



# American Dreamz

## Production Information

Imagine a country where the President doesn't read the newspaper, the government goes to war for all the wrong reasons and more votes are cast for the next pop music star than for the next president.

Welcome to your *American Dreamz*.

This spring, filmmaker PAUL WEITZ (writer/director of *In Good Company*, co-director/Academy Award®-nominated co-screenwriter of *About a Boy* and co-director of *American Pie*) turns his camera on a nation obsessed with instant fame, immediate celebrity and disposable hype culture. In this darkly humorous satire, Weitz follows the intersection of juggernaut reality show "American Dreamz" hopefuls, a clueless American President who is attempting to get back in touch with reality and a hapless terrorist charged to upend American politics by blowing up the free world's leader on the country's most popular television program.

Set in a world where prepackaged pop culture and government rhetoric begin to feel startlingly similar, the film questions a reality in which the President is completely ineffective while the country grows more and more obsessed with an aspirational television contest. Weitz satirically ponders a culture that could lead a dewy-eyed, seemingly innocent talent-show contestant to become more manipulative than a splinter-cell terrorist—all in the name of chasing a dream.

Acting in *American Dreamz* is an impressive roster of talent including HUGH GRANT (*About a Boy*, *Bridget Jones's Diary*), DENNIS QUAID (*In Good Company*,

*The Rookie*), MANDY MOORE (*Saved!, A Walk to Remember*), MARCIA GAY HARDEN (*Mystic River, Pollock*), CHRIS KLEIN (*Just Friends, American Pie*), JENNIFER COOLIDGE (*Legally Blonde, American Pie*) and WILLEM DAFOE (*Spider-Man, Inside Man*).

Rounding off the acting set are young comic thespians JUDY GREER (*13 Going on 30*), JOHN CHO (*Harold & Kumar Go to White Castle*) and SETH MEYERS (*Saturday Night Live*). They are joined by multiple actors with impeccable comic timing, including Academy Award®-nominated actress SHOHREH AGHDASHLOO (*House of Sand and Fog*), and newcomers SAM GOLZARI and TONY YALDA.

Known for turning an affectionate yet satirical eye to hormonally charged teens in *American Pie*, arrested adolescence in *About a Boy* and the changing face of corporate culture with *In Good Company*, writer/producer/director Paul Weitz delivers a comedy yanked from right-now popular culture with *American Dreamz*. In this film, Weitz focuses on the nation's shrinking attention span, more drawn to what's hot on television than on hot-button headlines that affect our relationships with the world.

*American Dreamz* is written, produced and directed by Weitz. RODNEY LIBER (*Wild Things*) and ANDREW MIANO (*In Good Company*) also produce; CHRIS WEITZ (*American Pie* films) and KERRY KOHANSKY (*In Good Company*) serve as executive producers.

Weitz's creative team is led by director of cinematography ROBERT ELSWIT (*Good Night, and Good Luck.*), production designer WILLIAM ARNOLD (*Shopgirl*), costume designer MOLLY MAGINNIS (*As Good as It Gets*), editor MYRON KERSTEIN (*Garden State*) and composer STEPHEN TRASK (*The Station Agent*).

## **ABOUT THE PRODUCTION**

### Synopsis of the Film

*“Everyone in America thinks they’re middle class,  
so they like having someone to look down on.”*

—Hollywood agent Chet Krogl

On the morning of his reelection, President Joe Staton (Dennis Quaid) decides to read the newspaper for the first time in four years, starting him down a slippery slope in the eyes of both his doting First Lady (Marcia Gay Harden) and his manipulative Chief of Staff (Willem Dafoe). Holed up in pajamas in his bedroom, the President begins obsessively reading and reexamining his formerly black-and-white view of the world, shocked at what he is discovering. Frightened by his boss' apparent nervous breakdown—and plummeting approval rating—the Chief pushes him back into the spotlight by booking him as a guest judge on a TV ratings beast: weekly talent show “American Dreamz.”

America just can't seem to get enough of “American Dreamz,” hosted by self-aggrandizing, self-loathing Martin Tweed (Hugh Grant), ever on the lookout for the next insta-celebrity. Tired of the same boring guests season after season, Tweed decides to up this year's ante by recruiting a crop of bizarre hopefuls that includes Sally (Mandy Moore), a conniving steel magnolia with a devoted, dopey veteran boyfriend (Chris Klein) and fame-obsessed momager Martha (Jennifer Coolidge); Omer (SAM GOLZARI), a recent immigrant and bumbling, show-tune singing / would-be terrorist awaiting activation; and Sholem (ADAM BUSCH), an Orthodox cantor whose goofy raps were tailor-made for unscripted television.

Guided to the final round by Tweed, his show producers Accordo and Ittles (Judy Greer and John Cho) and her eat-his-own-young agent Chet (Seth Meyers), Sally manages to claw her way to the center of the nation's conscience—only to find her path to winning “American Dreamz” threatened by lovable immigrant Omer.

A reluctant contestant who just wants to fit in his new home country, Omer is told by his secret terrorist training camp operatives to make his way to the finals and detonate a bomb that will destroy the increased-approval-rating-seeking guest judge President Staton—thereby striking a blow to both the bull's-eye of hedonistic American culture and political stability in our region.

With everything riding on the biggest show of the year for Staton, Tweed and the two hopefuls, the stage is finally set for an explosive showdown our pop-fed nation will never forget.

Dreaming *American Dreamz*:  
Paul Weitz Finds Inspiration

*“So to what degree is this country culpable for its actions?*

*Are Americans to blame for America?”*

—“*American Dreamz*” hopeful / bumbling terrorist Omer

For filmmaker Paul Weitz, the genesis of this project began with a vexing idea: unfulfilled dreams. He reflects, “I was interested in making a film about a core aspect of the American identity—the idea that we are all supposed to have a dream. We’re supposed to want something better than what we actually have.”

He pondered if having and securing the perfect American dream was enough for an individual or even a country as a whole. “We’re the only superpower,” Weitz states. “I found myself asking, ‘Is achieving a dominant status in the world the final step before moral and political decline for a society?’ And, of course, the next thing that leaps to my mind is comedy...”

So, the writer put pen to paper and wrote “an utterly insane comedy about the idea that everybody in America has a dream—and how that ‘great thing’ can actually drive our culture crazy.”

Long curious about the roots of quirky human behavior and its comic potential, Weitz and his team at Depth of Field Productions found the concept for a satirical film familiar territory. They had previously tackled social issues in the comedy of the *American Pie* franchise, *About a Boy* and *In Good Company*. But the often-bizarre political and social climate of the past few years had left the filmmakers pondering an even greater challenge: reality politics.

“Part of the inspiration for the film was my fascination with pop culture and ‘American Idol’—the juxtaposition of being interested and obsessed with the show while world events become more crazy,” notes Weitz.

Reassembling much of the crew who had brought life to his previous films, Weitz turned to trusted producers Andrew Miano and Rodney Liber to bring *American Dreamz* from his page to the screen.

Producer Miano—who originally partnered with the Weitz brothers in 1999 and subsequently joined them under the shingle of Depth of Field—surmises that Weitz “wanted to make a film that looked at our cultural obsessions. He wanted to write a story with both a political and a pop-culture slant.”

From inspiration to completion, Weitz didn’t waste any time. Producer Liber recalls his early conversations with Weitz in discussing *American Dreamz* as, “Paul wanted to get going on it right away so that it would be out when it was still timely. From the time he first told me about this movie to the time we were greenlit and in preproduction was two months.”

Miano echoes how Weitz’s clear vision is emblematic of how he works. “He comes up with the idea, he puts pen to paper and the next thing you know, there’s a script.”

“With Paul, it’s like one-stop shopping,” concludes Liber. “Because he’s the writer, producer and director, I can come to him with any potential problem, and he’ll be able to solve it just by going to his computer, retyping or rethinking a scene and coming up with solutions that are sometimes even better than what they were originally.”

With working script in hand, Weitz and his team were ready to cast the film. All they needed to find was a band of actors willing to deliver sarcastic lines with the best of poker faces.

Actual Cast of a Fixed Show:

The Stars of *American Dreamz*

*“I’d rather jab my eyes out with a toothpick and eat them than lose this thing.”*

—“American Dreamz” contestant Sally Kendoo

Many of the cast members of the film are veterans of Paul and Chris Weitz projects and expressed great interest in working with the brothers again. Weitz recalls of casting his troupe of actors: “It was like a fever dream—all these people I knew doing these crazy characters.”

Hugh Grant starred as Will, the self-involved bachelor who finally grows up with the help of a young boy, in the Weitz brothers' film version of Nick Hornby's best-selling novel *About a Boy*. Academy Award® nominated for best screenplay adaptation, *About a Boy* was co-written and co-directed by Paul and Chris Weitz.

Weitz relates, "I sent Hugh the script, and I think he was upset when he read it and actually was intrigued by it. Hugh has a very cynical, acid sense of humor and uses that to its fullest extent in this film."

The concept of the film was one that amused Grant at every turn. "The blackness of this script very much appealed to me. But what makes it work is that it's done with a strange kind of affection and warmth."

Commenting on working with the director, Grant offers, "Paul's always been in tune with my darker side. He is kind of amused by it. He told me that he put a certain amount of that darkness and existential angst into this part, so I felt it was quite a juicy thing to come and actually play it out on screen."

Also an easy character sell, American President Joe Staton was cast during a single conversation between Dennis Quaid—star of the Weitz's critically acclaimed film *In Good Company*—and Paul Weitz.

"He just asked me to do it," recalls Quaid. "He wanted me to play the President, and I just said, 'Yes'—without even reading the script. He's so talented, and I want to hitch myself up to his wagon.

"Paul can be satirical, but all of his material has a heart to it as well," observes Quaid. "It doesn't drift into caricature, and it's not mean-spirited. The President is a guy with a heart that makes him an interesting character, and I was more interested in portraying the difference between the public and the personal persona of the man."

Of creating his character, Quaid comments, "I didn't want to do an impersonation of anyone. I wanted to put in a little flavor of Bush but also have President Staton be his own man. And there's a little bit of Reagan and Clinton and presidents I've watched over the years."

The director agrees with Quaid's take on the role: "Dennis brings a lot of heart to whatever he does, so this would have been boring if he had just done a parody of Bush."

Actress and singer Mandy Moore was cast to play the manipulative Sally Kendoo, who uses all her talents to make it to the finals in this latest season of “American Dreamz.”

Weitz laughs, “Sally is basically a sociopath. She desperately wants to be a star.”

The filmmaker needed to find an actor who could play very sweet with a very naughty side, and that actor was Moore. “I wanted Mandy because I actually believe she could win ‘American Dreamz,’ he says. “There’s something very sweet about her, and it makes it very interesting to see her in a villainess role.”

“When I was preparing for the film,” shares Moore, “I was thinking, ‘This is a girl who has watched every season of the show. She knows everything about Martin Tweed.’ So when she makes it to the opening round and gets chosen to go to Hollywood, she has it all planned out, every step of the way.”

Supporting and encouraging Sally as she pursues her dream are her on-again/off-again boyfriend William Williams, devoted stage mother Martha Kendoo and her win-at-any-cost agent Chet Krogl. Jennifer Coolidge plays the somewhat overbearing, yet supportive mom Martha; Chris Klein, Weitz’s do-gooder jock from the *American Pie* films, portrays William—Sally’s wounded-war-veteran and dim-witted beau—and Seth Meyers steps in as Sally’s agent Chet.

To Klein, while the character of William Williams is as all-American as you could possibly get, he is also very determined. “William will do whatever it takes to get what he wants,” the actor comments. “All these characters will, and I love that.”

Weitz feels Klein’s character encapsulates his film’s message that “Everybody is consumed by a dream here—for better or worse. He’s fixating on this girl who clearly doesn’t care for him...thinking his love for her is going to overcome everything.”

Oscar® winner Marcia Gay Harden takes a refreshing comic turn as the salt-of-the-earth First Lady to Dennis Quaid’s President Staton, while veteran thespian Willem Dafoe dives into the role—and offers an uncanny resemblance to a certain administration official—as the manipulative Chief of Staff who just wants the President to behave as he did in his first term: completely clueless.

Adding a unique spin to *American Dreamz* is Weitz’s core group of newcomers, including Sam Golzari as Omer, Tony Yalda as Iqbal, Noureen DeWulf as Shazzy and

Adam Busch as Sholem. The young actors bring to his film the spirit of a tried-and-true Paul Weitz technique: mixing it up with old- and new-school performers.

“One of the big thrills for me in filmmaking is to take people who’ve done absolutely nothing in movies and put them with people who are incredibly well-known film stars,” the director says. “It points to the fact that acting is an amazing talent, and it doesn’t matter if you’ve done it a hundred times or are doing it for the first time.”

Golzari and Yalda had an especially difficult task at hand: playing starry-eyed talent show hopefuls. The Svengali to Omer’s aspiring reality star, Iqbal needed to be as talentless as he was hilarious. Yalda jokingly explains of his self-centered Iqbal, “I’m playing a character of Middle Eastern descent that actually is rich, a little bit conceited and wrapped up in his own world. I thought it was me...except for the rich part.”

Weitz knew for the character of his bumbling terrorist Omer, he had to cast a young man with both deep wisdom in his fresh face and great comic timing; he found that in Golzari. Omer was perhaps the most changed of the ‘American Dreamz’ hopefuls—from his experience training at (and singing show-tunes in) a terrorist camp in the Middle East to living the American dream in Orange County...and becoming cast on one of the world’s most popular reality shows.

Sam Golzari suggests, “When describing Omer, the word ‘terrorist’ just feels so weird to me; I don’t see him like that. It was exciting for me to play a guy who is more than a simple terrorist. I saw Omer more as a good kid getting mixed up with a gang. He had made some really bad choices, but in the end has a good heart.”

Of Golzari’s performance as Omer on the talent show, Weitz notes, “The first (song) he sings is ‘Impossible Dream,’ which has a whole different light when it’s being sung by a terrorist, as there are lines in it talking about marching into hell for a heavenly cause—which seems to be how some of these people define themselves. (To them), their causes are so worthwhile that you can utterly suspend the semblances of morality.”

Glued to the Tube:  
The Cast and Crew Dissect Reality Television

*“I’m talking human. And by human I mean flawed. And by flawed I mean freaks.  
Find me some freaks.”*

—“American Dreamz” host Martin Tweed

In signing up for the project, the cast and crew were forced to reflect on questions such as, “Why are we watching these shows? Why are so many Americans enthralled with cheering for their favorites: for the underdog, for the most deserving, for the most talented? Is it a fad, or is there something deeper behind it?”

Notes Weitz, “Part of the appeal of ‘American Idol’ or in this show ‘American Dreamz’ is the idea that we can take somebody and make a star out of them. There’s nothing better than sitting in the comfort of your living room and not dealing with your problems...and being thrown into the deepest desires of real people. Everybody in some way is consumed by a dream here, for better or for worse.”

The filmmakers and the cast offered multiple views and theories about why reality television has come to occupy the country’s—and world’s—attention. Hugh Grant offers, “I don’t want to know that these shows are somewhat staged, just so long as it’s fascinatingly repellent—that’s all I care about. I think if I had a choice between having dinner with someone who is a completely worthless reality TV star or Hollywood royalty, I’d go for the worthless reality TV star every time. They’re more interesting.”

Mandy Moore adds, “Reality shows provide the escapism we crave. I feel these shows are like sporting events without actual athletes. People who aren’t into sports can tune in every week and vote to keep their people in the playoffs and then, hopefully, get down to the finals. It’s perfect.”

“I really think that everybody wants to root for something...everybody loves it,” actor Chris Klein notes. “Why do people go to baseball games and NASCAR races? It’s (to watch) people striving to do their best while others root them on.”

Tony Yalda takes a different perspective on the “rooting them on” aspect of the show...feeling it can often come from a more competitive place. He says, “When we

watch ‘American Idol,’ we love tuning into the horrible auditions and delude ourselves by thinking, ‘Yes, they’re awful, and I’m better than they are.’”

Jennifer Coolidge reflects, “I think what happened for a lot of people was that reality television seemed to offer something refreshing and real. The reality shows were actually more real, truer to people than the absurd sitcom. You can tune into a reality show and feel, ‘Oh, my God, this is real.’ But now, we have come the full spectrum to a place where a lot of the reality shows are *not* so real.”

Comic Seth Meyers simply wishes he “could figure it out. It’s so beyond me how riveted we are by it, because I find it very uncomfortable to watch real people being real somewhere other than in regular life. So, I think I’m sort of on the outside looking in on this reality phenomenon.”

Sam Golzari agrees, “It’s amazing living in and working in Hollywood. You quickly find out what reality shows are actually like, with these shows about Hollywood and the dreamers in it. When you air that around the world, specifically the Middle East, people think it’s real—the American dream.”

The backdrop of a reality set allowed Weitz to play out his characters’ storylines quite well. He found that not only is a home audience strangely affected by reality programs, but so too are the players on the set. Weitz concludes, “There’s a scene in the finale of the show where the President is giving a completely pat, imbecilic speech about how he likes how the contestants exude what’s best about America. They see what they want and they go for it.

“It’s the kind of speech that one would totally gloss over,” he continues. “But backstage, Omer, who’s deciding whether to blow himself up is hearing this speech, and it has tremendous meaning to him. It’s at this point he makes his decision about whether or not to go through with the plot.”

Cover Your Ears—  
The Music of *American Dreamz*

*“If these people know nothing about talent,  
there’s not much I can do about it, is there?”*

—“American Dreamz” hopeful Iqbal Riza

To capture the essence of an “American Idol”-type competition, the music of *American Dreamz* needed to replicate the uninspired compositions often sung by many of the amateur performers on the actual singing contests that have become sensations in countries around the world.

To write some original “bad” songs for the “American Dreamz” competitions, the filmmakers brought in composer Stephen Trask (*Hedwig and the Angry Inch*), with whom they had previously worked on *In Good Company*. To get in the appropriate mindset, Trask proceeded to immerse himself in musical styles that were most definitely not to his taste. By listening to and studying gooey pop music, he felt he would be able to find inspiration for creating lyrics and music that wouldn’t be just bad, but believably bad.

“It was very embarrassing,” laughs Trask. “When I would go to the record store where I regularly shop, I actually felt compelled to explain what I was doing. It was just too humiliating to be buying all this really popular, disposable pop.”

Trask found that the contestants on each season of the hit series “American Idol” chose the same pop song selections time and again. Shockingly, the audience listening and voting for their favorite “Idol” contestants never seemed to tire of the same sentimental tunes.

“I tried to get inside a songwriting style and to write well...but from somebody else’s instincts,” remembers Trask. “The idea was not to write badly, but to write well from what I think of as bad instincts.”

Relying on this method to compose a song proved to be difficult for the composer, and there were many times when he had to toss away a composition because it was just too good. “When I brought the first draft of ‘Rockin’ Man’ (sung by a spoofed

long-haired rocker in the film) to play for Paul,” the composer shares, “his first comment was that it was great. And he was right, it was *too* good.”

To aid in reviving his “bad” instincts, Trask went through popular song titles and started noticing that many infamous pop-rock titles were not only pedestrian, the songs lyrics were repetitive. For example, he found the compositions including “I’ll Never Stop Loving You,” “I’ve Never Felt This Way Before” and “You Are My Life” managed redundant phrases that stretched over the same melodies, again and again—perfect for what Trask needed to accomplish.

As producer Liber was trying to figure out how the very expensive proposition of retaining the rights to many well-known songs would fit into the film’s budget, Trask surprised Liber by suggesting an unconventional partner who would alleviate costs and help in writing some of the tunes: Paul Weitz.

Weitz assured Liber that he would help write the songs and meet their production deadline. The skeptical producer gave Weitz and Trask eight weeks to write, and, in typical fashion, they were done on time.

“We wrote, ‘Let’s Not Be Friends’ together,” Trask relates. “It started off with some lines that Paul was just singing—a simple melody and lyrics. We also wrote ‘Mommy Don’t Drink Me to Bed Tonight,’ as well as ‘Rockin’ Man’—which is sure to be a Grammy winner...”

Weitz and Trask felt anything too original would have been inappropriate for the film. To continue the emphasis on all things plain, all three songs were given an almost identical instrumentation—the same sounds, the same big snare with the never-ending reverberation and the same sax solo.

Luckily, the Depth of Field team had some actual vocal talent with whom to work: the multitalented Mandy Moore. Weitz reflects of his chanteuse as the irrepressible Sally Kendoo: “I knew Mandy was a pop star, but I had no idea if she could actually sing, or if a 50-year-old soul singer was doubling for her voice. And then she came in and recorded Steven’s “Dreamz With a Z,” and I realized she had just an incredible voice.”

Designing *Dreamz*:  
Costumes and Sets of the Film

*“I kinda remember it. I was pretty toasted.”*

—American President Joe Staton

Like many of the cast members, the majority of the creative team gathered by the filmmakers were veterans of at least one previous Weitz project. “Paul is extremely loyal,” explains Liber. “And he also has a comfort level with familiar, creative people. So the first thing I did was to go to people who had worked on *In Good Company*, and I tried to establish who was available.”

“It’s always good to get a repeat call,” begins production designer William Arnold, “I had a very good experience on *In Good Company* and just expected the same sort of thing on this one—and it was. I think Paul likes to have a comfort level on his sets; when he finds people who do that, he tries to keep them all together.”

Production was based at the Los Angeles Center Stages in downtown Los Angeles, where several sets were built—including the game-show set of “American Dreamz” as well as the President’s bedroom. Other location work in and around Los Angeles was completed in Sierra Madre, Thousand Oaks, West Hills and at The Ritz Carlton hotel in Pasadena.

Before launching into action, each department head met with Weitz. The comprehensive discussions clarified the production values he wished to create as the backdrop for the story. As costumer Molly Maginnis explains, “We talked about each character in-depth—where they’re from, what their desires are, what they want to put across.”

The “American Dreamz” show set and the costumes worn by each of the contestants was one of the most challenging elements of the film. The set was “all played a little over the top, a little past reality,” explains Arnold.

Gathering inspiration from “American Idol,” Arnold looked not so much to copy the sets, but to draw elements from the show that would translate well into film. “These shows are seen through the television set, and they’re manipulated just from that point of

view. To just repeat that on film would not work. We saw what tricks they used and tried to utilize and adjust a few of them to our medium.”

The set of “American Dreamz” was designed with large, dramatic, freestanding geometric figures that could be lighted in a myriad of ways. It also included several video monitors of various sizes, on which images and colors could be constantly manipulated and adjusted.

The other major set designed and built was the President’s bedroom. This too was built at the Los Angeles Center Studios and was the scene of many of the most important exchanges among Dennis Quaid, Marcia Gay Harden and Willem Dafoe.

The production designer found it quite difficult to get accurate information about the private residence areas of the White House. “But I knew that I wanted it to feel like the room could be in the White House and yet still convey that we are in a different reality,” he remarks. “Everything in it—the moldings, the furniture—is a little over-scale. This way the actors look a little smaller, a little more childlike in that set.”

Costumer Maginnis not only worked in conjunction with Arnold and his team to make sure that the color palettes were compatible with the costumes she designed, but she had to be very aware of the lighting components that cinematographer Robert Elswit was planning to use to highlight the elements of each scene. Working as part of this creative team, Maginnis met constantly with the others to ensure that each costume would work in sync with the other visual elements.

“We would go through the sets and the colors just to make sure that the contestants were not in the same, exact colors. We had technical rehearsals where we did the show within the show. During this time, we brought costumes in so that DP Robert Elswit could look at the clothes with Paul and they could decide if the colors were going to work. It also gave Robert a chance to work with his crew to adjust the lights, as needed.”

Dressing Mandy Moore as Sally was the most fun for Maginnis. “We wanted Mandy to look as adorable as she always does. But at the same time, we wanted to show that Sally is reading *People* and *In Style*, she’s looking at all these things she’s trying to work into her act. After all, Sally is a very savvy girl about where she wants to be; but where she’s come from—that has some limitations for her.”

Typical of the “American Idol” contestants, as each singer moves up the ranks and to the next level within the contest, their appearances so change. The production team felt this would also be important for the film’s hopefuls.

“As they move along, stylists start working with the contestants,” observes Maginnis. “I’d look at what some of these kids would wear. Basically, they are in jeans and a t-shirt when they start. By the end, they’re wearing chiffon gowns with tiaras and rhinestone shoes. It’s pretty hilarious—so we couldn’t go too far.”

Working with Moore to create a progressive look for Sally was gratifying for both the costumer and the actor. “Mandy was willing to have fun with it. She would say, ‘Let’s go. Let’s make it even more funny.’”

Moore reflects, “I think Sally was reeled into the whole experience. Someone was leading her around, letting her shop and helping her pick out clothes. They were telling her what lip gloss looked best...how to wear her hair so that it looked the best for TV. By the end of it, she’s so polished, and she knows exactly what she’s doing and what to wear—a dangly earring, or a rhinestone cuff or some sort of bejeweled necklace.”

Planning out what the bumbling, would-be terrorist Omer would wear as he climbed the “American Dreamz” ladder into the finals was equally challenging for Maginnis. Omer is heavily influenced by his cousins Shazzy and Iqbal and their love of all things MTV-ish. Keeping this in mind, Maginnis had an open canvas to create his look utilizing bright colors and surprising textures. Again, the more exaggerated his look, the better to represent his Orange County influences.

“When his cousins get a hold of him, they just completely subvert his plain style and give him some flash. For his song, “Impossible Dream” we used a corny-looking spandex jacket with the epaulets, so it has kind of a military feel to match the marching sound of the music. It is almost like a marching band uniform.”

With the reality show players dressed, choreographed and as “well” tuned as possible, Weitz knew it was time for his season of “American Dreamz” to commence—and some of his characters’ to prepare for their nasty swan song. The filmmaker closes with his summation of President Staton’s final revelation of the film: “Staton finally realizes, ‘I think that we are all looking for solutions to these problems, but maybe there aren’t gonna be any. Maybe, we need to address how to keep the elements down. Maybe

it's gonna be the kind of thing where the problem needs to be contained as opposed to solved.”

Until then, it seems we'll just keep singing and dancing our hearts out...Nero fiddling while Rome burns.

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Universal Pictures presents A Depth of Field Production of A Paul Weitz Film: Hugh Grant, Dennis Quaid, Mandy Moore star in *American Dreamz* with Marcia Gay Harden, Chris Klein, Jennifer Coolidge and Willem Dafoe. The original score for the film is by Stephen Trask. Costume designs are by Molly Maginnis; the editor is Myron Kerstein; the production designer is William Arnold. The director of photography is Robert Elswit ASC. The executive producers behind *American Dreamz* are Chris Weitz and Kerry Kohansky. The film is produced by Rodney Liber and Andrew Miano. *American Dreamz* is written, produced and directed by Paul Weitz. © 2006 Universal Studios. [www.americandreamzmovie.com](http://www.americandreamzmovie.com).

### **ABOUT THE CAST**

**HUGH GRANT** (Martin Tweed) has been acting for over 20 years. Most recently, Grant returned as Daniel Cleaver in *Bridget Jones: The Edge of Reason*, again starring opposite Renée Zellweger; and in the ensemble film *Love Actually*, Richard Curtis' directorial debut. He also starred in the romantic comedy *Two Weeks Notice*, with Sandra Bullock; and the critically acclaimed *About a Boy*, for which he earned a Golden Globe nomination.

Grant's other recent film credits include *Bridget Jones's Diary*, the highest-grossing movie in British film history at the time of its release—which also starred Zellweger and Colin Firth; and Woody Allen's comedy *Small Time Crooks*, with Tracey Ullman, Jon Lovitz and Allen. In 1999, Grant starred in the box-office hit *Notting Hill* with Julia Roberts, for which he earned a Golden Globe nomination. Later the same year, Grant appeared alongside Jeanne Tripplehorn and James Caan in *Mickey Blue Eyes*. The romantic comedy was the second feature film from Simian Films, the company he set up with Elizabeth Hurley. Grant

also starred in *Extreme Measures*, with Gene Hackman, the first feature film from Simian Films.

In 1994, Grant became an international star when he appeared in *Four Weddings and a Funeral*, directed by Mike Newell and co-starring Andie MacDowell, for which Grant won both a Golden Globe and a British Academy Award. In the same year, he also starred in Roman Polanski's *Bitter Moon*, opposite Kristin Scott Thomas, as well as in *Sirens*, directed by John Duigan.

Grant first came to notice in 1982 while at Oxford University when he made the movie *Privileged*. But it was in the 1987 Merchant-Ivory production of *Maurice*, E.M. Forster's account of a young man at the turn of the century confronting his homosexuality, that Grant first received international acclaim, as well as a Best Actor Award at the Venice Film Festival.

This led to a succession of roles including *The Dawning*, with Anthony Hopkins; Ken Russell's *The Lair of the White Worm*; *The Big Man*, opposite Joanne Whalley-Kilmer; and the role of Chopin in James Lapine's *Impromptu*. Grant was reunited with director James Ivory in 1993 for his pivotal role as a journalist in *The Remains of the Day*, starring Anthony Hopkins and Emma Thompson.

In 1995, Grant appeared as Edward Ferrars in the Oscar®-winning adaptation of Jane Austen's *Sense and Sensibility*; as a nervous father-to-be in Chris Columbus' *Nine Months*, with Julianne Moore and Robin Williams; and in the critically acclaimed *The Englishman Who Went Up a Hill But Came Down a Mountain*, written and directed by Christopher Monger. He was also seen in the British comedy *An Awfully Big Adventure*, directed by Mike Newell, and had a cameo role in the 17<sup>th</sup> century romp *Restoration*.

Among Grant's other film credits are *White Mischief*, *Bengali Nights* and *Rowing in the Wind*.

With every role he plays, **DENNIS QUAID** (President Staton) upholds his place as one of the most charismatic actors of our time. Quaid received honors by the New York Film Critics Circle and the Independent Spirit Awards as Best Supporting Actor of the Year and also garnered nominations for a Golden Globe Award and Screen Actors Guild Award for his emotional turn as a closeted homosexual in 1950s New York in the

critically acclaimed 2002 film, *Far from Heaven*.

Quaid recently starred in Paramount Pictures' film *Yours, Mine and Ours*, a family comedy co-starring Rene Russo; Paul Weitz's *In Good Company*, with Scarlett Johansson and Topher Grace; and in Twentieth Century Fox's remake of *Flight of the Phoenix*, directed by John Moore and produced by John Davis and William Aldrich.

In Summer 2004, Quaid starred in the Twentieth Century Fox action-blockbuster film *The Day After Tomorrow*, directed by Roland Emmerich and as General Sam Houston in Disney's *The Alamo*, which re-teamed him with director John Lee Hancock.

In 2002, Quaid starred in the title role of a high school baseball coach in Disney's box-office hit *The Rookie*, based on the true story of pitcher Jim Morris who makes the major leagues at the age of 35. *The Rookie* was directed by John Lee Hancock and produced by Mark Johnson, Gordon Gray and Mark Ciardi. The film was awarded an ESPY by ESPN for Best Sports Film of the Year.

Quaid appeared in the critically acclaimed Steven Soderbergh suspense drama *Traffic* for USA Films, opposite Michael Douglas and Catherine Zeta-Jones.

In 2001, Quaid starred in HBO's *Dinner with Friends* for director Norman Jewison. Based on Donald Margulies' Pulitzer Prize-winning play, the story explores the strains of modern-day marriages. *Dinner with Friends* received a 2002 Emmy nomination for Best TV Movie.

Quaid also starred in New Line Cinema's 2000 hit *Frequency*, where he played a heroic firefighter who died at a young age, but, due to a time warp, was able to communicate with the son he left behind. The film was written by Toby Emmerich, directed by Greg Hoblit and also starred Jim Caviezel and Andre Braugher.

Quaid also appeared in Warner Bros.' film *Any Given Sunday*, directed by Oliver Stone, where he portrayed a Joe Montana-like quarterback legend who struggled with the demise of his career.

Quaid made his directorial debut for TNT with the television film *Everything That Rises*, the story of a Wyoming man's struggle to hold on to the land passed down through generations, which takes on a new poignancy when his son is critically injured in an auto accident. TNT premiered the film on July 12, 1998. Quaid also starred in Nancy Meyer's box-office hit *The Parent Trap*, a remake of the 1961 classic.

In the fall of 1998, Quaid was seen in the critically acclaimed film *Savior*, directed by Peter Antonijevic. Quaid starred in this realistic and heart-wrenching portrayal of a French-American mercenary who reclaims his humanity by rescuing a girl orphaned by the Bosnian War. Critics hailed his performance as the best of his career.

Quaid also received considerable critical praise for his role as Doc Holliday in the Western *Wyatt Earp* and for the Oscar®-nominated space epic *The Right Stuff*.

Quaid's impressive body of work includes Jeb Stuart's *Switchback*; *Gang Related*, opposite James Belushi; Lasse Hallström's *Something to Talk About*, opposite Julia Roberts and Robert Duvall; the fantasy action-adventure film *Dragonheart*; Steve Kloves' critically acclaimed *Flesh and Bone*; Alan Parker's World War II saga *Come See the Paradise*; Taylor Hackford's *Everybody's All-American*, opposite Jessica Lange; Peter Yates' *Suspect*, with Cher; Annabel Jankel's remake of the 1949 film noir *D.O.A.*; Jim McBride's *The Big Easy*, with Ellen Barkin; and Joe Dante's *Innerspace*. He showcased his musical talents in the films *The Night the Lights Went Out in Georgia*, *Tough Enough* and *Great Balls of Fire!*

Quaid began acting in high school and studied theater at the University of Houston. Soon after his arrival in Hollywood, he landed the plum role of a working-class tough in *Breaking Away*. Other early film credits include *The Long Riders*, with brother Randy Quaid; *9/30/55*; *Crazy Mama*; *Dreamscape*; *All Night Long*; *Our Winning Season*; *Caveman*; *I Never Promised You a Rose Garden*; and *Enemy Mine*.

In 1983, Quaid starred with Mickey Rooney in the Emmy Award-winning television movie *Bill* and its sequel *Bill: On His Own*. A year later, he co-starred with Randy Quaid in the off-Broadway production of Sam Shepard's *True West*, which he later reprised in Los Angeles.

A multi-talent who has achieved a remarkable level of success at a young age as both an actress and recording artist, **MANDY MOORE** (Sally Kendoo) continues to challenge herself and grow with each succeeding project.

Additional films due for release include Richard Kelly's *Southland Tales*. Also starring The Rock, Seann William Scott and Sarah Michelle Gellar, the film is an

ensemble piece set in the futuristic landscape of Los Angeles on July 4, 2008, as it stands on the brink of social, economic and environmental disaster.

Moore will also be seen starring in Universal Pictures and Gold Circle Film's comedy *Because I Said So*. Directed by Michael Lehmann and co-starring Diane Keaton, the film tells the story of a meddling mother (Keaton) who, in order to prevent her daughter (Moore) from making the same mistakes she made, decides to set her up with the perfect man—neglecting to mention that she found the dates through a personal ad.

Moore is currently shooting Plum Pictures' romantic comedy *Dedication*, opposite Billy Crudup, Justin Theroux, Tom Wilkinson, Mia Farrow and Bob Balaban. Directed by Theroux, the story concerns a misogynistic children's author (Crudup) who is forced to collaborate with a young female illustrator (Moore) when his writing partner (and only friend) dies.

Following that film will be Jennifer Elster's *Twist of Fate*, opposite James McAvoy. Moore will play a working-class girl who, along with her boyfriend, has to deal with the repercussions after they fail to report a car accident they are involved in that kills a young local socialite.

Critics and audiences alike took notice of her performance in Brian Dannelly's acclaimed film *Saved!* for United Artists. Moore's take on the perfect Christian girl who uses her personal relationship with Jesus to take advantage of everyone marked another step in her evolution as a film actress. This film was produced by Michael Stipe and Sandy Stern and co-starred Jena Malone, Eva Amurri, Macaulay Culkin, Patrick Fugit and Mary-Louise Parker.

Prior film credits include starring roles in John Turturro's musical *Romance & Cigarettes*, with James Gandolfini, Susan Sarandon, Kate Winslet and Mary-Louise Parker; as well as Andy Cadiff's *Chasing Liberty* for Warner Bros.; and Clare Kilner's *How to Deal* for New Line. Moore lent her voice to the animated comedy *Racing Stripes* and starred opposite Shane West in Adam Shankman's box-office success *A Walk to Remember* for Warner Bros. For this film, she won an MTV Movie Award for Breakthrough Female Performance. She also performed four songs featured on the film's soundtrack.

Moore made her feature-film debut playing a haughty, cruel and popular high school cheerleader in Disney's smash hit comedy *The Princess Diaries*. Directed by Garry Marshall, the film also starred Julie Andrews, Anne Hathaway and Hector Elizondo.

On television, Moore was recently seen on NBC's popular comedy *Scrubs*. She also recently guest starred as herself on the HBO hit series *Entourage*.

Due for release in 2006 will be Moore's fourth album. Distributed by Warner Bros. Records, the album will mark the first time all of the songs are written and/or co-written by Moore herself. Her critically acclaimed album "Coverage," released on October 21, 2003, featured her mature and adventurous approaches to a remarkable collection of classic and personal favorite songs by Elton John, Joan Armatrading, Todd Rundgren, Cat Stevens—among many others. It was Moore's idea to bring these songs to a younger generation, and her performance and interpretation of them further established her as a musical artist of note.

As a recording artist, Moore came to national attention with the 1999 release of her debut album "So Real," which reached platinum status in a remarkable three months and produced the top-ten single "Candy." Moore's second album, "I Wanna Be With You" (Special Edition), was released in May, 2000, and also went platinum. Her self-titled third album, another major seller, featured the hit single "Cry. "

Moore launched an exclusive line of contemporary tees based on her original concepts and designs called MBLEM. MBLEM is available in over 100 various trendsetting boutiques across the nation.

Moore was raised in Orlando, Florida, and currently lives in Los Angeles.

One of film, theater and television's uniquely original talents, the versatile **MARCIA GAY HARDEN** (First Lady) garnered a second Academy Award® nomination for Best Supporting Actress for her performance as Celeste Boyle in *Mystic River*, the critically acclaimed film by the legendary Clint Eastwood, in 2004. Harden plays the wife of Tim Robbins' character whose doubt about his innocence in a gruesome murder drives her away from her troubled husband. The stellar cast includes Sean Penn, Kevin Bacon, Laurence Fishburne and Laura Linney.

Next up for Harden is IFC's *American Gun*, which premiered at the 2005 Toronto Film Festival. Forest Whitaker and Donald Sutherland also star in the film. Later this year, Harden plays Richard Gere's wife in the Lasse Hallström film *Hoax*, which also stars Alfred Molina. Additionally, Harden stars in Disney's *The Invisible*, directed by Davis S. Goyer. Recent films include Paramount Pictures' *Bad News Bears*, opposite Billy Bob Thornton and Greg Kinnear; the Fox comedy *Welcome to Mooseport*, opposite Gene Hackman and Ray Romano; as well as Dylan Kidd's *P.S.*, opposite Laura Linney.

2003 proved to be a busy year for Harden with three films in release; the above-mentioned *Mystic River*; Revolution Studios' *Mona Lisa Smile*, directed by Mike Newell. In the film, Harden's character Nancy Abbey plays a teacher and a friend to Julia Roberts' character. The film also stars Julia Stiles, Kirsten Dunst and Maggie Gyllenhaal. Additionally, Harden was featured as part of a brilliant ensemble in *Casa de los Babys*, the story of six American women who travel to Mexico to adopt babies. The film is written and directed by legendary filmmaker John Sayles. Harden co-starred along with Daryl Hannah, Lili Taylor, Mary Steenburgen, Rita Moreno and Maggie Gyllenhaal. The film premiered at the Toronto Film Festival in 2003.

Harden won the Academy Award® in 2001 for her stunning portrayal of Lee Krasner, opposite Ed Harris, in the feature film *Pollock*—about pioneer abstract expressionist painter Jackson Pollock and his artist wife. The film re-teamed her with Harris, with whom she last performed on stage in the New York Shakespeare Festival premiere production of Sam Shephard's *Simpatico*. In addition to the Oscar® that year, Harden won the New York Film Critics Award for best supporting actress and was nominated for an Independent Spirit Award.

The Coen brothers directing team discovered Harden, giving her the female lead in their critically acclaimed feature *Miller's Crossing*, opposite Albert Finney, Gabriel Byrne and John Turturro. She moved on to the leads in *Late for Dinner* and *Used People*. Other features include the Warner Bros.' film *Space Cowboys*, directed by Clint Eastwood and starring Eastwood, Tommy Lee Jones, Donald Sutherland and James Garner; *Meet Joe Black*, which starred Brad Pitt and Anthony Hopkins; Walt Disney's hit *Flubber*, with Robin Williams; *Desperate Measures*, with Andy Garcia and Michael Keaton; *Safe Passage*, with Susan Sarandon, Sam Shepard and Robert Sean Leonard; the

highly acclaimed independent feature *Crush*, which was a hit at the Cannes Film Festival; the blockbuster comedy *The First Wives Club*; and *Gaudi Afternoon*, shot on location in Barcelona. This film was directed by Susan Seidelman and starred Judy Davis, Juliette Lewis and Lili Taylor.

She received the Spirit of Sundance Award for her richly layered work in *The Spitfire Grill*, which also won the audience award at Sundance.

Television appearances include appearing opposite Patrick Stewart in *King of Texas* for TNT—an epic Western that transplanted Shakespeare’s *King Lear* to 1840’s Texas; the CBS drama series *The Education of Max Bickford*, opposite Richard Dreyfuss; and the highly rated A&E original movie *Small Vices*, opposite Joe Mantegna. Additionally, Harden re-teamed with Mantegna for A&E’s *Thin Air*, as well as the CBS movie of the week *Guilty Hearts*. In 1992, Harden quickly came to the attention of television audiences for her portrayal of Ava Gardner in the CBS mini-series *Sinatra*.

Harden was featured on Broadway in Tony Kushner’s Pulitzer Prize-winning play *Angels in America*, which earned her a Tony nomination, a Drama Desk Award and a Theater World Award. She also starred in David Rabe’s *Those the River Keeps*. Harden most recently walked the boards as Masha in New York Public Theater’s production of *The Seagull*, directed by the esteemed Mike Nichols and starring Meryl Streep, Kevin Kline, Philip Seymour Hoffman and Natalie Portman.

The actress graduated from the University of Texas with a B.A. in Theater and went on to earn an MFA from the graduate theater program at New York University.

With a diverse body of work behind him and starring roles in some of the most dynamic films, **CHRIS KLEIN** (William Williams) has quickly established himself as one of Hollywood’s most sought-after young actors. He was recently seen in *Just Friends*, opposite Ryan Reynolds, Anna Faris and Amy Smart.

Klein is currently preparing for roles in two new projects, both set to film this spring: *The Good Life*, with Zooey Deschanel, Harry Dean Stanton and Patrick Fugit; and *Day Zero*, with Ginnifer Goodwin and Elijah Wood.

His latest work includes Paramount Classics’ *The United States of Leland*, co-starring Kevin Spacey, Ryan Gosling and Don Cheadle; the independent feature *The*

*Long Weekend*, for director Pat Holden and co-starring Brendan Fehr; *Lenexa 1 Mile*, the directorial debut of Jason Wiles and the CBS Television movie *The Valley of Light*, opposite Gretchen Mol.

On stage, Klein recently starred in *This is Our Youth* in London's West End, playing the role of Dennis. He joined Freddie Prinze Jr. and Heather Burns playing a trio of rich New York teenagers caught up in the new yuppie culture of the early '80s.

After the box-office success of *American Pie*, Klein reprised his role of Oz in *American Pie 2* in 2001. Klein also starred in Paramount's Vietnam epic *We Were Soldiers*, with Mel Gibson; in John McTiernan's *Rollerball* for MGM; *Here on Earth*, with Leelee Sobieski and Josh Hartnett; and in 20<sup>th</sup> Century Fox's comedy *Say It Isn't So*, opposite Heather Graham, produced by the Farrelly Brothers.

Born in Chicago, Klein moved to Omaha, Nebraska at the age of 13. Wanting to act since he sang his first solo in the church choir in fourth grade, Klein starred in several school stage productions including the role of Tony in *West Side Story*. It was during his senior year at Millard West High School in Omaha that he literally bumped into director Alexander Payne as he was scouting Klein's high school as a possible location for *Election*. After an audition for Payne, and only four weeks into his first semester at Texas Christian University where he was studying dramatic arts, Klein received the offer to star in *Election* opposite Reese Witherspoon and Matthew Broderick. Klein's portrayal of the dimwitted jock Paul Metzler earned him praise throughout the industry, including a Chicago Film Critics nomination as Most Promising Newcomer, and *Election* went on to be nominated for an Academy Award® for Best Original Screenplay and Independent Spirit Awards for Best Picture and Best Screenplay.

**JENNIFER COOLIDGE** (Martha Kendo) is noted for the distinct and unique characters she creates, and she has established a reputation as one of Hollywood's most versatile and celebrated talents.

Coolidge can currently be seen on NBC's hit comedy series *Joey*, opposite Matt LeBlanc and Drea de Matteo. She plays Bobbie, Joey's tough-as-nails and blunt-to-a-fault talent agent on the show. Most recently, Coolidge appeared in *Lemony Snicket's A*

*Series of Unfortunate Events* and lent her vocal talents alongside Robin Williams, Ewan McGregor and Halle Berry in the animated film *Robots*.

In 2003, Coolidge was seen in two of the biggest grossing comedies of the summer. In *Legally Blonde 2: Red, White & Blonde*, she reprised her role opposite Reese Witherspoon as Paulette, the manicurist who becomes an important ally to Witherspoon's character. She also reprised her popular role as Stifler's mom in the third installment of the highly successful *American Pie* trilogy, *American Wedding*.

Coolidge is probably best known for her breakout performance in Christopher Guest's critically acclaimed *Best in Show* in an unforgettable role as a woman whose love for her 95-year-old husband encompasses such similarities as a taste for peas and soup. She followed this up with 2003's *A Mighty Wind*, once again for director Guest.

In 2002, Coolidge starred in the Broadway production of Claire Boothe Luce's comedy *The Women* and was nominated for a Drama Desk Award for Best Featured Actress in a Play. The all-star cast also featured Kristen Johnson, Rue McClanahan, Cynthia Nixon and Mary Louise Wilson.

On the small screen, Coolidge has appeared on *Sex and the City*, *Friends*, *Frasier* and *Seinfeld*. Her voice was also featured in recurring roles in Fox's animated hit series *King of the Hill*.

Coolidge earned her Bachelor of Arts degree from Emerson College and soon thereafter started her career at the renowned Groundlings Theatre in Los Angeles. She currently resides in Los Angeles.

**WILLEM DAFOE** (Chief of Staff) was nominated for a 2000 Academy Award®, a Golden Globe and a SAG Award, and received the Independent Spirit Award for Best Supporting Male for his transformational performance as Max Schreck in *Shadow of the Vampire*. He was also named Best Supporting Actor by the Los Angeles Film Critics and runner-up by the New York Film Critics. He starred in two of the number-one box-office films of recent years: Sam Raimi's 2002 summer box-office hit, *Spider-Man*, as Norman Osborn/the Green Goblin, the rival of the iconic, web-spinning hero; and in *Finding Nemo* as Gill, the Moorish Idol who constantly plots to escape his captivity.

Dafoe was most recently seen in Wes Anderson's *The Life Aquatic*, opposite Bill Murray, Owen Wilson and Cate Blanchett; Lars von Trier's *Manderlay*; *The Aviator*, in which he reunited with Martin Scorsese; and *xXx: State of the Union*. His upcoming releases include Giada Colagrande's *Before It Had a Name* (co-written by Dafoe); and Henry Miller's *Anamorph*, in which he stars as a detective on the trail of a copycat serial killer.

Dafoe has made a name for himself working with some of the most critically acclaimed directors in the world: with his turn as David Caravaggio the thumbless thief in Anthony Minghella's Academy Award®-winning drama *The English Patient*; his Academy Award®-nominated performance as Sergeant Elias Grodin in Oliver Stone's *Platoon*; his starring role in *The Last Temptation of Christ* for director Martin Scorsese; his memorable turn as lowlife Bobby Peru for David Lynch in *Wild at Heart*; and his role as a civil rights activist in Alan Parker's *Mississippi Burning*.

Dafoe's credits also include three films with Paul Schrader (*Auto Focus*, *Affliction* and *Light Sleeper*); *The Clearing*; *Ripley Under Ground*; *The Reckoning*; *Animal Factory*; *American Psycho*; *The Boondock Saints*; David Cronenberg's *eXistenZ*; *Lulu on the Bridge*; *New Rose Hotel*; *Pavilion of Women*; *Faraway, So Close!*; *Speed 2: Cruise Control*; *Tom & Viv*; *Clear and Present Danger*; *Born on the Fourth of July*; *Triumph of the Spirit*; *White Sands*; *To Live and Die in L.A.*; *Streets of Fire*; and *The Loveless*.

Dafoe is one of the founding members of The Wooster Group, the New York-based experimental theater collective. He has created and performed in the group's work since 1977, both in the U.S. and internationally.

He may currently be seen in Spike Lee's *Inside Man*, opposite Denzel Washington.

## **ABOUT THE FILMMAKERS**

**PAUL WEITZ** (Written, Produced and Directed by) most recently wrote, directed and—along with his brother and frequent collaborator, Chris Weitz—produced the critically acclaimed film, *In Good Company*. He also co-directed the award-winning hit *About a Boy* with his brother, also adapting the screenplay from Nick Hornby's novel.

The screenplay received an Academy Award® nomination for Best Adapted Screenplay, as well as similar nominations from BAFTA, Writers Guild, Chicago Film Critics and Humanitas; the film was named one of AFI's Movies of the Year and was nominated for Golden Globe and Golden Satellite awards for Best Comedy, winning Best Studio Comedy Feature at the U.S. Comedy Arts Festival.

In 1999, Paul and Chris Weitz formed Depth of Field, their Los Angeles-based production company. Their diverse slate of upcoming projects include *A Stolen Life*, a remake of the Bette Davis classic to be directed by Miguel Arteta (*The Good Girl*); the feature adaptation of Michael Moorcock's fantasy epic *The Elric Saga*; the comedies *Army Geek* and *The Last Bachelor Party*; and the WWI drama *Silent Night*.

Weitz made his feature directorial debut teaming with his brother on *American Pie*, the phenomenally successful first installment of the *Pie* franchise.

Prior to their screenwriting work on *About a Boy*, the brothers collaborated on several screenplays, including *Antz*. Weitz also made his acting debut in the Sundance Film Festival hit *Chuck&Buck*.

Born in New York, Weitz's grandfather was fabled agent Paul Kohner (who represented filmmakers such as John Huston, Billy Wilder and Ingmar Bergman), and his parents are fashion designer/writer John Weitz and Oscar®-nominated actress Susan Kohner.

Weitz graduated from Wesleyan University with a degree in film. His last year there, his play *Mango Tea* was produced off-Broadway with Marisa Tomei and Rob Morrow by New York's Ensemble Studio Theatre (EST). EST also produced his next works, *Captive* and *All for One*; and, most recently, the ensemble comedy *Roulette*, starring Larry Bryggman, Anna Paquin, Ana Gasteyer and Shawn Hatosy (which *The New York Times* cited as an "original jewel"). *Privilege* was recently produced by the Second Stage Theatre.

**RODNEY LIBER** (Produced by) was most recently executive producer on Paul Weitz's critically acclaimed film *In Good Company* and on the box-office hit *Big Momma's House*, starring Martin Lawrence.

Previously, Liber served as producer on the sexual thriller *Wild Things*, starring Kevin Bacon, Matt Dillon and Neve Campbell; and on *Dunston Checks In*, starring Jason Alexander, Rupert Everett and Faye Dunaway. He also served as production consultant on *Bad Girls*, with Drew Barrymore; and *Cousin Bette*, starring Jessica Lange.

As a vice president of production for 20<sup>th</sup> Century Fox, Liber worked with director Michael Mann on *The Last of the Mohicans*; Ron Shelton on *White Men Can't Jump*; and Jim Abrahams on the comedy *Hot Shots: The Movie*. He also supervised production on *My Cousin Vinny* and the John Hughes comedy *Dutch*.

Liber began his career working in as a production assistant on feature films such as *F/X* and *Ruthless People*. At age 27, he supervised production on Disney's summer blockbuster *Dick Tracy*, directed by and starring Warren Beatty, along with an all-star cast.

**ANDREW MIANO** (Produced by) most recently executive produced Paul Weitz's critically acclaimed film *In Good Company*. He partnered with Paul and Chris Weitz in 1999, overseeing all phases of production at Depth of Field, their Los Angeles-based production company. Their diverse slate of upcoming projects include the feature adaptation of Michael Moorcock's fantasy epic *The Elric Saga* for Universal Studios and the comedies *Army Geek* and *The Last Bachelor Party*. Also in development is *Nick & Norah's Infinite Playlist* for Focus Features; as well as *The Game*, which Miano will produce, from best-selling author Neil Strauss.

Miano also served as a producer on the WB television series *Off Centre* and is currently overseeing Depth of Field's recently finalized television deal with NBC Universal Television.

Prior to joining the Weitz brothers, Miano worked for three years at the William Morris Agency, where he started in their agent trainee program. Miano is a graduate of SUNY Oswego, where he earned a Bachelors of Arts degree in theatre and creative writing.

Director/writer/producer **CHRIS WEITZ** (Executive Producer) most recently produced the critically acclaimed film, *In Good Company*, along with his brother and collaborator, Paul Weitz. He previously co-directed, with his brother, the award-winning hit film *About a Boy*, adapting the screenplay from the Nick Hornby novel. The screenplay received an Academy Award® nomination for Best Adapted Screenplay, as well as similar nominations from BAFTA, Writers Guild, Chicago Film Critics and Humanitas; the film was named one of AFI's Movies of the Year and was nominated for the Golden Globe award for Best Comedy, winning Best Studio Comedy Feature at the U.S. Comedy Arts Festival.

Weitz is adapting the fantasy epic *His Dark Materials: The Golden Compass*, the motion picture adaptation of the first book from author Philip Pullman's immensely popular young adult novel series.

In 1999, Weitz and his brother formed Depth of Field, their Los Angeles-based production company. Their diverse slate of upcoming projects include *A Stolen Life*, a remake of the Bette Davis classic to be directed by Miguel Arteta (*The Good Girl*); the feature adaptation of Michael Moorcock's fantasy epic *The Elric Saga*; the comedies *Army Geek* and *The Last Bachelor Party*; and the WWI drama *Silent Night*.

Weitz's first directorial collaboration with Paul was on *American Pie*, the phenomenally successful first installment of the *Pie* franchise, which was followed by *American Pie 2* and the final installment, *American Wedding*, both of which he also executive produced.

Prior to their screenwriting work on *About a Boy*, the brothers collaborated on several screenplays, including *Antz* and *Madeline* (adapting the popular children's book). Chris also made his acting debut in the Sundance Film Festival hit *Chuck&Buck*.

Born in New York, Weitz earned his Bachelors and Masters degrees in English literature at Cambridge University. He went on to work as a journalist for several newspapers in the U.K. and U.S. before starting to work in film.

**KERRY KOHANSKY** (Executive Producer) most recently co-produced Paul Weitz's critically acclaimed film *In Good Company*. She currently serves as vice president of development at Depth of Field, Paul and Chris Weitz's Los Angeles-based

production company. Kohansky is currently overseeing development on a diverse slate of upcoming projects including *Army Geek*, written and to be directed by Brian Dannelly, and Michael Urban (*Saved!*); *Nick and Nora's Infinite Playlist*; *The Last Bachelor Party*; and *The Pursuit of Alice Thrift*.

She joined Depth of Field in January 2001 after working in the development department of The Shooting Gallery and the literary department at the William Morris Agency. Kohansky is a graduate of NYU's Tisch School of the Arts with a degree in film and television.

**ROBERT ELSWIT ASC** (Director of Photography) most recently served as cinematographer on George Clooney's *Good Night, and Good Luck.*, as well as Stephen Gaghan's *Syriana*, starring George Clooney, Matt Damon and Amanda Peet.

He previously collaborated with director Gary Fleder on *Runaway Jury* and *Impostor* and with Paul Thomas Anderson on *Punch-Drunk Love*, starring Adam Sandler, as well as Anderson's *Magnolia*, *Boogie Nights* and *Hard Eight*.

Elswit's other recent films include Martin Brest's *Gigli*; David Mamet's *Heist*; *Bounce*, starring Gwyneth Paltrow and Ben Affleck; and *8MM*, starring Nicolas Cage. Additional feature credits include *Tomorrow Never Dies*; *Boys*, starring Winona Ryder; *The Pallbearer*; *The River Wild*, starring Meryl Streep; *A Dangerous Woman*; *Waterland*; *The Hand That Rocks the Cradle*; *Bad Influence*; *Heart of Dixie*; *Return of the Living Dead Part II*; *Amazing Grace and Chuck*; *Trick or Treat*; *Desert Hearts*; *Moving Violations*; *The Sure Thing*, starring John Cusack; and *Waltz Across Texas*.

**WILLIAM ARNOLD** (Production Designer) most recently crafted the production design for Paul Weitz's *In Good Company*, as well as Wayne Wang's *Last Holiday* and Steve Martin's *Shopgirl*.

Arnold studied theater and design in his native state of Rhode Island before moving to Chicago to pursue his career in the theater. While there, he began working on motion pictures and eventually became art director on feature films such as *Music Box*, *Losing Isaiah*, *The Bridges of Madison County*, *Primal Fear* and *Snow Falling on Cedars*. Since moving to Los Angeles, his art direction credits have also included *L.A.*

*Confidential* and *Pleasantville*, with both pictures garnering Academy Award® nominations for Best Art Direction.

Arnold made his debut as a production designer on the feature film *Mo' Money*. His other feature production design credits include *Magnolia*, *Punch-Drunk Love* and *Confidence*.

**MYRON KERSTEIN** (Editor) began his career in editing working on a variety of projects, among them Michael Moore's television series *TV Nation* and Todd Haynes' celebrated feature film *Velvet Goldmine*.

More recently, Kerstein served as editor on Paul Weitz's *In Good Company*, Peter Sollett's *Raising Victor Vargas*, Todd Graff's musical *Camp* and two entries in last year's Sundance Film Festival: *Chrystal* and Zach Braff's acclaimed *Garden State*.

His first film as an editor was James Toback's subversive indie feature *Black and White*. Additional credits include the television documentary *Hollywood High* and the feature *Hedwig and the Angry Inch*.

**MOLLY MAGINNIS** (Costume Designer) continues her collaboration with Paul Weitz, after designing the costumes for her most recent project, Weitz's *In Good Company*. Previously, Maginnis worked with such talents as Lawrence Kasdan (*Dreamcatcher*), Irwin Winkler (*Life as a House*), Peter Chelsom (*Town & Country*), Ron Underwood (*Mighty Joe Young*), James L. Brooks (the multiple Academy Award® winners *As Good as It Gets* and *Broadcast News*), Stephen Frears (the live telefilm *Fail Safe*), Jon Avnet (*The War*), Alan Parker (*Come See the Paradise*) and Amy Heckerling (*Look Who's Talking*).

On television, Maginnis' work includes the costuming for the miniseries *Tales of the City*, which netted her a BAFTA nomination for Best Costume Design. She also created the costumes for the live telefilm version of *On Golden Pond*, starring Julie Andrews and Christopher Plummer.

Maginnis' work will next be seen in *The Shaggy Dog* and *Flicka*.

Versatile composer **STEPHEN TRASK** (Original Score by) is the co-creator, composer/lyricist of the off-Broadway musical, multiple award-winning *Hedwig and the Angry Inch*, which developed into the feature film release by Fine Line Features. His instrumental score for the movie was his feature film debut, and the film's soundtrack was Stephen's first commercial release as a record producer.

Immediately thereafter, Trask was tapped by director Alex Steyermark to score and produce songs for *Prey for Rock & Roll*, starring Gina Gershon. For *Prey*, Trask assembled an all-star, all-girl rock band featuring Sara Lee (Gang of Four, Indigo Girls and The B-52's), Sam Maloney (Hole and Mötley Crüe), Cheri Lovedog (who wrote the screenplay and the songs) and rock legend Joan Jett.

Then, Tom McCarthy called Trask to score the award-winning *The Station Agent* (Miramax), which he followed up with Paul Weitz's *In Good Company*. Currently, Trask is in development at National Artists with Barry Weisler with the stage adaptation of *Clueless*; Trask serves as composer/lyricist.

For *Hedwig*, Trask received an Obie Award; the Outer Critics Circle Award for Outstanding off-Broadway Musical; a 1998 *New York Magazine* award; Drama Desk nominations for Outstanding Music, Lyrics and New Musical; a Grammy nomination for Best Cast Album; two GLAMA Awards; and *Entertainment Weekly's* Best Soundtrack Award for 2001.

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-american dreamz-