

## THE UPSIDE OF ANGER

Academy Award nominee Joan Allen, Academy Award winner Kevin Costner, Erika Christensen, Evan Rachel Wood, Keri Russell and Alicia Witt headline a stellar ensemble cast in the comedic drama *The Upside of Anger*.

Allen stars as the sharp-witted Terry Wolfmeyer, a suburban wife and mother whose life takes an unusual turn when her husband unexpectedly disappears. Struggling to deal with his sudden absence, Terry finds herself increasingly at odds with her four headstrong daughters (Christensen, Wood, Russell and Witt) and regularly drowning her anger in alcohol, until she develops an offbeat relationship with her next-door neighbor, Denny (Costner). A once-great baseball star turned radio DJ, Denny becomes a drinking buddy for Terry and slowly evolves into her source of strength, as well as an ad-hoc father to her daughters. But things get complicated as Terry's daughters grow accustomed to having Denny around while attempting to juggle not only their mother's romantic dilemmas, but their own.

At turns funny, poignant and bittersweet, *The Upside of Anger* is written and directed by Mike Binder (creator and star of the HBO series "The Mind of the Married Man"), who also appears in a co-starring role as Shep, Denny's radio show producer. The film is produced by Alex Gartner, Jack Binder and Sammy Lee and is a co-production between MDP Filmproduktion GmbH, Film & Entertainment VIP Medienfonds 2 GmbH & Co., KG and Film & Entertainment VIP Medienfonds 3 GmbH & Co., KG. Stewart Hall, Andreas Grosch and Andreas Schmid are the executive producers.

New Line Cinema will release *The Upside of Anger* (rated "R" by the M.P.A.A. for "language, sexual situations, brief comic violence and some drug use") in theaters nationwide on March 11, 2005. The film will have its world premiere at the 2005 Sundance Film Festival.

## ABOUT THE PRODUCTION

For a film with such a richly-layered storyline, *The Upside of Anger* had a relatively simple beginning. A very personal movie for writer/director Mike Binder, the script was inspired in large part by his own experiences growing up as a child with divorced parents and his desire to explore the impact that anger and emotion can have on a family.

“When I was a kid, my parents separated and my mother went through a tough time for a lot of years,” says Binder. “I thought that would be a great way to get to this point that I wanted to write about. I conceived the whole screenplay as a parable of sorts on misplaced anger, about the things in life that people often spend so much time being angry and upset about, only to later find out what they thought was right was actually wrong, or vice versa.”

The topic is a marked departure from Binder’s previous work, which includes more lighthearted looks at love and relationships in the comedy *The Sex Monster* and the HBO series “The Mind of the Married Man.” But with *The Upside of Anger*, Binder found it inspiring to explore new territory with his script and to approach his subject from a unique angle.

“When I first read the script, I thought it was fantastic – I can’t remember a script I’ve read that was so original, truthful, and funny,” says producer Alex Gartner, a former president of production for MGM/United Artists. “Mike brought a fresh voice to the kind of movie we are not seeing enough of anymore, and the response we got from actors was better than on any project I can remember being involved with.”

“This is one of the best scripts that Mike has ever written, and I think it really elevates his work to a new level,” says producer Jack Binder. “The amazing thing is that the quality of his writing was so good that it really drove the film to get

made. It made a group of talented actors eager to work on the film and is the type of material that will really attract an audience.”

Gartner adds that one of the script’s greatest strengths was the way in which it does not cleanly fit into any predisposed genre category, instead blending elements of comedy, drama and family films.

Mike Binder’s personal investment in the script was furthered by his additional roles as director and supporting actor. “Mike brings the whole package. He’s a triple threat - a real actor’s director who can also write the hell out of a script,” says Gartner.

Binder may have first-hand knowledge of what it’s like to be an actor, but in order to pen a script that revolved largely around women, he turned to the women in his own life for inspiration.

“To me, women and men are not all that different,” says Binder. “Like everyone, I have a mother and I’m also married, I have women in my life and you just write about the people that you see day to day.”

Binder decided to reflect the male perspective on the movie’s themes through the character of Denny, a retired professional baseball player turned radio DJ played by Kevin Costner.

“I wanted Denny to have been in a real kind of guy’s mode and guy’s world until he meets this family and becomes inundated with these females,” says Binder. “And I wanted to really be able to watch how that affected him positively, negatively and emotionally – to see what the mix of being part of the Wolfmeyer family did to him.”

*The Upside of Anger* not only addresses the impact of anger from both a male and female perspective, but also examines the impact that emotion has on the family as a whole.

“I think there are going to be a lot of women who will really relate to this because divorce is so common and families splitting up has become so common,” says Joan Allen. “But I think what Mike has really done is examined closely what happens. We all say it’s not good for the family, but nobody really talks about the toll it takes and what it means to children whose father is suddenly no longer a part of their lives.”

“How does that really feel?” Allen continues. “How does that make a woman feel? How does that make children feel? I think that’s talked about a lot, but it’s not really seen, and that’s what I think this film really demonstrates. I think Mike has zeroed in on that and it’s going to hit the heart and strike a lot of people, but not in a preachy way. It’s just going to be very fun, a light venture into this area that’s a huge part of the global culture in this century.”

In order to bring *The Upside of Anger* to life on the big screen, Binder and the film’s producers knew they would need to attract a talented and diverse cast. The lineup they ultimately secured surpassed even their highest hopes.

“I’ve always been somebody who believes it starts with the material, and Mike Binder wrote a great, edgy script that attracted an amazing group of performers who saw the potential in the material,” says producer Alex Gartner.

For the central role of Terry, the suddenly single matriarch of the Wolfmeyer family, Binder cast three-time Academy Award nominee Joan Allen, whom he had become friendly with when they both worked as actors on the drama *The Contender*.

“When I first read the script I definitely thought of it as a comedy, but it has very poignant parts throughout,” says Allen. “I know Mike wants it to be very multidimensional, especially for my character, because he doesn’t want it to be just one thing. That made it really fun to do the scenes because one day Terry is incredibly charming, and the next day she is tearing her hair out, then the next she is being a real pill. As an actor, I get to play a wide variety of emotional levels, which is great.”

Best known for her work in such dramatic films as *Nixon* and *The Ice Storm*, Allen was thrilled by the opportunity to take on a role laced with comedic elements.

“Mike and I had worked together several years ago and I remember saying to him that maybe someday he could write something for me and that I would love to be in a comedy,” says Allen. “So he wrote this for me and I always thought of it as a comedy in which the humor comes from just the reality of the characters. There’s a lot of humor in real life.”

Binder remembers Allen’s offhand query well. “Joan told me on the set of *The Contender* that she had seen a movie I had written and directed called *The Sex Monster*, and asked when I was going to write a comedy for her, that she loved to do comedy. I told her to be careful what she wished for because of course I loved the idea of writing a role for her. So when the idea for *The Upside of Anger* came together, I was already thinking about what I could write for Joan. She’s an amazing presence.”

While Allen was excited to flex her comedic muscles on screen, Binder and the producers were thrilled to work with an actress whose range enabled the character he had envisioned on the page to spring to life.

“There was only Joan to play this part since Mike had written it specifically for her – in essence, she was Terry,” says producer Alex Gartner. “And she didn’t disappoint when she took on the role. It gave her a chance to do things she doesn’t usually do.”

While Allen may have been the first cast member to sign on to the project, she was far from the only one with an impressive resume. For the pivotal role of Denny, a retired baseball player and Terry’s next door neighbor turned love interest, Binder turned to an actor he had long admired – Kevin Costner.

“Kevin and I didn’t know each other well, but we had met in the early 1990’s when he walked up to me in a restaurant and said he was a fan of my comedy,” says Mike Binder. “We sat and talked for a bit, and then I saw him again years later at a movie premiere. He asked me what I was currently working on and I told him about this movie I was doing with Joan Allen, and he agreed to read the script.”

Costner, a veteran of portraying baseball players in such films as *Bull Durham* and *Field of Dreams*, sparked to the script and saw the character of Denny as very different from past athletes he has portrayed.

“Denny is a retired player and the twist on the character is that he really doesn’t acknowledge the game of baseball – he is a sports radio DJ who really just likes to talk about everything but baseball and wants his life to move on,” says Costner. “He is not your prototypical athlete who is looking to score all the time with the girls. He doesn’t try to cash in on his past fame, he really just wants to fit in somewhere.”

Costner was also attracted to the film’s script and its mixture of tones and themes, and like Allen, was intrigued by the opportunity it presented for a change of pace.

“It is just really stand-out writing and a highly personal movie,” Costner says. “It’s angry and it’s funny, it’s dark and it’s light. But overall, it’s a special movie and I wanted to be a part of it because what you really want to do in movies is be part of something that you haven’t done before and also be involved in a good story. I’ve lived through divorce myself, so I recognize a lot of what is going on here. It’s told in such an entertaining and heartfelt way, but also kind of punches you in the stomach.”

The producers were thrilled with what Costner brought to the role and believe audiences will also love the opportunity to see the actor playing a different type of role.

“Kevin really helped to bring the character of Denny to life, and I think it will be a wonderful surprise for audiences because this is a Kevin Costner that we don’t get to see enough of in movies these days,” says producer Alex Gartner. “His character is sexy and funny, and really the kind of guy that audiences are going to fall in love with.”

From the moment he arrived on the set, Costner delivered the exact presence the filmmakers had hoped for. “Kevin showed up with an incredible enthusiasm and great dramatic strength that was the perfect counterbalance to the female leanings of the movie,” says producer Jack Binder. “He is an amazing talent and really added a depth to his character and the film.”

Rounding out the ensemble cast are the four Wolfmeyer daughters – each of whom are portrayed by accomplished young actresses from varied backgrounds.

“There is a huge depth to the cast of this film and I think it is one of the movie’s biggest strengths,” says producer Gartner. “The daughters are all fully fleshed out characters and that is a tribute to the work of those actresses, who were

willing to take on the supporting roles because they were all excited to work with Joan Allen.”

Mike Binder is quick to sing the praises of the film’s young actresses. “They are all strong actors and were really there because they liked the script,” he says. “None of them were there because they were making a lot of money. They just wanted to make a good movie.”

Alicia Witt, a veteran of such films as *Vanilla Sky* and *Two Weeks Notice*, stars as Hadley, the oldest Wolfmeyer daughter who blames her mother in large part for her father leaving the family. Witt found herself attracted to the role largely because of the difficult relationship that Hadley maintains with her mother throughout the film.

“I love that relationship because there is so much tension there and so much anger and acrimony,” says Witt. “But the truth is that they are so much alike that it’s the reason they don’t get along. It gets resolved towards the end, which is so like life, because you sort of lose that fighting edge that you have with your parents as you get older and you realize it’s just not worth it anymore.”

Keri Russell, best known for her work as the star of the long-running WB television series “Felicity”, takes on the role of Emily Wolfmeyer.

“All the daughters have their own version of anger towards their mom, but I feel like my character has the most confrontational scenes with her,” says Russell. “I’m the one who is always pushing her and is really outwardly vocal about her drinking and other issues.”

Taking on the role of the mischievous Andy Wolfmeyer, Erika Christensen (*Traffic*) became involved with the film after reading the script and becoming attracted to the relatability of the Wolfmeyer family.

“I think all the ins and outs of this family and how relatable it is to your own family are key to the appeal of this film,” says Christensen. “It’s really easy for everyone to find something to like because it certainly has dramatic elements to it, but at the same time some of the darkness is the very thing you will end up laughing at. And each of the characters are different and so specific that you’ll find things in there and say, ‘Oh, I know people like that.’”

Portraying Popeye, the youngest of the Wolfmeyer clan who serves as the film’s narrator, is Evan Rachel Wood. For Wood, who earned a Golden Globe nomination for her work in the indie hit *Thirteen*, the role presented an opportunity to try her hand at comedy for the first time in her career – and it proved a challenge too tempting to pass up.

“I’ve never done a comedy, so I wanted to get the timing right, get the lines down and just really break down the script and sort it out,” says Wood. “There are a lot of things in the script that people might feel a little bad for laughing at, but I wanted to get it down so that people would laugh, but then not feel so bad about it.”

The ensemble cast all felt it was extremely helpful to have the material handled by Mike Binder, a director who was intimately familiar not only with the script but also with the acting process.

“It’s great to work with a director who is also an actor – that makes a big difference,” says Alicia Witt. “I don’t think I’ve ever worked with a director who has been so sensitive to what actors are going through. It makes you feel like you can be a bit more vulnerable with him, because he understands, he has been there himself.”

With a unique script, an outstanding cast, and a deft balance of comedy and drama, the team behind *The Upside of Anger* is confident the film has the ability to appeal to a wide audience.

“I think audiences will take away from this movie that it is possible to really laugh but still be incredibly affected,” says producer Alex Gartner. “Hopefully, this movie will also lead people to realize that you don’t have to label a movie so specifically in terms of a genre in order for it to work in the marketplace.”

Adds Kevin Costner, “This is a movie that can really stand the test of time. I think when people go searching for movies geared towards adults, when people want to see their lives, or when they want to see something compelling, we will go to the top of their list. I feel that we’re right in the same category as something like *American Beauty* – people who love movies, who enjoy them and demand a lot from their movies will find this right in their strike zone.”

## ABOUT THE CAST

### **Joan Allen** (Terry Wolfmeyer)

Three-time Oscar nominee Joan Allen is one of the film world's busiest actresses.

She was most recently seen in *The Bourne Supremacy* for director Paul Greengrass, starring opposite Matt Damon. In June, she was seen in *The Notebook*, starring opposite Gena Rowlands, James Garner, and Ryan Gosling, directed by Nick Cassavetes. Next, Allen stars in *Yes*, for writer-director Sally Potter, and *Off the Map*, directed by Campbell Scott and co-starring Sam Elliott.

She starred in *The Contender* opposite Jeff Bridges, Gary Oldman and Christian Slater, for which she was nominated for a Golden Globe, a SAG Award, an Independent Spirit Award and an Academy Award for Best Actress.

Allen starred in *Pleasantville* opposite William H. Macy and Jeff Daniels, which earned her several critics awards. Her role opposite John Travolta and Nicolas Cage in the smash hit film *Face-Off* earned her critical kudos as well as Blockbuster and MTV Movie Awards. Her emotionally devastating role in *The Ice Storm* opposite Kevin Kline and Sigourney Weaver also earned her several critics awards.

In 1996, Allen starred in Oliver Stone's *Nixon* for which she received an Academy Award nomination for Best Supporting Actress. She also won seven critics association awards, including the L.A. Film Critics Association and the National Society of Film Critics Awards.

Allen received her second consecutive Best Supporting Actress Oscar nomination in 1997 for her role opposite Daniel Day Lewis and Winona Ryder in Arthur Miller's *The Crucible*.

Allen has appeared in numerous feature films including *Compromising Positions*, *Peggy Sue Got Married*, *Manhunter*, *Tucker: The Man And His Dream*, *Ethan Frome*, *Josh and S.A.M.*, *In Country*, *Searching for Bobby Fisher*, *Mad Love*, *It's the Rage*, and *When the Sky Falls*.

Allen is also one of the New York theater world's most honored actresses and winner of every major prize for her work on and off-Broadway. She received the Best Actress Tony Award for her performance opposite John Malkovich in Lanford Wilson's "Burn This," and was nominated in the same category for the title role in "The Heidi Chronicles." Off-Broadway she starred in "The Marriage of Bette & Boo" (for which she won the Obie Award), and reprised her Steppenwolf Theatre/Joseph Jefferson Award-winning role in "And A Nightingale Sang," for which she received the Clarence Derwent, Drama Desk, Outer Critics Circle and Theatre World Awards. Off-Broadway she also starred in "Delores" and "The Heidi Chronicles." An original member of Chicago's famed Steppenwolf Theatre Company, Allen starred in their production of "Burn This," "Earthly Possessions," "Reckless," "A Lesson From Aloes" (Joseph Jefferson Award), "Balm in Gilead" and "Of Mice and Men."

Allen recently received an Emmy nomination for the TNT film "Mists of Avalon" opposite Anjelica Huston and Julianna Margulies.

### **Kevin Costner** (Denny)

Kevin Costner began his career starring in independent films, gradually earning small parts in more established movies. His first major motion picture role was in the coming of age comedy *Fandango*.

Throughout his career, Costner has varied his choices with comedy, action and drama roles. He has appeared in such popular box-office hits as *No Way Out*, *Bull Durham*, *Field of Dreams*, *The Bodyguard* and *Wyatt Earp*.

Costner's exceptional filmmaking abilities were showcased in *Dances with Wolves*, which he produced, directed and starred in, and which won seven Academy Awards including Best Picture and Best Director.

In addition to appearing in memorable roles in *JFK*, *The Untouchables* and *Robin Hood: Prince of Thieves*, he re-teamed with his *Bull Durham* director Ron Shelton for the hit feature *Tin Cup*.

Costner also starred in *Thirteen Days*, successfully collaborating again with his *No Way Out* director Roger Donaldson. His other film credits include *For Love of the Game*, *The War*, *3,000 Miles to Graceland*, *Dragonfly* and *The Postman*, his second directing effort.

In 2003 Kevin Costner directed and starred in the box office hit and critically acclaimed film *Open Range*, alongside Robert Duvall and Annette Bening.

He will next be seen starring opposite Jennifer Aniston in the film *Rumor Has It*, directed by Rob Reiner for Warner Brothers.

**Erika Christensen** (Andy Wolfmeyer)

Erika Christensen has established herself as one of Hollywood's most talented and sought after young actresses.

Erika will next star in Arthur Allen Seidelman's *The Sisters* opposite Maria Bello and Mary Stuart Masterson. *The Sisters* is a contemporary adaptation of Anton Chekhov's drama, "Three Sisters."

Erika recently finished production on Robert Schwentke's *Flight Plan* opposite Jodie Foster and Peter Sarsgaard for Touchstone Pictures and Imagine

Entertainment. Erika plays Fiona, a rookie flight attendant embroiled in a mysterious trans-Atlantic trip.

Erika stunned audiences in Steven Soderbergh's Oscar and Golden Globe winning film *Traffic* as Michael Douglas' drug addicted daughter. She, along with the cast, received a Screen Actors Guild Award for "Outstanding Performance by the Cast of a Theatrical Motion Picture." Additionally, Erika won MTV's "Breakthrough Female Performance" Award at the 2001 MTV Movie Awards.

Erika starred in John Polson's high school thriller *Swimfan* opposite Jesse Bradford. Erika's memorable performance as a student whose crush turns into a dangerous obsession helped the film debut at number one at the box office in September 2002. Erika also starred in Brian Robbins' *The Perfect Score* opposite Scarlett Johanson and Bob Dolman's *The Banger Sisters*, opposite Susan Sarandon and Goldie Hawn.

Erika received the Spirit Award at the 2003 Annual Diversity Awards, an honor bestowed upon an actor who has demonstrated diversity in role choices during their career.

### **Evan Rachel Wood** (Popeye Wolfmeyer)

An actress with talent and poise well beyond her years, Evan Rachel Wood is one of Hollywood's brightest young actresses and is already a Golden Globe and SAG Award nominee.

Wood was nominated for a Golden Globe Award, a SAG Award and a Critic's Choice Award in 2004 for her role in the critically acclaimed drama *Thirteen*, written and directed by Catherine Hardwicke. Wood starred opposite Holly Hunter.

Wood will soon be seen in Marcos Siega's *Pretty Persuasion* opposite Ron Livingston and James Woods. The film centers on a sexual harassment scandal that engulfs an exclusive Beverly Hills private school. *Pretty Persuasion* will premiere at the 2005 Sundance Film Festival. Wood will also star in David Jacobson's *Down In The Valley* opposite Edward Norton, David Morse and Rory Culkin. Set in the present-day San Fernando Valley, the project revolves around a delusional man (Norton) who believes he's a cowboy and the relationship that he starts with a rebellious young woman (Wood).

Wood starred in Ron Howard's *The Missing*, opposite Tommy Lee Jones and Cate Blanchett. Wood played Lilly, a young girl captured by a band of outcasts who must fight for her survival until she is rescued.

In 2002, Wood was seen in two feature films, the first opposite Al Pacino in New Line Cinema's comedy *Simone*. Written, produced and directed by Andrew Niccol, Pacino plays a disillusioned producer who attempts to create a computer-generated virtual actress when the leading lady in his movie walks off the set. Wood plays the daughter of Pacino and Catherine Keener; she also appeared in *Little Secrets*, for the Samuel Goldwyn Company. Starring as the lead role Emily, Wood plays a talented and curious young girl who spends an eye-opening summer at home while all her friends are away at camp. The movie also stars Vivica A. Fox.

Wood starred in ABC's critically acclaimed hit drama series, "Once and Again." Created by Marshall Herskovitz and Ed Zwick ("thirtysomething") and produced by Disney, the series followed the efforts of divorcees (played by Sela Ward and Billy Campbell) trying to sustain a new relationship through the countless hurdles presented by their children, their ex-spouses and everyday life. Wood played Billy Campbell's sensitive daughter, Jessie, who had difficulty dealing with the pains of divorce and adolescence.

Wood's additional feature credits include *Practical Magic* with Nicole Kidman and Sandra Bullock, Timothy Hutton's *Digging to China*, and *Detour* with Michael Madsen. On television, she recently appeared as CJ Craig's niece in NBC's critically acclaimed drama "The West Wing."

Wood's stage credits include "The Miracle Worker" for Theatre in the Park, "A Midsummer Night's Dream" for Shakespeare in the Park and a three-year tour with "A Christmas Carol."

Wood is a black belt in Tae Kwon Do and is also trained in singing and dance. She lives in Los Angeles.

### **Keri Russell** (Emily Wolfmeyer)

A familiar face to television audiences, Keri Russell played the title role in "Felicity." In just four months after the show's acclaimed premiere on the WB, Keri was honored with a Golden Globe Award for Best Performance by an Actress in a Drama Series.

Keri recently completed a starring role in the Off-Broadway production of Neil LaBute's play "Fat Pig," as Jeannie, a vindictive girl furious at her ex-boyfriend, played by Jeremy Piven, for having the gall to fall in love with someone who is overweight. This marked Keri's stage debut.

Most recently, Keri completed "The Magic of Ordinary Days," a Hallmark Hall of Fame presentation which will air on CBS in early 2005, and wrapped the mini-series "Into the West," executive produced by Steven Spielberg and directed by Simon Wincer, for DreamWorks and TNT which is scheduled to air in Summer 2005.

Keri's feature film credits include *Mad About Mambo*, *The Curve*, *Eight Days A Week* and *We Were Soldiers Once and Young*.

**Alicia Witt** (Hadley Wolfmeyer)

Alicia Witt was most recently seen starring in the Warner Bros. romantic comedy, *Two Weeks Notice*, opposite Hugh Grant and Sandra Bullock.

She was also seen in the John Waters film *Cecil B. Demented*, also starring Stephen Dorff and Melanie Griffith, as well as director Cameron Crowe's *Vanilla Sky*, opposite Tom Cruise.

On stage, Witt made her London West End debut in Spring 2004 in Neil Labute's "The Shape of Things."

Witt combined her acting talents with her skills as a classically trained pianist in the romantic comedy, *Playing Mona Lisa*. For this role, she won a Best Actress Award at the US Comedy Arts Festival.

On television, Witt has made guest appearances on the phenomenally successful HBO series "The Sopranos" and the Emmy award winning "Ally McBeal." She has starred for four seasons as Cybill Shepherd's quirky daughter Zoey on the hit sitcom "Cybill."

In 1994, Witt appeared in the critically acclaimed *Fun*, which debuted at the Sundance Film Festival. The film, directed by Rafal Zielinski, depicts a tale of two disturbed young girls whose quest for fun leads them to murder. Witt received the "Special Jury Recognition" Award at Sundance and a nomination for an Independent Spirit Award. In 1998, she starred in Columbia Tristar's hit movie, *Urban Legend*.

Alicia made her film debut in David Lynch's *Dune*, and by the age of fourteen, received her high school diploma and moved to Los Angeles to pursue acting full

time. Once in Los Angeles, Lynch cast her in his cult classic television series, "Twin Peaks", as Gersten Hayward, a part that he had written specifically for Witt. Following this, Lynch utilized Alicia's talents once again in his HBO trilogy, *Hotel Room*, in which she portrayed a young woman with multiple personality disorder.

Alicia appeared in *Mr. Holland's Opus*, opposite Richard Dreyfuss, as well as *Four Rooms* (Miramax) with Tim Roth, Madonna, and Lili Taylor, and directed by Quentin Tarantino, Allison Anders, Robert Rodriguez and Alexandre Rockwell.

Other film credits include *American Girl*, Mike Figgis' *Liebstraum*, starring Kevin Anderson, *Bodies*, *Rest and Motion*, starring Tim Roth and Bridget Fonda, and *Bongwater* opposite Luke Wilson.

She is currently filming director Wayne Wang's *Last Holiday*, which will be released at Christmas 2005.

### **Mike Binder (Shep)**

See "About the Filmmakers" section

### **Dane Christensen**

Dane Christensen co-stars with his sister Erika Christensen in *The Upside of Anger*.

Though Dane worked in commercials, film and television as an infant and young child, he does not actually recall his early acting days.

In 2001, Dane starred as Michael Murphy in the New Line/ Warner Brothers pilot "Murphy's Dozen" directed by Gavin O'Conner.

Until recently Dane's focus has been on his academic and sports endeavors. He is now living in Los Angeles and pursuing his acting career.

## ABOUT THE FILMMAKERS

### **Mike Binder** (Writer/Director)

Mike Binder began his career as a stand-up comedian in his hometown of Detroit, Michigan. This path eventually led to his own HBO “One Night Stand” special, HBO’s “Detroit Comedy Jam” and “The Eleventh Anniversary of the Comedy Store” special with Robin Williams, Richard Pryor and Jim Carrey.

His years of stand-up also yielded a secondary benefit: developing a point of view as a writer. His first screenplay *Coupe De Ville* caught the attention of director Joe Roth, who helmed the film for Universal, which soon led to another feature, *Crossing the Bridge*, that marked Binder's directorial debut. From there, he wrote and directed the poignant *Indian Summer*, for Touchstone Pictures.

With HBO's critically acclaimed series, “The Mind of the Married Man”, Binder created a true water cooler show that pushed buttons, provoked thought, and, most important, made people laugh.

Binder wrote, directed and starred in the feature *The Search for John Gissing* with Alan Rickman and Janeane Garofalo that won the Critics Award at the 2002 Sarasota Film Festival. He also wrote, directed and starred in both *Londinium*, with Stephen Fry and Colin Firth, and *The Sex Monster*, for which Binder received both the Best Film and Best Actor nods from the U.S. Comedy Arts Festival in Aspen. In addition, Binder co-starred in the *The Contender* with Joan Allen, Jeff Bridges and Gary Oldman, and Steven Spielberg's futuristic thriller, *Minority Report*, opposite Tom Cruise.

His next project is *Man About Town* starring Ben Affleck, a dramatic comedy set in the chaotic world of Hollywood super-agents.

**Alex Gartner** (Producer)

Having worked in the entertainment industry for over a decade as a producer as well as senior executive at two major studios, Alex Gartner has most recently concentrated on producing and is partnered with Charles Roven at Mosaic Media Group.

In addition to *The Upside of Anger*, Gartner has produced the sequel hit *Barbershop 2*, which starred Ice Cube and Cedric The Entertainer, and was Executive Producer on *Out of Time*, starring Denzel Washington, Sanaa Latham and Eva Mendez, directed by Carl Franklin. Both pictures were released by MGM in 2004.

Prior to that Gartner was President of Production at MGM where he supervised the entire production slate, including such movies as *Die Another Day* (the highest grossing film in MGM history), with Pierce Brosnan and Halle Berry, *Barbershop* and *Legally Blonde*, starring Reese Witherspoon.

After producing *Indecent Proposal*, directed by Robert Redford and starring Demi Moore and Woody Harrelson, for Paramount in 1993, Gartner became Executive Vice President at Fox 2000, having started the division with President Laura Ziskin. While there he worked on such films as *Soul Food*, *Volcano*, *Men of Honor*, *Dude Where's My Car*, *Traffic*, *Courage Under Fire* and Terrence Malick's *The Thin Red Line*.

Gartner has also worked in production in television commercials and with directors such as Martin Brest on production for *Scent of a Woman*.

**Jack Binder** (Producer)

Jack Binder is the younger brother of writer/director Mike Binder. He is currently shooting *Man About Town* starring Ben Affleck. Jack also served as a producer on *Crossing the Bridge*, *Indian Summer*, *The Sex Monster*, *Londinium*, *The Search For John Gissing* and HBO's "The Mind of the Married Man."

**Sammy Lee** (Producer)

Sammy Lee is Vice Chairman of the Board of Directors, Media 8 Entertainment, a leading independent film company engaged in the production, financing, acquisition and worldwide distribution of feature length films in all media.

Mr. Lee is a lawyer by training and a prominent international financier, who has been primarily engaged in real estate and hotel investment.

Media 8's first production under Mr. Lee's leadership was *Monster*, for which Charlize Theron won the Academy Award for Best Actress.

Following the success of *Monster*, Mr. Lee has served as a producer on the Media 8 projects *Lovewrecked*, directed by Randal Kleiser and starring Amanda Bynes; *Running Scared*, which stars Paul Walker and is writer-director Wayne Kramer's follow up to his critically acclaimed debut *The Cooler*; *Santa's Slay*, written and directed by David Steiman and starring WWE star Goldberg; and *Havoc*, directed by two-time Oscar winner Barbara Kopple, and starring Anne Hathaway and Bijou Phillips.

Mr. Lee is currently serving as a producer on Media 8's *Man About Town*, which reunites Media 8 with writer-director Mike Binder, and stars Ben Affleck and Rebecca Romijn.

**Richard Greatrex, BSC** (Director of Photography)

Richard Greatrex went to the National Film School in Britain and studied Cinematography for three years. Since leaving in 1980, Richard has become one of London's most respected cinematographers with many credits to his name including a BAFTA and Royal Television Award for Best Cinematography on the highly acclaimed television production "The Woman In White."

He worked with director John Madden on the feature film *Mrs. Brown* starring Dame Judi Dench and Billy Connolly. He followed this film with *Shakespeare In Love*, again with John Madden, starring Gwyneth Paltrow and Joseph Feinnes. For this film he received Oscar, BAFTA, ASC, BSC and Golden Satellite nominations for Best Cinematography.

Richard has worked in Prague on *A Knight's Tale* and in America on *Where the Heart Is*. In Canada he filmed *Connie and Carla* and *Chaos*.

**Chris Roope** (Production Designer)

Chris Roope has just finished a feature for BBC Films called "Confetti," directed by Debbie Issit. Chris' other credits as Production Designer include: Pete Hewitt's *Thunderpants*, Paramount / Fox TV series "Keen Eddie," Graham Theakston's TV film "Sherlock, A Case of Evil," Pete Hewitt's TV film "The Princess of Thieves," Phil Davis' *Hold Back The Night* and Bill Anderson's TV film "Dockers." Chris also served as Art Director on Peter Cattaneo's smash hit *The Full Monty*.

**Steve Edwards** (Editor)

Born in Atlanta, GA, Steve Edwards received a Bachelor's degree in English Literature from the University of Georgia. He worked in post-production on projects such as "The Sopranos," "NYPD Blue," "Philly," and "Arli\$\$" before editing on HBO's "The Mind of the Married Man."

*The Upside of Anger* is Steve's first feature.

He currently lives with his wife, Lori, in Los Angeles, CA.

**Robin Sales** (Editor)

After graduating from Film School in London, and working for a while as a theatre manager and then a photographer, Robin Sales joined the editing department of the BBC. In the 17 years he spent there he worked with many of Britain's foremost directors, including Mike Leigh, Stephen Frears, Alan Clarke and Alan Parker.

In 1989 Sales left the BBC to go freelance as a film editor. He carried on his working relationship with Mike Leigh on *Career Girls* and *Topsy-Turvy*. Other recent credits include *Mrs. Brown* directed by John Madden and *Johnny English* directed by Peter Howitt.

**Deborah Scott** (Costume Designer)

Early on in her career, Deborah Lynn Scott worked on Steven Spielberg's film, *E.T. The Extra Terrestrial* and moved steadily on to work with such A-list directors as Robert Zemeckis, Albert Brooks, Edward Zwick and Michael Bay. Deborah has worked on some of the most acclaimed feature films of all time including *Legends of the Fall*, *Heat*, *Minority Report* and *Titanic*, for which she won the Academy Award for Best Costume Design.

**Alexandre Desplat** (Composer)

Alexandre Desplat has composed scores for more than 50 films, an opera, and a ballet, as well as varied projects for television and theatre, over the last 15 years. Born in Paris, he began studying piano at age 6, trumpet at age 8, and flute at age 10. He studied with Claude Ballif at the Paris Conservatory and with Jack Hayes in Los Angeles for orchestration. His score for Peter Webber's *Girl With A Pearl Earring* earned him a 2004 Golden Globe nomination for Best Original

Score, a BAFTA nomination and the 2004 Best European Composer nomination. In addition, he has received two French César nominations for his scores for Jacques Audiard's *Read My Lips (Sur Mes Lèvres)* and *A Self Made Hero (Un Héros Très Discret)*. Other credits include Marleen Gorris' *The Luzhin Defense*; Leslie Megahey's *The Advocate*; Patrick Dewolf's *Innocent Lies*; and Malcom Mowbray's *The Revengers Comedies* and most recently Jonathan Glazer's *Birth* starring Nicole Kidman. Desplat also wrote the title music for the multi-part feature "11'09'01 – September 11," with contributions from directors including Sean Penn, Alejandro Gonzalez Inarritu, Danis Tanovic, Ken Loach and Shohei Imamura. Desplat has conducted the London Symphony Orchestra, the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, the Czech Philharmonic and the Munich Symphony Orchestra, among others. He has written songs for Kate Beckinsale, Charlotte Gainsbourg, Michael Gambon, Catherine Ringer and Nadia Fares. He lectured on film scoring at the Royal College of Music in London and continues at La Sorbonne in Paris.