

# Wall Street, Take Two

In the upcoming sequel to Oliver Stone's groundbreaking film, Gordon Gekko gets out of jail and back to business. **Peggy Siegal** takes us behind the scenes as an extra with a few of her friends.

In 1987, right after director **Oliver Stone** won the Academy Award for *Platoon*, he immediately turned to a domestic arena and began working on *Wall Street* in New York City, where his father had been a stockbroker. Although the film was widely seen as a scathing critique of the culture of Wall Street, Stone has said that part of the movie is a defense of capitalism, and an homage to his father.

At the time, Oliver was also fascinated with the similarity between the Miami drug dealers of his earlier *Scarface* script and young, white-collar stockbrokers. Both groups had an animalistic need to obtain big and fast money.

Oliver sent his actors to Bear Stearns for research, including then-newcomer **Charlie Sheen**, who played Bud Fox, a kid from nowhere. Fox lands one big client, Gordon

Gekko, and is thrust into the fast lane with a rock-star financial mentor who teaches him corruption.

Oliver needed an old-fashioned villain to create drama, and he cast **Michael Douglas** against type. He was not known as a heavy at the time, but as a charming, handsome, sensitive leading man. Oliver also saw the anger, confidence, salesmanship and style that Michael brought to the role. Michael's Gekko looked a bit like Lakers' coach Pat Riley with his slicked-back hair and well-cut suits, and it became Michael's most important role, winning him the Academy Award for the villain no one could ever forget.

When Gekko delivers his speech, "Greed, for lack of a better word, is good. Greed is right. Greed works," cinematic history was made.

Four years ago, *Wall Street* producer **Ed Pressman** decided



it was time for a sequel. Michael Douglas was immediately on board, pending script approval. The first version was written before the global economic crash of 2008 rendered it obsolete.

Screenwriter **Allan Loeb** was brought in. Pressman asked me to meet Loeb at The Carlyle Hotel to explain the social rhythms of New York's financial high society. Whereas Gekko's character was modeled after 1970s junk-bond kings (**Michael Milken**) and '80s mergers and acquisitions killers (**Henry Kravis**), Loeb bases the new villain on hedge-fund billionaires like **John Paulson** and **Mike Novogratz**, geniuses who have created stratospheric wealth beyond Gordon Gekko's wildest dreams.

This past September, Oliver yelled "action" as Gordon Gekko, with long grey hair, comes back to life after emerging from a lengthy prison stint shot outside of Sing Sing in Ossining, New York. Gekko is desperate to redefine himself in a different era.

The *New York Post* ran a full-page photo of Gekko, and New Yorkers immediately became obsessed with the filming of *Wall Street: Money Never Sleeps*.



Top to bottom: Shia LaBeouf, Josh Brolin and Michael Douglas; HRH Prince Dimitri of Yugoslavia, Peggy Siegal and Christopher Mason.

PHOTOS BY BARRY WETCHER, © 20TH CENTURY FOX

## ONE WEEK INTO SHOOTING, A GLORIOUS FALL DAY

Ed Pressman invites me on the set at the Central Park Zoo. Oliver designs an elaborate tracking shot around the seal pool where Gekko, fresh from jail, walks and talks to Jacob Moore, a young idealistic investment banker played by **Shia LaBeouf**. They discuss Gekko's daughter and Moore's fiancée, Winnie, played by **Carey Mulligan**, who is very friendly with LaBeouf off the set. Moore invites Gekko to the Alzheimer's Association ball at The Metropolitan Museum of Art. Gekko, who used to be a sponsor or honoree of such events, cannot even afford a ticket.

The shot starts with a barking seal jumping for fish, then pans down to the actors. Extras weave in and out. In one take, Michael makes a wrong turn and ends up at the monkey house. Everyone laughs. The atmosphere on the set is courteous but quick and tense. There is pressure when you are making a sequel to a hit.

I watch the action on monitors while sitting on the producers' canvas chairs with Pressman, **Eric Kopeloff** (*Monsters Ball*) and **Celia Costas**, who was a location manager on the first *Wall Street*. They have asked me to be an extra in the Alzheimer's Association ball scene, and to bring some friends to play rich Upper East Side socialites. Oliver wants over-the-top glam, go-to-



the-vault jewels and couture gowns. “Give me the night before the Titanic goes down” were his exact words. Not a problem.

I pay a quick visit to Michael in his trailer on Fifth Avenue where he is resting. We go way back. I was his personal publicist when he won the Golden Globe and Oscar for Best Actor for *Wall Street*, and we have remained great friends. Gekko is just as challenging for him the second time because of endless pages of technical financial dialogue. We discuss **Catherine Zeta-Jones’** Broadway debut in *A Little Night Music*. Michael has a stack of partially finished handwritten thank-you notes next to him for gifts received for their shared birthday party on September 25th at The St. Regis New York. Her 40th and his 65th.

I tell him I have been cast as an extra in two scenes and he laughs, knowing I am desperate to hang around him and the production.

**8:30 A.M. ON WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 21ST, ANOTHER WARM, STUNNING FALL DAY**

I report to the wardrobe trailer on 65th Street and Madison Avenue. I carry four elaborate cocktail dresses and bags of matching accessories. My hair is in rollers. Statuesque **Julia**

**Koch** walks over from her Park Avenue apartment carrying her white Valentino and long diamond earrings. Her real-life financial titan husband **David** is unaware where she is this morning.

*Vanity Fair’s* keeper of the Best-Dressed List, **Amy Fine Collins**, arrives totally organized in turquoise vintage Geoffrey Beene, and *Vogue* fashion editor **Hamish Bowles** wears a riot of plaids, patterns and a large yellow fake flower on his lapel. Costume Designer **Ellen Mirojnick**, who created Gordon Gekko’s rich, slick look in the first film, is ecstatic with the extras I invited.

Oliver is shooting a scene with **Josh Brolin** (the star of Stone’s *W.*). His character, Bretton (never Bret) James, a ruthless Wall Street kingpin, and his perfect wife, Samantha (**Noelle Beck**), are hosting a benefit piano recital for a 13-year-old child prodigy in their huge, art-filled townhouse in the East 60s. The building actually belongs to **Baby Jane Holzer**, a wealthy art collector still famous for hanging with Andy Warhol in the ’60s. The production designer had Jane’s fabulous Warhols moved to storage and replaced with matching photographic copies. Very expensive contemporary art is again an important production element of Oliver’s vision.

At 10:30 a.m. all the extras are placed around the living room set. Oliver’s French mother, **Jacqueline Stone**, and her friend **Monique Van Vooren**, both in their 80s, are seated in front of the fireplace, chatting in French. Production assistants fuss over them. Debonair macho man **Chuck Pfeiffer**, who appeared in the original film, and I immediately invent a backstory—I am his corporate wife—and we position ourselves on a couch next to the director’s mother. Julia gets the best spot close to the piano and Amy, Hamish and decorator **Geoffrey Bradfield** are right behind her. Josh is brought in and the kibitzing stops.

Oliver appears on the set with eagle eyes and a sly grin and quickly re-positions everyone. He explains the scene, gives out lines to his favored extras and, on his way out to the monitors in the next room, mentions that my earrings are too small. Wardrobe jumps. Josh rehearses and Oliver finally yells, “Action!” The kid plays the piano,

**Top to bottom:** (l. to r.) Joan Juliet Buck, HRH Prince Dimitri of Yugoslavia, Mario Calvo-Platero and Susan Hess; Roger Hendricks Simon and Susy Boniver; Michael Douglas with Monique van Vooren.



Josh explains why we are in his home, asks for money, the camera dollies as extras say their lines and Shia appears at the door uninvited for a confrontation with Josh. Three hours later a P.A. yells, “Lunch!”

In costume, Amy, Hamish and I run to Monkey Bar. I am late to meet “The Harpies,” including **Liz Smith, Barbara Walters, Cynthia McFadden, Nora Ephron, Jennifer Isham, Maury Perl** and **Beth Kseniak**.

**Graydon Carter** is at the next table. I tell him Oliver Stone wants him in the *Wall Street* sequel as an extra. (I made that up.) Graydon jokes that he only works with lines. I say, “Not a problem.” (This will be news to Oliver.)

Back on the set I tell Oliver that Graydon is willing to be in the film with lines. Oliver finds that intriguing.

Oliver shoots the piano recital scene over and over again from different angles all afternoon. Financial wizard **Don Marron** saunters onto the set to visit and Oliver spontaneously puts him in a scene chatting with Josh. Carey Mulligan hangs out watching Shia work.

At sundown Julia Koch has to race from reel to real life and explain to her husband where she has been all day. (He loves it.)



**“Oliver decides this is the perfect scene for Graydon Carter. After a flurry of calls, Graydon arrives . . . and playing himself, sashays by the table. Gekko jumps up to say hello and Graydon brushes him off with a few dismissive lines.”**

**—Peggy Siegal**



Chuck Pfeiffer plants a “Page Six” item and the next day socialites begin calling me to get into the film.

**THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 5, SHUN LEE RESTAURANT, WEST 65TH STREET**

Oliver shoots a tight, crowded interior scene with Michael, Carey and Shia, who are having an intimate Chinese dinner. Spontaneously, Oliver decides this is the perfect scene for Graydon Carter. After a flurry of calls, Graydon arrives on set, and playing himself, sashays by the table. Gekko jumps up to say hello and Graydon brushes him off with a few dismissive lines.

**MONDAY, NOVEMBER 9, 25 BROADWAY**

One hundred swells show up at the former Canard Shipping building, a massive Italianate hall, at the crack of dawn for the Alzheimer’s Association ball, a grand charity event.

**Susan Hess**, schlepping her J. Mendel gown, and I cab it downtown in the dark and report to the VIP extra holding area

**Top to bottom:** Monique Van Vooren with Oliver Stone; Eloise DeJoria and HRH Prince Dimitri of Yugoslavia at the ball; Michael Douglas and Oliver Stone between takes.



PHOTOS BY CHRISTOPHER MASON AND BARRY WETCHER, © 20TH CENTURY FOX



where we join **Prince Dimitri of Yugoslavia** in a bespoke dinner jacket, journalist **Christopher Mason**, songstress **Yanna Avis**, photographer **Kelly Klein**, art dealer **Larry Gagosian's** girlfriend **Shala Monroe** in see-through Rodarte, beauty executive **Olivia Chantecaille**, producer **Lawrence Robins**, author **Jacqueline Weld Drake**, *Vogue* film critic **Joan Juliet Buck**, fashion consultant **Jill Fairchild**, CNN's **Felicia Taylor** and Italian newsman **Mario Calvo-Platero**.

**Ellen Mirojnick** and her costume department have assembled racks of the most expensive, elaborate designer gowns, and they work at breakneck speed, styling while we wildly strip to our undies in a makeshift dressing area. Ellen pours me into a black tulle Marchesa with an enormous wired, silver bow. Twenty hairdressers and makeup artists systematically work on 250 extras. A mile of tables are alternately filled with steaming coffee, fattening breakfast foods, hair sprays, mirrors, shoes and jewelry. It's a madhouse of excitement.

**“[It was] a day of electrifying glamour, and the longest gala of my life. I was in black tie for 13 hours.” —HRH Prince Dimitri of Yugoslavia tells *The Wall Street Journal***

We are led to the part of the set used for the cocktail reception, and placed around Michael Douglas and Charlie Sheen stand-ins. Charlie has been flown in from L.A. for half a day's work to reprise his original character. He is now the highest paid television actor, commanding \$800,000 per episode of “Two and a Half Men,” as of this past December.

Oliver arrives on the set greeting, examining, tweaking the shot and always pulling the prettiest girls closest to the camera. Michael and Charlie arrive from their trailers and run their lines as socials drift into their sight lines, challenging their concentration on pages of dialogue. Oliver yells, “action,” as the extras aggressively jockey for face time. Michael and Charlie do take after take. My corporate husband Chuck Pfeiffer has gotten his real girlfriend **Lisa Crosby** in the film so my marriage has become a threesome.

Sensing our concern of not making it onto the silver screen, Oliver tells his first assistant director to seat a dinner table with Susan Hess, Jill Fairchild, Prince Dimitri, Chuck Pfeiffer, **Grace Meigher** and Mario Calvo-Platero. He directs us to chat with each other, turning left and right as the camera closely pans past our faces.

Elsewhere on the set are **John Buffalo Mailer** as Shia's character's best friend, **Austin Pendleton**, 94-year-old **Eli Wallach** and **Natalie Morales**. Also in this film are: the magnificent **Frank Langella** as Shia's boss who throws himself in front of a train early in the film, **Susan Sarandon** as Shia's real-estate

**Top to bottom:** Michael Douglas and Shia LaBeouf; Shia as Jacob Moore; Shia LaBeouf and Carey Mulligan, who plays Winnie Gekko.



broker mother, **Sylvia Miles**, who reprises her hilarious cameo as another real-estate agent and **Jean Pigozzi** as an international banker.

Lunch is called at 4 p.m. and Michael Douglas takes seven heavily made-up and bejeweled women including Susan, Jill and me to a restaurant around the corner. Gordon Gekko hosts a hen party talking about children, schools, country houses and vacations.

Shooting the actual dinner, assistant directors ask for volunteers to dance. Prince Dimitri twirls and dips Jacqueline Weld Drake. Kelly Klein, in her own Karl Lagerfeld, watches from a table with scattered champagne glasses half-filled with apple juice. Charlie Sheen leaves for L.A., and Shia is disappointed he has missed an opportunity to meet his cinematic hero. Carey Mulligan, costumed like Audrey Hepburn, chats with us between takes.

The final set-up is a long tracking shot of Josh Brolin and his wife as they triumphantly enter the ball. It is close to 9 p.m. and **Lord William Astor** arrives to pick me up for **Amalia Dayan** and **Adam Lindemann's** dinner for artists uptown.

Oliver is introduced to William and delights in calling him “Lord” as he immediately moves him into the top of the shot and instructs him to tell **Eli Wallach**, “We must do lunch.” Ever the proper English gentleman, William advises Oliver that lords do not use American slang and improvises his own lines. The tracking shot continues for numerous takes, following Josh and Noelle as every VIP extra gets another shot at instant stardom with one-line greetings.

At last, “it's a wrap” is screamed after 10 p.m. Prince Dimitri tells *The Wall Street Journal* it was “a day of electrifying glamour, and the longest gala of my life. I was in black tie for 13 hours.”

**NOVEMBER 25, TOMMY GUNS SALON, LUDLOW STREET, LAST DAY OF SHOOTING**

**Donald Trump** is on set at 7 a.m., ready for his close up. He is trying to make a midday departure on his jet from Teterboro with wife **Melania** and son **Baron** for Thanksgiving weekend in Palm Beach. Back in September, Oliver had invited Donald Trump to dinner at ‘21’ to meet his leading men, Josh and Shia, so they could observe New York's most charismatic powerbroker in his natural environment.

The scene is London so the grey skies are perfect. Gekko has moved abroad to make his financial comeback. The scene opens on the back of his head in a barber's chair as he watches the financial news on T.V. The camera pulls back and Gordon Gekko is finally revealed as the powerful bull he once was in an exquisite suit and signature slicked-back hair. Donald Trump walks into the shop for a cut and the banter begins about the money market. From his chair, Donald leans into Michael and suggests a “comb over” like his famous ‘do. Gekko, with a slight grin, says, “No thanks Donald, I am a gel man.”

The crew is yucking it up and Donald feels great. Paparazzi shoot the whole scene with long lenses from across the street. The unit publicist is helpless to keep this under wraps. Donald emerges, poses and gives interviews. Michael comes out, and the press think they have a scoop on the ending. Gekko is back in all his lovable titan splendor. Full-page photos of Michael and Donald run the next day in the tabloids. Never underestimate Oliver Stone's surprise endings.

20th Century Fox releases *Wall Street: Money Never Sleeps* this spring, and it's got hit written all over it. ♦

**Top to bottom:** Mario Calvo-Platero, Michael Douglas and Jacqueline Weld Drake; Chuck Pfeiffer; Josh Brolin as ruthless kingpin Bretton James.



PHOTOS BY BARRY WETCHER, © 20TH CENTURY FOX

PHOTOS BY CHRISTOPHER MASON AND BARRY WETCHER, © 20TH CENTURY FOX