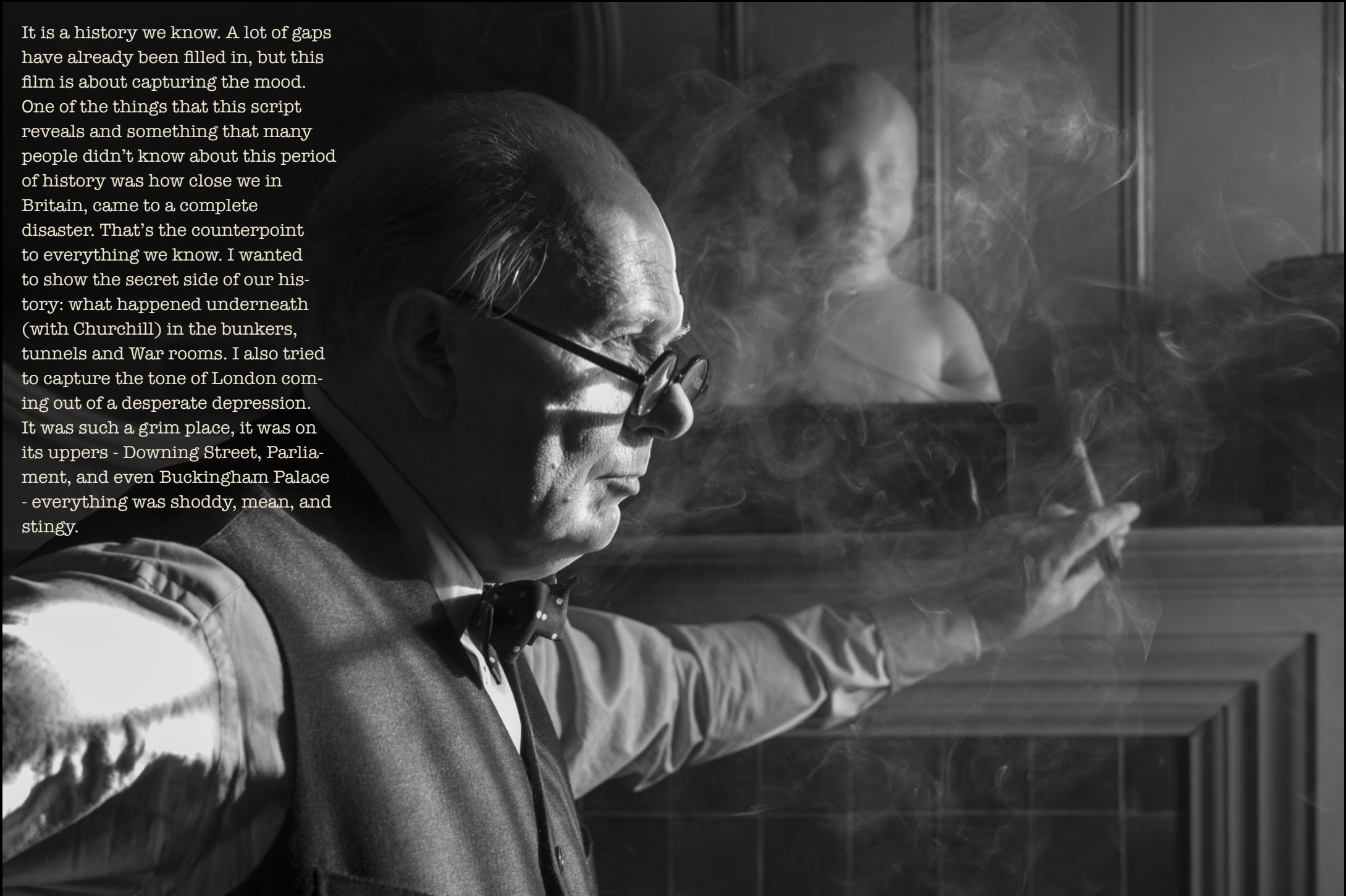


# DARKEST HOUR

PRODUCTION DESIGNER: SARAH GREENWOOD  
SUPERVISING ART DIRECTOR: NICK GOTTSCHALK  
ART DIRECTOR: OLIVER GOODIER  
ART DIRECTOR: JOE HOWARD  
STANDBY ART DIRECTOR: EMMA MACDEVITT  
ASSISTANT ART DIRECTOR: ISONA RIGAU  
ASSISTANT ART DIRECTOR: MATTHEW ROBINSON  
GRAPHIC DESIGNER: GEORGNIA MILLET  
SET DECORATOR: KATIE SPENCER

It is a history we know. A lot of gaps have already been filled in, but this film is about capturing the mood. One of the things that this script reveals and something that many people didn't know about this period of history was how close we in Britain, came to a complete disaster. That's the counterpoint to everything we know. I wanted to show the secret side of our history: what happened underneath (with Churchill) in the bunkers, tunnels and War rooms. I also tried to capture the tone of London coming out of a desperate depression. It was such a grim place, it was on its uppers - Downing Street, Parliament, and even Buckingham Palace - everything was shoddy, mean, and stingy.







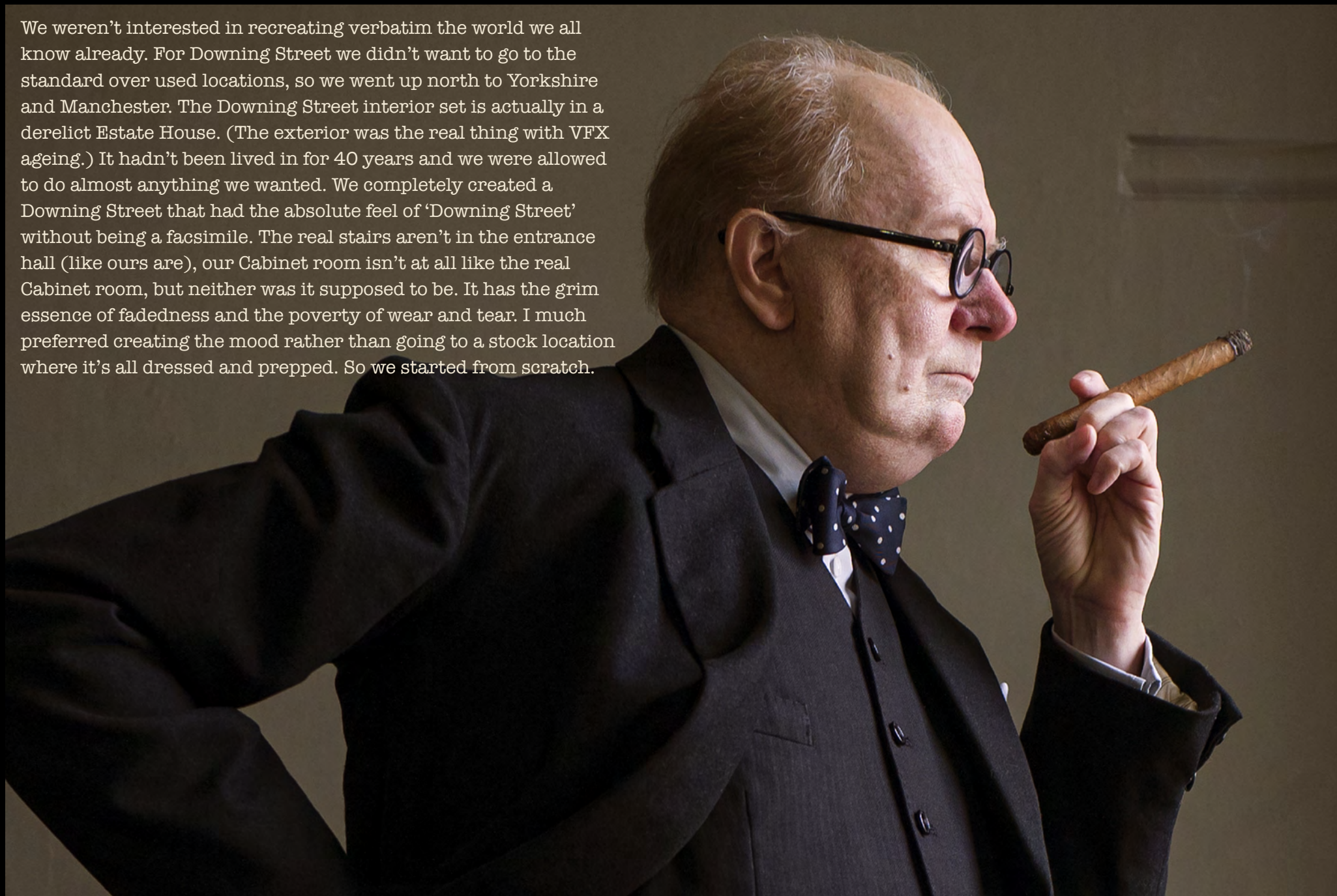








We weren't interested in recreating verbatim the world we all know already. For Downing Street we didn't want to go to the standard over used locations, so we went up north to Yorkshire and Manchester. The Downing Street interior set is actually in a derelict Estate House. (The exterior was the real thing with VFX ageing.) It hadn't been lived in for 40 years and we were allowed to do almost anything we wanted. We completely created a Downing Street that had the absolute feel of 'Downing Street' without being a facsimile. The real stairs aren't in the entrance hall (like ours are), our Cabinet room isn't at all like the real Cabinet room, but neither was it supposed to be. It has the grim essence of fadedness and the poverty of wear and tear. I much preferred creating the mood rather than going to a stock location where it's all dressed and prepped. So we started from scratch.







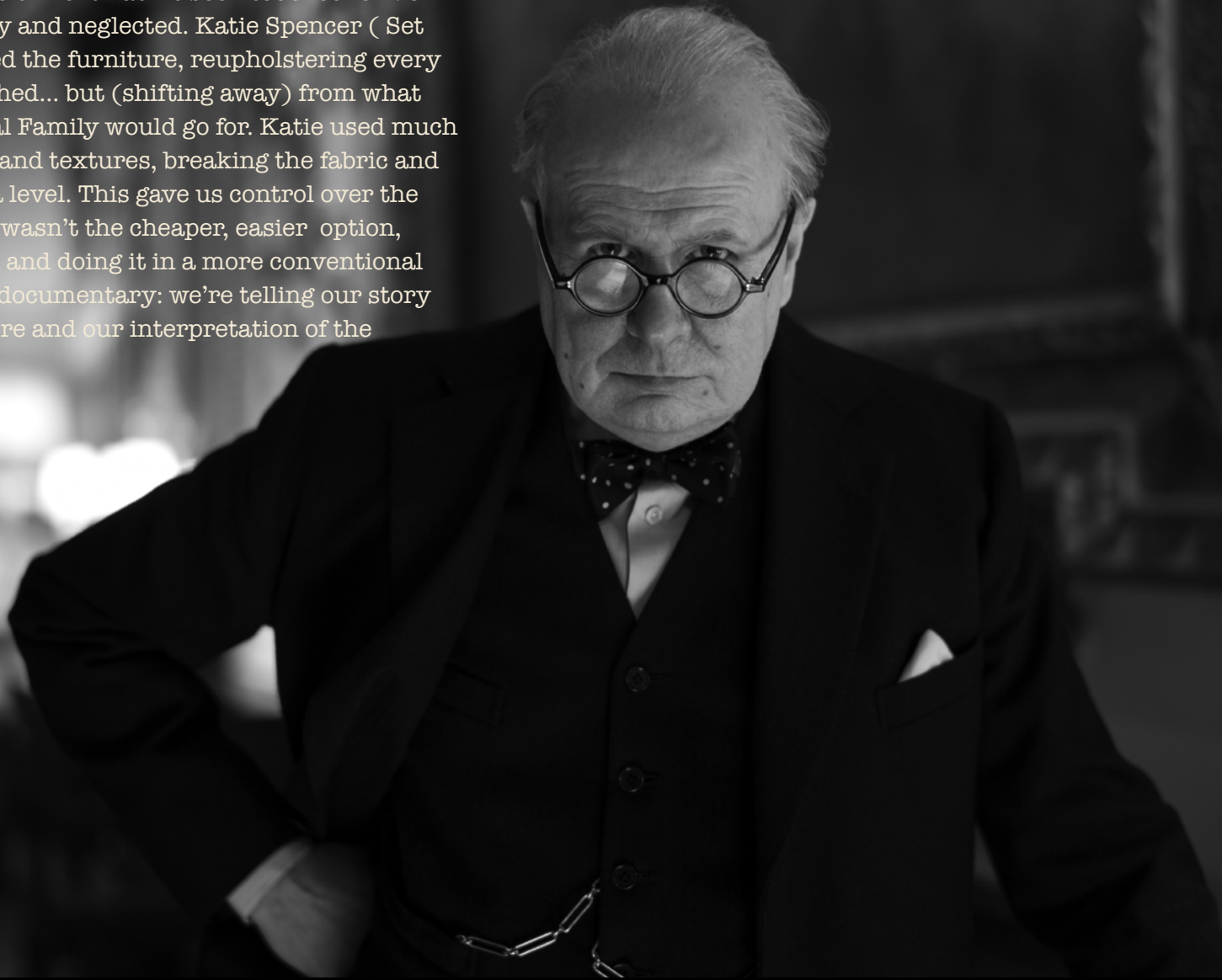








The same goes for Buckingham Palace. Again there are houses in London that are always used for Buckingham Palace but we went to another poor old derelict house in Yorkshire, which was empty. All the plasterwork was there but again it felt like it hadn't been touched for 70 years. It felt shabby and neglected. Katie Spencer ( Set Decorater ) selected the furniture, reupholstering every piece so it all matched... but (shifting away) from what you think the Royal Family would go for. Katie used much more muted tones and textures, breaking the fabric and taking it all down a level. This gave us control over the palette. Again this wasn't the cheaper, easier option, which is in London and doing it in a more conventional way.... We're not a documentary: we're telling our story with our atmosphere and our interpretation of the subject.













Cam C Sc 46

Tk 5

Emma MacDevitt's iPad



Op DESMOND

DARKEST HOUR

Cam C Sc 46

Tk 5

Emma MacDevitt's iPad



Op DESMOND

DARKEST HOUR















Cam c Sc 98

Tk 2



DARKEST HOUR

Op DESMONDO

Cam A Sc 60A

Tk 5



DARKEST HOUR

Op DESMONDO





We did the same thing with the War Rooms. There is an incredible museum of the real War Rooms but obviously one can't shoot there, but there's so much inspiration and detail and atmosphere. We took that inspiration and created our War Room as a set covering two stages at Ealing Studios. Joe likes cameras to go through walls and such, so even though it was a claustrophobic space, we had to have space to move. The real war room was very linear, long, and thin, but that didn't work for us, so we created a kind of maze. So you literally never knew quite where you were.







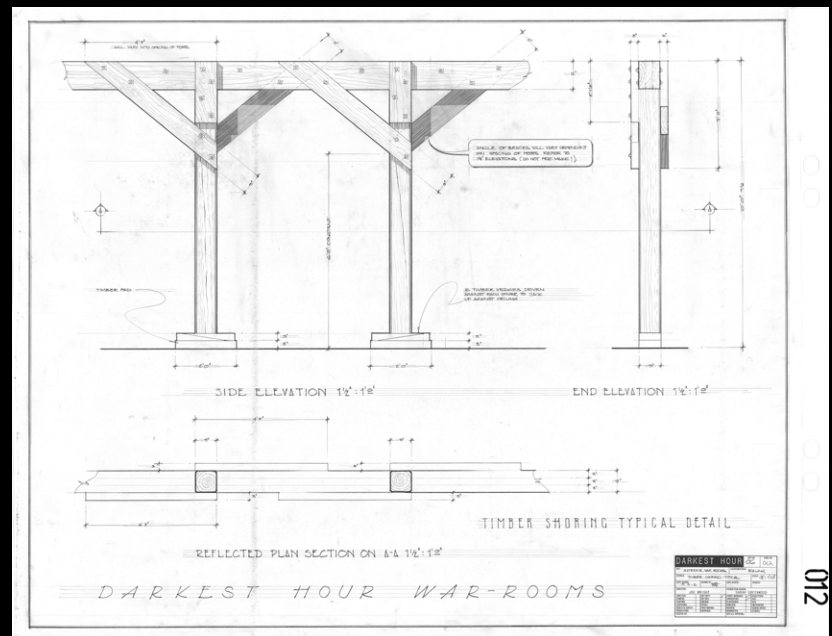
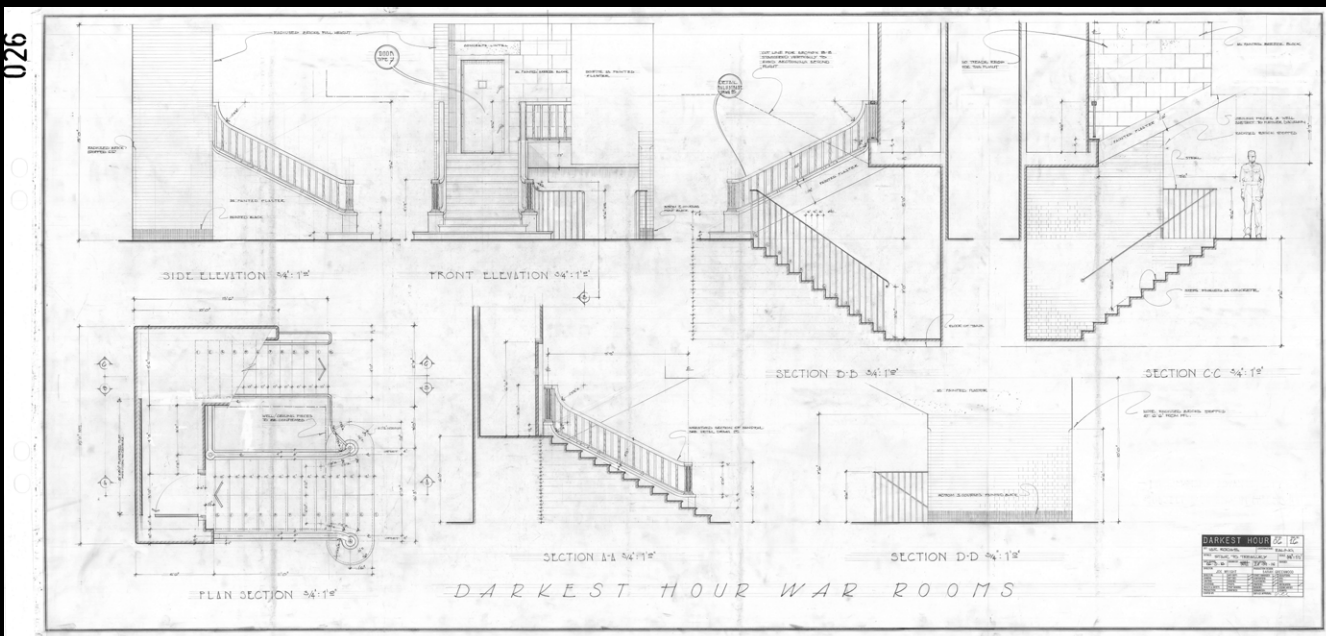
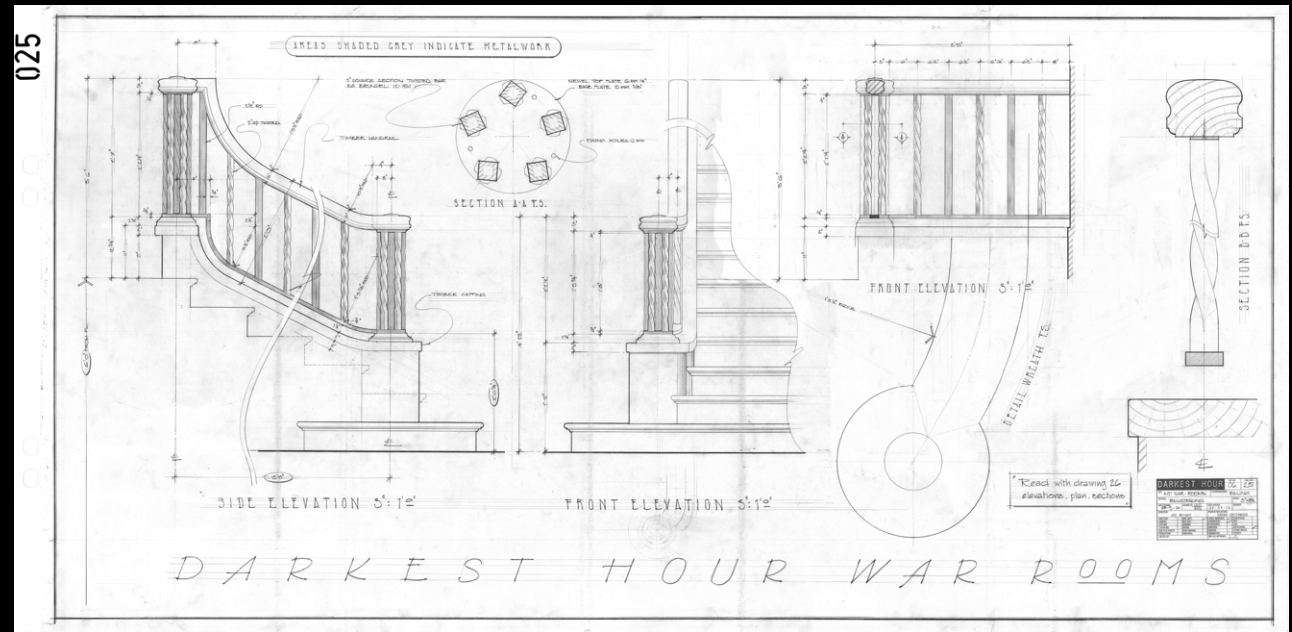


I was also looking to a counterpoint to the amazing Films 'Downfall' and 'Valkyrie'. The Nazi aesthetic was sharp, organized, and finished perfectly, and their uniforms were immaculate. Everything about the British was doing was the opposite. Churchill's War room was in a basement. It was such a hodge-podge environment. In that one room they ran the war so we tried to capture the ad hoc quality that also had a warmth to it. It was actually a real mess, that's what we wanted to get across, and not glamorize it at all. Out of this space, this world, came an incredible victory. This 'heart in the bowels' won the war!















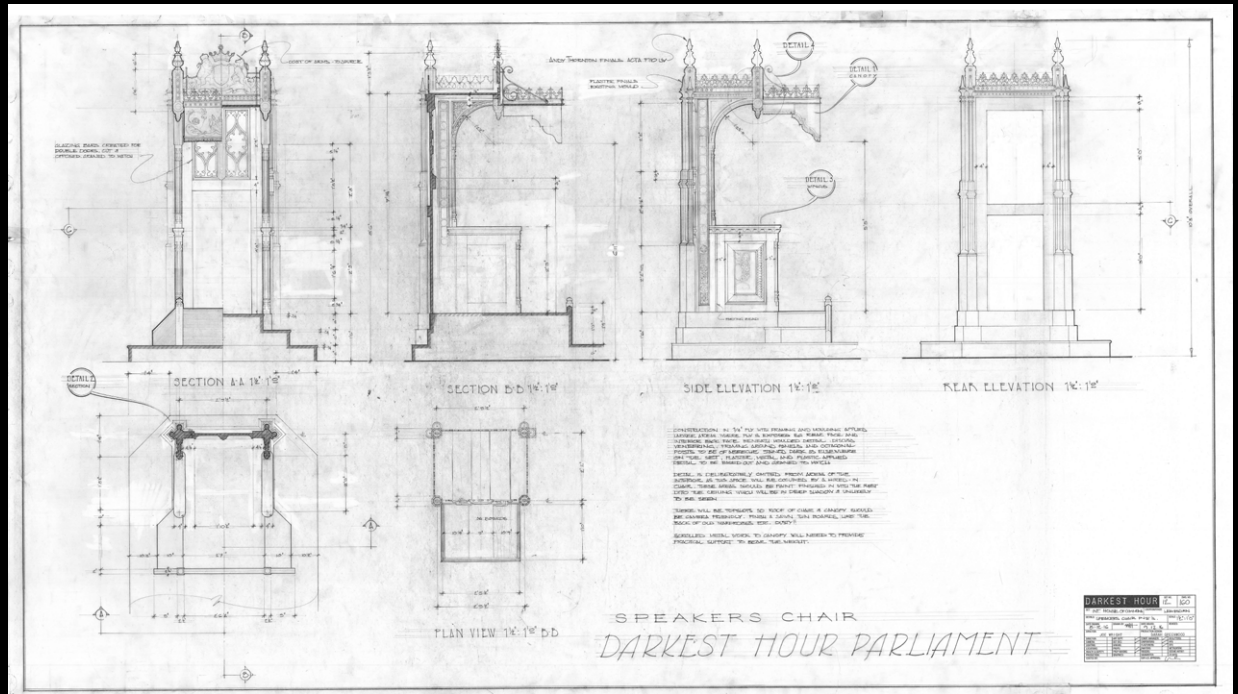
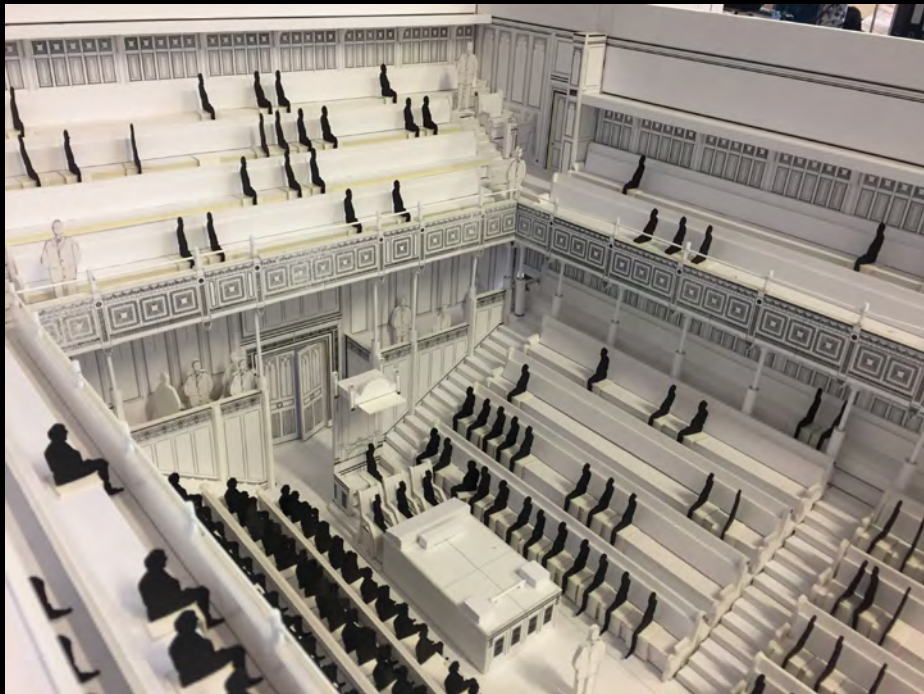
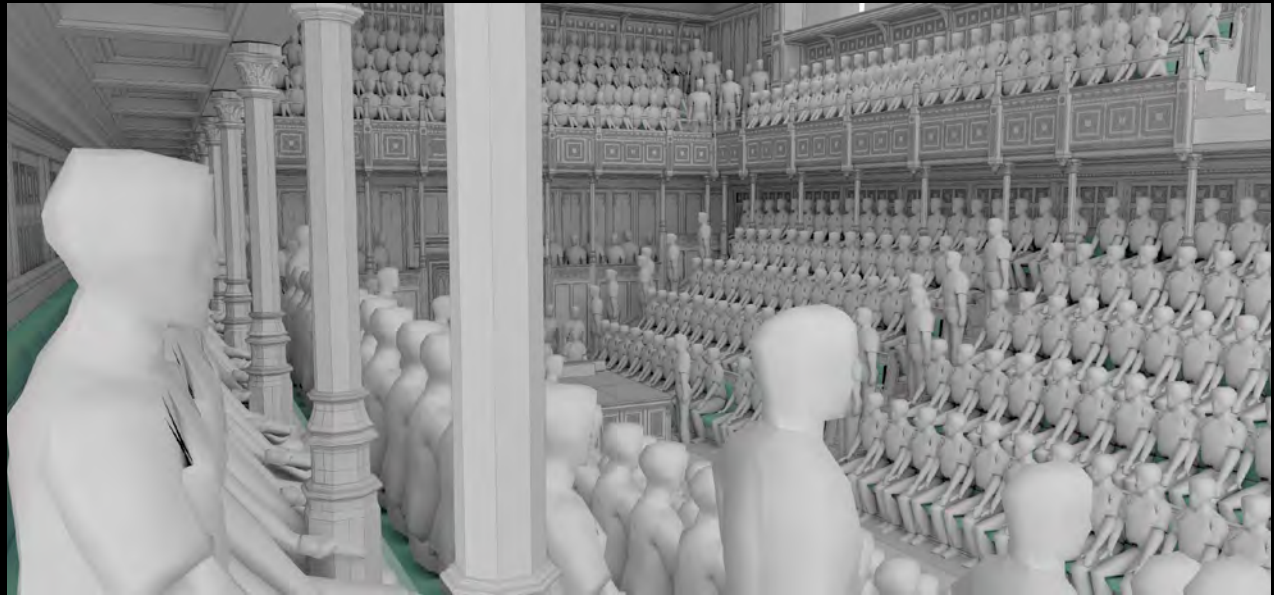


In recreating the House of Commons we asked a lot, especially of the budget! But it was completely the right decision in our own battle! There were locations that would have done, we even had the offer of using the real HoC (another story, to do with the fact that you cannot sit down on the green benches!) But the HoC that Churchill knew was the original 19th Century one, which was bombed and destroyed in 1941 (not rebuilt until the early 1950's). This is the one we chose to recreate, dark, dingy and overcrowded. It gave us the opening and the close of the film. It gave us the atmosphere, it gave Bruno (Debonell) the director of photography the ability to light it and it gave Joe the shots he wanted. Another correct but very challenging decision made on our film.

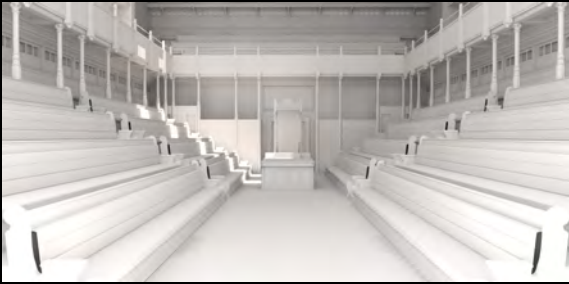














In the end it was also a lot about the color pink! Joe loves to use it but it's a dangerous colour on film. Churchill's bedroom is pink, his pyjamas are pink, he's like this big pink baby! Something about that captures his vulnerability... everything came from the story and the character, Winston Churchill.