



## SYNOPSIS

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In Sam Raimi and Columbia Pictures' powerful thriller *The Grudge*, based on the Japanese blockbuster *JU-ON: THE GRUDGE*, the normal façade of a modest house in Tokyo belies the hidden terror within. It is possessed by a violent plague that destroys the lives of everyone who enters. Known as "The Grudge," this curse causes its victims to die in the grip of a powerful rage. Those who are fatally afflicted by the curse die and a new curse is born – passed like a virus to all those who enter the house in an endless, growing chain of horror.

Karen (SARAH MICHELLE GELLAR) is an exchange student studying social work in Japan who innocently agrees to cover for a nurse who didn't show up for work. When

she enters the assigned home, she discovers an elderly American woman, Emma (GRACE ZABRISKIE), who is lost in a catatonic state while the rest of the house appears deserted and disheveled.

As she is tending to the stricken old woman, Karen hears scratching sounds from upstairs. When she investigates, she is faced with a supernatural horror more frightening than she could ever imagine.

Within this house, a chain of terror has been set in motion resulting from a terrifying evil that was born years before. As more people die, Karen is pulled into the cycle of horror and learns the secret of the vengeful curse that has taken root in this house.

Now she must stop it before it's too late.

Sam Raimi and Columbia Pictures Present A Ghost House Pictures Production *The Grudge* starring Sarah Michelle Gellar, Jason Behr, KaDee Strickland with Clea DuVall and Bill Pullman. The film is directed by Takashi Shimizu from a screenplay by Stephen Susco based on *JU-ON: The Grudge*, written and directed by Takashi Shimizu. The film is produced by Sam Raimi, Rob Tapert and Taka Ichise. The executive producers are Joe Drake, Nathan Kahane, Carsten Lorenz, Roy Lee and Doug Davison. The director of photography is Hideo Yamamoto. The production designer is Iwao Saito. The editor is Jeff Betancourt. The music is by Christopher Young.

*The Grudge* has been rated PG-13 by the Motion Picture Association of America for Mature Thematic Material, Disturbing Images/Terror/Violence And Some Sensuality.

*The Grudge* will be released nationwide on October 22, 2004

## **THE BIRTH OF JU-ON (*The Grudge*)**

Writer/Director Takashi Shimizu, who has been passionate about filmmaking since he was a child, explains the roots of his life-long interest: “When I was in primary school, I saw Steven Spielberg’s *E.T.* and realized that film was where I wanted to be. I began as an assistant director for three or four years, but since I didn’t have the chance to study more about camera work and lighting, I decided to go to film school.”

Prolific Japanese producer, Taka Ichise, whose credits include *Ringu*, the Japanese-language horror movie that was remade into the Hollywood hit *The Ring*, is credited with taking a chance on Shimizu while he was still a film student. “Hiroshi Takashi, the screenwriter of *Ringu*, got in touch with me to tell me about Shimizu, a promising young student who was currently in his class at film school,” Ichise explains. Takashi had been impressed by one of Shimizu’s class projects and submitted it to Ichise who was, at the time, looking for someone to make a short horror drama that could be audible over a mobile phone.

“Shimizu showed me two shorts he had previously made, both of which were expertly done,” Ichise continues.

“I had made these films after seeing *Ringu*,” says Shimizu, “and was determined to make a horror movie in a completely different style, something radically different, even if I failed miserably. My idea was to show ghosts, not as specters, but in a clearer, more realistic fashion.”

Ichise had an agreement with the Japanese company V-Cinema to make two movies for video distribution. He decided to hand the assignment to the promising young director. “I said to Shimizu, ‘Why don’t you make these two videos about anything you like as long as they are really scary.’ So he brought me a script that became the basis for the *JU-ON* series.”

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The two *JU-ON* videos developed a major word-of-mouth following throughout Asia, catching the attention of executive producer Roy Lee who had previously discovered

*Ringu* and championed its successful American remake *The Ring* starring Naomi Watts. “I first heard about it from a journalist named Alvin Lu who claimed that *JU-ON* was the scariest movie he had ever seen,” Lee recalls. “He sent me a copy of the movie and I watched it. Even though it was an un-subtitled print, it was powerfully frightening. I couldn’t shake its horrifying images from my mind.”

Lee approached a young screenwriter, Stephen Susco, to fashion an English-language script of *JU-ON*. “I had been an avid fan of Asian horror films for quite some time,” says Susco. “They seemed to be consistently pushing the envelope in terms of the genre.” When I first saw the original *JU-ON* films, I was both frightened and fascinated. Shimizu had taken things a step further by adding a non-linear narrative structure that added a powerful new dynamic to the genre, a sense of emotional instability and disorientation. Not only was his use of a non-linear structure masterful, but he peppered the film with some of the most arresting and terrifying images I’d ever seen. I didn’t so much agree to write the script as I was compelled to do it.”

As the English-language version was being written, Ichise made a Japanese theatrical version of *JU-ON*. Lee decided to show the film to director Sam Raimi, himself a master of the genre. “I had a feeling Sam would appreciate the horror because it had a similar sensibility to Sam’s movie *The Evil Dead*.”

“*JU-ON* is one of the most terrifying films I’d ever seen,” says Raimi. “Shimizu crafted some unique onscreen scares. His style and pacing were relentless. He never left you any time to catch your breath. He had clearly elevated the genre to a new level.”

As soon as he saw it, Raimi was determined to back the American remake through his production company Ghost House Pictures and to have Shimizu direct the English-language version as well. Shimizu was, at first, unsure about redoing his film with an American cast. “Since I had already done this story, I thought it would be better for a U.S. director to try his hand at it instead,” says Shimizu.

But after meeting with Raimi, Shimizu changed his mind. “Sam talked with great passion and specificity about particular scenes in the original *JU-ON*,” says the director. “He also told me he wanted the American version to have the kinds of effects I had not been able to do because of budget constraints. My interest was piqued, because I realized I would have the creative freedom to explore different facets of the story than I had previously and to take things even further. I just couldn’t pass up that opportunity.”

About two years after Lee first screened *JU-ON*, Shimizu was behind the camera remaking it as *The Grudge*. “Perhaps the largest hurdle in refashioning the script,” says Ichise, “was in making allowances for the differing sensibilities of Japanese and American filmmakers and what they think is frightening to an audience. There are special characteristics that are unique in Japanese horror movies. For instance, in many cases the mystery is never solved, nor is a conclusion to the story reached. For Japanese audiences that open-ended quality in itself is considered scary. But American audiences seem to require a more definitive resolution.”

Adds screenwriter Susco, “There were challenges in the writing process that I hadn’t faced before. The most prominent was to find the proper way to blend my own original ideas with Shimizu’s. I didn’t want to step on his toes, nor create a story that didn’t live up to the high standard he had set with the original films. But throughout the entire process, Shimizu gave me the freedom to explore my own ideas, all the while guiding the script’s development with his steady and confident directorial vision. I am thankful for his collaborative spirit and honored to have worked with a man, who in my opinion, is already one of the most talented horror filmmakers working today.”

## **THE AMERICAN CAST**

For his first English-language film, *The Grudge*, director Shimizu was able to gather a strong cast of prominent young American actors as well as seasoned veterans including Sarah Michelle Gellar, Jason Behr, KaDee Strickland, Clea DuVall, Grace Zabriskie, Rosa Blasi, William Mapother, Ted Raimi and, in a key cameo, Bill Pullman. The actors

were drawn to the project for a variety of reasons, including the unique subject matter, the director's compelling vision and the opportunity to work in Japan.

Coming off a seven-year stint in the wildly successful TV series "Buffy The Vampire Slayer," Sarah Michelle Gellar assumed the role of the central character, Karen. "The fact that Sam Raimi placed such trust in Takashi Shimizu, though he'd never made an American film before and spoke no English, demonstrated to me an incredible amount of belief in his talent," observes Gellar. "Knowing that, I really had to be involved. And as an actor, it really made me want to rise to the occasion. I love to be scared and, to me, the original *JU-ON* is a perfect example of that experience."

Jason Behr, who assumed the role of Karen's boyfriend Doug, says he was blown away by the original *JU-ON*. "I watched it in my living room with a bunch of friends and we all thought it was fantastic, different from any horror film we'd ever seen. So I really couldn't pass up the chance to do a Japanese horror film in English. I immediately packed my bags for Japan."

Veteran actor Bill Pullman has a cameo that will surprise audiences when they first see him. But that was only part of the reason he wanted to be involved in *The Grudge*. "I'm always intrigued by a new situation, where somebody's doing things differently," says Pullman. "*The Grudge* had that and so much more. When I saw *JU-ON*, I thought this guy knows how to make something happen on film with a very clean style, very specific and artful. Then when I learned that it was going to be shot in Japan using the Japanese model of production, right down to the crew and craft services, I was sold. It was the kind of filmmaking experience I'd never had before."

Grace Zabriskie, perhaps best known from her role in David Lynch's "Twin Peaks," also relished the opportunity to work in Japan. "It has always been in the back of my mind as some place I would love to see, so that was part of my decision," says Zabriskie. "But a large part of my response was to the script, which was genuinely scary. I had watched

the original *JU-ON* and I thought the English-language script was in some ways even better. So there was no way I could say no.”

William Mapother, who won acclaim for his bad guy role in the Oscar®-nominated independent feature *In the Bedroom*, was also taken with the original film. “I was excited to learn it would be remade by the same director because *JU-ON* scared the heck out of me.”

## **NOT SO LOST IN TRANSLATION:** **ON WORKING WITH SHIMIZU**

Director Takashi Shimizu speaks only a few words of English, which producer Ichise cites as a key factor in the decision to shoot the film in Japan. “It is definitely an English-language movie, with a great script and terrific American actors. But it will have a wonderful Japanese flavor to it.”

Gellar fondly remembers her initial meeting with the young Japanese director, whom she quickly learned had a delightful sense of humor that transcended the language barrier. “The first day we met he said to me, ‘My lady, your destination is approaching,’ and I thought maybe he was saying that I looked familiar. Then he explained to me that he learned what little English he knew from watching *Star Wars*,” she laughs.

“There was definitely a sense of being lost in translation at the start,” Behr says. “It was a bit of a challenge because you had to go through an interpreter to tell you exactly what Takashi was thinking and what he wanted from you as an actor. So you’d watch him speak in that wonderfully animated way he has and then the translator would tell you what he said in a sort of dispassionate, simplistic way. The lines of communication were a little jumbled at first. But Takashi and I both got used to it and eventually we developed a kind of shorthand between us.”

Mapother also had initial difficulties with the translation process. “I’d ask a question and wait a few seconds, like during an early overseas phone call,” he says. “It didn’t take long to realize that I had to be selective and to the point in my questions, which was better for everyone, believe me.”

Clea DuVall who had just finished working with the Spanish-speaking Mexican director Alejandro Gonzalez Iñárritu on *21 Grams*, had learned how to make herself understood and learn what she needed from that experience. “As a result it wasn’t that difficult to work with Takashi. Our communication was surprisingly fluid,” she confesses. “In a way it’s almost easier working with someone who doesn’t speak the same language because you don’t spend a lot of time over-analyzing. You’re not so much in your head about what you’re doing. You just kind of go with the experience instinctually. And because the director doesn’t understand what you’re saying, he has to focus on the emotions in your performance. Your face and your eyes can’t lie.”

Since most of his cast had never been to Japan before, Shimizu was able to transfer their real sense of disorientation to their performances. “Many of the actors had come to Japan for the first time,” he says. “I know that they were expecting me to have conversations with them about their roles, but I deliberately ignored them in order to heighten their nervousness. A great deal of that comes through in their work and it’s very real and very effective.”

## **THE GHOSTS**

Japanese actors Takako Fuji and Yuya Ozeki reprise the roles they played throughout the evolution of *JU-ON* in the English-language version *The Grudge*. “It was unusual to work with the same actors in the same roles over such an extended period,” says Shimizu. “It was also rewarding, because we were able to find greater nuances in those roles in each successive version. It was also amazing for us to watch the evolution of this story from a Japanese short to an American movie.”



Fuji plays Kayako the haunting female ghost who stalks all those who enter the house. “At the beginning, I approached the part for what it was—a three-minute test piece, so I had no expectations. But since then, the *JU-ON* series has evolved in ways I never imagined. I can hardly believe what it has become.”

One consistent element throughout, however, has been the ease of her working experience with Shimizu. “Takashi always has a very clear idea of exactly what shot he wants in his head as well as a real sense of the character of Kayako and her movements. Just by following his direction, the character of Kayako deepened and became more meaningful to me as a performer.”

Shimizu is philosophical about the development of his relationship with Fuji, who is taking on the role of the female ghost for the fifth time, “Both of us get older each time we do this movie, so it does feel a bit strange,” he says. “But if I had to hire someone new for the role, I would have to teach her everything from scratch. Takako already has a strong sense of the role and she believes in me, which makes our working relationship as facile as it is fruitful.”

Fuji’s suitability for the role transcends her acting ability, Shimizu adds. “We originally met by chance. Later, when I glanced at her resume, I realized we were both born on the same day of the same year. At that point, I felt that fate had intervened and it was more than a coincidence that she was reading for this role.”

At age seven, the young Yuya Ozeki is also repeating the role he originally played in *JU-ON*. Fuji observes, “Yuya-kun has become much stronger and more attractive over the years. In the beginning, he hardly ever spoke to anyone except his mother. He was very quiet. The role of Toshio is such a sad part that as a mother I feel very sorry for him. I’m impressed that Takashi has been able to create such feelings of trust and love between us. Yuya plays a cute ghost who follows his mother around.”

Regarding the uniqueness of the film's specters, Shimizu confides that, "Kayako sometimes utters a kind of 'ahhhh' sound. It was actually my voice in the original version. When I was a child I loved trying out my voice and I did it so often that I was scolded by my parents for making strange sounds. Even then, I felt I could use these sounds somewhere in my life. So when I found a good use for it in the original *JU-ON* series, this whole exercise made me realize that you never know when you might be doing something that seems odd at the time but might, one day, prove useful."

## **BEARING GRUDGES**

Actor Ted Raimi, best known from the popular TV series "Xena: Warrior Princess," speaks of *The Grudge* as a psychological horror movie. "It's the kind of film that affects you on a subconscious level. It deals with inner fears we have such as the transmogrifications of our bodies when we die. It also brings up the rather disturbing question that if you died and were not at peace or came to an untimely end, what would happen to you?"

Adds Gellar, "Everyone loves to go to a movie and be scared. And the scariest things are the ones that could actually happen, like something of the things in *The Grudge*. Those are the moments that frighten you to the core and resonate long after you've left the theater."

KaDee Strickland says such complex emotional reactions were inevitable given Shimizu's stylistic use of what seemed to be very simple images. "He'll take something as sweet and lovely as a cat or a child and really make you question whether or not you want to be in the same space with them," says Strickland. "He has an uncanny ability to take something traditional and make it very non-traditional. It's one of his great gifts as a filmmaker."

Rosa Blasi, who is a devoted fan of horror movies, says that by the end of the movie, when the pieces of the puzzle have fallen into place, the audience will experience a

great sense of satisfaction. “Shimizu and the writer Stephen Susco added a richness and intelligence to the mystery. This is no simple slasher film or haunted house movie.”

Pullman likens Shimizu’s approach to that of David Lynch. “The visual world he creates and his use of interesting and unpredictable camera moves is very precise and methodical. It’s very exciting to watch.”

After completing production, Gellar was confident that Shimizu had achieved something special with *The Grudge*. “Sometimes you just get a sense that what you’re working on is different, unique, even if you can’t quite put your finger on why. This film will benefit from an ensemble incorporating many different styles, a creatively different approach and a wide variety of approaches to acting. It’s quite unlike anything I’ve ever worked on before.”

Producer Ichise, who took a chance on Shimizu, is satisfied that the director continues to push the envelope creatively and has expanded the parameters of the horror genre. “What he has essentially done is make a Japanese horror movie in English that will be accessible to a worldwide audience. I think his growth as a filmmaker is filled with endless possibilities. This is just the beginning.”

## **MAKING THE MOVIE JAPANESE STYLE**

When Shimizu was brought in to direct the remake of *JU-ON*, producer Raimi also decided that he wanted the film to be produced in Japan. “It would have been easy to reconfigure the story and set it in the U.S., but it might have lost its impact,” he offers. “Since we were using the original director and the movie would be in the same style, it made sense to shoot it in Japan.”

Ichise echoes those sentiments. “Part of the horror of *JU-ON* relies on Japanese buildings and special configurations. It would have been a very different movie in an

American setting.” The director also saw *The Grudge* as an excellent opportunity to showcase the expertise of Japanese film crews. “Such recent movies as *Lost In Translation* and *The Last Samurai* were filmed here mostly with U.S. crews,” Ichise points out. “This time around, the talent behind the camera is almost entirely Japanese, a great showcase to demonstrate the sophistication of our local film crews.”

Working in Japan required adherence to the customs of local filmmaking, which included a traditional blessing prior to the start of principal photography. “In Japan, there is always a purification ceremony to ensure safety of the filming and the crew,” says Ichise. “We also pray for the success of the film. It is all part of the process of making movies here.”

The filmmakers observed the Japanese custom of having everyone remove their shoes when working on the set, including the grips and electricians. “There’s something wonderful about everyone paying their respects on the set by taking their shoes off when they enter,” observes Gellar.

Job responsibilities differed as well. The props department was in charge of shoes, while stylists Miyuki Taniguchi and Shawn Holly Cookson purchased and fitted clothes for the American actors under the guidance of Shimizu.

“Also, there’s no food allowed on the set,” adds Gellar. “One morning I walked on set and I was eating. I looked up and everyone was staring at me. I quickly rushed off and dumped my breakfast into the nearest garbage bin. Since I was on a Japanese set, I wanted to respect their ways.”

Gellar also discovered other pronounced differences during production. One of the film’s opening scenes required Gellar to walk through the crowded Tokyo streets during rush hour. She was surprised to find that she did just that. “You see, in the U.S. when you’re filming in an urban area, the traffic is blocked off and the crowd is made up of extras,” she says. “In Japan, you just walk out on the street with the city’s population and they

start filming. There I was in rush-hour traffic. It was an amazing experience. I had to make my way through the crowd just like everyone else. It was different from anything I'd ever done before professionally because you can't really ask the person next to you to walk a little slower or tell them that they're blocking your light. You just have to keep going. If you don't get the shot, suddenly rush hour is over. That makes for a very brisk pace of filming."

Behr had similarly unique experiences during the production. "The very first day of work, Sarah and I had an outdoor scene with dialogue. Shimizu looked at us, smiled and said, 'Okay.' So I look at Sarah and she looks at me and we wondered whether okay meant we were going to do another take or shoot the scene from another angle. Then I turn around and notice that the camera tracker's already moved, the camera has shifted and everyone was already in place. It was the most efficient crew I have ever worked with."

Blasi is used to the fast-paced world of television. But this was even faster, she notes. "I was warned if you do something you don't like, make sure you say 'No, no, no' right away, because as soon as the director says 'Okay,' the set is cleared and they're onto the next scene."

Mapother was also caught off guard initially, but quickly came to appreciate the Japanese approach to filmmaking. "While we blocked and rehearsed the next shot, the grips and electricians were setting up for it. We'd deliver our lines as we stepped around them and over cables. At first I was a little thrown, but I came to appreciate it. For actors, the American film system is medieval. You're either working and coddled or unemployed and ignored. But in Japan actors are just another member of the crew, and on the set there's a stronger sense of unity."

## **ABOUT THE CAST**

**SARAH MICHELLE GELLAR** (Karen) began her career as a child actress and has remained on the road of success, recently starring as the lovable 'Daphne' in the hit *Scooby Doo 2: Monsters Unleashed*.

Gellar is best known for her role as 'Buffy Summers' in "Buffy the Vampire Slayer." She wrapped her seventh and final season of the critically acclaimed drama in May of 2003.

Gellar starred in Columbia Pictures' hit thriller *I Know What You Did Last Summer* and the blockbuster hit *Scream 2*. She won a 1998 Blockbuster Award for Best Supporting Actress for her role in *Summer* and was nominated for a 1998 MTV Movie Award for her role in *Scream 2*. When Gellar starred opposite Ryan Phillippe in *Cruel Intentions*, she earned two MTV Awards: Best Actress, and Best On-Screen Kiss. Furthermore, Gellar co-hosted the 2002 MTV Movie Awards with Jack Black, garnering the highest ratings in the show's history. Gellar also been seen on the big screen in James Toback's *Harvard Man*, which premiered last year at the Cannes International Film Festival.

Gellar's career in the world of entertainment has spanned nearly 23 years. She won an Emmy in 1994 for her role on the ABC daytime drama "All My Children" and completed classes at the High School for the Performing Arts in New York one year ahead of schedule. Her other credits include "An Invasion of Privacy" (CBS/MOW), "A Woman Named Jackie" (CBS/Mini-Series), *Funny Farm*, *Over The Brooklyn Bridge* and *High Stakes*. On stage, she starred opposite Matthew Broderick at Circle in the Square in "Jake's Women" and "The Widow Claire" at the Old Globe Theatre in San Diego.

Gellar has also participated in much off-screen work as a volunteer for many charitable organizations. She is an advocate for breast cancer awareness and participated in Ford's 2003 'Tied to the Cause' campaign benefiting the Susan G. Komen Breast Cancer Foundation. Gellar was also an honoree at this year's Young Survivors Coalition. She has donated her time and talent to the Make-a-Wish Foundation and has spent time in the Dominican Republic working as a volunteer for Habitat for Humanity. She helped those affected by the recent California fires by visiting shelters and handing

out supplies to families who had lost everything. Additionally, she has been involved with Project Angel Food, The Starbright Foundation, Planned Parenthood and the Los Angeles Free Clinic.

**JASON BEHR** (Doug), who is originally from Minneapolis, is known to audiences for his starring role as 'Max Evans' in the dramatic series "Roswell." The series ran for three successful seasons and still plays throughout the world.

On the big screen, Behr made his feature debut in *Pleasantville* directed by Gary Ross. He co-starred with Kevin Spacey and Dame Judi Dench in *The Shipping News* directed by Lasse Hallström, receiving a Movieline Magazine Award for his performance. He also starred in Victor Salva's *Rites Of Passage* with Dean Stockwell. This film was awarded the Best Film Prize at the Santa Monica Film Festival in 2000.

Behr recently appeared in the independent film *Shooting Livien*, in which he stars in the title role as an emerging singer/songwriter who's struggling with his personal demons. He also stars in *Unhappily Even After*.

**KADEE STRICKLAND** (Susan) recently starred in Screen Gems' *Anacondas: The Hunt for the Blood Orchid* and, earlier this year, appeared in *The Stepford Wives*. She was raised in rural Georgia and moved to New York after graduating with a degree in Fine Arts from University of the Arts in Philadelphia. She quickly landed various roles in theater, television and feature films.

Some of her feature film credits include *Something's Gotta Give*, Woody Allen's *Anything Else*, *The Sixth Sense* and *Girl, Interrupted*. She also starred in *Moon Juice*, which debuted at the Hamptons Film Festival in 1999.

**CLEA DUVALL** (Jennifer) first made an impression in the teen horror flick *The Faculty* and has since managed to stand out among the crowd of young actors. She

most recently co-starred in *21 Grams* and the HBO series, “Carnivàle.” Other credits include *Identity*, *The Slaughter Rule*, *Thirteen Conversations About One Thing*, *Ghost Of Mars* and *But I’m A Cheerleader*.

Born in Los Angeles, she attended the Los Angeles High School of the Arts and got her professional start on television, making occasional appearances on a variety of shows including “E.R.” and “Buffy the Vampire Slayer.” After Duvall nabbed her role in *The Faculty*, for which she received the Blockbuster Entertainment Award and Teen Choice Award nominations, she appeared in *The Astronaut’s Wife* as Charlize Theron’s sister, and *Girl, Interrupted* with Winona Ryder and Angelina Jolie.

DuVall’s television work includes the HBO feature “The Laramie Project” and the Showtime telefilm “The Defenders: Payback:”

**BILL PULLMAN** (Peter) has played a wide range of roles including the President of the United States in the world-wide blockbuster *Independence Day*, an eccentric private detective in the critically acclaimed *Zero Effect* and the troubled musician in David Lynch’s *Lost Highway*, to name just a few. Some of his other feature films include *Lake Placid*, *Lucky Numbers*, *The Guilty*, *Brokedown Palace*, *While You Were Sleeping*, *Casper*, *Mr. Wrong*, *Sommersby*, *Sleepless In Seattle*, *Wyatt Earp*, *Malice*, *The Last Seduction*, *Spaceballs*, *The Serpent And The Rainbow*, *The Accidental Tourist*, *Sibling Rivalry*, *Liebestraum* and *The End Of Violence*.

Pullman garnered critical acclaim when he made his directorial debut last year with the TNT original western “The Virginian,” which he also starred in and produced under his Big Town Productions banner. In the film, an adaptation of Owen Wister’s classic Western novel of the same name, Pullman portrays the Virginian, a laconic Wyoming cowboy with an unwavering sense of justice.



In early 2003, Pullman starred in the dark independent feature *Rick* based on Verdi's opera "Rigoletto." He was also featured in Andrew Wilder's *The Orphan King* and with Jamie Bell in Thomas Vinterberg's *Dear Wendy*.

Born in Hornell, New York, Pullman earned a Master of Fine Arts degree in directing from the University of Massachusetts at Amherst. He went on to produce plays and teach at Montana State University, where he ran their theater department for two years. Following his stint in Montana, Pullman worked in New York studying acting and performing in Off-Broadway and regional theatres. He then came to California to work with the Los Angeles Theatre Center and soon made his feature film debut with the hit comedy *Ruthless People*.

**GRACE ZABRISKIE** (Emma) has left an indelible mark on both the small and big screens, since making her feature debut in 1979's *Norma Rae*, for which Sally Field won the Oscar® as Best Actress.

Some of her most powerful portrayals have been of mothers, though not exactly in the June Cleaver mold. In *An Officer and a Gentleman*, Zabriskie portrayed Debra Winger's mom, in *Drugstore Cowboy*, she was the rejecting parent of Matt Dillon. The actress drew on her New Orleans roots as Dennis Quaid's Cajun mom in *The Big Easy* and was another Southern mother, this time to Uma Thurman, in *Even Cowgirls Get the Blues*. Two of her most memorable feature parts were as a crazed killer in David Lynch's *Wild at Heart* and as Malcolm McDowell's wife in *Chain of Desire*. She also appeared in *A Family Thing* and *Armageddon*.

On the small screen, Zabriskie has lent her unique talents to a variety of memorable roles. David Lynch tapped her to portray the mother of murder victim Laura Palmer in the quirky primetime serial "Twin Peaks," which she reprised in the feature prequel, *Twin Peaks: Fire Walk With Me*. More recently, Zabriskie had the recurring role of the mother of Susan Ross, George Costanza's ill-fated fiancée, in several episodes of "Seinfeld". She also gave an effective supporting turn as Jennifer Jason Leigh's mother

in the controversial and critically praised television movie "Bastard Out of Carolina." She is currently shooting her regular role in the HBO pilot "Big Love."

**ROSA BLASI** (Maria) stars in the Lifetime television series "Strong Medicine." The show, which is in its fifth season, is the first cable series to reach 100 episodes. Last year, she received a Gracie Award for Best Actress in a Drama for her role on the series. *The Grudge* marks her feature film debut.

A native of Chicago, Blasi comes from a strong theater background, having performed in more than 40 professional productions beginning at age eight and ranging from comedy at the esteemed Piven Performance Company and Second City to starring roles in numerous musicals and an extended tour with Kenny Rogers.

Her television debut was a recurring role on the CBS soap opera "The Bold and the Beautiful." She later starred in the MTV/UPN sitcom "Hitz." Her rare combination of sex appeal and comedic timing landed her guest roles on hit shows such as "Frasier," "Becker," "Caroline in the City," "Drew Carey," "Grown Up," "Holding The Baby" and "Beverly Hills, 90210." She was acclaimed for her performance in the Showtime film "Noriega: God's Favorite," which was shot in the Philippines. The film was directed by Roger Spottiswoode and co-starred Bob Hoskins.

Blasi also starred in "The Vagina Monologues" at the Apollo Theater and has recorded numerous radio and television voice-overs. Her sharp tongue and quick wit have earned her a reputation as a favorite guest on such shows as: "Jimmy Kimmel Live," "Craig Kilbourne," "Politically Incorrect" and "Love Line."

She recently married New York Giants football player James Finn.

**WILLIAM MAPOTHER** (Matthew) delivered a riveting performance in *In The Bedroom*. His other feature film credits include *Suspect Zero*, *Minority Report*,

*Swordfish*, *Mission Impossible 2*, *Almost Famous* and *Magnolia*. He made his big screen debut when he landed a small role in Oliver Stone's *Born On The 4<sup>th</sup> Of July*.

**TED RAIMI** (Alex), a native of Detroit, is the youngest of the four Raimi siblings. He is probably best known for his recurring roles on "SeaQuest DSV" (later "SeaQuest 2032") as Lt. Tim O'Neill and "Xena: Warrior Princess" as 'Joxer.'

He also appeared in the film versions of Tom Clancy's thrillers *Patriot Games* and *Clear and Present Danger*. His other motion picture credits include *Hard Target*, *Candyman*, *Born Yesterday*, *Forced Exposure*, *Stuart Saves His Family* and *For Love Of The Game*. In *Army of Darkness*, Raimi played four different roles. Recently, he appeared in *Spider-Man®* and *Spider-Man® 2*. He also stars in the upcoming Kirk Douglas film *The Illusion*, which is due for release in 2005.

Raimi also starred in the horror thriller *Skinner*, in the title role. In addition, he has had guest starring roles on such series as "Baywatch," "Twin Peaks" "Hercules the Legendary Journeys," "Baywatch" and "Alf." He had a very memorable part in "American Gothic" as a psychotic kidnapper.

**RYO ISHIBASHI** (Detective Nakagawa) is a well-known movie and television star in Japan. In 1982, he made his screen debut in *Saraba Aibo*. Some of his notable credits include his starring roles in *Audition*, *Another Lonely Hitman* for director Rokuro Mochizuki, writer/director/actor Takeshi Kitano's *Kid's Return* and *Brother*, as well as a supporting role in *The Crossing Guard*, which was written, directed and produced by Sean Penn.

Also a musician, Ishibashi started the Japanese rock band ARB and went on to record four albums. After breaking up in 1990, the band reunited in 1998, to release the album "Real Life," and continues to perform around Japan.

**YOKO MAKI** (Yoko) has appeared in such films as *The Princess Blade* and *Battle Royal 2* for producer Taka Ichise. *The Grudge* is her first English-language film.

**TAKAKO FUJI** (Kayako) is, for the fifth time, reprising her role as the eerie ghost for Shimizu. A well-known voice over actress in Japan, she appeared in Shimizu's student film and went on to star in his subsequent versions of *JU-ON* prior to joining the cast of the English-language remake *The Grudge*. Her training as a professional dancer helped her to recreate the bizarre movements that make her performance as the distraught ghost seeking revenge extremely haunting.

**YUYA OZEKI** (Toshio) is, at age seven, repeating his role as the young ghost for the third time.

## **ABOUT THE FILMMAKERS**

**TAKASHI SHIMIZU** (Director) majored in art and drama and then began his film career working part-time at a Kyoto movie theater, writing scripts during his off hours. In 1997, after several years freelancing as an assistant director, he enrolled at the Tokyo Film Seminar (now the Film School of Tokyo).

Following the completion of a short film project for the school, his talent was spotted by director Kyoshi Kurosawa (*Cure*) and screenwriter Hiroshi Takashi (*Ringu*). Their interest in his work brought him to the attention of producer Taka Ichise, who had been asked to produce a series of 'horror stories' for a cell phone company. He asked the young director to give him some ideas of what might scare him and this process launched the beginning of the series of *JU-ON* movies.

With *The Grudge*, Shimizu is directing the story of his haunted house and revenge-seeking ghosts for the fifth time.

**STEPHEN SUSCO** (Screenplay by) was born and raised in Pennsylvania and began writing fiction at age 11, winning several awards before graduating from high school, including an Honorable Mention in Issac Asimov's Science Fiction Competition. While at the University of Notre Dame, he performed in more than 25 plays and 30 student films. He also directed several theatrical productions, including David Mamet's "American Buffalo" and José Triana's "Night Of The Assassins."

Susco ventured into film when he wrote his first two screenplays, adaptations of Stephen King's novel Rage and Robert McCammon's Blue World. He subsequently wrote, directed and produced his first film, a 12-minute 16mm short that won a regional award in the 1993 College Film and Television Awards, held by the Academy of Television Arts and Sciences (Regional Winner in the Drama category). With three Bachelor's Degrees (Philosophy, Film & Television and Computer Applications), Susco moved to Los Angeles and, within three weeks, attended his first class at the University of Southern California as an M.F.A. student in Film Production.

In the fall of 1996, Susco produced a student film, *Mr. October*, which premiered at the Film Fest New Haven competition. The film won a Student Academy Award® and has been shown in a number of other domestic and international film festivals.

While still in film school, Susco earned his first professional screenwriting credits. He co-wrote *Bone In the Throat* (an adaptation of the first novel by acclaimed chef Tony Bourdain), *Ghosting* (an original supernatural horror film), the romantic comedy *Marry Me Jane* to which Jennifer Love Hewitt was attached to star and produce, as well as *Life During Wartime* for director Phillip Noyce and producer Gale Anne Hurd.

Upon graduating with his MFA from USC in May 1998, Susco co-wrote *Dumbstruck* for director Mike Nichols and actor John Leguizamo and the action thriller *Airtime* for director Scott Ziehl. In addition to writing the English-language screenplay of *The*

*Grudge* for Ghost House Pictures. Susco is finishing work on an adaptation of *Threshold*, a French-Canadian thriller.

Susco recently sold an option on his script *Red* (adapted from the book by Jack Ketchum) and is currently developing *Bitter* for director Taylor Hackford (*An Officer and a Gentleman*, *The Devil's Advocate*). His original script *Adagio* is being produced as an independent film.

**SAM RAIMI** (Producer) is the director of the box office blockbusters *Spider-Man*® starring Tobey Maguire, Kirsten Dunst and Willem Dafoe and *Spider-Man*® 2, which was released this past summer.

Raimi previously directed the supernatural thriller *The Gift* starring Cate Blanchett, Hilary Swank, Keanu Reeves, Greg Kinnear and Giovanni Ribisi. Raimi also directed the acclaimed suspense thriller *A Simple Plan*, which starred Bill Paxton, Billy Bob Thornton and Bridget Fonda, and earned Thornton an Academy Award® nomination for Best Supporting Actor. Additional directorial credits include the baseball homage *For Love of the Game* starring Kevin Costner and Kelly Preston.

Known for his imaginative filmmaking style, richly drawn characters and offbeat humor, Raimi wrote and directed the cult classic *The Evil Dead*, which became an immediate favorite when it debuted at the Cannes Film Festival and spawned the equally impressive *The Evil Dead II: Dead By Dawn*.

Raimi has directed *Darkman* starring Liam Neeson and Frances McDormand, which he followed up with *Army of Darkness*, a comic sword-and-sorcery fantasy starring Bruce Campbell. Raimi served as executive producer for John Woo's *Hard Target*, and co-wrote (with Joel and Ethan Coen) *The Hudsucker Proxy* starring Tim Robbins, Paul Newman and Jennifer Jason Leigh. Raimi also directed the western *The Quick and the Dead* starring Leonardo DiCaprio, Sharon Stone, Russell Crowe and Gene Hackman.

Raimi's extensive television work includes the hit syndicated series "Xena: Warrior Princess," which he executive produced with Rob Tapert. The highly successful series starring Lucy Lawless ran for six seasons. Raimi and Tapert also executive produced the enormously popular "Hercules: Legendary Journeys" and served as executive producers for the CBS series "American Gothic."

Raimi's interest in filmmaking began as a youngster in Michigan, where he directed his own Super 8 films. Later, he left Michigan State University to form Renaissance Pictures with Tapert and longtime friend and actor Bruce Campbell.

**ROB TAPERT** (Producer) is Sam Raimi's longstanding producing partner. *The Grudge* marks the second film for their the newly-formed Ghost House Pictures, a genre label they formed with distributor Senator International, which is dedicated to producing commercial feature films with horror, sci-fi and fantasy themes. Their first production with Senator was *Boogeyman*.

Tapert and Raimi have worked together since they met at Michigan State University, where they formed the Society for Creative Film Making. After producing the hit horror cult film *Evil Dead*, Tapert collaborated with Raimi on *Evil Dead II: Dead By Dawn*, *Darkman* and *Army of Darkness*.

Tapert went on to become an executive producer of action features *Hard Target* and *Timecop* starring Jean Claude Van Damme, as well as two direct-to-video "Darkman" sequels.

He was also a producer of Raimi's theatrical film *The Gift* starring Cate Blanchett and Keanu Reeves and executive producer of Raimi's high-action *The Quick and the Dead* starring Leonardo Di Caprio, Sharon Stone and Gene Hackman, as well as the two-hour series pilot of Fox's "M.A.N.T.I.S.," the CBS series "American Gothic," the ABC series "Spy Game," "Hercules and Xena, The Animated Movie," the telemovie "Young Hercules" and four "Hercules" telemovies. In addition, he served as executive producer

on the TV series “Hercules, the Legendary Journeys,” “Xena Warrior Princess,” “Young Hercules,” “Cleopatra 2525” and “Jack of All Trades.”

**TAKA ICHISE** (Producer) has, since debuting as a film producer in 1984, produced 42 films and is well known for discovering up-and-coming Japanese filmmakers such as *The Grudge* creator Takashi Shimizu. For *The Grudge*, Ichise has painstakingly assembled a group of dedicated Japanese filmmakers for this English language remake of the hit Japanese film *JU-ON*, which he originally produced along with its equally successful sequel *JU-ON 2*.

In 1997, Ichise produced another famous Japanese hit horror franchise *Ringu*, which was regarded by audiences in Japan as “the scariest film in Japan.” *Ringu* earned a record breaking 2 billion yen in Japanese box office, was honored at several international film festivals including Brussels and Catalonia and set box office records for a Japanese film released in Hong Kong and Taiwan. The English language remake, *The Ring* starring Naomi Watts, was also a worldwide success debuting at number one in the U.S.

Ichise’s early career highlights include his first film *To Sleep So As To Dream (Yume miruyouni Nemuri tai)*, which won critical praise at the New York and Venice film festivals. His breakout hits include the 1987 science fiction film *Tokyo the Last Megalopolis (Teito Monogatari)*, which earned 1.8 billion yen at the Japanese box office and was remade into the popular animated series *Doomed Megalopolis*, and its sequel *Tokyo The Last War (Teito Taisen)*.

Ichise formed OZ Co., Ltd. in 1989 and established OZLA Pictures, Inc., its U.S. counterpart in 1992. OZLA’s mission is to produce high quality, globally appealing feature films. Through OZLA, Ichise has produced eight feature films including *American Yakuza* starring Viggo Mortenson, *No Way Back* starring Academy Award® winner Russell Crowe and Christophe Gans’ directorial debut *Crying Freeman*.



Ichise's most recent films include *The Princess Blade (Shurayukihime)*, a sword-driven martial arts film set in the near future with action sequences directed by Donnie Yen, Hideo Nakata's (*Ring 2, Ringu*) *Last Scene*, Andrew Lau's *Bullets of Love*, the romantic thriller *Moonlight Express* starring Leslie Cheung and the award-winning Japanese horror film *Dark Water (Honogurai Mizu No Soko Kara)* directed by Hideo Nakata, which Pandemonium is currently remaking in the U.S. with Jennifer Connelly and director Walter Salles.

*J-HORROR THEATER*, Ichise's next venture, is a package of 6 horror films directed by six of Japan's top horror directors including Hideo Nakata, Kiyoshi Kurosawa, and Takashi Shimizu that will be produced between 2004 and 2006.

**JOE DRAKE** (Executive Producer) is President of Senator International, which is committed to the financing, production and distribution of A-list theatrical feature films, as well as specialized niche features for the worldwide theatrically driven marketplace. He is responsible for the evaluation, acquisition, sales and distribution of the company's film slate. Drake oversees partnerships with the studios on split-rights deals and manages Senator's joint production and financing ventures.

Formerly President of Lions Gate Films International, Drake established the company as a premier supplier of theatrical feature films to the independent world. He oversaw worldwide sales and distribution of Lions Gate's international programming and championed such projects as Nicolas Cage's *Shadow of the Vampire*, the highly controversial *American Psycho* and the Academy Award® and Golden Globe Nominee *Amores Perros*.

Before joining Lions Gate, Drake spent three years at Rysher Entertainment as senior vice president of International Theatrical. Prior to that, Drake worked at Moviestore Entertainment for six years.

**NATHAN KAHANE** (Executive Producer) has brought established relationships with high-level talent to Senator International and is responsible for overseeing the development and production of the company's growing feature slate. He also oversees the daily creative operations of Ghost House Pictures, Senator International's joint venture with Sam Raimi and Rob Tapert.

Prior to his time at Senator, Kahane was Executive Vice President of Production at The Canton Company where he managed the company's development and production line-up while serving as co-producer on *Trapped* (Charlize Theron, Kevin Bacon, and Courtney Love) and as the executive in charge of production for *Angel Eyes* (Jennifer Lopez) and *Get Carter* (Sly Stallone & Michael Caine). He was also responsible for packaging several high-profile projects including *Taking Lives* starring Angelina Jolie and *Books of Magic* to be directed by Nick Matheiu.

Kahane started his career at ICM in their agent-training program after graduating from the Hass School of Business at The University of California, Berkeley.

**CARSTEN LORENZ** (Executive Producer) serves as President of Physical Production at Senator International and oversees production on all features from development to release. This includes budgeting and financing activities as well as overseeing relationships with co-production partners.

Lorenz rejoined Senator after serving as an independent producer/writer on such films as the Lola Award Winner *The Little Vampire*, *Prince Valiant* and *Invasion of Privacy*. Lorenz served as Head of US Operations for Senator from 1991-94, and was involved with such films as *Heavenly Creatures*, *The Crying Game* and *Fried Green Tomatoes*.

**ROY LEE** (Executive Producer) received a bachelor's degree from George Washington University and a law degree from The American University. He moved from Washington, D.C. to Los Angeles to pursue a career in Hollywood. His first job was with

the production company Alphaville, where he worked on films such as *The Mummy*, *The Jackal* and *Michael*.

*The Ring* was Lee's first production as an independent producer. He has subsequently set up more than 20 projects at various studios including remakes of the Japanese films

*Dark Water* and *Chaos*, both directed by Hideo Nakata, who helmed *Ringu*. As a result, Lee has developed a reputation as someone who can identify foreign films with English-language remake possibilities. In addition to developing original ideas and scripts, he has successfully imported films from Japan, Korea, Hong Kong and Indonesia to be remade in the United States.

Vertigo Entertainment, his company with partner Doug Davison, has a first look deal with Dimension Films. They are currently in production with *The Ring 2* and *Dark Water*.

**DOUG DAVISON** (Executive Producer) began his career in the film business in New York City working as a reader for New Line Cinema and as an on-set production assistant on numerous films including *Die Hard 3*. Davison soon moved to Los Angeles where he worked at the William Morris Agency. He later joined Mad Chance Productions where he rose to become President of Production working on such films as *Space Cowboys*, *Cats And Dogs* and *Confessions Of A Dangerous Mind*.

Davison formed the independent production company Vertigo Entertainment with Roy Lee. The company has a first-look production deal with Dimension/ Miramax Films. In addition to *The Grudge*, Davison is currently in production on *Dark Water* starring Jennifer Connolly and directed by Walter Salles. Later this year, he will start production on *Infernal Affairs* starring Brad Pitt with Martin Scorsese directing and *My Wife Is A Gangster* with Queen Latifah. In addition, he is developing more than 20 films at various

studios including a remake of *Invasion of the Body Snatchers* and *Chaos* with Robert DeNiro and Benicio Del Toro.

Davison grew up in Washington, D.C. and received his Bachelor's degree in English and Art History from Hamilton College.

**HIDEO YAMAMOTO** (Director of Photography) shot the popular Japanese version of *Ring 2* with Producer Taka Ichise. The Japanese cinematographer is known for his work on variety of productions, including *Fudoh: The New Generation*, *Andromedia*, *Blues Harp* and, more recently, the popular action film *Muscle Heat*. Given the chance to work with Takashi Shimizu and his cast of American actors for the remake of *JU-ON*, he readily agreed to join the team. He also shot the *Hana-Bi* for Takeshi Kitano and *Audition* for Takashi Miike.

**IWAO SAITO** (Production Designer) brings his vast knowledge of Japanese production design to the English-language remake of *The Grudge*. Working previously with Producer Taka Ichise on six projects including *Ringu* and *Ringu 2*, he jumped at the opportunity to recreate the haunted house of *The Grudge* on the sound stages of the legendary Toho Studios in Tokyo. Other noteworthy credits for the talented artist are *Mr. Baseball*, *Private Lessons*, *Rasen* and Hideo Nakata's *Last Scene*.

**JEFF BETANCOURT** (Editor) recently edited *Harold and Kumar Go to White Castle* and *The United States of Leland* starring Don Cheadle, Chris Klein and Kevin Spacey. He also edited the critically acclaimed drama *The Good Girl* starring Jennifer Aniston. His other feature film credits include *Get Over It*, *The Girls' Room*, *Chuck & Buck*, *Billy's Hollywood Screen Kiss* and *Star Maps*. For television, Betancourt edited the series "Opposite Sex."

**CHRISTOPHER YOUNG** (Music) has evolved into one of the most skilled of a new generation of film composers who are able to move effortlessly between hardcore melodrama and off-the-wall satire and comedy. He combines the orchestral craftsmanship of the great film composers of the '50s, '60s and '70s with an edgy sensibility as well as a keen and sharply tuned intelligence. His music can enhance dramas with subtlety and simplicity, propel suspense and action films with powerfully thrusting rhythms and electrifying textures, and provide comedies and unusual subject matter with hip, cutting-edge musical commentary. He achieved early recognition in 1987 with his bone-chilling score to the Clive Barker horror tale *Hellraiser* and in 1988 added two more thundering horror scores to his resume: *Hellbound: Hellraiser II* and *The Fly II*.

Young's distinctive and imaginative approaches to several unique projects have made him a highly sought-after commodity on films with unusual subject matter. He wrote an ingenious score incorporating breathing effects for the offbeat film *The Vagrant* in 1992. His score to the moody serial killer film *Jennifer Eight* added immeasurably to the film's unnerving atmosphere, while his darkly dramatic score to the Christian Slater/Kevin Bacon prison drama *Murder in the First* distinguished it from several competing courtroom thrillers.

In 1995, his music elevated a trio of thrillers: the sci-fi horror film *Species* received an unnerving score in the manner of Saint-Saens. The cyber-reality adventure *Virtuosity* was energized by a supercharged action score and the Sigourney Weaver/Holly Hunter serial killer film *Copycat* received a brilliantly-nuanced score that burrowed deeply into the psychologies of both Weaver's and Hunter's characters. He tuned in perfectly to the offbeat sensibility of the Bill Murray comedy *The Man Who Knew Too Little* and provided an appropriate urban blues groove to the John Dahl gambling melodrama *Rounders*. His other works include the scores for *Head Above Water*, Jon Amiel's *Entrapment*, *The Big Kahuna* starring Kevin Spacey and Danny DeVito, Norman Jewison's *Hurricane* starring Denzel Washington, *The Wonder Boys* starring Michael

Douglas, Sam Raimi's *The Gift*, as well as the scores to such hits as *Runaway Jury*, *The Core* and *An Unfinished Life*.

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