

## WAS SHAKESPEARE A FRAUD ?

This is the controversy raised by the German director Roland Emmerich in his 2011 movie :



WATCH TRAILER : <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uBmnkkoQW3Q>

IN CINEMAS ON JANUARY 4<sup>TH</sup> 2012

Roland Emmerich – born in 1955 - is also the director of :

- *Independence Day* released in 1996
- *Godzilla* released in 1998
- *The Day after Tomorrow* released in 2004
- *2012* released in 2009



... movies which have received average ratings by film reviewers, which makes it all the more interesting to discover how he dealt with this controversial issue that is Shakespeare's not writing his works.

## MOVIE SYNOPSIS

The scene is set at the end of the Elizabethan era, a time of political intrigue between the Tudors and the Cecils over the succession of Elizabeth I. It presents Lord Oxford as the real author of Shakespeare's plays. Lord Oxford was Edward de Vere, 17th Earl of Oxford, a courtier, playwright, poet and patron of the Arts. Lord Oxford could not write the plays in his own name because their content could have fomented revolt in the population.

Essex, who led a rebellion against Elizabeth I with de Vere's son, was King James of Scotland's most avid supporter in England during the closing years of Elizabeth's reign. The film presents James as the Cecils' candidate, and Essex as a threat to his succession. In fact, William Cecil feared James, believing he bore a grudge against him for his role in the death of James' mother, Mary Queen of Scots.

### Emmerich's interviews

"It's a mix of a lot of things : it's a historical thriller because it's about who will succeed Queen Elizabeth and the struggle of the people who want to have a hand in it. It's the Tudors on one side and the Cecils on the other, and in between [the two] is the Queen. Through that story we tell how the plays written by the Earl of Oxford ended up labeled 'William Shakespeare'."

"[...] I, like Henry James, Mark Twain, Walt Whitman, Derek Jacobi and John Gielgud, don't think Shakespeare wrote the plays, but obviously a lot more people do think Shakespeare wrote the plays."

Since the 19th Century, Shakespeare's authorship has been questioned. His humble origins and obscure life seemed incompatible with his poetic eminence and his reputation for genius. He was said to lack education, aristocratic sensibility, or familiarity with the royal court that is apparent in the works.

Oxford, Bacon, Derby and Marlowe (clockwise from top left, Shakespeare centre) have each been proposed as the true author.



... Much ado about nothing ...?