

# TWO LOVERS

EEN FILM VAN JAMES GRAY



WILD BUNCH  
HAARLEMMERDIJK 159 - 1013 KH - AMSTERDAM  
[WWW.WILDBUNCH.NL](http://WWW.WILDBUNCH.NL)

THE PUBLICITY COMPANY  
PRISCILLA@PUBLICITY.NL

# Two Lovers – James Gray

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## **PROJECT SUMMARY**

<b>Een productie van</b>	2929 PRODUCTIONS TEMPESTA FILMS
<b>Taal</b>	Engels
<b>Lengte</b>	110 minuten
<b>Genre</b>	Drama
<b>Land van herkomst</b>	Verenigde Staten
<b>Filmmaker</b>	James Gray
<b>Hoofdrollen</b>	Joaquin Phoenix Gwyneth Paltrow
<b>Releasedatum</b>	12 maart 2009
<b>Nominaties</b>	Nominatie Gouden Palm 2008
<b>Premisse</b>	

De depressieve Leonard (Joaquin Phoenix) is na afloop van een pijnlijke relatie, tijdelijk weer bij zijn ouders ingetrokken. Zijn ouders proberen hem te koppelen aan de dochter van hun zakenrelatie, Sandra (Vinessa Shaw). Maar dan valt Leonard als een blok voor de mysterieuze en aantrekkelijke buurvrouw Michelle (Gwyneth Paltrow). Deze heftige verliefdheid stelt Leonard voor een moeilijke keuze: volgt hij zijn hart of zijn verstand?

## **SYNOPSIS ENGELS**

TWO LOVERS is a classical romantic drama set in the insular world of Brighton Beach, Brooklyn. It tells the story of Leonard (JOAQUIN PHOENIX), an attractive but troubled young man who moves back into his childhood home following a suicide attempt. While recovering under the watchful eye of his worried but ultimately uncomprehending parents (ISABELLA ROSSELLINI and MONI MONOSHOV), he encounters two women in quick succession.

There's Michelle (GWYNETH PALTROW), a mysterious and beautiful neighbor—exotic and out-of-place in Leonard's staid Brighton Beach neighborhood. But he soon discovers that she too is deeply troubled. Meanwhile, his parents try to set him up with Sandra (VINESSA SHAW), the lovely and caring daughter of the suburban businessman who's buying out the family dry cleaning business. At first resistant to her appeal (and to his family's pressure), Leonard gradually discovers hidden depths in Sandra.

A potential romance with Sandra is complicated, however, when Michelle, her life spiraling out of control, enlists Leonard's help in dealing with the destructive affair she's carrying on with another man.

Then, as Michelle seems poised to fall for Leonard and Leonard's family pressures him into committing to Sandra, Leonard is forced to make an impossible decision—between the impetuosity of desire and the comfort of love--or risk falling back into the darkness that nearly killed him.

## **CREW**

Casting	DOUGLAS AIBEL
Costume designer	MICHAEL CLANCY
Music supervisor	DANA SANO
Editor	JOHN AXELRAD
Production designer	HAPPY MASSEE
Director of photography	JOAQUIN BACA-ASAY
Co-producers	MIKE UPTON COUPER SAMUELSON
Executive producers	AGNES MENTRE TODD WAGNER MARK CUBAN MARC BUTAN
Produced by	DONNA GIGLIOTTI JAMES GRAY ANTHONY KATAGAS
Written by	JAMES GRAY RICHARD MENELLO
Directed by	JAMES GRAY

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### ABOUT THE PRODUCTION

Two Lovers marks a shift in direction for writer-director James Gray, whose last three features were the critically acclaimed dramatic crime thrillers, *Little Odessa*, *The Yards* and *We Own The Night*. It also marks the Gray's third collaboration with two-time Oscar nominee JOAQUIN PHOENIX and his third consecutive film to be nominated for Cannes' prestigious Palme d'Or.

According to Gray, the inspiration for *Two Lovers* came from a number of sources including Dostoevsky's novella, "White Nights," about a man who enters into a platonic friendship with a woman he meets on the streets and develops an obsession with her. "I found the novella very moving," says Gray. "It's the story of a person who is clearly suffering from a type of manic disorder. But what it's really about is how he deals with love." Gray found intriguing the way the concept of love is handled from this perspective. "It's often very difficult to treat love with a kind of seriousness. It's usually treated in a romantic comedy format because the state of being in love is, in itself, almost preposterous. Often we are really in love with a fantasy or an obsession." From there he began writing a script "about love, about something more personal to me."

Several months later Gray had the first draft of *Two Lovers*, a modern romantic drama set in Brighton Beach, Brooklyn—a familiar setting in Gray's films. But this intense love story about a troubled young man caught between two women marked a definite shift from the dark crime thrillers of the filmmaker's past—though it also references Gray's ongoing interest in the degree to which one's social context and intrinsic nature determine one's destiny.

Gray wrote the leading role of Leonard for Phoenix, who had starred in *The Yards* and *We Own the Night*. "Joaquin feels like a brother to me and that's a very rare thing," Gray says of their friendship. "I'm very close with him. We talk about what it is we want to

explore in people. Joaquin has an unbelievable eye for human behavior and a really great understanding of what people are about and what motivates them. Frankly he likes the same things that I like, so of course I would always want to work with him."

*Two Lovers* tells the story of Leonard Kraditor, a young man caught between two women. When we first meet Phoenix's character he has recently retreated back to his parents' apartment in the insular community of Brighton Beach. Clearly troubled, he bears the emotional scars of a previous failed relationship. It was a role Gray was convinced the actor would embrace. "I see myself as very lucky," he says. "Because this is my third movie with Joaquin I could write the character and be confident that he would play this role."

As the film unfolds, Leonard meets two opposing women, the first, Sandra, through his concerned parents and the second, Michelle, through a chance meeting in his apartment building. Gray admits that he wrote the role of Michelle, Leonard's beautiful and volatile neighbor, for the Oscar-winning actress GWYNETH PALTROW. "Gwyneth's definitely one of the most interesting and intelligent actors of her generation and the person I had in mind for this role," he says. "She's very famous for her British roles and for big Elizabethan productions, so this film seemed very atypical for her. But I knew that she could pull this off."

Gray adds that Paltrow is also responsible for inspiring the director to explore a different genre. "In a weird way she also inspired my decision to write something about love. She had told me 'we should do something together, but only if you make a movie without guns and a lot of guys yelling curse words,'" he laughs. "So in a way she really inspired the actual writing of the whole script and for me it was a way to get the other stuff, the 'crime element' out of my system."

Gray had already written the first draft of *Two Lovers* before he started shooting *We Own*

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The Night and it sat in his bottom drawer until after he wrapped production. It was about this time that he showed the script to the Oscar-winning producer DONNA GIGLIOTTI (Shakespeare in Love). Gray and Gigliotti had started work together on another film that had fallen apart, "which often happens with movies," he says, "but during that time I discovered that Donna is incredibly bright as well as being a wonderful person and we have very similar tastes in cinema." As the idea for Two Lovers took shape, Gray approached Gigliotti to produce the film. "I also knew I wanted a female presence working with me in the telling of this story," he adds. "It's a story that's told through Leonard's eyes and I didn't want it to be a totally male-centric view of the world."

When Gray and Gigliotti first discussed the film, she recalls that he was initially cautious. "He indicated that he was hesitant to step immediately into another project. It was very soon after We Own The Night and he contemplated whether Two Lovers should be his next film. But Gigliotti encouraged him to make it. "It's difficult to get films financed nowadays and many directors can go for years between films. I believe filmmakers should make as many films as possible. Here was a script James was passionate about with an incredible lead in the pivotal role and the budget was within reach. I didn't want us to lose momentum."

Gray decided to move forward with another draft and brought on the writer RICHARD MENELLO, who had worked with Gray as a creative consultant on We Own The Night. They re-worked the draft and within a few months the script was ready to send out to his leading actors. "Joaquin was the first person to read the script and he was aboard straight away," says Gray. It had been some time since his brief chat with Paltrow about the possibility of them working together and in the end Gray sent the script to her over an email exchange about pasta sauces.

Paltrow smiles when she is reminded of this anecdote. "I was in London at the time and

James wrote me something about tomato sauce and then over one email exchange he said 'I wrote a movie for you and I want you to read it,'" she says. Gray sent the script and Paltrow was immediately taken with this departure from his earlier work. "I thought it was so beautiful and at the same time profound. It's sad, but for me it's also hopeful."

Of her character, Paltrow says: "She's caught in an obsessive loop, in a relationship with a married guy, but she can't seem to let go of the obsession. But what she's really hooked on is the fact she can't have this person, which is something we all do in our lives, in different ways. When Leonard meets Michelle he develops a similar obsession with her and for me the film is about being able to see the bigger picture and break out of that obsessive compulsion."

With Phoenix and Paltrow attached, and Gray's We Own the Night partners at 2929 Productions aboard to finance, the Gray rushed to cast the film in order to make his start date. There was still the role of Sandra, the pretty and nurturing daughter of his father's business partner, who falls deeply in love with Leonard. It was producer Gigliotti who came up with the idea of VINESSA SHAW. "I asked James, 'who dead or alive would you cast in this role?' and he replied 'Claudia Cardinale.' Two days earlier I had been to a screening of 3:10 To Yuma co-starring Vinessa, who actually reminded me of Claudia. I told him, 'I think this is her.'"

Adds Gray: "As soon as Donna mentioned Vinessa I was completely inspired by the idea. I had seen Eyes Wide Shut where she is very, very good and also the Kathryn Bigelow movie The Weight Of Water where she's wonderful. She's normally blonde, but in 3:10 To Yuma she had dyed her hair dark for the role and definitely had a very different look so I began to see her in another way."

Two days after Gigliotti brought up the idea, Gray and Shaw met for lunch. "I found her

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to be a very empathetic person with a lot of sensitivity. There's definitely a soulfulness that comes through in her that was perfect for this role."

Having recently completed such a big production in 3:10 to Yuma, Shaw was drawn to the role of Sandra who she describes as "sweet and nurturing" and to being part of a smaller and more intimate film. "I read the script the night before meeting James. It reminded me of old Mike Nichols movies with a lot of warmth and heart to it. Sandra and Leonard's relationship moved me a lot, but most of all I loved how simply everyone related to each other. You don't see that in movies anymore, everything has to be big and blown out, whereas this was real and intimate."

For Shaw it was also refreshing to read a love story that was not a romantic comedy. "Although everyone loves a good romantic film, it's rare to find one that isn't a comedy. Audiences want to see heart in a film and they want to see people really falling in love. Romantic comedies are very formulaic and what's different about Two Lovers is that it doesn't follow a formula. Instead the story really follows Leonard's heart. It's a confused heart in the beginning but he ends up aligning himself with the woman who is right for him," she says.

On her character, Shaw says: "It's really nice to take in the moments with Sandra. I like how she cares and that she sees the beauty and potential in people. When she meets Leonard she wants him to open up and become the type of person that he wants to be. She definitely sees how troubled he is and goes in with her eyes wide open, knowing that he can become this person who she can love and who will love her back."

Although gentle and softspoken, Shaw says her character is still strong. "She's pretty direct about what she sees when she meets Leonard. She doesn't seem to be forward but she is in a very elegant and gentle way."

To assemble the supporting cast, Gray reunited with DOUGLAS AIBEL, his casting director on The Yards and We Own The Night. With the film already in pre-production, everyone had to fall into place pretty quickly. "We had no choice," says Gray. On casting Leonard's father, Gray says he had written the part for MONI MOSHONOV. "I had first noticed him when I saw a picture that he did titled Late Marriage, a beautiful movie. His performance stood out to me. Then we worked together on We Own The Night so I always had him in mind to play this role." On casting Leonard's mother, Gray says he says he felt ISABELLA ROSSELLINI had the right kind of warmth for the role, but also a certain darkness: "Leonard's mother loves him and wants him to be happy, but there's also a sense that she's trying to keep him close, which may or may not be the best thing for him. Isabella was able to get both of these feelings across."

For the role of Michelle's married boyfriend, Ronald, Gray wasn't interested in casting a typical 'bad guy' because that wouldn't be interesting and it would lower the stakes. "Even though it's a small role it's critical because everybody keeps talking about him," notes Gray. It was Aibel who suggested ELIAS KOTEAS to play Ronald. "It had to be someone that could impart a certain amount of internal conflict, a guy who truly doesn't know whether he's going to leave his wife. When Doug suggested Elias I was instantly reminded of his performance in The Thin Red Line. He was great in that film."

Gray describes his relationship with Phoenix on set as "tempestuous." He goes on to explain that "Joaquin is very work-centric, meaning that if one day the scenes demand struggle then that's what the relationship will be and if it's a scene about tenderness, then that's often what he will be on set."

Gray says that as an actor, Phoenix demands very little of him. "Joaquin is a brilliant actor but he's also an unbelievably hard worker and people don't understand that about him. What he's always asking is 'What



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can I bring to it? What detail can I bring to it that makes it sing with life?' So I always try to look for that extra touch that makes his performance unique." The filmmaker and actor spend their weekends during the shoot rehearsing that week's scenes, often talking for hours about what is coming up that week. "Joaquin focuses on his own character and is very single-minded about it. He doesn't see his own movies because for him it's all about the process. In that sense he's a true artist because he doesn't care about what other people think about his performance or his character, whether he is liked or hated and that's also incredibly rare."

Gray admits that when Paltrow and Phoenix first came together for their scenes he was concerned because their techniques are so different. "Joaquin likes many takes and a lot of improvisation. He likes it to be very loose and free flowing. Gwyneth likes doing three takes at the most and is extremely precise in that way. Neither technique is better than the other. I love them both, but they're very, very different. And that's a strange mix."

On working with Phoenix, Paltrow says: "It has been one of the top two experiences of my life in terms of working with an actor and in terms of being awed by an actor. He's so brilliant, and he's so creative, and inventive. I just feel very impressed by him." She found the experience of working with Gray equally rewarding. "James is exceptional. He really loves the actor, and you feel very valued and very supported," adding that "he laughs hysterically when he likes something you have done, even to the point of ruining takes! At first it was slightly off-putting but then it became very endearing. It's just nice to work with somebody who is so dedicated and who has such a specific vision," she says.

Shaw admits she found it terribly daunting, to arrive on set and jump straight in without a rehearsal. "The very first scene I did was in the coffee shop, and it was 'OK, you're in the middle of your relationship. Go!' I was very nervous that day because I had no idea how

James or Joaquin worked. They are very different in their own unique way and it was a little disarming at first. James would say 'Let's just shoot it' and I couldn't help feeling a little off-kilter but in the end you iron out the uncomfortable parts by just going into it full throttle."

On working with Gray, Shaw notes: "He really pays attention and watches what you do very closely. You think that should be the common thread among directors, but a lot don't care about the process to get you on film and what is going on with your character. James really pays attention to the details making sure that the characters' desires are coming across. I always find directors want me to do more, but usually James wants me to do less. Instead of asking me to speak up, he wants me to whisper. That really settled me into who Sandra is."

On working with her co-star, Shaw says: "Joaquin is very on top of it and very passionate. It's great to be able to look into another actor's eyes and really see the character coming alive. Both of our characters are very gentle so I think it was easy to create the chemistry that was supposed to be happening between them, because it was already happening between us as actors."

Principal photography began in early November and concluded just before Christmas 2007, taking place in the boroughs of Manhattan, Brooklyn and Queens. The locations included a number of familiar and iconic New York exteriors such as Central Park, the Met, Lincoln Plaza and Coney Island.

In early December, the production relocated to an outerborough apartment building where Leonard and Michelle live. For three weeks the cast and crew worked in tight cramped spaces shooting the majority of the film's interior sequences. The schedule was incredibly rushed with a great deal to be achieved in a very short time, but Gray and the cast worked very quickly. "James is incredibly focused," notes Gigliotti. "He definitely knows what he wants, which helps

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when you have as brief of a shooting period as we did. Not only does he have an amazing eye, he also watches the monitors for playback and really knows how he is going to cut that scene together. So in some respects he is cutting the movie in the camera. It's an old fashioned way of making films, but it's what you have to do when you don't have 75 days to make a movie."

Gigliotti also acknowledges their incredible cast in being able to meet the film's tight schedule. "Although we knew it would be a challenge, the key to it is working with sensational actors. What happens when Joaquin, Gwyneth and Vinessa are on set is magic. In all honesty it doesn't take a whole lot to get them there."

Two Lovers marks the second collaboration between Gray and the Director of Photography, JOAQUIN BACA-ASAY after *We Own The Night*. Together they looked at paintings and discussed "establishing a certain visual flair using movement in the camera, a certain lyricism," notes Gray. "For the look of the film I wanted there to be a beautiful ugliness to it, a certain beauty to its banality. Because the story already has fantastical elements, I also wanted something earthy, almost naturalistic. Love in itself tends to be a fantastic experience because it's so heightened and in that way the story is already doing the work for you."

Reuniting with Baca-Asay helped them move through a challenging and demanding shooting schedule. "Now we finish each others sentences," says Gray. "We really had to bang it out; you have to think on your feet. When a scene wasn't working we had to solve that problem incredibly quickly, or we wouldn't get it. That's hard but its also liberating because there's no art without discipline, so having to think on your feet and making it work somehow became a fun exercise."

Gray adds that with this film he felt he was able to loosen his reins a bit as a director.

"When I made my first film I was very specific about camera placements, and very specific about lenses and film stock. It's not that I no longer care, instead I now know that there's an ebb and flow to the process and there's a degree to which you need your cinematographer to give you good ideas and to influence what it is you're doing." He adds that Baca-Asay brought more than just expertise and experience to the film. "He is also a very soulful person and that's what you're also looking for; an understanding and emotional intelligence is the rarest of qualities in a person."

On working with his cast and crew, Gray points out that he likes to be surprised in a good way by what happens on set. "People say 'Do you want your vision on the screen?' And I say, 'The last thing on earth I want is my vision.' If I'm getting my vision it means I'm inept because there are so many other people who contribute. The cinematographer brings something great to it, the camera operator, the production designer, the producer can tell you something good, the actors of course are giving you great stuff, so I feel like it would be foolish to only get your vision. You get what's better than what you had in mind and that means you are taking advantage of all the excellent people that you've surrounded yourself with."

Observing Gray on set, it's hard not to notice his outbursts of laughter as he watches the monitor, as noted by Paltrow. Gray explains, "I laugh when I see things on screen that I like because it feels honest to me and I didn't expect it. Human behavior is very funny, it's very idiosyncratic and it's very silly. There's a great quote by a director in the Hollywood system, Ernst Lubitsch, and he said, 'Even the most dignified person is ridiculous at least twice a day.' And that's what movies are; movies are showing the most dignified person during these times because movies are about the extremes of behavior. People say they want realistic, but realistic is not interesting, that's not the same thing. What you want is a heightened state of being. That's movies."

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## ABOUT THE FILMMAKERS

### James Gray – Co-writer/Director

JAMES GRAY made his directorial debut at the age of 25 with *Little Odessa*, a critically acclaimed crime drama about a hit-man confronted by his younger brother upon returning to his hometown of Brighton Beach, Brooklyn. Starring Tim Roth, Edward Furlong, Maximilian Schell and Vanessa Redgrave, the film received the Critics Award at the Deauville Film Festival as well as the Silver Lion at the Venice Film Festival. That same year, he received nominations from the Independent Spirit Awards for Best First Feature and Best First Screenplay.

In 2000, Gray wrote and directed his second film, *The Yards*, starring Mark Wahlberg, Charlize Theron, James Caan and Joaquin Phoenix. The film was selected for official competition at the 2000 Cannes Film Festival.

*We Own the Night* paired writer/director Gray with Wahlberg and Phoenix for the second time and also starred Eva Mendes and Robert Duvall. That film was selected for official competition at the 2007 Cannes Film Festival and was released later that year by Columbia Pictures.

Born in New York City, he grew up in Queens and attended the University of Southern California School of Cinema-Television.

### Richard Menello -- Co-writer

TWO LOVERS is Richard Menello's first credited screenplay. Prior to this he was a creative consultant to actor/writer Owen Wilson on such films as *The Wedding Crashers*, *The Big Bounce* and *Starsky and Hutch* and creative associate to Larry Charles on an HBO pilot, "Burt and Dickie."

Most recently he was consultant to the filmmakers on writer/director James Gray's film *We Own The Night*. Menello began his career as a music video director and did such

seminal works as "Fight For Your Right to Party" and "No Sleep 'til Brooklyn" for the Beastie Boys, "Goin' Back To Cali" for LL Cool J, "Mother" for Danzig and "A Children's Story" for Slick Rick.

The recipient of two RIAA Certified Gold Video Awards, and a nominee for two Billboard Music Video Awards, he was honored with a screening of "Goin' Back To Cali" at a special program of influential early videos at the Los Angeles Film Festival. In addition, several independent features and short films he co-wrote have been screened at Slamdance, South by Southwest, the Atlanta Film Festival and the Just For Laughs Comedy Festival in Montreal.

A graduate of NYU with a degree in Dramatic Literature and Cinema, and two years postgraduate work in Cinema Studies, Menello has written for several film magazines and done audio commentary for two DVDs of films by Claude Chabrol.

### Donna Gigliotti – Producer

In 1999 Donna Gigliotti won a Best Picture Oscar for *Shakespeare in Love*. She is one of only five female producers to have received this honor. That same year the film won a Golden Globe for Best Picture/Comedy and a BAFTA for Best Film. Earlier on in her career, she became the youngest woman knighted to the rank of 'Chevalier des Arts et Lettres' by the French Republic (1985).

Ms. Gigliotti has worked as both a studio executive and a film producer. Following *Shakespeare in Love*, she was hired as the President of Production at USA Films. During her tenure she was responsible for overseeing the production on Robert Altman's *Gosford Park*, Steven Soderbergh's award-winning feature *Traffic* and the documentary, *The Kid Stays In The Picture*.

Recently, Ms. Gigliotti returned to independent production through her company, Tempesta Films. As well as TWO LOVERS, her slate includes *The Good Night*,



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directed by Jake Paltrow and Vanity Fair starring Reese Witherspoon. Later this year, Tempesta will commence production on Doug McGrath's *The Bridge*.

Previously Ms. Gigliotti was Executive Vice President at Miramax Films where she steered the production on several critically acclaimed films including *Emma*, *Restoration* and *Jane Eyre*. Prior to Miramax, Gigliotti founded Orion Classics, one of the founding specialized film distribution companies. During this time she was instrumental in launching the careers of several emerging directors and their films including Pedro Almodovar's *Women On The Verge Of A Nervous Breakdown*, and Steven Frears' *My Beautiful Laundrette* as well as Gabriel Axel's Oscar-winning *Babette's Feast*.

Ms. Gigliotti began her career as assistant to Martin Scorsese on his film, *Raging Bull*. She credits Mr. Scorsese with teaching her everything she knows about the creative aspects of great storytelling.

### **Anthony Katagas – Producer**

Most recently Anthony Katagas produced or executive-produced Lasse Hallstrom's *The Hoax*, Vadim Perelman's *The Life Before Her Eyes*, and James Gray's *We Own the Night*. Throughout his career he has worked on the production of more than 20 independent films, primarily New York-based. These include *54*, Michael Almereyda's *Hamlet 2000*, Sofia Coppola's *Lost in Translation*, Jay Anania's *Long Time Since*, Denys Arcand's *Stardom* and the Robert Evans documentary *The Kid Stays in the Picture*.

In 1999, Mr. Katagas formed his company Keep Your Head Productions, committed to the development and production of New York-based films. Through this company he has produced three features by Michael Almereyda: *Happy Here and Now*, *This So-Called Disaster* and *William Eggleston in the Real World*. Additional company credits include *Blackbird* by the Pulitzer Prize-nominated playwright Adam Rapp, *Second*

*Best, Homework* and *The Ostrich Incident* from writer Glenn Gers.

In 2004 he was nominated for an IFP Independent Spirit award honoring filmmakers who demonstrate the creativity, tenacity, and vision required to produce high-quality independent films, in spite of highly limited resources. Mr. Katagas was a co-producer on Lee Davis' *3 A.M.* (Showtime 2001), Ray Mckinnon's *Chrystal* (First Look 2004), Adam Rapp's *Winter Passing* (Focus 2004), and Ben Younger's *Prime* (Universal 2005).

### **Todd Wagner - Executive Producer**

TODD WAGNER is CEO of 2929 Productions and founder of the Todd Wagner Foundation. Wagner began his ascension in the business world in 1995 as co-founder and CEO of Broadcast.com. After taking the company public in an IPO that made history as one of the largest opening-day gains at the time, and then selling it to Yahoo! for \$5.7 billion in 1999, Wagner initially led the division as Yahoo! Broadcast before venturing into the entertainment world, where he has coupled his entrepreneurial skills and digital technology expertise with a passion for the movie business.

Through 2929 Productions, Wagner has executive-produced James Gray's recent film, *We Own the Night*; the critically acclaimed drama *Akeelah and the Bee*; and *Good Night, and Good Luck*, directed by and co-starring George Clooney, which earned a half-dozen Academy Award nominations including Best Picture.

Wagner, alongside partner Mark Cuban, owns and manages an array of other entertainment properties including distributor Magnolia Pictures, which released the Oscar-nominated documentary *Enron: The Smartest Guys in the Room* and *The World's Fastest Indian* starring Anthony Hopkins; home video division Magnolia Home Entertainment; the Landmark Theatres art-house chain; and high-definition

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cable channels HDNet and HDNet Movies. Wagner negotiated a deal with Oscar-winning director Steven Soderbergh to make six movies that are being released “day-and-date” across theatrical, television and home video platforms, an innovative distribution strategy allowing consumers to choose how, when and where they wish to see a film. The first was *Bubble*, a murder mystery set in Ohio that cast non-actors in its key roles. Soderbergh will shoot the second film in the series, *The Girlfriend Experience*, this summer.

Wagner also owns minority stakes in Lionsgate Entertainment and The Weinstein Company, and most recently invested in Canadian film and television company Peace Arch Entertainment. Additionally, he is a founder and co-chairman of Content Partners LLC, a company that invests in the back-end profit participations of Hollywood talent.

Wagner, who also serves on the board of trustees of the American Film Institute and the Tribeca Film Institute, is the recipient of the national First Star Visionary Award, Dallas CASA Champion of Children Award, Dallas Film Festival Trailblazer Award and national Kappa Sigma Man of the Year award.

### **Mark Cuban - Executive Producer**

Executive Producer MARK CUBAN is co-founder, chairman and president of HDNet, which operates two 24/7 cable channels, HDNet and HDNet Movies, available on Bright House Networks, Charter Communications, DIRECTV, DISH Network, Insight, Mediacom, Time Warner Cable and more than 40 NCTC cable affiliate companies.

In addition to HDNet and HDNet Movies, Cuban, together with business partner Todd Wagner, owns several other vertically integrated media and entertainment properties, including 2929 Productions, theatrical and home video distributor Magnolia Pictures, the Landmark Theatres art-house chain, and a minority stake in Lionsgate Entertainment.

Using several of these properties, Cuban and Wagner have launched a bold “day-and-date” strategy in which they are releasing films simultaneously across theatrical, television and home video platforms, thus collapsing the traditional release windows and giving consumers a choice of how, when and where they wish to see a movie.

Cuban is also the outspoken owner of the NBA’s Dallas Mavericks team, an active investor in leading and cutting-edge technologies, and publisher of his own Weblog in which he communicates directly and openly to fans, critics and journalists. In 1995, Cuban co-founded with Todd Wagner the Internet broadcasting service Broadcast.com with Wagner and sold the company for \$5.7 billion to Yahoo! in 1999. Prior to Broadcast.com Cuban co-founded a computer consulting firm, MicroSolutions, and sold it to CompuServe.

### **Marc Butan - Executive Producer**

MARC BUTAN is the president of 2929 Productions, a production and financing company formed in 2005 and co-owned by Todd Wagner and Mark Cuban. Its productions to date include James Gray’s *We Own the Night*; *Goodnight*, and *Good Luck*, which was nominated for six Academy Awards; and the critically acclaimed drama *Akeelah* and the *Bee* starring Laurence Fishburne and Angela Bassett. Upcoming features include *The Burning Plain* from Guillermo Arriaga (the writer of *Babel* and *21 Grams*) starring Charlize Theron and *The Road*, adapted from the Pulitzer Prize-winning novel by Cormac McCarthy (*No Country for Old Men*) and starring Viggo Mortensen.

Prior to joining 2929 Productions, Butan was Executive Vice President of Production at Lionsgate. Butan previously served as an independent producer, producing films for Miramax, Lionsgate and Samuel Goldwyn Pictures and as a media & entertainment investment banker for Kidder, Peabody & Company and Prudential Securities.

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## **Joaquin Baca-Asay - Director of Photography**

Joaquin Baca-Asay photographed James Gray's recent feature, *We Own The Night*. Earlier feature credits include *Rodger Dodger* and *P.S.* for director Dylan Kidd and *Thumbsucker* for Mike Mills.

For commercials, Mr. Baca-Asay has worked with directors Mark Romanek, Mike Mills, Brian Beletic, Joachim Back and Traktor, among others. In 2004 he won a Best Cinematography prize at the MTV Music Video Awards for his work with Mr. Romanek on Jay-Z's "99 Problems." Since then, he has directed numerous award-winning commercials for clients such as Nike, Eurostar, Nissan, and Gatorade.

Born in Berkley, California and raised in Boulder, Colorado, Mr. Baca-Asay graduated from New York University in 1991 where he photographed the Academy Award-nominated short film "The Lady in Waiting."

## **John Axelrad – Editor**

John Axelrad and James Gray first collaborated together on Mr. Gray's crime drama *We Own The Night*. Previously, he edited *Boogeyman* for Sony Screen Gems and was an additional editor in 1999 on David Koepp's *Stir Of Echoes*, starring Kevin Bacon and Kathryn Erbe. More recently Mr. Axelrad edited James Gunn's *Slither* and the thriller *The Messengers*, directed by Danny and Oxide Pang.

Mr. Axelrad began his career mentored by some of the best editors in Los Angeles. He assisted Anne V. Coates on *Erin Brockovich*, *Out Of Sight* and *Unfaithful*, worked with Debra Neil-Fisher on *Up Close and Personal* and assisted Bruce Green on *Home Alone 3* and *While You Were Sleeping*. During that time Mr. Axelrad edited a number of independent features. These include; *Changing Hearts*, directed by Martin Guigui, *Too Smooth* starring Neve Campbell and *The Auteur Theory*, directed by Evan Oppenheimer.

For television, Mr. Axelrad edited the pilot and series "Hack" for CBS.

## **Happy Masee - Production Designer**

After studying at the School of Applied Arts in Paris, Happy Masee moved to New York City. In the past 15 years his career as a designer has spanned theatre, commercials and feature films. Mr. Masee's film credits include *Broken English* directed by Zoe Cassavetes, *Gardener Of Eden* directed by Kevin Connolly, *Just A Kiss* directed by Fisher Stevens and David Fincher's short film *Thanksgiving*.

For commercials, Mr. Masee has worked with some of the world's most established directors including; Wes Anderson, David Lynch, Betina Rheims, Mathew Badger, Sam Bayer, David Fincher, Michel Gondry, Michael Haussman, Mike Mills, Noam Murro and Mark Romanek.

Mr. Masee was nominated for Best Production Design at the MVPA Awards for Keith Richard's "Wicked As It Seems" and Jay Z's "99 Problems," for director Mark Romanek. He also received a nomination for Best Design at the MTV Music Video Awards for Madonna's "Take A Bow."

## **ABOUT THE CAST**

### **Joaquin Phoenix as Leonard Kraditor**

In 2006, Joaquin Phoenix was hailed for his mesmerizing performance as Johnny Cash in *Walk the Line*. For this role, he collected his second Academy Award nomination (this time, as Best Actor) and won the Golden Globe as Best Actor in a Musical as well as nominations for BAFTA, SAG, BFCA and Chicago Film Critics Awards.

Mr. Phoenix was born in Puerto Rico and began his acting career at an early age with television appearances on such hit shows as "Hill Street Blues," "The Fall Guy" and "Morningstar/Eveningstar." His work in television led to his first feature role in

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Spacecamp followed by Russkies and Ron Howard's comedy Parenthood. Several years later he earned critical acclaim for his performance opposite Nicole Kidman in Gus Van Sant's *To Die For*. Mr. Phoenix followed this with *Inventing The Abbotts* opposite Liv Tyler and *U-Turn* opposite Sean Penn.

Mr. Phoenix went on to star opposite Vince Vaughn in *Return to Paradise*, and Clay Pigeons. He followed this with Joel Schumacher's thriller *8mm*. Shortly afterwards, he earned his first Academy Award nomination for his role in Ridley Scott's Oscar-winning Best Picture *Gladiator*. In addition to nominations for the Oscar, the Golden Globe and the British Academy BAFTA Award, he received awards as Best Supporting Actor from the National Board of Review and The Broadcast Films Critics Association.

For the Oscar-nominated film *Quills* Mr. Phoenix won a Broadcast Film Critics Award for Best Supporting Actor. That same year, he starred opposite Mark Wahlberg in James Gray's *The Yards* and followed this with *Signs* and *The Village* for M. Night Shyamalan.

His extensive body of work also includes *It's All About Love*, *Buffalo Soldiers*, *Ladder 49* and Terry George's *Hotel Rwanda*. He was last seen on screen in *Reservation Road* opposite Jennifer Connelly, his second film with Terry George; and *We Own The Night*, reuniting with James Gray.

### **Gwyneth Paltrow as Michelle Rausch**

Gwyneth Paltrow's credits feature critically acclaimed independent films and studio blockbusters that have made her a fixture for today's audiences. Her stunning performance in *Shakespeare In Love* catapulted her to awards stardom with Best Actress honors at the Golden Globes, Screen Actors Guild Awards, and Academy Awards.

Ms. Paltrow recently co-starred opposite Robert Downey Jr in the box office and critical hit *Iron Man*. She was also seen in her brother Jake Paltrow's directorial debut, *The Good*

*Night*, opposite Penelope Cruz and Danny De Vito.

In 2005 the feature film *Proof* reunited her with director John Madden. Ms. Paltrow received an Olivier Award nomination for Best Actress for her work in the play as well as a Golden Globe nomination for the film. She followed this with *Running With Scissors* and *Infamous* from Doug McGrath, who also directed her in *Emma*.

Her body of work includes *The World Of Tomorrow*, *Sylvia*, *Possession*, *Austin Powers 3* and the critically acclaimed *The Royal Tenenbaums*. Earlier credits include *Duets*, a film directed by her father Bruce Paltrow; *Bounce* opposite Ben Affleck; the late Anthony Minghella's *The Talented Mr Ripley*; *A Perfect Murder*, opposite Michael Douglas; and the international box office hit *Sliding Doors*, amongst others.

Ms. Paltrow was born in Los Angeles to director Bruce Paltrow and his wife Blythe Danner. After 11 years the family moved to New York City. She currently resides in New York City and London with her family.

### **Vinessa Shaw as Sandra Cohen**

Vinessa Shaw was most recently seen in *3:10 To Yuma* opposite Russell Crowe. Her breakthrough role came when she co-starred in Stanley Kubrick's *Eyes Wide Shut* opposite Tom Cruise. That same year she co-starred with Sean Penn and Sarah Polley in *The Weight of Water*. She followed this with a co-starring role in *40 Days and 40 Nights* opposite Josh Hartnett and later, Woody Allen's *Melinda and Melinda*, opposite Will Ferrell.

Ms. Shaw was born in California and was immersed in show business at an early age. She began her career as a model appearing on magazine covers that include *Seventeen* and *Vogue*. She made her acting debut in 1991 in the NBC TV-movie "*Long Road Home*." Her first feature role came in 1992 with the comedy *Ladybugs*. That same year she had a

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recurring role as Tobey Maguire's love interest in the Television series "Great Scott!" Her other television credits include the Showtime series "Fallen Angels," and the NBC miniseries event "The 70's."

### **Moni Moshonov as Reuben Kraditor**

Moni Moshonov is one of Israel's most recognized actors and an Israeli cultural icon. Since the 1970s, he has played over 60 roles in classic and modern plays from "Romeo and Juliet" and "Death of a Salesman" to "I'm not Rappaport." In addition to acting, Mr. Moshonov is also one of Israel's most talented theatre directors. In 2001 he won the Man of the Year award for his role in "Chairs" by Eugene Ionesco as well as the Best Theatre Director for this play.

For the past 20 years he has hosted one of Israel's most successful television programs, "This Is It." He has also featured in a number of popular television series that include "Kzarim", "Betipul," and "Dogout."

Mr. Moshonov worked previously with James Gray on *We Own The Night*. In 2001 he was awarded Best Supporting Actor by The Israeli Film Academy for his role in *Late Marriage* directed by Dover Kozashvilli. He was nominated for the same award in 2004 for *Year Zero* and the following year for *Gift From Above*, also directed by Kozashvilli. His body of work also includes the films *Lirkod*, *Forgiveness* and *Kedma*, among many others.

In 2000 he was featured in Joseph Pitchhadze's movie *Besame Mucho*. He also played a role in the Moshe Mizrachi film *Every Time We Say Goodbye* starring Tom Hanks.

### **Isabella Rossellini as Ruth Kraditor**

Isabella Rossellini grew up in Paris and Rome. At the age of 19, she moved to New York, where she became a translator and later a reporter for RAI-Italian Television. Her popular segments led to appearances as the New York correspondent for the weekly Italian

comedy show "The Other Sunday," with Roberto Benigni.

At 28, Ms. Rossellini was discovered by Bruce Weber and photographed for *British Vogue*. A modeling career followed, during which Ms. Rossellini worked with the industry's most distinguished photographers including Richard Avedon, Steven Meisel, Helmut Newton and Peter Lindbergh. She appeared on the cover of *Vogue*, *Elle*, *Marie Claire*, *Bazaar* and *Vanity Fair* and in 1988, an exhibition of her photographs titled 'Portrait of a Woman', was held at the Museum of Modern Art in Paris.

Ms. Rossellini made her cinematic debut in 1979 in Paolo and Vittorio Taviani's *Il Prato* (The Meadow). Her American film debut was opposite Mikhail Baryshnikov and Gregory Hines in Taylor Hackford's *White Nights*. In 1986, she starred opposite Dennis Hopper as 'Dorothy Vallens,' the tortured lounge singer, in David Lynch's haunting and controversial *Blue Velvet*.

She recently starred in the short film directed by Guy Maddin, *My Dad Is 100 Years Old*, about her father Roberto Rossellini, which she also wrote and produced. Ms. Rossellini and Maddin worked together previously on *The Saddest Music in The World*.

Her most recent film credits include; *The Architect*, Luis Llosa's screen adaptation of Mario Vargas Llosa's novel "The Feast of The Goat" and Doug McGrath's *Infamous*. She will next be seen in *The Accidental Husband* directed by Griffin Dunne, co-starring Uma Thurman and Colin Firth.