Lindenlaub, acs, bvk
production designer Wilbert van Dorp
film editors Job ter Burg
James Herbert
composer Anne Dudley
costume designer Yan Tax
make-up Winnie Gallis
Dick Naastepad
line producer Jos van der Linden
casting NL KEMNA CASTING
Hans Kemna
Job Gosschalk
casting germany Risa Kes
first assistant director Marc van der Bijl
associate producer Jindra Markus
production executive Sonja B. Zimmer
production supervisor Karin S. de Boer
unit production manager Niko Post
script continuity Els Rastelli
gaffer Erik van Wouden
sound Georges Bossaers
stunt coordinator Willem de Beukelaer
special effects Harry Wiessenhaan
post-production supervisor SLEEVEMONKEY FILM
Hans van Helden
international sales ContentFilm International

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Black Book is a dark RPG Adventure based on Slavic mythology and featuring card-based combat. You will take on the role of Vasilisa, a young sorceress on a quest to revive her beloved one. In order to do so, she has to uncover all the 7 seals of Black Book – a demonic artefact, said to be powerful enough to grant any wish. The demo features an essential part of the story – the First Day of Vasilisa becoming a witch. Black Books Wiki is a comprehensive guide for everything related to the BAFTA award-winning sitcom, Black Books. Feel free to create new articles, edit existing pages or upload your own images. Black Books was a British BAFTA award-winning sitcom produced for Channel 4 starring Dylan Moran, Bill