

Rise Blu-Ray Commentary

Compiled by Jeff Krueger

Is there such a thing as a blu-ray commentary spoiler? Anyway, I listened to the "Rise" commentaries so you don't have to, and compiled the grooviest stuff. If you want to experience the magic for yourself, ignore this.

Rupert Wyatt - Director

This is the lesser of the commentaries. He's enthusiastic and that's important for a commentary, but also important is keeping the factoids coming. Mostly he just sticks to what's on the screen and what his intent was. Not much in the way of behind-the-scenes, why things were cut or war stories. An OK commentary but nothing great.

The opening wasn't shot in Africa, just so you know. It was meant to reflect back on the Hunt from the original. He would've liked to have the hunters on horses but that's not how it's done. He feels the beginning and the end reflect on each other, being taken from nature and returning.

Franco's first scene was shot during post-production (Bright Eyes acing the test). The director felt they needed a "Eureka! moment" so they had to go back and get it. He liked Franco in the lead because he has an "everyman" quality. He felt the early scenes should keep building and moving things forward. There was time to stop and reflect later when Caesar came home.

Chimps love fizzy drinks, especially Gatorade. Wyatt loved the line, "You're the chimp handler, handle it!".

He says the main theme of the movie is "home". What is home?

His cinematographer Andrew Lesnie wanted bright lighting to contrast the dark story

He wanted Caesar to discover things like early Man did. Shot a scene (it's in the deleted scenes) of Caesar exploring a bike (discovering the wheel) and wanted one where he discovers fire.

Prison and escape is another theme (and one that got him the job, since his previous movie was "The Escapist"). Will's home is a prison too for Caesar.

The moment where Caesar refuses to get in the back of the car was improvised by Andy Serkis, it wasn't in the script. Give that man an Oscar!

Freida Pinto is not a trained actress and he felt that brought a freshness to her acting. She had the Dr. Dolittle role and her warning about chimps is an important moment. Wyatt feels he didn't develop the relationship of Franco and Pinto enough to reflect their years together. There's no way she'd be that clueless after 5 years. He was concentrating on Caesar's story.

The first day of filming was the attack on the neighbor. There were long debates on portraying the finger biting.

The woman at the Animal Control window ("You're lucky they didn't put that animal down") is Karin Konoval, who plays the orangutan Maurice.

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Wyatt really digs Koba as a counterpoint to Caesar. You can be sure we haven't seen the last of Koba.

The main ape sounds were done by the actors themselves.

Koba was supposed to use a mechanical arm in the scene that shows his increased intelligence, but the arm didn't arrive in time so they had to improvise. If it had arrived we might not have had that cool "JACOBS" reference.

It's tougher to create CG characters when there's something in front of them, like cage bars. Obviously that was a situation in this movie.

Wyatt feels he should've explained better the difference between ALZ-112 (the drug Will gives his dad) and ALZ-113 (the newer formula that leads to the virus). That confused audiences.

The great scene where Caesar becomes a leader through the power of cookies was almost another one for the deleted pile. There was a big debate over whether it was needed or whether it was stupid, etc.

It wasn't until about 5 months after shooting when they received their first finished shot of a CG ape and realized it could work.

People wonder could there really be that many apes in San Francisco but Wyatt says there's an actual ape sanctuary in San Bruno that houses 70 -80 apes

The Golden Gate Bridge worked great as a dividing line between the human world and the natural world ("the bridge to freedom")

The ape characters were individuals and he points out Wolfie, the ape who gets shot and falls off the bridge (he lived in the cage next to Rocket and smashes the camera during the lab breakout)

It was important to him to have an ape on horseback because that gave him nightmares for weeks when he saw it in the original (beast harnessing beast) and he goes so far as to say that's why he wanted to do the movie

the sequel: wants it to be on a much bigger scale and to use a lot more real locations; Caesar vs. Koba

Rick Jaffa/ Amanda Silver - writers

This commentary is better because, well, they keep talking and bringing interesting things up. Probably it helps that there are two of them (and husband and wife at that; watch out!). These two are nice, humble folks who went on a long journey bringing "Rise" to the screen and seeing it succeed. Fox had no interest in going back to POTA until they brought in their story idea. If it

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wasn't for them POTA would still be in Burton purgatory. When Amanda opens the commentary by saying, "We're really happy to be here", it's heartfelt. Here's to them.

What's the deal with Caesar's birthmark. They point out that his father Alpha had the same birthmark and originally died trying to protect his mother (even though that wasn't shown ultimately). It's the birthmark of a warrior. But it still came in handy when Caesar was nekid.

The early concept was a "Pinocchio" story; the ape who longed to be a real (human) boy. All that's really left of that is Caesar and his window.

Originally there were subtitles for Caesar when he uses sign language but it works better without 'em. Even the ones for Maurice the orangutan was the subject of much debate (subtitles in a POTA movie, of all things)

The ape sanctuary was always seen as "the Ranch", a rural setting, and the geography of the script was always confused. When the director came on he wanted the sanctuary in the urban, human world (like a prison) and then the idea of the Golden Gate Bridge with humanity on one side and nature on the other side (the redwoods) clicked

They credit their son Joe with the discovery of the "supplicating gesture" the apes use to establish trust

They liken what Caesar goes through to teenage angst and listened to a lot of the Who and Pink Floyd when writing the script

The basis for the ape sanctuary was the Black Beauty Ranch in Athens, Texas where the famous Nim spent his final years

The theme "Rise" shares with the original: "Man's hubris will be his downfall"

The name "Koba" was Stalin's name in the Communist Party

Caesar was a darker character in earlier scripts, a Michael Corleone type (from "The Godfather"), even going so far as to spread the virus on purpose

Maurice the orangutan signing was debated. There's evidence apes can sign and even teach signing to each other but the studio worried people would have a problem with it

They got the idea of Caesar's first word from Cornelius' history lesson in "Escape" and built the script around that moment

When Caesar visits Will's house to get the ALZ he leaves his pants there as a goodbye to humanity, but it wasn't shown in the movie

Fox exec Tom Rothman wanted an iconic image like the Statue of Liberty, thus the Golden Gate Bridge

They say their writer friend Charlie Fletcher had the idea of Caesar ape-pearling on horseback

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Rocket was supposed to be the one who is sacrificed protecting Caesar but everyone felt it should be Buck the gorilla's fate (hey, is it just me or does Buck's face seem to shrink into a POTA gorilla when he dies?)

Richard Ridings, a cult actor from Terry Gilliam movies, played Buck

The director wanted an uplifting ending