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'We failed to reflect diversity': Director of new Gerard Butler movie Gods Of Egypt apologises for casting mostly white actors

By [Rachel Mcgrath For Dailymail.com](#)

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Director Alex Proyas and Lionsgate issued an apology on Friday for the lack of racial diversity in the movie Gods Of Egypt.

The fantasy adventure set in ancient Egypt and starring Gerard Butler is already in the can and prompted a backlash when its first look trailer was released online earlier this month.

'The process of casting a movie has many complicated variables, but it is clear that our casting choices should have been more diverse,' Proyas said in a statement posted by [Forbes.com](#). 'I sincerely apologize to those who are offended by the decisions we made.'

Scroll down for video



'We're sorry': The studio and director behind the Gerard Butler movie Gods Of Egypt have taken the unusual step of apologizing for casting too many white actors in the movie set in ancient Egypt



No diversity: In addition to Scottish actor Butler, the film also stars Australians Geoffrey Rush, Brenton Thwaites and Courtney Eaton as well as English actor Rufus Sewell and Danish Game Of Thrones hunk Nikolaj Coster-Waldau

Lionsgate added: 'We recognize that it is our responsibility to help ensure that casting decisions reflect the diversity and culture of the time periods portrayed. In this instance we failed to live up to our own standards of sensitivity and diversity, for which we sincerely apologize.'

'Lionsgate is deeply committed to making films that reflect the diversity of our audiences. We have, can and will continue to do better. '





Too white: Nikolaj Coster-Waldau and Elodie Yung are seen in costume in 2014 while filming the movie



© KHAPGG / Splash News

Not authentic: Actors are pictured on set of the movie in Sydney last year



© INFphoto.com
The movie is slated for release in February 2016, is described by Lionsgate as an 'action-adventure inspired by the classic mythology of Egypt.'

In addition to Scottish actor Butler, the film also stars Australians Geoffrey Rush, Brenton Thwaites and Courtney Eaton as well as English actor Rufus Sewell and Danish Game Of Thrones hunk Nikolaj Coster-Waldau. Proyas, an Australian and the director of films Knowing, Dark City and I, Robot, was born in Egypt to Greek parents who took him to live Down Under when he was three years old.

On November 12, Bette Midler led the charge against the studio for making its main Egyptian characters white.

'Movie, #GodsOfEgypt in which everyone is white?' the Divine Miss M said on her Twitter feed.

'Egyptians, in history and today, have NEVER been white. BRING BACK GEOGRAPHY!! It's Africa!' she tweeted.





Too white: Scottish star Butler and Danish actor Nikolaj Coster-Waldau headline the fantasy adventure that also stars Australians Geoffrey Rush, Brenton Thwaites and Courtney Eaton and English actor Rufus Sewell

Gods Of Egypt, which is slated for release in February 2016, is described

by Lionsgate as an 'action-adventure inspired by the classic mythology of Egypt.'

'The survival of mankind hangs in the balance as an unexpected mortal hero Bek (Thwaites) undertakes a thrilling journey to save the world and rescue his true love. In order to succeed, he must enlist the help of the powerful god Horus (Coster-Waldau) in an unlikely alliance against Set (Butler), the merciless god of darkness,' the official blurb reads.



Bette Midler ✓

@BetteMidler

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Movie, [#GodsOfEgypt](#) in which everyone is white? Egyptians, in history and today, have NEVER been white. BRING BACK GEOGRAPHY!! It's Africa!

RETWEETS

595

LIKES

1,041



1:53 PM - 12 Nov 2015

© Bette Midler / Twitter

Led the charge: Actress and entertainer Bette Midler was among those who took to social media to protest the lack of diversity in the Lionsgate film directed by Australian Alex Proyas



Ancient spectacle: The movie is described by the studio as 'inspired by the classic mythology of Egypt.' Pictured are Coster-Waldau and Thwaites in a scene from the film



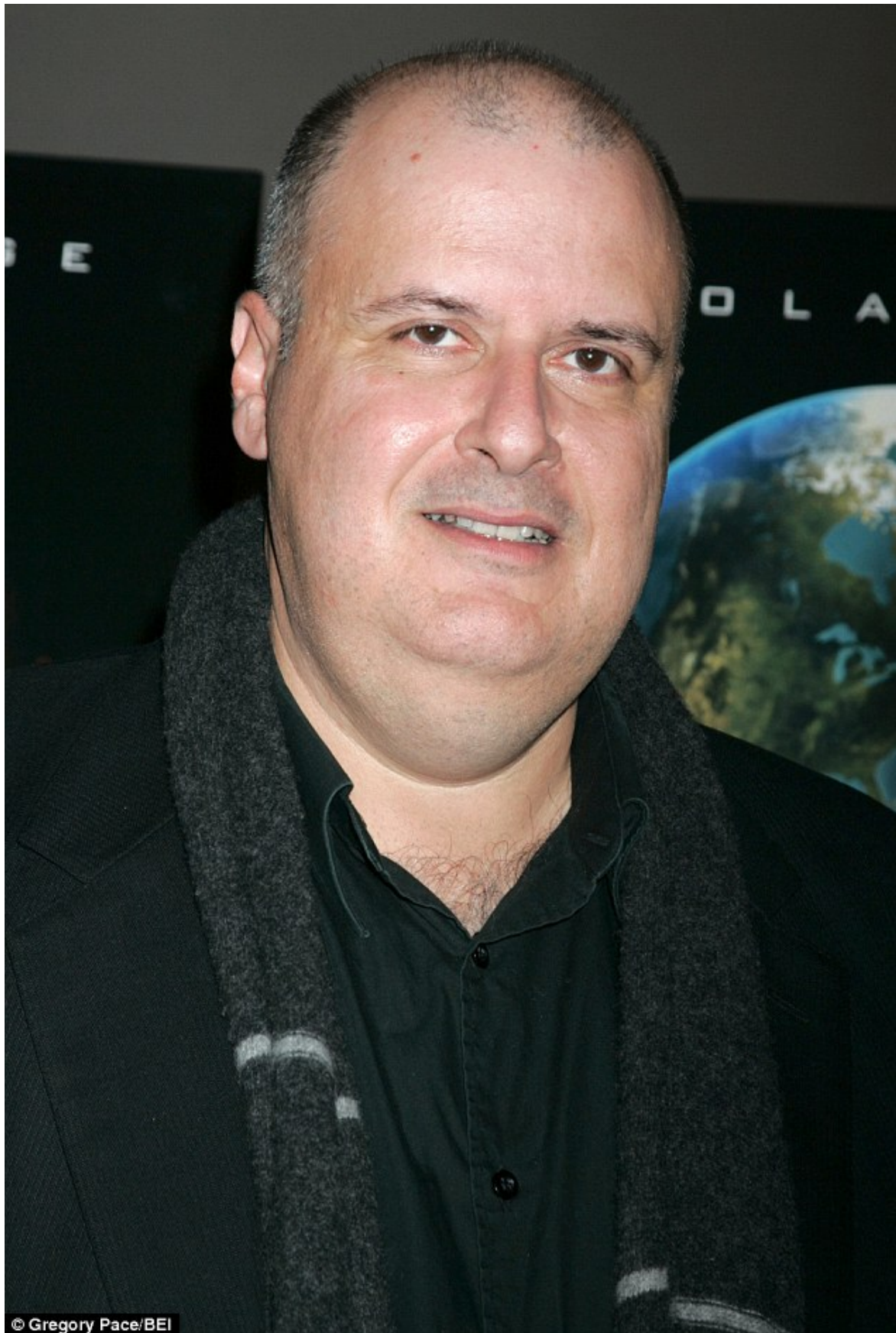
Mixing it up a bit: There appeared to be a little more diversity among the extras hired



The movie, filmed in Sydney, has sparked a backlash even before it's release

It's not the first time recently that Hollywood directors and movie studios have come under fire for 'whitewashing' their characters.

Ridley Scott was criticized for casting Christian Bale as Moses and Joel Edgerton as the Pharaoh Ramses in last year's Exodus: Gods And Kings. The British director defended his choices, however, saying it had been necessary in order to get funding for the film.



Apologized: Director Alex Proyas was, in fact, born in Egypt and moved with his Greek parents to Australia as a boy. He was raised in Sydney



Responded to criticism: Lionsgate's apology is an unusual step for a studio to take

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Comments (89)

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[mdsd77](#), Cathedral City, United States, 6 months ago
yeah and they should walk like egyptians too....

8

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9



[Mike](#), Dallas, 6 months ago
If people don't like then don't go see it. Simple as that.

19

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17



[manny1980](#), Glasgow, United Kingdom, 6 months ago

Makes no sense...they realised their mistake after the movie was completed?
Looks like an intentional decision in the beginning of the movie.

2

14

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[Solomon Grundy](#), Gotham City, United States, 6 months ago

And another thing, why do filmmakers believe that everyone spoke with a British accent in ancient times? Whether it's ancient Egypt, Greece, or Rome, they did not sound like Brits, so stop with it.

6

24

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[Loika917](#), Arlington, United States, 6 months ago

I just know that movie is going to bore everyone to tears. Butler is nothing special to gaze upon either.

6

15

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[SiliconSabre](#), Bel Air, United States, 6 months ago

There is no reason to apologize. The casting is correct.

28

11

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[SiliconSabre](#), Bel Air, United States, 6 months ago

Cleopatra VIII is the Cleopatra that was involved with Julius Caesar. Her family lineage was Greek from the family of the Ptolemys. It's been said that she had blond hair, but there is no proof of that. When Alexander conquered Egypt, he installed the Ptolemys as the rulers of Egypt. They are not of Egyptian descent.

22

23

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[Captain Reynault](#), Georgia USA, United States, 6 months ago
Why let facts get in the way of a liberal "grievance"?

15

17

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[mgnola](#), kenner, United States, 6 months ago
Why should they hire actors based on the color of their skin? Does this not seem a bit hypocritical?

49

30

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[mgnola](#), kenner, United States, 6 months ago

Why should they hire actors based on their race only? Does this seem a little hypocritical?

40

21

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[Surfpunk](#), Warks, United Kingdom, 6 months ago

well everyone in the 300 movies were mostly white too

9

27

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[Aynsley](#), Palm Springs, 6 months ago

A movie featuring tens of thousands of Persians and Greeks and not a single body hair in the whole film. That was just bizarre.

1

38

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