



THE VISITOR

Written and Directed by Tom McCarthy

Starring
Richard Jenkins
Hiam Abbass
Haaz Sleiman
Danai Gurira

Run Time 103 Minutes
Rated TBD

FILMMAKERS

Writer/Director	TOM MCCARTHY
Producers	MARY JANE SKALSKI MICHAEL LONDON
Executive Producers	OMAR AMANAT JEFF SKOLL RICKY STRAUSS CHRIS SALVATERRA
Music Supervisor	MARY RAMOS
Music By	JAN A.P. KACZMAREK
Costume Designer	MELISSA TOTH
Production Designer	JOHN PAINO
Director of Photography	OLIVER BOKELBERG
Editor	TOM MCARDLE

CAST

Walter Vale	RICHARD JENKINS
Mouna	HIAM ABBASS
Tarek	HAAZ SLEIMAN

THE VISITOR

Short Synopsis

A college professor becomes embroiled in the lives of a young immigrant couple living in New York City and stumbles into an unexpected romance as a result. As these strangers struggle to deal with their individual lives in a changed world, their shared humanity is revealed in awkward, humorous and dramatic ways.

Synopsis

In *The Visitor*, Walter Vale, a widower of five years, lives an aimless life as a college economics professor in suburban Connecticut. When Walter reluctantly agrees to fill in for a colleague at a conference in New York City he discovers a young couple, Tarek and Zainab, who have been scammed into illegally renting his vacant flat. Walter agrees to let them stay until they find a place of their own and soon Walter and Tarek form a friendship of which the more guarded Zainab disapproves. However when an arbitrary interaction with the police lands Tarek, an undocumented New Yorker, in an ICE detention center Walter emerges as the only person able to visit Tarek. When Tarek's mother Mouna appears in search of her son, Walter's emotional commitment in Tarek's case is sealed. As the four people struggle to deal with the stark realities of the US immigration system and their own individual lives, their shared humanity is revealed in awkward, humorous and dramatic ways.

ABOUT THE PRODUCTION

An interview with Tom McCarthy

Q: What inspired you to write the screenplay and shoot the film?

A: I think it's always difficult to point to the exact inspiration for a film. Usually I collect a lot of different ideas and keep them in one big file then start to sort out which ones are most resonant to me. I think in this particular case it was a couple things. I spent some time in the Middle East with the last movie I directed (specifically in Beirut), and it felt like I was reading a lot about that part of the world without understanding much about the people or the culture there. So I went back to visit a couple of times, started reading more and even began spending more time in the Arab community here in New York. Through my research, I came across a story of a young man who was detained here from the Middle East and put in one of these centers, I think in Queens. I started reading everything I could on immigration policy and specifically on our detention systems. How we're dealing with people since 9/11, especially undocumented citizens, led me to this story. I also joined an organization called Sojourners based at Riverside Church in Manhattan and started visiting detainees. Separate from this, I had in mind this character of an aging college professor who had lost his passion for his vocation. Somewhere along the way the two stories came together. And the two characters came together.

Q: In developing "The Visitor" did you have a lot of interest in getting something out of it, or did you want to send a message about immigration laws? Was any of that part of the process?

A: That's an interesting question. My primary concern is telling a

good story. If I can shed some light on some issues that perhaps the general public is less informed about along the way then all the better. I think specifically what I was trying to do was take the immigration situation and put a human face to it. The best we can do sometimes is to remind ourselves of our own humanity so when we're dealing with these issues, whether it be large issues like how to deal with problems in the Middle East or how to deal with our own issues like immigration, we always start from a place of remembering that we're not just talking about issues but we're talking about human beings. I think if we constantly remind ourselves of that, who knows? I guess it boils down to compassion in some way. Understanding. I think that's what I set out to do. Whenever I brought people to these detention facilities they were always a little horrified that this is how we were treating people arriving at this country for the first time, and they were in there for a variety of reasons. A lot of the detainees didn't have any legal representation, and a lot of them hadn't committed any crime per se. It's a complex problem, immigration. But we must maintain our sense of compassion when dealing with it.

Q: In developing the humanity and trying to get your message across, why and how did you choose Walter as your protagonist?

A: He's a character that I've had in mind for some time: an aging professor who is rudderless, void of passion or action. And the actor, Richard Jenkins, is someone I really wanted to work with. He has such a wonderful everyman quality about him. He doesn't immediately come across as an extraordinary person, but his talent is just that. He's an actor's actor. He's been in so many movies and yet he always manages to continually create thoroughly original characters, disappearing into his roles. He's just such a versatile actor. As a writer I'm interested in characters that fall between the cracks, who don't pop right out of a crowd. Richard is the perfect fit. Let's be honest, he's not a classic leading man in many peoples eyes, but that is exactly what makes his performance so believable

and so compelling.

Q: What about elaborating on ‘like everyone else’?

A: I thought of this character Zainab because I was fascinated with the concept of a young African who had come to the States really just to find a better life, make a better living, and pursue her art as a jewelry designer. From that these other characters come into the story. With Tarek's character I was trying to come up with a young man who had come here with his mother after the death of his father and was searching for safe haven. So once I had these three characters the movie started to write itself. Everything else comes out of that, even the political elements of this movie. It comes down to how these different people connect, how different they are, and at the end of the day how similar they are. I mean, you have Tarek, a musician from Syria, and his connection with Walter Vale, this aging economics professor from Connecticut, and these two find this common ground. It's the beauty of this country and specifically with New York. You can't deny the humanity around you. You're on the subway, the trains, you've got people on top of you! I think what it affords, outside of the occasional headache, is the opportunity to connect with so many different people if you're open to it. I think in this particular instance it's something our main character stumbled into. He wasn't looking for that. He wasn't looking to expand in any sense. I think he was very detached but immediately found through music a connection with this young musician. I think in many senses Tarek becomes the heart of the story. He wins us over. His ambition in life is quite pure: to live a good life and to play his music. It's something you would hope this country would afford a decent individual no matter where they're from or how they arrived, but I think the times and circumstances of this country have altered that reality.

Q: Did you always plan to cast with international actors as opposed to actors transforming themselves into different nationalities, as

often happens?

A: Yeah, I think authenticity is always very important. For instance, Haaz is Lebanese, not Syrian, but he told me this story the other night where he had to go to Syria to the American embassy to get his papers after being denied once because the embassy was closed in Lebanon, then he moved to Dearborn, Michigan, which is where in the story he and his mother go, and then New York to become an actor. His journey was incredibly similar to that of the characters, and that was developed in the story well before I met him. It can only feed his performance. I think with every character in the story there's a little bit of a different scenario. I had Richard in mind from the beginning, and Hiam in a similar way. I saw Hiam in a movie when I was in Beirut called "Satin Rouge" and fell in love with her as an actress and kept seeing her in all these movies: "Syrian Bride," "Paradise Now," and then finally "Munich." I thought, "Wow." I couldn't get her out of my mind. I went to write in Paris and set up a meeting with her and said I wanted to include her in this project. After meeting her and seeing her work with the character, the character became very clear to me. It's a much easier way to write. The same thing happened on "The Station Agent," sort of a combination of having an image of a character and a sense of the actor.

Q: Since you mentioned "The Station Agent," you're working with a lot of similar people that you worked with on that. Was that intentional or just because you shot in the NY area?

A: Mary Jane Skalski produced "The Station Agent" with Robert May, so Mary Jane was very involved in this from the beginning. Robert was tied up with another project. Rhonda Price (my agent) who's been involved in every project I've done since the beginning has also been a tremendous constant. My cinematographer Oliver Bokelberg, who shot "The Station Agent," read a very early draft

of this, Tom McCardle, my editor, and John Paino, my production designer. It's a joy to be able to include these guys very early on because we share a common vision of the type of movies we want to make. And we started to develop a shorthand to working with each other. McCardle and I sat down a number of times before we shot the movie to just talk through all the things we might talk through after we shot the movie. It's a wonderful opportunity to do that with an editor you trust. Oliver read many drafts of the script, so what happens by the time you actually begin shooting or to the design stage of the production or the editing stage, you have a history with these people and the story has a history among you, which is crucial. Honestly, sometimes they keep me on track and remind me of the vision we had when we started. It's an incredibly wonderful and helpful situation.

Q: What was it like working with new people? You had some new crew as well as new partners with Participant and Groundswell. What was it like working with them?

A: Groundswell and Participant were two of the first companies we turned to when it was time to finance this film because of their commitment to telling original stories and their track record in making that happen. And quite honestly it all happened very quickly. They stepped right up. It was a ridiculously fast process. They had a lot of input and a lot of ideas along the way but they were also very committed to my vision of the film. I had some connection working with both companies in the past, primarily as actor in "Syriana" and "Good Night, and Good Luck" with Participant and I was in "The Guru" for Michael London at Groundswell, so that made the process even a little bit easier.

Q: They never tried to pressure you to use different actors or techniques?

A: No. Not really. There was a lot of discussion along the way but

that is part of the process. We were all very clear about the type of movie we wanted to make. And, for instance, casting Richard Jenkins, who normally plays supporting parts, in the lead role was an essential element to setting the tone of the film. Participant, for instance, was a big fan of Richard Jenkins. He was in “North Country” with a heartbreaking performance. It was just the right people at the right time in that respect. Michael worked on “Sideways” with Alexander Payne who had a similar recipe. None of these guys, Paul Giamatti for instance, were box office stars at the time. There’s an authenticity to finding the right actor for the right role.

Q: Given your unconventional journey to the inspiration, and even down to the elements of casting, what was the most challenging part of the process: the development, filming, etc?

A: Shooting in New York is like living in New York; you have days where you feel like the luckiest man in the world, and you have days when you want to leave the city screaming. New York can be your best friend one morning and bury you the next. We shot in the fall and the city was like a studio back lot, which is great news for the New York Film community, but it made it hard for us as one of the smaller films shooting in the city. It’s a difficult environment to shoot in, but it’s great because you get New York City and there’s no other city like it in the world. And then of course, specifically in terms of immigration, New York is just the perfect setting. Ellis Island used to be where people came through to become citizens and get naturalized and that's no longer the case. In many cases the new Ellis Island is detention centers. When people come through our airports and don’t have the proper documentation, they are immediately escorted to detention centers. Not to say the same battles on the immigration front aren’t being experienced in L.A., San Antonio, Florida, Miami, Chicago, and everywhere else, but I know New York.

Q: Do you consider music a character in the film?

Yeah, definitely. There are so many live musical elements, even beyond the fact that Tarek is a musician and Walter is fixated on learning the piano. Just walking around the streets of NY there are guys in the subway, guys in the parks, guys on the streets. It's something we kept stumbling on in the research and writing stage and ultimately the shooting stage. We found a guy who plays the Eru in an upper west side subway and brought him down for a night to play for us. It's a great sound -- an ancient Chinese instrument in the subway. There's a unique sound quality to it, a haunting quality that you could never recreate. We were drawing on sounds like kids playing buckets in the street or the guys who play drums in the park. Tarek plays in a band, and we shot that live with wonderful musicians involved. My dear friend Mohammad Ali, a wonderful author and djembe player, was a huge help with this. He wrote a great book that I read when I was doing my research called "The Prophet of Zongo Street." I read the back cover and it said Mohammed lives in Brooklyn with his wife and two kids and plays the djembe in a jazz band. I knew the main character Tarek was going to play the djembe so I called him and took lessons from him. He became a great resource and a great friend in the process. Again, it's the kind of thing that would only happen in New York: within two days of reading this book I was in a café talking to him asking about taking djembe lessons. I did that because the author's character takes lesson and I thought, "What better way than to experience it?"

Q: So you personally took the lessons? You weren't just referring to your actors taking it?

A: I took the lessons to experience it as a writer. When I cast Haaz in the role he went into a self imposed djembe boot camp for 8 weeks. Richard didn't have to; he takes his journey in the movie. He never gets that good at it in the movie. I think he played

percussion as a kid. He's pretty good at it. I think his son plays drums, too.

Q: So we're watching his evolution

A: Yeah, there's sort of a musical evolution in the movie. But more importantly, it deals with how music transcends boundaries and transcends cultural divides. It's something that unites us all. There's something very elemental and powerful about the release that one can find in music. There's a reason music can make us so emotional: because it's pure. I think that's something Walter discovers in the course of the film.

Q: Because your first film was so popular do you see any comparisons?

A: I guess it's nothing I can control. I imagine when I make my third movie it'll be compared to my first movie and my second movie and so on and so forth. It's nice that you have a movie that's remembered and well received enough after your next film, but that's for other people to do. My job's just to keep creating original work and being honest to the type of story I want to tell. I suppose I'm working toward developing a style that people will come to recognize, but that will take a few more films for me to really start to realize that. I will say that to some degree I played a little bit on the expectations, especially the beginning of this movie. I had a lot of fun playing on that and how the reality of the world we live in sort of infringes on the story and the lives of the characters. That's what I love about great novels. A character's predicament looks like it'll be the paramount focus of the story and then everything suddenly shifts on one small moment, one tiny decision on whether its to take a left or a right, or in this case pay a subway toll or not.

Q: Well that happens several times.

A: Yeah, I believe in that. I think that's what makes life fascinating -- not necessarily the huge moments, although those moments are important. It's always little decisions we make. Many of those that take us in a completely different direction in life are almost arbitrary. I think that's the magic of life, isn't it? That's what's beautiful about it. It makes us realize, as much as we like to imagine we have control over our fate and destiny, we really don't. That's something that happens in this movie. Walter has no intention of going to the conference. He does everything he can to get out of it. One thing unfolds, he makes a decision to help two kids out in a jam, and in doing that he discovers a new musical life. Who could predict these things? Some people say there're only so many original stories in the world, and I believe that, but I think what is original is the human experience in those stories. That's something you can't account for. Your life may be very simple and plain in comparison to everybody else's, but it's your own human experience that's very unique. I think if you take the time to notice that, it can be very magical.

Q: Did you ever find yourself wanting to take a role in the film, or do you prefer to keep your occupations separate?

A: No. It's not so much that I have an overriding theory about that because some people can do it. Woody Allen made a career of it. He's a genius. Personally I don't think I could handle it. I think writing and directing are enough hats for me to wear, and they're both completely consuming. Having been an actor for so long I have too much respect for what it takes to be prepared and focused on the day of shooting to show up and give it your best. I think if you're distracted with too many other elements you can't achieve what great actors achieve on film. People ask me all the time why I don't put myself in my films. The reason I became an actor was the element of storytelling through performance.

Q: You're right, that's a common thread between each of these roles – actor, writer, director.

A: Right, it's an obvious extension of that. I get the same high off writing and directing that I do acting. It's so exciting to be on the other side of the camera watching a wonderful actor work. It just blows me away. That was the fun thing about this project. I had four main actors all from different parts of the world; two veteran actors in Richard and Hiam and two relatively young actors in Haaz and Danai. It was really interesting for me as a writer director and even an actor to watch them work off each other and come together as an ensemble.

Q: Do you think this film is a love story, or do you see it as a story of friendship?

A: Both actually. The story keeps evolving in a very simple way. There are funny moments, tragic moments, even mundane moments. I think it's reflective of how life unfolds. And I think it'll take a long time for me, well after this movie is released, to really understand what it's about.

Q: People see different things.

A: Yeah, I had the same thing again with the organic unraveling of this movie in terms of relationships and shifting relationships. With "The Station Agent," people constantly come up and say this is their favorite character. Some say it was a comedy, some say it was a drama. With "The Visitor" there are probably more dramatic themes, but ultimately I think people will connect with the film in different ways and through different characters.

Q: Do you see “The Visitor” being political?

A: Yes, to some degree. At least in so much that the characters are embroiled in a situation that is very much on the national conscious right now: immigration and detention. I didn’t set out to make a statement per se but rather to put a human face to something that was quickly becoming an “issue.” That really sustained me in writing and directing and editing. It didn’t feel as if all of my energy and work was separate from what was really happening around me. It may not change the world, but at the very least it’s reminding us of the human element and consequence to a very divisive issue. I guess, in some small way, I’m holding up the mirror up and saying, “This is what’s going on. Do we like it? Do we not? Is there room for debate?” I don’t think it’s our job, as filmmakers, to provide answers all the time, but to certainly raise questions. I think that’s something this movie does very well on a personal/emotional level and on a policy level, but never at the expense of a good story. If you can tell a good story, it’s the best chance you have of affecting people.

ABOUT THE CAST

RICHARD JENKINS (Walter Vale) has become one of the most in-demand character actors in Hollywood. Before his Hollywood career though, the actor developed a long and distinguished regional theater career, most notably a 15-year stint at Rhode Island's Trinity Repertory Theater, where he served as artistic director for four years. He snagged his first role as early as 1975, in the TV movie “Brother to Dragons,” but did not begin working regularly until a small role in the [Lawrence Kasdan](#) film *Silverado* (1985). Supporting work in such films as *Hannah And Her Sisters* (1986), *The Witches of Eastwick* (1987), and *Sea Of Love* (1989) followed, and Jenkins spent the early '90s specializing in made-for-TV movies, including the adaptation of [Randy Shilts'](#) AIDS opus

[“And the Band Played On”](#) (1993).

In the late '90s Jenkins started gaining wider appreciation, especially as he indulged in his talent for comedy. His appearance as an uptight gay FBI agent who gets accidentally drugged was one of the highlights of [David O. Russell](#)'s *Flirting With Disaster* (1996), allowing him to convincingly act out an acid trip. Working again with [Ben Stiller](#), Jenkins appeared as a psychiatrist in [There's Something About Mary](#) (1998), which launched a relationship with directors Peter and [Bobby Farrelly](#). Jenkins appeared in the Farrelly-produced *Outside Providence* (1999) and [Say It Ain't So](#) (2001), as well as in the Farrelly-directed *Me, Myself And Irene* (2000). The actor then shifted over to another set of brother directors to portray the father of Scarlet Johansson's character in Joel and [Ethan Coen](#)'s noir *The Man Who Wasn't There* (2001). In 2001, Jenkins also appeared in the first season of HBO's “Six Feet Under” as Nathaniel Fisher Sr., the sardonic funeral home director whom the characters remember as an impenetrable mystery, frugal with his praise and emotions. Most recently, Jenkins has appeared in *Intolerable Cruelty* (2003), *Cheaper By The Dozen* (2003), *I Heart Huckabees* (2004), *Shall We Dance* (2004), *North Country* (2005), *Fun With Dick And Jane* (2005), and *Rumor Has It* (2005).

Director Tom McCarthy says, “I’ve long been an admirer of Richard and his work. Very early on, as I was writing the script, I had him in mind for the role.”

HAAZ SLEIMAN (Tarek) has feature film credits prior to his work on *The Visitor* including *American Dreamz*, *The Ski Trip*, *Americaneast*, *What Goes Around*, *Offside*, and *In The Shadow*. Sleiman also had a co-starring role on “ER.” His theatre credits include *Joys of Lipstick* and *The Royal Pardon*.

DANAI GURIRA (Zainab) was born in the United States to

Zimbabwean parents and raised in Zimbabwe. She received her M.F.A. in acting from New York University, where she appeared as Juliet in *Romeo and Juliet* and Ruby in *King Hedley II*. She is a recipient of a 2006 OBIE Award and a 2006 John Gassner Outer Critics Award and has been honored by the Theater Hall of Fame. In 2007 she won the Helen Hayes Award for Best Actress in a Play for her *In the Continuum*, which she also co-wrote. Her television credits include *Law and Order: Criminal Intent*.

HIAM ABBASS (Mouna) was born in Nazareth, and studied photography and theatre before starting a career as an actress. No longer able to stand the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, Abbas left her country in 1988. After a stay in London, she settled in Paris where her acting career in cinema began. Her feature credits include *Munich*, *The Nativity Story*, *Azur Et Asmar*, *Petites Revelations*, and *The Syrian Bride*. Hiam has also written and directed two short movies, *Le Pain* (2000) and *La Danse Eternell* (2003)

ABOUT THE FILMMAKERS

TOM MCCARTHY (Writer/Director)

THE VISITOR will be Tom McCarthy's follow up to the critically acclaimed film *The Station Agent*, released in 2003 by Miramax Films. *The Station Agent* premiered at the Sundance Film Festival where it was awarded the Audience Award and the Waldo Salt Screenwriting Award. The film was also awarded the BAFTA for Best Screenplay and two Independent Spirit Awards, including the John Cassavetes award. The National Board of Review named it third on their list of Ten Best Films of the Year. It was nominated for three SAG Awards including Best Ensemble and was also nominated by the WGA for Original Screenplay. The film also won awards at many Film Festivals including San Sebastian,

Stockholm, Mexico City and Aspen.

As an actor, some of McCarthy's feature credits include *Flags of our Fathers*, *Syriana*, *Good Night and Good Luck*, *The Year of the Dog* and *Meet the Parents*. He will also be featured in the final season of HBO's critically acclaimed series *The Wire*.

MARY JANE SKALSKI (Producer)

Mary Jane Skalski is a producer based in New York City whose films have consistently been critically acclaimed and commercially successful. She has also been highlighted as one of Variety's Producers to Watch.

Among Skalski's previous films is Gregg Araki's *Mysterious Skin*, which premiered at the 2004 Venice Film Festival and screened at the Toronto, Sundance and London film festivals. It was cited on over 70 Ten Best lists in the US (including the New York Times and the LA Times) and received a Gotham Award nomination for Joe Gordon-Levitt's Breakout Performance and a Spirit Award nomination for Best Director. The film was adapted from the novel by Scott Heim and stars Joseph Gordon-Levitt, Brady Corbet, Michelle Trachtenberg and Elisabeth Shue.

Skalski's previous collaboration with director Tom McCarthy is *The Station Agent*. The film premiered in the Dramatic Competition at the 2003 Sundance Film Festival and received the Audience Award, the Waldo Salt Screenwriting Award and a special acting award for Patricia Clarkson. Its European premiere was at the San Sebastian Film Festival where it was awarded the Special Jury Prize. The film was cited on numerous 'Ten Best' lists including the National Board of Review. It received three Screen Actors Guild nominations, including a nomination for Best Ensemble. The film also received three Independent Spirit Awards

and a BAFTA for Best Screenplay.

Her other credits include *The Hawk is Dying*, directed by Julian Goldberger and starring Paul Giamatti, Michelle Williams and Michael Pitt. The film premiered at the Sundance Film Festival and was immediately invited to screen at the Cannes Film Festival later that year. With Steven Shainberg's *FUR: An Imaginary Portrait of Diane Arbus*, Mary Jane served as a co-producer. The film stars Nicole Kidman and Robert Downey Jr. and opened the inaugural Rome Film Festival in 2006. Jem Cohen's *Chain* premiered at the Berlin Film Festival (Forum Section) in 2004. The film is a hybrid documentary-narrative, which stars Mira Bilotte and Miho Nikaido. Cohen was awarded the IFP 'Someone to Watch' Spirit Award.

The Jimmy Show, directed by Frank Whaley, premiered at the Toronto Film Festival and also screened at the Sundance Film Festival. The film stars Whaley, Ethan Hawke and Carla Gugino.

Bart Freundlich's *The Myth of Fingerprints* starring Noah Wyle, Roy Scheider and Julianne Moore, premiered at the Sundance Film Festival and won the audience award at the Deauville Film Festival. Roy Scheider's performance was also nominated for a IFP Spirit Award.

Wonderland, a non-fiction film directed by John O'Hagan, received the Cable Ace Award for Best Historical Documentary and was nominated for the Directors Guild Award for Best Documentary director. O'Hagan was also nominated for the Open Palm Award.

Mary Jane was an executive producer of *Jim Fall's Trick*. The premiered at the Sundance Film Festival and screened at the Berlin Film Festival where it was awarded the Reader's Jury Prize. She was also an executive producer of David Schisgall's *The Lifestyle*.

As an associate producer, Mary Jane was involved with Edward Burns' *The Brothers McMullen*, which premiered at the Sundance Film Festival and was awarded the Grand Jury Prize. The film also received an IFP Spirit Award for Best First Feature and a special jury prize at the Deauville Film Festival.

In addition to feature films, Mary Jane has also produced the following short films: Paul Harrill's "Gina, an Actress Age 29" which was awarded the Grand Jury Prize in Short Film at the 2001 Sundance Film Festival and Noah Baumbach's "Conrad and Butler" which is currently available as part of the Criterion Collection. In television Mary Jane produced *Dear Doughboy*, a pilot for the WB created by Hopwood Depree and directed by Penelope Spheeris.

Mary Jane is a consultant for Fortissimo Film Sales and is an assistant adjunct faculty member in Columbia University's Graduate Film Department. From 1993 to 1999 Skalski was part of the New York production company Good Machine where she acted in various capacities including the VP of Creative Affairs.

In 2004 Mary Jane was awarded the IFP Producer Award.

MICHAEL LONDON (Producer)

Michael London is an Academy-Award nominated producer and the founder/CEO of Groundswell Productions, an independent financing and production company based in Beverly Hills that he launched in February 2006. London has produced such films as the upcoming KING OF CALIFORNIA starring Michael Douglas, as well as a variety of acclaimed films that include THE ILLUSIONIST, THE FAMILY STONE, SIDEWAYS (which

garnered him an Oscar nomination as producer when the film was nominated for Best Picture), HOUSE OF SAND AND FOG, THIRTEEN, THE GURU and 40 DAYS AND 40 NIGHTS. London was a senior production executive at Twentieth Century Fox for ten years before leaving to become an independent producer

OLIVER BOKELBERG (Director of Photography)

Oliver Bokelberg's feature film credits include *Dark Matter*, which starred Meryl Streep and Aidan Quinn, *Strangers With Candy*, which starred Amy Sedaris, Phillip Seymour Hoffman, Sarah Jessica Parker, and Matthew Broderick, *Loggerheads*, with Bonnie Hunt, Tess Harper, and Kip Pardue, *The Station Agent*, which starred Patricia Clarkson, Peter Dinklage, Michelle Williams and Bobby Cannavale, and *The Citizen*, which starred Najwa Nimri, Andrea diStefano and Thomas McCarthy.

Bokelberg was awarded the Kodak Vision Award in 2000 for his work on *The Citizen*. Also for director Jay Anania, Bokelberg shot *Long Time Since* starring Paulina Porizkova and Julian Sands. The film premiered at the 1998 Toronto Film Festival. He worked on *The Next Big Thing*, which starred Chris Eigeman, Jamie Harris and Farley Granger and was directed by PJ Posner, and *Lifebreath* with Francie Swift, Luke Perry and Gia Carrides, also directed by PJ Posner. Bokelberg also shot *Cash Crop* with Mary McCormack, John Slattery and James van der Beek, directed by Stuart Burkin. Bokelberg's European works include *Heimkehr Der Jaeger* which starred Ulrich Tukur and screened in the 2000 Berlin Film Festival as well as *Charms Incidents* recipient of the Caligari Award at the 1996 Berlin Film Festival, both directed by Michael Kreihsl.

Bokelberg's documentary work includes *Beautopia*, which premiered at the 1998 Sundance Festival and *The Need For Speed*

both directed by Katharina Otto. Bokelberg has helmed the camera for music videos of artists such as LL Cool J, BB King, Christina Aguilera, Run DMC and Terrence Blanchard.

Bokelberg is a 1988 graduate of the Tisch School of the Arts at New York University and lives in New York City.

JOHN PAINO (Production Designer)

As a production designer, John Paino's credits include *Preaching To The Choir*, Bob Odenkirk's *Let's Go To Prison* and his upcoming *Brothers Solomon*, Official Sundance 2001 Selection *Jump Tomorrow* for director Joel Hopkins, *Jump* for director Justin McCarthy, *Shift* for director Kelly Anderson for the ITVS and PBS, the New York unit of *Barcelona* for director Whit Stillman, and *Dirty Laundry* for directors Mike Norman & Rob Sherman. Paino previously worked with Tom McCarthy on *The Station Agent*, winner of the audience award at the 2003 Sundance Film Festival and which starred Patricia Clarkson, Peter Dinklage, Michelle Williams and Bobby Cannavale. Paino also has worked as the production designer for the critically acclaimed "Queer Eye for the Straight Guy" on Bravo Networks. His music video work includes LL Cool J's "Mama Said Knock You Out!," which was nominated for MTV's Best Art Direction and Best Rap Video, Billboard Best Rap Video, and Live's "I Alone," which was nominated for MTV's Best Art Direction and Best Music Video.

TOM MCARDLE (Editor)

Tom McArdle's feature film credits include the 2006 drama *The Architect*, a drama with Anthony LaPaglia, Isabella Rossellini, and Viola Davis, *Duane Hopwood*, a drama which starred David Schwimmer, Judah Friedlander, Steven Schirripa, Janeane

Garofalo, *The Station Agent*, a comedy with Patricia Clarkson, Peter Dinklage, Bobby Cannavale & Michelle Williams, and *Poor White Trash*, a comedy with William Devane, Jaime Pressly, Sean Young, Jason London, and Emmet Walsh.

His other feature film credits include *Handgun* (directed by Whitney Ransick), *The Keeper* and *The Killing Zone* (both directed by Joe Brewster), *Star Maps* (directed by Miguel Arteta), *Hi-Life* (directed by Roger Hedden), *Laws of Gravity* (directed by Nick Gomez), and *Loving Jezebel* (directed by Kwyn Bader), which received the audience award at the South by Southwest Film Festival in 2000.

He has also edited “The Skateboard Show” a 30 minute comedy/skateboarding pilot for television from executive producer Tom Green, “Charles & Marion’s Winter Exchange”, a 30 minute comedy film with Charles Barkley & Marion Jones for the Winter Olympics that was directed by Jay Chandrasekhar, *Nazis: The Occult Conspiracy* a documentary hosted by Malcolm McDowell for The Discovery Channel and *Hole In The Head*, a documentary about people who drill holes in their foreheads for The Learning Channel.

JAN A.P. KACZMAREK (Composer)

Academy Award Winner Jan Kaczmarek has written the scores for over thirty feature films and documentaries, including *Total Eclipse*, *Bliss*, *Washington Square*, *Aimee and Jaguar*, *The Third Miracle*, *Lost Souls*, *Edges of the Lord*, and *Unfaithful*.

He began touring Europe in the 1970’s with The Orchestra of the Eighth Day. In 1982, Kaczmarek recorded his debut album titled *Music for the End*. He relocated to America in 1989 and began composing for theater, winning two New York theater awards in

1992. After his success in theater, he returned to film composition. In 2005 he won his first Oscar for *Finding Neverland*, going on to win The National Review Board's award for Best Score and was nominated for a Golden Globe as well as BAFTA's Anthony Asquith Award for Achievement in Film Music.

Currently he is setting up the Rozbitek Institute in his native country of Poland. The Institute will serve as a European center encouraging work in film, theater, music, and new media.

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About Groundswell Productions

Groundswell is an independent financing and production company founded by Michael London in February 2006 with office headquarters located in Beverly Hills. Groundswell is currently in pre-production on APPALOOSA for New Line (to be directed by Ed Harris, who will also star opposite Renee Zellweger and Viggo Mortenson) and in post-production on THE MARC PEASE EXPERIENCE for Paramount Vantage (directed by Todd Louiso and starring Jason Schwartzman and Ben Stiller). Groundswell has completed production on films such as THE MYSTERIES OF PITTSBURGH, written and directed by Rawson Marshall Thurber (based on the Michael Chabon novel) and starring Sienna Miller, Peter Saarsgard and Nick Nolte; SMART PEOPLE directed by Noam Murro and starring Dennis Quaid, Thomas Haden Church and Sarah Jessica Parker, which Miramax Films will release in 2008, and THE VISITOR, a co-production with Participant Productions from writer-director Tom McCarthy that stars Richard Jenkins. London, who serves as the company's CEO, is an Academy-Award nominated producer who has produced such films as KING OF CALIFORNIA, THE ILLUSIONIST, THE FAMILY STONE, SIDEWAYS, HOUSE OF SAND AND FOG,

THIRTEEN, THE GURU and 40 DAYS AND 40 NIGHTS.

About Participant Productions

Participant Productions is a Los Angeles-based production company that focuses on socially relevant, commercially viable feature films and documentaries. Participant's films have been chosen to awaken, inspire and empower audiences to take action and create change. The company is headed by CEO Jim Berk and President Ricky Strauss. Participant was founded by philanthropist Jeff Skoll, who serves as Chairman.

Upcoming releases include Mike Nichols' CHARLIE WILSON'S WAR, Marc Forster's THE KITE RUNNER, DARFUR NOW, starring and produced by Don Cheadle, Errol Morris' S.O.P. (Standard Operating Procedure) and THE VISITOR, Tom McCarthy's first film since THE STATION AGENT, Brett Morgen's CHICAGO 10, Louise Hogarth's documentary ANGELS IN THE DUST and Jonathan Demme's JIMMY CARTER MAN FROM PLAINS.

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Participant's most recent success is AN INCONVENIENT TRUTH, which won two Academy Awards for Best Documentary and Best Original Song and has become the third-highest grossing documentary in history.