

JUST FRIENDS

“The ‘friend zone’ is like the penalty box of dating, only you can never get out. Once a girl decides you’re her ‘friend,’ it’s game over. You’ve become a complete non-sexual entity in her eyes, like her brother, or a lamp.”

-Chris Brander

Chris Brander (Ryan Reynolds) has it all -- money, good looks and a flashy job as an LA music executive. But things weren't always this way for him...

Back in high school in New Jersey in the 1990's, Chris was shy, overweight and the butt of the cool crowd's jokes. The only bright spot in his life was his friendship with Jamie Palamino (Amy Smart) a super-popular cheerleader and the hottest girl in school. For four years, these two best buds were inseparable, save for the occasional jock boyfriend of Jamie's coming between them. But throughout high school, Chris was harboring a secret -- he was hopelessly in love with his best friend, Jamie. On the night of their high school graduation, Chris finally works up his courage and makes his feelings known. In response, a surprised Jamie tells Chris that she loves him...like a brother. She proceeds to give him the “Just Friends” speech, the most painful words known to man. Enraged and humiliated, Chris declares himself no longer friends with Jamie and storms off.

Ten years later, Chris has reinvented himself as a smooth talking lady-killer, living large in Los Angeles. Chris's boss, KC (Stephen Root), has just given him his most challenging job assignment yet -- turning spoiled socialite, diva and magazine pin-up girl Samantha James (Anna Faris) into a pop-singing sensation. The well-known fact that Chris and Sam used to date, and that she still carries a torch for him, makes it all the more hellish. But what Chris doesn't realize is that his nightmare is just beginning.

The less than talented Sam doesn't feel she can “create” unless Chris whisks her off to Paris. En route, a plane malfunction causes them to make an unexpected pit-stop in New Jersey – the first time Chris has been back in 10 years. Chris takes the opportunity to drop in on his overly excitable mom (Julie Hagerty) and smart-aleck brother, Mike (Christopher Marquette). However, Chris' plans to only stay the night are detoured when he runs into Jamie Palamino working at the local bar. Suddenly faced with the chance to undo the past and “seal the deal” with the “just friends” girl of his dreams, Chris finds

himself postponing Paris. This sets off a chain of events in which Chris tries to woo Jamie, all the while distracting the suspicious Samantha. Unbelievably, Chris is finding it more difficult to romance Jamie than it was 10 years ago.

The harder Chris tries, the deeper he finds himself entrenched in the 'friend zone,' the purgatory of dating where only platonic relationships flourish. When Dusty Dinkleman (Chris Klein), another 'just friends' guy from high school shows up, Chris' fate seems doomed. Can one escape the clutches of the 'friend zone?' Is it possible to go from 'just friend' to boyfriend? Chris is about to find out the hard way...

The romantic comedy *Just Friends* features a terrific ensemble cast that includes Ryan Reynolds (*National Lampoon's Van Wilder*, *Blade: Trinity*, *The Amityville Horror*), Amy Smart (*The Butterfly Effect*, *Road Trip*, *Rat Race*), Anna Faris (*Scary Movie*, *Lost in Translation*), Chris Klein (*American Pie*, *Election*), Christopher Marquette (*The Girl Next Door*), Julie Hagerty (*Airplane!*, *Lost in America*) and Stephen Root (*Dodgeball: A True Underdog Story*).

The film is directed by Roger Kumble (*Cruel Intentions*) and written by Adam "Tex" Davis. The producers are Chris Bender and JC Spink of Benderspink; Michael Ohoven and William Vince of Infinity Media, Inc.; and Bill Johnson of Inferno Distribution. The executive producers are Toby Emmerich, Richard Brener, Cale Boyter and Marco Mehlitz. The co-producer is Jake Weiner.

New Line Cinema will release *Just Friends* (rated PG-13 by the M.P.A.A. for "sexual content including some dialogue") nationwide on November 23rd, 2005.

ABOUT THE PRODUCTION

When screenwriter Adam “Tex” Davis delivered his first draft of the screenplay for *Just Friends* to the management/production company, Benderspink, the story at its center had a ‘just friends’ relationship. Everyone agreed that was the way to go, so Davis consequently zeroed in on that concept and fleshed it out, with the resulting screenplay selling to New Line Cinema.

During the writing process Davis was bombarded with hundreds of woebegone tales of guys and gals stuck in the ‘friend zone.’ “We realized that there was a wealth of material and this was one of those movies that everyone could relate to,” says the writer. “The script underwent many changes, but we all knew it was such a good idea, so we kept going.”

Helping to supply some of these key anecdotes were producer Chris Bender and New Line Cinema production executive Richard Brener, who supported the project from the outset. “Ultimately the script became a compilation of all sorts of people. The characters all sprang from real stories, so it’s been fun to develop,” says Bender.

“*Just Friends* asks the question, ‘when you’re stuck in the ‘friend zone,’ can you get out?’ The answer is yes,” says Bender, who relates an anecdote about a guy who ended up dating a girl years after she had rejected him in high school. This revelation shifted the thrust of the tale. Until then, Bender thought it was impossible to get out of the ‘friend zone.’ “I realized that it really was about timing. This story shifted to incorporate that idea as well. The story is now about the character of Chris Brander allowing himself to become vulnerable again after being rejected in high-school where he was relegated to the ‘friend zone’ – a place where ‘just friends’ relationships flourish, but not romantically,” continues Bender.

Director Roger Kumble could also identify with the story. “I’ve been a victim of the ‘friend zone’ one too many times. That was the reason I wanted to make this movie. It was a relatable idea, and if executed right, could really tap into the Zeitgeist.”

Kumble had wanted to work with Ryan Reynolds since the late 1990's, when he spotted him in a film called *Coming Soon*. Since then the talented Reynolds has gone on to appear in such wildly diverse films as *National Lampoon's Van Wilder*, *Blade: Trinity* and *The Amityville Horror*.

"I'm shocked that a movie about this subject matter hasn't been made before," says Reynolds. "Everyone can relate to being subjugated to the 'friend zone' and placed in this perma-penalty box of non-sexual gratification, the purgatorial Cyrano role of a lifetime. I went through it in high school when I was in love with this girl for years while she dated jerk after jerk, but came to *me* for advice!" admits Reynolds. "It certainly is my inspiration for this movie."

"In high school the character I play, Chris Brander, wore his heart on his sleeve. Basically he was just incredibly wounded. In the subsequent 10 years since graduation, he's lived in a profound reactionary state to those horrifying moments in high school," continues Reynolds, who drew on his experience living in Los Angeles, modeling Chris' professional world on the L.A. agent archetype. "One is inundated in that moderately superficial world where there is a thinly veiled veneer of communication you don't find elsewhere. It's kind of cool because you get this rare opportunity to play a character who's the aggressor, but he's redeemable because you see where this type of person came from," relates Reynolds.

Says screenwriter Adam "Tex" Davis, "the thing that was sweet about Chris Brander in high school and made girls want to be his friend is all gone. Since then he's lost himself in the process of losing weight and gaining good looks. Now he's this cold, shallow person. By the end of the movie, he rediscovers himself." Producer Chris Bender concurs, "at his core, Chris is a good guy who's forgotten what he once was."

"First and foremost, *Just Friends* is a comedy, but it's also a great story," says Reynolds. "A lot of comedies forsake the story, but from the outset Roger Kumble was adamant about making sure the story is the key ingredient. That's what drew me into the script to begin with. It's a beautiful story. I love it."

When Roger Kumble saw Amy Smart in the comedy *Rat Race*, he knew he'd found the person he was looking for to play the role of Jamie Palamino – an actress who was beautiful *and* really funny. He also sensed that she and Ryan Reynolds would have great on-screen chemistry.

“Ryan is charismatic and one of the funniest actors I’ve ever worked with,” says Smart. “He’s got good comedic timing; he’s great with physical comedy, facial expressions, inflection and the way he delivers his lines. But what to me is more rare, he has a great way of bringing his heart into it at times when it’s needed. He is very present, and I love that.”

“Amy Smart is the perfect embodiment of the girl next door,” says Reynolds. “She’s a beautiful young woman who’s also incredibly approachable. There’s something accessible about her which makes her special. You feel like you could walk up to her and actually say ‘hi’ instead of cowering in fear. We have such a great chemistry and that’s something that you cannot manufacture. It’s either there or it’s not. Every day was really palpable with her.”

Smart responds, “I was drawn to the project because I wanted to do a romantic comedy, and after auditioning with Ryan on two other films before *Just Friends*, I always felt we had great chemistry. I thought we could really bring a lot to these characters.”

“For me, Jamie Palamino in high school is full of life and energy, wanting to live in the moment,” Smart says of her character. “She’s also struggling with insecurities and wanting to fit in. She has a best friend whom she never thinks of while she goes through all these misfortunes with the other guys in her life. You catch her ten years later at 28, living at home and working as a bartender to make money to become a teacher. Going from the top of her game and sliding back down to where she started from is a little frustrating. She’s trying to find herself and feels humbled by Chris Brander, who she always cared about, coming back, wondering why he just completely disappeared on her. And now the tables have turned.”

Screenwriter Adam Davis agrees. “Jamie is the small town girl next door who is good inside and out. Maybe she was a little immature in high school and wasn’t willing to date

the guy who wasn't good looking. But that was high school. Now she's struggling, and doesn't quite know what she wants to do with her life. She's pursuing a teaching degree and she's the great catch waiting at home."

Jamie is the polar opposite in every way of spoiled socialite and aspiring musician Samantha James, who just happens to be an ex-girlfriend of Chris Brander. Director Roger Kumble thought that finding an actress who possessed the right combination to be funny, bitter and tortured to play Samantha was going to be hard, until Anna Faris appeared on the scene. When Kumble first met Faris, she said she'd love to do the part, but she didn't want the character to be just the rich bitch.

"So together we added another dimension to the character of Samantha, who is more a product of the MTV generation," says Faris. "She's narcissistic and self-absorbed, but she's got a heart of gold at the same time. Her character was created for this movie. She represents the ultimate obstacle for Chris. In a way, she's a product of his own womanizing. Their affair is over, but she wants more and he's forced to drag her along because of his job. He is constantly coming up with ruses to lose her while he pursues Jamie."

"This is one of the true mentally unhinged characters I've ever seen on film," says Ryan Reynolds. "Anna has created a completely original character. If you could cross Paris Hilton with Britney Spears and a Vietnam Vet, you'd have this character! Anna's taken what's on the page and elevated it to this very layered character."

"I love working with Ryan," responds Faris. "He brings so much to the table and is so generous as an actor that I felt really comfortable attacking him! I've never met anybody as crazy as my character. I loved playing Samantha, but it required so much energy. She's hyper-crazy, self-absorbed and a sex maniac."

Rounding out the main cast is Chris Klein, who portrays Dusty, another guy from high school days who had an unrequited crush on Jamie Palamino and is now taking another stab ten years later, much to the chagrin of Chris Brander.

“Dusty is a great Jersey cheese ball,” laughs Amy Smart. “Even when we start to learn more about him, there’s something so likeable about his character.”

“Dusty Dinkleman was a nobody in high school,” says Klein. “He had a bad acne problem, was really shy and his passion is music. The funny thing about Dusty is that he didn’t even have pull enough to get into the ‘friend zone.’ After he graduated, his acne cleared up and he grew into a good lookin’ young man and decided to be a Jersey Player. He uses his music and guitar to pick up women and decides to go after Jamie Palamino, the one that he could never get in high school. He’s charismatic and knows how to work the crowd and really uses that to his advantage, even though there’s more to him than meets the eye. There’s always that one guy who’s shallow enough to come up with these crazy schemes to get chicks.”

“This was an opportunity to take a good-natured character like I’ve played in other movies and do a one eighty and actually be the guy with some cobwebs. That was an exciting prospect for me,” concludes Klein.

The hardest role for the filmmakers to cast was that of Mike, Chris Brander’s bratty younger brother. “We searched high and low for the right actor to play Mike,” says director Roger Kumble. “Christopher Marquette fit the bill. His relationship with his brother was identical to that of Chris and Mike in the film. What’s funny is that it’s so relatable.”

Responds Christopher Marquette, “Mike is a wiseass, a jerk-off little brother. The best part about playing him is that he only cares about himself. The challenge is creating an entire world where, in every scene, all I have to do is try to make the funniest decisions that just come from myself. He’s one of those guys that’ll never grow up. He’ll be sixty years old and still slapping his older brother. It’s like a typical relationship between brothers.”

Rounding out the main cast is Julie Hagerty (who played Elaine in the classic comedy, *Airplane!*) as Chris and Mike Brander’s excitable mother, and Stephen Root as Chris’ record company boss in Los Angeles. “We got our dream cast,” says director Roger Kumble. “I love them and their work.”

The cast is equally effusive when it comes to describing working with Kumble. “Roger and I have been looking forward to working together for years,” says Ryan Reynolds, who met Kumble shortly after making *Van Wilder*. “I felt this was kind of kismet. I just love his style and the energy that he brings to this kind of movie. Our range is basically going from one to ten. We take scenes that could be played very broad, or we could play very minimalistically. We’ve tried the very small version and the enormous version. Roger likes to have a lot of choices in the editing room. Putting this together is going to be like putting together a mosaic that’s been through a pepper grinder. That’s the genius of Roger. I really love that he allows myself and the other actors to go full bloom in scenes and go as ridiculous as possible; and then, as straight as possible as well.”

Adds Amy Smart, “One of Roger’s greatest strengths is being able to determine how to tweak a scene, make it funny, dynamic and really come alive. For me, you have to ground a romantic comedy in reality. You have to ground it in a place where people can relate to your characters.”

“It’s really fun when Roger does his little magic of directing because it’s very in the moment,” adds Smart. “He’s famous for his resetting, so instead of cutting, he just resets as we repeat small pieces of dialogue a thousand different ways, from over the top to very real and unaffected. It must be a real challenge in the editing room!”

“Roger’s one of the most accessible directors I’ve worked with,” says Anna Faris. “I love that he pushes us all and is very spontaneous. We’re forced to do a little improv while he keeps the cameras rolling and we do take after take. I love that style of working. We’ve all had a really great time with each other and part of that is because of Roger’s leadership.”

Chris Klein adds, “It’s been a really great experience working with Roger. He is very prepared and has a clear, concise vision of what he wants this movie to be and what he wants to get out of every character. What ends up happening in comedy is you develop a shorthand and are able to put a magnifying glass on the written word, elevating it to something more fun and a bit bigger, taking everyday situations and blowing them a bit

out of proportion to where it's funny. Roger's really good at it. He's got a great take on the script and the actors."

The look of the film was also influenced by Kumble. Production Designer Robb Wilson King credits the director for his inspirational freedom. "Roger's an inspiration. Not only does he give you license to bring something to the table, but he takes it to the next level and makes it real. That's a real gift. Oftentimes we can create it, but giving it life is his job and nobody can do it better than Roger."

Just Friends juggled a shooting schedule divided between locations in the cities of Moose Jaw and Regina, Canada, which were 50 miles apart. Since the story takes place at Christmas time, snow and ice is an integral part of the film. The spunky cast and crew bundled up for the duration, enduring bone-chilling temperatures. Occasionally the temperatures went as low as 50 degrees below with the wind chill factor.

Director of Photography Anthony B. Richmond was prepared for the frigid weather. In addition to carrying two sets of lens, keeping one warm for interiors, the other cold for working outside in extreme cold, the cameras, magazines and camera covers were all heated. "The cameras were warmer than us," says Richmond, a distinguished cinematographer who has lensed five Nicolas Roeg movies and several Blake Edwards films, among 30 others, including music films with The Rolling Stones, The Beatles and The Who. During the first week of shooting, the wind chill factor was 50 below and "the cameras worked superbly," says Richmond, although his meters froze. So he put them in his pocket alongside hand warmers to keep them working.

Just Friends marks Richmond's second film with Kumble, for whom he photographed *The Sweetest Thing*. "In terms of a visual style, I think Roger's up there with Blake Edwards. He has the ability to bring out the best in everybody. He's very funny and the actors and the crew love him. I just really want to help him put his vision of this comedy on the screen," says Richmond, who states that comedy should be shot more like a drama to let the comedy play out within itself. "This is a drama that happens to be very funny and we photographed it that way, perceiving the look from some of Blake Edwards' movies."

“We needed this place to be snowy and cold as it takes place during a snow storm in suburban New Jersey. What better place to come to than the coldest place on earth!” exclaims Ryan Reynolds. “The first night we spent outside, even your thoughts froze. I was like, ‘Roger, I can’t shoot a scene, my mouth is frozen, I can’t speak!’ It’s minus 45 and my character is brutally under-dressed for this weather – he’s packed for Paris, not Saskatchewan! But it definitely helps my character – he’s supposed to be cold, but not dead,” jokes Reynolds, whose theory on the cold weather is that it provokes imagination and thus provokes our funny bones.

“I’m not used to this cold. When we were filming exteriors, Roger knew I was freezing, so he directed me to run out of the scene,” says Los-Angeles based Amy Smart, who kept warm by hiding hand and toe warmer packets in her belts, shoes, legs and even in her ear muffs. These indispensable packets kept hot for six hours.

Anna Faris says, “It was so cold that when you first stepped outside, your instinct was to laugh, and then you breath the air in and just hunker down. The moisture in your nostrils freezes so it’s like you have these tiny little icicles in your nose and your body instantly stiffens up. The cold has definitely been a big part of this journey. I don’t think I’ll be able to watch those scenes without shivering inside in a deep place.”

“The record cold for this year was in Regina, Saskatchewan. I’m thinking we’re going to the coldest place in North America to make a movie in the middle of winter,” laughs Chris Klein. “When I walked out of the airport terminal, the cold punched me in the face. It was an absolute ‘wham, you’re frozen, and you will not thaw until you leave.’ It was minus forty when I first got here and it was so cold that when you go outside, any moisture that’s in the air is in the form of ice crystals. That’s a wild thing to see and when you inhale through your nose; your nose is frozen instantly. Instant lockjaw. Instant frostbite on the tips of your fingers and toes no matter how many pairs of wool socks and gloves you use. Luckily it warmed up when we were shooting exteriors. It was minus 16 Celsius and nobody could hear what anybody’s saying because everybody’s bundled in these huge Antarctic expedition coats that weigh 40 pounds,” he laughs. “The cold definitely helps the comedy because being outside in that kind of weather is just funny.”

Even the costume department was affected. Wardrobe had to switch from plastic covers to fabric bags to carry the clothes because the plastic split in the cold. The Porsche driven by Reynold's character had it's own 48-foot trailer to keep it warm; and during a particularly cold spell, to keep the water lines and equipment from freezing, transportation stacked bales of hay around the base of every trailer and truck for insulation.

A two-day shoot in Los Angeles wrapped up the picture, providing a warm respite from the rigors of Regina.

It took a lot of ingenuity to create Los Angeles and New Jersey in the middle of a Canadian winter in the prairie towns of Regina and Moose Jaw, with combined populations of 250,000. The land is so flat between the two towns, the 50-mile highway connecting them has only one curve. But even Production Designer Robb Wilson King's enormous talents could not replicate Los Angeles exteriors – the real thing had to be shot in sunny California.

“The wonderful thing about this project was the writing, which inspired us to want to create a real world that would support the organic humor,” says King. “Going to a remarkable place which was virtually untouched in terms of film allowed us a lot of privilege wherever we went and allowed us to go into homes and into people's lives and really find the most interesting stuff we could find for the movie. At the end of the day, when we look at the picture, one of the more remarkable things about the movie will be that you will get a sense of place throughout the film, and it's that sense of place that creates that dynamic which entices Chris to recall his life and want to revisit after ten years and remember the warmth of place and really want to get back in touch with that reality.”

King's mandate was to create two parallel universes: Los Angeles and suburban New Jersey. Los Angeles conveys coldness juxtaposed to the warmth of New Jersey. King recreated L.A. interiors in Regina, designing a recording studio on stage; and found the perfect atrium for Red Bull Records at Regina Research Park, which allowed him to create the cold L.A. look where “everything we see is not exactly real. We never see evergreen trees. Everything is metal and hard-edged shapes with highly reflective

surfaces, with grey colors predominating. Chris' house represents the fashion taste of the day by being minimalist and simple. This contrasts with what Chris recalls and finds his home town to be again, and is very different from the warmth and texture and the fabrics that you see in New Jersey.”

Other interiors such as the bedrooms of Chris and his brother Mike, as well as Jamie's bedroom, were also created on stage. “Our aim was to create a warmth and texture that supports the humor and at the same time supports the humanity of the movie. We've created a real kind of loving reality to the movie that makes it a little different than just colorful comedies.”

The color palettes are very instrumental to creating parallel universes. For New Jersey, King's color palette featured all earth tones. Primary colors, including cars, were banned. “That allows you to really get into the warmth of the evergreen. I want the viewer to smell the trees. The house of Chris' mother was very warm and richly textured. The home of Jamie's family is over the top. But there's something quite charming about how wild and weird they are. You enjoy both lifestyles.”

“Alexandra Welker, a wonderful costume designer, always brought the right color and tone to our rooms,” says King. Welker notes, “There are two kinds of comedies. One is where the clothes are visually comic. The other is where the humor comes from the situations. *Just Friends* is a bit of both. Part of that is the contrast between L.A., which is slick, hard and monochromatic, with shiny surfaces and harder colors such as acid green and silver; and New Jersey, which is a golden Norman Rockwell home town where the preppy wardrobe reflects earth and jewel tones with a lot of texture, wool sweaters, leather and suede. The more information on the screen visually, the more you can tell about the character.”

“Our two adorable leading ladies are total opposites,” continues Welker. “Jamie is the beautiful girl next door, sexy without being conscious of it. She epitomizes the hometown; at the same time, she's stylish and sexy. Whereas Samantha, a creature of Los Angeles, is all artifice. She's a model, actress, socialite, fashionista and wannabe rock star playing these different roles. Every time we see her, she's in a different outfit.

As far as she's concerned, she's dressed for the occasion, completely accessorized, everything matches."

"The character of Chris Brander goes through several transformations. In high school, he wears one outfit – the fat suit and bad hair. Ten years later, he's become the slick L.A. guy with a lean silhouette. He's a totally calculated dark, fashion guy. Back in New Jersey, he shifts gears to become the total wussy. When that doesn't work, after the Christmas party disaster, he finally becomes the real, unaffected Chris, wearing the perfect jeans and the perfect T-shirt." Welker took cues from Ryan Reynolds' own closet, involving him in the process. "I love the collaborative process. Hopefully, through my clothes, I can help the actors find the character," concludes Welker.

One sizable permutation of Brander's character is his plus-size high-school persona. Explains Roger Kumble, "Ryan Reynolds is a good-looking guy. I just didn't want to give him acne for the high school scenes. We really had to do a number on him. It's important for the story because we really have to humiliate him at the beginning to understand his pain and his journey. This movie is about how high school haunts us to this day."

The first step the director took was to have Make-Up Effects Designer Bill Terezakis make Reynolds look 80 pounds heavier by photo-shopping his head shot. The prosthetics and the fat suit evolved from there. "As soon as Ryan put on the suit, he became a different character. It was a wild transformation," smiles Kumble.

"The character that I'm playing is a guy whose entire life is based on one humongous emotional wound he had in high school," says Reynolds. "As an actor, that's a brilliant place to come from. The character is so sensitive and sweet. And he's just a guy who gets crushed. I started this movie in a fat suit. The audience will see me go from a tall lean fella to a roly-poly blimp with hat hair and six chins. They've come a long way in terms of prosthetics in this business. Not only are they able to completely change somebody's physical appearance, but what I really found interesting was what came out of me when I was performing in it. That character took on a whole creation of its own."

“It was a three-hour ordeal to get the suit on,” he continues. “It weighs a ton, it’s hot and it’s hard to have a full range of movement. But what’s amazing is that thing is so stuck onto my face that I can make every facial expression.”

“The beauty of this movie is that it takes us through the process this guy went through. We get to see how this guy became a hardened jerk from high school where he was 80 pounds overweight and in love with a girl who was the popular cheerleader who just wanted to be friends with him,” concludes Reynolds. “It’s a decade before he gets out of the ‘friend zone.’ That’s our journey here. Somehow, just when he thought he was out of this hellacious place called the ‘friend zone,’ he’s sucked back in.”

“Ryan is a good looking guy who’s really funny,” says producer Chris Bender. “He’s willing to comedically go anywhere and do anything. For the beginning of the movie, he let us fatten his face, mess his hair and wear a retainer. You need an actor who’s willing, comedy-wise, to embarrass himself. When you’re laughing at somebody being embarrassed and making a fool of themselves, you know, ultimately, it’s going to serve them to become a better person. So you can enjoy it and not feel bad about it.”

Recalls Amy Smart, “The funniest day on this movie for me was the first day Ryan wore the fat suit and was experimenting with different faces and the way his hands could move. He’s one of the funniest actors I’ve worked with. There were many moments in this movie when I’m off camera for his close-ups and he would have to play the scenes to the back of my head because I was laughing so hard.”

When it came time to shoot the sequence where a disastrous series of events sets off a calamitous chain reaction in front of the Palamino family home, director Roger Kumble thought big. “I wanted this to be the greatest Christmas disaster scene ever,” says Kumble. “I wanted to turn it into *Apocalypse Now*.” What took a week to film took months to figure out and lasts an explosive few minutes on the screen.

“It’s a chain reaction that leads to this catastrophe, all started by one small infraction, my character Chris Brander, pissing off Samantha James,” reveals Ryan Reynolds. “Enough that she drives the family Volvo into the front yard of these poor unsuspecting people and essentially destroys the most over-the-top Christmas display any human being has

ever seen. And this is all my fault. Mr. Palamino, Jamie's dad, who wins best Christmas display every year in the state, doesn't like me very much to begin with. So it certainly didn't bode well with him after I destroyed his beautiful world, as he called it, and rained down upon him sparks and misery. This is the special effects coordinator's moment to shine."

And shine they did. Setting up a series of spectacular and intricate maneuvers in a domino effect, the Volvo, connected to a decelerator, crosses two lanes of traffic, smashes through a fence and destroys two snowmen. After an altercation between Samantha and Jamie, Samantha gets back in the car and drives out of the yard on a different path, snagging an electrical cable, smashing through a second portion of the fence, causing lights to burst and spark, and giant candy canes to burst into flames. Up on the roof, Santa Clause catches fire, reindeer are torn down from overhead cables, sparking lights and bursting into flame; one burning reindeer is dragged down a city block; the second reindeer narrowly misses Mrs. Palamino; while the third reindeer smashes into a tree, narrowly missing grandma, while an electrical box arcs and sparks. The last snowman gets tossed over, creating a complete Armageddon scene.

The Christmas decoration disaster is a great example of Kumble taking a scene to a different level. "We collaborated on the moment," says King. "As initially written, Mr. Palamino came out of the house, tripped on a cord and fell into a nativity scene. Collectively, we thought we could do more than that and made it work."

"I loved being this terror that comes crashing into the party and then freaks out in front of everybody. I'm in and out like a little hurricane. I do think that some of the extras were truly scared of me. They may have thought that I was like my character," laughs Anna Faris, who also gets to sing two songs (badly) in the film.

"They let me sing the terrible songs" smiles Faris, who laid down the tracks in Los Angeles before the shoot. "It was really fun and terrible at the same time to have everyone hear my voice." While pre-recording in the studio, Faris had the opportunity to find her comedic footing as a pop star diva. Many of the hilarious improvisations that happened in the recording booth carried over to her performances on the set.

Chris Klein also got in on the musical act, recording a version of “Jamie Smiles,” the song he uses to serenade Jamie Palamino, prior to principal photography. Roger Kumble loved the song so much, he directed a music video at various stages during the shoot to run on the *Just Friends* website and the DVD. Klein stayed in town when he wasn’t filming, just to participate in various episodes of the music video to lip-synch “Jamie Smiles.”

“My goal was to make a romantic comedy that the guys would take their girls to,” says screenwriter Adam Davis. “I was hoping to do comedy romantic – stress the funny. But it comes from such a real place; there is something that strikes right to the core. It’s the kind of experience where people should slap their heads and say, ‘of course, this happens all the time. Why wasn’t a movie made about this before?’”

“A lot of the actors responded to the ‘friend zone’ situation which they’d all experienced,” says producer Chris Bender. “It’s that universal theme that makes this movie commercial and bigger than just a typical romantic comedy.” Bender optimistically adds, “Timing is the end all and be all hook factor if you’re stuck in the ‘friend zone.’ Walking away and seeing what happens is a good thing to do. Who knows? A year from then, things can work out.”

“I love doing a comedy that has heart, that has a place that’s grounded and rooted and you feel there is a dramatic element to it on the same level,” says Ryan Reynolds. “It has to be. You know – comedy’s born of pain!”

“We’re really investigating a universal theme here,” says Chris Klein. “But at the same time it’s new because we haven’t had a movie where we actually talk about the ‘friend zone’ and how absolutely frustrating it can be for teenagers and people in college. Even people in their 30s get stuck in the ‘friend zone’ at work.”

Christopher Marquette sums up the experience of the movie. “A lot of thought and heart was put into this movie. You could tell somebody went along with certain experiences. The job of the director, the writer, the producers and the actors is to go in and heighten it, make it even more enjoyable and funnier. It comes from a good place and it’ll end up in a good place.”

ABOUT THE CAST

Ryan Reynolds (Chris Brander)

Ryan Reynolds is quickly emerging as one of Hollywood's most sought after leading young men. With a unique flare for comedy, Reynolds received critical acclaim for his comedic performance as the title role in Artisan Entertainment/Tapestry Film's *National Lampoon's Van Wilder*.

He was most recently seen in MGM's *The Amityville Horror*, a remake of the classic horror film, and Lions Gate's comedy *Waiting* (also starring Anna Faris) for writer/director Rob McKittrick.

In December, 2004, Reynolds costarred in the third installment of New Line's *Blade* series. In *Blade: Trinity*, Reynolds played Hannibal King, an acerbic vampire hunter in league with Wesley Snipes' Blade character. For the role, Reynolds dedicated himself to a physical transformation, gaining an impressive 20 pounds of muscle during the production.

His other feature film credits include the comedic drama *The Alarmist*, which received critical acclaim at the Sundance Film Festival, as well as the features *Buying the Coa*, *Finders Fee*, *Dick*, *Coming Soon*, *Ordinary Magic*, *Foolproof* and Warner Bros. remake of *The In Laws*.

Reynolds is fondly remembered for his hysterical portrayal of medical student "Michael Bergen" in ABC's *Two Guys and a Girl*.

Amy Smart (Jamie Palamino)

Amy Smart is quickly emerging as one of Hollywood's brightest talents on both the silver screen and television.

Smart has just completed *The Best Man* with Stuart Townsend in London. She recently shot the independent film *Caught in the Act*, directed by Al Corley, and can be seen alongside Ben Stiller, Owen Wilson, Snoop Dogg, and Vince Vaughn in the remake of

the 70's television classic, *Starsky & Hutch*. In addition, Smart is starred with Ashton Kutcher in New Line Cinema's Sci-Fi thriller, *The Butterfly Effect*.

Amy also starred in Project Greenlight's *Battle of Shaker Heights* and Paramount's ensemble comedy *Rat Race*, opposite Cuba Gooding, Jr. and Whoopi Goldberg. Additional film credits include DreamWorks' hit comedy *Roadtrip*, opposite Breckin Meyer and Tom Green, the independent feature film *Scotland, PA*, with Christopher Walkin and Andy Dick, Miramax's *Outside Providence*, with Alec Baldwin and Shawn Hatosy, Paramount's *Varsity Blues* opposite James Vanderbeek, *Starf*cker* with Loren Dean, *Starship Troopers*, and *The Last Time I Committed Suicide*.

On television, Amy heated up the small screen as Noel's love interest on the WB's *Felicity* and was also seen in the NBC miniseries *The 70's*, which chronicled four young people whose lives were intertwined forever after they witnessed the Kent State shooting of 1970.

Amy is involved with both Heal the Bay and EMA. Smart currently resides in Los Angeles.

Anna Faris (Samantha James)

Anna Faris is currently filming the fourth installment of the *Scary Movie* franchise for Dimension Films reprising her role of "Cindy Campbell," and this fall she is also set to co-star in *Super Ex*, alongside Uma Thurman and Luke Wilson and directed by Ivan Reitman.

In 2003 she co-starred in the Oscar nominated Universal / Focus film *Lost in Translation*, alongside Bill Murray, Scarlet Johansen & Giovanni Ribisi, for director Sophia Coppola. *Lost in Translation* emerged as both one of the year's most critically acclaimed films, as well as a box office hit, and has earned Anna rave reviews in the process.

Anna starred in *Scary Movie 3* for Miramax / Dimension Films, as well as both *Scary Movie* and *Scary Movie 2*. The trilogy remains the company's most successful franchise to date.

Anna recurred on the final season of television's number one comedy "Friends," playing the surrogate mother to Monica and Chandler's adopted baby.

Originally from Seattle, Anna started acting in theater at a young age. She currently lives in Los Angeles with her husband.

Chris Klein (Dusty)

Chris Klein first burst onto the screen as Paul Metzler, opposite Reese Witherspoon, and Mathew Broderick in Alexander Payne's *Election*. The role earned him a Chicago Film Critics nomination as Most Promising Newcomer. The film went on to be nominated for an Academy Award for Best Original Screenplay and Independent Spirit Awards for Best Picture and Best Screenplay.

Klein's next film was *American Pie*, which was a blockbuster at the boxoffice in 1999. The film has gone on to be a comedy classic and Klein reprised his role of Oz in *American Pie 2* in 2001.

Born in Chicago, Illinois, Klein moved to Omaha, Nebraska at 13, appearing in several school productions. It was during his senior year at Millard West High School that he was brought to the attention of Alexander Payne while Payne was scouting locations for *Election*.

Klein's other starring roles include, Paramount's *We Were Soldiers*, with Mel Gibson, John McTiernan's *Rollerball*, *Here on Earth*, with LeeLee Sobieski and Josh Hartnett, 20th Century Fox's comedy *Say It Isn't So* opposite Heather Graham, produced by the Farrelly Brothers and *The United States of Leland*, with Kevin Spacey, Ryan Gosling and Don Cheadle.

On stage, Klein starred in "This is Our Youth" in London's West End, with Freddie Prinze Jr. and Heather Burns.

Klein recently completed production on "Universal's *American Dreamz* re-teaming him with *American Pie* directors Paul and Chris Weitz. He will next be seen starring in the indie film *The Long Weekend* for director Pat Holden and co-starring Brendan Fehr.

Christopher Marquette (Michael)

Christopher Marquette starred as Mira Sorvino's son in *Sweet Nothings* (WB), *The Girl Next Door* (20th Century) and *Freddy vs. Jason* (New Line Cinema). He is a series regular on the Emmy nominated and People's Choice Award-winning, *Joan of Arcadia* (CBS) in which he stars as Adam Rove, the love interest for Joan (Amber Tamblyn).

Marquette's other projects are *American Gun* (IFC). He is the lead in the animated film *Thru the Moebius Strip* (GDCent), and stars with Bruce Willis, Justin Timberlake, Sharon Stone and rejoins Emile Hirsch in Nick Cassavetes-directed film *Alpha Dog* (New Line Cinema). The film is inspired by the real-life story of Jesse James Hollywood. Marquette plays Keith Stratton, a member of Jesse James Hollywood's drug gang.

Marquette has an impressive list of credits in television, film and theatre. His guest star roles include *ER* (NBC); *Seventh Heaven* (WB); *Judging Amy* (CBS) and *Touched By An Angel* (CBS). Recurring role on *Strong Medicine* (Lifetime); On the big screen *The Tic Code* (WB) and on Broadway as Tiny Tim.

Marquette was born in Stuart, Florida, the oldest of the three Marquette brothers, all actors. He began modeling at the age of four in Dallas, Texas. After his family moved to New York, he landed his first screen acting debut at the age of eight.

Julie Hagerty (Chris' Mom)

Julie Hagerty is perhaps best known for her performances as Trans American Airlines stewardess Elaine Dickinson in the classic 'Airplane!' films and as Albert Brooks' wife Linda Howard in 'Lost in America'.

Hagerty was born and raised in Cincinnati, Ohio, where she began taking acting classes at an early age. After graduating from high school, Hagerty moved to New York, where she performed in her first play (at her brother's off-off Broadway theatre company). Shortly thereafter, she auditioned for the Abrahams/Zucker spoof of the Airport disaster film and won the role that launched her career.

Hagerty just recently wrapped the Dreamworks feature film *She's the Man*, directed by Andy Fickman. Her screen credits also include Rob Reiner's *The Story of Us*, Woody Allen's *A Midsummer Night's Sex Comedy*, Robert Altman's *Beyond Therapy*, Frank Oz's *What about Bob?*, Peter Bogdonovich's *Noises Off*, Oliver Stone's *U-Turn*, *Freddy Got Fingered*, Tom Noonan's *The Wife, Mel* and *Boys Will Be Boys*.

An accomplished stage actor, Hagerty received the Drama Critics Award for her role in "Raised in Captivity" and the Theatre World Award (an accolade given to Broadway's most outstanding newcomer) for John Guare's "The House of Blue Leaves". She also received the Outer Critics Award for her performance in "Mornings At Seven" on Broadway. Additional stage credits include "The Odd Couple", "Moon Over Miami", "Born Yesterday", "Front Page", A.R. Gurney's "A Cheever Evening" and Shel Silverstein's "Wild Life".

In addition to the American Playhouse presentation of *The House of Blue Leaves*, Hagerty starred in the telefilms *London Suite*, *The Visit*, *Tourist Trap*, *Necessary Pilots* and the mockumentary *Jackie's Back!* The series lead on UPN's *Reunited*, Hagerty has also appeared on numerous series including *ER*, *Everybody Loves Raymond*, *Malcolm in the Middle*, *The Guardian*, and *Law & Order SUV*.

Stephen Root (K.C.)

Stephen Root entertains television and film audiences not only in front of the cameras, but behind them as well. He is currently filming a 6 hour, untitled mini-series for ABC, based on the 9/11 Commission Report. It will follow the CIA and FBI behind closed doors from the 1993 World Trade Center bombings to the morning of 9-11. Root plays Richard Clarke, who advised four presidents on homeland security. Patricia Heaton and Harvey Keitel also star.

He voices 'Chode' in "Tripping the Rift," Sci-Fi Channel's first animated series, which premiered March 4, 2004. This edgy half-hour CGI-animated series is based on the award-winning short film of the same name. "Tripping the Rift" follows the adventures of JUPITER 42, a smuggling vessel led by Root's character, a stumpy purple alien. 'Chode,' along with his colorful group of misfit shipmates, battles arch enemies and new

obstacles in space each week. He also lends his voice to 'Dick' on the new Fox animated series, "American Dad."

Root starred as the eccentric station owner 'Jimmy James' on the series "News Radio" for five seasons. He was a series regular on "Ladies Man" with Alfred Molina and "Harts of the West" with Beau and Lloyd Bridges. He also had recurring roles on the award-winning HBO series "From The Earth To The Moon," as well as the television series "Grounded for Life," "Civil Wars" and "L.A. Law."

He starred as the put-upon 'Milton Waddams' in the Twentieth Century Fox film, *Office Space*, with Jennifer Aniston, released in 1999. This comedy about the plight of white-collar workers in today's corporate world marked a unique re-teaming for Root and director Mike Judge, who debuted in his first live-action feature film. The *Office Space* DVD release is slated for November 1. Judge, creator of the Emmy winning hit animated television series "King of the Hill" cast Root as the voice of 'Bill,' Hank Hill's next-door neighbor on the series. Bill is described as "a lonely-hearted Army barber with low self-esteem." He also provides the voice of 'Mr. Strickland,' Hank's boss. "King of the Hill" won the 1998-99 Emmy for Outstanding Animated Program and is now entering its ninth season.

Animated features include the voice of 'Bubbles' the fish in the Walt Disney Pictures/Pixar hit, *Finding Nemo*, Twentieth Century Fox's *Ice Age*, in which he voiced a hilariously menacing 'Rhino,' and 'Zeb' in Walt Disney's feature film, *Country Bears*. He provided voices for Columbia Tri-Star's *The Big Guy and Rusty the Robot*, as 'Donovan' and Disney's *Star Command*, as 'Sheriff.'

Born in Sarasota, Root majored in acting and broadcasting at the University of Florida, then left before graduating when he won a regional audition for the National Shakespeare Company. After three years of touring the U.S. and Canada with the troupe, Root settled in New York, honing his craft in regional theatre and starring in off-Broadway's "Journey's End" and "The Au Pair Man."

Root's Broadway debut came in "So Long on Lonely Street," which was followed by the Tony award-winning production of "All My Sons," in which he starred opposite Richard

Kiley. A starring role in the Broadway national tour of "Driving Miss Daisy" with Julie Harris brought Root to Los Angeles.

Root co-starred as 'Gordon' in last summer's hit feature, 20th Century Fox's *Dodgeball: A True Underdog Story* with Ben Stiller and Vince Vaughn. He appeared in Dreamworks' film *Anchorman* with Will Farrell.

Rave reviews came his way from critics who adored his performance as 'Mr. Lund,' the blind 'Radio Station Man,' in the Coen Brothers feature "O Brother, Where Art Thou?" for Universal/Disney.

He co-starred as 'Fernand Gudge' in *The Ladykillers*, his second Coen Brothers feature. He also played the role of 'Greenie,' opposite Ben Affleck and George Carlin in Kevin Smith's *Jersey Girl* for Miramax films.

Numerous feature-film credits include: *The Ladykillers, Jersey Girl, Surviving Christmas, Raising Genius, Bicentennial Man, Krippendorf's Tribe, Bye Bye Love, Extreme Justice, Buffy the Vampire Slayer, Robocop III, V.I. Warshawski, Ghost, Black Rain, Crocodile Dundee, Guilty by Suspicion* and *Stanley and Iris*.

His extensive guest-starring credits on television series include "The West Wing," "Frasier," "CSI: Crime Scene Investigation," "Just Shoot Me," "DAG," "Seinfeld," "Chicago Hope," "Christy," "Cybill," "Sweet Justice," "Roseanne," "Night Court," "Murphy Brown," "Northern Exposure," and "Star Trek: The Next Generation."

Root also appeared in the NBC miniseries "Pandora's Clock" and was nominated for a CableACE Award for his performance in the cable movie "Road to Galveston," with Cicely Tyson and Piper Laurie.

In his off-camera hours, Root likes to spend time with his family and go golfing.

Fred Ewanuick (Clark)

Fred Ewanuick is currently working on the feature film *Black Eyed Dog* for Quebec filmmaker Pierre Gang who he worked with on the MOW *Selling Innocence*. Feature

credits include the independent films, *Crossing*, and *Absolute Zero*, the Miramax family film, *Chestnut*. His other feature films include *The Delicate Art of Parking*, which won him a Best Actor Award at Spain's Peniscola Film Festival and premiered at the Montreal World Film Festival, where it won Best Canadian Feature. Ewanuick made his film debut in MGM/UA's *A Guy Thing*, followed by a role in *The Santa Clause 2*.

Ewanuick is a regular on the CTV hit series *Corner Gas*, nominated for an International Emmy for Best Comedy Show and a Gemini Award nomination for Best Ensemble Cast and Best Comedy series in 2004. Ewanuick co-stars as Brent Butt's best friend in *Corner Gas*, which just wrapped its third season. Other series include the CTV comedy/drama series; *Robson Arms*. Additional television credits include guest starring roles in *Da Vinci's Inquest* and *Dark Angel*. He made His television debut as "a spinning gnome" in *The Addams Family* series. Movie of the week credits include *Criminal Life*.

Born in Port Moody, British Columbia, Ewanuick was bitten by the theatre bug during a stint at Douglas College, New Westminster where he decided to pursue an acting career. He subsequently trained for three years with acting coach Shea Hampton, with whom he continues to study in Vancouver, B.C., where he lives.

Amy Matysio (Darla)

Amy Matysio made her feature film debut in the thriller, *The Unsaid*, with Andy Garcia. *Just Friends* marks her first major role in a motion picture. On television, she appeared in the MOW "I Accuse," "I'll Be Seeing You," "The Risen" and on the CTV series "Corner Gas." She will also be featured in the MOW "2-Human," and in the mini-series "The Tommy Douglas Story."

Matysio honed her craft performing in summer stock with "Shakespeare on the Saskatchewan" for three seasons, as well as numerous roles for various regional theatre companies. She has also worked with the improvisational theatre company, "The General Fools," for nine seasons.

Born in Regina, Saskatchewan, Matysio began dancing at the age of 4 and segued into acting in grade 9, when she became interested in improvisation. She studied at the University of Regina, which included a four month intensive acting course in the UK at

the University of Ripon and York St, John, graduating with a Bachelor of Fine Arts in acting in 2001.

Barry Flatman (Mr. Palamino)

Flatman, one of Canada's most prolific film and television performers, has appeared in more than 30 movies, has had leading roles in a dozen TV series and guest starred in some 20 more in addition to creating voice characters for animation. In addition, he has produced, written, directed and taught for stage, TV, film and radio; has a Gold Record and been nominated for both Juno and Gemini Awards.

Flatman's most recent credits include a recurring role in "Tilt," for ESPN, "H2O" for CBC, "Our Fathers" for Showtime, "The Last Sign," "Hell on Heels – the Mary Kay Story" and the mini-series "Hanssen," both for CBS, a recurring lead in "Odyssey Five" for Showtime, as well as guest starring roles in episodes of "Monk" for ABC and "Blue Murder" for Global.

Born in Victoria, B.C., Flatman served on the National, Guild and Toronto executives of ACTRA for more than 10 years and received the honorary title of President Emeritus for Toronto and Life Membership.

ABOUT THE FILMMAKERS

Roger Kumble (Director)

Roger Kumble is a graduate of Northwestern University. He began his career as a playwright and director in 1993 with the Hollywood satire “Pay or Play,” which garnered him the LA Weekly Award for Best Comic Writing. His second play, 1997’s “d girl,” starring David Schwimmer, earned him four Dramalogue Awards. In 2003, Mr. Kumble completed his Hollywood trilogy with the critically acclaimed *Turnaround*, again starring David Schwimmer, which sold out its entire run in Los Angeles.

Kumble made his feature film directorial debut with 1999’s Sony Pictures box office hit, *Cruel Intentions*, starring Sarah Michelle Gellar, Ryan Phillippe, Reese Witherspoon and Selma Blair, which he adapted from Chardelos De Laclos’ “Les Liasons Dangerues.” He followed this in 2002 with Sony Picture’s *The Sweetest Thing*, starring Cameron Diaz, Christina Applegate and Selma Blair. In addition, he created the television series “Manchester Prep” and directed an episode of the Showtime’s “Out of Order.”

Adam “Tex” Davis (Screenwriter)

Adam “Tex” Davis was working in a car wash manufacturing factory in Hackensack, N.J., when he sold *Just Friends* to New Line and *Sunburned* to Miramax within a month of each other. That same year, he was hired by MTV to write “Spring Break Lawyer,” a made-for-cable comedy, which aired in 2001.

He sold the original script *The Gardener of Eden* to Leonardo DiCaprio’s company, Appian Way. Production is scheduled to start in the fall of 2005. In addition, he has sold several original pitches, including a spy comedy to Mission Entertainment and *We Are Family* to New Line; and was hired by Universal to write *Zits*, based on the award-winning comic strip, and by MTV films to re-write *With Friends Like These*.

Born in Brooklyn, N.Y., Davis grew up in Bergenfield, New Jersey, and graduated from NYU Film School in 1993. He currently resides in Brooklyn with his wife Kim and daughter Gia.

Chris Bender & JC Spink (Producers)

Chris Bender & JC Spink are partners in Benderspink, a diversified management/production company that opened its doors in November 1998 with fifteen screenwriting clients. In just over a year, Bender and Spink sold twenty-four client spec scripts, co-produced Universal Pictures' *American Pie*, and convinced Disney executives to take a chance on a first-time director for *Deuce Bigalow: Male Gigolo*. On the heels of such success, New Line Cinema signed Benderspink to a first-look deal.

Since inception, the company has expanded its literary and talent management divisions and moved into television by inking a first-look deal with Fox 21. Benderspink continues to make diverse feature films and retains their deal with New Line Cinema. Over the past six years, Bender and Spink have had success with Warner Bros.' *Cats and Dogs*, New Line's *The Butterfly Effect*, Dreamworks' *The Ring*, and Universal's *American Pie 2* and *American Wedding*.

Benderspink most recently produced the thriller *A History of Violence*, directed by David Cronenberg and starring Viggo Mortensen, Maria Bello, William Hurt and Ed Harris, which premiered to critical and audience acclaim at the 2005 Cannes and Toronto Film Festivals. Their 2005 release slate also includes *Red Eye*, directed by Wes Craven and featuring Rachel McAdams and Cillian Murphy, Dreamworks' horror film *The Ring 2* starring Naomi Watts, and the romantic comedy *Monster in Law*, featuring Jennifer Lopez, Wanda Sykes, Michael Vartan and the return of screen legend Jane Fonda.

Michael Ohoven (Producer)

Michael Ohoven formed Infinity Media, Inc. in 2000 and is the company's Chief Executive Officer. Raised and educated in Germany, Ohoven learned financing and institutional investment at the prestigious Commerzbank. He then joined the International Corporate Affairs division of RTL Television, Europe's largest private broadcaster, where he was mentored by the station's renowned founder, television mogul Professor Helmut Thoma. After two and a half years, Ohoven left the company to create Infinity Media. Under his leadership, the company quickly established strong working relationships with major studios, talent representatives, and financial institutions.

Among his production credits are *The Snow Walker* (2004) which was nominated for 9 Genie Awards including Best Picture, *The Woods*, *Mr. Ripley's Return*, *The Final Cut* starring Robin Williams, the teen-comedy Hit *Saved!* and *The Human Stain* starring Anthony Hopkins and Nicole Kidman.

His most recent productions are Rob Zombie's *The Devil's Rejects* (2005), *The Cave* and the recently released *Capote* (2005) starring Philip Seymour Hoffman, Chris Cooper and Catherine Keener.

William Vince (Producer)

Producer and owner of Infinity Media, Inc., with offices in Los Angeles and Vancouver, William Vince has produced over 40 feature films and arranged more than \$500M in feature film financing, including the creation of the highly successful *Air Bud* franchise, which started with Disney's original *Air Bud* in 1997.

Vince has over 18 years experience in the industry, having acquired extensive technical knowledge and expertise in all aspects of motion picture management. Mr. Vince oversees all phases of feature film production from script development to financing, pre-production through to post-production. Mr. Vince has fostered strong working relationships with US talent agencies, banks, studios, and distributors throughout North America and abroad.

His experience and uncompromising approach to the industry soon garnered him an international reputation as a producer who could package and finance films. Most recently he has produced two studio pictures: the critically acclaimed *Capote* for MGM / Sony and *Just Friends* for New Line.

Vince also produced *Saved!*, *The Snow Walker*, and the upcoming *Ripley Under Ground*, starring Barry Pepper, Tom Wilkinson and Willem Dafoe.

Bill Johnson (Producer)

Bill Johnson is a co-founder and partner in Inferno Distribution LLC. The company launched its operation in 2002 with headquarters in Los Angeles and Vancouver with its

primary focus being production, financing and worldwide sales of major motion pictures and television programming.

The company was launched with an impressive library and currently, Inferno is managing sales and collections on a slate which includes such titles as *The Human Stain*, *Confidence*, *The Contender*, *Frailty* and *Jeepers Creepers*.

Currently, Johnson is producing, financing and selling international rights on three new feature film projects through Inferno. The first of which, is a co-production with New Line Cinema is *Just Friends*. He is also producing *Southland Tales*, written and to be directed by Richard Kelly (Donnie Darko) which stars Duane "The Rock" Johnson, Sarah Michelle Gellar, Sean William Scott and Jason Lee. Finally, Mr. Johnson is Executive Producing *Peaceful Warrior*, based on the best selling book *Way of the Peaceful Warrior* written by Dan Millman. This film will be directed by Victor Salva.

Recently, Johnson and Inferno created a joint venture production company with well-known spiritual author Deepak Chopra and Oscar nominated director Shekhar Kapur (Elizabeth) called Intent Films which has the mission to create commercially viable films which are positive, inspirational and raise consciousness. Several projects are currently in development.

Johnson has written two screenplays and directed one film – *Within the Lines*, which was produced in 1997 and aired on Showtime. He is a native of Chicago who was an All-American tennis player at California State University, Northridge and later, attended film courses at both the University of Southern California and the American Film Institute. He lives on the beach in Venice, California with his 10 year old daughter Skyler.

Jake Weiner (Co-Producer)

Jake Weiner is President of Production at Benderspink. In 1996, Weiner started at New Line Cinema in New York City, working directly for miscellaneous department heads including Chairman and CEO Bob Shaye, and soon became an assistant to the Sr. Vice President of Production. Weiner was promoted in 1998 to Executive Story Analyst,

responsible for overseeing the New York story department, critiquing all material submitted for feature consideration, and bringing in new projects. He was transferred to the Los Angeles New Line office in 2001 and shortly thereafter started at Benderspink as President of Production. Weiner currently supervises all of the projects on the company slate and assisted in developing *Butterfly Effect* and bringing in and developing *Monster In Law*, starring Jennifer Lopez and Jane Fonda. He also co-produced *A History of Violence* for New Line.

Anthony B. Richmond, A.S.C., B.S.C. (Director of Photography)

Anthony B. Richmond has been a cinematographer for more than three decades. His most recent credits include *Riding The Bus With Her Sister*, directed by Angelica Houston, *Shade*, *Havana Nights*, *Walk On The Moon*, *Legally Blond*, *Ravenous*, *Men of Honor*, *The Sweetest Thing* and *Someone Like You*.

Richmond collaborated with Director Nicolas Roeg on five of his films including *Don't Look Now*, for which he won the prestigious BAFTA award, *The Man Who Fell To Earth*, *Bad Timing*, *Heart Of Darkness* and *Full Body Massage* for Showtime. Additional credits are *Candyman*, *Stardust*, *Rough Riders*, *The Eagle Has Landed*, *The Greek Tycoon*, *Playing God* and *Roosevelt's Rough Riders*. He was DP on both Angelica Houston's directorial debut, *Bastard Out Of Carolina* as well as Sean Penn's *Indian Runner*.

The London native was responsible for photography on the seminal British music scene of the late 60's. He shot the Rolling Stones classic, *Sympathy for the Devil* for Jean-Luc Godard, then collaborated with Michael Lindsey Hogg on *The Rolling Stones Rock and Roll Circus* and the Beatles, *Let It Be*. His other rock and roll credit includes the Who's, *The Kids Are Alright*.

Richmond relocated to Los Angeles in 1981.

Robb Wilson King (Production Designer)

Robb Wilson King is an innovative designer who has created very distinctive looks for numerous films and music videos. Among his more recent feature films are *The Librarian 2*, filmed in Africa, *Behind the Smile*, *Paparazzi*, *Barbershop 2: Back in Business*, *Run Ronnie Run!*, *Tomcats*, and *Scary Movie*. In addition he designed *Rush*

Hour and *Rush Hour 2*, *Money Talks*, *Set It Off*, *Moonlight and Valentino*, *Low Down Dirty Shame*, *Rudy*, and *Pump Up the Volume* to name a few.

Some of King's television credits include the successful pilots for *Medical Investigation*, *The Pretender*, *The Monroes*, *Knight Rider 2010*, NBC's *Wind on Water*, John Favreau's *Bad Cop Bad Cop*, *Hollywood Swingers* as well as *Treasure Island* and the Emmy nominated *In The Company of Darkness*.

King has also designed the looks for many music videos, working with the industry's top directors for such recording artists as Mariah Carey, Puff Daddy, No Doubt and Will Smith, among others.

A Hollywood-born designer who has studied in New York, Los Angeles and Europe, he's an architectural graduate and was raised in the company of theme park developers. King resides in Venice, California.

Alexandra Welker (Costume Designer)

Alexandra Welker began her career in New York City working on independent films with such highly acclaimed directors as Hal Hartley and Jim Jarmusch. Since then she has designed costumes for more than 20 films.

Most recently Welker completed the feature films *John Tucker Must Die*, *How to Deal*, *American Pie 2* and *Joe Dirt*. Among other numerous credits are *Simple Men*, *Amateur*, *The Big Brass Ring*, *Meet Wally Sparks*, *Phoenix* and *Seven Girlfriends*. She created the trendsetting fashions of the debut season of *the O.C.*, hailed as the successor to *Sex & the City* for groundbreaking television fashion. Her other television credits include the series *Leap of Faith*, *Snoops* and *Relativity*. Welker also designed the stage wear for Spinal Tap's 2001 "Back from the Dead" tour.

Born in New Jersey, Welker graduated from the University of Pennsylvania where she wrote her thesis on William Shakespeare and minored in history. After a stint fundraising for the New York Zoological Society (the non-profit entity behind the Bronx Zoo, the New York Aquarium and Wildlife Conservation International), she parlayed her love of film

and her expertise in art and fashion into her costume design career. Destiny, perhaps? Her father is an illustrator and her mother studied Haute Couture in Paris.

Jeff Freeman (Editor)

Jeff Freeman has served as editor on such films as *Frankie and Johnny Are Married*, with Michael and Lisa Pressman and Alan Rosenberg, and also with David Kelley and Les Moonves playing themselves, *Cruel Intentions*, with Sarah Michelle Gellar, Ryan Phillippe, and Reese Witherspoon, *The Only Thrill* starring Diane Keaton and Sam Shepard, Columbia Pictures' *The Craft* starring Neve Campbell and Robin Tunney, *The Waterdance* with Eric Stoltz, Wesley Snipes, William Forsythe and Helen Hunt, which won the 1992 Sundance Film Festival Audience Award and The Waldo Salt Screenwriting Award. Freeman has also worked on *Mad Love* for Touchstone Pictures, with Drew Barrymore and Chris O'Donnell. In addition he worked on *Glitter*, *The Crow 2-City of Angels*, *Highlander 2-The Quickening*, *Bad Dreams* and *Bulletproof*.

His television credits include "Reefer Madness," a musical for Showtime (with Neve Campbell, Christian Campbell, Kirsten Bell, Alan Cumming, Steven Weber and Anna Gasteyer) the pilot for the new Showtime series, "The 'L' Word," the pilot and series for David E. Kelley's "The Brotherhood of Poland, New Hampshire," Disney's "Angels in the End Zone," USA Cable Movies "Deconstructing Sarah" and "Deep Red," NBC's Telefilms "A Family Torn Apart" and "The Revenge of Al Capone," and Disney Channel's "The Ernest Green Story," winner of the 1994 Peabody Award.

His education includes UCLA Film School: earning a BA Degree in film with Magna Cum Laude honors.

He is represented by the Jay Gilbert and Hilary Roote at the Broder, Webb, Chervin and Silberman Agency in Beverly Hills, and currently lives in Santa Monica, California.

Jeff Cardoni (Composer)

Los Angeles based composer Jeff Cardoni drew from influences past and present in creating the highly melodic and catchy score for *Just Friends*. Working with Director Roger Kumble and music supervisor Patrick Houlihan, he decided that a thematic and timeless approach would be best suited for the "loveable Loser" character of Chris

Brander. He also incorporated melodies from several classic Christmas songs, which were, weaved into the score and eventually recorded by a 50-piece orchestra in Seattle.

Jeff began his musical training as a classical pianist before spending several years as a rock and roll guitarist including V2 Records' "Alien Crime Syndicate." This eventually led to writing songs for several major films including *Austin Powers*, *Euro-Trip*, *The Sweetest Thing*, and *A Walk To Remember*.

Other film scores include the Bluegrass influenced *Where The Red Fern Grows* starring Dave Matthews and Dabney Coleman for Disney and the drama *Seven Days* for Videocene. He as also scored several television projects, including "CSI:Miami" - the hugely successful Jerry Bruckheimer series for CBS, Oscar nominated Morgan Spurlock's "30 Days" for FX, and the theme to mtv's hit "Pimp My Ride", which can be heard in over 40 countries.