

Serenity

Preliminary Production Information

Five-hundred years in the future, the crew of the transport-for-hire ship *Serenity* takes on two new passengers and soon find themselves in a crossfire between an invincible military force and cannibalistic savages.

Oscar®- and Emmy-nominated writer/director JOSS WHEDON—creator of the worldwide television phenomena of *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* and *Angel* and co-writer of *Toy Story*—makes his feature film directorial debut with the futuristic action-adventure *Serenity*, based on Whedon's cult television series *Firefly*.

Captain Malcolm Reynolds, a hardened veteran who fought on the losing side of a galactic civil war, now ekes out a living pulling off small crimes and transporting passengers and cargo (without asking too many questions) on the Firefly class ship *Serenity*. He leads a small, eclectic crew who are the closest thing he has left to family—squabbling, insubordinate and undyingly loyal.

When Mal agrees to transport a young doctor and his unstable, telepathic sister, he gets much more than he bargained for. The pair are fugitives from The Alliance—the coalition dominating the galaxy—who will stop at nothing to reclaim the girl. The crew that was once used to skimming the outskirts of the galaxy unnoticed suddenly finds itself caught between this unstoppable military force and Reavers—barbaric savages who roam the edges of space.

Hunted by vastly different, equally deadly enemies, they soon begin to discover that the greatest danger to their safety may be onboard the *Serenity* herself.

Written and directed by Whedon, *Serenity* is produced by BARRY MENDEL (*Rushmore*, *The Sixth Sense* and Wes Anderson's upcoming *The Life Aquatic*) with CHRIS BUCHANAN (president of Mutant Enemy, Inc., Whedon's production company; *Best Men*), ALISA TAGER (*Enemy at the Gates*) and DAVID LESTER (*Air Force One*, *The Shawshank Redemption*) executive-producing. The cast reprising their roles from the television series include NATHAN FILLION (Mal), GINA TORRES (Zoe), ADAM

BALDWIN (Jayne), ALAN TUDYK (Wash), JEWEL STAITE (Kaylee), MORENA BACCARIN (Inara), SUMMER GLAU (River), SEAN MAHER (Simon) and RON GLASS (Book). The Operative, the Alliance's man, is played by CHIWETEL EJIOFOR, the exciting young star of Stephen Frears' *Dirty Pretty Things*. There is also a brief appearance by Shohreh Aghdashloo, who was nominated for an Oscar® for her role in *House of Sand and Fog*.

“It's a story about freedom—how much we need it, how much everybody deserves it and how much we can lose before we have to fight back,” says Whedon. “This movie gives me the opportunity to create worlds on a scale that I've never dreamed of before, which is very exciting.”

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Joss Whedon's trademark wit and compassion have graced a myriad of projects during his career. In addition to creating and executive-producing the series *Firefly*, *Angel* and *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* (as well as writing and directing multiple episodes of each), he has worked as a screenwriter on many films, including *Speed*, *Alien: Resurrection* and *Toy Story*, for which he received an Academy Award® nomination. He was nominated for the Emmy for outstanding writing on the *Buffy* episode entitled “Hush.” *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* is the second highest-selling television series on DVD, and it continues to win fans worldwide and influence an entire school of up-and-coming auteurs of film and television.

While the original feature film version of *Buffy* was not a huge box office hit when it was released in the U.S., Whedon assumed control of the television series and it became one of the most popular shows of all-time. *Firefly*, the television series, lasted only 11 episodes before the show left the air. But the firestorm of support from critics and fans—along with impressive DVD sales figures—didn't go unnoticed when Whedon and Mendel brought the project to Universal Pictures. The result was Universal purchasing the rights to make a major motion picture out of a television series that didn't even last half a season.

“*Firefly* was the kind of show that I love and that I hadn’t seen for awhile,” recalls Whedon. “It had real humanity to it. It also had extraordinary special effects for a TV show—effects that looked so real you felt you were living on the spaceship with these people. And we had nine actors who were born to play the roles. When the show was canceled, it was very clear to me that the story was not done being told. It wasn’t out of me yet...and it wasn’t out of these actors, which is how the idea for the movie came about.”

Whedon was committed to returning his ensemble of actors to the roles they originated in the series and allowing them to play in an expanded universe made possible by a motion picture adaptation.

Nathan Fillion plays ship captain Malcolm Reynolds, a disillusioned rogue who believes in the independence of a life on the move.

His loyal crew includes Gina Torres as Zoe, his second-in-command and every bit his equal as a fighter. Zoe is married to the ship’s skillful, dry-witted pilot Wash, played by Alan Tudyk, who serves as her opposite physically and temperamentally though matches her in devotion to their union.

Jewel Staite plays the ship’s mechanic, Kaylee, a sweet and sensual farm girl with a genius for gizmos. The renegade mercenary Jayne, a tough hombre on a lawless frontier on the fringes of space, is embodied by Adam Baldwin.

As close as he is with his crew, Mal’s feelings are strongest for one who no longer shares life aboard the *Serenity*. Having once allowed his ship to ferry the private craft in which she entertained visitors—often of great stature and power—the Captain still harbors deep affections for a beautiful “companion” named Inara, played by Morena Baccarin. But class differences (her social status being so far above his) and mutual denial keep them from following where their hearts might lead them.

The Alliance has escalated its search for *Serenity* passengers River Tam and her brother, Simon. Sean Maher is Simon, a physician who has discarded a medical research career and devoted his life to protecting his sister, River (Summer Glau), who possesses powers that are a threat not only to the forces after her, but to the crew of the ship who have given her sanctuary as well.

Ron Glass portrays Shepherd Book, whose counsel proves invaluable as the crew of the *Serenity* attempts to outwit their pursuers. Chiwetel Ejiofor steps into the role of The Operative, an agent dispatched by The Alliance to capture (if possible) or terminate (if necessary) River...and similarly dispose of anyone who stands in the way of his mission.

The flight crew came into this film having had six months of rehearsal from inhabiting these character while creating the television series.

“We have a group of characters that I adore played by actors that I am awed by. The bonding between them is going to turn this into a movie that I think may actually be quite different from the genre movies we have become used to,” says Whedon. “When it comes to the bells and whistles, yes, we have them all: a hovercraft, action, gunfights, fistfights, cannibals—everything you could want in a movie.

“But more than anything, the movie should leave audiences feeling like they’ve just been through something with people they care about. We have nine people aboard a small transport ship who live on the edges of space, who do the sort of work that is not generally done in science-fiction movies: the odd jobs, the dirty jobs. I love this crew—they’re extraordinary characters. Best of all for me is that the people who play them are also extraordinary actors, extraordinary human beings, and I’m incredibly fortunate to be working with them again.”

Behind-the-scenes talent on *Serenity* includes Oscar®-nominated cinematographer JACK N. GREEN (*Unforgiven*, *Twister*), production designer BARRY CHUSID (*The Day After Tomorrow*), editor LISA LASSEK (*Buffy the Vampire Slayer* TV series), twice-Oscar®-nominated costume designer RUTH CARTER (*Malcolm X*, *Amistad*), Emmy-winning visual effects supervisor LONI PERISTERE (*Firefly*) and Oscar®-nominated special effects coordinator DAN SUDICK (*Master and Commander: The Far Side of the World*).

Serenity will be released in the U.S. on April 22, 2005.

About the filmmakers...

Writer-Director JOSS WHEDON received an Oscar® nomination as co-writer of the record-breaking hit *Toy Story*. He is also the Emmy-nominated creator of the television sensations *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* and *Angel*, as well as *Firefly*, on which his feature film directorial debut, *Serenity*, is based.

Buffy earned Whedon the SFX Millenium Readers Award for creating “The Best Show of All Time.” Through all his success on television and in film, Whedon has also kept his hand in the comic book industry, creating *Fray* for Dark Horse Comics. He will also be writing *Astonishing X-Men*, a new extension of the singularly successful “X-Men” series.

A graduate of Wesleyan University in film studies, Joss began his television writing career as a staff writer on the NBC comedy series *Roseanne* before becoming a producer on the sitcom *Parenthood*. In addition to *Toy Story*, his feature film writing credits include *Alien: Resurrection* and *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*. He has also contributed (uncredited) to *X-Men*, *Speed* and *Twister*.

The son of TV-writer Tom Whedon (*The Dick Cavett Show*, *Benson*, *Alice*) and grandson of TV-writer John Whedon (*The Donna Reed Show*, *The Dick Van Dyke Show*), the third-generation Whedon expanded his range of talents to include music: he composed the music and wrote the lyrics for the musical *Buffy* episode “Once More, With Feeling,” which he also directed. The CD of original songs from that landmark episode has sold more than 400,000 units worldwide.

Whedon resides in Los Angeles with his wife and their toddler son.

BARRY MENDEL produced *Rushmore*, *The Sixth Sense*, *Unbreakable*, *The Royal Tenenbaums* and *The Life Aquatic*.

Executive producer CHRISTOPHER BUCHANAN is also president of Mutant Enemy, Inc., Joss Whedon’s production company. In this capacity, he oversees all the company’s various businesses, including film, television, video games, music and publishing.

Buchanan previously served as senior vice president of production and chief development executive for Jerry Weintraub Productions at Warner Bros. In that capacity, he developed *Ocean's Eleven*, among other high profile Weintraub projects.

A Harvard graduate, Buchanan began his motion picture industry career as an acquisition executive with Columbia TriStar Home Video, after a stint in New York as an entertainment industry analyst for Alexander & Associates. In 1993, he became a literary agent with United Talent Agency, specializing in independent film and foreign financing. Buchanan served as an executive producer on Tamra Davis' film *Best Men*, starring Luke Wilson, Drew Barrymore and Dean Cain.

Executive producer ALISA TAGER served as executive producer on the Jean-Jacques Annaud film, *Enemy at the Gates*, starring Jude Law, Joseph Fiennes, Rachel Weisz and Ed Harris. She was executive producer on the Columbia Pictures release of Sergei Bodrov's *Running Free*, which was filmed entirely on location in Namibia. She previously served as associate producer on Jean-Jacques Annaud's *Seven Years in Tibet*, starring Brad Pitt.

Tager completed her undergraduate work in history at the University of California at Berkeley and obtained a Masters degree in international relations from Yale University. After moving to New York, she produced a diverse range of projects in theater, music, art and video in New York as well as in Spain, Argentina, Venezuela and Russia. Tager was also a journalist, writing for several international publications. When she moved to Los Angeles, she began working with acclaimed director Jean-Jacques Annaud. Tager now works with Barry Mendel Productions.

Executive producer DAVID LESTER is a film business veteran of nearly three decades, having begun his career as a production manager on the original *Star Wars* and most recently serving as executive producer on Ron Shelton's *Hollywood Homicide*.

A longtime associate of Shelton's, Lester produced the director's hit golfing comedy *Tin Cup*, as well as the critically respected baseball bio-pic *Cobb* and the box office smash *White Men Can't Jump*. He served as executive producer on Shelton's directorial debut, *Bull Durham*, consistently voted among the best sports movies of all

time. The two also worked together on *Play to the Bone*, with Antonio Banderas and Woody Harrelson, and *Blaze*, starring Paul Newman and Lolita Davidovich (both of which he executive-produced and directed second unit).

Among Lester's other distinguished credits as executive producer are *Air Force One* and *The Shawshank Redemption*. He also produced the feature *Sibling Rivalry*, co-produced *Lord of the Flies* and recently worked on the remake of *The Time Machine*.

Cinematographer JACK GREEN received an Oscar® nomination for his work on Clint Eastwood's *Unforgiven*, for which he also earned a BAFTA nomination. He was also nominated for Outstanding Achievement by the American Society of Cinematographers for Eastwood's *The Bridges of Madison County* and given the Cannes Film Festival Technical Award for *Bird*.

Green teamed with Eastwood for over a decade, beginning with his first major feature director of photography job on the 1986 military drama *Heartbreak Ridge*. Their other collaborations include: *Bird*, *White Hunter Black Heart*, *The Rookie*, *A Perfect World*, *Absolute Power*, *Midnight in the Garden of Good and Evil*, *True Crime*, *Space Cowboys* and the documentary *Eastwood on Eastwood*.

Among Green's recent credits as DOP are *Against the Ropes*, *50 First Dates*, *Secondhand Lions*, *A Man Apart*, *Golden Dreams* and *Pretty When You Cry*. His other films include *Girl Interrupted*, *Speed 2: Cruise Control*, *Twister*, *The Net*, *Bad Company*, *Rookie of the Year*, *Love Crimes*, *Deceived*, *Race for Glory*, *Pink Cadillac*, *The Dead Pool* and *Like Father, Like Son*.

Production designer BARRY CHUSID most recently served in the same capacity on Rolland Emmerich's controversial box office hit *The Day After Tomorrow* and on the superhero thriller *Daredevil*.

As an art director, Chusid most recently worked on *Domestic Disturbance*, starring John Travolta. He was also art director on Emmerich's *The Patriot*. Other credits as art director include *Mystery Men*, *The Thirteenth Floor*, *Blade*, *Anaconda* and *Last Man Standing*.

Chusid began his career as a set designer on *Son in Law* and, later, *Wyatt Earp*.

Costume designer RUTH CARTER is a two-time Academy Award® nominee for her work on Steven Spielberg's *Amistad* and Spike Lee's *Malcolm X*. She is also the 2002 recipient of the American Black Film Festival Career Achievement Award for Women.

Carter most recently designed costumes for *Against the Ropes*, *Daddy Day Care*, *I Spy*, *Baby Boy* and *Dr. Dolittle 2*. Among her other feature credits are *Shaft*, *Price of Glory*, *Love & Basketball*, *Money Train*, *Rosewood*, *Cobb*, *What's Love Got to Do with It?*, along with Robert Townsend's *Five Heartbeats*, *The Meteor Man* and *B*A*P*S*.

A long-time associate of director Spike Lee, Carter got her first feature costume design assignment on *School Daze*. The two have subsequently teamed on *Do the Right Thing*, *Mo' Better Blues*, *Jungle Fever*, *Crooklyn*, *Clockers*, *Summer of Sam* and *Bamboozled*.

Editor LISA LASSEK worked with writer-director Joss Whedon on the Emmy-nominated television series *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* and again on *Firefly*, for which she also received an associate producer credit. She was also an assistant editor on the series *Angel*.

Her movie credits include the independent features *Just Add Love* and *Killers*. She most recently worked on the series *Wonderfalls* and *Tru Calling*.

About the flight crew...

NATHAN FILLION (Mal) played the wrong "Ryan" (the Private mis-identified as the missing soldier) in *Saving Private Ryan* and starred in the independent film *Water's Edge*. He has also appeared in the motion pictures *Blast from the Past*, *Dracula 2000* and *Doubting Reilly*.

On television, Fillion earned an Emmy nomination for his role in the daytime drama *One Life to Live*. In addition to starring in Joss Whedon's *Firefly*, he starred in the ABC movie-of-the-week *Ordeal in the Arctic*. He has also been a regular on the television series *2 Guys and a Girl*. He has recurring roles on *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, *Pasadena* and *Miss Match*.

A native of Edmonton, Alberta, Fillion had wanted to be a high school teacher and studied at the University of Alberta. He later starred in productions at the Edmonton Fringe Festival and performed with comedy groups in town before moving on to pursue an acting career in New York and Los Angeles.

GINA TORRES (Zoe) recently appeared in *The Matrix Reloaded* and *The Matrix Revolutions* and will soon be featured in the independent film *Fair Game* and the comedy *Beauty Shop*, both scheduled for 2004 release.

The youngest of three children born to Cuban immigrant parents in the Bronx, New York, Torres was chosen as one of *People Espanol's* "25 Most Beautiful" last year and *People Espanol's* "50 Most Beautiful" list in 2004. She began her career as a singer and made her professional debut in the musical *Dreamgirls*. She later starred on Broadway in *The Best Little Whorehouse Goes Public* and *Face Value*. She also appeared in prestigious New York productions of *Antigone*, *Blood Wedding*, *A Raisin in the Sun* and *Ma Rainey's Black Bottom*.

Torres' won an ALMA for her part in *Cleopatra 2525* and starred in *Alias*. She also starred in Joss Whedon's series *Angel* and *Firefly*.

Torres is married to actor-director Laurence Fishburne.

ADAM BALDWIN (Jayne) a youthful veteran of over 60 films and numerous television appearances spanning 25 years, Baldwin made his feature debut in the title role of the 1980 coming-of-age story *My Bodyguard*. Later that same year, he joined the cast of Robert Redford's Academy Award®-winning *Ordinary People*. He followed this by starring in the role of Animal Mother in Stanley Kubrick's Vietnam War classic *Full Metal Jacket*.

Baldwin's subsequent film credits include *Independence Day*, *The Patriot*, *Radio Flyer* and *Wyatt Earp*. He worked in the Tom Hanks-produced mini-series *From the Earth to the Moon*; he also starred in the television mini-series *Smokejumpers*, *In the Line of Duty* and as the title character in the Frances Ford Coppola-produced *Dr. Jekyll & Mr. Hyde*. He also starred in the syndicated series *The Cape*.

In addition to starring in the television series *Firefly* and *Angel* for creator Joss Whedon, he also appeared as Knowle Rohrer in the final two seasons of *The X-Files*.

ALAN TUDYK (Wash) has recently appeared in two of the summer's biggest movies: *I, Robot* with Will Smith, and *Dodgeball: A True Underdog Story*, starring Ben Stiller and Vince Vaughn. Among his previous feature film credits are *28 Days*, *Wonder Boys*, *A Knight's Tale*, *Hearts in Atlantis*, the indie comedy *Meet Market* and as a voice in the animated hit *Ice Age*.

In addition to co-starring in Joss Whedon's *Firefly*, Tudyk's television work included a recurring role on the Comedy Central series *Strangers with Candy* and a guest-starring spot on the award-winning *Frasier*.

The Texas native studied at Julliard before moving to New York to begin his professional career on stage. He starred on Broadway in *Epic Proportions* and off-Broadway in *The Most Fabulous Story Ever Told* and *Bunny Bunny*. He also won the Clarence Derwent Best New Talent Award for his performance in *Oedipus Rex*.

JEWEL STAITE (Kaylee) made her feature film debut in the 2002 independent comedy *Cheats*.

The native of Vancouver, British Columbia began acting at age six after a brief stint at child modeling. She grew up to become a regular on several popular Canadian television series and earned a Gemini nomination for Best Actress in a Canadian Television Film & Showcase for her role in the 1996 series *Flash Forward*. She has also been a regular on the series *Space Cases* for Nickelodeon, *Higher Ground* for Fox Family Channel, *Just Deal* for NBC and Joss Whedon's *Firefly*.

Staitte recently starred in the Showtime cable feature *Damaged Care* and had supporting roles in several telefeatures, including *Roughing It*, directed by Charles Martin Smith. She began her acting career on stage as a member of the Vancouver Youth Theatre.

MORENA BACCARIN (Inara) starred in the independent features *Perfume*, with Sonia Braga, and *Way Off Broadway* before making her major movie starring debut in *Serenity*.

Baccarin was born in Rio de Janeiro and educated in New York at the LaGuardia High School of the Performing Arts and the Juilliard School, where she starred in a number of plays, including *Mary Stuart*, *The Seagull*, *The Importance of Being Ernest* and *Love's Labours Lost*.

Prior to moving to Los Angeles, she landed a small part in the indy feature *Roger Dodger*. The experience of working on a film with actors such as Campbell Scott and Isabella Rossellini prompted her to head west where, soon after arrival in L.A., she came to the attention of Joss Whedon, who cast her in *Firefly*. She subsequently became a regular on the Fox series *Still Life*.

SUMMER GLAU (River) made her feature film debut with a small role in the teen comedy *Sleepover*. She makes her big screen starring debut in *Serenity*.

A native of San Antonio, Texas, Glau spent many years as an award-winning prima ballerina before a leg injury ended that career. As a dance performer, she had leading roles in Majestic Theatre stagings of *Le Bourgeois Gentlehomme*, *The Merry Widow*, *Peer Gynt* and *Paint Your Wagon*.

Moving to Los Angeles, she studied acting and improvisation under several prominent local teachers before Joss Whedon cast her for *Firefly*. She previously guest-starred in Whedon's *Angel* and later in the CBS series *Cold Case*.

SEAN MAHER (Simon) most recently starred as Brian Piccolo in the ABC/Disney remake of the movie-of-the-week classic *Brian's Song*.

In addition to co-starring in Joss Whedon's *Firefly*, Maher has been a regular on the television shows *HRT* and *The Street*. He filled the title role for the series *Ryan Caulfield: Year One* and had the recurring role of Adam Matthews on the long-running family drama *Party of Five*.

Born in Pleasantville, New York, Maher graduated New York University with a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree in drama. He also studied at the Tisch School of the Arts in London before moving to Los Angeles to pursue a career in film and television.

RON GLASS (Book) is a veteran star of stage, screen and television who received two Emmy Award nominations for his role as Detective Harris in the ground-breaking television comedy series *Barney Miller*.

Glass has been featured in the films *House Guest*, *Back in Business*, *It's My Party* and *Deal of a Lifetime*. His other television work includes the telefilms *Crash of Flight 401*, *Perry Mason: The Case of the Shooting Star* and *Gus Brown and Midnight Brewster*, as well as starring roles on the series *Rhythm & Blues*, *The New Odd Couple*, *Mr. Rhodes* and *Teen Angel*. His stage work has earned him awards and praise across the country, beginning with his work as a member of the prestigious Guthrie Theatre in Minneapolis and including a starring role in the Los Angeles production of *Speed of Darkness* for which he was honored with the Hollywood-Beverly Hills NAACP Theatre Award.

Glass is also a scholar and social activist, having earned a Medal of Honor commendation from his alma mater, the University of Evansville, for his scholarship and career accomplishments, and serving as chairman of the board of the Al Wooten, Jr. Heritage Center in Los Angeles, whose goal is to empower young people growing up in crises communities.

CHIWETEL EJIOFOR (The Operative) made his feature film debut in *Amistad* and was the star of the critically praised independent movie *Dirty Pretty Things*.

Classically trained at London Academy of Music and Dramatic Arts (LAMDA), Ejiofor earned the London Evening Standard Award and the British Independent Film Award for Best Actor in 2003 for *Dirty Pretty Things*. He was also nominated for BIFA honors as Best Newcomer that year. He was also nominated for a Laurence Olivier Theatre Award in 2001 as Best Supporting Actor for his performance in *Blue/Orange*, which played at the Royal National Theatre and the Duchess Theatre in the West End.

Ejiofor has recently starred in the upcoming indies *Red Dust* with Hillary Swank, *Slow Burn* with Taye Diggs and Ray Liotta, and co-starred in Woody Allen's *Melinda*

and Melinda. He also appeared in Spike Lee's *She Hate Me* and co-starred in the comedy *Love Actually*. His other feature film credits include the title role in *My Friend Soweto* and starring roles in the indies *Mind Games*, *It Was an Accident* and *Greenwich Mean Time*.

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