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OUTLANDER

A film by
Howard McCain

With
**Jim Caviezel, Sophia Myles,
Jack Huston, Ron Perlman
and John Hurt**

Official Screening: 15.8.2008 21h30 PIAZZA GRANDE
Press Screening: 14.8.2008 21h00 TEATRO KURSAAL

Howard McCain, director; Jack Huston, actor and Sophia Myles, actress
will be available for interviews
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Press kit and stills are available at
the festival's site www.pardo.ch or at www.frenetic.ch/locarno

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ENGLISH SYNOPSIS

Far away, a light streaks across the night sky. It is a spacecraft, which crashes into one of the majestic Norwegian fjords. From the wreckage emerges a man from another world, Kainan, a humanoid warrior, and a deadly stowaway, the Moorwen, a savage creature hell-bent on avenging the acts of Kainan's army. Marooned on this alien planet, which is centuries behind his own civilization, Kainan sets out to track down and defeat his nemesis.

Before he is able to accomplish this, Kainan is captured by the Vikings. Grudgingly accepted into the clan after saving Rothgar's life, Kainan confides in Rothgar's fiercely beautiful daughter, Freya, about his past and the acts which both cost him his family and left the Moorwen mad with rage.

The vengeful beast besieges the Viking stronghold and is finally revealed in its awesome and terrifying splendor. Trapped, the monster is set ablaze and barely escapes into the forest, leaving a mortally wounded King Rothgar in its wake.

Wulfric is declared his successor, but his succession is marred when the Moorwen returns and snatches Freya. The Vikings, led by Kainan, set out on their final desperate mission – to slay the monster or to face destruction.

As the dust of the history of Herot Village settles, the tale of Kainan becomes legend.

DEUTSCHE SYNOPSIS

Ein Raumschiff aus einer fernen Galaxie stürzt auf die Erde ab. Kainen, ein ausserirdischer Krieger von menschlicher Gestalt, kann sich aus den Trümmern retten. Bald merkt er, dass er nicht nur auf einem ihm fremden Planeten gelandet ist, sondern in eine Zivilisation weit vor seiner Zeit katapultiert wurde.

Kaum ist sich Kainen seiner Situation bewusst, wird er von Wikingern gefangen genommen. Der Fremde ist dem stolzen Clan suspekt. Doch schon bald wird er zu ihrer letzten Hoffnung. Denn Kainen ist nicht allein gekommen. In seinem Schlepptau hat er ein tödliches Wesen, ein tollwütiges Monster von einem anderen Stern, das nach nichts anderem trachtet, als alle Menschen zu vernichten.

PRODUCTION NOTES

Director Howard McCain read the epic English poem, „Beowulf“, in high school and was captivated by the saga. The hero myth stayed with him for years, turning over in his head even as he entered NYU Film School. But even then, he couldn't see his way clear to turning it into a movie because the idea of the monstrous troll, Grendel, didn't fit into a historically-accurate story. This was in the early 1990s, long before the J.R. Tolkien's Beowulf-inspired movie, THE LORD OF THE RINGS, made mythical creatures and landscapes part of the public psyche. Movies were strictly observant of their genres: historical movies, which is what McCain felt Beowulf was, were about history while science-fiction movies were about science fiction. Monsters, McCain believed, resided in the world of science fiction, but not something to be blended into a historical setting.

A problem well stated is a problem half solved. McCain started kicking around the idea of embracing science fiction instead of running from it. By adding aliens into the mix, it might become more believable. When McCain moved to California and struck up a friendship with kindred Beowulf devotee, screenwriter, Dirk Blackman, the solution sprang up from the very heart of the problem and took shape in the form of a first draft.

The two men, committed film and comic book geeks, took their inspiration from various sources: ALIEN; PREDATOR; the 1951 classic, THE THING; the „Arena“ episode of the first season of „Star Trek“, where Kirk finds himself in one-on-one combat with the Gorn, an intelligent, humanoid reptile, but unable to use his phaser, forcing him to craft primitive weapons to defeat his adversary; and the theories of Erich von Däniken's ancient astronauts.

Paleocontact: „Maybe an alien creature landed on earth in Viking times,” McCain thought. „Our feeling was that if the Beowulf legend had any truth behind it, this was the source of that myth and this is how it really might have happened, if it did.”

„Everyone knows there were no monsters in the Viking era,” added Blackman, „but if a manlike alien from outer space dumped an alien creature onto earth and then had to join forces with the Vikings to fight the creature, there you have the origins of Beowulf. In other words, we set out to write 'The True History of Beowulf'.”

Executive Producer Karen Loop brought the script to John Schimmel, President of Production at Ascendant Pictures. „We thought it was unbelievably good,” said Schimmel. „It's an absolutely unique blend of genres, and an innovative combination of action and deep emotions. It speaks to the cycles of violence and the price of vengeance. It's a beautiful redemption story about a man who is emotionally dead when he crashes to earth, yet finds salvation in the most unlikely place, and it's all packaged in a big sci-fi action movie.”

Schimmel pitched it to Ascendant partner and Co-Chairman Chris Roberts, who has an admitted weakness for movies that transport him to places far away and fantastical. „OUTLANDER had it all and I had been looking for a film like this for a long time.” OUTLANDER also has the novel twist: 'Sci-mythic' as McCain characterized it. „It's a perfect idea, mixing the two: aliens in Viking times. It takes things we've seen before and puts them in a new setting. It is escapism and that's what science fiction and fantasy movies offer. And it's not as hard a sell as you might imagine,” Roberts added. Together Schimmel and Roberts worked to get the project on its feet and moving forward.

Executive Producer Don Carmody had enjoyed working with Roberts on LUCKY NUMBER SLEVIN and wished to collaborate on another film. When the script for OUTLANDER came to him, Carmody was quick to note its qualities. „This is terrifically drawn, lots of action beats, and most important, it’s exactly the kind of movie I would pay to go see. From a producer’s standpoint, there hadn’t been a good Viking movie in a long time. What makes this one intriguing is that while it is somewhat anchored in the Beowulf legend, the Grendel character is from outer space and is as terrifying as PREDATOR and ALIEN combined. This is promising because it brings the story, which is the oldest in the English language, to the forefront and makes it exciting for audiences today. Transcribing the original ‘Beowulf’ to the screen was not as exciting as the idea of fusing together theories about aliens landing on earth centuries ago with ancient literature.”

For Roberts, a self-confessed fanboy, Schimmel, whose favorite childhood movie was monster-flick CYCLOPS, and Carmody, who started his 30-year career in the business with horror films (SHIVERS and RABID for David Cronenberg, and the cult-favorite, TERROR TRAIN for Roger Spottiswoode), the idea of a bona fide, bloodthirsty Viking saga was fertile ground. „On a fanboy list, this one is right up there - Vikings and alien creatures. What’s not to love?” challenged Roberts.

„Vikings were the men of men,” Carmody explained. „They discovered North America before Columbus and they were tied in with the Crusades; they were like the Delta Force of the 9th century. Just as compelling is that they were amazing storytellers. The idea of telling stories around the campfire was a precursor to modern filmmaking. Our campfires are flickering 40-foot movies screens where audiences sit in the dark and watch them play out. It’s the same communal sensibility.”

THE MOORWEN – THE ART OF THE REVEAL

It is one thing to write a monster into a script; it is something else to create a new monster for cinema. Since ALIEN and then PREDATOR, movie monsters (robotic, human, alien, robot, animal, insect and supernatural) have become an industry unto themselves. The burden of responsibility is great, both conceptually and financially. By the time McCain and Blackman brought the OUTLANDER script to Ascendant Pictures in 2003, Creature Designer Patrick Tatopolous had already created the Moorwen. Its name is derived from Morlocks, the light-sensitive creatures in H.G. Wells 1895 novel, „The Time Machine“.

„Every monster since H.R. Giger’s „Alien“ has fallen in the shadow of that design. They all became phallic killing machines and the emphasis of each creature was about the morphology: its biology, what it did, and how it changed. They were all death machines, nothing more. The Moorwen goes beyond the design and its appeal is as much about its character. You can almost have empathy for it, like King Kong or Frankenstein,” attested McCain.

The challenges of giving birth to a new creatures were multifold: „The Moorwen had to be a logical fit into the natural world of the Vikings,” McCain continued. „In the same manner that Giger’s bio-mechanical ‘Alien’ was a perfect fit in a world of conduits and electrical ducts in a space ship. The Moorwen had to be animal, yet alien, and look like something that would eventually inspire the carvings of a Viking ship masthead. A lot of people took shots at it, and then we met Patrick whose designs have his personality and his sensuality.”

Patrick Tatopolous recently designed for Don Carmody’s SILENT HILL. „Grounding this creature in the reality of the Viking era was a good place for me to begin,” said Tatopolous, who took his inspiration from their dragon lore. Previously, creatures tended towards being anthropomorphic - two arms, two legs, standing upright. The Moorwen is an animal, a mix of a bull and a gorilla. It can run, swim and climb trees, but faster than a man because it moves on four legs. When it strikes, it does so on two legs. The personality comes through in its emotion and its body language, but the choreography of its movement dictates proportions. To achieve magnificence in an animal, the joints have to be somewhat more slender. The Moorwen is about strength, so the chest and shoulders are broad and powerful, the hips are narrow and the neck is strong. This is the language I used for my designs: sexy, cool and very scary. The biggest change from the original design of ten years ago is the neck. In order to allow the Moorwen to turn its head, we have elongated it to provide more mobility.”

The signature of the Moorwen is the bioluminescence. Don Carmody views this as an innovative approach to the ‘reveal’, which is an essential component of introducing a monster in a film. „The bioluminescence is the Moorwen’s trademark: you sense it, you see it, then you get it.”

„As much as a film is about the actors, a genre film is about the monster,” explained Chris Roberts. In OUTLANDER, this character is greater than the sum of its digitally enhanced parts. It has intelligence, cunning, and a history with the hero which has inspired protracted revenge. „The Moorwen is a star as well as being the most expensive single line item in the budget, but it is mesmerizing in concept and reality. The tail, a claw and several versions of the head were built, and then SPIN further brought it to life digitally.”

Visual Effects Supervisor, David Kuklish, discussed the work that went into creating the Moorwen in the digital realm. „We started off with 450 visual effects shots, but it has exceeded 600 because the Moorwen is more complex than most creatures. It’s a fully animated quadruped compounded by having a prehensile tail with tentacles that it uses as a tool. This adds another layer of animation. What really defines it is the bioluminescence, which is a lighting system rather than just glowing lights. We’ve modeled this on the beautiful forms of communication between deep-sea creatures. The Moorwen’s planet is all about communication by bioluminescent light. This is something Howard was focused on, but even with storyboarding in place, we still have had to work out the fine details. At first audiences will think they are seeing fireflies. It’s that delicate in the beginning.”

Ultimately, the Moorwen earns the right to be immortalized as the inspiration for the Beowulf legend.

NINTH RAY STUDIOS : **THE OUTLANDER CREATIVE ADVANTAGE**

When Producer Chris Roberts first read the OUTLANDER script (and Tatopolous’ Moorwen design), he wanted to begin the conceptual work on the film immediately. Executive Producer John Schimmel brought on Barrie Osbourne, one of the producers of LORD OF THE RINGS and THE MATRIX, who in turn brought on his LOTR art director, Dan Hannah. Roberts then made the bold move of investing in the development of concept art long before financing was in place and hired Ninth Ray Studios to work side-by-side with Hannah, according to Schimmel. In 2005, Ian McCaig, the man who designed Darth Maul for George Lucas, had joined with several key concept artists who had worked together on such notable films as the STAR WARS prequels, SPIDERMAN 2, LEMONY SNICKETT - A SERIES OF UNFORTUNATE EVENTS, and HULK, to form Ninth Ray, the unique art-based story development and production company. „It was a rare step, on a film with no financing, to spring for the best artists we could find - this was a huge price tag for a small company like Ascendant. The rest of the film was made on a budget, but between Tatopolous and Ninth Ray and Dan Hannah, who was a fantastic addition, both artistically and spiritually, we had the best in the business,” recalled Schimmel.

„For twelve intensive weeks, Ninth Ray Studios produced storyboards, artwork, set design, costume design, props and animatronics,” said McCain. „The results were staggeringly beautiful. We effectively had a blueprint for our movie and Ninth Ray set the bar very high. The art worked to get the financing and to attract the actors.”

Once financing was in place, the production moved to its base to Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada, where Production Designer David Hackl (SKINWALKERS, SAW 2 & 3) and Costume Designer Debra Hanson (BEOWULF & GRENDEL, AWAY FROM HER) brought the Ninth Ray concepts to life. „David saw the drawings created by Ryan Church and the other artists of Ninth Ray and fell in love with them,” noted McCain. „His sets, Herot Village, Gunnar’s village, the caves and the waterfall (an indoor build with four tons of water), plus the Viking ship which we shot in Newfoundland, are fantastic. David’s been a genius at figuring out how to achieve these sets right down to details like hiring our own loggers to log our own trees for the wood - which had to be a first for an art department. The sets are fantastic and they create the world the characters live in.”

The set for Herot Village was a massive undertaking. Built on a six-acre floodplain, edged by old forest at Nine Mile River, 45 minutes outside of Halifax, the village is surrounded by a breathtaking wooden palisade, made from hewn trees, running 650 feet long, ranging from 16-18 feet high. Inside the wall stand two sentry towers, tripods of wood 42 feet high, plus 14 buildings: longhouses, a blacksmith's hut, a primitive church, stables, a tannery, all focused on the crowning achievement - the Shield Hall.

Fifty-four feet tall at its gargoyle peak (with an additional 50-75 feet plus a series of steeping towers added in post-production). „Shield Hall is a magnificent hybrid design with the flavor of early churches in Norway and Denmark and all the grandness of Viking life personified in one building,” Hackl said.

There was no need to reinvent the wheel when it came to building. Hackl researched the original construction and duplicated the simple post and beam structures with purlines running from the ground to create an arch over the roof. This allowed rain to run off easily – a handy point given it rained almost daily during exterior photography. All told, it took six weeks to build this set. Craftsmen and carpenters were brought in to create intricate wood and stonework carving also based on historical designs. So accurate was the finished product that the archeology school at Dalhousie University in Halifax requested to take possession of the buildings used in Herot Village.

Another one of the other major builds was the interior of the Shield Hall, at 120 x 80 feet with a massive 36-foot oak tree growing out of the center. Oak was selected because, in Norse tradition, the tree was sacred to their warrior god, Odin. The interior décor included wood columns and pilasters, hand-carved with nature-based designs dating back 1500 years. The wall paintings depicted the hunt, battles and mythological creatures. What audiences do not see is the box steel trussing over top of the middle of the hall, housing an elaborate oval track designed by Stunt Coordinator, Steve Lucescu, to rig the actors for the spectacular shield dance scene in which Wulfric challenges Kainan to run along the tops of shields held up by the men of the village.

Finally, a Viking movie demands a Viking ship and OUTLANDER was no exception. Based on the design of the „Oseberg” ship discovered in 1904 and now on display at the Viking Ship Museum in Oslo, the vessel was built on site in Newfoundland. Sixty feet long, with dragon figureheads, plus filigree work on the bow and stern, rising 22 feet above water, it took 30 people six weeks to build. Fully loaded with twenty actors rowing, it reached speeds of almost six knots (compared to the original which is reported to have traveled at ten knots).

Any period film worth its weight in salt – or in the case of OUTLANDER, mud – has costumes that tell audiences as much about the characters as do their lines. Working from Howard McCain's vision and the creative supplied by Ryan Meinerding at Ninth Ray Studios (drawn up before a cast was in place), Costume Designer Debra Hanson worked to create a portrait of the period's aesthetic.

„My personal image that I worked from was ‘sequins in mud’,” explained Hanson. „When you do costumes like these, whether or not you actually end up in the mud as we did, I wanted to have garments that were very beautiful, very hand-wrought with incredible craftsmanship and skill, and yet at the same time, primitive with a practicality. It's not couturier. The practicality was real because the actors had to move in these garments, to fight, to sleep, to climb, to run, and to survive extreme elements. These costumes had to live on their bodies.”

Kainan's clothes, once out of his space suit, retain their functional simplicity, compared to what the Vikings were wearing. Kainan's designs were about textures: rich suedes, deeply toned leathers, dark fur and leather strapping with very limited ornamentation. They had a slight futuristic, yet retrograde element. For the Vikings, Hanson wanted all the work to be either hand-made or look as if it was made by hand. This was achieved with beautiful and intricate detailing. Wulfric and Rothgar wear chain mail vests, each one made from over 1000 individual hand-cut, then hand-polished brass scales. „This is complemented by leather armor, particularly the articulated leather shoulder guards which are so fantastic they verge on being fantasy pieces rather than historically accurate. Their leather footwear, which wrapped up the leg to the knee, ably withstood the mud and the cold on set. Altogether, 156 pairs of handmade boots were created for the film,” continued Hanson.

It was Freya's dresses which truly showcased Hanson's talents. Using Fortuny „Delphos” pleating and laundering fabrics so they appeared hand-loomed, the gowns for this Viking princess are deceptively simple. For the emerald gown Freya wore in Shield Hall, Hanson reversed the cloth, and suddenly the smooth gold flecks had a whimsical unevenness to them. The gown Freya wore for the funeral scene is the most elaborate: a garnet-colored fabric with a heavily embroidered ceremonial cloak is complimented by a fur piece over one shoulder. The belting, buckles and footwear, while not necessarily period correct, contribute to the primitive sophistication.

ABOUT THE CAST

„Genre films have not always cast great actors, but there are notable exceptions, such as ALIEN, with John Hurt and Sigourney Weaver. We cast OUTLANDER in the spirit of that film,” said Roberts. „And it was a liberating process to be able to find people who were good for the roles because they brought far more to their characters than just what was on the page.”

„We really did attract a great cast,” affirmed McCain, „all of whom are in it for the right reasons. From Jim Caviezel and John Hurt to Sophia Myles, Jack Huston and Ron Perlman, they all liked the script, not because it was a monster movie, not because it was a genre movie, but because of the underlying story.”

Stoic, yet heroic, is how Don Carmody characterized Jim Caviezel, with whom he had previously worked on the crime drama, ANGEL EYES. McCain favored this idea because it was imperative that the actor who played Kainan be able to summon up the qualities of the classic 1950s action hero: a hard, solitary warrior struggling with an inner moral turmoil. „Instead of turning to the more likely lock-and-load candidates for an action/sci-fi movie,” McCain said, „it was essential that we find someone who could deliver a sense of quiet soulfulness about the events which preceded the beginning of the film.”

„Kainan is a character who is bemused by his primitive surroundings, not intimidated. He quickly realizes he has to get along to survive and it takes a lot of his willpower as a negotiator to make that happen,” said Carmody. „Jim is a terrific actor and is more than able to bring that about.”

McCain knew that he had to entice his actors into becoming part of his dream and to that end, tempting them with the concept artwork from Ninth Ray Studios was very effective. „Jim read the script,” McCain recalled. „We met, I showed him the art work and he was very taken. Yes, he grappled with it at first because I’m a first time director and this was an independent film - but Jim loves these kind of movies, and what he really liked was that there was substance underneath.”

Kainan falls out of the sky and into 709 AD on Earth. Bridging these two worlds is the character of Freya, daughter of King Rothgar, betrothed to Wulfric, but strangely drawn to the outsider. This is an archetype with notable historical basis: Pocahontas, the daughter of a Native American Chief, who befriended the English colonist, Captain John Smith; La Malinche, daughter of an Aztec noble, who acted as a translator for Cortez and the invading Spaniards; even Cleopatra who fraternized with Julius Caesar and the Roman army.

„Sophia Myles was ideal for Freya because she brought a sense of grit and edge and she inhabited this historical world well. I had seen TRISTAN AND ISOLDE and loved Sophia’s performance,” said McCain.

„It’s curious how I seem to get offered a lot of royalty!” said Myles, who has played a princess several times previously, including TRISTAN AND ISOLDE. „But Freya’s different. She gets her hands dirty. She gets to fight the Moorwen, which delighted me when I read that in the script. She’s more masculine than any other character I’ve played, and that I get to deck Jim with a roundhouse is impressive, but then again, I’m surrounded by so much testosterone in this film. The boys are great. Jack has become my best friend, Jim has been great, showing me up all the time with his push-ups, and then there is John Hurt. Just to be in the same room with him is a privilege.”

About her director, Myles said, „Howard has been fantastic. We instantly connected. He sees the vision and he knows what he wants. It’s been a mud bath at times, but the harder it is on the day, the better it looks on the screen, so I was prepared to put up with all the muck.” Myles said that when she read the script, she never envisioned Freya as a blonde, her own color, and had always harbored a wish to be a redhead, if only for a brief while. She convinced McCain to try it out and it worked beautifully with the personality of the character.

Dirk Blackman said the character of Wulfric had been pretty solid in their minds for a long time as the young prince sitting on a fence, a young man with a lot of power, but unsure what to do with it. During casting, McCain recalled Jack Huston as, „... a total revelation. I hadn’t seen anything he had done. In Jack’s reading, he brought a veneer of authority mixed with this boyish immaturity. And it was the indecisiveness in the character, the flaw, that Jack was able to find very nicely.”

„I absolutely had to play this part,” proclaimed Huston. „I love period films and this is the one I wanted to do. The whole Viking experience is a trip – the costumes, the sword training, the bravado you feel just walking through the Viking village. I loved it. And Wulfric is a great character who starts as the anti-hero and by the end of the movie, he wins the audience over. Deep down, he is a good man; he just needs guidance and Rothgar, Kainan and Freya do guide him.”

Huston’s view of Wulfric’s arc is expansive, „Wulfric’s father, Halga, taught him that the sword is the only form of negotiation, whereas his more thoughtful Uncle Rothgar acted as his father in the more loving sense. The conflicting allegiances trouble Wulfric, who approaches each new conflict by either making the brash decision, which is to fight it out, or the right decision, which is to talk it out. The result is an arrogant, impetuous youth who believes he is not only ready to be king, but should be king. Freya, his childhood playmate, is now the object of, if not his affection, certainly his attention because she’s the only one in the village who hasn’t yet succumbed to his charms. This, naturally, drives him insane. Into this mix comes Kainan, the first and perhaps only man in the village who challenges him. In addition to all that, you get this overwhelming sense of being a Viking! I am taking great pleasure in killing a lot of people in this film.”

Huston thoroughly enjoyed the cast of OUTLANDER. „Ron Perlman is just the epitome of cool. Sophia is a sweetheart, and Jim is a great actor with an amazing intensity which is perfect for the character. He has this otherworldly quality in the most beautiful way; you look in his eyes and think, you’re not from this earth. And then there is the legend that is John Hurt – an incredible, old school, character actor. I’d heard a rumor that he might do the film and I completely flipped out. When I heard he took the part, I couldn’t have been happier.”

The relationship between Rothgar, played by Hurt, and Gunnar, played by Ron Perlman, is steeped in the history of the Viking tribes. Gunnar rules a hamlet that is subject to Herot Village, which was ruled by King Halga. Called to go on a dangerous raid by Halga, Gunnar refused, leaving the King poorly defended. When Halga dies in battle, his son, Wulfric, blames Gunnar, pledging revenge, but his uncle, Rothgar, assumes the throne and advocates for a peaceful resolution. The Moorwen lands on Earth and his first victims are the inhabitants of Gunnar’s village, but Rothgar is blamed, and a full-blown blood feud ensues.

In the annals of genre film, both John Hurt and Ron Perlman have distinguished pedigrees and it is noteworthy that they are working together again. „Having Ron and John brought tremendous class to the movie. Both are extraordinary actors and it’s a real testament to the script and to Howard’s passion that he landed these two actors. They’ve delivered amazing performances,” said Schimmel.

„You need a character to bring wisdom into movies like this, and for the Vikings at that moment in their history, the question was how to deal with Gunnar’s clan,” said Blackman. „Rothgar is wise, but he isn’t always right. And John Hurt is so good, he can sell anything.”

McCain is fond of recalling the process John Hurt went through in deciding to take the role of Rothgar. „John and his wife read scripts out loud to each other when they come in. When his agent first sent him OUTLANDER, it was prefaced with the description of ‘It’s about Vikings and aliens.’ Most people laugh because it sounds silly and John was no different. But being a dutiful actor, he read it and by page 20, he said, ‘This wasn’t what we thought it would be at all.’ By the end of the second reading, he said, ‘This will really play. I like it.’”

After more than 40 years of acting, John Hurt is delightfully sanguine about the business. If a script looks like it is going to succeed on the level it is intended to, he’s in. „OUTLANDER is a rattling good yarn and I figured this was my last opportunity at playing a Viking,” Hurt said. As it happened, it was also his first chance to play a Viking and at the age of 67, now seemed as good a time as any to engage in a little sword-fighting and horseback riding. „Rothgar believes a king is a servant of his people, not the other way around. Rothgar’s purpose in the film is to pass off some of his philosophy to the young man before he becomes king.”

Off screen, it was an endearing moment when Hurt was reunited with Perlman. Hurt noted, „Ron is one of those few, but fortunate fellows who quicken your heart with joy both when you meet him and when you see his name on the call-sheet. I think this is probably because of Ron’s great generosity of spirit. Years ago, an agent told Ron that he would come into his own at the age of forty which did not please him at the time as he was about twenty. However, the agent seems to have been right. I am thrilled to have been able to work with him on two occasions and feel sure there are more to come.”

Ron Perlman responded in kind, „What a delight it is to be reunited with John Hurt, having worked with him on HELLBOY. He is the quintessential actor’s actor, one of the most generous people I have ever met. When I got word he was going to be on OUTLANDER, I got a little spring in my step and it hasn’t left. I am completely blessed by whatever coincidence managed to rule the day.” Moving along to the subject of Gunnar, Perlman continued. „Gunnar might possibly be my favorite character that I’ve ever played – fierce and feared. They talk about me for about 62 pages until I finally arrive. I’m in for about seven pages and then I’m gone and they talk about me for the rest of the movie.”

THE CAST

Jim Caviezel – Kainan

Jim Caviezel was born and raised in Skagit County, Washington. The Caviezels were a family of athletes, and James steered initially towards athletics, especially basketball. It wasn't until an injured foot sidelined him that James began to develop other interests. His first acting gig was an undergraduate stage adaptation of the Frank Sinatra musical „Come Blow Your Horn“. In the early 1980s he re-located to Los Angeles, working as a waiter and making the rounds of auditions.

He found small roles on popular TV shows like „Murder“, „She Wrote“ and „The Wonder Years“. He talked his way into his big screen debut as an airline reservations clerk in Gus Van Sant's MY OWN PRIVATE IDAHO (1991) by pretending to be a recent Italian immigrant with a thick accent. He continued to get small roles in pictures like DIGGSTOWN (1992), Lawrence Kasdan's WYATT EARP (1994), but he also began to be noticed. As „Slov“ Slovnik in G.I. JANE (1997) he made his presence felt in several scenes of intense fraternization with co-star Demi Moore.

His breakthrough role was another military assignment, the brooding pacifist Private Witt in Terrence Malick's THE THIN RED LINE (1998), alongside Sean Penn, Nick Nolte, and Adrien Brody. He went on to appear over the next few years in such films as Ang Lee's Civil War-era „Western“ RIDE WITH THE DEVIL (1999), and in Gregory Hoblit's ingenious time-twist thriller FREQUENCY (2000), in which he played a troubled son hooking up across two decades of time with his long-dead father (Dennis Quaid). In 2001 he starred with Jennifer Lopez in ANGEL EYES, directed by Luis Mandoki. He then used his range to convincingly play the wrongly convicted Edmond Dantes in the adaptation of Alexandre Dumas' classic THE COUNT OF MONTE CRISTO (2002), and a war hero wrestling with a murder charge in Carl Franklin's courtroom drama HIGH CRIMES (2002), with Morgan Freeman and Ashley Judd.

It could be said that Jim's role in THE PASSION OF THE CHRIST is the ultimate in terms of making simultaneous physical and emotional demands upon a performer. The actor was chosen for the role because he was willing to commit to this unique project wholeheartedly.

Sophia Myles – Freya

A vicar's daughter brought up in Islesworth, West London, Sophia Myles was spotted by a British casting director at the age of sixteen in a school play and offered a small part in the television version of „The Prince and the Pauper“. Filming during her GCSEs, she learned her lines at night in a hotel and still got straight A's. During her A levels, Sophia appeared in Fay Weldon's BIG WOMEN. She turned down a place studying Philosophy at Cambridge in favor of pursuing a career in acting.

Sophia was next cast in Patricia Rozema's feature MANSFIELD PARK and as Oliver Twist's mother in the Bleasdale adaptation. She then starred opposite Charles Dance in „Nicholas Nickleby“ for ITV. Sophia continued full speed ahead, with a starring role in the British feature ABDUCTION CLUB opposite Matthew Rhys for director Stefan Schwartz and the American thriller FROM HELL, in which she played Johnny Depp's wife. She next landed a role on her first American audition in Lakeshore's UNDERWORLD alongside Kate Beckinsale and shortly after, nabbed the coveted role of "Lady Penelope" in Universal Pictures' THUNDERBIRDS for director Jonathan Frakes.

In 2006, she played the female lead in the Terry Zwigoff film ART SCHOOL CONFIDENTIAL with Steve Buscemi and John Malkovich and as "Isolde" in the 20th Century Fox feature TRISTAN & ISOLDE for director Kevin Reynolds and producer Ridley Scott. Recently, Sophia starred in the British film HALLAM FOE with Jamie Bell.

Sophia presently resides in London.

Jack Huston – Wulfric

Jack Huston has movies in his blood. Belonging to the youngest generation of the illustrious Huston family, Jack developed his acting skills during school life at Hurtwood House, where he played a wide variety of challenging roles such as Pip in „Great Expectations“, Inspector Bertozzo in „Accidental Death Of An Anarchist“, and Rusty Charlie in „Guys And Dolls“. Soon after beginning his professional career playing Frank in Sir Peter Hall's production of „Mrs. Warrens Profession“ in London's West End, he swiftly made the jump to television, playing Flavius in USA Network's „Spartacus“.

Since then, Jack has turned his attentions towards film. Most recently he wrapped FACTORY GIRL for The Weinstein Company in which he stars opposite Sienna Miller and Jimmy Fallon. Jack will next be seen starring as the lead in THE GARDEN OF EDEN, an adaption of the novel by Ernest Hemingway

John Hurt – Rothgar

Born in 1940, the son of Arnold Herbert (an Anglican vicar) and Phyllis Massey (an engineer and amateur actress), John Hurt attended schools in Kent and Lincoln. He was a stagehand with the Lincoln Repertory and studied Art at St. Martin's School, London before winning a scholarship to RADA.

John Hurt is one of Britain's best known, critically acclaimed and most versatile actors. He made his West End debut in 1962 and went on to take the 1963 Critics' Award for Most Promising Actor in Harold Pinter's THE DWARFS. For the stage, John has also appeared in Pinter's THE CARETAKER, O'Casey's SHADOW OF A GUNMAN, Stoppard's TRAVESTIES for the RSC, Turgenev's A MONTH IN THE COUNTRY. The year 2000 saw his greatly acclaimed performance in Samuel Beckett's KRAPP'S LAST TAPE in London's West End.

John's impressive body of television work commenced in 1961 and has included such notable roles as Caligula in „I, Claudius“, Raskolnikov in „Crime and Punishment“ and, most memorably, as Quentin Crisp in the autobiographical „The Naked Civil Servant“ (for which he received a Best Actor Emmy and a BAFTA Best Television Actor Award) which led Crisp to opine that 'John Hurt is my representative here on Earth.'

It was his defining film roles as Max in MIDNIGHT EXPRESS (1978) and as John Merrick in THE ELEPHANT MAN (1980) that thrust him into the international spotlight with Oscar nominations for Best Supporting Actor and Best Actor, respectively. His other film work includes a trio of roles in 1984 which rewarded him with the Evening Standard Award for Best Actor for that year for: 1984, THE HIT AND CHAMPIONS. His many films include A MAN FOR ALL SEASONS, THE FIELD, SCANDAL, ROB ROY and John Boorman's TWO NUDES BATHING, the latter for which he received a Cable Ace Award in 1995, and an acclaimed performance in Richard Kwietniowski's LOVE AND DEATH ON LONG ISLAND. John was seen as Dr. Iannis in CAPTAIN CORELLI'S MANDOLIN directed by John Madden.

In 1999 John filmed Beckett's KRAPP'S LAST TAPE directed by Atom Egoyan and TABLOID TV directed by David Blair in 2000. 2001 was spent filming MIRANDA directed by Mark Munden, HARRY POTTER AND THE SORCERER'S STONE directed by Chris Columbus and OWNING MAHONEY directed by Richard Kwietniowski.

In 2002, John won the Variety Club Award for Outstanding Performance in a Stage Play, alongside Penelope Wilton for their performance in Brian Friel's AFTERPLAY. This was followed by the film, HELLBOY, directed by Guillermo del Toro for Revolution Studios and THE ALAN CLARK DIARIES for the BBC, which received great critical acclaim. More recently, John filmed SKELETON KEY, directed by Iain Softely for Universal, SHOOTING DOGS directed by Michael Caton-Jones and THE PROPOSITION directed by John Hilcote. He also recently starred in V FOR VENDETTA written and produced by The Wachowski Brothers and was the narrator in PERFUME: THE STORY OF A MURDERER.

Ron Perlman – Gunnar

An award-winning actor, Ron Perlman has moved seamlessly between the worlds of film, television, and theater for almost three decades. Having received a Master of Fine Arts degree from the University of Minnesota, he returned to his native New York to begin his professional career in theater, delving into the works of contemporaries like „Pinter and Beckett“ as well as the classics of Shakespeare, Marlowe, Ibsen, and Chekhov with two recent trips back to Broadway in „A Few Good Men“ and „Bus Stop“.

His film career began in the early eighties with two films back to back for director Jean Jacques Annaud; QUEST FOR FIRE, for which he received a Canadian Academy Award nomination, and the role of Salvatore, the hunchback in Umberto Eco's THE NAME OF THE ROSE. Most recently Perlman resumes his unique collaboration with French directors starring in Jean Pierre Juenet and Marc Caro's award winning CITY OF LOST CHILDREN and costarring with Sigourney Weaver and Winona Ryder in Juenet's ALIEN RESURRECTION. Other film work includes roles in studio ventures such as THE ISLAND OF DR. MOREAU, ROMEO IS BLEEDING, FLUKE, THE ADVENTURES OF HUCK FINN, and SLEEPWALKERS, as well as independent films including CRONOS, THE LAST SUPPER, WHEN THE BOUGH BREAKS, FROGS FOR SNAKES, I WOKE UP EARLY THE DAY I DIED, TINSELTOWN, and Miramax's HAPPY TEXAS.

Perlman's film career was interrupted for a three-year run on CBS' critically acclaimed „Beauty and The Beast“ for which he received a Golden Globe Award for Best Actor along with two Emmy Nominations and three Viewers For Quality Television Awards. Other television work includes HBO's „The Second Civil War“, „Mr. Stitch“, „The Adventures of Captain Zoom“, the Rob Nilsson adaptation of the Rod Serling classic „A Town Has Turned to Dust“ for the Sci-Fi Channel, „The Magnificent Seven“, marking his second collaboration with CBS, New Line Cinema's feature PRICE OF GLORY with Jimmy Smits, Mandalay's, ENEMY AT THE GATE, opposite Jude Law, New Line Cinema's BLADE II, Paramount's, STAR TREK: NEMESIS, the Oscar winning short film TWO SOLDIERS, Guillermo del Toro's HELLBOY for Revolution Studios in which he plays the title character. Stephen King's mini-series Desperation for ABC, Larry Fessenden's Indie, THE LAST WINTER and the IN THE NAME OF THE KING with Jason Statham and John Rhys-Davies. Perlman starred recently in the HELLBOY-sequel HELLBOY II: THE GOLDEN ARMY by Guillermo del Toro.

THE CREW

Howard McCain

A graduate of one of the world's top cinema programs at New York University his short films TRUMAN and LOS POLLOS won honors at the internationally renowned Sundance Film Festival. Los Pollos also won an Emmy for Best Short Drama. McCain has directed the television movies: „Perfect Prey” for HBO, „The Unspeakable” for Showtime, and “No Dessert Dad” for the Disney Channel.

As a writer, he and his partner Dirk Blackman, have worked for legendary action star Jackie Chan, Director John Woo, and recently sold the action/adventure pitch, AMAZON. Actress Scarlett Johansson is attached to star.

Chris Roberts – Producer

Chris Roberts founded Ascendant Pictures in early 2003 and in just a short time, established himself and the company as a force in the world of independent film production and finance. In 2004, Roberts earned an Executive Producer credit on THE PUNISHER and produced THE BIG WHITE (Robin Williams, Holly Hunter, Woody Harrelson) and LORD OF WAR (Nicolas Cage, Ethan Hawke, Jared Leto). In 2005, Roberts produced LUCKY NUMBER SLEVIN. In addition, he served as Executive Producer on THE JACKET (Adrien Brody and Keira Knightly) and the upcoming Robert Towne film, ASK THE DUST (Colin Farrell and Selma Hayek). Roberts also served as Executive Producer on BLACK WATER TRANSIT which was filmed 2007 in New Orleans.

Prior to founding Ascendant, Roberts was Chairman and CEO of Digital Anvil (DA), the game development and digital effects company he founded in 1996 with funding from Microsoft and Advanced Micro Devices. Roberts guided DA's growth to annual revenues of \$14 million, prior to the release of many of its games in development. His innovations changed the gaming industry. His games were the first to perfect the use of 35mm film as narrative in interactive game titles, and DA became the first interactive entertainment company to produce a game title, „Wing Commander“, into a \$25 million feature film, directed and produced by Roberts. The film starred Freddie Prinze, Jr., I KNOW WHAT YOU DID LAST SUMMER, Saffron Burrows in DEEP BLUE SEA and Matthew Lillard in SCOOBY DOO.

DA and the video game titles it created won numerous gaming awards and the company became a digital effects powerhouse, creating all of the digital effects for the WING COMMANDER movie and contributing to the digital effects for several other films, including SPY KIDS. In December of 2000, Roberts sold DA to Microsoft. DA remains a successful subsidiary of Microsoft and content provider for the XBOX.

In 1987, Roberts joined Origin Systems, Inc. (OSI), which was later acquired as a wholly owned subsidiary by Electronic Arts (EA) in 1992 for \$30 million. Roberts was instrumental in OSI's growth from a company with \$4 million in annual revenues to a company with annual revenues of \$50 million. In 1990, Roberts developed „Wing Commander“, which set a new standard in PC games and evolved into a franchise series of game titles, all developed and produced by Roberts. With its cinematic quality, clearly developed storylines and well-known actors, the „Wing Commander“ series created a whole new genre within the gaming industry known as the „interactive movie.“ By 1995, the „Wing Commander“ series had generated well over \$110 million in revenues, and from 1990 to 1995, the „Wing Commander“ series accounted for more than 60% of OSI's revenue. In addition to selling more than 3 million units worldwide by 1995, the „Wing Commander“ series won a record setting number of gaming awards. To date, the series has generated over \$400 million in global retail revenue.

A gaming wunderkind, Roberts sold his first computer game at the age of 14, and by the age of 20, Roberts had developed three #1 hits in his native U.K.: „Match Day“, „Wiz Day“ and „Stryker's Run“.

John Schimmel – Producer

John Schimmel is currently a partner in and President of Production of Ascendant Pictures, an independent film finance and production company. Ascendant's films include Andrew Nicol's LORD OF WAR, Paul McGuigan's LUCKY NUMBER SLEVIN, and THE BIG WHITE starring Robin Williams and Holly Hunter.

John came to Ascendant from Bel Air Entertainment, a production and finance company that distributed through Warner Bros., where he was Executive Vice President of Production. While there he produced COLLATERAL DAMAGE with Arnold Schwarzenegger, and supervised SWEET NOVEMBER with Keanu Reeves and Charlize Theron; THE REPLACEMENTS with Keanu Reeves and Gene Hackman; and READY TO RUMBLE with Scott Caan and David Arquette.

John started his career as an executive in the film industry at Warner Bros., first as a script reader, then as head of the story department where he managed a team of fifteen readers and five clerks. After being promoted to Production Executive, he worked on such projects as THE FUGITIVE starring Harrison Ford; OUTBREAK starring Dustin Hoffman; UNDER SEIGE starring Steven Segal; THE LAST BOY SCOUT starring Bruce Willis; MR. WONDERFUL starring Matt Dillon and Annabella Sciora; JUST CAUSE starring Sean Connery; and INTERVIEW WITH A VAMPIRE starring Tom Cruise and Brad Pitt. John also helped put together and run Warner Bros. Feature Animation department, and was on the steering committee that helped plot Warner's entrance into the interactive world.

John left Warner Bros. for a two-year stint as Vice President of Fox Family Films, where he supervised DUNSTON CHECKS IN with Jason Alexander and Faye Dunaway.

John moved to Fox to work as Senior Vice President of Douglas-Reuther with Steve Reuther and Michael Douglas, a production and finance company that distributed through Paramount. At Douglas-Reuther, John worked on THE RAINMAKER starring Matt Damon and Danny DeVito; and supervised FACE/OFF starring John Travolta and Nick Cage.

When Douglas-Reuther lost its financing, John put together and worked as president of Michael Douglas' new company Further Films, which had a deal at Universal Studios. He left that position when Steve Reuther put together the financing for Bel Air Entertainment.

John started his career as a musician, working mostly in New York studios, clubs, and theaters. He co-wrote and co-produced the show „Pump Boys and Dinettes“ which received both Tony and Laurence Olivier nominations for best show. He attended Wesleyan University and the NYU Courant Institute/Graduate School of Mathematics.

Barrie Osborne – Executive Producer

Barrie Osborne's last production was THE WATERHORSE: THE LEGEND OF THE DEEP which was released in December 07. He recently executive produced two independent films, Roger Donaldson's THE WORLD'S FASTEST INDIAN starring Anthony Hopkins and Rowan Woods' LITTLE FISH starring Cate Blanchett, Hugo Weaving, Sam Neill and Martin Henderson.

As producer of THE LORD OF THE RINGS: RETURN OF THE KING, Osborne won many awards including the 2004 Academy Award and the British Academy of Film and Television Award for Best Picture. Among other credits, Osborne

executive produced THE MATRIX. His other producing credits include John Woo's FACE/OFF and CHINA MOON. He has served as executive producer on THE FAN, DICK TRACY, CHILD'S PLAY, WILDER NAPALM, RAPA NUI and PEGGY SUE GOT MARRIED.

A native New Yorker, Osborne earned a B.A. degree from Minnesota's Carleton College. Osborne served as 1st Lieutenant in the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers before entering the film industry in 1970. Accepted into the Directors Guild of America trainee program, Osborne worked under the tutelage of directors such as Francis Ford Coppola, Alan Pakula and Sydney Pollack on films including THE GODFATHER PART II, THREE DAYS OF THE CONDOR and ALL THE PRESIDENTS MEN. He subsequently worked on a number of films in various capacities including APOCALYPSE NOW, THE BIG CHILL, KING OF COMEDY, THE COTTON CLUB, CUTTER'S WAY, FANDANGO and CHINA SYNDROME.

Don Carmody – Executive Producer

Don Carmody has been producing films for more than 30 years. He was vice-president of production for Canada's Cinepix (now Lions Gate Films), where he co-produced David Cronenberg's early shockers THEY CAME FROM WITHIN and RABID as well as the popular comedy MEATBALLS.

Starting his own production company in 1980, Carmody went on to produce the smash hits PORKY'S and PORKY'S II, also the perennially popular A CHRISTMAS STORY as well as SPACEHUNTER: ADVENTURES IN THE FORBIDDEN ZONE, WHISPERS, THE BIG TOWN, PHYSICAL EVIDENCE, SWITCHING CHANNELS and several Chuck Norris films, including THE HITMAN and SIDEKICKS.

He returned to comedy successfully with the „Weekend at Bernie's“ series, and THE LATE SHIFT FOR H.B.O., which was nominated for seven Emmy Awards, three Cable Ace awards and the Producers' Guild of America Golden Laurel. THE LATE SHIFT also won a Golden Globe for actress Kathy Bates and a Directors' Guild Award for Betty Thomas.

His credits include some 75 films thus far, including JOHNNY MNEMONIC with Keanu Reeves, THE MIGHTY with Sharon Stone, STUDIO 54 with Mike Myers, the Academy Award nominated GOOD WILL HUNTING with Matt Damon, Ben Affleck and Robin Williams, IN TOO DEEP with L.L. Cool J, the cult hit THE BOONDOCK SAINTS with Willem Dafoe, THE THIRD MIRACLE with Ed Harris and Anne Heche, GET CARTER with Sylvester Stallone, THE WHOLE NINE YARDS with Bruce Willis and Mathew Perry, THE PLEDGE directed by Sean Penn and starring Jack Nicholson, 3000 MILES TO GRACELAND with Kevin Costner and Courtney Cox, CAVEMAN'S VALENTINE with Samuel Jackson, ANGEL EYES with Jennifer Lopez, David Mamet's THE HEIST with Gene Hackman, and Danny DeVito, CITY BY THE SEA with Robert De Niro and Frances McDormand, WRONG TURN with Eliza Dushku, GOTHIKA starring Halle Berry, Penelope Cruz and Robert Downey Jr., RESIDENT EVIL based on the all time bestselling video game and RESIDENT EVIL: APOCALYPSE starring Milla Jovovich, ASSAULT ON PRECINCT 13 with Ethan Hawke, Laurence Fishburne, Gabriel Byrne and Maria Bello, LUCKY NUMBER SLEVIN with Bruce Willis, Josh Hartnett and Morgan Freeman, and SILENT HILL starring Radha Mitchell and Sean Bean. He recently completed production on SKINWALKERS, starring Jason Behr, Elias Koteas, Rhona Mitra, and Sarah Carter, and is in pre-production on the thriller Driver, written and directed by Roger Avary, and WHITEOUT, starring Kate Beckinsale. In 2002 he was Co-Producer of the hit film musical of CHICAGO starring Renée Zellweger, Catherine Zeta-Jones and Richard Gere, which won seven Academy Awards including Best Picture, three Golden Globe Awards, including Best Musical or Comedy and the Producers'

Guild of America Golden Laurel Award for Best Picture as well as many, many other awards and citations around the world.

Following his genre instincts, Carmody branched out into the theatre world and was part of the production team for the Off Broadway play „Evil Dead: The Musical“, a campy send-up of Sam Raimi’s cult classic horror films EVIL DEAD I and II, which opened in New York to rave reviews.

Don Carmody was born in New England and emigrated to Canada with his parents as a boy. He graduated from film school in Montreal and has gone on to produce films all over the world. He currently lives in Toronto and Los Angeles.

Dirk Blackman – Executive Producer

Dirk Blackman’s credits include twenty screenplays sold to major production companies and studios in Hollywood during the past ten years. With OUTLANDER, he adds executive producing chores for the Ascendant-TWC project. He has just completed AMAZON, an ancient-world action piece for Scarlett Johansson and producer Moshe Diamante. Dirk has the supernatural thriller CROSSING OVER in active development with director Nick Mastandrea, as well as the horror film THE DJINN at Intrepid Pictures. His earlier work includes projects for Chinese action legends Tsui Hark and Jackie Chan. He is hard at work on a television pilot and historical thriller. Dirk and OUTLANDER Director Howard McCain have recently formed DWP, a production company. A graduate of Columbia University and the American Film Institute, Dirk lives at home in Los Angeles with his wife and twin daughters. He spends his free time growing his huge collection of Silver Age comic books and Buck Rogers memorabilia.

Kia Jam – Executive Producer

With more than a decade of experience as a a producer, Kia Jam teamed up with Chris Roberts and Christopher Eberts to form Ascendant Pictures in 2002, an independent film production and film finance company.

Together they created one of the most promising upstart film companies with an experienced team that is uniquely to develop projects from conception through worldwide release. Jam has served in a producing capacity on several Ascendant Pictures’ projects including LUCKY NUMBER SLEVIN, THE BIG WHITE, ASK THE DUST, and THE JACKET. He is currently overseeing pre-production on BLACK WATER TRANSIT, directed by Sam Bayer. Jam recently oversaw production on TIMBER FALLS done with Cheyenne Enterprises and the urban golf comedy, WHO’S YOUR CADDY, that was being distributed by Dimension Films. Other projects in development for Jam include: GROUNDED written by Paul Davidson and to be the live action debut of SHREK director, Vicky Jenson, and FUTURE FORCE, directed by Renny Harlin and produced in conjunction with E3. Prior to joining Ascendant, Jam was president of KJAM Productions, an independent film production company based in Santa Monica, California. In 2002, Jam co-produced JUWANNA MANN for Morgan Creek and Warner Bros. He also produced DUNGEONS & DRAGONS with Joel Silver for New Line Cinema starring Jermeay Irons and Marlon Waynans.

Jam began his feature film career back in 1995 when he signed a multi-picture first look deal with Miramax/Dimension Films. Prior to producing features, Jam was recruited by James Cameron’s visual effects powerhouse Digital Domain where he was involved in all levels of production on over 60 television commercials, including Cleo Award-winning Jeep commercial and David Fincher’s Grammy Award-winning Rolling Stone music video, “Love is Strong.”

Christopher Eberts – Executive Producer

As one of the founders of Ascendant Pictures, an independent film development, production, finance and foreign distribution company, Christopher Eberts served in producing capacities on numerous projects since its inception in 2002 including: LUCKY NUMBER SLEVIN starring Josh Hartnett, Bruce Willis, Lucy Liu, Morgan Freeman and Sir Ben Kingsley, directed by Paul McGuigan; LORD OF WAR starring Nicolas Cage and Ethan Hawke, directed by Andrew Niccol; THE BIG WHITE starring Robin Williams, Holly Hunter and Woody Harrelson, directed by Mark Mylod; ASK THE DUST starring Colin Farrell and Salma Hayak, written and directed by Robert Towne; EDISON starring Kevin Spacey, Morgan Freeman, Justin Timberlake, and LL Cool J.; THE JACKET starring Adrien Brody and Keira Knightley, directed by John Maybury; and THE PUNISHER starring John Travolta and Thomas Jane, directed by Jonathan Hensleigh.

Recent Projects include: THE TOURIST – a psychological thriller starring Ewan MacGregor, Hugh Jackman, and Michelle Williams, directed by Marcel Langenegger; WHO'S YOUR CADDY - an urban updated „Caddyshack“ starring Big Boi and Faizon Love; TIMBER FALLS - a terrifying new horror franchise starring Josh Randall and Brianna Brown, directed by Tony Giglio (CHAOS); and ALREADY DEAD – a psychological thriller starring Til Schweiger and Christopher Plummer, written by Joe Chappelle (THE WIRE), directed by Joe Otting, and produced with SDJS Media.

Prior to founding Ascendant, Christopher Eberts was CEO and President of ScreenWorks Media where he executive produced the documentary film, PRISONER OF PARADISE, which was nominated for a 2002 Academy Award for Best Documentary. Additional Producing credits include: HALF PAST DEAD starring Steven Seagal and Ja Rule; THE WATCHER, starring Keanu Reeves, James Spader, Marisa Tomei and Chris Ellis; CHASING HOLDEN starring DJ Qualls and Rachel Blanchard; and WOMAN WANTED starring Kiefer Sutherland and Holly Hunter.

Before forming his own production banner, Eberts was Vice President of Production at Twentieth Century Fox where he was responsible for all phases of feature film development and production, including: solicitation of screenplays and other source material; screenplay analysis and development; assignment of director, cast and other creative elements; the securing of production financing and distribution arrangements; as well as the physical supervision of all aspects of the production process. With Twentieth Century Fox, Eberts was involved in the production of MY COUSIN VINNY, RISING SUN, and ALIENS III, among others.

Karen Loop – Executive Producer

Her first feature film was a psychological horror picture entitled FRAILTY in which actor Bill Paxton made his directorial debut. This critically acclaimed film, starring Paxton and Matthew McConaughey, was hailed by Ebert & Ropert „as one of the year's best.” She followed that with New Line's successful family film, SECONDHAND LIONS. Starring Michael Caine, Robert Duvall, and Haley Joel Osment, the film was well received and is presently in development as a Broadway musical. In summer 2004, Loop served as co-producer on a five part mini-series for the Sci Fi Channel's entitled „Five Days Til Midnight“, starring Timothy Hutton. After graduating from UCLA, Loop began her career as a television producer in Boston. She obtained her MFA in Film Production from NYU where her short films won two Emmys and became a finalist for the student Academy Award. While at school, she worked in physical production directing music videos and coordinating feature films.

Upon moving to Los Angeles, Loop switched to the development side of film, landing her first job with legendary producers Freddie Fields and Jerry Hellman

(MIDNIGHT COWBOY, COMING HOME, GLORY). Karen spent the next three years working at the Paramount-based Cort/Madden Company which was responsible for such films as ODD COUPLE II, THE OUT OF TOWNERS and SAVE THE LAST DANCE during her tenure. She then went on to work with producer David Kirschner (CURIOUS GEORGE, MISS POTTER, CHILD'S PLAY) before striking out on her own.

Patrick Tatopolous – Creature Design

Tatopolous designs and creations have influenced the quality and direction of contemporary cinematography for over a decade. His creative achievements in Production Design as well as Creature Effects have left a lasting impression in the Motion Picture industry, with a unique style that is rich, complex and diverse. His growing body of work has a distinct visual style that attests to his boundless imagination.

Patrick's signature style is recognizable in such noted feature films as INDEPENDENCE DAY (ID4); I ROBOT; UNDERWORLD: EVOLUTION; SILENT HILL; DARK CITY; UNDERWORLD; PITCH BLACK; STUART LITTLE; STARGATE and GODZILLA, to name just a few. The environments and creatures created for these films have resulted from the unique combination of Patrick's artistry and his collaboration with talented, visionary directors.

Patrick has also designed/directed several commercials and music videos in the past few years in addition to his many other projects. Three of his most recognized music video designs were done for the popular rock band Linkin Park; with the first video, „In The End“, taking the coveted „Best Rock Video“ award at the 2001 US MTV Music Awards, and the second, „Pts. of Authority – Remix“ taking the „Favorite Video“ award at the 2002 MTV Asia Music Awards. On the commercial front, Patrick has designed the look in many ads for such highly branded industry names as Nintendo, Reebok, Mike's Hard Lemonade, Cingular Wireless, Intel Pentium, and Footlocker.

Born in Paris, France, Patrick is of Greek and French heritage. He studied at the Art Decoratif De Paris; the Art Appliques De Paris and the famous Beaux Art De Paris. Prior to moving to the US in 1989 to work in the entertainment industry, Patrick spent several years in both Rome and Athens working as a fine artist and freelance illustrator. Another interest of Patrick's is the mentoring of new and upcoming young artists. In 2001 Patrick was honored to have one of the prized Hellenic Times Scholarship given in his name.

Patrick Tatopoulos continually strives to discover new challenges in all areas of the entertainment world. In turn, his efforts, contributions, and artistic style continue to be sought after.

Pierre Gill – Director of Photography

Pierre Gill has worked with some of the most respected directors in cinema and television and he has been honored by both the Canadian and American Societies of Cinematography. Gill's film credits include THE COVENANT with director Renny Harlin, MAURICE RICHARD, THE ROCKET with director Charles Binamé, Denise Filiatrault's L'ODYSSÉE D'ALICE TREMBLAY, Léa Pool's LOST AND DELIRIOUS, for which he won a Genie Award and a CSC Award; Christian Duguay's THE ART OF WAR, for which he won a CSC Award and received two nominations for Genie and Jutra Awards, Binamé's LA BEAUTÉ DE PANDORE and Jean Beaudin's SOUVENIRS INTIMES, for which Gill won Jutra and CSC Awards, as well as a Genie nomination for Best Cinematography. He worked with Jean-Marc Vallée on LOSER LOVE, LOS LOCOS and LISTE NOIRE, for which he received his first Genie nomination for Best Cinematography. Gill's credits

also include two additional films with Charles Binamé, ELDORADO and LE COEUR AU POING, as well as Joan Micklin Silver's IN THE PRESENCE OF MINE ENEMIES.

Gill has directed several telefilms including THE LAST CASINO, for which he won the Best Director Award at the International New York Film Festival in 2005, as well as CHARLIE JADE. As a cinematographer, his made-for-TV movie credits include XCHANGE, directed by Allan Moyle, „The Hunger“ for showtime and Charles Binamé's MARGUERITE VOLANT, for which he won a Prix Gémeaux for Best Cinematography. His miniseries include Christian Duguay's HITLER: THE RISE OF EVIL (starring Robert Carlyle and Stockard Channing), for which Gill won both CSC and ASC Awards; THE SALEM WITCH TRIALS, directed by Joseph Sargent and Christian Duguay's JOAN OF ARC (starring Leelee Sobieski), which won a CSC Award for Best Cinematography and an ASC nomination in the same category.

David Dodson – Editor

David Dodson is the editor of many films including THE ELDER SON, starring Leelee Sobieski, the music documentary SLEEPWALKING THROUGH THE MEKONG, NORTH, directed by John Boskovich, which won the Jury Prize for Special Achievement in Film Editing at the Berlin International Film Festival, THE AMERICAN KNIGHT, FLOW (the number one selling extreme sports film in the world in 2002), for which he was also the Sound Designer, DUST, directed by Xan Cassavetes, plus commercials and music videos including „No One Knows: The Lost Art of Keeping a Secret“, which received a MTV VMA Award nomination.

David Kuklish – Special Effects Supervisor

David Kuklish has been creating visual effects for almost eighteen years, supervising over twenty feature films in 8 different countries. He started designing and developing mechanical special effects systems for Universal Studios Hollywood and Disney, and from there started working with miniatures and motion control photography for commercials and features. He has developed a number of proprietary visual effects systems including cable camera flying rigs and inertial acoustic tracking systems.

David's work has encompassed everything from feature films, titles and graphics, to episodic television, documentaries and live events. He has used his visual effects techniques regularly to reconstruct historic events for National Geographic and Discovery.

David's extensive experience includes the creation of special elements and the shooting of difficult and tricky subject matter. He has photographed literally hundreds of subjects, from miniature cityscapes to gigantic robot warriors. With expertise in aerial cinematography, motion-control, pyrotechnics, high-speed cameras and custom built camera rigs, the scope of David's work has taken him from strange worlds in outerspace to storm-ravaged shipwrecks at sea.

David Hackl – Production Designer

David Hackl has been an art director, production designer and commercial director in the United States and Canada, and his credits include serving as production designer for the Sci-Fi Channel series „Lexx“ and „Starhunter 2300“, the independent features SAW II and III, and two films for Director Saul Rubinek, JERRY AND TOM, and CLUBLAND, the television films „Zebra Lounge“, „Cybermutt“, „Redemption“, „The Riverman“ and the 2003 miniseries „The Grid“.

Debra Hanson – Costume Designer

Debra Hanson received a 2004 Genie nomination for Best Costume Design for THE GOSPEL OF JOHN, starring Christopher Plummer and Henry Ian Cusick. Hanson's recent work includes Sarah Polley's feature film directorial debut, AWAY FROM HER starring Julie Christie and Gordon Pinsent, SNOW CAKE, starring Alan Rickman, Sigourney Weaver and Carrie-Anne Moss, Don McKellar's second feature CHILDSTAR, starring Jennifer Jason Leigh; Sturla Gunnarsson's Miniseries, „Above and Beyond“, TV movie „The Man Who Saved Christmas“, „In God's Country“ (TV), the television docudrama „Stormy Weather: The Music of Harold Arlen“, starring Paul Soles, Deborah Harry, Sandra Bernhard, and Rufus Wainwright; Steven Williams' „Verdict in Blood“; and „A Killing Spring“. Hanson designed costumes for Laurie Lynd's miniseries, „I Was A Rat“, starring Tom Conti and Brenda Fricker; the period television movie „What Katy Did“, based on a novel by Susan Coolidge, and for Clement Virgo's multi-awardwinning contemporary love story, „Love Come Down“ starring Larenz Tate and Deborah Cox. Hanson received a Genie nomination for Best Achievement in Costume Design for her work on the multi-award winning NEW WATERFORD GIRL. Her list of film credits also includes George Mendeluk's action/drama, MEN OF MEANS (1999), Daniel D'Or's sci-fi asteroid pic, „Falling Fire“, and „The Taming of the Shrew“ (TV) starring Henry Czerny and Colm Feore. In theatre, Debra works in Stratford Festival Theatre where she established herself as one of Canada's foremost designers and head of design from 1989 to 1994. She has also designed for the stage in Toronto and New York. She won a Dora Mavor Award for Outstanding Costume Design for her work on the play, „Translations.“