

EE British Academy Film Awards in 2013 – Winners Press Conference: Special Visual Effects

Q. Please welcome the winner of the BAFTA for special visual effects for Life of Pi, Bill Westenhofer, Guillaume Rocheron, Erik-Jan De Boer and Donald R Elliott.

Congratulations gents. If you can identify yourselves for the microphone.

BILL WESTENHOFER: Bill Westenhofer.

GUILLAUME ROCHERON: Guillaume Rocheron.

ERIK-JAN DE BOER: Erik-Jan De Boer.

DONALD ELLIOTT: Don Elliott.

Q. How does it feel first of all to win this?

BILL WESTENHOFER: It's awesome. I mean we do this, we set out to try and make ourselves happy and make our directors happy and to do justice to the book and to get an award is icing on the cake. This is fantastic.

Q. They say never work with animals and never work with water.

BILL WESTENHOFER: And 3D. Angus is a glutton for punishment I think.

Q. Was there ever a point where you thought this can't be done?

BILL WESTENHOFER: It's our job to take the piece of cloth and some string and leap off a cliff and tell everyone that it can be done, no worries, but yes you get nervous, trying to blend water and 3 is a challenge. That was one of the big things. Then worrying that we could pull off Richard Parker and make the audience believe he's the real thing, it's what we do so you go through it with confidence.

Q. Any questions for the guys. Yes please?

PRESS: Guys, congratulations. Ang Lee, you know a master film maker, can you talk about working with him and what that experience was like?

BILL WESTENHOFER: Ang for us is the absolute dream director, he's someone who knows what he wants, communicates it well, but he doesn't -- he lets us bring our own artistry to the table and does that with all departments. He won't be specific, he'll say I want this to be an operatic sky or a expensive sky and then we walk off and say what the heck is the intensive sky but let's us be creative which is really rewarding.

Q. Anyone's else at all? Let's talk very briefly about Richard Parker and what a challenge that was.

BILL WESTENHOFER: Listen, on scenes where there's no Richard Parker on the boat where often a man in a blue suit is Richard Parker.

Q. You must have your Richard Parker -- your tiger down pat a bit like ang on Hulk. How was that experience?

ERIK-JAN DE BOER: Well I guess I should thank Jule Le Roche ^ and Slep Reynolds {^} the animal trainers on set, they gave us a lot of access to the live tigers that were on set for about 8 weeks and we studied the hell out of that. We shot a lot of reference footage and took that back home and looked at that with the animators, we had a team of about 47 animators in Mumbai, Hydrobot {^^} and Los Angeles and we animated the hell out of it.

Q. How close did you get to the tigers?

ERIK-JAN DE BOER: There was one guy Jonas who was pretty friendly and we got close but they are predators so we had cages to film from and we were creative, we left cameras rolling inside of the boat and that's how we got our reference.

BILL WESTENHOFER: I can check off my bucket list. There are cages right here and we were taking pictures of King who was Richard Parker's motto and you know we'd done this for a little while, he decided he was done and came right at me so I know what it's like to be charged and attacked by a tiger and this is the first and last time that needs to happen.

Q. Huge thanks, huge congratulations. Thank you so much.