

'THE LONG GOOD FRIDAY

"THE BEST GANGSTER MOVIE TO COME ALONG SINCE
'THE GODFATHER.'" — Judith Crist

'THE LONG GOOD FRIDAY

"A SPLENDIDLY CINEMATIC THUNDERBOLT! Bob Hoskins
is a squat, bull-necked monster so chilling he'd even send shivers
racing through 'Little Caesar.'" — Guy Flatley, COSMOPOLITAN MAGAZINE

'THE LONG GOOD FRIDAY

".. HUGELY ENTERTAINING." — Vincent Canby, N.Y. TIMES "A GANGSTER
FILM IN THE CLASSIC OLD HOLLYWOOD MOLD OF
SHARP CRAFTSMANSHIP." — Jack Kroll, NEWSWEEK MAGAZINE

'THE LONG GOOD FRIDAY

"★★★★. NOTHING SHORT OF A MASTERPIECE.
Bob Hoskins makes Marlon Brando's 'Godfather' look like
Mr. Rodgers by comparison." — Richard Freedman, NEWHOUSE NEWSPAPERS



HANDMADE FILMS Presents

BOB HOSKINS and HELEN MIRREN
in **'THE LONG GOOD FRIDAY'**

Music composed by FRANCIS MONKMAN Original screenplay by BARRIE KEEFFE Produced by BARRY HANSON

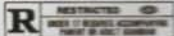
Directed by JOHN MACKENZIE

THE HANDMADE FILM (UK) PARTNERSHIP

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PARENT OR ADULT GUARDIAN

THE LONG GOOD FRIDAY

As was true of Chicago and New York, London was particularized for a time by the cut of its gangsters. Although criminal gangs certainly were afoot pre-World War II (e.g., the Gardstein Gang, Latvian cop killers ultimately run to ground by the Metropolitan Police in the Siege of Sidney Street), the number was likely not so great as imagined by mystery writer Edgar Wallace. Gangsterism as a going concern really began in London during the Second World War, when restrictions on luxury items such as radio parts, rubber tires, cigarettes and nylons beget the black market and the spiffy wideboys who, for the right price, knew someone who knew someone. However reviled were these flash profiteers for undermining the war effort, the image of the cockney "spiv" with the velvet lapels and yellow shoes was tailor-made for cinema. Such a posh cad was Stewart Granger in *WATERLOO ROAD* (1945), not only shirking his national service but making time with the wife of soldier John Mills; in *BRIGHTON ROCK* (1947), Richard Attenborough was a natty funfair hooligan whose homicidal rages were but a warm-up for the actor's creepy impersonation of London serial killer Reginald Christie in *10 RILLINGTON PLACE* (1970). While neither Howard's Clem Morgan or Widmark's Harry Fabian were proper spivs (Fabian wasn't even British), both characters betray an authorial belief that even the disreputable are worthy of redemption providing their torment is sufficiently Christ-like.



While there is nothing particularly Messianic about Harold Shand, the Stepney tearaway turned global gangster played with fireplug ferocity by Bob Hoskins in John Mackenzie's *THE LONG GOOD FRIDAY* (1979), it bears noting that Harold's trial-by-fire commences on Good Friday, celebrated in austerity by Roman Catholics in commemoration of Christ's betrayal, death and resurrection. A product of Thatcherite London, Harold Shand is the figurative offspring of the wartime spivs and kid brother to the razor tie racketeers who ruled the roost in post-

war London. North of the river, "The Twins" Reg and Ronnie Kray packed their pugilist physiques into bespoke Saville Row suits but settled disputes by nailing the hands and feet of their debtors to the floor; to the south, "legitimate businessman" Charlie Richardson was the so-called "torture gang" boss whose brilliant criminal career crashed around his heels on the brink of his biggest deal ever. The myriad misdeeds of the above were the inspiration for Barrie Keeffe's *THE LONG GOOD FRIDAY* screenplay, conceived over a three-day bank holiday in the late 70s when the Greenwich playwright couldn't find anything worth seeing at the cinema. A former journalist, Keeffe had grown up on Hollywood gangster pictures and their bastard British stepchildren a generation later; the heyday of the modern British gangster film had flared out after the white hot incandescence of *PERFORMANCE* (1970), *GET CARTER* (1970), and *VILLAIN* (1971). Once Keeffe had the notion to breathe new life into this subgenre, the elements of his script fell together with disarming alacrity: a drive around Docklands gave him his setting, a stop at an Irish pub gave him his IRA subplot and his memories of the East End's bygone villainy fleshed out the backstory. Film financier Lew Grade bought Keeffe's pitch of "terrorism meets gangsterism" and coughed up \$80,000 for a budget; if the amount seems trifling, keep in mind that Lord Grade had already sunk a small fortune into the bomb-in-the-making *RAISE THE TITANIC* (1979).

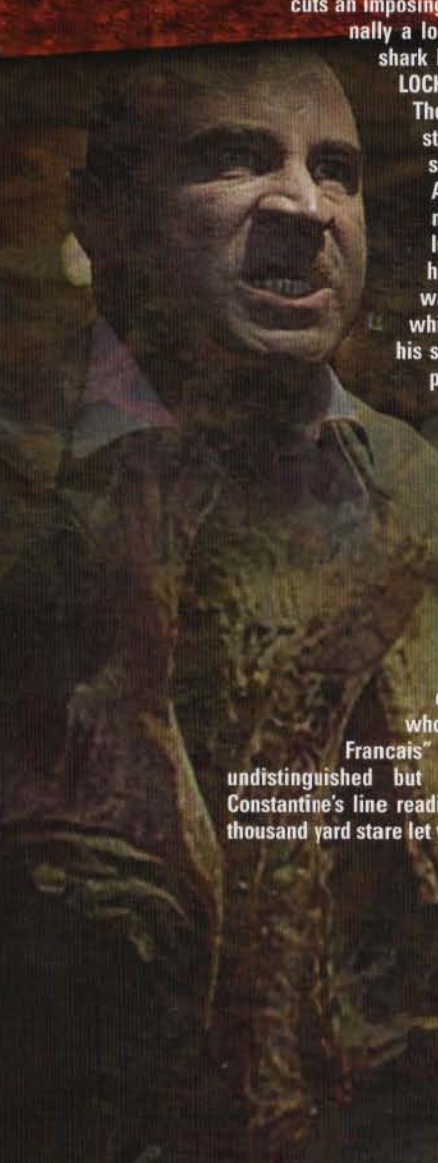
The only actor considered for Harold Shand, Bob Hoskins was a former Covent Garden barrow boy who had played Richard III for producer Barry Hanson at London's Royal Court Theater and caused a sensation with his portrayal of a hapless sheet music salesman in the BBC miniseries *PENNIES FROM HEAVEN* (1978). Hoskins supplied the name Harold Shand, while director John Mackenzie came up with the title; the production team had agonized over dozens of possibilities, including *THE LAST GANGSTER SHOW*, *DIABOLICAL LIBERTY*, *SHAND'S KINGDOM*, *HAVOC*, *CITADEL OF BLOOD* and *THE PADDY FACTOR*. A true collaborative effort, none of the principal players has ever attempted to claim sole credit for *THE LONG GOOD FRIDAY*'s parade of grace notes, which include but are not limited to the film's chancy opening montage (which juxtaposes standard

gangster procedure with a homosexual pickup) and Hoskins' extended (and lovingly photographed by Phil Meheux) nude shower scene. (If the burly actor looks uncharacteristically lean here, credit goes to the tapeworm he picked up in Africa while filming *ZULU DAWN*). And then there's that ending — the futile flip side of *SCARFACE* (either version) and one of the great slow burns in cinema history.

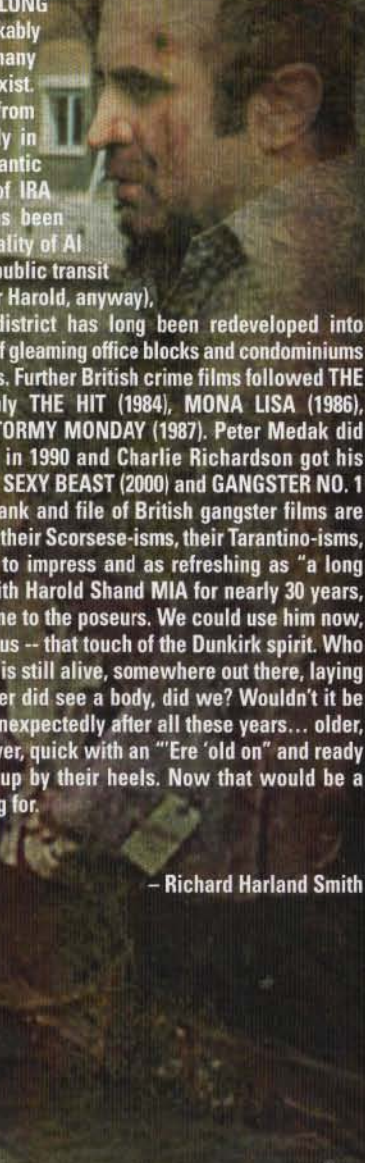
Harold Shand made Bob Hoskins an international star (Brian De Palma paid the actor \$200,000 not to play Al Capone in his big screen adaptation of *THE UNTOUCHABLES* when Robert DeNiro suddenly became available) and boosted John Mackenzie, primarily



known for his television work, into the ranks of A-list directors (however briefly). Hoskins' leading lady Helen Mirren was already a lauded stage actress; the underage doyen of the Royal Shakespeare Company had gotten her showbiz start as a boardwalk blagger in her native Southend-on-Sea and was at this point at the start of a long and distinguished career. In secondary roles, P. H. Moriarty



cuts an imposing figure as the silent-but-deadly Razors; originally a longshoreman and boxer, Moriarty was later a shark hunter in *JAWS 3-D* (1983) and a porn czar in *LOCK, STOCK AND TWO SMOKING BARRELS* (1998). Those familiar with Paul Freeman's work as a steely mercenary in *THE DOGS OF WAR* and the silky dastard Belloq of *RAIDERS OF THE LOST ARK* (both 1981) will enjoy him as Harold's best mate Colin, a syndicate bagman with an eye for Irish boys. Before he was James Bond, before he was even Remington Steele, Pierce Brosnan was a convincing, gum-chewing IRA triggerman, while the RADA-trained Bryan Marshall (who got his start in small roles for Hammer), contributes a pitch perfect portrait of a second string shitter in the praetorian "Councilman 'Arris." Crooner/comedian Dave King, cast against type as corrupt copper Parky, was another carryover from *PENNIES FROM HEAVEN* while Kevin McNally, the mutton-chopped mutineer of *THE PIRATES OF THE CARRIBEAN* films, is nigh unrecognizable here in his youth as Paul Freeman's ill-starred pub pickup. Mackenzie's real casting coup was getting Eddie Constantine to play Harold's Mafia contact. Constantine was an American hooper who made his bones in France as "le Bogart Francais" in nightclubs and onscreen in a number of undistinguished but fun crime and espionage programmers. Constantine's line readings may be starchy but his pocker face and thousand yard stare let you know he's the real deal.



Nearly thirty years on, *THE LONG GOOD FRIDAY* has dated remarkably well, despite the fact that many of its locations no longer exist. The supersonic Concorde from which Harold deplanes early in the film flew its last transatlantic voyage in 2003; the threat of IRA bombings within London has been forever supplanted by the reality of Al Quaeda strikes on the city's public transit system in 2005; worse yet (for Harold, anyway), the draggletail Docklands district has long been redeveloped into upmarket Canary Wharf, site of gleaming office blocks and condominiums for young urban professionals. Further British crime films followed *THE LONG GOOD FRIDAY*, notably *THE HIT* (1984), *MONA LISA* (1986), *EMPIRE STATE* (1987) and *STORMY MONDAY* (1987). Peter Medak did *THE KRAYS* a proper biopic in 1990 and Charlie Richardson got his cinematic due in 2004. While *SEXY BEAST* (2000) and *GANGSTER NO. 1* (2000) are a cut above, the rank and file of British gangster films are pallid wannabes, choking on their Scorsese-isms, their Tarantino-isms, their Shand-isms, too eager to impress and as refreshing as "a long streak of paralyzed piss." With Harold Shand *MIA* for nearly 30 years, the British crime film has gone to the poseurs. We could use him now, his vitality, imagination, genius -- that touch of the Dunkirk spirit. Who knows, maybe Harold Shand is still alive, somewhere out there, laying low, biding his time; we never did see a body, did we? Wouldn't it be something if "H" turned up unexpectedly after all these years... older, wiser but ever the true believer, quick with an "Ere 'old on" and ready to string the Jack-the-Lads up by their heels. Now that would be a second coming worth praying for.

— Richard Harland Smith

CHAPTER SELECTIONS



THE LONG GOOD FRIDAY

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1. The Money [Main Titles]
 2. Harold Shand
 3. Victoria
 4. The Party
 5. Hands Across The Ocean
 6. Bad News
 7. The Bomb
 8. Cutting The Grass
 9. Narrow Escape
 10. Serious Business
 11. Charlie's Ultimatum
 12. Alone With Jeff
 13. Hanging With Harold
 14. Breakdown
 15. Putting It Together
 16. Judas
 17. Washing Away The Blood
 18. Payback
 19. The Last Ride
 20. End Credits