

# ASSAULT ON PRECINCT 13

## Synopsis

To survive the night, cops and criminals alike will have to unite and fight. A classic head-to-head showdown ignites in **Assault on Precinct 13**, an all-new update of the 1976 action thriller of the same name.

With only a few hours left in the calendar year, Precinct 13, one of Detroit's oldest precinct houses, is closing. Amid heavy snowfall and unsafe road conditions, only a few lawmen remain on duty for New Year's Eve. They are headed by Sergeant Jake Roenick (Ethan Hawke), a good cop wrestling with bad memories of a fatal undercover op from the previous spring. Roenick and Precinct 13 have both seen better days. Early on December 31<sup>st</sup>, deep in the city, formidable crime lord Marion Bishop (Laurence Fishburne), is cornered by an undercover cop. Their ensuing struggle leaves the cop dead – and Bishop captured, by the Organized Crime and Racketeering squad that Marcus Duvall (Gabriel Byrne) runs. Bishop is handcuffed and herded onto a prison bus with several criminals: junkie Beck (John Leguizamo), hustler Smiley (Jeffrey “Ja Rule” Atkins), and gang member Anna (Aisha Hinds). But the battering snowstorm stops the bus well short of its high-security destination and strands it at the remote Precinct 13 – where, as night falls, the prisoners are temporarily incarcerated. This influx of prisoners irks Roenick, almost as much as visiting police psychologist Alex Sabian (Maria Bello) does. But Precinct 13's provocative secretary Iris Ferry (Drea de Matteo) and salty veteran cop Jasper “Old School” O’Shea (Brian Dennehy) won't let the increasing workload deter them from celebrating...

...until two masked gunmen break in and attack the guards from the bus. The gunmen are just barely beaten back, and everyone inside Precinct 13 realizes that more will come – to extract crime lord Bishop, but also armed and ready to shoot anyone and everyone else. The cops, looking to the reluctant Roenick for leadership, and the cons, looking to the steely Bishop for an angle, must join forces to live. Fortifying themselves with minimal weaponry and maximum courage, they will not go gently into the bad night. As they fight to the death, the thin lines between good and bad bleed together.

Rogue Pictures presents A Why Not/Liaison Films/Biscayne Pictures Production. Ethan Hawke, Laurence Fishburne. **Assault on Precinct 13**. John Leguizamo, Maria Bello, Jeffrey “Ja Rule” Atkins, Drea de Matteo, Matt Craven. With Brian Dennehy and Gabriel Byrne. Visual Effects Supervisor, Dennis Berardi. Casting by Billy Hopkins, Suzanne Smith, Kerry Barden. Costume Designers, Vicki Graef, Georgina Yarhi. Music Supervisor, John Houlihan. Music by Graeme Revell. Editor, Bill Pankow, A.C.E. Production Designer, Paul Denham Austerberry. Director of Photography, Robert Gantz. Co-Producer, James DeMonaco. Executive Producers, Don Carmody, Sebastien Kurt Lemercier, Joseph Kaufman. Produced by Pascal Caucheteux, Stephane Sperry, Jeffrey Silver. Based on the film written by John Carpenter. Screenplay by James DeMonaco. Directed by Jean-François Richet. A Rogue Pictures Release.

# ASSAULT ON PRECINCT 13

## Director's Statement

I already knew that John Carpenter's film *Assault on Precinct 13* was a cult classic when Pascal Caucheteux and I began discussing a new version.

Our challenge in making **Assault on Precinct 13**, or **AP13**, was to modernize the material without weakening the way the tension ratchets up. I think James DeMonaco's screenplay achieves this perfectly; he has created a great new character-based action thriller.

Just as John Carpenter had referred to Howard Hawks' *Rio Bravo*, I looked to the Western genre to inspire me for the new film. Obviously the surface question is the physical survival of our characters but, even more importantly, their moral survival is at stake. The core of **AP13** is the union of two fundamentally opposed men, Roenick and Bishop. One is a broken hero who must face down his demons; the other is a cold-blooded racketeer. They must band together, like it or not, to fight a third force which neither respects the law of the people nor the rules of crime. Thus, the spirit of *Rio Bravo* endures in an otherwise high-tech action movie.

Precinct 13 is a deadly trap for Roenick, Bishop, Alex, and the others, yet it's also a deadly trap for Duvall. The siege situation asks of them all how far they want to go and what path they will choose. The way each character interacts with the others is the key to this story. The precinct becomes the stage for these revelations, and where the lines of good and evil are blurred.

Visually speaking, I wanted the film to be dynamic but also gritty and dark, reflecting the claustrophobic and tense atmosphere of the script. I felt that it was very important to depict the violence as realistically as possible. The more realistic the fights, the higher the tension.

The old precinct is set against a stark white landscape. This sets the tone for the interaction and the conflicts, external and internal, of the characters.

The actors are the most important parts of our project, communicating fear, bravery, humility, and strength to our audience – who will then relate to the ultimate tests our characters are facing.

-- Jean-François Richet

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## About the Production

A storytelling torch is carried into the 21<sup>st</sup> century with **Assault on Precinct 13**. Performance firepower from the troupe of actors complements and enhances the twists and turns of an all-new film updating writer/director John Carpenter's 1976 feature of the same name, which was itself inspired by Howard Hawks' 1959 *Rio Bravo*. The impulse is constant – to entertain and excite filmgoers with an action-packed thriller revolving around a showdown.

The latter-day filmmakers see their movie, **AP13**, as a re-imagining of the 1976 film, rather than a remake in the traditional sense. The title and the basic concept of a group of people from both sides of the law under siege in a doomed police precinct remain, but the characters and story have been updated.

The concept of updating the Carpenter movie first occurred to producer Pascal Caucheteux, the head of Why Not Productions, in 1997. At the time, he was producing director Jean-François Richet's second feature, *Ma 6-T va crack-er (Crack City)*. As executive producer Sebastien Kurt Lemercier (also of Why Not) remembers it, "Pascal was looking at Jean-François' film in the editing room and thought there was a feel, a vibrancy to it that reminded him of one of his favorite movies – *Assault on Precinct 13*. There was an urban western quality to the violence that Jean-François had captured which sparked his remembrance of the John Carpenter movie.

"So, at that very moment, Pascal said to me that we should contact Carpenter and try to find a way to remake his movie! It took quite a while to get in touch with him. We e-mailed him to explain that we were a smaller French company, producing auteur films for art houses. We also got in touch with his lawyer. Then, suddenly, we got an answer back from Carpenter's wife that we could meet with him in L.A."

The two French producers promptly flew to California and met with Carpenter in the garage office of his home. Lemercier recalls, "John sat behind his desk, surrounded by this beautiful library full of books – science-fiction books, books about cinema. We spoke about our doing a remake. John said, 'Okay, let me look at [Jean-François]' movie and then we'll speak about it more.' We gave him a tape of Jean-François' movie [*Ma 6-T va crack-er*] – and we also gave him this very beautiful vintage French poster of *Rio Bravo*. That was what really broke the ice, because John reveres Howard Hawks and had quoted the Western throughout his movie, which is really an urban Western. John basically invented that genre with *Assault on Precinct 13*, and we wanted to make an urban Western of our own."

During that first meeting, Carpenter made some incisive comments and suggestions that helped shape the direction in which **AP13** would go. Caucheteux notes, "There was this newspaper story about LAPD corruption and, almost jokingly, we said, 'It could be the

cops attacking.’ He thought that made perfect sense. That put us on to the whole new idea of corrupted cops as the bad guys.

“When Carpenter saw the tape of Jean-François’ film, he was impressed by the raw energy and the roughness of the style. He truly appreciated the film.”

Soon after, Carpenter was invited to the Turin Film Festival in Italy. He suggested that Caucheteux and Lemercier meet him there. They did, and Carpenter agreed to sell Why Not the rights if Ríchet would direct the movie.

Why Not bought both the French and English-language remake rights. But Ríchet felt strongly that he should make the movie in English, with an American setting. So intent was the director on this plan of attack that the producers sent him to Brooklyn for six months to study English.

Ríchet also wrote a draft of the screenplay, but, as Caucheteux comments, “He felt that since this would be an American movie, someone who knew the dramatics of American moviemaking should script it.” With everyone agreed on that decision, the filmmakers turned to screenwriter James DeMonaco, whose *The Negotiator* had also revolved around a standoff.

Lemercier says, “When Jean-François and James were introduced, they became fast friends. They immediately hit it off, speaking about what they both love – Westerns, action movies of the 1970s, directors like Sam Peckinpah and Arthur Penn.”

Ríchet adds, “James and I developed a close working relationship. Within a year, we had a terrific script that we knew would attract a great ensemble cast. The reason being, the script is different from most action movies being made today, which are just about action. This movie is about the characters. We wanted the spirit of this movie to be more like films from the 1970s, or [the earlier] *Bullitt* and *The Great Escape*.”

DeMonaco has admired Carpenter’s original movie for some time, revealing, “Ever since I was a kid, I’ve loved movies that take place in one spot; I love siege movies. It was the second movie that I ever rented on video, and I loved it; I was 13 years old, we’d just gotten our first VCR, and I went to the video store and rented *Fort Apache, the Bronx* and *Assault on Precinct 13*.” When Caucheteux contacted him about writing the new version, DeMonaco was interested but also cautious.

The screenwriter remembers, “I was enthusiastic about the prospect, but I wanted to know if John Carpenter was giving his blessing to the project. I didn’t want to write it if he wasn’t happy that it was going to be made. But when they told me he sold them the rights, was totally on board, and would even give me notes on the script...then I got very excited to take the original idea somewhere new.

“I felt we could do something completely different, more plot-driven and character-driven than the original movie. The Carpenter version was a visceral, gritty, hardcore violent experience. It was great, but I figured we could update it and get deeper in.”

DeMonaco elaborates, “This way, we could surprise the audience much more with the plot twists and not just with the action beats. The main plot elements that we retained were the convicts and the cops teaming up against this invading force on the outside, as well as the tension of it being in one spot and in one night. That element allows for more tension than in the typical action movie.”

As had been discussed in Carpenter’s garage, the enemy force attacking the precinct was to be changed. DeMonaco says, “The original film was based upon a gang threat in society that I don’t think exists as much today. So we veered away from that. The opposing force we have in **AP13** gives the plot a big twist that the original didn’t have.

“We’re echoing the dynamic between the two main characters from the earlier film, the sergeant [Bishop] who’s running the precinct and the criminal Napoleon Wilson, but everything else is completely new. Roenick [played by Ethan Hawke] and Marion Bishop [played by Laurence Fishburne] are new characters; we just kept the idea of a bad criminal teaming up with a good cop. Going all the way back to *Rio Bravo* – another of my favorite movies – the Dean Martin character, with aspects of the Walter Brennan character, is kind of reincarnated in Jasper [played by Brian Dennehy].”

For the American screenwriter, working with the French director on the project was a unique collaboration. DeMonaco admits, “At first, I was concerned about the language barrier. For Jean-François, English is a second language, and I don’t speak French, but from the first time we met there was no language problem at all. We love the same movies, so we came together and quickly figured how we wanted to do this.”

After several drafts of the screenplay were done, Caucheteux brought the project to producer Stephane Sperry and his Liaison Films. Sperry states, “When Pascal came to me with the project, the script and the proven ability of Jean-François convinced me that this new movie, with a different sensibility from the original, could stand and succeed on its own.”

Additional American moviemaking expertise came in the form of producer Jeffrey Silver, who boarded the project soon after the film got the go-ahead. He notes, “John Carpenter’s always been a favorite, so taking this on was daunting, but irresistible. I really responded to James’ screenplay and was very impressed when I met with Jean-François. I loved the prospect of making an American genre movie with a French director. That makes it more interesting, as does the fact that the new script trumps convention by making character the most important element within a genre piece, as opposed to plot.

“I thought *Ma 6-T va crack-er* was very strong – immediate, visceral, dynamic, frenetic, and all completely shot with a handheld camera. Jean-François used real people from the projects where he grew up. He’s literally a man of the streets, something a lot of people

in Hollywood pretend to be. But Jean-François is the real deal. I knew he could bring that urgency to **AP13**.”

When Ríchet and Silver began discussing the project, the producer sought to find out what qualities were important to the director. Silver remembers, “What Jean-François wanted was ‘first and foremost, realism. We start from there.’ And we did...Yes, we were making a movie, but Jean-François wanted to impart, say, how police and S.W.A.T. really react to attack. What’s it like inside a narc sting? What does it look like when a bullet actually hits a bulletproof vest, or pierces someone’s arm? He wanted reality, so we did research. We looked at forensics. We consulted police investigators. Unlike the typical action film, where the body count is prominent yet seemingly also irrelevant, Jean-François wanted every killing to matter. He wanted us to feel for the person being killed, for the audience to know that it was a real human being. For this reason, it was imperative to be real.

“So, I don’t believe that we have gratuitous violence in the movie. Instead, we have violence which resonates. This harkens back to the 1970s films, which was important to Jean-François and to me as well. That’s where my inspirations were – *Straw Dogs*, *The French Connection*.”

Silver further clarifies, “In the original movie, the attackers outside were criminals. In our movie, they’re dirty cops. For us, that was more relevant to what’s going on today. People are aware of the good and the bad side of official power in the cities of America today, so we thought that was the most relevant way to update the story.”

When it came to these all-new characters, Ríchet was determined not to color anyone purely good or purely bad, but rather paint everyone in shades of gray. Silver explains, “In **AP13**, nobody’s all good or all bad,” says Silver. “There’s a great actor’s saying: ‘Look for the good in the bad man and the bad in the good man.’ That’s what we did here, with these strange bedfellows crowded together on this one night.

“Roenicke is a broken man whose moral compass is askew because, after losing his team in an operation, he’s not sure if he wants to be a cop anymore. He faces two adversaries who challenge his notion of good and bad. Bishop is a bad man, a drug dealer. But what he does inside the precinct, under the guise of self-preservation, turns out to be good. Duvall [played by Gabriel Byrne] is a cop who’s turned bad; he’s out there taking guns and criminals off the street, but this is the moment where he goes over the line. In these circumstances, the ‘good’ man is bad and the ‘bad’ man is good.”

The tension within the precinct adds to the suspense of the story, which is already high because of the externalized threat. Silver notes, “The tension between Roenicke and Bishop is played out in the composition of every frame. At a certain point, the criminals inside are armed to protect against the dirty cops outside. But despite their common enemy, they might still turn on the policemen inside...”

“James DeMonaco was on set practically every day. Jean-François, with all his fantastic visual and dramatic ideas, needed an American ear. It’s a very literate script for an action film, so James was around more than any writer I’ve ever seen on a set. He contributed every day. The actors would throw out ideas about how a scene could play, and James was there to refine those ideas which Jean-François seized upon and then integrate them into our script.”

That fluid creative collaboration was possible because **AP13** is the rare action movie headlined by actors who know their way around a stage as much as a choreographed shootout. Silver notes, “As part of breaking out of the conventions of a genre film and emphasizing characters, we hired a brilliant cast. In most action films, you have one or two characters who are the stars, and everyone else has a secondary role. Ours is much more of an ensemble film, with two gifted stars at the top of the bill.

“Of course, Ethan Hawke and Laurence Fishburne lead the ensemble, but if the drama was going to work, we wanted them backed by top actors who could carry their own. As a result, the energy and interaction, among the actors and with Jean-François, really sparked. Gabriel Byrne, early on, told us, ‘It’s not so much an action film as a reaction film.’ We took that as our motto, and sought to have **AP13** be about reactions as much as action. You can see action films with bigger explosions and more gunfire, although we have quite a lot of that, but I think what we’ve done here is bring out the characters within the action in an integral way.”

Ethan Hawke was the first actor in, cast as the burnt-out cop in charge of precinct 13. Silver had previously teamed with Hawke nearly four years earlier on the Academy Award-winning *Training Day*. The producer reflects, “Ethan had surprised everyone in *Training Day* with his performance as the resilient younger cop. On that film, we were looking for somebody who had not played a cop before; we were looking for somebody, as Ethan said at the time, ‘who had always gotten to kiss the girl’ instead of carrying a gun. Coming at it from that direction, I think that’s why he succeeded so well in the part and got Academy and SAG Award nominations.

“In *Training Day*, he was playing the rookie; in **AP13**, he’s playing a police officer who has seen and done a lot more. But since he’s still not an actor who has been defined by his work in action films, he’s able to approach this role with the humanity that you’d expect from an actor with his dramatic background.”

Ethan Hawke admits, “I’d had such a great experience on *Training Day* that I’d been looking for another good cop movie. Like *Training Day*, **AP13** is about an extraordinary dramatic situation that takes place in one day. When I read this script, I knew this was the one I had to do. It was smart, and it was the best action script I’d ever read.

“Also, I’ve always been a fan of 1970s action movies – more so than I am of today’s – the kind of good action movie that had lots of real people in it, and I felt like this could be one of those. I knew that if we got the right cast, we’d have a chance of making something that would be a lot of fun to watch. To my mind, **AP13** is less a remake of

*Assault on Precinct 13* than a variation on the kind of Steve McQueen action movies that I loved growing up. McQueen would have been the best guy to play Roenick. *Assault on Precinct 13* is a wonderful movie, but ours is completely different.”

That divergence is immediately apparent in the respective climates of the two movies, since the Carpenter film takes place in a very arid California, while **AP13** unfolds in a nearly snowbound Detroit. That may have helped attract Hawke to the project, since, as he notes dryly, “I’m ‘Mr. Snow Movie;’ *Snow Falling on Cedars*, *A Midnight Clear*, *White Fang*, *Alive*, a big sequence in *Dead Poets Society*...I’m used to those working conditions.”

On a more practical level, Hawke appreciated the script’s shadings of the characters. He muses, “Everything is not as it seems. There’s this gray zone. Roenick is an action hero with a lot of problems. Usually those guys are just too cool for school, but Roenick has a lot of issues – which made it fun to play him. The film opens with him as a hotshot young cop. But after his undercover op goes bad, you next see him months later as the desk sergeant at Precinct 13. There, he’s lazy, despondent, battling addictions, and having a generally bad time. And then the action starts, and he needs to take responsibility and lead. It’s the ideal of ‘how we walk through the fire is how we are formed.’

“Bishop helps spur Roenick to action. These two don’t trust each other, but they’re forced to rely on each other because they have the same problem. It’s that ‘the enemy of my enemy is my friend’ stance.”

The “right cast” that Hawke envisioned did indeed end up in the movie. He enthuses, “We got such a good cast because the parts are so well-written, with strong women characters. This is a very well-acted action movie. I’d always wanted to work with Laurence Fishburne. John Leguizamo has been one of my favorite actors for a long time. Drea de Matteo is so good. And we have all these other ‘theater rats,’ like Brian Dennehy, who gave two of the greatest stage performances I’ve ever seen, in *Death of a Salesman* and *Long Day’s Journey Into Night*...Everybody in this cast had to take their turn at ‘center stage.’ This is a true ensemble movie where, at some point, each person had to carry the weight – and everybody could. I do get drawn to projects that are a little bit more theatrical. It’s an action film, yet much of it takes place at one location, so all of these characters are trapped together. As an actor, it makes the movie a lot more interesting because it becomes about the dynamics between the people.

“For example, my scenes with Maria Bello are classic boy/girl stuff; I’m not sure if they like each other or want to pull each other’s hair. Those were some of the most enjoyable scenes for me, maybe because they didn’t involve life-or-death situations. Maria made her character of Alex somebody specific and odd. I was really impressed by her.”

Hawke also hit it off with R chet. He says, “Jean-Fran ois has a quality I value – enthusiasm. He was always so excited to be making this movie. Even though his English wasn’t perfect, what I learned with Alfonso Cuar n on *Great Expectations* also applied here; making movies is not entirely verbal, it’s really about what you can communicate

with images and emotions. Jean-François got to the heart of everything, and he had a clear vision of the movie he wanted to make, with extraordinary attention to detail.”

Facing off against Hawke on-screen is Laurence Fishburne as the imposing Marion Bishop. Silver notes, “In **AP13**, Bishop is actually the most stalwart character. He doesn’t change. He has a code; it may not be society’s code, but it’s a code that he sticks to.

“Laurence is, in reality, a very effusive and warm person. But when the camera rolls, he has a great intensity about him; it’s in his eyes. He can communicate more with a look than most actors can with a soliloquy.”

Laurence Fishburne remarks, “When I first read the script, I liked the take on the original story and I felt that Bishop would be a good part to play. Then I watched Jean-François’ earlier film and was impressed with how much emotion was in it. I sensed that he must be a passionate person. So I met with Jean-François and talked about **AP13** and my playing opposite Ethan Hawke – whom I had met about 10 years ago, gotten along with, and wanted to work with.

“Once I’d committed to the project, I watched the original film. At the time that it was made, it was unlike anything that we had seen before. There are some things about it that absolutely hold up; it was interesting to revisit it. But our film is really more an homage than a remake. The changes make it more contemporary and relevant to our times. The way technology has progressed with respect to filmmaking required us to move with the times. Audiences’ expectations are higher.”

Fishburne adds, “Ours is a bigger movie than the original, which was a small independent movie made by a maverick filmmaker. **AP13** feels like action movies of today, yet at the same time it’s more intimate. Also, we now have not only three women, but three women who hold their own. Very cool.”

For Fishburne, the evolving dynamic between Bishop and Roenick – the two men on opposite sides of the law – was a key to the new film. He comments, “It’s like the scorpion and the frog; the scorpion has his nature, and his nature is to sting you. Roenick always has to watch his back, because he doesn’t know if or when Bishop might turn on him. The characters are so beautifully drawn that you don’t always know how things are going to go. Often, you’ll think it’s going to go one way and it goes in a completely different way.”

Like Hawke, Fishburne noticed a difference in working with Jean-François Richet. Fishburne notes, “Sometimes it was easier working with Jean-François than with an English-speaking director, because we didn’t waste words. We didn’t exhaust ourselves having conversations about infinitesimal details. I trusted Jean-François, and he trusted me to do my job. If I did have any questions, I’d try to make them very simple, succinct, and specific. If he had any designs, desires, or directions about what he did or didn’t want in the film, he’d do the same thing.”

The Tony Award-winning actor agrees with Hawke that the cast's theater background was a boon to the project. He says, "This is a cast of extraordinary actors, and many of us continue to work in the theater: myself, Ethan, Brian Dennehy, Gabriel Byrne, John Leguizamo, Aisha Hinds. Maria Bello has done a lot of work on stage in the past, and Ja Rule performs regularly in front of live audiences. We all have a connection to the live theatrical experience. That background gives so much texture to the work. I had the good fortune of working with Mr. Dennehy very early in my career, so I was especially thrilled that he joined us. He has an explosive power in his personality that brought dynamism to his character.

"Jean-François hopes that the audience connects with the characters to the extent that if the characters come to any harm, the audience is affected. The violence isn't stylized; it's realistic, because Jean-François doesn't want the audience to remain desensitized to it."

If Bishop and Roenick are the opposites who complement each other, then organized crime unit head Duvall is the gray area between them made tangible – and dangerous. Jeffrey Silver says, "Circumstances have caused Duvall to make a 180-degree turn on his moral compass. He reaches a point of no return. We asked Gabriel how he would be playing Duvall, and he quoted a famous actor: 'You don't play the king. Everyone else plays the king around you.' So Gabriel played Duvall with a 'less is more' approach and, sure enough, the S.W.A.T. team around him were like acolytes."

Gabriel Byrne reveals, "Duvall is a cop who's been on the force for 25 years – and who's strayed over to the dark side. He's very close to his men and willing to do anything to protect them. But I think he's somewhat conflicted about who he's become and what he's capable of doing. I like putting something in that makes the character ambivalent. In a film like **AP13**, the characters you're playing are archetypes, and as an actor you want to prevent the archetype from becoming a cliché. So you try to invest the archetype with some kind of emotion and complexity. That was the real challenge for me in playing Duvall.

"It's interesting how French directors have been fascinated, for so long now, by the American style of storytelling. I found Jean-François to be quite American in the way he directed. Truffaut was hugely influenced by Hitchcock; Melville was a great director of gangster films. Some of the modern French pictures, apart from the language, seem more American than some modern American pictures. But the language of action is an international one; action pictures rely less on dialogue and the interaction of characters and emotion. Jean-François has a very strong visual sense, yet **AP13** has more impact because he made sure it was invested with emotion. When actors can bring emotion to an action movie, it raises the ante."

To that end, for the role of Jasper O'Shea, Roenick's venerable second-in-command at Precinct 13, two-time Tony Award winner Brian Dennehy was cast. The veteran actor notes, "It's a very modern movie, but the characters are almost mythic and iconic. This movie had a strong script, *and* they've assembled a terrific company of actors – which is so unusual these days! Typically now when you're making a feature film, they like to

have one or two leading actors and no more. Everybody else is cast and paid scale just to fill in the other roles. Not on **AP13**. I think most of us were drawn to the project by the idea of working with each other and working with a director who was making his first American picture. I was impressed with the way Jean-François worked.”

Silver credits Maria Bello, cast as police psychologist Alex Sabian, with having “a completely original and envelope-pushing take on the character. Working with Jean-François and James, Maria brought an inner life to Alex that none of us had imagined. No other actress we met with saw such possibilities in the character, but Maria did. She and Ethan worked together to suggest an undercurrent between their characters, and I think the movie is the richer for it.”

Maria Bello had met with the director and “liked his sensibility. Even with the difference in languages, he was able to express his passion about this particular piece and about film in general. His previous movie affected me deeply and I was very excited to work with him – and with the cast that was assembling, which had some true actor’s actors in it!

“I think that the best directors have a firm vision of what they want in their movies. They will then hire people who are excellent at what they do. Jean-François hired a phenomenal cast and crew who were genuinely excited about making the film. He allowed us actors the space to fill out our characters and the scenes. On one shooting day, he rehearsed a scene that eight of us were in – all at once – for an hour and a half, which is unheard-of in film. He really took into consideration how we felt, which gave us the freedom as actors to find new levels for the characters. That happened continuously.”

Regarding Alex’s relationship with Roenick, Bello laughs, “Well, he’s her patient and yet she has a bit of a crush on him. There might be something there, but the two of them aren’t sure. Ethan and I had a lot of fun playing the scenes. He was really our leader. That’s what he becomes in the movie, and that’s who he is as an actor.”

For the role of Iris, the sexy secretary at Precinct 13, the filmmakers selected Drea de Matteo, who had just wrapped up her Emmy Award-winning portrayal on the other side of the law in *The Sopranos*. Silver notes, “When we met with Drea, she showed a spark and a strength. Talking about a scene in **AP13** where Iris has to try to kill somebody, Drea told us about the various ways that family members had told her that you could kill people. I said, ‘Any woman who can rattle off six novel ways to kill a guy is the woman we want to play this part.’”

Drea de Matteo reveals, “It turned out that Jean-François wanted me because he’d seen ‘*R Xmas*, an Abel Ferrara film that I had done; he’d never seen *The Sopranos*. Although I love playing the Adriana [from *The Sopranos*] type, it was great to play Iris because she’s fun and crazy and has a whole other thing going on – it’s New Year’s Eve, and she’s the only one who really wants to celebrate.”

De Matteo adds, “All the actors were terrific to work with. You always want to be surrounded by good company, and this group was. With Jean-François, I didn’t feel like

the language was much of a barrier. He always knew what he wanted and was very clear about it. Half the time we didn't even use the translator, even though she was there all the time. Jean-François says whatever he says with his hands, his mouth and his expressions, and you get it. And he pretty much understands what you're saying too.

“Although it's very exciting, **AP13** is not just a full-on action film; it's very character-driven. There's one minute where the audience is rooting for one character. Then they're going to be rooting for another character, and then both characters. It's not as simple as wanting the good guy to win. The audience gets to be conflicted along with the characters, which is exciting.”

De Matteo had never been in an action film before, so working on the movie presented her with some challenges beyond the typical acting ones. For instance, spending cold shooting nights in a mini-skirt, mesh stockings, and stiletto heels while running through the snow and fighting off assailants. The actress notes, “I'd usually try to do most of my own stunts, but there were certain things I just couldn't do in high heels. I don't know how I didn't break my ankle.”

For his characterization of motormouthed junkie Beck, John Leguizamo was inspired to create a back story. Silver says, “John can't help himself; he's a fount of ideas. He conceived that Beck had a legitimate past, and was not just someone off the street with a drug habit – he's a law student gone bad! John would constantly throw ideas at James DeMonaco, ‘Oh man, what if I say this? And what if I say that?’ We incorporated so many of John's ideas into the script.”

Leguizamo elaborates, “Jean-François brought a distinctive viewpoint and a great sense of humor to the set and to the script, which helped me to find the character. Beck went to college, then started dealing because he couldn't afford school since he was ghetto. Then he started using and failed the law boards. Now he's a constantly wound-up lowlife; he's into ‘packing.’ That's when you put heroin or meth in your ear and pick out a little bit when you want some without anybody noticing. When he meets Bishop, Beck is schmoozing, networking, like he's trying to get a job...”

For Leguizamo, working with the **AP13** ensemble cast met and exceeded his expectations. He comments, “Working with real actors with real chops made this movie one of the highlights of my career. Ethan and Laurence are the real thing; what you see of them on-screen is no lie. We all figured things out together; there was no ego, no vanity, none of that nonsense. We had a lot of complicated scenes that played out like a chess game where every piece had to be right; otherwise it would ring false. And, by the time we started filming, Jean-François had learned English well enough that he could harangue you if he wanted to!

“I think **AP13** will be a big surprise for audiences. A character-driven action picture feels almost innovative today. But it's the way they used to make movies in the 1970s, so why not again? The original movie was the first of the urban film genre. There were no movies like that before, with ghetto, Latin, and black people in there and all the gunplay.

John Carpenter opened up a whole genre. Jean-François and James took the other best elements of the original – the concept and structure – and fleshed it out.”

Cast as hustler Smiley, hip-hop star Ja Rule also fleshed out his character. He offers, “Smiley has anything you need: Rolexes, gold chains, floor seats to the basketball game. Then he gets caught up in something that he has no business being mixed up in – and, being the hustler that he is, he tries to make something good out of the situation.”

Ja continues to alternate making movies with making music, and filmed **AP13** while finishing up his latest album. Comparing and contrasting his two vocations, he comments, “In music it’s 24/7 of your expressions, your passions, your feelings. With film it’s different because you get to live out another character’s passions.

“I enjoy that because it brings me outside of being myself all the time. It’s a great release – especially, acting out in an action film with shooting, running, jumping. Making a movie is similar to music in that it’s a rhythm. When you’re doing music, you have to have your timing and your rhythm, like in the booth when you’re rhyming to the beat. When you’re acting, you have to have your rhythm and your timing with the other actors; you have to bounce off of each other, feed off of each other. I was honored to be in this movie with all these actors. I tried to steal some of their mojo, and I learned so much from all of them. The majority of my scenes are with John Leguizamo, and I had a great time with him; I could see John and I doing something else together.

Of the movie’s director, Ja states that “Jean-François definitely knows what he wants and he’s very strong in getting it. Also, I learned some French, so I could speak to him a little better.

“This film has a lot of action, but it also has a lot of great dialogue and strong characters. Action stars do not drive **AP13**; good actors do.”

Rounding out the prisoners’ roster is Anna, a gang member from inner-city Detroit. To play this part, the filmmakers wanted “somebody who could convey the reality of being a gang member,” relates Jeffrey Silver. “We cast around for real gang members and got a tape from a casting director with whom I’d worked on *Training Day*. She put Aisha’s audition on that tape, and we thought Aisha was a real gang member! In fact, she’s a theater-trained actress. But she had us so fooled that we went right after her for the role.”

Aisha Hinds recalls, “Initially, the filmmakers were looking for an actual gang member. They didn’t believe an actor could bring the authenticity to the role. At the audition, this was a challenge because I knew that what they were looking for was not so much a gang member, but someone who could access and identify what it is that a gang member goes through. There were areas that, as an actress, I knew I could access without ever having been in a gang. I wanted to show them that they could hire an actress.

“Once they told me I had the job and about the rest of the cast, I was just beside myself. But I come from a stage background as all of the other actors do, and I’m pretty confident

in that. So I was there with people of like mind and it was great! Still, being on set was sometimes very surreal for me. All the other actors brought such a unique energy to **AP13**; it was mesmerizing for me to just watch John pacing the floor, or Ethan dissecting the motivation for a scene, or Laurence being silent off in a corner. I had an awesome time working with all of them.”

Hinds adds, “One of the things that had most interested me about the project was that it’s as much about character as action – whether we’re doing action or having dialogue exchanges. That’s what makes **AP13** different from most action films being made today; as written by James DeMonaco, when the action takes place, you’re already heavily invested in the characters.

“There was an openness between myself and Jean-François R chet because this was my first big feature project and also his first American film. He was very available and very accessible, with constant energy and enthusiasm. He gave us a huge amount of freedom to build our characters, giving you the opportunity to talk about your character and to add whatever you needed so that things would make sense. He gave Maria Bello and myself an opportunity to add layers to our characters in our scenes together, which made it really exciting for our adrenalin-rush sequences.”

Behind the camera, director of photography Robert Gantz was recruited for the project by Silver, who had previously made another movie with the cinematographer. The producer explains, “I felt that Bob’s eye for composition and lighting were critically important for a movie where so much drama and action happened in once place. Besides, he knows a little French!

“We wanted **AP13** to have that 1970s gritty, real feel. Between Paul Denham Austerberry’s production design and Bob’s photography, I think we got that visceral feeling. For the inside of Precinct 13, Paul created a completely realistic and dilapidated 1930s police station. He worked with us from the script phase, making sure that every door opened the right way and that every corridor led to the right place on the set, so that we could work out all the assaults. There are three separate major assaults in the movie, and he had to design the set with every shot in mind. It was a real chess game, and he succeeded brilliantly.”

So from 1959 to 1976 to 2005, the fresh approach of a team of filmmakers to a classic concept has offered a new generation of filmgoers a movie of dramatic intensity and exciting action sequences. As Jean-Fran ois R chet says, “Character is the most important thing in **AP13**, and after that the action. I think we have plenty of both – and this will make the ride even more exciting for moviegoers.”

# ASSAULT ON PRECINCT 13

## About the Cast

### **ETHAN HAWKE (Jake Roenick)**

Ethan Hawke constantly challenges himself as an artist and has established a successful career in film and theater, and as a writer and director.

In film, he most recently starred in Richard Linklater's critically acclaimed *Before Sunset*. He also co-wrote the script with the director and with costar Julie Delpy. The trio previously worked together on *Before Sunrise*.

He previously worked with **Assault on Precinct 13** producer Jeffrey Silver on *Training Day*, directed by Antoine Fuqua. Mr. Hawke's performance in the film earned him Academy Award and Screen Actors Guild Award nominations.

He recently completed filming Andrew Niccol's upcoming *Lord of War*. His other screen credits include D.J. Caruso's *Taking Lives*, Michael Almereyda's *Hamlet*, Richard Linklater's *Tape* and *Waking Life*, Alfonso Cuarón's *Great Expectations*, Andrew Niccol's *Gattaca*, Ben Stiller's *Reality Bites*, Bruce Beresford's *Rich in Love*, Frank Marshall's *Alive*, Keith Gordon's *A Midnight Clear*, Stephen Gyllenhaal's *Waterland*, Randal Kleiser's *White Fang*, Gary David Goldberg's *Dad*, Peter Weir's *Dead Poets Society*, and Joe Dante's *Explorers* (which marked his feature debut).

Mr. Hawke was born in Austin, Texas and later settled in Princeton Junction, New Jersey. He began studying acting at Princeton University's prestigious McCarter Theater, landing his first professional job in their production of *St. Joan*. He also studied in England (with the British Theater Association) and in Pittsburgh (at Carnegie Mellon University).

His subsequent professional stage appearances include the National Actors Theatre production of *The Seagull*; *Sophistry* (off-Broadway); the Steppenwolf (Chicago) production of *Buried Child*; and the Lincoln Center Theatre production of *Henry IV*, starring opposite Kevin Kline. He will return to the New York stage in the winter of 2005, starring in a revival of *Hurlyburly*.

Mr. Hawke directed a short film entitled *Straight to One*, starring Josh Hamilton, as well as an accompanying music video. Subsequently, he made his feature directing debut with the intimate drama *Chelsea Walls*, which followed five stories over a single day at NYC's Chelsea Hotel.

He has written two novels. The most recent, *Ash Wednesday*, was published in 2002. His first novel, *The Hottest State*, was published in 1996 and is in its 19<sup>th</sup> printing. A feature film version of the latter, which he will adapt and direct, is planned.

## LAURENCE FISHBURNE (Marion Bishop)

An actor, writer, producer, and director, Laurence Fishburne has been acclaimed for his work on stage, screen, and television.

He earned the Tony, Drama Desk, Outer Critics Circle, and Theater World Awards for his performance in the Broadway production of August Wilson's *Two Trains Running*. Subsequently, Mr. Fishburne was honored with an Emmy Award for his performance in "The Box" episode of the NYC-shot anthology series *Tribeca*.

Mr. Fishburne received an Academy Award nomination for Best Actor for his portrayal of Ike Turner in *What's Love Got To Do With It*, directed by Brian Gibson.

Among his other notable screen credits are Clint Eastwood's multi-award-winning *Mystic River*, for which he shared in the ensemble's Screen Actors Guild Award nomination for Outstanding Performance by a Cast in a Motion Picture; Larry and Andy Wachowski's blockbuster trilogy of *The Matrix*, *The Matrix Reloaded*, and *The Matrix Revolutions*; Bill Duke's *Hoodlum*, which Mr. Fishburne also executive-produced, and *Deep Cover*; Oliver Parker's *Othello*, for which he was the first African-American actor to play the title character in a major film version; Arne Glimcher's *Just Cause*; John Singleton's *Higher Learning*, for which he won an NAACP Image Award for Best Actor, and *Boyz n the Hood*; Steven Zaillian's *Searching for Bobby Fischer*; Martin Sheen's *Cadence*; Abel Ferrara's *King of New York*; Francis Ford Coppola's *The Cotton Club* and *Rumble Fish*, as well as the classic *Apocalypse Now*; and Joe Manduke's *Cornbread, Earl and Me*, which marked his film debut.

He made his feature directorial debut on *Once in the Life*, the independent film version of his play *Riff-Raff*. He also wrote, produced, and starred in the movie adaptation, having previously starred in and directed the original theatrical production. The initial run of the latter, in Los Angeles, was his first production under his own banner, LOA Productions, and was followed by a production at New York's Circle Rep Theater.

Mr. Fishburne's theater work predates his film career, as he began acting onstage at age 10. At 14, he was cast in a production at New York's prestigious Negro Ensemble Theater and accepted to the city's famed High School of Performing Arts. More recently, he starred on Broadway as King Henry II in the Roundabout Theatre Company's revival of *The Lion in Winter*.

He has starred in several features for HBO: Michael Apted's *Always Outnumbered*, which Mr. Fishburne also executive-produced, from the first screenplay by celebrated author Walter Mosley; Robert Markowitz' *The Tuskegee Airmen*, for which Mr. Fishburne won an NAACP Image Award and was nominated for Emmy and Golden Globe Awards; and Joseph Sargent's *Miss Evers' Boys*. The latter telefilm earned multiple honors. Among them were five Emmy Awards, including the top prize of Outstanding Made-for-Television Movie (which he shared in his capacity as the film's executive producer), as well as the coveted President's Award (which honors a program

that illuminates a social or educational issue). For his performance in *Miss Evers' Boys*, Mr. Fishburne won an NAACP Image Award and was nominated for an Emmy Award.

Mr. Fishburne's television work also includes such network telefilms as Robert Markowitz' *Decoration Day*, Michael Schultz' *For Us the Living: The Medgar Evers Story*, and Richard T. Heffron's *A Rumor of War*.

Through his Cinema Gypsy Prods., he is currently producing Laurence Malkin's dramatic thriller *Five Fingers* (unrelated to the classic film of the same name). Mr. Fishburne stars opposite Ryan Phillippe in the feature film.

### **JOHN LEGUIZAMO (Beck)**

John Leguizamo's multi-faceted career defies easy categorization; as a performer, he is at home in many mediums and has crossed boundaries among them.

His many film appearances include George A. Romero's upcoming, eagerly anticipated *Land of the Dead*; John Schultz's forthcoming *The Honeyymooners*; Matt Checkowski and Kurt Mattila's just-wrapped *The Alibi*; Renee Chabria's *Sueño*; Sebastián Cordero's *Crónicas* (which world-premiered at the 2004 Cannes International Film Festival); Franc Reyes' *Empire*; Baz Luhrmann's Academy Award-winning *Moulin Rouge!* (as Toulouse-Lautrec) and *William Shakespeare's Romeo & Juliet*; Chris Wedge's animated blockbuster *Ice Age* (in which Mr. Leguizamo starred in voiceover as Sid the Sloth, and for which a sequel is slated); Spike Lee's *Summer of Sam*; Seth Zvi Rosenfeld's *King of the Jungle* (for which Mr. Leguizamo received an ALMA Award nomination) and *A Brother's Kiss*; Betty Thomas' *Doctor Dolittle* (in voiceover); Mark A.Z. Dippé's *Spawn*; Stuart Baird's *Executive Decision*; Bebban Kidron's *To Wong Foo, Thanks For Everything, Julie Newmar* (for which Mr. Leguizamo received a Golden Globe Award nomination); and Brian De Palma's *Carlito's Way* and *Casualties of War*.

Prior to beginning his film work in the late 1980s, the native New Yorker had studied acting with Lee Strasberg, as well as with Wynn Handman at New York University. His stage credits include *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (in Central Park) and *La Puta Vida*, with New York's Public Theatre; and *Parting Gestures* at INTAR.

Also for the stage, Mr. Leguizamo has written and performed four one-man shows. The third of these, *Freak*, had a successful run on Broadway and was nominated for two Tony Awards. He was honored with Drama Desk and Outer Critics Circle Awards for Outstanding Solo Performance. The production was directed for HBO by Spike Lee, and was nominated for an Emmy Award, with Mr. Leguizamo winning the Emmy Award for Outstanding Performance in a Variety or Music Program.

In 1991, he created a sensation off-Broadway with his first one-man show, *Mambo Mouth*, earning Obie, Outer Critics Circle, and Vanguardia Awards for his performance(s) in the show. The play was taped for HBO, which led to his next television special, Comedy Central's *The Talent Pool* (for which he received a CableAce Award).

Mr. Leguizamo's second one-man show, *Spic-O-Rama*, had an extended sold-out run in Chicago before opening in New York. The play received numerous accolades, including the Dramatists' Guild Hull-Warriner Award for Best American Play and the Lucille Lortel Outstanding Achievement Award for Best Broadway Performance. Mr. Leguizamo received the Theatre World Award for Outstanding New Talent, as well as a Drama Desk Award for Best Solo Performance. *Spic-O-Rama* also aired on HBO, and won four CableAce Awards.

Most recently, he returned to Broadway with *Sexaholix...a Love Story*. Directed by Peter Askin, the show was based on the sold-out national tour of *John Leguizamo Live!* Mr. Leguizamo was nominated for an Outer Critics Circle Award and the show received a Tony Award nomination. *Sexaholix* aired as an HBO special in 2002.

Extending his longstanding relationship with HBO, Mr. Leguizamo made his feature directing debut there on the boxing drama *Undefeated*, in which he also starred. The telefilm was scripted by Frank Pugliese from a story by Kathy DeMarco and Mr. Leguizamo.

In addition to his HBO credits, he has starred on television in the miniseries *Arabian Nights* (directed by Steve Barron). In 1995, he set a precedent by creating and starring in the first Latin comedy/variety network series, *House of Buggin'*.

Mr. Leguizamo was the recipient of the 2002 ALMA Award for Entertainer of the Year.

### **MARIA BELLO (Alex Sabian)**

For her performance in Wayne Kramer's *The Cooler*, Maria Bello earned Golden Globe and Screen Actors Guild Award nominations.

She has recently completed starring roles in three movies: David Cronenberg's *A History of Violence* (opposite Viggo Mortensen); Arthur Allan Seidelman's *The Sisters* (based on Chekov's *Three Sisters*); and John Fawcett's *The Dark*.

Ms. Bello's previous film credits include John Sayles' *Silver City*, David Koepp's *Secret Window*, Paul Schrader's *Auto Focus*, Brent Huff's *100-Mile Rule*, the IMAX short feature *China: The Panda Adventure* (directed by Scott Firestone and Robert M. Young), Bruce Paltrow's *Duets*, David McNally's *Coyote Ugly*, Brian Helgeland's *Payback*, and David Veloz' *Permanent Midnight*.

She also starred on the top-rated NBC series *ER*, for which she shared a Screen Actors Guild Award with the rest of the show's regular cast.

Ms. Bello has also performed extensively in stage projects. These include *The Killer Inside Me*, *Smart Town Gals* (at the Currican Theater), *Big Problems* (at the Theatre for New City), *Urban Planning* (at the Theatre del Barrio), *A Lie of the Mind* (at Columbia

University), *His Pillow* and *Out of Gas on Lover's Leap* (at T. Schreiber Studios), *Big Talk* (at the Double Image Theatre), and *Talked Away* at the West End Gate.

She is co-founder of the Dream Yard Drama Project for Kids, a not-for-profit arts and education program for children in Harlem. In conjunction with this program, she has toured and studied in Africa and Asia. She also is active in the charity Save the Children.

### **JEFFREY "JA RULE" ATKINS (Smiley)**

Acknowledged as a vital talent in hip-hop music, with album sales topping 10 million worldwide, Ja Rule is now additionally pursuing a big-screen career.

To that end, he has appeared in Peter Chelsom's *Shall We Dance*, Lance Rivera's *The Cookout*, James Hunter's *Back in the Day*, David Zucker's smash *Scary Movie 3*, Don Michael Paul's *Half Past Dead*, Robert Adetuyi's *Turn It Up*, and Rob Cohen's blockbuster *The Fast and The Furious*.

Born in Hollis, Queens, Ja (the initials for Jeffrey Atkins) began rhyming at the age of 16. Word spread fast about the teenager with the lightning-fast wordplay and distinctive rhyming style, and he was soon signed to a record deal. Building on the strength of his debut on the single "Time to Build," Ja united with two friends in the group The Cash Money Click. They scored a success with "Bet the Fortune"/"For My Click."

Ever since his teaming on "Can I Get A" (from the *Rush Hour* soundtrack), with Jay-Z and Amil, Ja has been a leading presence in the hip-hop world. Some of his most notable cuts include "Girlfriend/Boyfriend" (in which Ja traded verses with Eve), "How Many Wanna" (from the *Light It Up* soundtrack), Dru Hill's "You Are Everything [remix]," "Always on Time" (dueting with Ashanti), "Between Me and You" (with Christina Milian), "Livin It Up" (with Case), "Put It On Me" (with Vita), "Down A Chick" (with Ashanti, Vita, and Charli Baltimore), and "Thug Lovin" (with Bobby Brown, Clapback, and The Crowne).

Ja's debut album, "Venni Vetti Vecci" (1999) went platinum, with the first single, "Holla, Holla," becoming a street anthem. His subsequent albums were "Rule 3:36" (2000), "Pain is Love" (2001), "The Last Temptation" (2002), "Blood in My Eye" (2003), and "R.U.L.E." (2004).

He has written songs for Mary J. Bilge (their duet "Rainy Dayz") and Jennifer Lopez (their duets "I'm Real" and "Ain't It Funny"). He co-wrote "If We" for Mariah Carey, and worked with Ruben Studdard on the single "What Is Sexy" (featured on Studdard's "Soulful" album).

In 2002, Ja Rule was nominated for three Grammy Awards: Best Rap Album ("Pain is Love"), Best Rap Performance – Duo/Group ("Put It On Me"), and Best Rap Song - Collaboration ("Livin It Up"). That same year, he was also nominated for an NAACP

Image Award, an American Music Award, a GQ Man of the Year Award, and a Teen Choice Award.

### **DREA de MATTEO (Iris Ferry)**

Drea de Matteo currently stars as Gina Tribbiani, opposite Matt LeBlanc and Paulo Costanzo, on the hit NBC series *Joey*.

Her memorable portrayal of Adriana La Cerva on the much-lauded HBO series *The Sopranos* earned her an Emmy Award for Outstanding Supporting Actress in a Drama Series. She has also shared, with the rest of the regular cast, three Screen Actors Guild Award nominations.

Ms. de Matteo's film work includes Alex Steyermark's music drama *Prey for Rock & Roll*; Abel Ferrara's *R Xmas*, which premiered at the 2001 Cannes International Film Festival; and Dominic Sena's *Swordfish*.

She earned a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree in film production from New York University's Tisch School of the Arts, and also studied acting there. She often visits students and classes at HB Studios, where her mother Donna has taught playwriting for over 25 years.

Ms. de Matteo is also co-owner of the boutique Filth Mart, located in NYC's East Village.

### **MATT CRAVEN (Capra)**

Matt Craven is a familiar face to both moviegoers and television viewers.

The Ontario native's first acting role was in a stage production of *Dracula*. He got his big break when Ivan Reitman cast him in the hit comedy *Meatballs*, which he followed up with a starring role in the Academy Award-nominated short film *Bravery in the Field*, directed by Giles Walker.

Mr. Craven's subsequent feature films have included Barry Levinson's *Tin Men*, Kathryn Bigelow's *Blue Steel*, Adrian Lyne's *Jacob's Ladder*, Franc Roddam's *K-2*, Rob Reiner's *A Few Good Men*, Mike Binder's *Indian Summer*, Mark Malone's *Bulletproof Heart*, Tony Scott's *Crimson Tide*, Brian Gibson's *The Juror*, Giles Walker's *Never Too Late*, Rodrigo García's *Things You Can Tell Just by Looking at Her*, Tom Shadyac's *Dragonfly*, Alan Parker's *The Life of David Gale*, Richard Donner's *Timeline*, Norman Jewison's *The Statement*, and Pieter Jan Brugge's *The Clearing*.

He was a series regular on such television shows as *High Incident*, *L.A. Doctors*, and *The Lyon's Den*. Mr. Craven has also had recurring roles on such series as *ER* and *Boomtown*.

He costarred in two notable miniseries, the epic *From the Earth to the Moon* and Yves Simoneau's award-winning *Nuremberg*. His telefilm appearances include Ralph L. Thomas' *The Terry Fox Story*, Thomas Schlamme's *Kingfish: A Story of Huey P. Long*, Lionel Chetwynd's *Varian's War*, and Saul Rubinek's *Bleacher Bums*.

Mr. Craven's stage work includes the off-Broadway productions of *Blue Window* (as well as the show's subsequent PBS *American Playhouse* presentation) and *Crackwalker* (which he also produced).

### **AISHA HINDS (Anna)**

Aisha Hinds was born and raised in Brooklyn, N.Y., and is a graduate of NYC's Fiorello H. LaGuardia High School of the Performing Arts. She received a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree from The University of Miami. Subsequently, she studied acting at the TVI Actors Studio and The American Theatre of Harlem.

Ms. Hinds' extensive stage work includes productions of *Love Aquarium*, at The Cast Theater; *The Mighty Gents*, at The Inglewood Playhouse; *Fences* and *Night Mother*, both at The American Theatre of Harlem; *Catcalls*, at BRIC Studios; *Boy Times Man*, at The Castillo Theatre; *Summer Shorts*, at City Theatre; *Young Abe Lincoln*, at The Lincoln Amphitheatre; *Tartuffe*, *Anything Goes* (as Reno Sweeney), and *Mame* (as Agnes Gooch), all at the Jerry Herman Ring Theatre; *Spell #7*, at Gusman Hall; *The Good Doctor*, at The James L. Knight Center; and *The Colored Museum* and *A Piece of My Heart*, at The Alvin Sherman Stage.

She has appeared in several independent films. Among the former are Van Fischer's upcoming *Neo Ned*, kA'RAMUU KUSH's *Love Aquarium*, and Jerry Schatzberg's *The Day the Ponies Come Back*.

Ms. Hinds had a recurring role last season on the award-winning FX Network series *The Shield*. Her other television appearances include guest-starring roles on *ER*, *NYPD Blue*, *Crossing Jordan*, and the premiere episode of *Boston Legal*.

### **BRIAN DENNEHY (Jasper O'Shea)**

Brian Dennehy has maintained a strong presence in three mediums – film, theater, and television – for three decades.

He has twice won the Tony Award for Best Actor in a Play. He was honored for playing James Tyrone in Eugene O'Neill's *Long Day's Journey Into Night*, and for playing Willy Loman in Arthur Miller's *Death of a Salesman*. The latter production was also filmed for Showtime by director Kirk Browning, with Mr. Dennehy executive-producing. The television version subsequently earned Mr. Dennehy a Golden Globe Award, a Screen Actors Guild Award, and an Emmy Award nomination. He will play Willy Loman in London's West End in 2005.

Mr. Dennehy is well-known to audiences worldwide for his performances in such popular films as Michael Ritchie's *Semi-Tough*, Colin Higgins' *Foul Play*, Blake Edwards' *10*, Ted Kotcheff's *First Blood*, Ron Howard's *Cocoon*, Robert Mandel's *F/X*, Alan J. Pakula's *Presumed Innocent*, Peter Segal's *Tommy Boy*, and Baz Luhrmann's *William Shakespeare's Romeo & Juliet*.

His other notable screen credits include Michael Apted's *Gorky Park*, Carroll Ballard's *Never Cry Wolf*, Richard Lester's *Finders Keepers*, Lawrence Kasdan's *Silverado*, Bud Yorkin's *Twice in a Lifetime*, John Flynn's *Best Seller*, Peter Greenaway's *The Belly of an Architect* (for which he received Best Actor honors at the Chicago Film Festival), Spike Lee's *She Hate Me*, and Robert Moresco's upcoming *10<sup>th</sup> & Wolf*.

Mr. Dennehy has starred in a wide range of television projects, receiving Emmy Award nominations for his performances in Mike Robe's miniseries *The Burden of Proof*, Robert Markowitz' miniseries *Murder in the Heartland*, Eric Till's miniseries *To Catch a Killer* (in which he played John Wayne Gacy), and Stephen Gyllenhaal's telefilm *Killing in a Small Town*.

His characterization of police investigator Jack Reed anchored a successful series of telefilms that he starred in for NBC throughout the 1990s, several of which he executive-produced, co-wrote, and directed. He also directed and starred in the telefilms *Shadow of a Doubt* (which he co-wrote) and *Indefensible*.

Mr. Dennehy has been associated for two decades with Chicago's Goodman Theatre, where he has starred in leading roles in Robert Falls' productions of *Long Day's Journey Into Night*, *Death of a Salesman*, *A Touch of the Poet*, *Galileo*, *Hughie* (which he also starred in at Providence's Trinity Square Rep), and *The Iceman Cometh*. The duo remounted the latter production at The Abbey Theatre in Dublin.

His other notable stage work includes the Broadway production of *Translations*; *Hughie*, at Trinity Repertory; Peter Brook's production of *The Cherry Orchard* at the Brooklyn Academy of Music; *Trumbo*, which he starred in off-Broadway and will be touring with in the winter of 2005; Wisdom Bridge Theatre's production of *Rat in the Skull*; *Says I, Says He* at The Mark Taper Forum in L.A. and The Phoenix Theatre in N.Y.; and Bob Balaban's production of *The Exonerated*, which he starred in off-Broadway and toured with. He also stars in the recently completed Court TV film version of the latter production, directed by Bob Balaban.

### **GABRIEL BYRNE (Marcus Duvall)**

Born and raised in Dublin, Ireland, Gabriel Byrne began acting with the Abbey Theatre. He later joined the Royal Court Theatre in London.

Segueing into feature films, Mr. Byrne made his screen debut in John Boorman's *Excalibur*. His many subsequent features include Costa-Gavras' *Hanna K.*, Ken Russell's *Gothic*, Mary Lambert's *Siesta*, Joel and Ethan Coen's *Miller's Crossing*, Stephen

Gyllenhaal's *A Dangerous Woman*, Gillian Armstrong's *Little Women*, Bryan Singer's Academy Award-winning *The Usual Suspects*, Jim Jarmusch's *Dead Man*, Larry Bishop's *Mad Dog Time* (a.k.a. *Trigger Happy*), Stephen Surjik's HBO film *Weapons of Mass Distraction*, Mary McGuckian's *This is the Sea* and upcoming *The Bridge of San Luis Rey*, Randall Wallace's *The Man in the Iron Mask*, Tony Scott's *Enemy of the State*, Rupert Wainwright's *Stigmata*, Peter Hyams' *End of Days*, David Cronenberg's *Spider*, Dylan Kidd's *P.S.*, and, for Focus Features, Mira Nair's *Vanity Fair*.

In addition to his work in front of the camera, he has been a producer on several movies. Among these are Mike Newell's *Into the West* (in which he also starred), Jim Sheridan's Academy Award-nominated *In the Name of the Father*, David Keating's *The Last of the High Kings* (which he also wrote and starred in), Martin Donovan's *Somebody is Waiting* (in which he also starred), Terence Ryan's *The Brylcreem Boys* (in which he also starred), and John Forte's *Mad About Mambo*.

Returning to the stage, Mr. Byrne earned a Tony Award nomination for his performance as James Tyrone, Jr. in the 2000 Broadway revival of Eugene O'Neill's *A Moon for the Misbegotten* (directed by Daniel Sullivan).

His autobiography, [Pictures in My Head](#), was published in 2001.

# ASSAULT ON PRECINCT 13

## About the Filmmakers

### **JEAN-FRANÇOIS RICHEL (Director)**

Acclaimed French director Jean-François Richet makes his American feature debut with **Assault on Precinct 13**.

Mr. Richet's debut feature film, *État des lieux (Condition of Premises)*, created a sensation in France. It was shot on a budget of \$20,000 – the writer/director's winnings after successfully gambling his unemployment wages at a local casino. An unflinching depiction of blue-collar life, the film was based on his own first-hand knowledge of growing up in the projects. Wide critical acclaim ensued, and Mr. Richet earned a César Award (France's equivalent of the Academy Awards) nomination for Best First Feature. *État des lieux* was screened at film festivals worldwide, including the Avoriaz Film Festival, the Sarasota Film Festival, the Avignon/NY Film Festival, and the Montreal Film Festival. The film was also honored with the 1996 Cyril Collard Award.

**AP13** producer Pascal Caucheteux teamed with Mr. Richet to produce the writer/director's next two films, *Ma 6-T va crack-er (Crack City)* and *De l'amour (About Love)*, starring Virginie Ledoyen. Both films garnered favorable reviews, and the former screened at the 1997 Cannes International Film Festival (in the Cinemas en France section), the 1997 Stockholm Film Festival, and the 1997 Chicago Film Festival. In addition to writing and directing them, Mr. Richet edited his first three features.

*Ma 6-T va crack-er* was steeped in rap music and so launched Mr. Richet on a second successful career, as a music producer. The film's soundtrack went gold, as did the next album he produced, with French rap artists 2 Bal – 2 Neg. The latter stands as one of the country's most successful rap album debuts of all time. Mr. Richet has branched out to produce albums for such top U.S. hip-hop artists such as KRS-One, B-Real from Cypress Hill, Afrika Bambaataa, Guru from Gangstarr, Mobb Deep, Ras-Kass, and Eric Sermon.

He was born in Meaux, France. He was raised, with a brother and sister, by a single mother in one of the projects surrounding Paris. He left school at an early age and worked at a series of low-paying jobs before realizing his dream of becoming a filmmaker.

### **JAMES DeMONACO (Screenplay; Co-Producer)**

James DeMonaco writes for both feature films and television.

His feature screenwriting credits include the police thriller *The Negotiator*, directed by F. Gary Gray and starring Samuel L. Jackson and Kevin Spacey; and the family comedy

*Jack*, directed by Francis Coppola and starring Robin Williams, Diane Lane, and Jennifer Lopez.

For television, Mr. DeMonaco created and executive-produced the police drama series *Ryan Caulfield: Year One*. He recently scripted *Hate*, a pilot for a series about hate crimes, for Showtime, starring Academy Award winner Marcia Gay Harden and directed by Emmy Award winner Paris Barclay.

Born in Brooklyn, New York, he attended Rutgers University and studied English and Film. Pursuing the latter vocation, he enrolled in the graduate program at NYU Film School, where he wrote and produced the short film *Red*. The short went on to win the NYU Mobil Award and later The Student Academy Award – the highest U.S. honor for a student film.

Mr. DeMonaco's screenplays in development include the werewolf adventure *Skinwalkers*, to be produced by David Cronenberg and Stan Winston, with Academy Award-winning special effects supervisor Jim Isaac directing; the police thriller *Zombie Squad*; the action adventure *Driver*, adapted from the videogame series of the same name; and the independent film *The Porch*, about a retired NYC cop, on which he is slated to make his feature directorial debut.

### **PASCAL CAUCHETEUX (Producer)**

In 1991, Pascal Caucheteux formed Paris-based Why Not Productions with Gregoire Soriat. Ever since then, Why Not has been one of the leading independent production companies in France.

At Why Not, Mr. Caucheteux has fostered the work and art of French filmmakers – both veteran auteurs and new filmmakers. Among these directors have been Xavier Beauvois, Arnaud Desplechin, Philippe Garrel, Claude Lanzmann, Bruno Podalydès, and Jean-François Richet.

Why Not also, from the beginning, cultivated an alliance with American independent cinema, working with such filmmakers as Gregg Araki (on *Nowhere*) and Alexandre Rockwell (on both *Louis and Frank* and *In the Soup*).

Over the years, Why Not has had 10 of its films screen at the Venice International Film Festival, and 7 show in the New York Film Festival. Among the company's award winners have been Xavier Beauvois' *N'oublie pas que tu vas mourir (Don't Forget You're Going to Die)*, winner of the Grand Jury Prize at the Cannes International Film Festival; Philippe Garrel's *Sauvage Innocence*, winner of the International Critics' Prize at the Venice International Film Festival; and Alexandre Rockwell's *In the Soup*, winner of the Grand Jury Prize at the Sundance Film Festival. Over the years, Why Not has also had seven of its films screen at the New York Film Festival, most recently Arnaud Desplechin's *Kings and Queen*.

### **STEPHANE SPERRY (Producer)**

Stephane Sperry formed his production company Liaison Films in the fall of 2002. Liaison has a multi-year first-look production deal with Focus Features. The company has a mandate to bring European properties, ideas, and talent to the American marketplace and beyond.

Dividing his time between Los Angeles and Paris, Mr. Sperry maintains an exclusive advisory arrangement with Focus, one which also entails continuing communication with Canal +, Studio Canal, and parent company Universal Pictures.

Before forming Liaison, the veteran film executive spent nearly three years as co-president of Canal +'s U.S. operation. Based in Los Angeles, he oversaw the company's investments in U.S. films.

For four years prior, Mr. Sperry was executive vice president, programs and strategic development, subsidiaries division for the French company. During that period, he oversaw the strengthening of the company's business units into a cohesive whole as the company went public. He first came to Canal + in 1987, and as head of acquisitions was an architect of the company's library of 5,500 films.

His previous positions include three years as president of Alliance International, as well as four years as head of Island Records (France), where he helped build up the company's film business. He began his career in the film industry in the 1970s, working on nearly three dozen features in various capacities.

Prior to **AP13**, Liaison produced Pascal Laugier's ghost story *Saint Ange*, starring Virginie Ledoyen.

### **JEFFREY SILVER (Producer)**

Jeffrey Silver produced Antoine Fuqua's *Training Day*, the hit police thriller for which Denzel Washington won the Academy Award for Best Actor, and for which **AP13** star Ethan Hawke earned Academy Award and Screen Actors Guild Award nominations.

He has produced over two dozen feature films, both independently (as with **AP13**) and through his company, Outlaw Productions. Among his other credits as producer are the two blockbuster *The Santa Clause* movies, starring Tim Allen and directed by John Pasquin and Michael Lembeck, respectively; Renny Harlin's *Mindhunters*; Dennis Dugan's *National Security*; Griffin Dunne's *Addicted to Love*; Jeremy Leven's *Don Juan DeMarco*; Mike Binder's *Indian Summer* and *Crossing the Bridge*; and Stephen Herek's *Don't Tell Mom the Babysitter's Dead*.

Outlaw Productions' first feature was Steven Soderbergh's debut feature *sex, lies and videotape*, which won the top prize (the Palme d'Or) at the Cannes International Film Festival.

As producer of the classic series *The Wonder Years*, Mr. Silver earned an Emmy Award for Outstanding Comedy Series.

He holds a degree in theater from Brandeis University, and began his career in New York before moving to Los Angeles.

### **DON CARMODY (Executive Producer)**

Don Carmody has been producing movies for thirty years.

Born in New England, Mr. Carmody emigrated to Canada with his parents as a boy. He graduated from film school in Montreal and soon made his career in the industry.

As vice president of production for Cinepix (a very early incarnation of Lions Gate Films), he co-produced early works by David Cronenberg (*They Came From Within* and *Rabid*) and was the production executive on Ivan Reitman's boxoffice hit *Meatballs*.

Mr. Carmody inaugurated his own production company in 1980. Among the earliest films he produced through his company were Bob Clark's blockbuster *Porky's* and sequel *Porky's II: The Next Day*. He also executive-produced films by such filmmakers as Sidney Lumet and Michael Crichton. Now based in Los Angeles, Mr. Carmody recently produced Alexander Witt's hit *Resident Evil: Apocalypse*.

His production of *The Late Shift*, for HBO, won several awards, including Golden Globe and Screen Actors Guild Awards for costar Kathy Bates and a Directors Guild of America Award for helmer Betty Thomas. Mr. Carmody shared in the program's Emmy Award nomination (one of seven) for Outstanding Made for Television Movie.

He was co-producer of Rob Marshall's *Chicago*, the winner of six Academy Awards including Best Picture.

### **SEBASTIEN KURT LEMERCIER (Executive Producer)**

Sebastien Kurt Lemercier has worked with **AP13** producer Pascal Caucheteux at Why Not Productions since 1996. Most recently, he has served as head of development at Why Not, working on Arnaud Desplechin's *Playing 'In the Company of Men'* (which was shown in the Un Certain Regard section of the Cannes International Film Festival) and *Kings and Queen* (which world-premiered at the Venice International Film Festival and screened at the New York Film Festival), as well as on several short films.

Mr. Lemercier was born in Hamburg, Germany and attended a French school there. After finishing high school, he moved to France where he famed national film school (FEMIS, which only accepted 30 out of 600 applicants). To gain industry experience, he also interned for Daniel Toscan du Plantier, who at the time was head of the major film company Gaumont.

He was soon hired by Pascal Caucheteux, with whom he had studied at film school. Mr. Lemerrier's first job at Why Not was in the music department, and his first project there was **AP13** director Jean-François Richet's *Ma 6-T va crack-er*.

Arnaud Desplechin's *Esther Kahn* marked Mr. Lemerrier's first involvement in every aspect of a Why Not production. The film was an official selection of the Cannes International Film Festival.

He is currently producing films by two first-time directors for Why Not: Antony Cordier's *Cold Showers* (which is in post-production), and David Lambert's *Prisonniere*.

Mr. Lemerrier is privileged to have worked with filmmaker Claude Lanzmann on *Sobibor, October 14, 1943, 4 P.M.*, as well as on production of the DVD edition of *Shoah*.

### **JOSEPH KAUFMAN (Executive Producer)**

Joseph Kaufman was also executive producer of John Carpenter's *Assault on Precinct 13*.

He is the co-founder of AgitPop Media, which is devoted to the distribution of culturally provocative feature films, documentary features, and a World Music TV series for DVD issue, among other media.

Mr. Kaufman's current projects also include co-producing *Fubar*, a "fictional documentary" feature centering on the U.S. government's war on drugs; and overseeing the re-release of the political sci-fi musical *Population: One*, which he produced in 1984. That film first spotlighted many celebrated talents of the L.A. music scene, including Beck, and launched the careers of many of the West Coast's top music video directors.

He is also a creative consultant on *Strawberry Fields*, an animated feature (in pre-production) that will be set to the songs of The Beatles.

### **ROBERT GANTZ (Director of Photography)**

Robert Gantz was previously the cinematographer on Renny Harlin's *Mindhunters*, also for **AP13** producer Jeffrey Silver.

He has made a name for himself as one of the top cinematographers working on television commercials. Among the companies that he has shot ads for are Verizon, L'Oreal, Oxford Health, Neutrogena, Pantene, Covergirl, Old Navy, Fresh Looks Lenses, Sears, Burger King, Crest, Clairol, and NBC's Olympics telecasts.

Mr. Gantz has also been the director of photography on music videos for major hip-hop artists, including Destiny's Child's "Survivor" and "Bootylicious," Jay-Z's "Clothes Off," Anastasia's "Chicago," Busta Rhymes' "Make It Clap Remix," TLC's "Hands Up," and Mariah Carey (on several videos).

He has won two Emmy Awards as a co-director of promos for *Monday Night Football*.

### **PAUL DENHAM AUSTERBERRY (Production Designer)**

Paul Denham Austerberry was previously the production designer on Alexander Witt's *Resident Evil: Apocalypse*, Robert Harmon's *Highwaymen*, Kevin Donovan's *The Tuxedo*, Paul Gross' *Men with Brooms*, Andrzej Bartkowiak's *Exit Wounds*, and Damian Harris' *Mercy*.

As art director, his feature credits include Bryan Singer's *X-Men*, Paul Schrader's *Forever Mine*, James Foley's *The Corruptor*, Tamra Davis' *Half Baked*, Tom DiCillo's *The Real Blonde*, Michael Apted's *Extreme Measures*, Bronwen Hughes' *Harriet the Spy*, Kelly Makin's *Kids in the Hall: Brain Candy*, as well as Tim Southam's longform music video *Satie and Suzanne*.

Mr. Austerberry was awarded a Gemini Award (Canada's equivalent to an Emmy Award) for his work designing the television special *Yo-Yo Ma Inspired by Bach*.

He was born in Toronto and raised in Uganda and Sault Ste. Marie. He was educated as an architect, graduating from Carleton University in Ottawa.

### **BILL PANKOW, A.C.E. (Editor)**

Bill Pankow edited **AP13** star Laurence Fishburne's *Once in the Life*, as well as **AP13** star John Leguizamo's HBO feature *Undeclared*.

The film editor has enjoyed a long collaboration with director Brian De Palma, most recently as editor on *Femme Fatale*. That film earned him the Seattle Film Critics' Best Editing citation for 2002. Previously, Mr. Pankow had edited *Snake Eyes* and *Casualties of War*; co-edited *Carlito's Way*, *The Bonfire of the Vanities*, *The Untouchables*, and *Body Double*; and worked as associate editor on *Scarface* and *Dressed to Kill*.

The New York University graduate has also worked with directors Charles Stone III (editing *Paid in Full*, *Drumline*, and *Mr. 3000*), Abel Ferrara (co-editing *The Funeral* and editing *'R Xmas*), and Gary Winick (co-editing *Sweet Nothing* and editing *The Tic Code*).

Mr. Pankow's other feature editing credits include Robert Benton's *Kramer vs. Kramer* (as assistant editor) and *Still of the Night*, Bob Balaban's *Parents*, Paul Schrader's *The Comfort of Strangers*, Dan Algrant's *Naked in New York*, Ringo Lam's *Maximum Risk*, and Tsui Hark's *Double Team*.

His other television editing credits include Charles S. Dutton's award-winning HBO miniseries *The Corner* (earning an American Cinema Editors' Eddie Award nomination) and the popular NYC-based series *The Equalizer*.

### **VICKI GRAEF (Costume Designer)**

Vicki Graef began her career in her native San Francisco, creating clothing for drag and music performers. She then segued into designing costumes for film and television.

Her early costume design credits included Sam Raimi's *Evil Dead II*, as well as assisting noted costume designer Milena Canonero on Warren Beatty's *Dick Tracy* and Francis Coppola's *The Godfather Part III*.

Ms. Graef has since designed the costumes for such films as John Bailey's *Mariette in Ecstasy*, Jeff Pollack's *Booby Call*, Tamra Davis' *Half Baked*, Damon Santostefano's *Three to Tango*, Neal Slavin's *Focus*, and Donald Petrie's *Welcome to Mooseport*.

For television, she has been the costume designer on series pilots (such as *Gilmore Girls* and *1-800-Missing*); miniseries (such as Mike Robe's *Scott Turow's 'Reversible Errors'*); and telefilms (such as Stanley Donen's *Love Letters* and this season's George Lopez holiday-themed story directed by Eric Laneuville).

### **GEORGINA YARHI (Costume Designer)**

Georgina Yarhi was the costume designer on Rob Schmidt's *Wrong Turn*.

She has also been the costume designer on several telefilms. Among them were the late Anita Addison's *Deep in My Heart*, Wesley Strick's *Hitched*, Joshua Butler's *Prancer Returns*, Christopher Menaul's *One Kill*, Bill Duke's "Nero Wolfe" mystery *The Golden Spiders*, David Steinberg's *Switching Goals*, Stephen Tolkin's *Judgment Day: The Ellie Nesler Story*, Bruce Pittman's *Flood: A River's Rampage* and *The Secret Path*, Doug Barr's *For Love of Olivia*, and Jerry London's *I'll Be Home for Christmas* and *Christmas in My Hometown*.