

Presents

**DEVIL’S KNOT**

**A Film by Atom Egoyan
Official Selection of the 2013 Toronto International Film Festival**

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**Director’s Statement**

“When I was sent the script for *DEVIL'S KNOT*, I was immediately struck by the complexity of this true story. Twenty years ago, three young boys were found murdered in a forest. The crime scene was appalling and – most mysteriously – there was no hard evidence. Who could have committed these horrors?

With this unanswered question comes something much deeper. The film becomes an exploration of how we live with evil, how we deal with issues of revenge, how we cope with the moral injury of a community and – most hauntingly – how we deal with unimaginable loss. *DEVIL'S KNOT* shows how legal systems in the town were deployed to simulate retribution, as two characters – a grieving mother and an idealistic private investigator – begin to sense that something is deeply wrong.

In following these two characters, the film doesn’t point to a culprit. The answer to the crime may never be found. Mistakes were made, ‘evidence’ was constructed, and important threads were lost. What remains is the infinitely more complex question of how we deal with the unknown.”

 Atom Egoyan, Director

**Synopsis**

On the evening of May 5, 1993, in the small town of West Memphis, Arkansas, three eight-year-old boys disappeared. The next afternoon, the naked bodies of Stevie Branch, Christopher Byers, and Michael Moore were found submerged in a nearby stream. The boys had been bound from ankle to wrist with their own shoelaces and severely beaten. Christopher had been castrated.

The crime scene had yielded few clues, and despite Christopher's castration, there was a remarkable absence of blood. The police were stymied, and citizens' alarm mounted as weeks passed with no suspects. Finally, a month after the murders, detectives announced three arrests and a startling theory for the crime: the children had been killed by members of a satanic cult.

Detectives attributed their break in the case to a former special education student, seventeen-year-old Jessie Misskelley, Jr. After twelve hours of questioning, police announced that Jessie had implicated himself and accused two other teenagers, eighteen-year-old Damien Echols and sixteen-year-old Jason Baldwin. Damien and Jason both immediately denied Jessie's account, and Jessie himself recanted it within hours, but by then all three had been charged with capital murder.

With no physical evidence connecting anyone to the crime, prosecutors contended that the murders bore signs of “the occult” and that the three accused teenagers – alleged members of a satanic cult -- possessed a “state of mind” that pointed to them as the killers. As proof of the defendants' mental states, they introduced items taken from their rooms -- such as books by Anne Rice and album posters for the rock group Metallica. Despite stunning investigative blunders, a confession riddled with errors, and an absence of physical evidence linking any of the accused to the crime, the jury found all three teenagers guilty. Jason Baldwin and Jessie Misskelley, Jr. were sentenced to life in prison. They sentenced Damien Echols, the accused ringleader, to death.

In 1994, the Arkansas Supreme Court affirmed the verdicts on appeal and state officials insisted that anyone who questioned the trials simply did not know “the facts.”

In response to the convictions being upheld and a growing movement of “supporters” who believed in Damien, Jason, and Jessie’s innocence, Mara Leveritt, an award-winning investigative reporter living in Arkansas, decided to examine “the facts” cited by Arkansas state officials resulting in her bestselling book *Devil’s Knot: The True Story of the West Memphis Three*, which recounts the chilling witch-hunt nature of the investigation and trials and raises serious questions about the lack of evidence as well as other viable suspects in the case. The troubling case has also been the subject of several documentaries and drawn the public support of members of the arts communities including Eddie Vedder of Pearl Jam, Natalie Maines of The Dixie Chicks, filmmaker Peter Jackson, and Johnny Depp. Leveritt’s book is the basis for the feature film DEVIL'S KNOT.

In 2007, a new defense team presented never-before-heard forensic testimony that would completely negate assertions of the original prosecution.

On August 4th, 2010, the Arkansas Supreme Court ordered a judge to consider whether the newly analyzed DNA evidence might exonerate the three and to look into possible juror misconduct in both trials. While anticipating a new trial, the convicted men negotiated a rare “Alford Plea” with

prosecutors, in which they pleaded guilty while being allowed to maintain their innocence. On August 19th, 2011, the State of Arkansas set Damien, Jason, and Jessie free.

From Academy Award® nominated director Atom Egoyan (The Sweet Hereafter), starring Academy Award® winner Colin Firth (The King’s Speech) and Academy Award® winner Reese Witherspoon (Walk The Line), comes the feature film DEVIL'S KNOT, a haunting true mystery about who killed three children in a small town. DEVIL'S KNOT transports the audience back to a tiny southern town gripped in fear over supposed satanic ritual murders and trial and conviction of teenagers, Damien Echols, Jessie Misskelley Jr., and Jason Baldwin, also known as the West Memphis Three. The defendants, each of them a social outsider, quickly find themselves up against a community crying out for justice, as well as the police who believe the murders were carried out as part of a satanic occult ritual. Colin Firth stars as Ron Lax, a local private investigator, and Reese Witherspoon stars as Pam Hobbs, the mother of one of the murdered boys, who both come to suspect that all is not as it appears and while the police call the crimes satanic… the truth may be far scarier.

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 **An Introduction to DEVIL'S KNOT**

DEVIL'S KNOT is directed by acclaimed director Atom Egoyan and stars Reese Witherspoon and Colin Firth, from a screenplay by Paul Harris Boardman and Scott Derrickson. Elizabeth Fowler, Richard Saperstein and Clark Peterson produced DEVIL'S KNOT alongside Worldview Entertainment’s CEO, Christopher Woodrow. Worldview’s Molly Conners, Sarah Johnson Redlich, Maria Cestone, and Hoyt David Morgan executive produced alongside actual defendants Jason Baldwin and Jessie Misskelley, Jr.

Following the release from prison of theWest Memphis Three, after nearly 20 years of incarceration, Hollywood was abuzz with plans to develop the teen trio's incredible story of wrongful conviction for the mutilation and murder of three young boys into a narrative feature. Among other works, it inspired the 2011 Academy Award® nominated HBO documentary, Paradise Lost 3: Purgatory. Though tackling a complicated – and unsolved -- murder mystery that spans nearly 20 years and includes a myriad of characters as a theatrical motion picture is an ambitious undertaking, director Atom Egoyan was more inspired than intimidated by the story of the West Memphis Three.

With a long history of adapting stories inspired by real life tragedy into compelling dramas such as The Sweet Hereafter and Ararat, Egoyan was eager to begin filming Paul Harris Boardman & Scott Derrickson’s adaptation of Mara Leveritt's best-selling true crime book, *Devil's Knot: The True Story of the West Memphis Three*. His film DEVIL'S KNOT stars Academy Award® winner Reese Witherspoon (Walk the Line) as Pam Hobbs, the mother of murder victim Stevie Hobbs, and Academy Award® winner Colin Firth (The King’s Speech) as private investigator Ron Lax, who in real life uncovered troubling details about the case that ultimately led to the release of Damien Echols, Jessie Misskelley Jr., and Jason Baldwin after 18 years in prison.

Joining Witherspoon and Firth in the star-studded cast are Alessandro Nivola of Coco Before Chanel, Academy Award® nominee Amy Ryan of Gone Baby Gone, Matt Letscher of ABC's *Scandal*, Michael Gladis of AMC’s *Mad Men*, Stephen Moyer of HBO’s *True Blood*, Rex Linn of Appaloosa*,* and Bruce Greenwood who recently appeared in The Place Beyond the Pines.

Nivola portrays Pam’s increasingly suspicious husband, Terry Hobbs. Letscher signed on to play Paul Ford, the defense attorney for Baldwin, while Gladis portrayed Dan Stidham, the defense attorney for Misskelley Jr. Greenwood renders the not-so-honorable Judge David Burnett, who oversaw the West Memphis Three’s trial and was later accused of bias that slanted the scales of justice against the accused. Rounding out the cast, Amy Ryan plays Ron’s ex-wife, Margaret Lax, Stephen Moyer plays prosecutor John Fogelman, and Rex Linn plays Chief Inspector Gitchell.

DEVIL'S KNOTboasts a creative team that includes producers Elizabeth Fowler, Richard Saperstein, Clark Peterson, Christopher Woodrow, producer/writer Paul Harris Boardman, executive producer Molly Conners, and line producer/UPM Michael Flynn.

Joining that above-the-line group are production designer Phillip Barker, art director Thomas Minton, set decorator Melinda Sanders, director of photography Paul Sarossy, costume designer Kari Perkins, editor Susan Shipton, composer/songwriter Mychael Danna, sound mixer Shirley Libby, special effects coordinator Lisa Reynolds, special effect make-up Bill “Splat” Johnson, and stunt coordinator Andy Martin.

The Weinstein Company is handling international sales, and CAA is handling North American rights.

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**A Conversation with Director Atom Egoyan**

 “When the script was presented to me I was immediately seized by this extraordinary story which seemed to just open up so many possibilities, and which seemed to get more intricate and more bold and unresolved as you went deeper into it,” said Egoyan.

 Early in his process, a very unusual event occurred that changed the entire direction of Egoyan’s preparations: “About two months or so into my working on this project–suddenly the West Memphis Three were released from prison. And that just gave it an incredibly different spin because up until that point there was a feeling that the film had to focus on a story which would support their release, but now that they were free~~,~~ -- even though under the most bizarre circumstances~~,~~ -- it allowed us to go to a different place artistically. What attracted me from the beginning was the notion of a community rocked by this awful unimaginably horrifying crime… and the need to find some sort of answer along with the danger of rushing to any sort of judgment.”

 “I’ve always been interested in the notions of how we construct our idea of what is truthful, how we establish a sense of reality, and what constitutes the truth. Many of my films have explored that notion, and DEVIL'S KNOT was a unique way to look at that question from what has become a piece of American mythology. What happened to the West Memphis Three in 1993 is remarkably well documented, not only from the initial news reports, but the fact that at least four major documentaries now have been released, so there is a lot of information already circulated. I felt ~~t~~he time was right to do a dramatic retelling of all these facts and to weave them in a certain way that would allow the viewer to enter an extraordinary journey, the DEVIL'S KNOT."

 “In essence, a ‘devil’s knot’ is the sort of knot that technically can’t be opened, which becomes a metaphor because even though we’re aware of the real circumstances, we don’t fully know what happened in the forest that night in 1993. It’s all about conjecture based on various theories and ideas according to what people needed to believe at any given moment. And the fact that the prosecution’s narrative had so much latitude given the lack of evidence is very interesting to me, of course aided by a judge who had his own agenda. Narratives were spun and became reality based on what people wanted to believe, which is very troubling to me -- and also a subject that’s ripe for dramatic exploration.”

 In the process of prepping DEVIL'S KNOT*,* Egoyan and his production designer, Phillip Barker, visited West Memphis, AK, the scene of the crime, and Jonesboro, AK, where the trial courthouse was located. “Going to West Memphis was really important for us because we needed to know where the real story was situated and how that place felt," says Egoyan. "It was anunsettling experience because it was really non-descript. There was nothing that gave it a particular character, which was probably one of the things that made it so horrifying.”

 “Also it was obvious that all of the places in which the real story occurred had changed significantly. The forest had been completely cut down; a lot of the signature buildings had been transformed; and so we thought rather than try to recreate what was there, we would interpret it dramatically. Instead of using a cinderblock courthouse, we’d find a really beautiful courtroom to amplify the trial. Which is what drama does... it amplifies. It’s something we’ve been doing since the time of the ancient Greeks. We felt the really interesting approach was to make certain references that were iconographic. The courtroom is different, the neighborhoods have a similar architecture, but what I loved about filming in Georgia, was that it’s so green, and one of the themes visually in this film is the notion of the forest –the clash between the natural laws and the world of nature ~~–~~, and what is imposed by man.”

 “We also met the current Chief of Police in West Memphis, who was a young officer during the initial trial,” recalls Egoyan. “It was interesting having his perspective on it and realizing that in some ways the people, as they appear in the documentaries, might come off as being more caricatures than they do in our drama. We had the advantage of time, and we could create more subtlety and space than perhaps these characters could have at that moment when everything was so frenetic and crazed. Also, the documentarians were working within specific parameters. I think one of the roles of drama is to deal with the world of ambiguity,where things are not so clear. That’s certainly the world that fascinates me.”

 “I think audiences will feel unsettled. There is something deeply troubling about the fact that this story doesn’t have a resolution and that our characters have to live with the trauma of this horrifying, cataclysmic event. In this world of judgment where people are rushing to make all sorts of crazy conclusions, there are these two characters – Pam Hobbs and Ron Lax – who are somehow apart from that. Pam has a strong intuitive sense: she’s a very religious woman and believes in the notion of forgiveness, but until she knows who actually did it, she can’t really forgive anyone. While everyone is rushing to judgment, which can be very provocative, she stands apart and says, ‘This doesn’t seems right.’ It's somewhat heroic. And I think Ron certainly isa character who gets involved in this case because he’s against capital punishment, but suddenly realizes he’s dealing with something much bigger, which is that these boys are innocent.”

 For Reese and Colin, Egoyan has nothing but the highest of praise. “I’ve worked with Colin Firth before and I adore him. I think he’s one of the most amazing actors, capable of such a range of roles. He’s very empathetic, and in DEVIL'S KNOT he plays a hugely successful private investigator who – understanding that the boys could face capital punishment for their alleged offences – takes on the case pro bono. But as he does his work and meets Damien, he comes to realize that there’s something else -- that Damien’s just a teenager really, someone who’s an outsider, someone who’s been vilified because he’s different. It troubles him deeply and he goes ona mission to provide very green, inexperienced defense lawyers with all the ammunition they need to present a case. Ron tries to give information to lawyers who are dealing with their first trial and the volume of materials just completely overwhelms them. Ron Lax’s great tragedy is that he’s very bright and very engaged, but ultimately he doesn’t have the agency to actually affect anything. He’s an interesting character study. In some ways, there’s something almost Kafkaesque about it all because despite the mountains of documents he has to pour through, nothing is really resolved. I wanted to have a film where, in the wash of evidence, images, and various theories and ideas, these two characters~~,~~ -- Pam and Ron -- ~~,~~ emerge as heroes, because they resist the popular and extremely seductive rush to judgment.”

 About Reese Witherspoon, Egoyan reflects, “I’d been watching some cuts during filming, and I’m so excited for this role because it’s unlike anything she’s ever done. She has incredible intelligence and sensitivity, and she was able to bring a focus to this character of Pam Hobbs that is amazing. I could never imagine anyone else in this role. There was no one else who could play it. I really felt so lucky to be able to work with two actors of this caliber. But all of the cast members were amazing: vets whom I’ve worked with in the past, others I've worked with for the first time, and then a generation of actors who had never performed before. It was a beautiful blend, and I think those days filming in the courthouse, with all of those levels of actors working, was just such a great experience for everyone. It was amazing to hang out with all these people and see them appreciating one another’s work and just having fun.”

 Similarly Egoyan hopes the audience approaches the story of the West Memphis Three with new degrees of empathy. “I think anyone who has felt like an outsider at any point in their life, especially in adolescence, will identify with these boys~~."~~

 The project also presented a unique change for Egoyan since he is a writer/producer/director who usually creates his own material *(*Chloeis one of the few notable exceptions), so he welcomed the opportunity to dive into Boardman and Derrickson’s script. “The script for DEVIL'S KNOT was verbose. When I’m writing characters I tend to be more oblique and provide a lot more space. It was an unusual script for me to plunge into, but with all the dialogue, there’s so much space in the structure for interpretation. And that, from the very beginning, was what I was drawn to. It’s not really how these moments operate on a scene-to-scene basis, but how the overall shape creates a world which is so disturbing and inconclusive. The viewer has to really get engaged in a bigger sense considering what the film is about, questioning a lot of the preconceptions of what conventional drama does. DEVIL'S KNOT won’t give you any of that,” concludes Egoyan.

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**Conversations with Cast Members**

**A Conversation with Reese Witherspoon**

 Reese Witherspoon, who plays Pam Hobbs, is a Southern girl. “I grew up in Nashville, TN, so I was aware of the case of the West Memphis Three. And then, in 1996, while I was at the Sundance Film Festival, I saw Paradise Lost: The Child Murders at Robin Hood Hills*.* It had always been a case I was interested in, and I felt like Joe [Berlinger] and Bruce [Sinofsky] had done just a really interesting job of capturing that time in the city and the real sort of feeling around the case that I had no understanding of while it was going on.”

 Moving several years ahead, Whitherspoon was presented with the script for DEVIL'S KNOT. “When I read the script I thought it was really an interesting perspective on the case and told a side of the story that I hadn’t heard. And I immediately connected to Pam Hobbs’ story. She was from a similar area where I grew up and had an interesting experience and journey, from being someone who really felt convinced, and then ultimately opening herself up to other possibilities. She knew exactly what had happened and that justice needed to be served through the process of seeing the three teenage boys convicted and then subsequently finding out a lot of other information, she started to have doubts. That was a very interesting meditation on human behavior and how we seek the truth and how important the truth can be.”

 Witherspoon became involved after Atom Egoyan was hired to direct. “I read the script and then I met with Atom. I knew he was directing and we had some really interesting conversations about it, and that’s when I decided to do it,” remembers Witherspoon.

 When she commits to a project, she dives right in. It was important to her to meet Pam Hobbs. “I had the opportunity to meet Pam a few times which was really helpful for me in trying to find my way into the character and the story. As an actor, it’s a completely different experience when you’re playing a real person, so I was really mindful of wanting to respect her ideas and to portray her with the same dignity that I would want to be portrayed with by an actor. So I went to West Memphis with her and she showed me around. It was really helpful for me to see the place through her eyes and her experience and her words. She’s been incredibly forthcoming and really helpful despite talking about very emotional issues and a journey that I can’t even imagine as a mother. So I was really very grateful to her for sharing so much with me. When you’re portraying a real person, I think you have a responsibility to represent that person truthfully, as well as representing all sides of that person. No person has a perfect life story. No person is without human flaws. So it takes real courage for the person being fictionalized in a film to let go a little bit of an idea that you’re going to see sides of yourself that aren’t necessarily the best parts of yourself. I think that it was really courageous of Pam,” said Witherspoon.

 Witherspoon was drawn to DEVIL'S KNOTfor several reasons, but her own role as a mother resonated most strongly: “The thing that resounds for me and the reason I felt strongly about doing the film is that no one is looking for the killer of these three little boys. And being the mother of an eight-year-old boy, you know there’s no closure until you really understand what happened and really know the truth. It’s just natural and human behavior to want to know and to make things up in your mind when you don’t know. When you’re left with the fantasies in your own mind it can be deeply troubling. Atom has great ideas about what the film is. It’s not trying to find an answer. He’s showing the case from many different perspectives. To play with perspective, what makes you see someone as a suspect and not another person as a suspect, and how that can influence an entire community or an entire country or an entire world is fascinating. It’s really about perception. My honest goal with this film is to raise awareness about the case and hopefully get the state of Arkansas to reopen it and look for the person who killed these boys because it’s not acceptable for these parents or for the people who were convicted. It’s just a huge question mark out there!”

 “I’ve been fortunate enough to have met Jason Baldwin and Damien Echols,” said Witherspoon. “I have so much respect for them, after everything they’ve been through in their lives, and their willingness to tell their story in order to really change people’s opinions and how justice really should be carried out. My perception of the case had been based on the documentaries that I’d seen and from those filmmakers’ perspectives. But now I’m gleaning information from the people who sat there in the courtroom every day. I’m gleaning information from Pam, Jason, and different people that were there. Perception is everything, and the information you’re given really feeds your ideas of who committed a crime.”

 Adds Witherspoon, “Pam’s journey in this movie is extraordinary as she goes from being this person who is so grief stricken and just tormented by her own sadness that she’s willing to listen to what is offered up as an explanation for her son’s murder. Through her own emotional journey, she finds a way to open up her heart and see that there might be a different answer to the question of who killed her son. And I think it takes incredible courage to go against the tide of the community who were ready to convict these three teenage boys. And she knows in her heart it’s not true. And I think that’s a journey in her real life that took a very long time. She’s not just listening to what other people want to tell her. I think that takes great courage.”

 “The story is uniquely southern. Atom is very thoughtful about exploring southern conservative Christian identity. It’s not a film that wants to put religion down, but there’s a bible verse for every sort of negative thing you’re feeling. And sometimes what is supposed to make you a very open, loving person can also really close your mind. The film does a really great job of exploring the idea of religion versus spirituality, which is what Pam is experiencing – a real rebirth and the idea that religion can be about spirituality; it can be about tolerance and opening your heart and not closing your mind,,” said Witherspoon.

 One overwhelmingly emotional moment in the film continues to resonate most strongly with Witherspoon, the moment when Pam brings late son Stevie’s homework to his school to be graded after the murders. “It was a real moment in Pam’s life that she shared with me. What an emotional experience that was to be embraced by Stevie’s classmates and it was a really important thing and a real healing moment for her to be able to have this closure with his classmates who missed him terribly and never really got to express it,” concludes Witherspoon.

**A Conversation with Colin Firth**

Colin Firth admits the story was largely foreign to him when he first encountered the project, but he quickly became engrossed with the details of the case after stepping into the role of private investigator Ron Lax. As Firth describes, “I didn’t know anything about the story at all. I don’t know how it had slipped me by. I read the script as a completely ignorant outsider. It’s very compelling. It has all kinds of elements which I think lead you to want to know more. There’s a mystery at the heart of it for a start. It produces a very strong feeling of indignation because as the script presented it you see misconduct all over the place; in the investigative process, you see it in the judicial process, and justice gets lost in an atmosphere of trauma, hysteria, lack of defense funding, and all kinds of assumptions which were very prevalent at that time.”

“The very title is one of the most aptly titled stories that I know. The *Kno*t does seem diabolical. There are all sorts of references to the knots that were used to tie the boys, but of course once you start to take a closer look at the story, it does seem fairly unfathomable, like a tortuous and endlessly tangled series of mysteries on a great many fronts because the fate of so many people is wrapped up in the story. You’ve got the damage that was done quite obviously to the victims and their families, but you’ve also got the damage that was done to three more boys. As my character says in the film, one of the things he takes so personally about [the case] is seeing a town that loses three of its children and then sacrifices three more for revenge.”

Firth acknowledges that Ron Lax enters the story very much as an outsider, a trait that he as an actor found helpful when crafting the character: “Ron Lax is a private investigator. He doesn’t come from West Memphis. He comes from Memphis. The reason he became interested in the case is because he is passionately anti-death penalty and he realized this was a capital case and that the prosecution were going to ask for the death penalty. He looked at the ages of the boys and he felt strongly about adding his time, skills, and finances to aid a rigorous defense. He felt that all too often the judicial process was not rigorous enough when the stakes were so high. He explained to me was that’s why he took up an anti-death penalty position in the first place. He didn’t used to be opposed to the death penalty.”

“He’s not a man who likes the spotlight. And I think if you’re a good detective you probably don’t. You retreat, and you listen more than you talk; so you don’t hear much really from Ron Lax, but he entered into the case because of an ideological belief. And then when he took a closer look he started to see a lot wrong with the evidence and the way the case was being conducted. He started to genuinely believe that these boys were innocent, yet there just was not sufficient evidence. And so what we see in the film is a man who has all the drive and all the faculties to create a case, but he is gagged and muted when it comes to actually arguing anything out there on the front line of the courtroom. One of the things that became incredibly apparent to me when I was working on this story is that the principle of reasonable doubt and the rights of the accused are not just formalities so that we can reassure ourselves about how civilized we are. The principle of reasonable doubt is what's important here because nobody really can rationally look at this case now and think that those convictions were safe beyond reasonable.”

When creating the character of Ron Lax for the film, Firth approached met Lax himself first. As Firth describes, “I think sheer curiosity always drives us to want to meet the person you’re playing. It’s always useful to see if there’s something to be gleaned, and talking to Ron Lax on the one occasion wasn’t just to listen to his voice and hear how he talked, but to understand something about him. He’s a taciturn man. He was more keen to listen than to speak. He didn’t sound quite like the people of the town, which was a relief for me because I could be a bit less specific. He’s quite a cosmopolitan, widely traveled man and his sound was very difficult to actually put him on the map.”

 In addition to the compelling story and characters, Firth also viewed the project as an opportunity to reunite with former collaborators Reese Witherspoon and Atom Egoyan: “[Reese and I] have worked together before, and she was another reason why I wanted to do it. We’d done The Importance of Being Earnest together which, as you can imagine, is a somewhat different tone. It was one of the most enjoyable film experiences of my life. Reese is one of the least precious actors I know. She doesn’t bore you with her process or her neurosis. She’s extremely approachable and very bright. She doesn’t suffer fools and she's quite tough-minded.”

 Firth also notes how well-prepared Egoyan was to tackle the rigors of independent cinema: “Atom Egoyan is an old friend and we've worked together before. I would do anything for him really. Atom has a lot of experience working with a low budget and with time constraints, and he knows how to use the time efficiently, but he also has the gift of making a very short times feel like a lot of time. That’s partly through efficiency, but it’s also just something rather mysterious. He refuses to let you feel rushed. Knowing that you have an experienced person who can deliver so well is very reassuring.”

When reflecting back on the project, Firth emphasizes how frustrating and elusive the true event of the case remains: “Going from complete ignorance to some acquaintance with it, my main experience was being out of my depth. I still can’t find my way through it at all. That feeling of being completely lost in the thicket was probably intensified by meeting the real protagonists. It’s something of an echo of what my character experienced even though it was his job to investigate. He has a far greater, more long-standing commitment to it than I do.”

“People find that they jump into the story," Firth remarks. "They become players themselves. This [film] challenges you to [enter the story], rather than manipulating you into a position and feeling. [The film] says, ‘What if this was you? What if you were the parents of one of these little boys? What if you were one of the accused who was minding his own business when they got swooped on one day? What if you were the investigating officer and you had an immense amount of pressure to find some sort of closure and resolution whatever for your community? What if you had to prosecute? What if you had to defend? And what would you do if you felt you had some answers and no one was listening?’”

“I think the film owns up to [the unanswered questions]. The film isn't seeking resolution where it’s not to be found. I think it would be disingenuous of the film to try to do that. Because there’s no simple theory, rather than pointing the finger at an individual or individuals, the film seems to point the finger in all sorts of direction as a way of saying “Take your pick.” I think it’s leaving a painfully unresolved case unresolved. Frankly, the way [this case] stands today is to nobody’s satisfaction. Justice has not been served whichever way you look at it.”

**A Conversation with Producer Elizabeth Fowler**

 Not inconsistent with the twists and turns of the court case of the West Memphis Three, the journey of DEVIL'S KNOTto the screen became intertwined with its own unique set of convolutions, including with the case itself. Producer Elizabeth Fowler was making the transition from being an agent into producing. She had been given access to the catalogue of a literary agent’s about to be released books and came across a log line that immediately caught her attention.

 “It said something to the effect of ‘three boys convicted for the murder of three children as a result of being part of a satanic cult,’" recalls Fowler. "It immediately caught my eye and got my full attention. I read the book and was just amazed by the story and all the different levels that it operated very organically on – plot, character and social relevance. The fact that it was such an unresolved mystery was fascinating and disturbing. And so I had a conversation with Mara Leveritt, the author of the then recently published ‘*Devil’s Knot: The True Story of the West Memphis Three*,’ and in that first conversation we spoke for about two hours – and now, nine years later, here we are.”

 It was not an easy journey once Fowler optioned the book. “I sold it three different times to two different studios and an independent financier. I had various actors and actresses attached, directors too, but we ended up exactly where we were supposed to be. Once we got Atom Egoyan on board, everything started really clicking into place. Atom was perfectly suited for this film on so many levels and especially in terms of his prior projects. His incredible sensitivity was very important for obvious reasons; we’re dealing with an unspeakable tragedy, and it’s sadly a true story. It had to be handled with a tremendous amount of care, and that’s exactly what he brought to it.”

 In addition to the creative process of developing the film, Fowler has fostered many relationships with the people the film depicts. “I remember watching those documentaries and it caused me to start to do my own due diligence, and that’s when I started meeting Pam Hobbs, John Mark Byers and Damien’s mother and sister, and Dan Stidham and Ron Lax, and so many of the people involved in this tragic story. I immediately sent letters to Damien, Jason and Jessie, but it wasn’t until I was able to speak with Jason after they got out of prison, that I learned he never got those letters; they were confiscated. His attorney,” explained Fowler, “for understandable reasons, didn’t want him to read them because they were fighting for their lives at that point, and now they’re fighting for their exoneration. So I had no contact with Jason until he was released. I’ve had a long, long friendship now with Pam Hobbs that I cherish, as well as Damien’s mother, Pam Echols, and his sister, Michelle, and a lot of other people involved in the story.”

Given her ties to the people of this story, Fowler quickly became impressed with how diligently the cast worked to honestly portray their characters. “Almost each and every cast member sought out their real-life counterparts. We had such a committed cast, and for every single cast member this is clearly not just another job. We’ve somehow brought together exactly the right actor for every role, and each of them is so committed to the story and to representing their real-life counterparts as beautifully and honestly as they can. It’s really been an amazing set to be on in that way. Everybody’s connected by this unfaltering desire to bring this story to life in the most responsible and powerful way possible,” says Fowler, adding, “I’ve been really touched by that…really touched by it.”

 Fowler remains profoundly grateful to have secured such exemplary talent for the lead roles. When speaking of Reese Witherspoon’s performance, Fowler notes, “There never was any other actress in my mind that should play Pam Hicks Hobbs, and I think Pam would agree. Her portrayal is incredible in a very strong, touching, and powerful way. Reese spent a good deal of time with Pam in researching the role, and they’ve become quite close. Her commitment to women’s issues, to the South, and to justice, all factored in as well.”

 “I felt the same way about Colin Firth. I don’t think that any other actor could portray Ron Lax as well,” said Fowler. “Ron is a very interior person. He’s not emotive at all. No one does it like Colin, and he was very passionate about a lot of issues that are touched upon in this film. I have great respect for that too.”

 “The rest of the casting process went very much the same way. Each and every cast member was handpicked and perfectly suited for his or her respective role. From Alessandro Nivola playing Pam’s husband, to Stephen Moyer playing the prosecutor John Fogelman, Amy Ryan playing Ron Lax’s wife, Matt Letcher playing Paul Ford, Michael Gladis playing Dan Stidham, Rex Linn playing Chief Inspector Gitchell, Bruce Greenwood playing Judge Burnett, and Kevin Durand playing John Mark Byers…and I could go on. We were very with such and amazing ensemble cast,” says Fowler.

 During the filming of DEVIL'S KNOT, many of the real people, whose story the film tells, were invited to come on set. “The culmination of the nine-year journey was the week that we had the true life rights people join us for the courtroom scene. It was the most rewarding time of my life, and I think the emotion was the same for so many people on the set as well. And for the life rights people themselves, it was surreal. They saw the care and energy and commitment that we all had to the story and it was, I believe, healing to them – whose lives were turned upside down in 1993 -- in a very profound way. My hope and my belief is that this film will introduce this case and this story to millions more people and keep the pressure on the State of Arkansas to dig deeper. There’s clearly more to the story, and I believe it will eventually come out,” concludes Fowler.

 She adds, “Pam Hicks will tell you herself that she is continuing the fight to seek justice for her son. She’s also extremely involved in a charity that she started for mothers of murdered children. Jason is going on with his life and has already started speaking to people and inspiring them. Pam Echols and Michelle have started a new chapter in their lives and written a book. So I think that everybody that I know that has been touched by this case or involved in this case to a large or even a small degree, at least just continues to fight for justice.”

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**Conversations with Screenwriters**

**Paul Harris Boardman and Scott Derrickson**

 Paul Harris Boardman co-wrote DEVIL'S KNOT with Scott Derrickson, but his memories of the case extend much further back. “We had just done a film called The Exorcism of Emily Rose when the producers came to us with Mara Leveritt’s book‘*Devil’s Knot: The True Story of the West Memphis Three*.’ I knew something about the case from years before when I’d first seen the HBO documentaries and got interested in it. I thought it was an amazing case and it seemed to indicate that there could be a real travesty of justice there and where everyone was acting out of oddly understandable motivations. Everyone was afraid. The police were afraid because they were dealing with something they’d never experienced before and they felt compelled to find the person or people who committed these odious murders. There was this kind of pressure cooker in this town and in this community. At some point in time I looked at the status of the case to see whether the three guys in prison might have a chance to get their case reviewed or looked at again. I even wrote a letter to Bill Clinton just before he was about to leave office. His attorney responded that he was aware of the case but he was letting it go through the justice process. So when the book came to us and we got back into the case, we discovered the website and a whole movement about trying to uncover new evidence and get a new trial that would get the boys out of jail."

 "Scott and I went to West Memphis, AK, looked at the police files, and interviewed Pam Hobbs at great length and Terry Hobbs too. We also spent a great deal of time with Jerry Driver and Ron Lax. Pam has always been the heart of the story, and Ron became the other central character in the piece. Mara’s book was very useful too. She’s a very compelling writer, so it was as much the book that got us intrigued as much as anything we discovered from all of the folks we spoke to, and the stories we had heard from those intimately involved in the case and whose lives had been impacted. It was a huge, voluminous kind of archive of resource material that we had to absorb so that we could do a conscientious job of writing the screenplay.”

 “Scott and I are both parents of youngsters,” notes Boardman, “and we felt so much empathy for Pam. Talking to her, we tried to imagine what she went through, and what the people of the town went through, which was a very powerful influence on how the script needed to be written. It was not going to be a kind of a propaganda piece. It really needed to be empathetic to all of the people involved. My hope is that audiences will see this as authentic; that it will feel true, not just factually true, but emotionally true. For Pam, from the moment she discovered that Stevie was missing to the terror and buildup of tension to the moment when they’re found is harrowing. At the same time, Ron begins to take us into the facts behind it all, and how the investigation went, and what they looked at and what they didn’t look at – and should have. And, as he’s inclined to do, he gets emotionally engaged as well. So in the end audiences will have gone through this powerful emotional journey – the same emotional journey that Pam and Ron went through,” adds Boardman.

 Of director Atom Egoyan, Boardman can’t say enough wonderful things: “Atom has been great. He’s an unthreatened kind of director, which is a great asset. He knows what he wants, but he’s very collaborative. He’s very open and welcoming, and very respectful to the filmmakers and the cast. And he’s always open to your thoughts and ideas, which is rare indeed. I’ve learned a lot from him, by watching him set up scenes and work with the actors and his shot design with his cinematographer. It’s been a wonderful learning experience.”

 Boardman also has high praise for producer Elizabeth Fowler. “Liz is great. She’s the one who first had a vision for this as a movie. I’ve been involved in this project for six years, but she’s been involved for about ten years. The great thing about Liz, and what I admire the most, is her perseverance. She has never lost sight of the goal of making this movie. And she put the chips on the table for this film, and I’m very happy to see it work out for her.”

Scott Derrickson acknowledges that he and writing partner Paul Harris Boardman continue to be fascinated with recurring themes: “Paul and I are drawn to stories that involve religious elements. I’m a religious person. I’m a Christian and pretty outspoken about it. And he’s a skeptic, a true agnostic skeptic. But I’m an open minded Christian and he’s an open minded skeptic. And you don’t see many of either of those things in the world. The connection that I have with Paul is one of wanting the truth about things, and always being willing to take the truth where it leads you. Paul and I, for example, never argue when we’re writing: whose scene is better or whose lines are better. We both want the truth, and the search for truth demands humility.”

“We worked on the script for a long time. Definitely the most time I’ve ever invested into a single screenplay. I was pretty familiar with the case already, but when I read the book it was very clear that there was a lot more to the case than I had seen in the documentaries that played on HBO. After reading that book, I did more research and was pretty determined to not just write a script but write a script that was capturing some of the more compelling elements that are not familiar to the public. To make your way through that ocean of material just took months and months and months of work. I think our first draft of the script was 260 pages long.”

“When I was working on the screenplay I felt a tremendous burden to not fictionalize things. You have to fictionalize some things,but I wasn’t willing to fictionalize anything of any significance pertaining to the actual case, especially at that time I was writing because the West Memphis Three were still not out of prison. Damien Echols was still on death row. There was so much going on regarding the attempt to get the West Memphis Three out of prison that no lawyers really wanted anybody doing anything like a film or a book. I spoke to Damien Echols’ attorney a few times just to make sure that what I was doing was, to the best of my ability, not going to get in the way of what they were doing. Of course, now, Jessie Misskelley and Jason Baldwin are executive producers on the movie which I think is a testimony to the fact that we did write it well and we did tell the story in a way that is fair and proper.”

When examining the structure of the adapted script, Derrickson admits, “The story of *Devil’s Knot* does not have a traditional villain. While I think that the West Memphis police did some embarrassingly poor police work, they weren’t bad men. For the most part they were trying to do their job. I have a lot of empathy for anyone who has to spend that kind of time in such a dark case. However, I think that the real villain was religious hysteria and the fact that everybody bought into it. Once they bought into it, the truth became obscured. The result was the victimizing of these three kids, these three teenagers. And I think that what has gone on to happen is a deeper victimization of the families who lost their children, because their loss has been so obscured by the trials.”

“We were definitely looking for emotional story moments that we could put into the screenplay that were not available through just standard research. For me it was talking to Pam Hobbs. We sat with Pam Hobbs and Terry Hobbs in their living room and did a really long interview. I think we spend two days with them, two long days. The stories that came out during that time particularly from Pam were so surprising. At the time when we went down to interview Pam we had no intention of making her the central figure in the story. But as we spoke with her it was hearing things like the fact that she brought Stevie’s homework and had the teacher grade it and all of the kids hugged her. There’s a moment in the movie where Reese Witherspoon [as] Pam Hobbs rips her own hair out when the detective asks for a hair sample. That really happened. Those are the sorts of things that can seem overly dramatic if you write them in a work of fiction, but they happened. And what mattered to me was that in all the travesties that are at work in DEVIL'S KNOT, in this entire story, no one suffered like the parents of those kids. No one. The West Memphis Three got a horrible deal. There’s no doubt about that. It was a grave injustice but I think that sometimes what gets lost in the story is that people like Pam Hobbs or Todd Moore, the father of Michael Moore, would trade places with Damien Echols in a second. They would trade their life experience for his in a moment because nothing is worse than losing a child, especially in the violent manner which they did.”

Due to the emotional weight and complexities of the story, Derrickson has consistently viewed the project as an examination of the intersection of secular and spiritual life: “DEVIL'S KNOT to me was always a story about religion in America, and the fact that there is [both] a dark side and a beautiful side to religious life in America. After making The Exorcism of Emily Rose I was really interested in writing a counterpart to that. The Exorcism of Emily Rose asked the audience rather audaciously to take seriously the idea that the devil exists. DEVIL'S KNOT is very much a movie about what happens when you take the idea of the devil too seriously. And when a community takes the idea of the devil too seriously and it begins to infect the judicial process and the police process, terrible things happen. For me, I love the idea that DEVIL'S KNOT is a story that, while horribly tragic, is a mirror to religious life in America, the negative side of when religion crosses over into the state in a way that it’s not supposed to. That’s why this is referred to sometimes as a second Salem witch trial, because there was this religious fervor that had taken part and taken root in the police process. Fundamentalism is rooted in fear. It’s what it is. Fundamentalist religion is fear at its root.”

Derrickson also counters, “But there’s a bright side to it too. I’m a religious person, and I’ve seen it. I’ve experienced it. Pam Hobbs never would have gotten through the experience of losing her child in such a violent matter had it not been for her faith, had it not been for her church community. So the idea of being able to tell a story where you see the religious community contaminating what is otherwise a clean process, the police, investigative, and judicial process, and seeing that juxtaposed with Pam Hobbs’ personal coping with this tragedy and her personal ability to eventually recover from it as much as a person can, I think, says so much about American life. And so for me the “DEVIL'S KNOT” was always about that religious divide that occurs in this country, the dark side and the beautiful side of religious life in America.”

When asked about the people who continue to believe in the guilt of the West Memphis Three, Derrickson reflects, “I obviously would not have written the script that I wrote if I didn’t believe that the West Memphis Three are innocent. I’m thoroughly convinced of that and that’s after years of research and really having an open mind about it. There wasn’t enough evidence to merit an arrest... Atom did a good job in portraying some of these things. Todd Moore, the father of Michael Moore, thinks they’re guilty. And that’s something that deserves respect, and I think about him a lot. And I think about the fact that now these guys are not only out but Damien Echols is a kind of celebrity. And here’s this movie that’s going to be made. And my heart just bleeds for him, because what does that feel like? There are plenty of other people in the West Memphis area in particular that think that these kids are guilty, and I don’t have disrespect for that. At the same time I think the facts are the facts, and I think that our script portrayed those facts fairly and in a way that was not disrespectful to anybody connected to this horrible tragedy.”

Looking ahead, Derrickson remains very optimistic about the final product of the movie given his longstanding appreciation for director Atom Egoyan: “When I heard that Atom Egoyan was interested in the material, I got very excited because I think he’s the perfect director for the material. He is the director of the movie which got the single strongest emotional reaction from me of anything of anything I’ve ever seen, which was The Sweet Hereafter. I have an emotional response to that movie that’s unprecedented in my life. It always was supposed to be Atom Egoyan. I found him to be endlessly fascinated with not just the truth of the case but with the emotional nuances of the characters.”

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**Conversations with the Production Team**

 Atom Egoyan likes to work with the same team as much as possible, and the collaborative shorthand was a major advantage for this film’s lean 26-day shooting schedule. Production Designer Phillip Barker had a vague familiarity with the events, but it wasn’t until Egoyan asked him if he was available for the project that he began to delve deeply into researching the story.

 “I started with the script, then read the book and saw all of the documentaries," recalls Barker. "Atom and I went to West Memphis for about three days to see the place where the people had lived and where the bodies were found. We also went to the churches where the victims’ families were members of the congregations, and basically just absorbed some of the atmosphere of the environment. But the incident was 20 years ago so lots had changed quite a bit. But for us, the idea was just to sort of be submerged in that atmosphere, to meet people, listen to accents, visit trailer parks and just absorb as much as we could.”

 After this visit, Barker began his own process of designing the movie. “My approach to designing a film is always an organic one. And that’s what happened in terms of the look of DEVIL'S KNOT:It developed by observing the use of wood as a texture and as a real thing.We used lots because in Georgia trees are everywhere, and we had the woods. But Arkansas is not rich with trees. However, we embraced that and it became a symbolic thing in the film that inspired the use of wood grain on walls, in basements, in offices, trailer parks, as another continued theme in the film."

 Barker readily reflects on some of the common themes shared between DEVIL'S KNOT and his past projects with Egoyan: “I think DEVIL'S KNOTis similar to The Sweet Hereafter*,* which is about a tragic event that unsettles a community and is told through various points of view. There’s an outsider that comes to town and tries to unravel the story of what happened to the children and what happened to the bus and why the bus crashed and what can be done about it…and the various cinematic devices that we used to visually portray wide landscapes as well as facial emotions in the same picture. In this film I liked the idea of approaching it very naturally – different environments, locations, and scenes cut together in an unconsidered, almost jarring way, going from brightly lit outdoor scenes to a darkly lit interior police station. That juxtaposition is part of the story-telling technique and the style of the film.”

DEVIL'S KNOT marks Director of Photography Paul Sarossy’s eleventh film with director Atom Egoyan. “I’ve worked several times with production designer Phillip Barker too, and it’s a great privilege to have this longtime relationship, which very often on the set ends up being a very non-verbal one. It’s wonderful in the sense that very little discussion needs to happen because it’s a bit like an old marriage, and many things are understood because of the years of working together. That said, it’s never, ever stale. It’s always an adventure and a great new experience,” explains Sarossy, who only became familiar with the story of the West Memphis Three after reading the script.

Both Sarossy’s and Barker’s approach was informed by Egoyan’s mantra throughout the film: “We wanted to be correct and proper with the history that the film is depicting, but on the other hand, it is a film. It’s also a story that dictates how we approach things. We weren’t clinically reproducing events, rather, we were telling a story. And that’s a liberation of sorts because you look at things from the eyes of a filmmaker, a storyteller, rather than a chronicler recreating history. So that opened up the doors with a lot of possibilities in terms of lighting and framing, yet it was good to have the limits of the real situation to kind of be the wall you lean against.”

“Because of a short shooting schedule," explained Sarossy, "[everything] filmed on practical locations and without the luxury of more time. So you begin to edit in your mind and deal with the very real constraints of time and location, which to me is not a negative thing. It’s just setting up your pallet, and you’ve got only three swatches of color as opposed to six, and you embrace those three and happily move forward. We shot in specific places like forests, the homes, the courthouse, so I developed a point of view for each story that’s being told, and that informed what the camera was going to do and the way a scene was going to be lit, framed and shot. It’s a very dramatic story that we approached in a very dramatic way cinematically.”

 Costume Designer Kari Perkins found creating the costumes to be a very interesting challenge: “We were creating 1993 which wasn’t that long ago, but it’s still like vintage. Everyone’s comments were, ‘Oh, my parents wore this!’ So it was really fun putting those kinds of clothes on the cast. Fortunately for us and our budget, the thrift stores were completely full of 1990-93 garments, so I was able to really shop locally and find just wonderful color palates and clothes from the actual time period. That was really a treat for me.”

 Egoyan told Perkins, “‘We’re creating a drama here,’ and it’s a very touching, moving, heart- wrenching story. In creating designs for these characters we were able to draw from the actual people themselves to see what they were wearing, which was a really cool dividend,” says Perkins. However, her biggest challenge came during the trial sequences: “Surviving the courtroom scenes was a huge accomplishment. It was so much work, just constantly fitting and dressing and re-establishing new looks. We had 20 actors to establish with five costume changes for each of them, and we had 200 plus extras, and we had to make sure we had enough costumes for everybody. I did a lot of tie changes while keeping it within the color palate. That was the biggest hurdle of the film and in the end, lots of fun – ‘Tie change for everyone!!!’”

 “For Witherspoon there was one dress that we were kind of matching. We had video references. Pam Hobbs and I really wanted to capture that particular look. So I made that dress,” explains Perkins, adding, “I kept Pam Hobbs’ wardrobe in darker, sadder tones. By contrast, and in doing my research, it seemed like Terry Hobbs was dressing for the camera. So his wardrobe had really bold patterns, brighter colors and was really well fitted. It seemed like every time we saw his character, he was really dressed just impeccably.”

“On the other hand, when it came to law enforcement,” counters Perkins, “we went for a more dramatic approach. In the town of West Memphis we went with really dark colors, though at the time I recall that their uniforms were actually two-tone. But we wanted a big difference between the Sheriff’s Department and the West Memphis law enforcement officers, so we chose a much darker, more menacing sort of look for the police.”

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**Conversations with the Cast**

Alessandro Nivola, who plays Pam’s husband, Terry Hobbs, recalls, “I must have been living in a bubble. I think I’m the only person who knew absolutely nothing about *DEVIL'S KNOT*. So I read the script completely cold, and I was really moved and upset and compelled by it on its own. It was only later, once I was offered the job, that I started researching the whole thing and watched all of the documentaries and all of the footage of the guy I was playing.” Nivola jumped at the chance to work with Atom Egoyan: “He’s somebody who commands lots of respect. All the cool kids know about him. We’ve followed him over the years, and the fact that he was directing the project was definitely really attractive. His movies have always had a smack of originality and they’ve always been kind of fearless, and this world seemed really well-suited to his directing style based on other of his films that I’d seen.”

 “I’ve played real-life characters before, but never with the same kind of pressure, where the media had interviewed them so much that people were familiar with Terry Hobbs. They knew what he sounded like, what his behavior was like, what he looked like… And then there was the added pressure of not knowing if Terry Hobbs was guilty or not guilty – it’s still a complete mystery. There’s no definitive evidence to convict him of anything, and yet a lot of people suspect him to have taken part in these horrendous killings, and it was important for me, given the fact that the film was about a rush to judgment, that the film not be hypocritical and do exactly what it was accusing people of having done in that community at that time. So, in the early conversations that I had with Atom we were discussing that particular concern, and trying to suggest ways that the film could keep shifting its focus from one character to another to alternately raise the suspicion within the audience…and then to crush that suspicion. And we both felt that if the audience could feel convinced that it was a certain character one minute, and then become convinced that it wasn’t that they would have the same sensation that the people in the community were having at that time. It would be a shame to allow what might be a human instinct to point a finger. So that presented a delicate balance for me,” explains Nivola, adding, “I really felt nervous when I took the job about the moral responsibility that I had to NOT indict someone of something he might or might not have done, while at the same time being true to what we knew about him.”

Stephen Moyer, who plays prosecutor John Fogelman, remembers first receiving the script: “I avidly tore through the pages and immediately watched every bit of footage that I could find, including going down the rabbit hole on You Tube and searching the multitude of websites with pros and cons for very single aspect of the case. It’s heavily documented, and, in terms of doing research as an actor, that turned out to be kind of a gift.” Moyer was one of the cast members who actually had the opportunity to have a conversation with the character he was playing, and he recalls how he approached his real-life counterpart: “‘I wanted to do justice to him, and I was very glad that he came back to me. He couldn’t have been more helpful, and he was incredibly eloquent. I would never have gone so far as to ask John anything about how he feels now. I was really more interested in how he felt walking into that courtroom, what his confidence level was at a certain point in the case, and whether he felt that the case was going well at that point. It was a pretty amazing journey.”

Moyer had never worked with director Atom Egoyan before, but he was thrilled with the chance to finally do so. “I was very aware of his work, things like where he puts the camera and what he wants the audience to look at, so I was very excited when I knew that he was on board because I knew the film would have his remarkable quality of excellence."

Moyer has definite feeling about what he hopes the film might accomplish, aside from it just being a terrific movie-going experience. “I hope that it puts a lot of strands out there. What I feel should happen is that the case should be re-opened. It’s absolutely essential that this happens at some point not only to exonerate these three boys – Jessie, Damien, and Jason – but also to find out who actually committed this crime. I hope the film will have the power lead to that.”

Academy Award® nominated Amy Ryan, who plays Ron Lax’s wife Margaret, was instantly attracted to the project. “Atom Egoyan, Colin Firth, Reese Witherspoon, and just the story, is just so powerful. I was familiar with the Devil's Knot because I had seen the documentaries, and I thought, if there’s a chance to be a part of it, and we’re going to reach another audience who may not have seen the documentaries, then all the better to spread the word of how horrible a story it is.” Ryan didn't know Egoyan before DEVIL'S KNOT, but she is a huge fan of his works.

Ryan, in describing the story, says, “It’s kind of a witch hunt, a modern-day Salem witch hunt trial with a town that got caught up in a frenzy because of the horrific murders of these poor young boys. And you know there’s also the other side to the story that pertains to what people unfortunately will do to further their political aspirations, their own careers, rather than doing what’s right and just. So the real message here is ‘watch your judgments.’ People are not always what they seem, and that goes both ways. And don’t take no for an answer. Keep searching for truth, no matter how long it takes.”

 The film captures Margaret and Ron during an unusually rough time. “My character and Ron are in the middle of a divorce," says Ryan, "so that’s very complicated, and it’s very emotional when they meet one another. And concurrently with this, the police investigation has turned on Ron, and they’re digging around for information and dirt on him. And all of that is starting to affect Margaret’s life because the police have come to her, interrupted her at her place of business and her life, and it’s feeling very uncomfortable”

 Ryan has high hopes for DEVIL'S KNOT’s impact on audiences. “Being an actor is to entertain people, but if you can also make an audience, or even just one person, think differently or bring a new story to them -- something they’ve never heard of – if we can open some eyes and make people think differently, then that’s really powerful. I’m just really proud to be a part of this film.”

 Kevin Durand plays John Mark Byers, a man who was, at one point, considered a suspect in the murder investigation. “I had heard about the story but I wasn’t very well educated about the specifics of it until I read the script and became madly obsessed with it. It’s just so interesting because you look at the effect that those Paradise Lostdocumentaries had on ultimately getting the three guys out of prison and saving Damien Echols’ life. It’s really interesting to think of what the possible effects could be of a theatrical film coming out and spreading the awareness so that they might continue the investigations and find the rightful people who should have been sentenced and convicted of these murders.”

 Durand hadn’t worked with any of the filmmakers before. “I had heard that Atom had seen a film that I’d done when it screened at the Toronto International Film Festival last year, and just knowing that he was aware of me was pretty exciting because I’m such a massive fan of his works. So I auditioned for him and was thrilled to get the job. When you portray a real person, you want to capture the essence of that character in every way. There are certain physical traits that kind of help you get there. To that end, I had to put on weight, shave my head for a wig, and spent a lot of time obsessing on John Mark Byers and his idiosyncratic behavior. There was the rise and fall of his voice that was definitely noticeable. Also, trying to figure out what was going on in his mind was a great challenge because he’s such a multidimensional character. It was such a wonderful challenge to dive into discovering that person, and I hope I did it justice.”

 During filming Durand had the opportunity to speak with Pam Hobbs and Jason Baldwin, as well as some of the other folks the film is about and the book’s author, Mara Leveritt. “Jason and Pam were so open and ready to talk. At first I felt like I might be walking on thin ice and thought maybe I shouldn’t talk about certain things, but they were just so open which was so helpful because it brought me into that reality of the atrocious reality they both suffered. I asked Jason about this interview he did the day he was released when he said he had figured out the meaning of life. And he told this to some of his friends in the prison, and they said, ‘Well, what is it?’ And he said, ‘Enjoy it. Enjoy it.’ And I thought that was so incredible to be wrongfully accused for two decades and that he could walk out of prison with that philosophy. It doesn’t seem like there’s any kind of deep-seated anger in him at all. He’s just found a way to forgive, and that’s inspiring.”

 Bruce Greenwood, a long-time friend and actor that has appeared in a number of Atom Egoyan’s films, plays Judge Burnett. “The first time Atom and I worked together was on Exotica, and we had a wonderful time. And then we did The Sweet Hereafter and then Ararat, and we’ve remained friends ever since. On set, he’s easy to talk to, and he knows what he wants…and he’s open to things evolving and changing, so it’s fun and very creative to be around him.”

 After joining the film, Greenwood explains, “I read Mara Leveritt’s book and watched the three documentaries. Then I started going online and pulling all kinds of little bits from here and there, and started talking to people that had been involved. I never got to speak to the Judge but I found interviews and talked to people who had experiences with him.”

 For Greenwood, it was hard to form opinions about what really happened: “What’s funny about forming opinions in this case in general is that the more you know the more convoluted it becomes and the more open to interpretation of all kinds it is. So I found my opinions evolving and changing throughout the course of the research period and even while we were shooting the movie, also as we were meeting more of the real people who were actually involved in the case.”

 “When you portray a fictional person, you can do absolutely anything you like and anything the director thinks is appropriate. And here, there are certain confines you can’t step out of. That said, it is a fictionalized account of what happened to some degree so it is a perspective that I’m playing.”

 James Hamrick, the 19-year-old Houston actor-musician-writer who plays Damien Echols, remembers, “I got an e-mail alerting me that DEVIL'S KNOT was looking for an actor to play the role of Damien Echols. I knew the name West Memphis Three, but that was about all. And I knew of Atom Egoyan and was personally a big fan of Chloe. As soon as I got the casting call I began looking into the case and immediately got engaged heart and soul. The idea of false imprisonment based on false impressions fascinated me. I watched the documentaries and many interviews with Damien. I read Mara Leveritt’s book, which I loved, did online research, and got to learn as much as I could about the case and people’s thoughts and comments about how everything went down.”

 Hamrick got called in to audition for the role about two weeks prior to beginning principal photography. “I met with Atom and the producers, and got the part, which was my very first feature film role. Needless to say, I was thrilled! I also got to meet Pam Hobbs, who is an incredibly amazing woman. She hasn’t let the murder of her son ruin her life, and in fact she continues to fight for justice for her son and the other two young victims. She’s a real activist and a real force. I also met Jason Baldwin, who is a complete inspiration. He’s as solid as they come, and you sense immediately his innocence of the crime and his lack of bitterness, which blew me away.”

 For Hamrick, playing a real life person with such a high profile was definitely different. “Playing a real person forces an actor to be more honest in an effort to create the most true-to-the subject portrayal possible. I never, ever was challenged by a duty to be as truthful to Damien as possible. I knew I didn’t want to make him overly sympathetic or satanic or evil. I got to explore that middle ground and kind of played with what might have been going on in his mind at that time.”

 Hamrick bonded with his fellow cast members and found Colin Firth an absolute joy to work with. “Colin is an amazing actor,” said Hamrick, “who is very well put together, fun, and easy to work with and play off of. Rex Linn, a fellow Texan, was another great person to work with. But the real bonding came with Seth Meriweather, who plays Jason Baldwin, and Kris Higgins, who plays Jessie Miskelley, Jr. And I believe that bond helped each of us in our work. They were a great joy to work with on set and in our spare time.”

 The three young actors had many disturbing and emotional moments in the film, which might have been more emotional for the actors than for the audience in fact, because they were committed to making their performances true to these real men.

 “I’d never been in a courtroom before,” said Hamrick, “so just walking onto that set was intimidating. And then to have people in the courtroom yelling at me in the scene was very effective and felt very real. Damien had major psychological problems and struggles, but in many ways he’s not unlike a lot of kids in America. He was very different, and he grew up in a very closed, conservative, repressed, church-going southern community. The way he wore his hair, painted his fingernails, dressing in black in a very Goth look – in a place like West Memphis, AK – must have been a terrible pressure.”

 Hamrick could not be more thrilled that this was his first feature role. “This was a very wonderful first film to be a part of. I knew immediately that getting to work on a project and story like this doesn’t happen very often, and I got very lucky. So many people are so charged by what happened, so hopefully it will affect the future of this case. I hope it encourages more debate and the need to find out what really happened. The case is closed as far as the government of Arkansas is concerned. But there’s still work to be done here. I hope the film pushes the case to a new level and forces an official re-examination by the authorities.” Additionally Hamrick hopes there will be cultural resonance from the film: “I only hope that a new generation will become interested in this case and that it will incite public interest to find out what actually happened, take a look at the other side, and try to bring the real killer or killers forward.”

 Seth Meriweather, began acting at the Alabama Shakespeare Festival when he was 11, and now at 17 he is tackling the role of Jason Baldwin. “I didn’t know about the case when I got called for an audition. But my agent told me to do a lot of research, which I do anyway. But by having him specifically say that, I noted that this was a big and important part for me. I’m big into history, and this was my chance to portray a real person in a film about something that really happened.”

 Prior to DEVIL'S KNOT, Meriweather had had limited film experience, apart from a Robert Lawrence. “I wasn’t really familiar with Atom’s work because I’m really pretty new to the film industry. So coming in and working with Atom was amazing. He’s such an actor’s director, really. He worked with me on developing my character. We’d even get together and do character analysis almost like having conversations between the characters that were totally not related to the script. And that was incredibly helpful to me in refining my character. I loved working with him.”

 For Meriweather, playing Jason Baldwin was especially gratifying. “Playing Jason is different because you don’t normally get to play a real character based on a true story when the person you’re playing is still living. So it was especially cool because I got to meet Jason and to observe some of his characteristics and how he is now that he’s out of jail after having gone through such a traumatic experience. He’s so humble and genuine, and he’s making the most of his freedom and his new life. He’s not bitter about anything and has the attitude, ‘…this is what I got, so I’ve got to go with it. '”

 Baldwin proved a gracious source of research for Meriweather throughout the film. Meriweather recalls, “I asked him how he felt when the verdict was read. He was clear that he was scared. So when the judge asked, ‘Was there anything in particular – any reason that you believe these charges shouldn’t be held against you?,’ his response was, ‘Because I’m innocent.’ It’s such a powerful line, and coming from a 16-year-old, he really nailed it. You can only imagine how tense it was in that courtroom at that moment.”

 In recreating these devastating events, Meriweather frequently empathized with how traumatic the story truly is. “There were a lot of moments when I really got into character, and I also realized how intense and serious these moments were for these three accused young men. There was a scene where we were being led out of the courthouse, down the stairs, and being put into the police cars. And even though we’re actors, and we knew what was going to be happening, the first time we did it we had a sense of what it must have been like for them. As soon as we heard the word, ‘Action!’, and we walked out for the first time and we really saw what an angry mob looked like, it was so real. It helped me get more into my character, and experience just a little bit of what that trial must have been like.”

DEVIL'S KNOT is Kristopher Higgins' second feature film. He plays convicted murderer Jessie Miskelley, Jr. “Before I was cast in DEVIL'S KNOT*,”* explains Higgins, “I hadn’t heard about the West Memphis Three. But my agent’s passion was so infectious that I got very excited and began researching it and instantly felt so much compassion for these people. I watched the first two documentaries in three days. I felt pained not only for these three murdered boys, but also for their parents too. And I had the hardest time with the notion that I – as the character -- didn’t do anything wrong yet everyone was constantly saying, ‘No, you actually did something horrific and you are going to prison for the rest of your life.’ It gives me chills just saying that. Look at what our justice system can do.”

“Portraying a real person,” notes Higgins, “is not the most common thing for an actor to do. But I felt like I connected a lot with Jessie: his naïveté, his being influenced by people, and his wanting to please people. I feel like there’s definitely that side of me that wants to do those certain things, especially when you’re growing up and you’re learning life’s lessons. So it was fun to explore that because it’s not necessarily the side of yourself you want to look at.”

Higgins reflects very fondly on collaborating with Egoyan: “It was such a great experience. He knows how to talk to you, and we got to work so much together on character. So on days that were really tough, and because we did all of that work together, he respected that it was tough stuff. He’s such a great guy! He’s so creative.”

For Higgins, one scene in particular perfectly encapsulates the pathos and sadness of Jessie: “It’s the scene where I’m sitting in my cell and I’m writing a letter to my dad telling him I hope they don’t hate me for what they’re saying that I’ve done, and I hope they can still love me and hopefully I can get out. You know it was hard because you know he’s not going to get out. And it was heavy, and it was a lot of work to do for me to pull this scene off well…but Atom was so great, and he knew it was a tough one for me. Working with him really tells me why his films are so great and so artistically fulfilled.”

Higgins wants audiences to grow from the danger and sadness of the story depicts: “I hope people take from this the understanding that things can go wrong, like they did for these three convicted teenagers, and to see how badly things can turn when you put blame, or when you have such hatred and madness toward someone or something…when it just snowballs and quickly gets out of control. So I think audiences will feel really great knowing that these guys are out and living their lives. But the reality is that this really happened and could easily happen again, and to anyone, given certain circumstances. That remains incredibly scary.”

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**A Conversation with Author Mara Leveritt**

 Award-winning journalist and best-selling author Mara Leveritt vividly remembers the origins of the trial: “Like everybody in Arkansas and the region, and as a mom, I was horrified by the murders. As a reporter who specialized in writing about criminal law issues, I followed the case, the investigation, and the lack of finding anyone for a month. And then,” continues Leveritt, “I was very surprised when the announcement came that it was three teenagers, and especially when immediately after that, the police said it was leaked that there was some sort of cult motive here because I already knew by that time, 1993, that the FBI had released a report saying that they had done extensive research and had not found evidence of cult-related killings that was supposedly taking place in this country. So my interest was piqued from the start.”

 Leveritt admired HBO’s ability to get the Paradise Lost trilogy documentary filmmakers – Joe Berlinger and Bruce Sinofsky -- into the courtroom. Clearly it gave tremendous exposure to the case, since getting into the courtroom is something that seldom happens. “What I felt I was able to do with my book, ‘Devil’s Knot,’ was go back much deeper – almost the way a puppeteer works a puppet show is how I felt writing the book. I was able to show not just what the public saw transpire in the courtroom, but I also showed some of what was going on in the back rooms and with a number of the personalities that were involved, and some of the legal technicalities involved and, I think, badly misused and abused in this case to get the outcome that we all saw.”

 Despite her wide breadth of knowledge on the case, Leveritt did not attend the trials. “Everything I saw was after the verdicts came in. At that point, all the police records and the transcripts were made available to me, and that’s when I started slowly digging into the case. That was the spring of 1994. I was able to see things in a much slower timeframe," says Leveritt. "I worked on the book much longer than the time it took from the arrests to the convictions. I got a sense of how rushed the trial lawyers were. There was so much being thrown at them in such a chaotic order. And they were supposed to make sense of it and somehow also defend these guys. With regard to Judge Burnett, a brick wall is a good sense of what I think he actually was in this case right up until just the past couple of years when he finally retired and left the bench. You can see over and over again that he was skewing things to the prosecution’s side. One of many glaring examples of this was when he allowed the testimony to be heard of a so-called expert witness in the occult, someone without any real credentials whatsoever. And they would never have been able to get the convictions that they won had it not been for the decisions that he was making up there on the bench.”

 “Elizabeth Fowler, the producer of DEVIL'S KNOT, optioned the book very early on – within a year of its release – 2002,” recounts Leveritt. "But as we all know, the development process can be slow.” So while others came after the book, Leveritt stayed with Fowler. “I stuck with Elizabeth for the same reasons she stuck with the story. I think we both realized how important a story it is, how it goes to such fundamental issues in our country and for the world, which are the idea that you have freedom of speech, that you cannot be convicted just because of the books you read or the t-shirts you wear, that what happened in this case is representative of the very worst that can happen in the United States…or anywhere. It happens a lot. It’s that rush to judgment. And there’s prejudice here and it was manipulated and used. And I think that she saw that. And I appreciated her seeing that very much. And then she just plowed through the many obstacles.”

 For the purposes of the screenplay, Leveritt is very comfortable with the filmmakers bringing other information into the story that was not in the book. Says Leveritt, “I’ve always felt that this is something that needs a lot of coverage from a lot of different angles, and I certainly don’t want to hold myself out as the last word on anything. I was glad that they took the time to come and meet the people involved and expanded the information base of this story. There’s a lot of good that comes from the production of this film – even going to the investigation of the case.”

 Adds Leveritt, "I would like for people who see this film to first of all think about what goes on in a case – and universally. Take the blinders off everybody. There’s a lot to be watched here. We have got to pay attention to what’s going on around us. And a bit of skepticism and care with these important institutions is a good thing to have. I think watching out for our own prejudices would be a really big thing to take out of the theaters too. Atom is a brilliant director, and he will do a masterful job in clarifying the case for people who’ve heard about it in passing maybe. It will not only show what actually transpired but the human toll that it took on the people involved. I hope from there that people will actually read ‘Devil’s Knot’ and find out more about the other layers that are behind it.”

 Most of all, Leveritt wants to emphasize the importance of this story for America’s youth. “To me, this is a strong story about young people. This is a story about people on the fringe, people who aren’t like everybody else. These were kids that were on the outside and on the fringe. And just because they were different or not part of the establishment or that part of the power, they got hammered. And so, in writing ‘Devil’s Knot,’ I felt for these kids. This is for young people and to know it’s okay to be different all your life. And, anybody who tries to nail somebody just because they’re different is somebody to look out for.”

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**Cast Biographies**

**REESE WITHERSPOON (Pam Hobbs),** theAcademy Award winning actress, has created the kind of unforgettable characters that connect with critics and audiences alike, making her one of Hollywood’s most sought-after actresses.

Witherspoon recently completed work in Jeff Nichols’ *Mud*, with Matthew McConaughey, which premiered to rave reviews in competition at the 2012 Cannes Film Festival.

Earlier this year Witherspoon partnered with producer Bruna Papandrea to launch Pacific Standard Films. The new production banner hit the ground running, setting up adaptations of bestsellers “Wild” and “Gone Girl,” as well as a range of comedies and dramas.

   Witherspoon was last seen alongside Tom Hardy and Chris Pine in the comedy adventure *This Means War*, directed by McG for Fox Studios, and prior to that in the period love story *Water for Elephants* with Robert Pattinson and Christoph Waltz.

  In 2009, Witherspoon was heard as the voice of Susan Murphy in the animated film *Monsters vs. Aliens* and also starred opposite Vince Vaughn in the hit comedy *Four Christmases*. In 2010, she received her star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame.

Since 2007, Witherspoon has served as Avon’s Global Ambassador and Honorary Chairman of the Avon Foundation for Women representing a company with a conscience and strong rights for Women’s Empowerment.  Witherspoon strongly supports the passage of the International Violence Against Women Act, which creates a comprehensive approach to combat violence. Witherspoon has been active on behalf of the Rape Treatment Center at the Santa Monica-UCLA Medical Center and Save the Children. She currently serves on the board of the Children’s Defense Fund, with whom she has been involved for many years, raising money and awareness for their many programs.

In 2006, her extraordinary performance as June Carter Cash in the 20th Century Fox bio-pic *Walk the Line* earned her the Academy Award for Best Performance by an Actress in a Leading Role, as well as the BAFTA, Golden Globe Award, Screen Actors Guild Award, New York Film Critics Award, Broadcast Film Critics Award, People’s Choice Award, and 11 other awards.

She is also known for her indelible performance as Tracy Flick in Alexander Payne's *Election*, and the lovable Elle Woods in the break out hits, *Legally Blonde* and Legally *Blonde 2: Red, White, and Blonde*.

Other notable films include: *Sweet Home Alabama*, which was the largest opening at the time for a female-driven romantic comedy, Mira Nair's *Vanity Fair*, Gary Ross' *Pleasantville*, and the teen cult classic, *Cruel Intentions*.

**COLIN FIRTH (Ron Lax),** a classically trained British theater actor and an Academy Award winner, is a veteran of film, television and theater, with an impressive body of work spanning over three decades. He has appeared in three films that have won the Academy Awards for Best Picture: *The* *King’s Speech, Shakespeare in Love*, and *The English Patient.* Firth earned an Academy Award, Golden Globe Award, Screen Actors Guild Award, British Independent Film Award, Critics’ Choice Award, and his second consecutive BAFTA Award in 2011 for his performance as King George VI in *The King’s Speech*. The film also won the Academy Award for Best Picture as well as the Screen Actors Guild Award for Outstanding Performance by a Cast in a Motion Picture. Firth also won the BAFTA Award in 2010 and the Volpi Cup for Best Actor at the 2009 Venice Film Festival for his performance in Tom Ford’s *A Single Man*.

Last year, Firth was seen in Tomas Alfredson’s *Tinker Tailor Soldier Spy* opposite Gary Oldman and Tom Hardy. The thriller is based on John Le Carré’s Cold War spy novel and tells the tale of a spy-hunt within the highest echelons of the British Secret Intelligence Service. The film garnered three Academy Award nominations including Best Writing, and won the 2012 BAFTA Film Award for Outstanding British Film and Best Adapted Screenplay.

Firth recently wrapped production for *The Railway Man* directed by Jonathan Teplitzky, also starring Nicole Kidman, Stellan Skarsgard, Sam Reid, and Jeremy Irvine. The film is based on the true story of Eric Lomax, played by Firth, who sets out to find those responsible for his torture during his time as a prisoner where he was forced to work on the Thai-Burma Railway in World War II.

He has also wrapped production on *Gambit,* directed by Michael Hoffman and written by Joel and Ethan Coen. Firth stars opposite Cameron Diaz as a British thief who comes up with a fool proof plan to steal an expensive statue from one of the richest men in the world. The film will be released by CBS Films in 2013. Additionally he wrapped production on the dark comedy *The Other You*, opposite Emily Blunt. The film, directed by Dante Ariola, tells the story of a man (Firth) who fakes his own death in an attempt to reinvent himself and meets a woman (Blunt) who is also in the process of trying to escape her old life.

In 2008, Firth was also seen in Universal Pictures’ global smash hit *Mamma Mia!* The film grossed over half a billion dollars around the world and is the highest grossing film of all time in the UK.

In 2004, Firth starred in the Universal/Working Title hit *Bridget Jones: The Edge of Reason*, and in the Oscar-nominated film *Girl with a Pearl Earring* opposite Scarlett Johansson.

In 2003, Firth appeared in the Universal hit *Love Actually,* written and directed by Richard Curtis. At the time of its release, *Love Actually* broke box office records as the highest grossing British romantic comedy opening of all time in the UK and Ireland, and was the largest opening in the history of Working Title Films.

His other film credits include: Helen Hunt’s *Then She Found Me,* Anand Tucker’s *When Did* *You Last See Your Father?,* Stephan Elliott’s *Easy Virtue*, Michael Winterbottom’s *Genova, A* *Christmas Carol, The Importance of Being Earnest,* Atom Egoyan’s *Where the Truth Lies,* Marc Evans’ thriller *Trauma, Nanny McPhee, What a Girl Wants, A Thousand Acres* with Michelle Pfeiffer and Jessica Lange, *Apartment Zero, My Life So Far,* Nick Hornby’s *Fever Pitch, Circle of Friends,* *Playmaker,* and the title role in Milos Forman’s *Valmont* opposite Annette Bening.

On the small screen, Firth is celebrated for his breakout role in 1995, when he played *Mr*. *Darcy* in the BBC adaptation of *Pride and Prejudice,* for which he received a BAFTA nomination for Best Actor and the National Television Award for Most Popular Actor.

In March 2004, Firth hosted NBC’s legendary series *Saturday Night Live.*  He was nominated for an Emmy Award in 2001 for Outstanding Supporting Actor in the critically acclaimed HBO film *Conspiracy* and also received the Royal Television Society Best Actor Award and a BAFTA nomination for his performance in *Tumbledown.* His other television credits include: BBC television movie *Born Equal* directed by Dominic Savage, *Donovan Quick, The Widowing of Mrs. Holroyd, Deep Blue Sea, Hostages,* and the miniseries *Nostromo.*  His London stage debut was in the West End production of *Another Country* playing Guy Bennett. He was then chosen to play the character Judd in the 1984 film adaptation opposite Rupert Everett.

Firth is an active supporter of Oxfam International, an organization dedicated to fighting poverty and related injustice around the world. He was honored with the Humanitarian Award by BAFTA/LA at their 2009 Britannia Awards. In 2008 he was named Philanthropist of the Year by TheHollywood Reporter*.* In 2006, Firth was voted European Campaigner of the Year by the EU.

**ALESSANDRO NIVOLA (Terry Hobbs)** was most recently seen on stage starring alongside Bradley Cooper and Patricia Clarkson in Bernard Pomerance's *The Elephant Man* for the Williamstown Theatre Festival.  Earlier this year he wrapped Sally Potter's film *Bomb* alongside Annette Benning, Christina Hendricks and Elle Fanning.  Other recent credits include: David Rosenthal's drama *Janie Jones* with Abigail Breslin, Rob Epstein's *Howl* alongside James Franco, Jon Hamm, Mary-Louise Parker, and Jeff Daniels, the French language film *Coco Before Chanel* opposite Audrey Tautou, and *Who Do You Love*, in which he played the legendary producer Leonard Chess.  In 2010 he did a run of Sam Shepard's *A Lie of the Mind* on stage in New York.

Nivola has also starred in the films *Face/Off*, *Junebug*, and the first two movies of the *Goal!* trilogy.

**STEPHEN MOYER (John Fogelman)** is the star of Alan Ball’s hit HBO series *True Blood*. The show takes place in a modern day world where vampires live amongst mortals by drinking synthetic blood. It is based on the bestselling book series, *The* *Sookie Stackhouse Story* by Charlaine Harris. *True Blood* also stars Academy Award winner Anna Paquin as psychic Louisiana barmaid Sookie Stackhouse, who falls for vampire Bill Compton (Moyer*).  True Blood* earned a Golden Globe nomination for Best Drama Series for both its first and second seasons.  The third and fourth seasons of *True Blood* received excellent ratings and reviews. *True* *Blood’s* highly anticipated fifth season premiered June 10, 2012 to 5.2 million viewers. This season, Moyer also directed episode #56, *Somebody Up There Likes Me*.

Moyer has recently completed filming *The Barrens*, directed by John M. Eckert. Moyer also starred in *The Double*, with Richard Gere and Topher Grace. Moyer first turned heads when he appeared on the series *The Starter Wife* opposite Debra Messing. The show was recognized by critics and fans alike and was nominated for multiple Emmy, Golden Globe and SAG Awards.

Moyer appeared in *Priest*, alongside Paul Bettany, *88 Minutes*, a film drama starring Al Pacino and directed by Jon Avnet, *Undiscovered*, the teen cult classic, the Oscar-nominated film *Quills,* opposite Kate Winslet and Joaquin Phoenix, *Prince Valiant*, with Katherine Heigl, *Restraint, Deadlines, Perfect, Alternate Endings*,and *Trinity.* Moyer has currently wrapped filming for *True Blood.*

**AMY RYAN (Margaret Lax)** made her Broadway debut in the 2000 production of *Uncle Vanya*, for which she was nominated for a Tony Award as Best Featured Actress in a Play.  In 2005, she appeared as Stella in *A Streetcar Named Desire*, earning her second Tony nomination.  She also starred in Neil LaBute’s *The Distance From Here* in London’s West End.  On film, for her acclaimed performance in 2007’s *Gone Baby Gone*, she was recognized with Academy Award, Golden Globe and SAG Award nominations for Best Supporting Actress.  Additionally, she won numerous Best Supporting Actress awards, including those from the National Board of Review, the Broadcast Film Critics Association, the New York Film Critics Circle, and the L.A. Film Critics.  Her other film credits include *Win Win,* *Green Zone*, *Jack Goes Boating*, *Changeling*, *Before the Devil Knows You’re Dead*, *Capote*, *Dan in Real Life*, *War of the Worlds*, *Keane*, *You Can Count On Me*, and *The Missing Person*. On stage, Amy starred in Lisa D’Amour’s acclaimed play *Detroit*, directed by Anne Kauffman, which opened in September 2012 at Playwrights Horizons. She will next be seen on the big screen starring opposite Guy Pearce and Felicity Jones in writer/director Drake Doremus’ yet-to-be-titled film produced by Indian Paintbrush and Jonathan Schwartz. Amy will also be seen starring in *The Tomb* for Summit opposite Sylvester Stallone, Jim Caviezel, 50 Cent, and Vincent D’Onofrio. Amy’s extensive television work includes her starring portrayals as Holly on “The Office,” Adele on “In Treatment,” and Officer Beatrice ‘Beadie’ Russell on “The Wire.”

**REX LINN (Chief Inspector Gitchell),** once a former banker and now a regularly working actor, has made his mark in the acting world with nearly thirty years of experience in film and television. Linn is most easily recognized as Detective Frank Tripp, David Caruso’s reliable buddy on *CSI: Miami*.

He recently wrapped *Django Unchained*, directed by Quentin Tarantino. In *Django* Linn joins a star-studded cast including Leonardo DiCaprio and Jamie Foxx. Linn, starring alongside Tarantino, plays a member of the Ku Klux Klan.

Although Linn came into acting a little bit later than most, his passion for the craft has been a lifelong one, perhaps rivaling only his love for football and barbeque. He first set his sights on becoming an actor in 1975, after seeing Jack Nicholson in *One Flew Over the Cuckoo’s Nest*. However, his dreams were thwarted after he bungled a performance in a high school production of *Fiddler on the Roof*,and he was told to direct his energy elsewhere, so he focused on his studies and received a degree in Journalism and Broadcasting from Oklahoma State University.

After graduation, Linn decided on a banking career. However, the acting bug had never quite left him, and so he resigned from the bank to pursue a fulltime acting career. He started landing smaller roles in Oklahoma that turned into more substantial roles such as a serial killer in *Night Game*, opposite Roy Scheider. This work led to the inevitable move to Los Angeles, where his success continued as he appeared in such films as *Cliffhanger* opposite Sylvester Stallone, *Clear and Present Danger* with Harrison Ford, and *Rush Hour* alongside Chris Tucker and Jackie Chan. More recently, Linn has been seen in films such as Ed Harris’ *Appaloosa*, *The Zodiac*, *The Salton Sea* opposite Val Kilmer, and *Cheaper by the Dozen* with Steve Martin.

Linn resides in Los Angeles where he continues to indulge in his love for football and barbeque.

**MIREILLE ENOS (Vicki Hutcheson)** just wrapped season two of AMC’s critically acclaimed drama series *The Killing*. She received both a Golden Globe and Emmy nomination for her role as detective Sarah Linden. As the first female lead in an AMC drama, the press continues to praise her performance in what *The Hollywood Reporter* has called her “breakout role.”

She also stars opposite Josh Brolin, Ryan Gosling, Sean Penn, and Emma Stone in the Warner Bros. film *Gangster Squad*, for director Ruben Fleischer. The film, set in the 1940’s and 1950’s, follows a specially recruited team of LAPD officers dedicated to combating the influx of East Coast gangsters to Los Angeles.

Later in 2012, Enos will be seen starring opposite Brad Pitt as the female lead in the Marc Forster-directed blockbusterWorld War Z for Paramount Pictures. Based on the novel by Max Brooks, the film looks at the aftermath of a global zombie war 10 years after the conflict.

From 2007-2010, Enos starred in the HBO drama *Big Love*. Impressed by her range and versatility, producers gave Enos a double role to play as twins Jodean and Kathy Marquart. Critics have commended Enos on her finely nuanced performance, calling her “luminous” and heralding her as “the actress who best captured the out-of-time otherness of compound life.”

In 2009, Enos returned to the stage starring opposite Annette Bening, David Arquette and Julian Sands in Joanna Murray-Smith’s comedy *The Female of the Species* at the Geffen Playhouse. “Mireille Enos nearly steals the show as Bening’s wonderfully distraught daughter,” touted *The Hollywood Reporter*.

In 2005, Enos won the role of Honey in the *Broadway* revival of *Who’s Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* opposite industry veterans Bill Irwin and Kathleen Turner. It opened to glowing reviews and earned her a Tony nomination for Best Featured Actress in a Play.

Enos joined the original cast when the play was transferred to London’s West End in 2006. The BBC stated, “They bring an authentically American atmosphere that makes it both funnier and more terrifying than any version of this play I have previously seen.”

Born to an American father and French mother, Enos was raised in Houston where she attended schools for the dramatic arts. While studying acting during her third year at Brigham Young University, she was invited to join a two-month project at the Classic Stage Company in New York City. She bought a one-way bus pass and the rest, as they say, is history.

**DANE DeHAAN (Chris Morgan)** has made a formidable impression on film audiences and is currently one of the industry’s most sought-after actors of his generation. Most recently, DeHaan starred in 20th Century-Fox’s box office hit, *Chronicle*. *Chronicle* was released on February 3, 2012 to rave reviews. The film follows three teenagers who develop superpowers and chronicle their experience on video.

DeHaan was recently seen in The Weinstein Company’s *Lawless*,directed byJohn Hillcoat (*The Road*,) starring opposite Shia LaBeouf, Tom Hardy, Jason Clark, Gary Oldman, and Guy Pearce. The film, set in a Depression-era, gritty Virginia, follows three brothers who are part of a bootlegging gang, illegally selling moonshine. *Lawless* was released on Wednesday, August 29th, 2012.

Earlier this year, DeHaan wrapped production on the independent film, *Kill Your Darlings.*  Directed by John Krokidas, *Kill Your Darlings* is loosely based on the life of poet Allen Ginsberg. DeHaan portrays Ginsberg’s friend, Lucien Carr, who documented their years together at school. The film tells the story of the 1944 untold murder bringing together a young Allen Ginsberg, Jack Kerouac and William S. Burroughs, played by Daniel Radcliffe, Ben Foster and Jack Huston. DeHaan also completed production on the independent film *The Place Beyond the Pines*, directed by Derek Cianfrance (*Blue Valentine*). DeHaan stars opposite Ryan Gosling, Bradley Cooper, and Eva Mendes as Gosling’s young son Jason. *The Place Beyond the Pines* debuted on Friday, September 7th at the 2012 Toronto International Film Festival.

  DeHaan, most known for his portrayal of Jesse on HBO’s critically acclaimed drama series *In Treatment*, starred in the third season of the series alongside Gabriel Byrne. His performance was lauded as a “revelatory breakthrough” by *Variety* and “brilliant” by the *Chicago Sun-Times*.

In 2010, DeHaan received an Obie Award for his performance the critically acclaimed Off-Broadway production of *The Aliens*, directed by Annie Baker. A Rattlestick Theatre production, *The Aliens* was given the prestigious honor of Play of the Year by the *New York Times*. DeHaan made his Broadway debut in 2008 with *American Buffalo.*

DeHaan began his film career under the direction of two-time Academy Award nominee John Sayles and opposite Chris Cooper in *Amigo,* released by Variance films in 2011.

A graduate of the University of North Carolina School of the Arts, DeHaan currently resides in Los Angeles.

**BRUCE GREENWOOD (Judge Burnett)** most recently starred in the ABC horror/drama series *The River* as wildlife explorer and TV personality Emmet Cole, who goes looking for magic in the uncharted Amazon and disappears while his family and friends set out on a mysterious and deadly journey to find him. Oren Peli, creator of *Paranormal Activity*, and Steven Spielberg are executive producers.

He can be seen in Robert Zemeckis’ drama *Flight* opposite Denzel Washington for Paramount Pictures. The film centers on airline pilot Whip (Washington), dealing with substance abuse issues, who steers an endangered flight to a crash-landing, saving nearly all of the passengers. Greenwood plays Charlie, the president of the Pilots’ Union who used to fly with Whip and tries to help him through a scandal. The film was nominated two Academy Awards awards.

*DEVIL'S KNOT* is Greenwood’s fourth film with acclaimed Canadian filmmaker Atom Egoyan. His three previous films include a leading role in *Exotica* as a tax inspector obsessed with a stripper. The film was nominated for the Palme D’Or at The Cannes Film Festivial and named Best Canadian Feature Film at the Toronto International Film Festival. He also starred in the drama *The Sweet Hereafter*, playing a father of two children killed in a tragic bus accident. The film earned the Jury Grand Prize at Cannes and swept the Genie Awards, including Best Motion Picture, and also earned Greenwood a Genie Award nomination for Best Actor. Additionally he starred in the drama *Ararat.*

He recently reprised his role as Captain Christopher Pike in Paramount Pictures’ next installment of *Star Trek* opposite Chris Pine, Zachary Quinto and Zoe Saldana for director J.J. Abrams. The follow-up to the 2009 blockbuster is slated for a 2013 release.

This summer he starred opposite Ryan Gosling and Bradley Cooper in *A Place Beyond the* *Pines* about a motorcycle stunt rider who considers committing a crime in order to provide for his family, an act that puts him on a collision course with a cop-turned-politician. Greenwood plays Bill Killcullen, an Assistant District Attorney. The film is written and directed by Derek Cianfrance.

Earlier he starred opposite Steve Carell and Paul Rudd in the comedy *Dinner for Schmucks* for director Jay Roach. His other credits include: *Mao’s Last Dancer* for director Bruce Beresford, based on the best selling memoir of dancer Li Cunxin, and which had its premiere as a Special Presentation at the 2009 Toronto International Film Festival; The Walt Disney action thriller *National* *Treasure: Book of Secrets* as the President of the United States opposite Nicholas Cage; and in 2007, his dual role in the unconventional biopic of legendary singer/songwriter Bob Dylan, *I’m Not There*, opposite Cate Blanchette and Richard Gere, for writer/director Todd Haynes, which earned the Independent Spirit Awards’ inaugural Robert Altman Award.

He is well known for his outstanding portrayal of President John F. Kennedy negotiating the Cuban Missile Crisis and its fallout in the riveting drama *Thirteen Days,* opposite Kevin Costner and Steven Culp. The film earned Greenwood a Golden Satellite Award for Best Supporting Actor.

In 2006 he appeared in the thriller *Déjà Vu* for director Tony Scott alongside Denzel Washington and Val Kilmer. In 2005 he starred opposite Philip Seymour Hoffman as Truman Capote’s partner, writer Jack Dunphy, in *Capote*. That performance earned him a Screen Actors Guild nomination for Outstanding Performance by a Cast in a Motion Picture.

In 2004 he appeared opposite Will Smith in the sci-fi box office hit *I, Robot* in which he played a ruthless CEO of U.S. Robotics who was suspected of murder. That same year he played the dashing paramour of an aging actress (Annette Bening) in the critically praised *Being Julia*. That role earned him a Genie Award nomination for Best Supporting Actor.

In 1999 he starred opposite Ashley Judd as a murderous plotting spouse in the suspense thriller *Double Jeopardy*, which earned him a Blockbuster Entertainment Award nomination for Favorite Supporting Actor.

Greenwood’s other film credits include: *Meeks Cutoff* opposite Michelle Williams for director Kelly Reichardt, *Barney’s Version, Donovan’s Echo* opposite Danny Glover, as well as *Firehouse* *Dog, Hollywood Homicide, The World’s Fastest Indian, Eight Below, Rules of Engagement, Racing Stripes, Here on Earth, The Lost Son, Thick as Thieves, Disturbing Behavior, Passenger 57,* and *Wild Orchid.*

Greenwood also enjoys a diverse and successful career in television. In 2009 he performed in the Hallmark Hall of Fame holiday movie *A Dog Named Christmas*, based on the Greg Kincaid novel. In 2007 he starred in the David Milch HBO series *John from Cincinnati.*

Earlier in his career he was a regular as Dr. Seth Griffith on the award-winning series *St.* *Elsewhere*. He also appeared on the critically acclaimed *The* *Larry Sanders Show.*

He also starred in the remake of *The* *Magnificent Ambersons*, as well as several movie-of- the week presentations, including *The Riverman* for A&E and *Saving Millie* for CBS.

Greenwood and his wife Susan divide their time between their homes in Los Angeles and Vancouver.

**KEVIN DURAND (John Mark Byers)** isa Canadian-born actor who has developed a versatile background, beginning in comedy and Broadway and then transitioning into television and film, illustrating his ability to captivate a wide range of audiences. Durand was nominated for a 2012 Genie Award for his performance in IFC Films’ *Edwin Boyd*.  In 2009, he was nominated for a Saturn Award for his recurring character, Martin Keamy, on the popular series *Lost*.   Durand can be seen in: David Cronenberg’s *Cosmopolis* opposite Robert Pattinson, Screen Gems’ *Resident Evil: Retribution*, the independent feature *The Truth* opposite Andy Garcia and Forest Whitaker, and in IFC Films’ *Edwin Boyd* alongside Scott Speedman.

Durand recently wrapped production on Jack Heller’s independent thriller *Dark Was the* *Night* with Lukas Haas.  Next he is set to join Russell Crowe and Anthony Hopkins in Darren Aronofsky’s *Noah* for Paramount and New Regency, and Lily Collins in *The Mortal Instruments,* which is based on the bestselling young adult series of the same name, for Screen Gems and Constantin Films.

Before his film career, Durand was voted one of Canada’s funniest new comedians.  In addition, he originated the role of Injun Joe in *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* on Broadway.

Durand is best known for his roles in such films as Shawn Levy’s *Real Steel* for Dreamworks/Disney opposite Hugh Jackman, Universal’s *Robin Hood* as Little John opposite Russell Crowe’s Robin Hood, James Mangold’s *3:10 to Yuma* with Russell Crowe and Christian Bale, as Fred Dukes aka The Blob in *X-Men Origins: Wolverine* alongside Hugh Jackman and Liev Schreiber, Joe Carnahan’s *Smokin’ Aces* opposite Ben Affleck and Jeremy Piven, and Walt Becker’s *Wild Hogs* with John Travolta, Tim Allen, and Martin Lawrence.

Durand’s other credits include: D.J. Caruso’s *I Am Number Four* for Dreamworks, Screen Gems’ *Legion* with Paul Bettany, *The Butterfly Effect* opposite Ashton Kutcher, Jay Roach’s *Mystery* *Alaska* with Russell Crowe, Columbia Pictures’ *Winged Creatures* opposite Forest Whitaker and Dakota Fanning, Vertigo Entertainment’s *The Echo*, a series regular on *Touching Evil*, and the James Cameron hit series *Dark Angel.*

He currently resides in Los Angeles.

**JAMES WILLIAM HAMRICK (Damien Echols),** born March 19, 1993, is a Texas actor currently attending Nebraska Wesleyan University in Lincoln. The Musical Theater major garnered excellent reviews his freshman year for his portrayal of Melchior Gabor in the University’s production of the musical *Spring Awakening*.

Born in Houston, Hamrick attended The Kinkaid Preparatory School, where he received the award for Excellence in Musical Theater and was selected for Texas’ prestigious All-State Choir in 2009, 2010 and 2011. Hamrick has been actively involved in theater and musical theater in venues throughout Houston, performing at Theater Under the Stars, HITS, Masquerade Theater, The Town & Country Playhouse, and Generations Theater at Rice University.

Notable Houston performances include the title roles in *The Who’s Tommy, Jekyll & Hyde,* and *Godspell*. He has also starred in *Les Miserables, Cats, Aida, Kiss Me, Kate!, Fiddler on the Roof, Barnum, South Pacific, Twelfth Night,* and *Henry V.*

As a writer, Hamrick’s one-act play, *ALIVE: A Comedy for The Dead,* was selected for production by the Alley Theater in Houston. An accomplished musician, Hamrick plays guitar and performs regularly as the lead singer for the band Haley’s Legs.

 **SETH MERIWEATHER (Jason Baldwin)** is 17-years-old and started his senior year at Macon East Academy in Montgomery, Alabama in the fall of 2012. His many interests include playing the electric guitar, drums, the plectrum and 5 string banjos. His latest musical undertaking is learning to play the piano. Being a cadet in the Civil Air Patrol and working on his private pilot’s license with instructor Chad Grondahl are among other activities that keep him busy.

Meriweather has a passion and natural talent for acting along with the focus and drive needed to master any role he is given. His first experience in acting was at age 11 at the Alabama Shakespeare Festival (ASF) in the play *Richard III* as Richard, the Duke of York, and since that time he has been cast in three roles, including the lead roles of Rudy in *Over the Tavern* and Ralphie in the beloved classic *A Christmas Story*. Meriweather was cast in his first film role as Wilson in *Trouble with the Curve*, which stars Clint Eastwood, Amy Adams, Justin Timberlake, and John Goodman.

 Meriweather steps into performing with such ease and natural ability that he can make the character his own and become as fearless or as meek as the part demands while keeping the audience enthralled. At age 17, he is already a young master of the trade and hopes to fulfill his goal of growing and developing as an actor with every opportunity that he is given.

**KRISTOPHER HIGGINS (Jessie Misskelley, Jr.)** has been a working actor for some time. He can be seen in the Vince Vaughn-Ben Stiller comedy *The Watch*.

Higgins got his start in 2007 as a guest star on the Showtime hit series *Weeds*. It didn’t take long for him to work his way through guest roles on *Cold Case* and *NCIS* and to create his first recurring role as Peter on *The Secret Life of the American Teenager*.

Higgins went on to land prominent roles in films such as Disney’s *Prom* in 2011, directed by Joe Nussbaum. Shortly after he was seen in the Twentieth Century Fox film *In Time*, starring Justin Timberlake and Amanda Seyfried.

Higgins currently resides in Los Angeles.

\*

**About the Filmmakers**

 **ATOM EGOYAN (Director),** with fifteen feature films and related projects, has won numerous awards including five prizes at the Cannes Film Festival (including the Grand Prix, International Critics Awards, and Ecumenical Jury Prizes), two Academy Award nominations, eight Genie Awards, prizes from the National Board of Review, and an award for Best International Adaptation at The Frankfurt Book Fair. In 2010, he had a full retrospective of his films at the Filmoteca Espagnol in Madrid, following similar events in previous years at the Pompidou Centre in Paris and The Museum of the Moving Image in New York. Egoyan won the 2010 Douglas Sirk Award from the Hamburg Film Festival, joining other career honors from festivals and events in Tokyo, Jerusalem, Reykjavik, Las Palmas, Hong Kong, Cairo, and The Panorama of European Cinema in Athens.

Egoyan has been President of the Jury in Cannes (Cinéfondation and Shorts), Berlin (Main Competition), and Venice (First Feature), as well as a jury member at several other festivals, including Sundance, Toronto, and Tribeca.

Egoyan’s art projects have been presented around the world including the Venice Biennale and Artangel in London. *Steenbeckett* has recently become part of the Artangel Collection, an innovative alliance with the Tate. The Collection will tour museums and galleries across the U.K.

Egoyan’s acclaimed production of Wagner’s *Die Walkure* won a Dora Award for Outstanding Opera Production, and his adaptation of Samuel Beckett’s *Eh Joe* was presented by The Gate Theatre in Dublin, where it won The Irish Times/ESB Award for Best Direction before transferring to London’s West End and The Lincoln Center Festival in New York.

Egoyan directed the North American premiere of Martin Crimp’s *Cruel and Tender* for the Canadian Stage theatre company in early 2012. He directed the contemporary Chinese opera *Feng Yi Teng* for the 2012 Spoleto Festival in Charleston and the Lincoln Center Festival, New York. It was performed at the Luminato Festival in Toronto in 2013, following the remount of Richard Strauss’s *Salome* with the Canadian Opera Company.

Egoyan is currently finishing his latest film QUEEN OF THE NIGHT, which stars Ryan Reynolds, Scott Speedman, Rosario Dawson, and Mireille Enos.

**ELIZABETH FOWLER (Producer)** started her career as an agent and then segued into management, working with such clients as Denzel Washington, Richard Gere, Michelle Pfeiffer, Steve Martin, and George Lopez, to name but a few. After successfully setting up film and television projects for many of her clients, she opened her own production company, Clear Pictures Entertainment. Mara Leveritt's best-selling crime thriller *DEVIL'S KNOT* was the first book she optioned to produce as a feature film.

Among Fowler’s upcoming projects are Mara Leveritt's *The Boy's On The Tracks*, a compelling drama about the Iran Contra scandal with a screenplay written by Oscar-nominee Keir Pearson (*Hotel Rwanda* and *Chavez*); award-winning writer Christian Betley's script, *Forsaken*, based on Peter Goss' book *Close To The Wind,* a riveting action-packed telling of Goss' heroic rescue of a competitor in the world's toughest single-handed round-the-world yacht race; and true crime thriller *Blood Trail,* a chilling story about the tainted blood scandal in Canada and the United States that killed thousands around the world, with Keir Pearson currently writing the screenplay.

**RICHARD SAPERSTEIN (Producer)** is a very active independent producer. Saperstein’s low-budget label, The Genre Company, will have three films released by Anchor Bay in 2012. He also created and executive produced the groundbreaking live-streaming reality show *ControlTV* with partner Seth Green. The first season, sponsored by Ford, Sprint, and Mars, received the 2011 Digital Luminary Award for Best Branded Entertainment Series and was selected as one of *Variety* and the Producer Guild’s ‘Digital 25.’  Sony Pictures Television has optioned international rights to the format.

Saperstein previously served as President of Production of The Weinstein Company's Dimension Films, where he supervised the hit films *1408, Rob Zombie's Halloween*, and Stephen King's *The Mist*, directed by Frank Darabont. Prior to Dimension, Saperstein served as President of Production for Artisan Pictures. In addition to overseeing Marvel's *The Punisher* while there, several of his Artisan projects have been made by other studios in recent years. These include Sony's hit *Hancock* starring Will Smith, on which Saperstein served as an executive producer. Previously, Saperstein was Senior Executive Vice President at New Line Cinema and was instrumental in building the independent company into a mini-major studio.  In addition to his managerial and oversight responsibilities within the production division, Saperstein served as executive producer on several New Line films including *Seven, John Q,* and*Frequency.*

Saperstein currently controls a slate of film projects in development, including a remake of *The Blob* with James Wan *(Saw, Insidious*) attached to direct*,* and *Cell,* based on the best-selling novel by Stephen King. He began his career as a Motion Picture Literary Agent at ICM, where his clients included Academy Award-winning writer Akiva Goldsman, director Jon Turteltaub, and writers Jeremy Leven and Michael Goldenberg.

Other film credits include: *Mother’s Day, Silent Night,* and *The Barrens*.

**CLARK PETERSON (Producer),** producer of the Academy [Award](http://www.imdb.com/search/name?bio=Award)-winning *Monster* starring Charlize Theron, has produced and executive produced a wide variety of [award](http://www.imdb.com/search/name?bio=award)-winning films, documentaries, and television movies.  Current projects in development include *The* *Prophet*, based on the classic book by Kahlil Gibran, which he is producing with Salma Hayek.  He also recently produced the critically acclaimed *Rampart,* starring Woody Harrelson and directed by Oren Moverman, from a screenplay by Moverman and James Ellroy.

Currently in post-production is *Decoding Annie Parker*, starring Samantha Morton and Helen Hunt.  Other past films include: *My Date with Drew, Dim Sum Funeral,* and *East of Havana*, a documentary about the Cuban hip-hop movement.

A graduate of Stanford University, Peterson began his career working in development and production for producer Robert Corman before later joining the Walt Disney Studios as an executive.  After serving as head of production and development at several independent production companies, he became an independent producer.

**CHRISTOPHER WOODROW (Producer)** Christopher Woodrow is Chairman and CEO at Worldview Entertainment, a leading independent motion picture production and investment company, which he co-founded. He is responsible for guiding the strategic vision of the company, and oversees the global development of its brand and franchise. Woodrow has played a principal role in raising the company’s capital, and has significant expertise in structuring and investing in filmed entertainment transactions.

Woodrow recently financed and produced Atom Egoyan’s West Memphis Three biopic, “Devil’s Knot”, starring Colin Firth and Reese Witherspoon; James Gray’s untitled romantic drama starring Marion Cotillard, Joaquin Phoenix and Jeremy Renner; Guillaume Canet’s crime thriller, “Blood Ties”, starring Clive Owen, Zoe Saldana and Mila Kunis; David Gordon Green’s gritty drama, “Joe”, starring Nicolas Cage; Eli Roth’s horror thriller, “The Green Inferno”; and Ti West’s horror thriller, “The Sacrament”, presented by Eli Roth. He recently financed and executive produced Eran Creevy’s British action thriller, “Welcome to the Punch”, starring James McAvoy and Mark Strong; and William Friedkin’s black comedy, “Killer Joe", starring Matthew McConaughey and Emile Hirsch.

Prior to this, Woodrow was Managing Director at Prospect Point Capital, an investment company focused on structured finance and venture capital opportunities in media and entertainment. He was previously a Vice President at Citigroup Global Markets, where he managed over USD 100 million in equity, debt and alternative assets for clients consisting of institutional investors, high-net-worth individuals and entertainment personalities. Woodrow also worked in investment banking and portfolio management capacities at Oppenheimer & Co. and CIBC World Markets.

**PAUL HARRIS BOARDMAN (Writer/Producer)**grew up in the Appalachian region of Southwest Virginia and East Tennessee and graduated Phi Beta Kappa from Sewanee with degrees in English literature and psychology. He earned an M.A. in creative writing from Johns Hopkins, where he wrote a thesis of original poetry, acted in several plays, and studied drama with Pulitzer Prize-winning playwright Edward Albee. Boardman also studied at St. Johns College, Oxford, and at the USC School of Cinematic Arts, where he received a scholarship in screenwriting and wrote and directed award-winning short films.

Boardman co-wrote and produced the hit film *The Exorcism of Emily Rose.* He also produced *The Day the Earth Stood Still*, and has done production re-writes on various films, including *Scream 4, The Messengers,* and *Dracula 2000.* Paul also co-wrote and directed the second unit for *Hellraiser: Inferno*, and he co-wrote *Urban Legends: Final Cut.*

His upcoming projects include: *Beware the Night* for Jerry Bruckheimer Films and Screen Gems, which he co-wrote and will executive produce, *Two Eyes Staring* for Summit Entertainment, with Charlize Theron attached to star and produce, and *Guilty Wives,* based on the recent NY Times bestseller by James Patterson, which Boardman will write and executive produce for Maven Pictures and James Patterson Entertainment.

Boardman’s other screenplays in development include: *The Substitute* for Sam Raimi and Mandate Pictures, *The Birds* for Universal, *The Living* for Lakeshore Entertainment (which he is also attached to produce), and *Poltergeist* for MGM. Boardman also recently co-wrote two television pilots that he was attached to executive produce: *Thunderstruck,* a sci-fi drama for AMC, and an untitled college medical drama for MTV.

In addition to these produced credits, Boardman has written or co-written other screenplays for studios and production companies including TriStar Pictures, Disney, APG, and Phoenix Pictures, and he co-wrote an adaptation of the Dan Simmons novel *Hyperion* for IEG and director Martin Scorsese.

**MOLLY CONNERS (Executive Producer)** is responsible for the operations of the company, and oversees business development and strategic initiates, in addition to playing a role in all major production decisions. Conners is currently executive producing Alejandro González Iñárritu's comedy, BIRDMAN, starring Michael Keaton, Emma Stone, Naomi Watts, Zach Galifianakis and Edward Norton; Guillaume Canet's crime thriller, BLOOD TIES, starring Clive Owen, Billy Crudup, Marion Cotillard, Mila Kunis, Zoe Saldana and James Caan; Daniel Espinosa's crime thriller, CHILD 44, starring Tom Hardy, Noomi Rapace and Gary Oldman; Atom Egoyan's crime thriller, DEVIL'S KNOT, starring Colin Firth and Reese Witherspoon; James Gray's period drama, THE IMMIGRANT, starring Marion Cotillard, Joaquin Phoenix and Jeremy Renner; Arnaud Desplechin’s drama, JIMMY P., starring Benecio Del Toro; and David Gordon Green's drama, JOE, starring Nicolas Cage. She is currently producing Eli Roth's horror thriller, THE GREEN INFERNO; and Ti West's horror thriller, THE SACRAMENT, presented by Eli Roth.

Prior to this, Conners was appointed by New York Governor George Pataki as Legislative Liaison to the Department of Environmental Conservation. She also worked in procurement and legislative lobbying for diverse sectors including financial services and media. Conners holds a B.A. in Psychology from the George Washington University and is a member of the Producers Guild of America and the British Academy of Film and Television Arts.

**SCOTT DERRICKSON (Screenwriter/Executive Producer)** grew up in Denver, Colorado. He graduated from [Biola University](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Biola_University) with a B.A. in Humanities with an emphasis on literature and philosophy, a B.A. in Communications with an emphasis on film, and a minor in theological studies. He earned his M.A. in film production from [USC School of Cinematic Arts](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/USC_School_of_Cinematic_Arts).

Derrickson co-wrote and directed the film [*The Exorcism of Emily Rose*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Exorcism_of_Emily_Rose), which was loosely based on a true story about [Anneliese Michel](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anneliese_Michel). The film won the 2005 Saturn Award for Best Horror Film, and in 2006, was named in the Chicago Film Critics Association list of the ‘Top 100 Scariest Films Ever Made.’ As of October 31, 2008, *The Exorcism of Emily Rose* had made over $140 million worldwide.

Derrickson also directed [*The Day the Earth Stood Still*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Day_the_Earth_Stood_Still_%282008_film%29) starring Keanu Reeves and Jennifer Connelly, written by David Scarpa. The film was released in late 2008 and earned over $230 million worldwide.

In August 2011, Derrickson teamed up with producer Jason Blum (*Paranormal Activity,* *Insidious*) and directed [*Sinister*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sinister_%28film%29) -- a mystery-horror film starring Ethan Hawke that is centered around a dark crime. The film was released by Summit Entertainment on October 12, 2012. Derrickson is currently attached to direct an adaptation of [Dan Simmons](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dan_Simmons)' [*Hyperion*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hyperion_%28Simmons_novel%29) and [*The Fall of Hyperion*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Fall_of_Hyperion) for Warner Bros., and [*Equinox*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Equinox) for Voltage Pictures. He is also writing and directing a remake of the Danish thriller *The Substitute*, which is being produced by [Sam Raimi](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sam_Raimi), and the [Lakeshore Entertainment](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lakeshore_Entertainment) supernatural suspense thriller *The Living*.

In January 2011, it was announced that Derrickson will direct [*Goliath*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Goliath). The new feature will be a period, biblical action movie made with contemporary sensibilities, singling out [*300*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/300_%28film%29) as a reference point.

In October 2011, it was announced that Derrickson will write and direct the horror-thriller [*Two Eyes Staring*](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Two_Eyes_Staring&action=edit&redlink=1) for Summit Entertainment, starring Charlize Theron.

Derrickson is also writing and will direct the 2012 television pilot [*Thunderstruck*](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Thunderstruck_(AMC_pilot)&action=edit&redlink=1) for AMC and [*Battlestar Galactica*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battlestar_Galactica) producer David Eick.

 **PAUL SAROSSY, CSC BSC (Cinematographer),** is an award-winning cinematographerand a long-time collaborator with filmmaker Atom Egoyan, who most recently worked with the director on*Chloe* (Julianne Moore, Liam Neeson). The two filmmakers have worked together on the films *Adoration*, *Where the Truth Lies,* *Ararat*, *Felicia's Journey*, *The Sweet Hereafter*, *Exotica*, *The Adjuster*, *Speaking Parts*, as well as the television production of *Krapp's Last Tape*.

 Sarossy's other film credits include: *The River King*, starring Edward Burns, *Ripley Under Ground*, starring Willem Dafoe, *Head In The Clouds*, starring Charlize Theron and Penelope Cruz, *Charlie Bartlett* with Robert Downey Jr*.*, *On the Nose*, and *Paid in Full*. He was also the director of photography on *The Wicker Man* starring Nicolas Cage and Ellen Burstyn, Bruce Paltrow's *Duets* (Gwyneth Paltrow), Joe Mantegna’s *Lakeboat*, Saul Rubinek's *Jerry & Tom*, Paul Schrader's Academy Award-nominated *Affliction* (Nick Nolte), *Picture Perfect* starring Jennifer Aniston, Denys Arcand's *Love and Human Remains*, and most recently *The Deal*, starring Meg Ryan and William H. Macy, among many others. Recent credits include *The Duel*, with director Dover Koshashvilli, and *Act of Dishonour*, shot in Tajikistan with director Nelofer Pazira.

 His work for television includes: made-for-TV movies: the Emmy Award-nominated *The Incredible Mrs. Ritchie*, starring Gena Rowlands, *Martha, Inc: The Story of Martha Stewart,* starring Cybill Shepherd, Golden Globe-nominated *A Soldier's Story, The Man Who Saved Christmas, Rated X, Rocky Marciano, Mistrial,* and the *Soir Blue* and *Prima Vera* episodes of the series *Picture* *Windows, Suzanne and Satie,* and *Grand Larceny*. Sarossy was also cinematographer for the upcoming CBC miniseries *Death Comes to Town* starring The Kids in the Hall. He was recently nominated for another Emmy for Neil Jordan’s *The Borgias*, which he shot for the 2010 and 2011 seasons. And in 2012 he shot a season of *Cooper* for Barry Levinson and Tom Fontana.

In addition to several international film festival awards and nominations, Sarossy's honors include: five Genie Awards for the films *Head in the Clouds*, *Perfect Pie*, *Felicia's Journey*, *The Sweet Hereafter* and *Exotica,* a Canadian Society of Cinematographers (CSC) Award for Best Cinematography in TV Drama for *Rocky Marciano*, CSC Awards for Best Cinematography in a Theatrical Feature for *Head in the Clouds*, *The Sweet Hereafter*, *Exotica* and *White Room*; an American Society of Cinematographers (ASC) Award nomination for Outstanding Achievement in Cinematography for a Miniseries for *Picture Windows*, and an Independent Spirit Award nomination for Best Cinematography for *Affliction*. Sarossy also made his directorial debut with the film *Mr. In-Between*, for which he won the Best Independent UK Film Award at the Raindance Film Festival, a Prix Sang Neuf at Cognac, and the Best Actor Award at Tokyo.

 **PHILLIP BARKER (Production Designer)** is internationally renowned as a production designer, filmmaker, and installation artist for film and stage.

 Barker has been the production designer for directors as diverse as Brian de Palma, Mira Nair, Neil LaBute, Lisa Cholodenko, and artist Michael Snow. He has been the production designer of seven films by Atom Egoyan, including *The Sweet Hereafter*. He won a Directors Guild of Canada Award for Best Production Design for Egoyan's *Where the Truth Lies, a*nd has received three Genie Award Nominations for Best Production Design for feature films. His own film installations have played in many cities and events including Arco International Art Fair in Madrid, Nuite Blanche in Toronto, and the World’s Fair in Seville, Spain.

 Barker has written and directed many of his own short films that have received numerous awards including: Best Short Film at the Atlantic Film Festival, and Best Film, Local Heroes, and Best Experimental Film at the Melbourne International Film Festival. Barker received a Genie nomination for Best Dramatic Short Film for his film *Soul Cages*. As a recent recipient of a Chalmers Arts Fellowship, Barker is currently researching and writing an experimental feature length film.

 Barker is a winner of a DGC Award for Best Production Design, has been nominated for DGC

Awards for Best Production Design and for a Genie Award for Best Production Design.

 Additional feature film production design credits include: *Cottage Country, Breakaway, Chloe,*

*Adoration, Redacted, Camille, The Wicker Man,The River Queen, Ararat,* and *Looking for Eileen.*

Television, movie of the week, and short film credits include: *Cavedweller, My Own Country,*

*Drop the Beat, Saraband: Yo-Yo Ma, The Line,* and *Prelude.*

**THOMAS MINTON (Art Director)** is well known as an art director and set designer working in the feature film industry.

Minton, over the past twenty-five years, has worked under many great designers as diverse as Dennis Gassner, Arthur Max, Stuart Craig, Jim Bissel, and Michael Corenblith.
With the distinction of having been a senior set designer from the very start of his career, Minton has worked on many large to medium-sized films including *Road to Perdition*, *The Truman Show*, *The Legend of Bagger Vance*,and *G. I. Jane,* requiring both stage and location sets.

In 2002 Minton began art direction on films in addition to set designing. His art direction credits include: *Radio*, *The Blind Side*, and *Killing Season.*

Minton was one of four recipients of an Emmy for the HBO movie *Warm Springs*,
and one of five nominees for an Excellence in Production Design award for *Road To Perdition* from the Art Directors Guild.

Minton’s additional film credits include: *Love Potion #9*, *Sweet Home Alabama*, *All The Pretty Horses*, *Oh Brother Where Art Thou?*,and *Runaway Bride*.

Outside of the film industry, Minton is engaged as a fine artist specializing in oil painting, both in the studio and outdoors with subject matter ranging from still life and portraiture to landscape and abstract.

**MELINDA SANDERS (Set Decorator)** has been a set decorator/art director for about 20 years primarily working in the Atlanta and Los Angeles areas.

She graduated from Elon University with aspirations of pursuing a career in the veterinarian field, but while applying for graduate schools, she had an opportunity to work on *RoboCop III* and her love of filmmaking was ignited.

She continued working for the next several years on various projects that would come to town. She art directed commercials for Microsoft, Nike, GA Lottery, and Verizon; music videos for Outkast, Whitney Houston, Kenny Rogers, Al Green, and Queen Latifah; feature film *Randy and the* *Mob* and a feature length period documentary about the Cherokee removal called *Trail of Tears*, produced for the Cherokee Nation.

But Sanders’ real passion is working as a set decorator. She has been an avid antique collector and dealer for years and loves interior design and any kind of sewing project. She has worked as a set decorator for television shows such as *Tyler Perry’s Meet the Browns, House of Payne*, and *For Better or Worse.*

Her feature film credits include *Killing Season,* starring Robert DeNiro and John Travolta, and *No Good Deed* starring Idris Elba, to name but a few.

In her free time, Sanders has become a licensed wildlife rehabilitator and is in the process of restoring a turn-of-the-century Victorian home in Atlanta, GA.

**SUSAN SHIPTON (Editor)** is best known for her work with Atom Egoyan, having edited all of his films from *The* *Adjuster* to *Chloe,* for which she won a Director’s Guild of Canada Award for Best Achievement in Editing. Shipton received a Genie Award for her work on Atom Egoyan’s *The Sweet Hereafter, Exotica,* and for Robert LePage’s *Possible Worlds*.

Most recently, Shipton cut director Richard Lewis’ *Barney’s Version,* starring Paul Giamatti, Dustin Hoffman, and Minnie Driver. Shipton has worked with acclaimed directors Jaco VanDormael *(Mr.Nobody)* and Istvan Szabo *(Being Julia).* She won a DGC Award for *Being Julia*.

Shipton has adapted Canadian author Helen Humphreys’ *Wild Dogs* for the screen, and is developing it as a feature film that she will direct. *Wild Dogs* will be produced by Atom Egoyan’s frequent collaborators Simone Urdl and Jen Weiss of The Film Farm.

**KARI PERKINS (Costume Designer)** is an award winning costume designer with an innovative style for creating believable characters. She has built her career over twenty-five years designing costumes for theater, dance and film. Kari made her film design debut with *Dazed and Confused* in 1993 and has continued to work with director Richard Linklater over the years on productions such as *Fast Food Nation* in 2006, *A Scanner Darkly* in 2006, and *Bernie* in 2010. Perkins’ costume design can currently be seen in the film *Mud*, directed by Jeff Nichols, which was nominated for the prestigious Palme d’Or at the 2012 Cannes Film Festival. She recently completed work on *Writers* and *When Angel’s Sing* to be released in the fall 2012.

**SHIRLEY LIBBY (Production Sound Mixer)** was born in New Hampshire and raised primarily in Maine, and although projects have taken her around the country, she has been based in Atlanta for the 30 years of her working history.

“Working with Atom Egoyan on *DEVIL'S KNOT* was a total pleasure. He is a director who is attuned to all aspects of the film, and was a great support in making sure we got the best production sound possible. We were able to meet the challenges of working in a big city as well as incorporating the indigenous insects into a sound base for the film, grounding the story firmly in the south.”

Libby has an extensive list of credits in film, television and commercials. Some of those include: *Coma, Necessary Roughness, Partners, The Walking Dead, Franklin & Bash, Tyler Perry’s Why Did I Get Married Too, Tyler Perry’s I Can Do Bad All By Myself, Get Low, Tyler Perry’s Madea Goes to Jail, Tyler Perry’s The Family That Preys, Tyler Perry’s Meets the Browns, Tyler Perry’s Why Did I Get Married?, Swimming Upstrem, Pet Semetary II,* and *In Love and War.*

**MYCHAEL DANNA** **(Composer/Songwriter)** is recognized as one of the pioneers of combining non-Western sound sources with orchestral and electronic elements in the world of film music.  Danna has been scoring films since his 1987 feature debut, Atom Egoyan’s *Family Viewing*.  He hails from Canada, where he has won five Genie Awards, the latest for his score for the Academy Award-nominated foreign language film *Water*, directed by Deepa Mehta.  Danna also received Genie Awards for his composing work on the Atom Egoyan films *Ararat*, *Felicia’s Journey*, *The* *Sweet Hereafter*, and *Exotica*.

Danna has also collaborated regularly with such noted filmmakers as Ang Lee on *Life of Pi, The Ice Storm,*and *Ride with the Devil;* Bennett Miller on the multiple Oscar-nominee *Moneyball* starring Brad Pitt and the Oscar-winning drama *Capote* starring Philip Seymour Hoffman; Terry Gilliam on the Oscar-nominated *The Imaginarium of Doctor Parnassus*and*Tideland;*Mira Nair on *Vanity Fair*, *Monsoon Wedding*, and *Kama Sutra: A Tale of Love*; and Billy Ray on *Breach* and *Shattered Glass*.

Danna’s composing credits also include the Oscar-winning hit *Little Miss Sunshine*, for which he shared a Grammy Award nomination for Best Compilation Soundtrack Album; Marc Webb’s acclaimed romantic comedy *(500) Days of* *Summer;* James Mangold’s Oscar-winning *Girl, Interrupted*starring Angelina Jolie*;* Neil LaBute’s *Lakeview Terrace*; Sony’s animated film*Surf’s Up*; Gregory Hoblit’s *Fracture*starring Anthony Hopkns and Ryan Gosling; Istvan Szabo’s Oscar-nominated *Being Julia*starring Annette Bening; Denzel Washington’s directorial debut *Antwone Fisher;* Scott Hicks’ *Hearts in Atlantis*; and Joel Schumacher’s *8MM*.

Danna received an Emmy nomination along with his brother, composer Jeff Danna, for Outstanding Main Title Theme music for their theme to *Camelot* starring Joseph Fiennes.

Danna studied music composition at the University of Toronto, winning the Glenn Gould Composition Scholarship in 1985.  He also served as composer-in-residence at the McLaughlin Planetarium in Toronto.

**ANDERSON (ANDY) MARTIN (Stunt Coordinator),** based out of Atlanta, Georgia, has enjoyed being a part of telling stories through the art of filmmaking since 1983*.  Witness, The* *Money Pit*, and *The Patriot* are among some of the projects he has been blessed to contribute to. Martin was the Assistant Stunt Coordinator on *Black Hawk Down*, and *The Alamo*. He worked as Co-Stunt Coordinator for *Remember the Titans*, and *The Blind Side*. He was 2nd Unit Stunt Coordinator on *The Kingdom of Heaven* and the re-make of *Footloose*. He has since gone on to be the Stunt Coordinator on many films including *Jane Mansfield’s Car* and*Plus One*.

**TOM TURNBULL (Visual Effects Supervision)** is a BAFTA award-winning VFX supervisor and co-founder of Rocket Science VFX (RSVFX). He has an accomplished record for creating photo-realistic effects and managing large, complex, and challenging VFX projects from script to set to award-winning content that consistently exceeds client expectations. His portfolio of work spans all aspects of visual effects supervision, including pre-visualization, on-set direction, motion control, multiple vendor management, miniature filming, stereoscopic, matte painting, practical elements filming, fluid simulations, creature, and character animation.

With his in depth of understanding of visual effects and his talent for clearly interpreting each client’s expectations, he has become a trusted collaborator to directors, producers and visual effects supervisors. He has been VFX supervisor for numerous features and high-end miniseries including: *The Sisterhood of the Traveling Pants I* and *II, Day of the Triffids, License to Wed, New York Minute, Adoration, Heaven on Earth, Haven, Joan of Arc, The Nativity,* and *Everest.* Turnbull has been VFX supervisor for RSVFX on: *Resident Evil: Retribution, Resident Evil: Afterlife, Resident Evil: Extinction, Slither, Fringe, Saw* *3D, Amelia,* and *Whiteout*. Turnbull was awarded the prestigious BAFTA awardfor Special Visual Effects in 2010 for his work as VFX Supervisor for *The Day of the Triffids*. He has received three primetime Emmy nominations (*Fringe, Haven, Path to 9/11*) and won three Geminis with an additional three nominations.

With an early start as a camera operator, Turnbull quickly fell into the field of visual effects as a vehicle to engage in his passion for film, technology, and creative problem solving. He quickly became an in-demand visual effects supervisor and honed his skills for creating all manner of visual effects in productions. He later co-founded Rocket Science VFX in 2003, a studio that regularly manages features, multiple television series, and documentary projects. It has solidified its reputation as a trusted producer of high quality visual effects and on-set supervision by selecting the right staff and the careful consideration of each production’s budget, deadlines, and technical challenges, and meeting them by tailoring a customized visual effects solution.

**BILL “SPLAT” JOHNSON (Makeup Effects Supervisor)** has been working in the film industry for about 30 years as a makeup effects artist. He first started his interest in effects after seeing the movie *Jaws* and began working on student films creating various simple effects. After attending the University of Georgia, where he got his BFA in Graphic Design, he moved to the Atlanta area and began his career working on low budget films. During this time, he took the Dick Smith Advanced Makeup Course, which helped him to develop his career rapidly.

Johnson’s big break came in 1987, when he got the job doing the effects make up for *Sleepaway Camps 2 & 3.* After that, he was able to make a full time career out of doing makeup effects work. Since then he has worked on 60 plus films including *The Patriot, Eight Legged Freaks, October Sky, Hoodlum,* and many others.

He’s also designed and created the character Joe for three of the Tyler Perry *Madea* films. He has also worked on the first season of *The Walking Dead*, created prop bodies for Spielberg’s *Lincoln,* *Lawless,* and *Zombieland*, and has recently worked on films like *3 Stooges, Flight*, and *The Watch*.

When not working on films, Johnson can be found creating the icon characters of *Netherworld* haunted attractions, which is considered to be the Best Haunted House in the country by many critics.

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