

“THE WEATHER MAN”

Production Information

Easy doesn't enter into grownup life

– Fatherly Wisdom

Academy Award® winner Nicolas Cage stars as popular Chicago TV weatherman David Spritz, who has a shot at the big time when “Hello America,” a national morning show, calls him for an audition. At the top of the world professionally, David is approaching disaster on a personal level as rapidly as the weather changes. His painful divorce, his dad’s illness, and trouble with his kids have David poised on the knife’s edge between stability and calamity. Trying to gain control of his situation, David slowly comes to realize that life, much like the weather, is completely unpredictable.

Paramount Pictures and Escape Artists Present an Escape Artists Production of a Gore Verbinski Film, “The Weather Man,” starring Nicolas Cage. Directed by Gore Verbinski from a screenplay written by Steven Conrad, the film is produced by Todd Black, Steve Tisch and Jason Blumenthal. Also starring Michael Caine and Hope Davis, the film is executive-produced by David Alper, William S. Beasley and Norm Golightly and co-produced by Steven Conrad.

Paramount Pictures is part of the entertainment operations of Viacom, Inc., one of the world’s largest entertainment and media companies and a leader in the production, promotion and distribution of entertainment, news, sports and music.

This film has been rated R by the Motion Picture Association of America for strong language & sexual content.

FILM FORECAST: CLEARLY COMEDIC YET PARTLY DRAMATIC

Meet David Spritz (Nicolas Cage), Chicago’s local weatherman for WCH, Channel 6. For many, he’s more than just someone who forecasts sun, rain, sleet or snow – he’s a moving target. Pelted on a regular basis with soda pop, malts and fast food by jealous fans, many of whom have a curious love-hate relationship with him, David wants nothing more than respect...especially from his father, prize-winning author Robert Spritzel (Michael Caine). He

also wants his estranged wife Noreen (Hope Davis) to love him again, his daughter (Gemmenne De la Peña, “Erin Brockovich”) to be happy, and son (Nicholas Hoult, “About a Boy”) to stay out of trouble. On top of that, David wouldn’t mind mastering archery.

But although David’s life is full of inner turmoil, on the outside the weatherman with the winning smile and onscreen charm appears to be pretty much under control. Even the producers of the prestigious New York-based “Hello America,” hosted by Bryant Gumbel (portraying himself), have noticed his work and want him to audition for their syndicated national morning show. Still, no amazing career opportunity seems to be stopping David’s personal life from going into a skid, and much like the tornadoes he predicts, he could be headed for a path of destruction.

For Nicolas Cage, it was the surprises in the script and how real the emotions were in all the characters that got his attention. “My first reaction after reading the script was how incredibly honest it is,” remembers Cage. “It has lots of twists and turns and it often surprised me to the extent that I didn’t know which way it was going to turn out. As for the character I portray, David Spritz gives me an opportunity to express some real emotional range and play someone I’ve never played before.”

Director Gore Verbinski, fresh off his success of “Pirates of the Caribbean: The Curse of the Black Pearl,” was eager to work with Cage, particularly because the screenplay called for subtle shifts in performance, perfect for an actor of his caliber.

“There’s no one better suited to play a guy like David Spritz than Nic Cage,” says Verbinski. “The role calls for someone who can bring both pathos and humor into his performance and Nic’s absolutely brilliant at that.”

Cage was equally as enthusiastic about working with Verbinski and called their collaboration a labor of love. “Gore and I had a terrific rapport on the set and we both saw an opportunity to do some experimenting with this film,” remembers Cage. “I really don’t want to reveal all the things we tried, but let’s just say that people will be happily surprised when they see this movie.”

While Cage found *himself* a little surprised by how difficult it is to play a weatherman, claiming that he was simply given a clicker one day and told to “figure out the geography,” he was even more taken aback by the magnetic presence of this co-star, two-time Academy Award® winner Michael Caine.

“Michael definitely conveys an aura of intimidation, a rather stern presence, which is very appropriate for portraying David Spritz’s dad,” observes Cage. “Also, he’s one of those

actors who is a master of not blinking and he's got these ice blue eyes...so when my character is supposed to have trouble meeting his father's gaze, it really comes across as real."

Director Verbinski offers that Caine brings a magnitude to the role that no other actor could have. "Michael has the ability to carry nobility without being cold. Because of the nature of how brilliant his character is, that's extremely important."

For Caine, signing on to play David Spritz's dad was a no-brainer, given the quality of the script, the director and the other actors with whom he'd be working. "Someone once said 'a man is judged by the company he keeps,' and this is very good company," says Caine. "As for the script, it brought me from laughter to tears and back again. It's one of those movies that's not a comedy, a drama or a tragedy – it's all those things, because that's what real life is."

Golden Globe nominee Hope Davis, who portrays Noreen, David Spritz's ex-wife, couldn't agree more. "This film is a very naked look at American culture that deals with some very real, sometimes painful issues, in a very humorous way. It's actually quite a brave movie that tells a very moving story," observes Davis. "And it's got some really juicy moments that people are going to love."

Davis also has tremendous admiration for Cage, whose performance she says is not only amazing but could not have been achieved by any other actor. "Nic created such a sympathetic character and portrayed him in such a funny way!" exclaims Davis. "I mean, poor David Spritz tries to do everything right and he just doesn't have a clue!"

Director Verbinski points out that Davis' portrayal of Noreen is crucial to the depiction of family and what the loss of it means to David Spritz. "As David's ex-wife, Hope has to play both sides of their disintegrating relationship," says Verbinski. "On the one hand, she makes the audience want them to get back together, but at the same time, she shows us that it could never work. Hope is an immensely talented actress, and the unique nuances she brings to her character provide infinite support to Nic's performance throughout the film."

Cage agrees, adding that the flaws in his character, as brought out by how hard he tries to win back Noreen, all stem from a deep love for his family. "In David's failures and mistakes, you see a man who is really trying to do his best, and it all comes from a good place — from love," observes Cage. "I think this film depicts a very realistic portrayal of what a lot of families go through — the good *and* the bad."

PREDICTING A GREAT PRODUCTION

When producer Todd Black (“A Knight’s Tale,” “Antwone Fisher”) read “The Weather Man” by screenwriter Steven Conrad (“Wrestling Ernest Hemingway”) he immediately recognized brilliant writing. “Steve’s screenplay was one of the funniest, most unique, touching scripts I’ve read in my career as a producer,” says Black. “It’s a very telling story about a man’s life with his family, his career and his inner, very personal, thoughts that we all can relate to. It’s very honest and in your face, which is to say that it doesn’t sugarcoat or shy away from anything, and I think audiences will appreciate that.”

Screenwriter Steven Conrad says his vision for the film is being fully realized and he couldn’t think of any director, stars or producers more suited to bringing “The Weather Man” to its greatest potential. “Everyone involved with this project has been terrific and has brought something different to making what was on the page into what I believe is a very human, very engaging film. It’s just a fun look at the serious things we all have in our lives.”

Proving that even though life can be a struggle, it doesn’t hurt to laugh at it, “The Weather Man” attracted not only critically acclaimed actors but also real-life personalities who appeared in key cameo roles. For example, well-known morning show co-host Bryant Gumbel and renowned Californian Cuisine chef Wolfgang Puck appeared to add the authenticity to the fictionalized morning program, “Hello America.” In addition, Tom Skilling, chief meteorologist for a Chicago television station and the *Chicago Tribune*, had a small part in the film and served as the movie’s technical advisor.

“I was very impressed by the attention to detail by the director, the stars and the entire production crew,” says Skilling, who taught Nicolas Cage how to read the chroma key and how to perform in front of the green screen. “Computer graphics are superimposed in front of this crazy screen that looks completely different to the audience, and I taught Nic how to interact with it. Truthfully, I was amazed at how quickly he took to working with the screen because it can be tricky, but he seemed so natural it was as though he’d been doing it for years!”

Just as the script called for, filmmakers chose to set the film in Chicago for one big reason – weather. “There’s some serious weather going on in Chicago for most of the year, and people really do plug into the forecasts to find out what they have to face that day,” says screenwriter Steven Conrad. “In Chicago, people often know their weather people by name since they check in to learn about the latest conditions throughout the day. In fact, the weather people establish this kind of ‘we’re-all-in-this-together’ vibe,” which gives them the kind of celebrity that David Spritz has.”

Nicolas Cage agrees: “Chicago weathermen are very important because everyone in the city relies on them so much. If they get it wrong, it really can ruin their day because the weather here is so intense. It can be thirty degrees one day and eighty degrees another day. A Chicago weatherman is a whole different animal than a Los Angeles weatherman,” Cage jokingly points out. “A Los Angeles weatherman doesn’t really have any seasons to forecast. There are earthquakes and fires, but weather? Not really.”

ABOUT THE CAST

Academy Award® winner **NICOLAS CAGE** (David Spritz), one of the most versatile actors of our time, is equally well known for his poignant portrayals in both drama and comedy. His memorable performance as an alcoholic drinking himself to death in the MGM drama “Leaving Las Vegas,” directed by Mike Figgis, earned him an Academy Award. He also received a Golden Globe and Best Actor awards from the New York Film Critics Circle, the Los Angeles Film Critics Association, the Chicago Film Critics and the National Board of Review.

Cage further solidified his leading man status when he received Academy Award®, Golden Globe, Screen Actor’s Guild, and BAFTA nominations for his dual roles of twin brothers Charlie and Donald Kaufman in Spike Jonze’s quirky comedy “Adaptation,” which co-starred Meryl Streep and Chris Cooper.

Recently, Cage completed production in Australia on “Ghost Rider” for Sony Pictures Entertainment. The film is scheduled for release in August 2006.

Cage is currently filming the independent film “The Wicker Man” in Vancouver, a mystery/ thriller directed by Neil LaBute.

Next, Cage will begin filming Paramount Pictures’ untitled World Trade Center project for director Oliver Stone. Following this, Cage will begin production on “Next,” a sci-fi thriller directed by Lee Tamahori and co-produced by Revolution Studios and Cage’s Saturn Productions.

Cage can currently be seen in “Lord of War,” a drama/thriller co-produced by Saturn Films, Cage’s production company. Andrew Niccol wrote and directed the film.

Last year, Cage starred in producer Jerry Bruckheimer’s worldwide hit, Disney’s action/adventure “National Treasure,” directed by Jon Turteltaub, and in 2003, he starred in the Warner Bros. film “Matchstick Men.”

At the end of 2002, Cage released his feature film directorial debut, “Sonny.” Cage cast an impressive group of actors, including Golden Globe winner James Franco, Mena Suvari, Brenda Blethyn and Harry Dean Stanton. The film was accepted into the 2002 Deauville Film Festival. Gold Circle Films, Vortex Pictures and Cage’s Saturn Productions produced the picture.

Cage's production company, Saturn Films, produced the 2002 Universal Pictures film "The Life of David Gale" and, in 2000, the critically acclaimed Lions Gate film, "Shadow of the Vampire."

Cage's many other films include "Windtalkers," "Captain Correlli's Mandolin," "The Family Man," "Gone in 60 Seconds," "Bringing out the Dead," "Eight Millimeter," "Snake Eyes," "City of Angels," "Face Off," "Con-Air," "The Rock," "Guarding Tess," "Red Rock West," "It Could Happen to You," "Kiss of Death," "Honeymoon in Vegas," "Valley Girl," "Cotton Club," "Racing with the Moon," "The Boy in Blue," "Peggy Sue Got Married," Joel and Ethan Coen's "Raising Arizona," "Vampire's Kiss," and "Fire Birds."

It was Cage's portrayal of a tormented Vietnam vet in "Birdy" that first established him as a serious actor. Directed by Alan Parker, "Birdy" won the jury prize at Cannes. Cage then received a Golden Globe nomination as Best Actor for his role as Cher's lover in "Moonstruck." David Lynch's "Wild at Heart," starring Cage and Laura Dern, won the Palm d'Or at the 1990 Cannes Film Festival.

Some of Cage's other honors include a Golden Globe nomination for his role in "Honeymoon in Vegas," the prestigious Lifetime Achievement Award from the Montreal World Film Festival, and the first ever Distinguished Decade in Film Award at ShoWest.

Cage was raised in Long Beach, California and lived there until his family moved to San Francisco when he was 12. Cage began acting at age 15 when he enrolled in San Francisco's American Conservatory Theatre where he appeared in the school's production of "Golden Boy." He later moved to Los Angeles, and while still a high school student landed a role in the television film "The Best of Times." He made his feature film debut in "Rumble Fish."

Cage currently resides in Los Angeles with his wife, Alice Cage.

MICHAEL CAINE (Robert Spritzel) has been in over ninety motion pictures and has been nominated for six Academy Awards® including "Alfie," "Sleuth," "Educating Rita" and "The Quiet American." The highly lauded thespian won Best Supporting Actor Oscars® for his performances in "Hannah and Her Sisters" and "The Cider House Rules."

Caine's other honors include the New York Critics' Best Actor Award for "Alfie," a Golden Globe Best Actor Award and a BAFTA Award (the British equivalent of an Oscar®) for "Educating Rita," a Golden Globe for Best Actor in a Comedy or Musical for "Dirty Rotten Scoundrels" and a Golden Globe for Best Actor in a Comedy or Musical for "Little Voice."

Caine was born in South London and had a childhood fascination with cinema. Leaving school at sixteen, he worked in numerous menial jobs until National Service with the Royal Fusiliers took him to Korea. Upon his discharge, his first job in the theater was as assistant stage manager in Horsham, Sussex. When he returned to London, he acted with Joan Littlewood's Theater Workshop and played a minor role in the film "A Hill In Korea" while obtaining bit parts in other movies and walk-on roles in a couple of West End plays.

Eventually touring Britain with one repertory company after another, he developed a relaxed stage presence and perfected a vast range of accents. Starting out as an understudy in the role of Private Bamforth in the London stage hit "The Long and the Short and the Tall," Caine ended up taking over the part when O'Toole dropped out and toured the provinces for six months. Following this stint, his television and film parts grew more substantial.

The turning point in his film career came in 1963, when he landed the part of aristocratic Lieutenant Gonville Bromhead in "Zulu." Passing forever out of the ranks of anonymity, he next played Harry Palmer in the espionage thriller, "The Ipcress File" which exceeded all expectations at the box office.

In 1966, "Alfie" catapulted Caine to super-stardom. In the annual British film critics' poll it was voted Best Picture of the Year. It also gave him his first Academy Award® nomination.

In the late sixties, he appeared in "Gambit," "Funeral In Berlin," "Billion Dollar Brain," "Hurry Sundown," "Woman Times Seven," "Deadfall," "The Italian Job," "The Battle of Britain," "Too Late The Hero" and "The Last Valley." During the seventies he starred in "X, Y and Zee," "Pulp," "Sleuth," "The Wilby Conspiracy," "The Romantic Englishwoman," "The Man Who Would Be King," "Harry & Walter Go To New York," "California Suite" and "The Swarm."

In the eighties, Caine starred in "Dressed To Kill," "Victory," "The Hand," "Death Trap," "Educating Rita," "Blame It On Rio," "The Holcroft Covenant," "Hannah And Her Sisters," "Sweet Liberty" and "Dirty Rotten Scoundrels."

In 1992, he and American producer Martin Bregman formed M & M Productions to make films in Britain for Caine to star in or direct. Their first production was "Blue Ice," co-starring Sean Young and directed by Russell Mulcahy.

Caine is also an author. He wrote an autobiography, What's It All About?, as well as Acting on Film, a book based on a highly successful series of lectures he gave on BBC Television. Caine most recently appeared in this summer's releases "Batman Begins" and "Bewitched."

In 2000, Queen Elizabeth II honored Michael Caine with knighthood. Born Maurice Micklewhite, he is now officially known as Sir Michael Caine.

Following successive critically-acclaimed turns in “About Schmidt,” “The Secret Lives of Dentists,” and “American Splendor,” chameleon-like actress **HOPE DAVIS** (Noreen) will soon be seen in a number of highly anticipated projects.

On September 16th, Davis will be seen in John Madden’s adaptation of David Auburn’s Pulitzer and Tony award-winning play “Proof” opposite Gwyneth Paltrow, Anthony Hopkins and Jake Gyllenhaal. Davis stars as Claire, the cynical, all-business sister to Paltrow, who is taking care of her dying father (Hopkins), a brilliant but insane mathematician.

She will also be seen in Warner Bros.’ “Duma,” opposite Campbell Scott, for director Carroll Ballard (“Fly Away Home,” “The Black Stallion”) and in the black comedy “The Matador,” opposite Greg Kinnear and Pierce Brosnan, which centers on a friendship between a globetrotting assassin (Brosnan) and a gullible young couple from the Denver suburbs. Written and directed by Richard Shepard, “The Matador” was purchased by Miramax Films at the 2005 Sundance Film Festival and will be released on November 18th.

Davis recently wrapped production on “Have you Heard?,” the Douglas McGrath film about Truman Capote. Davis plays the social matron Slim Keith. She is currently in production on Lasse Hallstrom’s “The Hoax,” the biopic of author Clifford Irving and his attempt to sell a fake Howard Hughes autobiography. Davis stars alongside Richard Gere, Alfred Molina and Marcia Gay Harden. Davis plays Andrea Tate.

In mid-September, Davis performs alongside Meryl Streep and Peter Dinklage in Charlie Kaufman’s radio play “Hope Leaves the Theatre.” It was originally performed in the Spring in London and at St. Anne’s in Brooklyn. It will be broadcast on Sirius Satellite Radio over Labor Day weekend. She recently appeared onstage in “A Midsummer Night’s Dream” with the New York Philharmonic.

Davis was named 2003 Best Actress of the Year by the New York Film Critics Circle for her work in two of the year’s most critically acclaimed independent features – “American Splendor,” directed by Shari Springer Berman and Robert Pulcini and Alan Rudolph’s “The Secret Lives of Dentists.”

Davis won a Golden Globe Award nomination for her portrayal of Joyce Brabner, the fiercely intelligent, sardonic wife and collaborator to Paul Giamatti’s Harvey Pekar, in “American Splendor” (LA Film Critics’ Best Picture of 2003). A fixture on 2003 Top 10 lists,

“American Splendor” captured the Grand Jury Prize - Dramatic Competition at Sundance; Best Film Un Certain Regard in Cannes and the Grand Jury Prize in Montreal’s Just for Laughs Festival.

Davis received an IFC Spirit Award nomination for her performance opposite Campbell Scott in “The Secret Lives of Dentists,” Alan Rudolph’s intimate look at a contemporary marriage compromised by children and infidelity, based upon Jane Smiley’s novella *The Age of Grief*.

Davis first garnered critical attention for her work in a trio of independent hits -- Greg Mottola’s “The Daytrippers,” Bart Freundlich’s “The Myth of Fingerprints,” and Brad Anderson’s “Next Stop Wonderland.”

Her filmography includes a delicious turn as Jack Nicholson’s daughter in Alexander Payne’s “About Schmidt” (Los Angeles Film Critics’ Best Picture of 2002), “Hearts in Atlantis” opposite Anthony Hopkins, Campbell Scott’s “Final” with Denis Leary, Stanley Tucci’s “Joe Gould’s Secret” and “The Imposters,” the political thriller “Arlington Road” with Jeff Bridges and Tim Robbins, and Lawrence Kasdan’s “Mumford.”

On stage, Davis most recently starred in Rebecca Gilman’s “Spinning Into Butter” at Lincoln Center. In addition to “Camino Real” at the famed Williamstown Theatre Festival, her credits also include Lincoln Center productions of “Ivanov” opposite Kevin Kline and “Two Shakespearean Actors.” Off-Broadway, Davis has appeared in “Pterodactyls,” “The Food Chain,” “The Iceman Cometh” and David Mamet’s “Speed the Plow,” directed by Joel Schumacher.

GIL BELLOWS (Don) translates his acting talents to all arenas of performance, including the stage, big screen and television. Most recognized for his starring role in the Emmy and Golden Globe Award winning series “Ally McBeal,” he also starred opposite Jon Voight in TNT’s “Second String,” the Showtime movie “Whitewash” and NBC’s “First to Die.”

Bellows will next be seen in the ten-part miniseries “Terminal City.”

The Canadian-born Bellows developed an interest in acting at eighteen when he auditioned for and was accepted into the American Academy of Dramatic Arts in Los Angeles. After graduating, Bellows stayed in Los Angeles, where ironically he first found work in the National Film Board of Canada production of “The First Season.”

He gained attention among filmgoers and critics for his portrayal of an inmate with a penchant for knowledge in the critically lauded “Shawshank Redemption,” opposite Tim

Robbins and Morgan Freeman. Shortly after, Bellows starred opposite Renee Zellweger in “Love and a .45” and with Sarah Jessica Parker in “Miami Rhapsody.” His additional film credits include “The Substance of Fire,” “Richard III,” directed by Al Pacino, “The Assistant” with Joan Plowright and Armin Mueller-Stahl, “Dinner at Fred’s” with Parker Posey, “Judas Kiss” with Emma Thompson and Alan Rickman, “Chasing Sleep” opposite Jeff Daniels and “Beautiful Joe” opposite Sharon Stone.

Bellows has appeared in an off-Broadway production of “A Snake in the Vein” and in the Playwrights Horizon production of “Flaubert’s Latest and Best of Schools.” He is a founding member of the Seraphim Theater Company in New York for whom he starred in “True West,” “Road,” and “The User’s Waltz.” He was also a member of the Act One Repertory Company of the prestigious Williamstown Theater Festival in Massachusetts.

MICHAEL RISPOLI (Russ) has amassed an impressive film career, showing his range as an actor by appearing in dramas, comedies, and thrillers, all of which received widespread notice and high box-office returns. Most recently, he starred in “Mr. 3000,” opposite Bernie Mac. Other memorable roles include “Death to Smoochy,” directed by Danny DeVito, Spike Lee’s “Summer of Sam,” John Dahl’s “Rounders” and Brian De Palma’s “Snake Eyes.” Rispoli played the lead in “Two Family House,” which won the Sundance Film Festival Audience Award in 2000. Some of his other feature credits are “Scared City,” “Volcano,” “To Die For,” “Feeling Minnesota,” “While You Were Sleeping,” “The Juror,” and “One Tough Cop.”

Rispoli is perhaps best known for his recurring role as Jackie Aprile in the HBO series, “The Sopranos.” Other recurring roles for television include NBC’s “Third Watch” and CBS’s “Touched by an Angel.” He has also appeared as a guest lead in both “E.R.” and “Law & Order.” Rispoli has starred in numerous television series, including “The Beat,” “The Great Defender,” “The Larsens of Las Vegas,” “My Guys,” “Billy Club,” and “Bram and Alice.” Rispoli began his career on stage, performing in the Circle Rep/Steppenwolf revival of “Balm in Gilead,” directed by John Malkovich. He then became a co-founder of the Willow Cabin Theatre Company. The WCTC staged a production of “Wilder, Wilder, Wilder – Three by Thornton” that moved to off-Broadway and then to Broadway, earning a Tony nomination. Rispoli has appeared in New York and regional theatre in productions of “Macbeth,” “Tartuffe,” “A Midsummer Night’s Dream” and “O’Neill’s Sea Plays,” among many others. Since then, he has accumulated an extensive list of movie, television, and stage credits.

Rispoli will next appear in two independent films, “Black Irish” and “One Last Thing.” He will soon start filming Disney’s “Invincible,” opposite Mark Wahlberg.

GEMMENNE DE LA PENA (Shelly) made her feature film debut as Julia Roberts’ daughter in “Erin Brockovich.” Her portrayal of Nicolas Cage’s daughter in “The Weather Man” is the twelve-year-old’s second role in a feature film.

NICHOLAS HOULT (Mike) rids himself of his English accent for the role of Nicolas Cage’s son in “The Weather Man.” Now fourteen years old, many American audiences will recognize the UK-based actor from his role in “About A Boy,” opposite Hugh Grant. He will next be seen in the UK indie “Wah-Wah,” Richard E. Grant’s directorial debut.

ABOUT THE FILMMAKERS

Working in a wide-range of budgets with many of today’s top talent, **GORE VERBINSKI** (Director) is considered one of the top visionary filmmakers of his generation. With only four feature films to his credit thus far, Verbinski’s box office success totals over \$1 Billion worldwide.

Most recently, Verbinski directed the immensely successful “Pirates of the Caribbean: The Curse of the Black Pearl,” starring Johnny Depp. Released by Disney in 2004, the film went on to become one of the top grossing films of the year and earned Depp an Oscar nomination for his performance. Prior to this swashbuckling adventure, Verbinski directed the chilling horror film “The Ring,” starring Naomi Watts, raising the bar for fans of the genre around the world. “The Ring” grossed nearly \$130 million domestically and helped to make Naomi Watts a household name. Always enigmatic in his choices and willing to cross genres, “The Weather Man” represents Verbinski’s first foray into drama.

Prior to embarking into the world of features, Verbinski was an award-winning commercial director. The UCLA graduate also cut his teeth extensively in directing high-profile music videos for such cutting edge artists as Bad Religion and The Crystal Method.

Verbinski is currently in production on the next two installments of the “Pirates of the Caribbean” franchise. He lives with his family in Los Angeles.

STEVEN CONRAD (Writer/Co-Producer) sold his first screenplay, “Wrestling Ernest Hemingway,” to producer Todd Black right after he graduated from Northwestern University in the early 1990s. Their friendship grew over the years, with both men hoping to find another opportunity to work together. That opportunity presented itself as “The Weather Man.”

Born in Florida and now living in Chicago with his wife and son, Conrad wrote the screenplay for the upcoming Escape Artists drama, “Pursuit of Happyness,” to star Will Smith.

TODD BLACK (Producer) most recently produced the inspirational drama “Antwone Fisher,” directed by and starring Denzel Washington. In January 2000, Black, along with his partner Jason Blumenthal, merged their company with the Steve Tisch Company to form Escape Artists, an independently financed company. Escape Artists, which has secured Sony Pictures as its domestic partner, produced writer-director Brian Helgeland’s “A Knight’s Tale,” starring Heath Ledger, Mark Addy and Paul Bettany.

Prior to forming Escape Artists, Black was president of production at Sony’s Mandalay Entertainment, where he managed such movies as “Donnie Brasco,” “Seven Years in Tibet,” “I Know What You Did Last Summer,” “Les Miserables” and “Wild Things.”

Upcoming Escape Artists projects include Paramount’s “Need,” to be directed by Ryan Murphy, and “Knowing,” to be directed by Alex Proyas. Currently in production are “The Pursuit of Happyness,” by Steven Conrad and starring Will Smith, as well as the David Gordon Green thriller “Diary,” to star Jennifer Aniston.

Black attended the theatre program at the University of Southern California and began his professional career as a casting associate on various television shows.

STEVE TISCH (producer), movie and television producer, has led a life rich in spirit and philanthropy. His television and feature film projects have consistently focused on the lives of everyday people and the significant impact they have made on society.

Tisch was recently named Executive Vice President of the New York Giants. Tisch, the son of the team’s co-owner Robert Tisch, represents the family’s 50-percent stake in the Giants.

Since April 2002, Tisch has been on the board of directors for Take Two Interactive Software, Inc., a leading worldwide publisher, developer and distributor of interactive entertainment software, hardware and accessories.

Currently, he is a partner in Escape Artists, an independently financed film production company formed in 2001 and based at Sony Pictures Entertainment. Escape Artists latest film

titled "Pursuit of Happyness," starring Will Smith and Thandie Newton, begins principal photography at the end of August. Upcoming projects "Need," "Knowing," "Nautica," and "Diary," starring Jennifer Aniston. Escape Artists' past producing credits include "Alex and Emma," "Antwone Fisher," and "A Knights Tale."

Tisch served as executive producer of Gramercy Pictures' "Lock, Stock and Two Smoking Barrels," "Snatch" and the critically-acclaimed film "American History X," starring Academy Award nominee Edward Norton.

Tisch also produced 1994's Academy Award winner for Best Picture, "Forrest Gump." The film won six of thirteen nominations from the Academy Awards and a Golden Globe Award for Best Picture.

Tisch began his career in entertainment while still a student at Tufts University. His summer jobs included film booker in his family's movie theatre chain, working for director John Avildsen and serving an apprenticeship under Otto Preminger. Upon graduation, Tisch continued in the entertainment industry as Peter Guber's assistant at Columbia Pictures and soon became a production executive at the studio. During his four-year tenure, Tisch supervised production on such films as "The Lords of Flatbush," "Tommy," "The Last Detail" and "White Line Fever."

In 1976, Tisch left Columbia to produce his first motion picture, "Outlaw Blues." During the shoot Tisch met Jon Avnet and soon the pair formed Tisch/Avnet Productions. Tisch/Avnet feature projects included the sleeper hit, "Risky Business," which launched the career of Tom Cruise, as well as "Deal of the Century" and "Coast to Coast."

In 1984, Tisch/Avnet produced "The Burning Bed," the controversial made-for-television film starring Farrah Fawcett as a battered wife driven to a desperate, violent act. The movie holds the distinction of being one of the highest-rated television films ever aired on NBC. "The Burning Bed" received 11 Emmy nominations and numerous other awards and was credited with providing many women the courage to seek help from physical abuse.

Tisch/Avnet's other television film credits include "Silence of the Heart," "Something So Right," "Prime Suspect," "Homeward Bound" (winner of a Christopher Award), "No Other Love" and "Call to Glory."

In 1986, Tisch formed his own production company, the Steve Tisch Company, which produced "The Postman," "Wild America," "The Long Kiss Goodnight," "Dear God," "Corrina, Corrina," "Looking for an Echo," "Soul Man," "Hot to Trot," "Big Business," "Heart Condition," "Bad Influence" and "Heart of Dixie."

On his own, Tisch has also made an impressive mark on the small screen. He produced the made-for-cable movies “Keep the Change,” “Afterburn” (which garnered three Emmy Award nominations) and “Judgment.” His network telefilms include the highly rated “The People Next Door,” “Evil in Clear River” and “Out on the Edge.” Tisch also produced the CBS television series “Freshman Dorm” and “Dirty Dancing,” based on the hit film.

Tisch was elected to the AIDS Project Los Angeles’ Board of Directors in April 1991. During his tenure, Tisch served as both Board Chair and Chair of the Development Committee. His financial contributions have placed him among APLA’s top donors and fund-raisers. Tisch was honored with the Gay and Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation’s Vanguard Award at their 1995 Media Awards.

In addition, he has also contributed his time and financial resources to such organizations as the H.E.L.P. Group and the ERAS Center. He is also a member of the Board of Advisors at the Tisch School of the Arts at New York University, Board of Trustees of The Geffen Theatre in Los Angeles, Sundance Institute and The American Cinematheque.

Steve lives in Beverly Hills with his wife Jamie and their three young children and has two older children from a previous marriage.

JASON BLUMENTHAL (Producer) was born and raised in Los Angeles and attended Syracuse University’s Newhouse School of Communications.

After graduation, Blumenthal joined Wizan/Black Films in 1990. There, he was involved with the development and production of “Iron Eagle II,” “Split Decisions,” “The Guardian,” “Short Time” and “Class Act.” The company executive produced “Becoming Colette,” “Fire In The Sky,” “Wrestling Ernest Hemingway,” “Dunston Checks In,” “A Family Thing” and “Bio Dome.”

Blumenthal was senior vice president of feature production at Mandalay Entertainment, a division of Sony Pictures Entertainment, from the company’s inception in 1995 through March of 1998. During his tenure, he managed Mandalay’s production slate which included such films as “The Fan” starring Robert De Niro and Wesley Snipes, “Donnie Brasco” starring Al Pacino and Johnny Depp and “Seven Years In Tibet” starring Brad Pitt.

The company also produced “I Know What You Did Last Summer,” which remained the #1 box office film for three weeks and grossed more than \$130 million worldwide, as well as its sequel, “I Still Know What You Did Last Summer.” Blumenthal also oversaw “Les Miserables,” “Wild Things,” “Gloria” and “Deep End of the Ocean.”

In April 1998, Blumenthal and his partner, Todd Black, formed Black & Blu Entertainment and entered into a first look production deal with Sony Pictures Entertainment. In 2001, Black & Blu merged with the Steve Tisch Company (“Forrest Gump”) to become Escape Artists, while still maintaining their Sony deal. Escape Artists has since produced “A Knight’s Tale” starring Heath Ledger, and “Antwone Fisher” directed by and starring Denzel Washington. The company is currently in pre-production on “The Pursuit of Happyness,” starring Will Smith.

DAVID ALPER (Executive Producer) is a managing partner and serves as chief executive officer for Escape Artists, an independently financed film production company. Previously, Alper worked at New Line cinema as Executive Vice President of Business Affairs, playing a lead role in the negotiations of numerous projects including “Final Destination,” “Thirteen Days,” “Little Nicky” and “I Am Sam.”

Alper’s other past positions include Executive Vice President for Lorimar Films and Senior Vice President of MCA/Motion Picture Group, serving as the senior business executive for Lorimar Pictures and Universal Pictures, respectively. Alper began his entertainment career with the law firm Ervin, Cohen & Jessup.

WILLIAM S. BEASLEY (Executive Producer), a veteran of more than forty feature films, has been involved in the motion picture industry since 1975. As Executive Producer, he most recently produced the comedy “Win A Date With Tad Hamilton” as well as “The Tuxedo.” He previously worked with Director Gore Verbinski on “The Mexican,” starring Brad Pitt and Julia Roberts. In addition, he served as an executive producer on the teen scream hit “I Know What You Did Last Summer,” and then produced the successful sequel “I Still Know What You Did Last Summer.”

In 1994, Beasley executive produced John Hughes’ “Miracle on 34th Street,” continuing an association which began when Beasley was the associate producer/production manager on “National Lampoon’s Christmas Vacation,” which marked his first producing credit. He was also the co-producer/production manager on Hughes’ Entertainment’s “Baby’s Day Out.” His other credits as a co-producer include “The Cable Guy,” “Something to Talk About” and Peter Weir’s “Fearless,” on which Beasley also directed the second unit and was the production manager. In addition, he served as associate producer/unit production manager on the films “Falling Down,” “Basic Instinct” and “Arachnophobia.”

Born in San Francisco and raised in Los Angeles, Beasley graduated from the University of Southern California with a degree in cinematography before joining the United States Air Force. He achieved the rank of Captain, serving as a rescue pilot in Vietnam and as part of the support team on the Apollo moon program. He later attended California State University at Northridge, where he was working on his Masters Degree when he heard about the Director's Guild training program.

He was accepted into the program and worked as a trainee for a year and a half before starting out as a second assistant director on a number of projects, including "Goin' South," "Breaking Away" and "American Gigolo." He moved up to first assistant director on such films as "Personal Best," "My Favorite Year," "Racing With the Moon," "Johnny Dangerously," "Ruthless People" and "The Lost Boys," among others.

NORM GOLIGHTLY (Executive Producer) is President of Nicolas Cage's Saturn Films. After growing up in Canada and Florida, Golightly attended the Wharton School at the University of Pennsylvania and began his motion picture industry career working at CAA. Golightly subsequently worked as a development executive with actor-writer-director Ben Stiller. He joined Saturn Films in 1997 as vice president and became president in January 2001.

Saturn Films' first production was the acclaimed, "Shadow of the Vampire," for which Willem Dafoe earned an Academy Award® nomination for Best Supporting Actor and Ann Buchanan and Amber Stiley earned Academy Award® nominations for Achievement in Make-up. "Shadow of the Vampire" marked Cage's first endeavor as a producer; Golightly served as an associate producer on the film.

Golightly and Saturn Films recently produced "The Life of David Gale," directed by Alan Parker, starring Kevin Spacey and Kate Winslet, and "Sonny," the directorial debut of Nicolas Cage, which starred James Franco and Mena Suvari.

Golightly and Saturn most recently produced "Lord of War" for director Andrew Niccol. The film, set in the world of international arms dealing, stars Cage, Ethan Hawke, Jared Leto, and Bridget Moynahan.

Golightly also serves as executive producer of the upcoming "Ghost Rider."

PHEDON PAPAMICHAEL, ASC (Director of Photography) appears to effortlessly turn interesting screenplays into beautifully shot feature films. Credited with such movies as "Identity," "Moonlight Mile," "America's Sweethearts," "Patch Adams," "Mouse Hunt,"

“Million Dollar Hotel,” “Phenomenon,” “Unhook The Stars,” “Unstrung Heroes,” “While You Were Sleeping,” “Cool Runnings” and “Poison Ivy,” among others, he is highly sought after by many of today’s successful directors to shoot their movies. Most recently, he filmed Alexander Payne’s “Sideways,” which was an Academy Award® nominee for Best Picture, and James Magnold’s “Walk The Line” with Joaquin Phoenix and Reese Witherspoon.

Other noted credits for the talented Director of Photography include winning the Best Cinematography Award at the Avignon Film Festival in 2000 for “27 Missing Kisses.” Papamichael was also honored with the Best Cinematography Award at the 1990 Cork Film Festival in Ireland for “Spud.” His television credits include the pilot for “White Dwarf” and the critically acclaimed miniseries, “Wild Palms,” which were both nominated for ASC Awards.

After starting his career as an architect, **TOM DUFFIELD** (Production Designer) soon discovered that his true calling was film design and art direction. Working his way up through the art department ranks on classic films including “Bladerunner,” he teamed with production designer Bo Welch in 1986. Duffield served as Welch’s art director on fifteen films, three of which were nominated for Academy Awards® in art direction: “A Little Princess,” “Men In Black” and “The Birdcage.”

Duffield’s first film as production designer was Tim Burton’s critically acclaimed biopic “Ed Wood.” More recently, he designed Gore Verbinski’s thriller hit “The Ring” and Peter Berg’s action comedy “The Rundown.”

CRAIG WOOD (Editor) first worked with director Gore Verbinski on music videos and television commercials including the Clio Award-winning Budweiser “Frogs.” He has teamed with Verbinski on all of his films, from the 1996 short “The Ritual,” through “Mouse Hunt,” “The Mexican,” “The Ring,” “Pirates Of the Caribbean: The Curse of the Black Pearl,” for which he won the ACE award, and now “The Weather Man.” He is currently at work on the sequel to “Pirates of the Caribbean.”

Wood also edited “Highway,” “Forces Of Nature,” “Secrets Of The City,” and “Spirits of the Air, Gremlins of the Clouds,” among others. He served as an additional editor on “We Were Soldiers,” starring Mel Gibson.

Born in Sydney, Australia, Wood began his career at nineteen as an assistant editor in the documentary department at the Australian Broadcasting Corporation before moving into music

videos and commercials. He edited the videos of such artists as Smashing Pumpkins, Bjork, Fiona Apple, Garbage, Tina Turner, Tom Petty, UB40 and Janet Jackson.

PENNY ROSE (Costume Designer) re-teams with director Gore Verbinski for a second time. Their first collaborative outing was last summer's hugely successful "Pirates of the Caribbean: The Curse of the Black Pearl," and she is currently working with Verbinski on the sequel to that film.

A long-time collaborator with Director Alan Parker, Rose received a BAFTA (the UK's equivalent to the Academy Award®) nomination for her work on the musical, "Evita." Their other films include "The Road to Wellville," "Pink Floyd The Wall" and "The Commitments." She is also credited with "The Sleeping Dictionary," "The Good Thief," "Just Visiting," "Entrapment" and the remake of "The Parent Trap."

Earlier in her career, Rose designed costumes for Brian de Palma's "Mission: Impossible." She also created the wardrobe for "King Arthur," "Carrington," "Map Of The Human Heart," "Local Hero," "Cal," "Another Country" and Jean-Jacques Annaud's "Quest For Fire." In addition, she worked twice with Lord Richard Attenborough on "Shadowlands" and "In Love And War."

Rose was trained at the West End Theatre in London. She began her career working in both theater and television. While designing for commercials, she met and worked with directors Alan Parker, Adrian Lyne, Ridley and Tony Scott, and Huge Hudson.

HANS ZIMMER (composer) is one of the film industry's most prolific composers. In 1994, he won both the Academy Award® and a Golden Globe Award for his score for the animated blockbuster "The Lion King," which also spawned one of the most successful soundtrack albums ever.

Zimmer has garnered six additional Academy Award® nominations, the latest for his "Gladiator" score, for his he also won a Golden Globe Award and earned a Grammy Award nomination. He has also been Oscar® nominated for "The Prince of Egypt," "The Thin Red Line," "As Good As It Gets," "The Preacher's Wife," and "Rain Man," and received Golden Globe nominations for his scores for "Pearl Harbor" and "The Road to El Dorado."

Zimmer's most recent scores include "Batman Begins," "Madagascar," "Spanglish," and "Shark Tale." In all, he has scored more than 80 feature films, including "King Arthur," "Pirates of the Caribbean: The Curse of the Black Pearl," "Tears of the Sun," "The Ring," "Black Hawk

Down,” “Hannibal,” “Crimson Tide,” for which he won a Grammy Award, “Thelma & Louise,” “Driving Miss Daisy,” “Mission: Impossible 2,” “The Peacemaker,” “The Rock,” “Broken Arrow,” “Nine Months,” “Cool Runnings,” “A League of Their Own,” “Black Rain,” “Backdraft,” “Green Card,” “True Romance,” “Days of Thunder,” and “My Beautiful Laundrette.”

Zimmer’s additional honors and awards include the prestigious Lifetime Achievement Award in Film Composition from the National Board of Review, and the Frederick Loewe Award in 2003 at the Palm Springs International Film Festival. Zimmer has also received ASCAP’s Henry Mancini Award for Lifetime Achievement. Zimmer and his wife live in Los Angeles and he is the father of four.

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