

DESIGNING THE WALL AND CASTLE BLACK



“I just want to stand on top of the Wall and piss off the edge of the world.”

{ Tyrion Lannister }

[above] Owen Teale as sadistic Night's Watch master-at-arms Alliser Thorne.

DAVID BENIOFF (*executive producer, writer*): The most important visual effects shot in the first episode is the Wall, which is fitting because the Wall might be the most crucial landmark in all of Westeros. It had to look both realistic and awe-inspiring, and the VFX team did an excellent job.

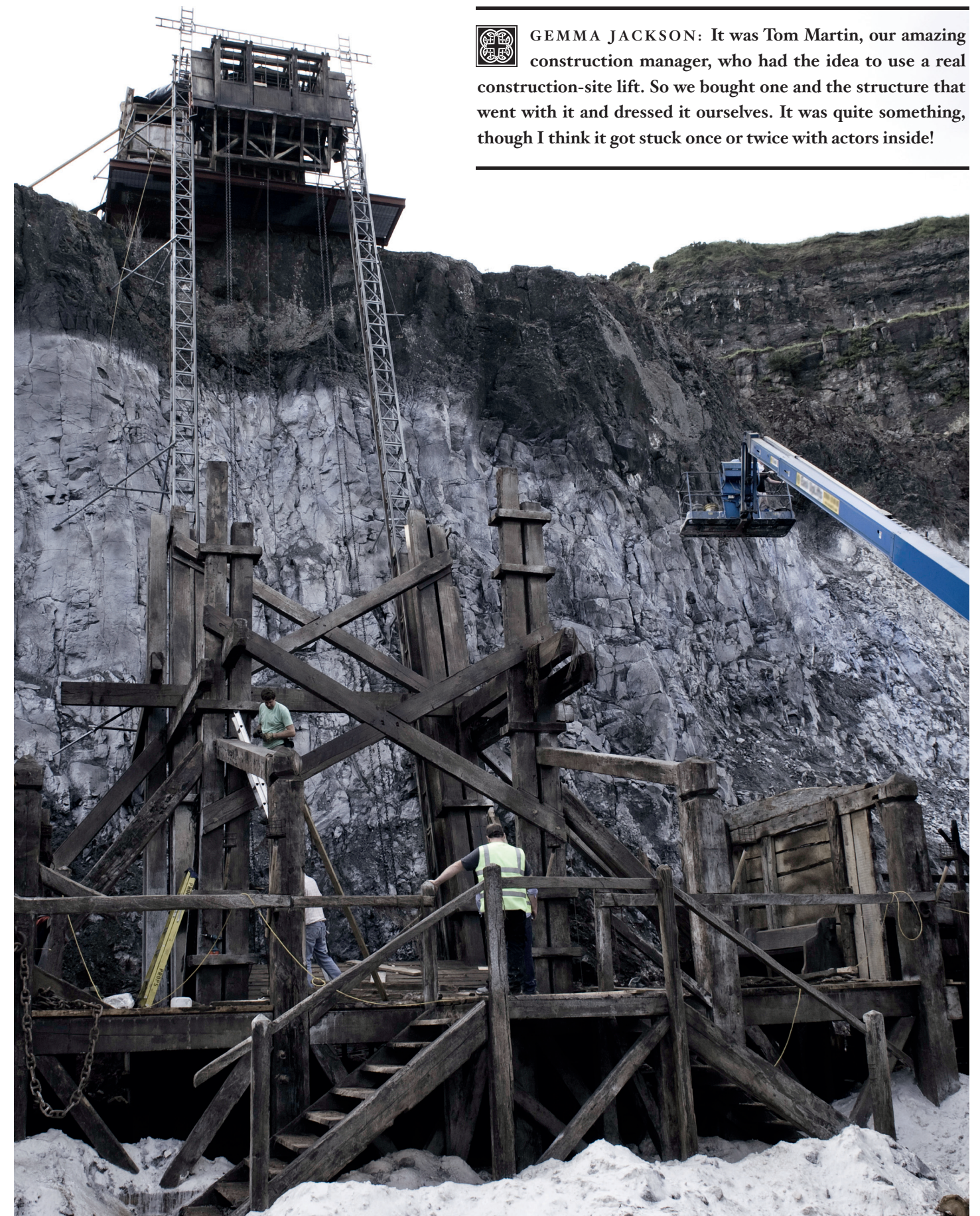
ADAM McINNES: Our aim with the Wall was to create a structure that was unquestionably built with ice but that also had some trademarks of the human engineering involved to construct it. The south side, where Castle Black resides, would be the business side of things. We'd see remnants of the tracks and outposts that would have been used to haul materials up and maintain it over the centuries. The north

side had to be sheer, so that it was inconceivable that anyone or anything could ever scale the Wall, thus providing the perfect defense from the dark forces of the North. To build all of this we began with concept art and the physical construction of Castle Black in its location at Magheramorne quarry.

ROBBIE BOAKE (*locations coordinator*): I remember first reading the season one breakdown and thinking, “Where am I going to find this?” Northern Ireland has many diverse locations, but not many seven-hundred-foot walls. So I was very pleased when I drove [production designer] Gemma Jackson over to Magheramorne, an old limestone quarry about twenty miles

north of Belfast, and asked, “What do you think?” There it was! By complete coincidence, it ended up being the safest part of the quarry to build in.

ADAM McINNES: The justification for a more rocky base to the Wall was an engineering need to have solid material as a foundation to the ice, which obviously fits nicely with having a good high physical location to shoot within. The Special Effects team treated the surface of the rock to resemble ice and snow buildup. We then had the entire Castle Black and quarry-wall set scanned to provide the basis of an identical CG model, and extensive digital matte painting was used to finish the shots of the Wall seen in the show.



GEMMA JACKSON: It was Tom Martin, our amazing construction manager, who had the idea to use a real construction-site lift. So we bought one and the structure that went with it and dressed it ourselves. It was quite something, though I think it got stuck once or twice with actors inside!

Jon Snow



**"The next time we see each other,
we'll talk about your mother."**

—Ned Stark to Jon Snow

The bastard son of Ned Stark, Jon was recognized by his father at birth and raised alongside his half brothers and half sisters at Winterfell, where he has always felt like an outsider. He grew up idolizing his father, yearning for the affection and approval Ned was never able to fully give. Jon seems to have found his place in the world with the Night's Watch, where he has become a natural leader and effective warrior when faced with the dangers beyond the Wall.

