

# HITCH

*"No matter what, no matter when, no matter who, any man has a chance to sweep any woman off her feet. He just needs the right broom.*

-- Alex "Hitch" Hitchens

## SYNOPSIS

In Columbia Pictures' sophisticated romantic comedy *Hitch*, Alex "Hitch" Hitchens (Will Smith) is a legendary — and deliberately anonymous — New York City "date doctor" who, for a fee, has helped countless men woo the women of their dreams.

While coaching Albert (Kevin James), a meek accountant who is smitten with a glamorous celebrity, Allegra Cole (Amber Valletta), Hitch finally meets his match

in the person of the gorgeous, whip-smart Sara Melas (Eva Mendes), a gossip columnist who follows Allegra's every move.

The ultimate professional bachelor, Hitch suddenly finds himself falling deliriously in love with Sara, a reporter whose biggest scoop could very well be the unmasking of Manhattan's most famous date doctor.

Columbia Pictures Presents An Overbrook Entertainment Production *Hitch* starring Will Smith, Eva Mendes, Kevin James, Amber Valletta, Michael Rapaport and Adam Arkin. The film is directed by Andy Tennant. The film was written by Kevin Bisch and produced by James Lassiter, Will Smith and Teddy Zee. The executive producers are Michael Tadross and Wink Mordaunt. The director of photography is Andrew Dunn, BSC. The production designer is Jane Musky. The film editors are Troy Takaki, A.C.E. and Tracey Wadmore-Smith. The costume designer is Marlene Stewart. The music is by George Fenton.

*Hitch* has been rated PG-13 by the Motion Picture Association of America for Language and Some Strong Sexual References.

## **THE ROMANTIC COMEDY *HITCH***

Though Will Smith is one of Hollywood's most popular and well-established superstars, a romantic heartthrob since his early days as a popular rapper and a proven comedic talent since his long-running TV series "The Fresh Prince of Bel Air," he has never starred in a big-screen romantic comedy before. It's not for lack of trying. "We'd been searching for the right romantic comedy project for Will for years," admits James Lassiter, the producer of *Hitch* and Smith's partner in the production company Overbrook Entertainment. "It's not as easy as it looks. There aren't many out there and even fewer that are any good."

Finally, Lassiter and Overbrook's Teddy Zee found a romantic comedy screenplay by Kevin Bisch that seemed to be tailored to Smith's considerable talents. The story involved a "date doctor," a cool, self-assured man who, for a fee, helps shy and socially inept men approach and win over the women of their dreams. "It's the perfect urban legend," says Lassiter, "about a guy who is very charismatic and confident around women, so much so that he is able to teach other men how to approach the women they've fallen for."

"In Hitch's philosophy," he continues, "it only takes three dates to illuminate the right you and appeal to the woman of your dreams."

Zee also sensed that the story had potential. "It had an unmistakable New York feel to it — hip and contemporary," says Zee. "And it was told from the man's point of view, which is extremely rare in romantic comedies."

The germ of the idea came from screenwriter Kevin Bisch's experiences in college when, after a series of dates with different women, he realized he usually wound up sitting on the edge of their beds going through photo albums. In trying to discover why these women were fixated on showing him their photo albums, Bisch says he had a revelation. "How could I be so dense? They were just killing time waiting for me to kiss them. After that I became obsessed with the minutiae of dating."

From the first page of the script, says Smith, he knew he wanted to play Hitch. "He's a kind of an alchemist," says the actor. "He takes what is and transforms it into what could be. All he needs is love. When he first meets the guys, he asks them if they're truly in love with the woman they're trying to win, because without that, Hitch can't help them."

Ironically, while Hitch himself has luck with women, he has no special relationship in his own life, because he's still wounded from a heartbreak he

suffered back in college and has vowed to never open himself up to love (and hurt) again.

That sentiment struck a chord with Smith as well. “Every guy has that one girl he remembers from high school that he was in love with and she did something that tore his heart out,” Smith says. “What makes Hitch so special is that he’s made it his life’s work to make sure other men are spared that fate.”

“I think that’s what makes the character of Hitch so appealing,” says Bisch. “He’s not jaded or cynical about romance. He really believes that every guy — except himself — can meet and woo the girl of his dreams. What he’s doing is really noble and altruistic. He wants these guys to succeed and spare them the pain he endured.”

An obvious choice to direct *Hitch* was director Andy Tennant, who had ably displayed his romantic comedy chops in such major hits as *Sweet Home Alabama* and *Ever After*. “Andy owns this genre,” says Zee, who previously worked with Tennant on *Fools Rush In*. “He’s not only funny, but he brings a refreshing humanity to romantic comedies as well.”

Tennant’s films are informed by his attitude toward romance. “Basically, love is a wonderful problem we never solve,” he says. “It’s this great merry-go-round of emotions that I find endlessly fascinating.”

Hitch’s “date doctor” rules are part of a long-standing tradition regarding the game of love. “There’s a line in the movie that says it very well: ‘She wants the real you. She just doesn’t want it all at once,’” says Tennant. “What that means is that you can’t completely overwhelm someone with your emotions. It’s all about the controlled release. You have to play some of the courtship games that have been going on for centuries.”

While Hitch proves himself to be extremely successful in helping other men find love, his smooth, practiced approach doesn't seem to work on Sara Melas (Eva Mendes), a beautiful reporter who works for a New York tabloid newspaper, leaving him stymied and intrigued.

"For the first time in his life," says Lassiter, "Hitch has met someone who also has it all figured out and he finds that very appealing."

"It's almost like the universe is conspiring against him," laughs Smith, "forcing him to show Sara who he really is rather than what he thinks she wants to see."

"Sara brings out the vulnerable, awkward geek that's inside all of us when we approach the woman of our dreams," observes Tennant.

Mendes, who has already made her mark in comedy and drama in such films as *Out of Time*, *Stuck on You*, and *2 Fast 2 Furious*, was cast in the role, says executive producer Wink Mordaunt (Tennant's producing partner), "because she is light-hearted, yet has a certain gravity. She has exactly the right temperament for Sara. When Hitch tries to set up dates with her and they go horribly wrong, Sara is not irritated. She's entertained. That corresponds perfectly with Eva's personality."

"And she's a brilliant actress," adds Smith. "She's beautiful and funny — and a lot of woman. She totally kept me on my toes."

The opportunity to work with Smith was definitely a draw for Mendes, but it was also the appeal of Sara's character. "Like Hitch, I fell in love with Sara, a woman who thinks she needs to keep her guard up so she can succeed as a career woman," says Mendes. "But inside she is a hopeless romantic."

Another actor who kept Smith on his toes was Kevin James, who is making his feature film debut as Albert Brenneman, Hitch's new client who is sorely in need of a "date doctor's" help. The role offered the star of the hit comedy series "The King of Queens" the opportunity to transition his talent for physical comedy to the big screen.

James' years of television comedy training were an added plus to Smith, who honed his own talents on the successful series "Fresh Prince of Bel Air" and cites such other experienced TV performers who easily made the transition to film including Tom Hanks, Robin Williams, Jim Carrey and Eddie Murphy. "When you work on television for years, you're prepared for anything. The guys who are successful on TV are the ones who can turn it on in an instant," Smith says. "The minute the director yells 'Action!' they can do something brilliant."

Albert, James' character in *Hitch*, represents "The most insecure aspect in all of us," Smith continues. "He doesn't wear the right clothes, he doesn't say the right things. He's sort of clumsy and slightly overweight."

Yet, Albert is hopelessly in love with Allegra Cole, a beautiful socialite, who knows him only as one of her accountants. "Every guy can relate to Albert's dilemma," says producer Zee. "He has a dream, a yearning for something special in his life and that something special is Allegra."

Allegra is played by Amber Valletta, the supermodel who has crossed over into acting with roles in such films as *What Lies Beneath* and *Family Man*. "It was very important that the character of Allegra be really sympathetic and vulnerable so that when Albert falls in love with her, we all fall in love with her, too," says Zee. "Amber is one of those gifted actresses who is not only naturally beauty, but has a recognizable core of humanity that makes her accessible."

Valletta approached the character of Allegra as a woman who is always in the spotlight, always the center of attention from everyone around her and for the press. “But at the same time Allegra is fighting to find her voice as a woman, not just the image that everyone sees,” says the actress. “Albert is not the kind of guy she’s dated or necessarily even been around, which intrigues her.”

And it is for that very reason that Hitch insists that Albert strictly adhere to his rule of holding back on his first date with Allegra. “My character is like a puppy dog,” says James. “I’d be all over the place, going crazy if I didn’t listen to Hitch and play it cool and just kind of sit back and relax.”

It works like a charm. And that’s why Hitch is Hitch.

## **ABOUT THE PRODUCTION**

Director Andy Tennant says he’s always wanted to shoot a film entirely in New York, after having shot portions of *Fools Rush In* and *Sweet Home Alabama* in Manhattan. “New York is the perfect place to film a movie about dating, being on your game and in your 30s,” he says.

“New York is where people go to become successful, to be rich and make their lives better,” says Smith. “At the center of all that energy is love, but it’s often overlooked.”

Production on *Hitch* began last spring in the trendy Soho bistro Balthazar. Tennant chose to shoot much of the film downtown, in areas rarely seen in movies.

The story’s nexus is Manhattan’s meatpacking district near 14<sup>th</sup> Street, which contains many of the city’s hippest and most lively nightspots. Several key

scenes were shot at the “Amp Lounge,” which is loosely based on the exclusive real-life Soho House.

“What’s most exciting about Andy’s movies is the way they look,” says producer Lassiter. “He has shot the city in a way that we haven’t seen before, which is very refreshing and exciting.”

“There are about 74 different locations in this movie,” according to executive producer Michael Tadross, whose is no stranger to New York films, having worked on *Die Hard with a Vengeance* and *The Thomas Crown Affair*. “That’s more than I have ever had in 24 years of doing this.”

The film’s production designer Jane Musky worked closely with the locations department to find the trendiest locales in Manhattan where young people congregate. “Jane is amazing,” says executive producer Mordaunt. “She totally has her finger on the pulse of the city.”

“I went through every fashionable New York magazine that I could find,” says Musky. “I must have bought 40 alternative or upscale design magazines, and I just kept flipping through them to find out where people were going.”

Among her discoveries were the ultra-modern rice pudding restaurant Rice to Riches, which is located in the fashionable Nolita section of Manhattan’s lower east side. “It’s really the very latest in snack bar chic,” she claims. Other chic up-to-the-minute locations were Pop Burger and Little Pie Company in the meatpacking district. For some of the more romantic scenes that Hitch recommends to his clients, the filmmakers shot in Central Park and Ellis Island the historic entry point for immigrants to the United States, which has unparalleled views of the Statue of Liberty and the Manhattan skyline. It is on Ellis Island that Tennant shot Hitch and Sara’s first date. Now part of the National



Park Service, Ellis Island is where immigrants from all over the world first stepped on American soil from 1892 until 1954.

One of the few changes the production was allowed to make to the Ellis Island museum was the addition of some set dressing in the main hall — display cases containing ship manifests that were part of the scene. The production put up signs indicating that the manifests were movie props of no historic value, but still, tourists (the museum remained open during filming) were fascinated, taking pictures of them anyway. The display cases were then donated to the museum. The fake manifests were not.

Another sequence that brought the new and old of New York together was shot at the Fulton Fish Market in Lower Manhattan, when Sara brings Hitch to a cooking class held in a corner of the fabled market. “Sara’s a gossip columnist, so she always knows what’s happening and where to go,” explains Musky. “Sara brings Hitch to this place, which is very special in that not a lot of people know about it, which impresses him because it means she actually knows more about the social scene than he does.”

Not that Hitch is a slouch. Far from it. He lives in his “command center,” a decorator-designed apartment located in a real Tribeca loft. It is here that he orchestrates his clients’ idealized dates. Says Musky, “Kind of like a painter, he jumps around. He has a magnetic board to set up the dates, a blackboard on which he writes down thoughts and a computer nearby for research. He has all the latest technology at his fingertips, and just as importantly, the best chocolates.”

Hitch’s command center is composed of panes of glass filled with argon gas. “He pushes a button and an electric charge passes through the glass,” the production designer explains. “It activates the argon, which becomes cloudy, frosty. In an instant, the transparent glass wall becomes opaque, ensuring Hitch

the privacy that he needs, so that no one will learn that his clients needed professional help to meet the women of their dreams” — which would be fatal to his thriving business.

Sara’s loft, located in Soho, is similar to Hitch’s in that it features huge windows with spectacular views of downtown. In contrast, however, her home is more personalized, with a large homey country dining table, a fully-stocked kitchen and walls covered with paintings and Cuban photographs. “The loft has a great deal of saturated color. It’s very warm and lived-in,” says Musky.

Director of photography Andrew Dunn, who was working with Tennant for the fourth time, saw Manhattan as saturated in color for this movie. “Andy likes as much color as you can throw in front of him,” he explains. “He also loves reflections and mirrors and a lot of things that other people would shy away from.”

Dunn and Tennant saw New York as a romantic city like Paris, though that presented them with some challenges. “One is, obviously, all the tall buildings,” says Dunn. “On any street you shoot there is only a narrow window of sunlight. But you’re filming over the period of an entire day, so you have to maintain a continuity of look or you’ll distract the audience from the story.”

The director and director of photography found a close ally in their star, Smith. “The great thing about Will is that he understands what we’re trying to do,” says Dunn. “He’s very knowledgeable and clever about the camera and about lighting. “If you ask him to do something, he knows exactly why you’re asking.”

Tennant also credits costume designer Marlene Stewart and her team for helping him set the right tone for the film. “Their job was to make the movie look as cool as Will Smith does in person, and they did just that,” says Tennant. Stewart, who previously worked with Smith on *Enemy of the State* and *Ali*, saw the character of

Hitch as a hip New Yorker, who is always pulled together, but is very casual about it. While many of Smith's clothes were custom-made for the athletically built actor, Stewart also dressed him in some designer-wear. "We used some Etro jackets, some Prada, some Gucci," she says. "And we tried to push the envelope a little bit in terms of color — lavenders and pinks, with seersucker — what you'd see on a well-dressed man in Milan."

Clothes are in fact an important part of Hitch's work since he grooms his clients in preparation for their big dates. "Part of the movie is extreme make-over," says Stewart. "Most of the guys in the movie start to look like Hitch at a certain point. For example, when we first see Albert, the accountant who hires Hitch in order to win the love of a gorgeous heiress, he is wearing a rather loud green gabardine suit with white socks — a common faux pas. After some coaching from Hitch, Albert becomes more fashionable, darker clothes, a smart pair of jeans."

Sara is also fashionable, but with her own particular style. She begins the story in darker colors, in a pantsuit that reflects her seriousness about her career. Gradually, she lightens up in both color and more feminine silhouettes.

Amber Valletta's character, on the other hand, wears designer clothing as her socialite character would. "What we went for with Amber was the beautiful dress," says Stewart. "We used some Prada and some Yves St. Laurent, and she carried beautiful Hermes bags." The jewelry maker Bulgari supplied Stewart with many of the necklaces Valletta wore in the film. "She was sporting some major bling," says Stewart. And she wore it beautifully since Valletta, a supermodel, is no stranger to wearing designer jewelry and clothes with ease.

James made the best of the situation during filming. "Amber kept wanting to rehearse our kissing scene, over and over," he coyly jokes. "She kept knocking on my dressing room door every morning. I was exhausted. I had other things to do. But there was no stopping her."

The actors developed a strong bond with director Tennant. Explains Mendes: “The thing about Andy is that he was an actor. So he gets actors. He relates to you and he listens and that’s fantastic. You can’t ask for more.”

Tennant returns Mendes’ compliment and also singles out his star, Smith, for praise. “Will’s instincts are brilliant,” he says. “He loves to challenge the material. And on a set, there’s no one like him. He treats everybody on the crew with incredible respect. That kind of attitude and passion is infectious. It makes us all work harder.”

While the pairing of Smith and Mendes is the romantic center of the film, the teaming of James and Smith provides some sterling comedy moments. “Kevin and Will had great comic chemistry,” says producer Zee. “Watching them work and continuously crack up the crew was a joy.”

One particular scene that had the crew in stitches was one during which the character of Albert shows Hitch his own particular style of dancing. “Most men think they’re doing a good job when they’re out on the dance floor,” says James, “but I’d say nine times out of ten, it’s a car wreck — a really bad car wreck. Still, they’re out there thinking, ‘she’s really digging this!’”

But even the comedic scenes contribute to the story’s underlying themes. “The thing about this story is that it’s incredibly easy for anyone to relate to the characters’ problems,” says Zee. “And when they overcome them, there’s this sense of relief. It gives us hope for romance and love in our own lives.”

That could be in part because Hitch’s dating philosophy has a ring of reality to it, says Lassiter. “The way Hitch sees it, you only get one shot at a first kiss,” he says. “And he’s right. Your first shot has to be your best shot.”

“One thing that I would hope that guys in the audience will pick up on is the level of effort Hitch puts into pleasing a woman,” adds Smith. “It takes 16 hours a day, five days a week to be a carpenter or a doctor or a basketball player. So how do you think you’re every going to sustain the most valuable relationship in your life if you don’t put any time and energy into it?”

And it’s not only the men in the audience who will relate to the film’s central themes, says Mendes. “As Americans, we take classes on everything except some of the most important things like parenting and dating and relationships. I think girls will want a Hitch for themselves — to teach them, to give them guidance.”

In the end, however, it’s not Hitch’s lessons about cool clothes, home decorating and fashionable nightspots that win the day — though they don’t hurt. “When all is said and done,” concludes Tennant, “the film is about presenting the best part of you, about not being afraid to show your foibles and flaws and anything else that makes you unique, that makes you an individual.”

## **ABOUT THE CAST**

**WILL SMITH** plays Alex “Hitch” Hitchens, New York’s most successful date doctor, who orchestrates his clients’ first three dates so they can win the women of their dreams.

Since launching his entertainment career in the late 1980’s, Smith has recorded multi-platinum selling records, starred on a hit television comedy series, become one of the film world’s most sought after leading men, been nominated for an Academy Award® and, recently, has turned to producing.

Smith serves as executive producer (along with his wife, Jada Pinkett Smith) on "All of Us," a comedy series for UPN, which is in its second season. It is about blended families and loosely based on the couple's own experiences.

Smith recently starred in the hit sci-fi action thriller *I, Robot* and lent his vocal talents to the animated hit comedy *Shark Tale*.

Smith's other recent film credits include *Bad Boys II* and *Men in Black™ II*, both of which were successful follow-ups to the smash-hit originals that established him as a superstar. He received an Academy Award® nomination for *Ali*, in which he portrayed the legendary boxer/activist. Smith's performance in *The Legend of Bagger Vance*, directed by Robert Redford, earned him an NAACP Award nomination for Best Actor. He also starred in the box office hit *Wild, Wild West* and wrote the film's theme song, which sold a million copies and helped the soundtrack go platinum. He previously won a Grammy for his title song to *Men in Black*. Smith thrilled audiences in the suspenseful *Enemy of the State* and the blockbuster *Independence Day*.

His box office strength propelled him from NATO/ShoWest's "Male Star of Tomorrow" in 1995 and to "Male Star of the Year" in 2002. In addition, he won the International Box Office Achievement Award in 1997 and was named "1999 Entertainer of the Year" by the NAACP Image Awards.

His other film work includes *Six Degrees of Separation*, *Made in America*, and *Where the Day Takes You*.

A legendary music sensation, Smith made his first record as a high school senior and subsequently embarked on a rap career with friend Jeff Townes. DJ Jazzy Jeff and the Fresh Prince recorded several platinum and multi-platinum albums, winning two Grammys and three American Music Awards. Smith's first solo

album, *Big Willie Style*, has sold 8 million copies. His album *Willennium* and the featured single *Will2K* went double platinum.

Smith made his transition into television as the star of "The Fresh Prince of Bel Air," a sitcom created for him by Quincy Jones and for which he was nominated for two Golden Globe awards. The hit NBC series wrapped its sixth and final season in 1996 and continues to be a popular attraction in syndication.

Smith is partnered with James Lassiter in Overbrook Entertainment.

**EVA MENDES** plays Sara Melas, the gorgeous and ambitious gossip columnist for *The New York Standard*.

Mendes' first major role was as Oscar®- winner Denzel Washington's girlfriend in *Training Day*. She followed up with another co-starring role opposite Washington in the suspense film *Out of Time*. That same year Mendes appeared in *Once Upon A Time in Mexico* opposite Johnny Depp as well as the action hit *2 Fast 2 Furious*. Mendes also starred in the comedy *All About the Benjamins* with Ice Cube and, more recently, the Farrelly Brothers' comedy *Stuck on You*.

Upcoming, Mendes stars in the independent film *The Wendell Baker Story* co-starring Owen Wilson, Luke Wilson and Will Ferrell with Luke Wilson directing. The film is tentatively scheduled for release in 2005. Mendes is also an international spokesperson for Revlon cosmetics. Following in the footsteps of such celebrated faces as Halle Berry, Cindy Crawford and Julianne Moore, Mendes appears in Revlon's print and television advertising campaigns. She is also an active participant and ardent supporter in Revlon's commitment in the fight against breast cancer.

**KEVIN JAMES** plays the meek, awkward accountant Albert Brennaman, who hires Hitch to help him woo Allegra Cole, the famous society beauty he adores from afar.

James, who currently stars in the hit CBS television series "The King of Queens," is a successful stand-up comedian who got his big break at the 1996 Montreal Comedy Festival and signed a development deal with NBC to create his own show. He was also cast in a recurring role on the CBS comedy series "Everybody Loves Raymond," opposite his friend and fellow comic Ray Romano. It led to his own series "The King of Queens," which is now in its seventh season on CBS.

James recently starred in a one-hour comedy special for Comedy Central called "Sweat the Small Stuff" and regularly makes guest appearances on the "Late Show with David Letterman." James was born in Mineola, N.Y., and raised in Stony Brook, N.Y.

Upcoming film projects for James include *Grilled* with Ray Romano and the animated feature *The Barnyard*.

**AMBER VALLETTA** plays Allegra Cole, a beautiful heiress who is the object of Albert's (Kevin James) affection.

A native of Tulsa, Oklahoma, Valletta made her feature film debut opposite James LeGros in Stacey Cochran's *Drop Back Ten*, which premiered at the Sundance Film Festival. She subsequently appeared opposite Harrison Ford and Michelle Pfeiffer in Dreamworks' *What Lies Beneath* for director Robert Zemeckis, opposite Nicolas Cage in Brett Ratner's *Family Man* and with Ben Stiller and Drew Barrymore in Danny DeVito's *The Duplex*. Valletta was most recently seen in Garry Marshall's *Raising Helen* starring Kate Hudson and is also set to star opposite Jason Statham in the upcoming *The Transporter 2*.



Valletta will soon be seen in the comedy/drama *Man About Town* with Ben Affleck, Rebecca Romijn and John Cleese.

**MICHAEL RAPAPORT** plays Ben, Hitch's (Will Smith) best friend, who has left the world of dating for marriage and now has a baby on the way.

In 1993, Michael Rapaport made his film debut in *Zebrahead*, receiving critical acclaim for his genuine and confident portrayal of a Jewish teenager growing up in a predominantly African-American Detroit neighborhood. The performance went on to garner him an Independent Spirit Award nomination and the film itself won the 1993 Sundance Film Festival's Filmmaker's Trophy.

Rapaport recently starred in David E. Kelley's critically acclaimed television drama "Boston Public." He joined the cast in 2000 as Danny Hanson. The show focused on the lives of the faculty members at a high school in Boston as they weave in and out of dealing with troublemakers, having a personal life and keeping their sanity.

Rapaport gained attention in motion pictures for starring roles in Woody Allen's *Small Time Crooks*, opposite Damon Wayans and Jada Pinkett-Smith in Spike Lee's controversial *Bamboozled*, the true-life period drama *Men of Honor* with Robert DeNiro and Cuba Gooding, Jr., with John Travolta in Nora Ephron's comedy/drama *Lucky Numbers* and in the sci-fi thriller *The Sixth Day* with Arnold Schwarzenegger.

Other notable appearances include such dramas as John Singleton's *Higher Learning* and Barbet Schroeder's *Kiss of Death* and comedic turns in Allen's *Mighty Aphrodite* and Ted Demme's *Beautiful Girls*. Additional film credits include *Metro*, *A Brother's Kiss*, *Cop Land*, *Kicked in the Head*, *True Romance*, *The*

*Pallbearer, Illtown, Comic Book Villains, Palmetto* and *Deep Blue Sea*. He recently completed *Grilled* starring Ray Romano and Kevin James.

Rapaport most recently has started pursuing roles behind the scenes. He directed the final episode of "Boston Public," which was the follow-up to the critically acclaimed short film he also directed for Showtime, *Meeting Mr. Johnson*. He is currently producing and developing *Car Show* for MTV Films/Paramount Pictures.

**ADAM ARKIN** plays Max Trundle, Sara's (Eva Mendes) editor at *The New York Standard*.

Arkin is probably best known for his role on CBS-TV's critically-acclaimed series "Chicago Hope" — for which he was nominated for an Emmy Award and in which he starred for six seasons. He also received Emmy nominations for his roles on "Northern Exposure" and "Frasier." Currently, he can be seen in recurring roles on "8 Simple Rules" and "The West Wing." Arkin's extensive television credits also include "A Year in the Life," "Picket Fences," "The Chris Isaak Show," "A Slight Case of Murder," in which he co-starred with William H. Macy, and "In the Line of Duty."

Arkin has also made a name for himself in film, on stage, and as a director. For the stage, he received a Tony nomination for his role in "I Hate Hamlet," and also starred on Broadway as Nathan Detroit in "Guys and Dolls." Off-Broadway roles include "Sight Unseen," "The Extra Man" and "Four Dogs and a Bone," for the Manhattan Theatre Club, as well as "Fiorello."

He recently starred in the premiere of Donald Margulies' "Brooklyn Boy" at the Manhattan Theatre Club, a co-production with South Coast Repertory Theatre.

Arkin's many film credits include *The Doctor* with William Hurt and *Wrestling Ernest Hemingway* with Robert Duvall, both for director Randa Haines, as well as *Hanging Up* directed by and starring Diane Keaton, *Halloween H20*, *With Friends Like These*, *Lake Placid*, *Under the Rainbow* and the upcoming *Marilyn Hotchkiss' Ballroom Dancing and Charm School*.

Recently Arkin won an Emmy Award for directing "My Louisiana Sky," an acclaimed Showtime film starring Juliette Lewis and Kelsey Keel. For "My Louisiana Sky" Arkin also received a DGA Award nomination for Outstanding Directorial Achievement in Children's Programs, while the film won the Emmy Award for Outstanding Children's Special as well as a Humanitas Prize and a Carnegie Award. Arkin has also directed episodes of "Northern Exposure," "Chicago Hope," "Monk" and "Ally McBeal."

## **ABOUT THE FILMMAKERS**

**ANDY TENNANT** (Director) most recently helmed the popular romantic comedy *Sweet Home Alabama* starring Reese Witherspoon. Tennant also co-wrote and directed the romantic adventure *Ever After* starring Drew Barrymore, Dougray Scott and Angelica Huston. In 1999, Tennant directed Jodie Foster and Chow Yun-Fat in *Anna and the King*, which received two Academy Award® nominations.

A native of Chicago, Tennant studied theatre under John Houseman at the University of Southern California. For television he directed such hits as "The Wonder Years," "Parker Lewis Can't Loose" and "The Adventures of Brisco County, Jr." He made his feature film directing debut with *It Takes Two* and subsequently directed Matthew Perry and Salma Hayek in *Fools Rush In*.

Tennant has several projects in development with his company Film Buff Productions including *Being Booy* and a thriller to be shot in Spain, which is a co-production with Julia Roberts' Red Om Films.

**KEVIN BISCH** (Written by) is making his screenwriting debut.

Bisch was raised in Long Island, New York. After college he moved to Prague where he co-founded a trends and events magazine for other American expatriates. Upon his return to the States, Bisch moved to Manhattan and went on to work as an editor at *Details* magazine and a contributor to *The New York Times*' "Style" section.

Bisch currently is adapting the memoir Honeymoon with My Brother for Columbia Pictures.

He currently lives in Los Angeles.

**JAMES LASSITER** (Producer) is partnered with Will Smith in Overbrook Entertainment, a production company specializing in film, television, and music. He also served as an executive producer of Smith's sci-fi thriller *I, Robot* and was a producer on Columbia Pictures' *Ali*. Lassiter served as executive producer of *Showtime*, which starred Robert De Niro and Eddie Murphy and produced *Saving Face* starring Joan Chen.

Lassiter is an executive producer on Overbrook's newest television series, "All of Us," for UPN. He was also executive producer on the Fox sitcom "Getting Personal."

In addition, Lassiter produced the soundtracks for *Wild, Wild West* and *Men in Black*, both winners of the American Music Award for Favorite Soundtrack.

He won the 2001 Outer Critics Circle Award for “Jitney,” an off-Broadway play written by August Wilson.

**WILL SMITH** (Producer) — See “About the Cast” section above for Bio.

**TEDDY ZEE** (Producer) is President of the Films Division of Overbrook Entertainment. Overbrook is a partnership of Will Smith and James Lassiter created to acquire, develop and produce motion pictures. Zee produced *Saving Face* starring Joan Chen. Upcoming projects include *Jellybeans*, a music-based roller-skating comedy, a remake of *Uptown Saturday Night* and *Mr. Prez*, a comedy starring Bow Wow.

Prior to joining Overbrook, Zee was President of Davis Entertainment from 1997 to 2001. While at Davis, he coordinated an exclusive first-look deal with Twentieth Century Fox and was the executive producer of *Life or Something Like It* starring Angelina Jolie. Other films produced at Davis during his tenure include *Dr. Dolittle 2*, *Behind Enemy Lines* and *Heartbreakers*.

Previously, Zee was Executive Vice President, Production, at Columbia Pictures, where he oversaw such films as *Charlie's Angels*, *The Replacement Killers*, *Anaconda*, *Fools Rush In*, *The Devil's Own*, *Cable Guy*, *First Knight*, *My Girl*, *Mo' Money*, *Hero* and *Stephen King's Sleepwalkers*.

Zee began his career with NBC and has also held positions at Touche Ross & Co. and Paramount Pictures, where he was a Senior VP of Production. While at Paramount, he was involved with films such as *Indecent Proposal*, *Star Trek VI*, *Cousins*, *The Presidio* and *Flashback*.

Zee graduated from the School of Industrial & Labor Relations at Cornell University and earned an M.B.A. from Harvard University, where he also served

as a member of the Executive Board of the Asian American Policy Review at the JFK School of Government.

**MICHAEL TADROSS** (Executive Producer) has firmly established himself as one of the leading figures in the film industry. His wealth of experience was most recently brought to bear as producer of *Basic* starring John Travolta and Samuel L. Jackson and directed by John McTiernan. Tadross also served as executive producer on *Rollerball* starring Chris Klein, LL Cool J and Jean Reno. Prior to that he executive produced the acclaimed remake of *The Thomas Crown Affair* starring Pierce Brosnan and René Russo.

Tadross' producing credits also include *Jack Frost* starring Michael Keaton and Kelly Preston, *The Devil's Advocate* starring Al Pacino and Keanu Reeves, the box office hit *Eraser* starring Arnold Schwarzenegger, Vanessa L. Williams and James Caan, *Indecent Proposal* starring Demi Moore and Robert Redford, *School Ties* starring Brendan Fraser, Matt Damon and Ben Affleck and *Brenda Starr* starring Brooke Shields and Timony Dalton. For television he produced "When Will I Be Loved" and "Deadly Illusion."

Tadross also produced 1995's highest grossing film worldwide, *Die Hard with a Vengeance* starring Bruce Willis, Samuel L. Jackson and Jeremy Irons.

While serving as Senior Vice President in charge of feature production at Paramount Pictures, Tadross oversaw some of the studio's most successful films, including *Forrest Gump*, *Naked Gun 33 1/3*, *The Firm*, *Clear and Present Danger*, *Wayne's World*, *Beverly Hills Cop III*, *Blue Chips*, *Coneheads* and *Sliver*. He also worked as unit production manager and first assistant director on such films as *Ghost*, *Coming to America*, *Black Rain*, *Trading Places*, *Death Wish*, *Cocktail* and *Masquerade*.

Tadross was born and raised in Brooklyn, and graduated from Wagner College with a degree in art. He began his career in film as a camera trainee and assistant film editor.

**WINK MORDAUNT** (Executive Producer) continues her association with Andy Tennant, with whom she is partnered in Film Buff Productions. Mordaunt first collaborated with Tennant on *Ever After* and continued her association with him as a co-producer of *Anna and the King*. Most recently Mordaunt served as executive producer of Tennant's hit romantic comedy *Sweet Home Alabama* starring Reese Witherspoon.

Projects in development for Mordaunt include *Being Booey* (with Working Title) and a thriller to be shot in Spain, which Mordaunt will produce, partnered with Julia Roberts' Red Om Films.

Mordaunt began her film career in England, working on such films as *Braveheart*, *Wings of the Dove* and *Sliding Doors*. Her physical production expertise has been put to the test in such varied locations as Malaysia, France, Thailand, China, Ireland, Scotland and the United States.

Mordaunt is a graduate of the University of Edinburgh with a masters degree in economics.

**ANDREW DUNN, BSC** (Director of Photography) has an extensive list of credits as a director of photography on feature films and television. His previous collaborations with director Andy Tennant include *Sweet Home Alabama* starring Reese Witherspoon and the Cinderella story *Ever After* starring Drew Barrymore and Anjelica Huston.

Some of Dunn's movie credits include *The Company* and the Oscar® and BAFTA-winning *Gosford Park*, both for director Robert Altman, and *The Madness*

of *King George*, for which Dunn won the British Society of Cinematographers and the *Evening Standard* awards for Outstanding Technical Achievement. He also received a BAFTA nomination for his work on the film. He also shot *The Count of Monte Cristo* starring James Caviezel and Guy Pearce, director Griffin Dunne's *Addicted to Love* with Meg Ryan, *Practical Magic* with Sandra Bullock and Nicole Kidman, *The Crucible* with Daniel Day-Lewis, the Kevin Costner box office hit *The Bodyguard*, Stephen Frears' drama *Liam* and the Steve Martin comedy *L.A. Story*. Recently, Dunn completed *Piccadilly Jim* with Sam Rockwell and *Stage Beauty* for director Richard Eyre starring Billy Crudup and Claire Danes.

Dunn has been awarded three BAFTA awards for "Edge of Darkness," "Threads" and "Tumbledown."

**JANE MUSKY** (Production Designer) recently did the production design for *Mona Lisa Smile* starring Julia Roberts, Kirsten Dunst, Maggie Gyllenhaal, Julia Stiles and directed by Mike Newell. She also designed Wayne Wang's box office hit *Maid in Manhattan* starring Jennifer Lopez and Ralph Fiennes, as well as *City by the Sea* starring Robert De Niro and Frances McDormand and director Gus Van Sant's *Finding Forrester* starring Sean Connery.

Among Musky's other credits are Rob Reiner's *When Harry Met Sally ...*, *Ghost*, *Boomerang*, the Coen Brothers' *Blood Simple* and *Raising Arizona*, Paul Schrader's *Patty Hearst*, *Glengarry Glen Ross*, *Two Bits*, *City Hall*, *The Devil's Own*, *Young Guns*, *Illegally Yours*, *At First Sight* and *The Object of My Affection*.

Musky's television credits include George C. Wolfe's "Fires in the Mirror" for American Playhouse, NBC-TV's "LBJ: The Early Years" and PBS's "The Little Sister" and "Under the Biltmore Clock."

**TROY TAKAKI, A.C.E.** (Editor) moved to Los Angeles in 1990 to pursue his filmmaking career after graduating cum laude with a degree in cinema from San



Francisco State University. Breaking into television, he worked on such classic series as "The Threat Matrix," "Ally McBeal," "Tales From The Crypt," "Seaquest DSV," "J.A.G.," "Dark Skies" and "Nash Bridges," just to name a few.

He made the switch to feature film editing on the Los Angeles Independent Film Festival entry *Sweet Underground* and the Sundance Film Festival participant *The Pornographer*. Takaki has since edited such films as *Sweet Home Alabama* for director Andy Tennant, *Cheaters* and *Jawbreaker*.

In 1998, Takaki was voted "Emerging Talent to Watch" by *The Hollywood Reporter*, and in 2000, he was asked to join the prestigious American Cinema Editors, an honorary society of motion picture editors founded in 1950.

Takaki works both in the independent and mainstream feature film arena on such films as the 2003 Sundance entry *One Point O, Drum* for Armada Pictures starring Taye Diggs and *This Girl's Life* starring James Woods and Rosario Dawson. Other movie credits include *Crazy As Hell* starring Eriq LaSalle, HBO's "Scarred City" starring Stephen Baldwin and Chazz Palminteri and *Slow Burn* starring Minnie Driver, Josh Brolin and James Spader.

**TRACEY WADMORE-SMITH** (Editor) was born in Sutton, England and studied graphic design at Reigate School of Art. After graduation she took a production assistant position at Brian Eastman's London-based production company Picture Partnership Productions, now known as Carnival Films, which led to work as an apprentice editor. Soon Wadmore-Smith worked her way up to full time editor. Her extensive list of credits as an assistant editor include *The Majestic*, *The Salton Sea*, *Here on Earth*, *Anna and the King*, *American Beauty*, *Ever After*, *The Crucible* and *Gentlemen Don't Eat Poets*. She worked on *Open Range* directed by Kevin Costner and HBO's "Fatherland" as an associate editor. More recently, she served as an associate editor on *The Upside of Anger* starring Kevin Costner and Joan Allen.

Wadmore-Smith was editor on "Mysteries of 71<sup>st</sup> Street," a television pilot directed by Andy Tennant and also served as editor on the director's box office hit *Sweet Home Alabama*.

**MARLENE STEWART** (Costume Designer) has been the costume designer for such features as Alejandro González Iñárritu's *21 Grams*, Mary Lambert's *Siesta*, Oliver Stone's *The Doors* and *JFK*, James Cameron's *Terminator 2: Judgment Day* and *True Lies*, Joel Schumacher's *Falling Down*, James L. Brooks' *I'll Do Anything*, Curtis Hanson's *The River Wild*, Beeban Kidron's *To Wong Foo, Thanks for Everything, Julie Newmar*, Joe Pytka's *Space Jam*, Rob Bowman's *The X-Files*, Tony Scott's *Enemy of the State*, Dominic Sena's *Gone in Sixty Seconds*, David McNally's *Coyote Ugly*, Michael Mann's *Ali* and Antoine Fuqua's *Tears of the Sun*.

She began her career designing women's clothing and had her own label, Covers. Her work took her all over Europe. After meeting Madonna, she was invited to design outfits for several of the singer's most popular and influential music videos, including "Vogue," "Material Girl," "Like a Prayer" and "Express Yourself." She also worked with Madonna on two movies, Alek Keshishian's *Truth or Dare* and Abel Ferrara's *Dangerous Game*.

Stewart has designed the costumes for concert tours of Cher, Paula Abdul, and Gloria Estefan. Other performers with whom she has worked on music videos include Janet Jackson, Rod Stewart, Bette Midler, Debbie Harry, Smashing Pumpkins, the Bangles and the Eurythmics.

She has also designed the costumes for several television commercials, working with Tony Scott, Mary Lambert, David Bailey, and Joe Pytka, among other directors.

Stewart has been honored with the Bob Mackie Award for Design.

**GEORGE FENTON** (Music) marks his fourth collaboration with Andy Tennant having previously scored the films *Sweet Home Alabama*, *Ever After* and *Anna and the King*. Fenton has composed music for a wide variety of motion pictures, receiving Academy Award® nominations for his work on *The Fisher King*, *Dangerous Liaisons*, *Cry Freedom*, and *Gandhi*.

His other film credits include *Fond Kiss...Ae*, *Stage Beauty*, *You've Got Mail*, *Summer Catch*, *Lucky Numbers*, *Bread and Roses*, *Living Out Loud*, *Mary Reilly*, *Mixed Nuts*, *The Madness of King George*, *Ladybird*, *Ladybird*, *Shadowlands*, *Born Yesterday*, *Groundhog Day*, *Stage Beauty*, *Hero*, *Final Analysis*, *White Palace*, *Imagining Argentina*, *Memphis Belle*, *We're No Angels*, *A Handful of Dust*, *High Spirits*, *84 Charing Cross Road*, *White of the Eye*, *The Company of Wolves* and *The Object of My Affection*.

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#### EXTRA BIOS IF NECESSARY

**JULIE ANN EMERY** plays Casey, Sara's (Eva Mendes) best friend who has been unlucky in love.

The emerging young actress's career has been quickly gaining momentum. For television, Emery recently starred in the ABC series "Line of Fire," a political drama from writer/director Rod Lurie. She first worked with Lurie on "Capital City," which co-starred Peter Fonda, Tom Berenger and Mary Steenburgen. Emery also appeared in the Emmy Award-winning miniseries "Taken," produced

by Steven Spielberg, having previously co-starred opposite Eric Paladino on NBC's acclaimed "ER." Other television credits include guest appearances on "CSI: Miami," "Providence" and "The Drew Carey Show".

Emery began her career on the theatrical stage. She's starred opposite Nancy Travis in "Boy Gets Girl" at the Geffen Playhouse in Los Angeles. In Chicago, she received rave reviews in the title role of "Gypsy." In New York, she appeared in "Twelfth Night," "Hot 'L Baltimore" and "Caesar and Cleopatra." In addition, she was featured in the national touring productions of "A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum" and "Annie."

Born and raised in Crossville, Tennessee, Emery attended Webster Conservatory in St. Louis where she studied acting. She currently resides in Los Angeles.

**KEVIN SUSSMAN** play Neil, a nerdy guy who, with Hitch's help, wins the woman of his dreams.

Sussman most recently co-starred in *Little Black Book* with Brittany Murphy and director Andy Tennant's hit comedy *Sweet Home Alabama* starring Reese Witherspoon. His other film credits include *Changing Lanes*, *Kissing Jessica Stein*, *Wet Hot American Summer* and *Liberty Heights*.

For television, Sussman had a recurring role on NBC's hit drama "E.R." and has also appeared on "Law and Order: Criminal Intent," "Jeff of the Universe," "The Sopranos," "Third Watch," "Law and Order" and "Ghost Stories."

Sussman's theater work includes roles in "Last Chance for a Slow Dance," "Revelers," "Finger Painting in a Murphy Bed," "Irwin's Dilemma," "The Flip Side," "Brighton Beach Memoirs" and "The Day They Shot John Lennon."

