



ORION PICTURES PRESENTS

A PLAN B ENTERTAINMENT PRODUCTION

A hear/say PRODUCTION

# WOMEN TALKING

Starring

Rooney Mara, Claire Foy, Jessie Buckley, Judith Ivey, Sheila McCarthy, Michelle McLeod, Kate Hallett, Liv McNeil, August Winter

With

Ben Wishaw

And

Frances McDormand

Executive Producers

Brad Pitt, Lyn Lucibello Brancatella, Emily Jade Foley

Produced by

Dede Gardner, p.g.a., Jeremy Kleiner, p.g.a.,  
Frances McDormand, p.g.a.,

Based upon the book by Miriam Toews

Screenplay by

Sarah Polley

Directed by

Sarah Polley

Distributed through United Artists Releasing  
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Rated: PG-13

Mature thematic content including sexual assault, bloody images and some strong language

Running time: 104 minutes

## **LOGLINE**

In 2010, the women of an isolated religious community grapple with reconciling their reality with their faith.

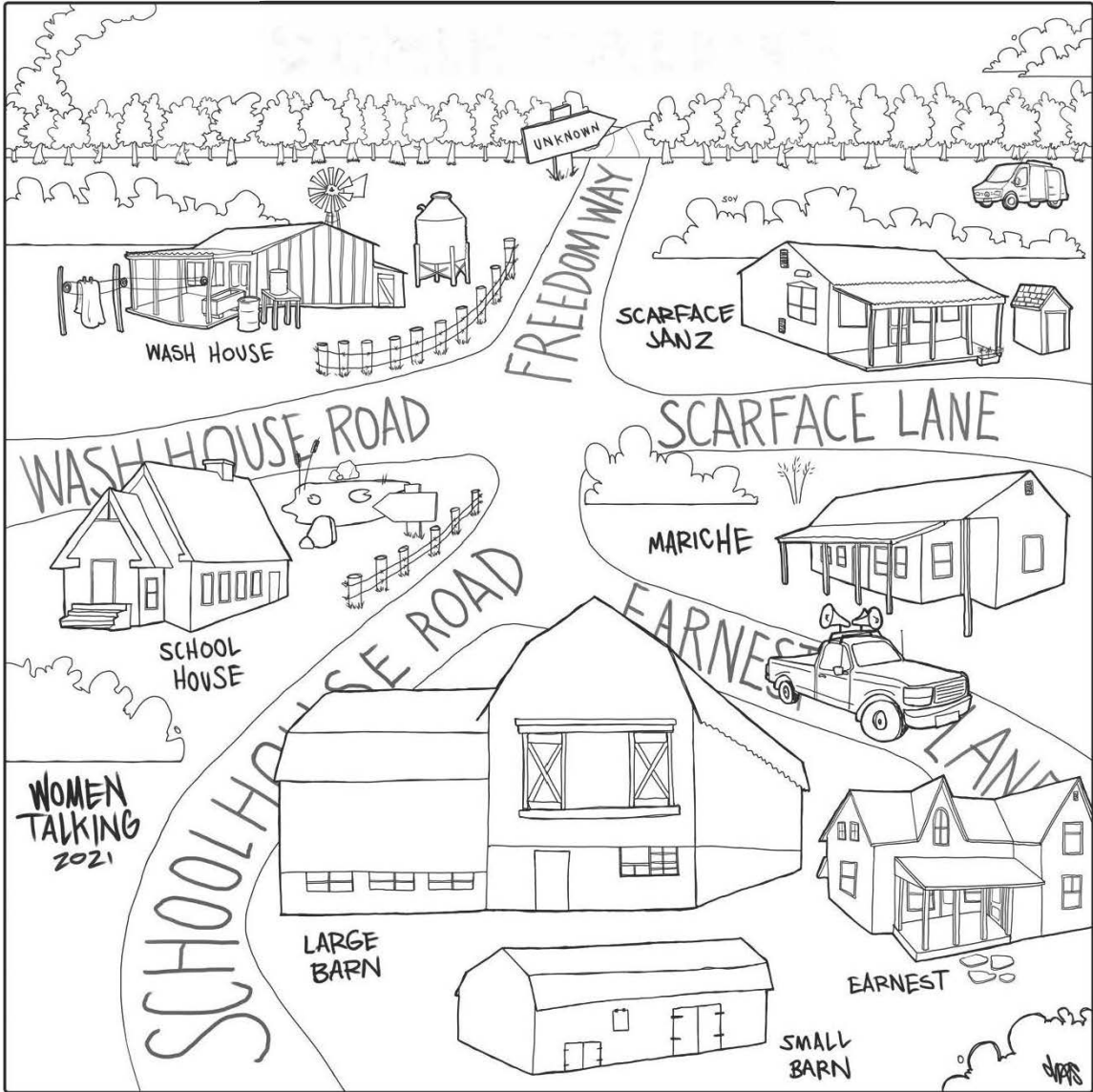
## **STATEMENT FROM WRITER/DIRECTOR SARAH POLLEY**

In *Women Talking*, a group of women, many of whom disagree on essential things, have a conversation to figure out how they might move forward together to build a better world for themselves and their children.

Though the backstory behind the events in *Women Talking* is violent, the film is not. We never see the violence that the women have experienced. We see only short glimpses of the aftermath. Instead, we watch a community of women come together as they must decide, in a very short space of time, what their collective response will be.

When I read Miriam Toews' book, it sunk deep into me, raising questions and thoughts about the world I live in that I had never articulated. Questions about forgiveness, faith, systems of power, trauma, healing, culpability, community, and self-determination. It also left me bewilderingly hopeful.

I imagined this film in the realm of a fable. While the story in the film is specific to a small religious community, I felt that it needed a large canvas, an epic scope through which to reflect the enormity and universality of the questions raised in the film. To this end, it felt imperative that the visual language of the film breathe and expand. I wanted to feel in every frame the endless potential and possibility contained in a conversation about how to remake a broken world.



## ABOUT THE PRODUCTION

*“I think the resilience of this group as a collective is something I’ve never seen. What they could handle as a group together was mighty”.*

*--Sarah Polley*

### STORY: DO NOTHING. STAY AND FIGHT. LEAVE.

Published in 2018, Miriam Toews’ novel, *Women Talking*, was hailed as a Best Book of the Year by The New York Times Book Review. The film’s trajectory from the page to the screen began with Frances McDormand, who optioned the book and approached producer Dede Gardner of Plan B about making the film together. “I found it thought provoking in a completely surprising and nuanced way and believed it had value for the conversation I was having with my community,” said McDormand. “I was interested in it being a debate that had a sense of humor and hope and possibility for the future.”

McDormand took the book to Gardner at Plan B, a production company she greatly admired for their resume of films. “When I met with Dede, she was extraordinarily well-prepared, she had diagrams, she had broken down the novel in a way that made it seem possible to adapt to cinematic form. I was so excited that I was with someone who had a passion for developing it and also an extraordinary determination to get it made soon, with a female filmmaker. We both decided it had to be someone who both writes and directs, someone who could adapt it.”

Adds Gardner: “When Fran and I were first talking about who would direct, Sarah was at the very top of our list. I’ve wanted to work with her for a hundred years, but she’s super selective.”

Given that author Miriam Toews is from Toronto, as is Polley, there was a potent synergy in the adaptation. “There was a Canadian strain of DNA that felt proper,” Gardner said.

The marriage of the multi-faceted material with a multi-dimensional filmmaker like Polley seemed ideal to McDormand. “Sarah Polley, whose work can speak volumes on its own, is the perfect match as a writer/director for this material,” McDormand said. “She had read the book

independently of our sending it to her and was already spinning with the possibilities of it being made into a film.”

For her part, Toews, who called the book “an act of female imagination,” says she was thrilled when she heard that Sarah was writing and directing. “I admire everything about her work, her experience, writing, directing, her feminism and activism,” said Toews. “It all comes into play.”

Polley leapt into action when she heard that McDormand and Gardner had optioned the book. “I immediately set out to find out if I could be a part of the project,” Polley said.

Judith Ivey, who plays Agata Friesen, one of the film’s matriarchs, loved the book and extolled Polley’s screenplay. “Sarah is a genius and adapted it so beautifully, with great regard for the book and respect for everybody involved,” Ivey said. “And she made it accessible too and built so much tension into it. She’s a consummate artist.”

The movie is a departure from the book in several ways, taking a contained story and making it much bigger and more suited to the big screen. And there’s a key change in the narrator. “The book is extraordinary and full of life and humor and wickedness and pithiness,” Gardner said. “Yet, two families of women in a hayloft making a decision for the duration is not an obvious idea for a film. At the same time, I could see its cinematic structure. The thing that the book and the movie really share is that despite all the things that they discuss there’s a real sense of movement and a victory at the end of it.”

McDormand agrees: “What surprised me was how epic Sarah saw the film. I think maybe I imagined it more intimate and perhaps more stylistically rustic, but she understood that to give it its due it had to have an epic grandeur to it.”

As is the case for so many projects lately, the Covid-19 pandemic interrupted the process. “We literally thought we’re going to have a farm and everyone can bring their kids and we’ll all live in Airstreams and it will all be shot in a real barn,” said McDormand. “Even without Covid, it became quickly clear that we weren’t going to have that utopian world.”

Yet the project ultimately profited from the pandemic-related postponement. “It had a gestation,” said McDormand. “It went through a process that it would not have gone through before...By the time the whole company got together physically, the exhilaration of being in a congress of people fed everyone. That made for a bond as a total company.”

Gardner agreed, adding: “This was a different kind of prep. Like think tank prep. Because of the year-long delay it gave us so much more time to think about who should be in it, and it felt very luxurious, because you never get that on a movie. It felt very sacred, it was just us with a bit of an unknown on the other end. It meant that the movie got to incubate. I believe that incubation is felt.”

It definitely was felt by the actors involved. “Sarah had such a clear vision of the film that she wanted to make before any of us came in, which is really why we have the film we have— because of the woman she is,” says Jessie Buckley. “She had such foresight and belief and perspective on this film. She brings all her humanity to it and all her political heart. We had a week of rehearsal, but it was during Covid so it was kind of intense, our faces covered with masks. We didn’t see each other's faces until action was called.”

Polley had met with all the key actors virtually well before rehearsal. “She met most people online first, and she was able to develop a rapport with them,” said McDormand. “We had a read-through of the script before we gathered in person.”

The trio of actors who came from Great Britain—Claire Foy, Jesse Buckley and Ben Whishaw—initially isolated and quarantined together, establishing a particularly close connection.

“The actors had to rehearse fully-masked and they were masked until they shot,” said McDormand. “That was really challenging, and the fact that this company of actors made it as much of an ensemble piece of work as it is is to their credit, and to Sarah’s. Sarah is a leader who’s a very articulate and erudite speaker and she’d given this a lot of thought. So they all trusted each other—even though they could only see half of their faces.”

Adds Ivey: “We were all, in ways, archetypes. Everyone worked beautifully that way. If there was any tension, it was never brought to the set.”

McDormand agreed, referring to the cast and crew as a “matriarchal production team. It’s about the collective. No one started beating their chest too hard. By the time we came together as an ensemble, it was like we’d gone through a kind of boot camp.”

The gathering of the women at the heart of the story is predicated on disturbing and terrifying actions within the strict confines of an isolated religious colony. The women’s stories about feeling drugged and waking up bruised and sometimes bleeding were dismissed by the community’s men as fabrications of female imagination or evidence of sinful behavior by the women themselves. But when crimes were revealed, the police were called and arrests made. Under the ticking clock of the men’s return from the city in 24 hours, the women consider and debate a potentially life-changing decision, one that forces each to reconcile self-determination with faith — Do they stay and forgive the men? Do they stay and fight for change? Or do they leave and start a new life?

Polley’s script starts after the community’s men have gone to town to post bail for the accused. While the men are away, over one hundred of the colony’s women have voted on what to do. A tie has resulted between two of the options: stay and fight, or leave the colony. A small group of women have taken on the time-sensitive task of discussing these positions and debating these choices before the men return. They come from two families, and are comprised of:

Agata, the eldest (Judith Ivey)

Ona, the eldest daughter of Agata (Rooney Mara)

Salome, a younger daughter of Agata (Claire Foy)

Neitje, a niece of Salome (Liv McNeil)

*and*

Greta, the eldest (Sheila McCarthy)

Mariche, the eldest daughter of Greta (Jessie Buckley)

Mejal, a younger daughter of Greta (Michelle McLeod)

Autje, a daughter of Mariche (Kate Hallett)

A third family headed by Scarface Janz (Frances McDormand) has been invited to the early part of the discussion, and is joined by her daughter Anna (Kira Guloien) and granddaughter Helena (Shayla Brown). Scarface represents the minority position of staying and doing nothing. For her, survival outside the colony is unlikely, and her religious obedience means there is nothing to debate. The risk of excommunication and banishment is too great for Scarface. The men must be forgiven and the status quo maintained.

McDormand was drawn to this taciturn character, who represents the position of the women in the community who did not want to leave, invested as she is in the status quo.

“I did not option the book with the idea of acting in the film, I optioned it because I wanted to produce a film based on the book, with Dede and Sarah,” McDormand said. “But I love Scarface dramaturgically...Sarah uses Scarface and the Janz family to remind the audience that there are other women outside the hayloft debate that don’t want or are afraid to leave.”

Salome’s (Foy) position is at the other extreme. For her, the stay-and-fight position is literal: she argues for revenge and doesn’t fear divine wrath. Mejal (McLeod) is less aggressive, but shares Salome’s desire to take a stand. But Mejal’s sister Mariche (Buckley) thinks that they could lose their fight and be forced to forgive. Tensions mount among the women as the security of their futures and their relationships to their faith and their male family members come into question. Should their priority be protecting their children or obedience to the male authority figures of their faith?

Assisting the women is August Epp (Ben Whishaw), a gentle soul who is considered unmanly by other men in the colony and teaches at the school, which is only for boys and young men; girls remain uneducated. August is in love with Ona (Mara), who asks him to take the minutes of their meeting since the women are illiterate, yet want a record of their discussions.

A lengthy, passionate discussion of the women’s options ensues. There are fights and insults, consolation and understanding, tears and laughter. All are resolved that they must do something; the violence must stop. Arguments are made for and against staying and going. Tensions mount among the women as the security of their futures and their relationships to their faith and their male



family member come into question. Questions are raised about leaving. Where will they go and how will they find their way? They have never lived anywhere else. Should they be more concerned about survival, or will the men be the ones at a loss since the women do so much of the work? If men are not welcome to join them, then what about boys? What age is a boy a man? The complexities and repercussions of the choices they might make are daunting and monumental. The men will return in twenty-four hours, so urgency pervades the meeting. “Structurally this also works as a clock,” Gardner said. “The women have this limited period of time to have this conversation and make a decision about what they’re going to do and they need to do so before the men return. It’s a brilliant clock. They’ve got to hurry.”

### A HAYLOFT DEBATE

The story unfolds through debate in the loft, moments of conflict as well as humor, and telling glimpses into the lives of the women. Speaking their innermost feelings and listening intently is at the heart of the women’s trajectories. “The movie is about the after effects and what is possible inside a debate when a group of people have decided they can no longer abide their circumstances,” Gardner said. “In a world where any kind of discussion about different points of view seems to have been atomized, it feels valuable and essential to show what that discussion can look like. To entertain that it can be difficult, challenging and it can be fraught, but that’s not a reason not to have it.”

“One of the other things that the movie does that’s so astonishing is you see some of the characters change their minds, having started in one place, then going through rigorous inquiry and prodding and being exposed to other points of view,” Gardner said. “All those things contribute to your own perspective and opinion and you watch their opinions actually morph and change. As a process it feels like watching something grow in a petri dish. Like some sort of biological process made visible. It’s thrilling to see that process.”

McDormand saw the story in all its dimensions: “It’s not about taking down the patriarchy. It’s about illuminating a matriarchy that has been there since time immemorial.”

Claire Foy, who plays hot-headed Salome, agreed: “The film is not about women are better than men, or men-bashing. It’s about hope. A hope for human beings as a whole that we can live in a world where we don’t hurt each other, where kindness is the ultimate goal.”

Foy particularly loved that this is a film driven by women, and stressed there is nothing limiting or one-dimensional about that. “Sarah had such clarity about this, she said ‘I want this to be massive, in its implication’,” said Foy. “We’ve been taught through film what’s important and what is not. A lot of what we’ve been taught is very masculine and comes from a very masculine place. We’ve seen Armageddon and Michael Bay and men doing big things in big rooms and going to war and massive dolly shots. This film is incredibly feminine. But why shouldn’t this be in a filmic language which is just as ginormous? Because this is ginormous for these women.”

The rhythms and traits of these particular women were unlike those ordinarily seen in films. To begin with, none of the women are literate. They have not been allowed to go to school. “Their connection to language is completely different,” said Foy. “Their lives are dictated by when the sun rises and goes down. It wasn’t like anything I’ve ever read in my whole life and I’ve read a lot of scripts. It was totally unique.”

And yet the viewer sees the universality in these characters. “My reaction was ‘I know all these women’,” said Buckley. “They’ve been part of me. I’ve been all these women in moments of my life.”

Adds Foy: “When women speak to one another it’s so layered, you can go from a completely opposed point of view to having compassion and understanding if you’re willing to listen. What’s extraordinary to these women is their faith. Central to their faith is kindness and pacifism and helping each other.”

All the actors spoke about the unusual element of a set that was essentially all women -- and one man (Whishaw). “I’ve never been on a film set where it’s predominantly all female characters discussing what it’s like to be a woman in the world,” said Buckley.

Buckley spoke almost reverentially of working with Polley, who spoke of the shoot in equally awed terms. “Getting to be in this space with this group of actors was a once-in-a-lifetime experience,” Polley said. “I don’t think I’ll ever be in a room with this many brilliant actors who are so consistently attuned to each other and themselves.” The loft set felt like a “sacred space where things unfolded that I never could have imagined.”

Indeed, she calls the experience transformative in terms of her personal growth. And cast members felt similarly. “It was like nothing else I’ve ever done,” said Foy. “It was really an incredibly dynamic environment to be in, not only because you had extraordinary actors everywhere you looked and a very intellectual but also incredibly emotional director, but everybody was coming at it from a point of view...It was just incredibly intense. Some days would be incredibly joyful. I’ve never done a job where I was so surprised daily with the performances people were doing in front of my eyes. Your understanding of things would be completely challenged by somebody else’s interpretation of something.”

And of course, seeing women band together in the name of equality and greater personal rights feels very timely. “I watched it the week that Roe v Wade was overturned,” said Buckley. “If there’s a need to tell this story, it’s now. I also think this story is going to last a lifetime, because these stories have lasted lifetimes. I’ve never felt prouder to stand beside a film as with this, at this moment.”

Adds Gardner: “Regrettably, I don’t know that there is or has ever been a moment when this film would land and be irrelevant. But I find that if a movie’s really alive and cooking, it’s in dialogue with the moment it’s being made and the moment it’s released.”

The film also has a lot to say about social structures, insular communities, conditioning and complicity. “It’s not meant to be an indictment of any particular community,” said Gardner. “It’s meant to be an indictment of isolationism. It’s meant to be an inquisition of absolute power. We wanted the movie to work approximate to a fable, making it more universal.”

## SCREENPLAY: ADAPTING THE BOOK TO THE SCREEN

The acclaimed book on which the film is based thoroughly captivated McDormand and Gardner. “I was given Miriam Toews’ book by a friend at Faber and Faber Publishing in London,” McDormand said. “He and I have exchanged books over about 28 years, and he consistently introduces me to reading material that captures my imagination. Rarely does the fiction we share need to be anything other than what it is—a compellingly written novel. Sometimes, however, the material demands further exploration and that is the case with *Women Talking*.”

Gardner was thrilled by McDormand’s recommendation. “I just hadn’t experienced anything where it afforded all the rage and all the sadness and all the debate that it merits and yet, I still got to lean into victory and conclusion,” said Gardner. “I found it a remarkable exercise, this idea of debate. I thought if we could achieve that in a film it would be unlike anything I’ve been a part of, or even anything that I’ve seen. “

The subject clearly resonated for McDormand, “We find ourselves in a very confusing and demanding time of recognition and reconciliation among the genders. I find the examination of this subject in Ms. Toews’ book to be apt, engaging, serious and refreshingly amusing.”

Polley was in contact with Toews as she developed the script, but Toews is clear that the “knockout script” is all Sarah’s. She said that Polley “adapted the book but made it so much more. She managed to take the women out of the enclosed, confined world in the loft and create other scenes.” While it introduces new elements to the story, Toews calls it “an incredibly faithful adaptation” that adds layers of “cinematic beauty.”

The cast spoke about the appeal and challenges of their specific roles, along with the film’s cinematic beauty. “Honestly I didn’t really realize at the time, but she was probably the hardest character I’ve ever had to sit with,” said Buckley. “She had so much violence in her because of the violence that was coming towards her. And the heartbreaking part of that was that she didn’t really know where hope could live beyond that parameter and step into an unknown. Which is sometimes scarier than the things you know how to survive.”

Foy said she grew to love her character, who was known in the community for her volatility. “My character has such spirit,” said Foy. “She had a very big heart with a massive fireball surrounding it. I just loved her with every fiber of my being. She could be incredibly passionate and argumentative about what she believes, but still make someone some food and give it to them, [in the midst of her anger.] She had enough humanity to do both of those things.”

Judith Ivey’s character Agata saw the personal and the political in their situation. She drew upon her own religious grandmother in getting into the skin of her character: “Part of the reason she did speak to me is my grandmother was a very pleasantly religious woman,” Ivey said. “She had great humanity and was so kind and caring for everybody she knew. This was kind of a natural to just remember my grandmother. There were times where I used her laugh and I used her thoughtfulness. She was always very thoughtful when she answered you. She took the time to answer you as if it was a profound question. She came in really handy.”

### THE STORY’S REVERBERATIONS AND REFLECTIONS

On the last day of filming *WOMEN TALKING*, Polley reflected on the cast. Despite the demands of the script on the cast, “everything would just go right every day”, she marvels. She says her actors were completely attuned when listening to each other. “It was both exhilarating and terrifying,” she said because despite all her preparation, she hadn’t realized how challenging it would be to have “nine actors in a room going through heaven and hell together for eight weeks.” Sometimes there were twelve actors working and responding to each other. The bonds and harmony that developed amongst them created “an energy in the room that everybody would pick up on.” And it was done without clashes of ego or temperament. The cast was highly supportive of each other and shared a common purpose. “Everyone was invested so deeply, and there was never a wavering of that at any point,” Polley said.

In hindsight, Polley jokes, “what was asked of these actors was insane and maybe a bit inhumane. One of the first big scenes is ten pages long, with huge emotions, peaks and valleys.” That scene shot for two and a half days, with 120 takes at different angles. She was worried that the actors would break since it was so demanding. But, ever-resilient, they got through it, creating a space for vulnerability.

The power of the story united the crew, as well, in their commitment to the film. For some, the experience was deeply personal in terms of their own difficult life experiences. For example, Sarah recalls “a moment in the film where one character apologizes to another for being complicit and allowing abuse to happen, not protecting them from it.” Some crew members talked about their own experiences and perhaps not feeling protected by parents. Those discussions led Polley to make changes in the dialogue to reflect what others felt would need to be said in the situation. “I think the greatest successes are in what we shot when we were all attuned to the energy of not just the story but of all our collective experiences.”

Polley felt that the cast and crew approached *WOMEN TALKING* with a rare fervor. “It was like they were part of a movement, not a film,” she said.

A particular discovery for her was exploring the idea of “leaving vs. fleeing,” and whether leaving is “about being able to love and be at a distance” for survivors. The story is rife with metaphor that goes beyond the immediate subject matter, and for that Polley is deeply grateful for Toews’ work and what everyone put into bringing it to the screen. It was the first studio film she has directed, and the experience was deeply rewarding. “People absolutely understood what we set out to do and gave us the space to do it and the support we needed and the resources to do it,” Polley said.

The loft scenes were daunting, but even the exterior shots were “bigger in scope and more epic” than she’d imagined. *WOMEN TALKING* is a departure from more contained, intimate films Polley had made previously. “I don’t think any of us realized how big a challenge we were taking on until it was too late,” she said. “We had to keep going, and that was great.”

### CINEMATOGRAPHY – EPIC AND INTIMATE

Polley and cinematographer Luc Montpellier have a long history as both colleagues and friends. Montpellier worked on *AWAY FROM HER*, *TAKE THIS WALTZ* and her short film *I SHOUT LOVE*. He and Sarah’s brother John (the film’s casting director) are the first people she speaks to when she has an idea for a film. For her, it’s a partnership from the very beginning. After the script

was written, she and Luc started “meeting often and for long periods of time” to discuss the look of the film.

Montpellier observes that it’s rare for a filmmaker to work this way. As a cinematographer, he was involved early on with thematic material as the script evolved and able to start the thought process of his work well in advance. “At every moment of the film, Luc and I are figuring it out together,” Polley said, “It’s a two-way street.”

Their discussions became part of the creative process and informed what would be represented on screen. For example, Montpellier said Polley discussed “how epic she wanted the women’s decision to feel without shying away from the intimacy.” It took time to figure out the appropriate approach to capture that duality. Rather than multiple closeups, Polley and Montpellier opted for a widescreen format. The barn had a cathedral feel to it as the women decide their future, and Polley wanted to lean into that monumental feeling.

“There is a sense that this conversation amongst women should feel like it could crack open the world,” Polley said. “It’s not subtle. And it shouldn’t be.” She worried at times that she should pull back, that it might be too much. Then she reminded herself that “if this was a conversation that men were having about changing the world,” she probably wouldn’t hesitate. She decided that “this is weighty. And this deserves space.” So, she was determined to make it appear as consequential as possible, utilizing crane shots: “The women here are facing a monumental task, so I wanted to give it that breadth and space and palette,” she said.

As a producer, McDormand found the visual choices revelatory. “I started really understanding where they were going when she and Luc started doing light tests. They were showing us what the farm would look like at different times of day. It couldn’t be a ‘12 Angry Men’ story that took place in one room. It had to have the scope and the danger of what was outside the hayloft and also outside the farm.”

The barn set was built in a giant studio space with room to shoot and height for lighting. Polley and Montpellier’s long collaboration involves creative trust that allows them to try out ideas with each other, good and bad ones, knowing that it’s safe. But Montpellier questioned whether as a man he

should be the one telling the story with her. “I needed to answer that question for myself,” he says. But Polley pointed out that *WOMEN TALKING* “is a story about everyone. It's not just about women.” That said, he felt a great sense of “responsibility as a collaborator to be there in the right way. It’s not just a job.”

Early on, Polley was inspired by a lot of Larry Towell’s black and white photographs of a Mennonite colony. Montpellier explains that they considered shooting *WOMEN TALKING* in black and white because the colony seems “kind of stuck in time.” But he says that they decided they didn’t want “the film to feel too bleak.”

“I have always been fascinated by the photographs of Larry Towell, who has spent many years documenting Mennonite communities worldwide,” Polley said. “I think his photos, in striking black and white, provide a beautiful template for the visual palette of the film. There is something iconic in these images, that seems to be speaking to us not only about the very specific world of these religious communities, but offering us unsettling, mesmerizing metaphors about the world we live in.”

Time of day played a vital role in the storytelling, because the men in the community are returning to the community within a limited time span. “The biggest challenge photographically was the timeline,” said Montpellier.” Tension builds because the men could return any minute and catch the women at their meeting--before they have decided what to do, and before they can leave if that’s their choice. They “needed to feel the light shift” to reinforce that tension as the day progressed. Eventually, the sun will set and the women will have to light lanterns. With the limited time “to shoot during twilight and sunrise,” the solution was a duplicate set of the barn and loft against a blue screen in studio. “I needed to freeze time,” Montpellier explained, to capture the scenes.

The studio options inspired cinematic aspects they wouldn’t have been able to accomplish on location. One of Montpellier’s favorite visual moments in the film involves Salome’s little daughter Miep coming in and falling asleep in her arms as “the sun falls over the horizon in real time on camera in the studio,” he said. He worked with Kevin Chandoo, the visual effects supervisor, to achieve the shot. Indeed, he credits the whole team for their technical and creative input. Some shots were highly technical but “had such a naturalism to them, even though we were



stretching reality.” It’s a climactic point in the film: the sun has gone down, the men could return any time, and the women haven’t made their decision. Montpellier is especially proud of that shot because, he said, “I don’t want to just shoot beautiful images; I want to shoot images that are right for what we’re doing.”

In support of the visual of the daylight changing, having color seemed like an “essential thing so that you felt more of the time of day.” Consequently, he observed that “figuring out the trajectory of the color palette was important. “That’s where we started playing with different saturations of color and different approaches.” He and Sarah spent a month experimenting and “manipulating the color in the images.”

Montpellier says they settled on “a very muted, desaturated color tone” that conveys a sense of history and conformity in the colony yet remains accessible to a contemporary viewer. And everything, including costume, hair, and makeup, worked within “a tone based on this desaturated palette.” It gave “a faded postcard kind of feeling to things that was important.” Adds Polley, “There was a sense of wanting to capture that they have already, in spirit, left the world they currently live in behind, when they begin their conversation.”

The viewer is reminded that the story isn’t in the distant past when a modern truck with 2010 census takers arrives in the colony. The sense that the story might be taking place in an earlier era is corrected. But the contrast is there: they are people living a kind of timeless life, but it’s contemporary and universal.

Gardner loved the decision on the muted color palette: “We thought the de-saturated look protected the very real beauty of where and how this community lives. And it expressed the proximity to nature, which is very important. It also allowed for people to realize this is not from long ago.

In addition to the color palette, Montpellier shot in large format, 70mm, digital for “the best, sharpest format” without having a digital look. The Panavision camera was the answer, and Montpellier had a long history of shooting with them. He has several sets of “Ultra Vista, large format anamorphic lenses” that he believes “were invented in the ‘50s and rehoused.” He feels that the “more vintage lens on it gives a kind of epic and cinematic look.” These lenses “shoot in a 2.76

aspect ratio, which is much wider than even standard widescreen.” That choice supported the decision to go with a “more traditional, more classic filmmaking style.”

Montpellier says the visual style fit with Sarah’s commitment to the seriousness of the material and provided an ability “to push in, dramatically, on people. The camera needed to have a life and be a character in the film.” And he says, it worked with the exterior shots: “You needed to feel their faith in images that would make you feel what they’re leaving behind.” The images had to be huge in scope and emotion. The 2.76 ratio provided beauty and weight. MGM invented the format long ago, “calling it MGM65,” but it fell out of use. “Not a lot of films shoot it,” said Montpellier. And I just felt that special treatment was needed for this kind of story.”

### EXPRESSING A COMPLEX TONE THROUGH MUSIC

Oscar®/ Emmy®/Grammy® winning Icelandic composer Hildur Guðnadóttir was drawn to the story’s dimensionality. “I felt the story was incredibly relevant to what is happening in our society today. I thought it was really interesting how the story focuses on how the women come together to process the violence they have been subject to for so long, and the power that they were able to harness together in a gentle way. The story raised so many questions and issues for me. It’s a really complex subject that raises complex feelings.”

The music captures this complexity, but also has a gentle quality. “I wanted the score to feel down to earth. I wanted the instrumentation to live in a sound world that is slightly folky, for lack of better words. Instrumentation that lives in this kind of rural setting. It felt like the guitar was the perfect leading instrument, because it is an accessible instrument for people of all walks of society.”

Guðnadóttir found the story personally resonant. “I felt empowered by the strength of the women coming together, and standing up for each other’s rights. During Covid you started hearing all these reports of the rise of domestic violence and you realize that this story is happening in real time all around us. All these women are just stuck at home and are being subjected to terrible violence, along with their children. It felt like such a big step backwards. And then when Roe v. Wade was overturned, I just couldn’t believe it. That really felt to me like a ginormous step backwards. But

somehow, when you try to imagine what can possibly be done, if anything, my answer always comes down to not giving up. Because, ultimately, just like in the film, it is when we stand together that we are strongest.”

The much-admired composer holds Polley in high esteem. “Sarah was clear with her vision for the film, that she wanted it to be hopeful and gentle. And, at first, I found that a bit difficult to settle into. My first reaction when I read the script was to get angry on behalf of these women. But the more I lived in it and sat with those feelings, the more it made sense. Anger is important to spark the need for change, but in the long run it is most likely the steady forward movement that is actually going to have the most long-lasting change. I think Sarah is totally spot on with her vision for the film and in her work as a writer and activist. She is very inspiring. I love the way she goes about her work.”

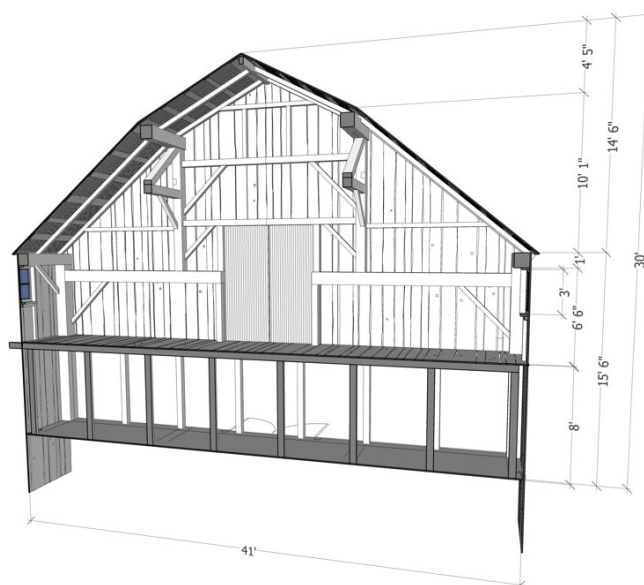
Gardner said it was always her goal to have Gudnadóttir compose the score: “She loathes sentimentality and we all thought there’s going to be a good tension—she’s going to insist on avoiding melodrama and we’ll push for more emotionality and somehow the alchemy is going to land perfectly.”

For her part, Gudnadóttir appreciated that tension as well. “I like to give the audience the space to make up their own minds about their feelings, instead of spoon feeding them what I want them to feel. So, I often feel writing sentimental music for a sentimental subject is like eating cream with a cream topping. Not being much of a cream person myself, I try to steer away from that. We definitely had a bit of a push and pull for finding the right tone for this score. Especially in the times where I was feeling more anger on behalf of the women, my tendency was to go a bit heavy-handed on the music, where Sarah and Dede were more inclined to lean more toward optimism and beauty. I think we landed in a good space in the end.”

Though she’s worked on a host of projects with vastly different themes— including JOKER, CHERNOBYL and SICARIO: DAY OF THE SOLDADO—the experience of working on WOMEN TALKING stands out for Gudnadóttir. “This ended up being one of the most emotionally

challenging projects I have worked on, due to the nature of the subject. But it is simultaneously probably the most optimistic music I have ever written. So, it was a very interesting journey for me.”

### PRODUCTION DESIGN: BETWEEN HEAVEN AND EARTH



The primary scenes of the women debating were filmed at a studio set that replicated the barn’s hayloft, with some modifications to improve shooting conditions. Exterior shots and additional interiors were done on a farm about an hour outside of Toronto, which acted “like a backlot for the film” where they were able to “lay down roads and then put buildings on them,” Production Designer Peter Cosco said.

The farmer who owned the land was extremely cooperative and accommodating. He even changed his crop to soy, which grows low, from his usual corn. Cosco used the existing L- shaped barn but built additional structures, including a schoolhouse and a wash house. With its windmill and water tower, Cosco describes the wash house as “everybody’s favorite build” and “a little gem” that features in a key scene with Ona (Mara) and August (Whishaw) sitting on its roof looking at the stars.

Attention to authenticity guided much of the production design work as Cosco's crew portrayed details in the women's lives and domestic duties, "from canning to sewing." The setup of the kitchens was important as they were the focal point of domestic life, and tended to be spacious rooms with big tables for large families.

The loft scenes presented challenges because they involved both the actual barn loft and the studio replica. The loft as focal point works well with the poetic idea of placing the women between heaven and earth, which reflects their conflicting religious and worldly concerns. That sense of elevated place was reinforced in studio by building the hayloft set 8 feet off the ground with loft ceilings that reached 22 feet high. The actors and crew all had to climb up to it daily, thus mirroring the real barn and sense of being in a heightened state, both literally and figuratively.

#### COSTUMES: SIMPLICITY IN APPEARANCE, CLARITY OF MIND

Costume Designer Quita Alfred grew up in Manitoba, Canada, surrounded by a large Mennonite religious community. For *WOMEN TALKING*, though the religious affiliation of the women is not specified in the film, Alfred was inspired by the details in their style of clothing, and the specific materials used to create their "plain dress."

"Plain dress is literally a term for the way particularly traditional Mennonite people choose to dress," she explains. Plain dress promotes simplicity in appearance and coherence in the mind, helping to strip the individual of trivial worries and permits them the freedom to focus on the primary tenets of religion: God and community. "It helps to remove this world of concerns so they have greater clarity towards God and each other. Plain dress means few traditional accessories, no jewelry, not too much decoration. They don't want to think about themselves with vanity and pride," said Alfred. "The women's dresses are polyester," she continued. "When you put them in the washing machine, they come out exactly as they went in."

Taking a deep dive into practical fashion, "I was accused of being a method costume designer," jokes Alfred. "I put the dresses on to see how you can move in them, how you could milk a cow in a puffy, sleeved, pleated polyester dress. The practicality was revealed in doing these tasks and they were among my biggest 'Aha!' moments."

The details on the bodices of the women's dresses are complicated: each required 40 hours of work by the costume department. The clothing colors serve also as identifiers: "the darker the dress, the older the wearer," Alfred noted. And sometimes generations within families would use the same bolt of fabric denoting their particular family or clan. The dresses also camouflage and marginalize the women, yet the plainness of the dresses renders a certain freedom to their wearers. "The actors were completely involved right from the beginning," said Alfred. "They'd put the dresses on and their posture would just change, their shoulders would drop. It was amazing to watch."

McDormand was impressed by Alfred's attention to detail. "She's one of the stealth bombers of the whole experience. She was really dedicated to the authenticity of the clothing."

In fact, the actor's involvement extended to influencing costume design itself. The dresses' utility pockets were suggested by McDormand who had worn a similar garment on a previous shoot. "The pocket is a 100% Frances McDormand thing—I cannot in any way take credit for that. Frances emailed me a picture, early on, of something she had worn on another show. The shape she sent me was a Shaker pocket—a design that dates back 200 or 300 years," Alfred explains. The pocket addition was useful and necessary---conveniently housing the actors' microphone packs under their costumes--and Alfred stuck with practicality: "We made them out of old tablecloths, old sheets: anything that could be reused."

### ELEMENTS, ANIMALS, & LOGISTICS

WOMEN TALKING was filmed both in studio and on location at a farm in southern Ontario from July to September 2021. Exterior scenes were shot at the farm, as well as some interior shots of sets built on location.

The rural setting was beautiful, but the location presented challenges. The original schedule was to shoot three solid weeks at the farm and then four weeks on stage, but heavy rains forced production to go back and forth between locations. The farm was an hour outside Toronto and required some shoots to happen at 4 a.m. to make the most of daylight--because the scenes all take place in a twenty-four-hour span. For the biggest exterior days, the WOMEN TALKING production involved

86-degree temperatures with 100% humidity, 65 extras, 22 COVID Health & Safety staff, thousands of flies, mosquitos, odd caterpillars, 10 chickens, 6 animal wranglers, 15 horse cart drivers, and...14 wagons to be pulled by 24 horses.

And cast and crew felt bittersweet leaving it all behind.

Toews visited the set during production and loved what she saw. “I’m just so struck by how hard everybody is working,” she said. Seeing it all come together impressed her in terms of the effort and the detail in the art direction, set decoration and building, and “brilliant, brilliant casting.” She says that what she saw in the dailies astonished her. “The cast inhabited their roles, carrying that pain that these women have suffered,” Toews said. “They captured the shared humanity and also embodied each character’s unique individuality, through their collective commitment and solidarity. It was amazing and powerful seeing these scenes come to life.”

## ABOUT THE FILMMAKERS

### **Sarah Polley (Director, Screenwriter)**

Sarah Polley received an Oscar® nomination for Best Adapted Screenplay for her first film as director- *Away From Her*, based on the short story *The Bear Came Over the Mountain* by Alice Munro. This film also garnered an Oscar nomination for Best Actress for star Julie Christie. Her next film *Take This Waltz* starred Michelle Williams, Seth Rogen, and Sarah Silverman. *Stories We Tell*, her documentary which examines secrets and memory in her own family, won Best Documentary Film awards from the Los Angeles Film Critics Association, National Board of Review, and the New York Film Critics Circle, as well as a Writer's Guild of America award for its screenplay. Polley executive produced and wrote the Netflix limited series *Alias, Grace*, which she adapted from Margaret Atwood's novel.

As an actor, Polley starred in a wide variety of films including Atom Egoyan's *The Sweet Hereafter* (Best Supporting Actress award from the Boston Society of Film Critics), Doug Liman's *Go* (Independent Spirit Award nomination), Zack Snyder's *Dawn of the Dead*, Jaco Van Dormael's *Mr. Nobody* opposite Jared Leto, Kathryn Bigelow's *The Weight of Water* opposite Ciaran Hinds, David Cronenberg's *Existenz*, Isabel Coixet's *The Secret Life of Words* and *My Life Without Me* (Canadian Screen Award, Best Actress), Audrey Wells' *Guinevere*, Wim Wenders' *Don't Come Knocking*, Michael Winterbottom's *The Claim*, and Terry Gilliam's *The Adventures of Baron Munchausen*.

In 2022, Polley released *Run Towards the Danger: Confrontations with a Body of Memory*, an autobiographical collection of essays detailing her relationship with her body and how her memory of past and present experiences has contributed to her evolving understanding of self.



### **Dede Gardner (Producer)**

Dede Gardner is an Academy Award-winning producer and co-president of Brad Pitt's production company, Plan B. Throughout her career she has produced many Academy Award- and Golden Globe®-nominated and winning films, including Barry Jenkins' *If Beale Street Could Talk* and *Moonlight*, Adam McKay's *The Big Short* and *Vice*, Ava DuVernay's *Selma*, Steve McQueen's *12 Years a Slave* and Terrence Malick's Palme d'Or winner *The Tree of Life*.

Dede's recent features include Gaz Alazraki's *Father of the Bride*, Lee Isaac Chung's *Minari*, and Miranda July's *Kajillionaire*, as well as the forthcoming features *Blonde*, *She Said*, *Women Talking* and *Landscape With Invisible Hand*. Her recent television releases include the Amazon Original series *Outer Range* starring Josh Brolin in his television debut, the HBO/Sky limited series "The Third Day," created by Dennis Kelly, and the Amazon limited series "The Underground Railroad," created by Barry Jenkins. Up next on the TV side is the forthcoming Amazon series "Paper Girls".

### **Jeremy Kleiner (Producer)**

Jeremy Kleiner is an Academy-Award winning producer and co-president of Brad Pitt's film and television production company PLAN B. His producing track record includes a number of critically and commercially celebrated films including Adam McKay's *The Big Short* and *Vice*, Barry Jenkins's *Moonlight* and *If Beale Street Could Talk*, Steve McQueen's *Twelve Years a Slave*, Bong Joon-Ho's *Okja*, James Gray's *The Lost City of Z* and *Ad Astra*, and David Michod's *War Machine* and *The King*. Along with his partners Dede Gardner and Pitt, he was honored with the PGA's David O. Selznick Achievement Award in 2020 for outstanding body of work in motion pictures and the PGA Visionary Award in 2015 for dedication to inspirational storytelling.

Kleiner's recent features include Gaz Alazraki's *Father of the Bride*, Lee Isaac Chung's *Minari*, and Miranda July's *Kajillionaire*, as well as the forthcoming features *Blonde*, *She Said*, *Women Talking* and *Landscape With Invisible Hand*. His recent television releases include the Amazon Original series *Outer Range* starring Josh Brolin in his television debut, the HBO/Sky limited series "The Third Day," created by Dennis Kelly, and the Amazon limited series "The Underground Railroad," created by Barry Jenkins. Up next on the TV side is the forthcoming Amazon series "Paper Girls".

### **Frances McDormand (Producer)**

With her company Hear/Say Productions, Frances McDormand produced *Every Secret Thing*, *Olive Kitteridge* (nominated for thirteen Emmys- receiving eight of the awards including Outstanding Limited Series), *The Tragedy of Macbeth* and *Nomadland* (receiving the Academy Award for Best Picture).

### **Brad Pitt (Executive Producer)**

Brad Pitt is one of today's strongest and most versatile film actors, is also a successful film producer with his company Plan B Entertainment.

In 2020, Pitt won an Academy Award® for best supporting actor for his work in Quentin Tarantino's "Once Upon a Time in Hollywood" alongside Leonardo DiCaprio and Margot Robbie and starred in as well as produced James Gray's 'Ad Astra.' Prior to this, Pitt won an Academy Award as a producer of "12 Years a Slave," directed by Steve McQueen (the film also won Oscars® for screenwriter John Ridley and supporting actress Lupita Nyong'o), led a five-man tank crew in David Ayer's World War II epic "Fury," starred and produced "By the Sea", played a supporting role in "The Big Short," and the lead in "War Machine," a provocative satirical comedy from David Michod for Netflix, both of which he also produced with his Plan B shingle. In 2016, Pitt starred opposite Marion Cotillard Robert Zemeckis' "Allied." Pitt will next be seen starring in David Leitch's 'Bullet Train' for Sony and Damien Chazelle's 'Babylon' opposite Margot Robbie.

In 2013, Pitt starred and produced one of the year's top ten grossing movies, "World War Z" for Paramount. Following Z, Pitt played a supporting role in Cormac McCarthy's "The Counselor" directed by Ridley Scott as well as Andrew Dominik's "Cogan's Trade." This is the second time Pitt has starred and produced a Dominik film, the first being "The Assassination of Jesse James by the Coward Robert Ford," for which he was named Best Actor at the Venice Film Festival. In 2011, Brad gave two of his most complex and nuanced performances in Bennett Miller's "Moneyball" and Terrence Malick's "Tree of Life," films he also produced. Brad won the New York Film Critics Circle Award and the National Society of Film Critics Award for both roles. Additionally, Brad was nominated for a Screen Actors Guild, Golden Globe Award, BAFTA Award, and an Academy Award for his work in "Moneyball." The movie also received an

Academy Award Best Picture nomination. "Tree of Life" won the Palme d'Or at the Cannes Film Festival and was nominated for Best Picture at the Academy Awards as well. In previous years, Brad was an Academy Award® nominee for his performance in David Fincher's "The Curious Case of Benjamin Button" and Terry Gilliam's "Twelve Monkeys," for which he won a Golden Globe Award. He was also a Golden Globe Award nominee for his performances in Edward Zwick's "Legends of the Fall" and Alejandro González Iñárritu's "Babel."

In 2009, Pitt starred in Quentin Tarantino's "Inglorious Basterds" as Lt. Aldo Raine; and appeared in Joel and Ethan Coen's comedy thriller "Burn After Reading." Opposite George Clooney, his "Burn After Reading" co-star, he also appeared in Steven Soderbergh's hits "Ocean's Eleven," "Ocean's Twelve" and "Ocean's Thirteen."

It was Mr. Pitt's role in Ridley Scott's Academy Award®-winning "Thelma and Louise" that first brought him national attention. He soon went on to star in Robert Redford's Academy Award®-winning "A River Runs Through It," Dominic Sena's "Kalifornia" and Tony Scott's "True Romance." Pitt also received critical acclaim for his performances in the two David Fincher films: "Se7en" and "Fight Club." His other films include Doug Liman's "Mr. and Mrs. Smith," which was one of 2005's biggest hits and Guy Ritchie's "Snatch."

Pitt's Plan B Entertainment has been responsible for producing numerous award-winning and commercially successful films including "The Departed," "The Assassination of Jesse James by the Coward Robert Ford," "The Tree of Life," "World War Z," "12 Years a Slave," "The Normal Heart," "Selma," 2017's Academy Award-winning "Moonlight" directed by Barry Jenkins, "the Big Short" directed by Adam McKay, "Selma" directed by Ava Duvernay, and 2014's Academy Award winning "12 Years a Slave" directed by Steve McQueen. Other productions include "Okja" directed by Bong Joon-ho, "The Lost City of Z" directed by James Gray, David Michod's "War Machine," Barry Jenkins' film "If Beale Street Could Talk," Adam McKay's "Vice" for Annapurna, and the television project "Sweetbitter" for Starz.

### **Lyn Lucibello Brancatella (Executive Producer)**

Lyn was inspired at a young age by her father, Tony, a pioneer of Toronto's prosperous film industry. Tony attracted production from the US and England to Kleinburg Studios where Lyn spent much of her childhood around the business.

Lyn served as executive producer Chris Columbus' Netflix hits *The Christmas Chronicles* and *The Christmas Chronicles: Part Two* and as co-producer on Aaron Sorkin's directorial debut *Molly's Game*. She was associate producer on D.J. Caruso's 'xXx: The Return of Xander Cage' starring Vin Diesel and Chris Columbus' *Pixels* starring Adam Sandler and Kevin James, line producer on Jose Padilha's *Robocop* starring Joel Kinnaman and Gary Oldman and Matthew Vaughn's *Kick Ass* starring Aaron Taylor-Johnson, Nicolas Cage and Chloe Grace Moretz. Lyn was a co-producer on *The Rocker* starring Rainn Wilson and Emma Stone.

As unit production manager, Lucibello's credits include the recent blockbusters *Suicide Squad* and *Total Recall*, as well as *Dream House*, *Grey Gardens*, *Mr Magorium's Wonder Emporium*, *Four Brothers*, *Dark Water*, *Shall We Dance*, *Against the Ropes*, *Avenging Angelo* and *The Skulls*.

Lyn was a production accountant on many feature films in Toronto before meeting Dino de Laurentiis on *Deadzone*. She spent the next four years honing her skills at the Dino De Laurentiis Corporation at his studios in Wilmington, North Carolina.

### **Emily Jade Foley (Executive Producer)**

Emily Jade Foley is an Executive Producer and Head of Development at Hear/Say Productions. Collaborating with Frances McDormand, she co-produced Best Picture Oscar winner *Nomadland*, directed by Chloe Zhao, in which she also played the role of "Emily". Previously she worked on the sets of The Coen Brothers' *The Ballad of Buster Scruggs*, Martin McDonagh's *Three Billboards Outside Ebbing, Missouri*, and Lisa Cholodenko's *Olive Kitteridge*, as well as in post-production on John Carney's *Begin Again*. Emily attended University of Cape Town and University of Michigan, where she graduated in 2009. She currently resides in Brooklyn, MI.

### **Hildur Guðnadóttir (Composer)**

Hildur Guðnadóttir is an Academy Award-, Golden Globe-, Emmy-, two-time Grammy-, and BAFTA-winning Icelandic artist, who has been manifesting herself at the forefront of experimental pop and contemporary music. In her solo works, she draws out a broad spectrum of sounds from her instrumentation, ranging from intimate simplicity to huge soundscapes.

Her work for film and television includes “Sicario: Day of the Soldado,” “Mary Magdalene,” and the critically acclaimed HBO series “Chernobyl,” for which she won a Primetime Emmy Award, as well as a Grammy Award. Guðnadóttir received a multitude of accolades for her work on the “Joker,” directed by Todd Phillips and starring Joaquin Phoenix, including an Academy Award, Golden Globe, BAFTA and Grammy. In addition, her body of work includes scores for films such as “Tom of Finland,” “Journey’s End” and 20 episodes of the Icelandic TV series “Trapped,” streaming on Amazon Prime. With Sam Slater she co-composed the video game score “Battlefield 2042” for Electronic Arts’ massively successful Battlefield franchise. The score won a Society of Composers & Lyricists Award.

Here latest projects, the Todd Field film “TÁR,” starring Cate Blanchett and the Sarah Polley film “Women Talking,” starring Frances McDormand, Rooney Mara, and Claire Foy will premiere at Venice Film Festival and Toronto Film Festival respectively.

Guðnadóttir began playing cello as a child, entered the Reykjavík Music Academy and then moved on to musical studies/composition and new media at the Iceland Academy of the Arts and Universität der Künste Berlin.

She has released four critically acclaimed solo albums: Mount A (2006), Without Sinking (2009), Leyfðu Ljósinu (2012) and Saman (2014). Her records have been nominated a number of times for the Icelandic Music Awards. Her albums are all released on Touch.

She has composed music for theatre, dance performances and films. The Icelandic Symphony Orchestra, Icelandic National Theatre, Tate Modern, The British Film Institute, The Royal Swedish Opera in Stockholm and Gothenburg National Theatre are amongst the institutions that have commissioned new works from her. Currently she is curating an exhibit for the opening of the new Academy Museum in Los Angeles, set to open on September 28.

Gudnadóttir has performed live and recorded music with Skúli Sverrisson, Jóhann Jóhannsson, múm, Sunn O))), Pan Sonic, Hauschka, Wildbirds & Peacedrums, Ryuichi Sakamoto, David Sylvian, The Knife, Fever Ray and Throbbing Gristle, among others.

### **Luc Montpellier (Director of Photography)**

Luc Montpellier is an award-winning cinematographer who, over a 20+ year career, is equally at home interpreting the perspective of Guy Maddin's avant garde *The Saddest Music in the World*, auteur directors Sarah Polley and Clark Johnson, and directors David Shore and Vince Gilligan.

Montpellier recently wrapped production on the feature films *Percy vs. Goliath* starring Christopher Walken, and his fourth collaboration with Sarah Polley on *WOMEN TALKING*. Film credits include Sarah Polley's short film *I Shout Love*, *Take This Waltz* and Academy Award® nominated directorial debut *Away from Her*, Ruba Nadda's *Sabah* and *Cairo Time*, which won Best Canadian Feature at the 2009 Toronto International Film Festival. He received a nomination from the Canadian Society of Cinematographers for Paolo Barzman's *Emotional Arithmetic* and won the Haskell Wexler Award for Asghar Massombagi's 2001 FIPRESCI Award winner *Khaled*. His work on Emmanuel Shirinian's *It Was You Charlie* was nominated for a 2015 Canadian Screen Award for Best Feature Film Cinematography.

Luc's television credits include "Damian" for A&E, the science fiction thriller "Incorporated" for SyFy, the science fiction series "Tales From The Loop" for Amazon and the Netflix series "Tiny Pretty Things". Montpellier was nominated for Best TV Series Cinematography at the 2018 Canadian Society of Cinematographers Awards for his work on the Starz series "Counterpart" for Starz starring JK Simmons.

### **Peter Cosco (Production Designer)**

Peter Cosco has received praise for his outstanding production design in contemporary, futuristic and period projects since 1997. His feature film credits include *Victoria Day*, *Kit Kittredge: An American Girl*, *388 Arletta Ave.*, *Collaborator*, *Nothing*, *Nemesis Game*, and *Perfect Pie*. Peter designed Martin Donovan's *Collaborator*, produced by Ted Hope. He also designed *Rocky Horror: Let's Do the Time Warp Again* and "Damien" with Glen Mezzera.

Variety magazine praised Peter's strong contribution of "down-to-the-last-1930s-detail" production design in Patricia Rozema's *Kit Kittredge: An American Girl*. He received Director's Guild of Canada Award nominations for his work on that film and Vincenzo Natali's *Nothing*. Peter is currently designing Natali's upcoming feature film, *Haunter*. Cosco's work on *The Nemesis Game* won the New Zealand Film Award for Best Design. For television, Cosco's work includes episodes of HBO's "Tell Me You Love Me", "Being Erica", "Beautiful People" for ABC Family, and "Total Recall 2070", as well as the telefilms "Widow on the Hill", "Diverted", "Naughty or Nice", "Gracie's Choice", "Mr. Rock 'n' Roll: The Alan Freed Story", "Vacation with Derek" and "Time Shifters".

Peter studied sculpture and film at the Ontario College of Art Toronto and Florence, Italy. He has exhibited his own work at the Cold City Gallery, Power Plant, Carmen Lamanna Gallery and Mercer Union.

### **Quita Alfred (Costume Designer)**

Originally from Winnipeg, Manitoba, Quita studied Theatre Production at Toronto's Ryerson University and soon landed her first job at Canada's famous Stratford Festival. She moved into costume building for large-scale musicals, then spent years learning the practical side of creating costumes for the screen, always with an eye towards design. She began designing for film in 1998.

Quita's credits include the television series "Soul Food", *The Sheldon Kennedy Story*, *Resurrection* with Christopher Lambert, and *Trapped in a Purple Haze*. She's been instrumental in creating thousands of background characters for feature films such as *Total Recall*, *Amelia*, *Pixels*, *The Long Kiss Goodnight*, *The Hurricane*, and *The Recruit*, as well as the well-loved *Road to Avonlea* tv series, and many others. Before working in film, Quita designed shows for dance companies,

regional theatres, and production companies, and produced her own line of jewelry and custom clothing, which were featured in Australian Elle, NOW magazine, and other publications.

### **Christopher Donaldson (Editor)**

Editor Christopher Donaldson's work encompasses a variety of dramatic and documentary features and television. WOMEN TALKING marks his second collaboration with Sarah Polley. Their first was Take This Waltz, starring Michelle Williams and Seth Rogan.

Donaldson's recent feature credits include David Cronenberg's Crimes of the Future and Atom Egoyan's Remember. His work for television includes "The Handmaid's Tale" for Hulu, "Reacher" for Amazon Prime, "Penny Dreadful" for Showtime/SkyAtlantic, "The Kids in the Hall: Death Comes To Town" for CBC, and "Slings & Arrows" for TMN/Showcase/Sundance Channel. His documentary credits are Kevin McMahon's Waterlife, and Alan Zweig's Mirror Trilogy, Vinyl, I, Curmudgeon:, and Lovable.

### **Miriam Toews (Novelist)**

Miriam Toews is the author of seven bestselling novels: Women Talking, All My Puny Sorrows, Irma Voth, The Flying Troutmans, A Complicated Kindness, A Boy of Good Breeding, and Summer of My Amazing Luck, and one work of non-fiction, Swing Low: A Life. She is a winner of the Governor General's Award for Fiction, the Libris Award for Fiction Book of the Year, the Rogers Writers' Trust Fiction Prize, and the Writers Trust Marian Engel/Timothy Findley Award. She lives in Toronto.

### **Dr. Lori Haskell (Trauma Consultant)**

Dr. Lori Haskell is a clinical psychologist and a nationally recognized expert on trauma and sexual violence, as well as on trauma informed approaches to mental health and legal responses and systems.

Her career has been dedicated to helping police, lawyers, judges, mental health professionals and the interested public deepen their knowledge and understanding of the effects of traumatic events on people's brains & bodies. These effects include the impacts of trauma on their relationships, families and physical and mental health.



In the summer of 2021 she worked on the set of *Women Talking* as a consultant and support for cast and crew. Director Sarah Polley and her production team recognized the potentially heightened emotional demand of portraying women and children who had been emotionally, sexually and physically abused by their own brothers, husbands and male community members.

Exposure to these charged, intense dialogues about harm, betrayal and loss was not only experienced by the cast but also crew members. Lori was available both on set and after hours to discuss any challenges and reactions cast and crew wanted to share.

Lori embraced the opportunity to be part of *Women Talking*, because of this film's contribution both to deepening our understanding of the immense psychological cost of sexual violence while also recognizing the fierce determination and resistance many survivors express in their quest to find safety and community in connection with others.

## ABOUT THE CAST

### **Rooney Mara (Ona Friesen)**

Two-time Oscar®-nominee Rooney Mara began her career shortly after enrolling as a student at New York University. It was during her college years that Mara decided to explore her interest in acting, landing small parts in independent films and eventually moving to Los Angeles to pursue the craft full-time.

Mara wrapped production on Alonso Ruizpalacios LA COCINA, which is based on the play “The Kitchen,” written by Arnold Wesker, who will also serve as a writer on the film. The story will follow the life in the kitchen of a vast New York City restaurant where all the cultures of the world mix during the lunchtime rush. The feature is slated to release in 2023.

Recently, Mara co-starred in Guillermo del Toro’s Nightmare Alley, opposite Bradley Cooper and Cate Blanchett. Mara starred as the title role in Mary Magdalene for director Garth Davis, opposite Joaquin Phoenix’s ‘Jesus Christ.’ Mara and Phoenix also co-starred in Gus Van Sant’s Don’t Worry, He Won’t Get Far On Foot, which premiered at the 2018 Sundance Film Festival.

Mara starred opposite Casey Affleck in A24 Films’ A Ghost Story, directed by David Lowery. The film first premiered to critical praise at the 2017 Sundance Film Festival, was recognized as one of the Top 10 Independent Films of 2017 by the National Board of Review, and was nominated for the Independent Spirit John Cassavetes Award.

Mara starred opposite Ben Mendohlson in Una, a screen adaptation of David Harrower’s Olivier Award winning play Blackbird. Mara also starred in Jim Sheridan’s The Secret Scripture, alongside Vanessa Redgrave and Theo James.

Mara starred in Terrence Malik’s Song To Song alongside Ryan Gosling, Michael Fassbender and Natalie Portman, which opened the SXSW Festival in 2017. Mara also starred in The Discovery opposite Robert Redford and Jason Segal for director Charlie McDowell, which premiered at the 2017 Sundance Film Festival.

Mara starred in *Lion* with Dev Patel and Nicole Kidman for director Garth Davis. The film had its world premiere at the 2016 Toronto International Film Festival.

Mara starred opposite Cate Blanchett in *Carol*, directed by Todd Haynes. Based off the controversial romance novel “*The Price of Salt*,” the critically acclaimed drama premiered at the 2015 Cannes Film Festival where Mara won Best Actress. Mara was recognized with Oscar®, Screen Actors Guild, Golden Globe®, and BAFTA award nominations for her performance.

Mara starred in Stephen Daldry’s film *Trash*, set in the slums of Brazil with a script written by Richard Curtis. The film premiered at the Rome Film Festival in October 2014 and was nominated for a BAFTA Award for Best Film.

Mara starred in the 2013 Sundance Film Festival competitive entry *Ain’t Them Bodies Saints* for writer/ director David Lowery with Casey Affleck and Ben Foster. Also in 2013, Mara starred in *Side Effects* directed by Steven Soderbergh and opposite Channing Tatum and Jude Law, an official entry at the 2013 Berlin Film Festival. Mara appeared in the Academy & Golden Globe® Best Picture nominated film *HER*, directed by Spike Jonze and starring Joaquin Phoenix and Amy Adams.

Mara first mesmerized audiences and critics alike for her portrayal of ‘Lisbeth Salander’ in the 2011 David Fincher-directed, U.S. adaptation of the popular Stieg Larsson book *The Girl With The Dragon Tattoo*. From her outstanding performance, Mara was recognized by the National Board of Review for Breakthrough Performance as well as earned a Golden Globe® and Oscar® nomination for Best Actress, Drama.

Additional film credits include *Tanner Hall*, directed by Francesca Gregorini and Tatiana von Furstenberg; Warner Bros.’ *PAN*, for director Joe Wright; David Fincher’s *The Social Network*; *Youth In Revolt*; and *The Winning Season* opposite Sam Rockwell.

In 2016, Mara voiced a character in the first of the three-picture animated Series *Kubo And The Two Strings* by LAIKA and Focus Features. The film also stars Matthew McConaughey, Charlize Theron and Ralph Fiennes.

On the small screen, Mara's credits include memorable guest starring roles on ER, The Cleaner, Women's Murder Club, and Law & Order: Special Victims Unit.

In 2018, Mara created the vegan fashion line, Hiraeth, with partners Sara Schloat and Chrys Wong. The cruelty-free brand focuses on clothing and accessories and was created to serve as a new generation of conscious women who value quality and design, though do not want to compromise on their ethical beliefs.

### **Claire Foy (Salome Friesen)**

Claire Foy is an award-winning actress, perhaps best known for her outstanding and nuanced performance as Queen Elizabeth in Netflix's flagship drama series, "The Crown". Claire garnered multiple nominations and wins, including two Emmy awards, a SAG Award and a Golden Globe for the role.

Most recently, Claire starred opposite Paul Bettany in season 2 of the BBC/Amazon anthology series "A Very British Scandal," and opposite Benedict Cumberbatch in Will Sharpe's The Electrical Life Of Louis Wain.

Claire also starred in the English-language remake of the French thriller MY SON, alongside James McAvoy. Akin to the original, much of the film is largely improvised and was directed by Christian Carion.

The end of 2019 saw Claire reunite with Matt Smith in Matthew Warchus' adaptation of Duncan Macmillan's distinctive love story Lungs at The Old Vic. 2018 saw Claire star in three major film projects. She starred alongside Ryan Gosling and Kyle Chandler as 'Janet Armstrong' in Damien Chazelle's critically acclaimed First Man. Claire earned a BAFTA Film Award nomination for her performance. Further demonstrating her versatility as an actress, in the same year Claire also starred as 'Lisbeth Salander' in Sony Pictures The Girl In The Spider's Web. Claire was also seen in Steven Soderbergh's psychological horror Unsane as 'Sawyer Valentini', a young woman involuntarily committed to a mental institution. Shot entirely on an iPhone 7 over two weeks, the film received critical acclaim for both Foy's performance and for Soderbergh's fresh vision.

Other notable work includes television projects such as “Wolf Hall”, for which she earned a Leading Actress nomination at the BAFTA TV Awards for her role as Anne Boleyn. The critically acclaimed six-part series, written by Oscar nominated Peter Straughan (Tinker, Tailor, Soldier, Spy), also starred Mark Rylance as ‘Thomas Cromwell’ and Damian Lewis as ‘Henry VIII’. Claire starred in “White Heat” for the BBC opposite Sam Claflin; “Upstairs Downstairs” for the BBC; THE PROMISE, written and directed by Peter Kosminsky; the “The Night Watch” for the BBC starring opposite Anna Maxwell Martin, and Jodie Whittaker; and “Little Dorrit”, the BBC drama adapted by Andrew Davies.

Claire has appeared in several prestigious theatre projects. She took the role of ‘Lady Macbeth’ at the Trafalgar Studios opposite James McAvooy in Macbeth in 2013. In 2012 Claire appeared at the Royal Court in two separate productions, Mike Bartlett’s Love, Love, Love, and Ding, Dong The Wicked. She made her professional stage debut in 2008 at the National Theatre in DNA/ The Miracle/ Baby Girl’, one of a trio of acts, directed by Paul Miller.

### **Jessie Buckley (Mariche Loewen)**

Olivier Award-Winner and Oscar-Nominee Jessie Buckley had her first starring role in Michael Pearce’s BAFTA-nominated BEAST, alongside Johnny Flynn. The film opened to rave reviews in 2018 and Buckley won “The Most Promising Newcomer” award at the British Independent Film Awards and “Best British or Irish Actress” at the Critics Circle Awards. She was selected to be one of BAFTA’s “Break Through Brits” and was also chosen as one of Screen International’s “Stars of Tomorrow.”

Upcoming, Buckley will star alongside Riz Ahmed in Christos Nikou’s Sci-Fi Romance FINGERNAILS, which is set in a surreal future in which married couples can undergo a test to see if they are truly in love; and Buckley will also reunite with Olivia Colman in WICKED LITTLE LETTERS, an upcoming comedy based on a true story of two vastly different neighbors who band together to solve a mystery.

Buckley was most recently be seen in Alex Garland’s MEN, alongside Rory Kinnear. which premiered at the Cannes Film Festival. Earlier this year, Buckley was nominated for an Academy

Award in the category of “Best Supporting Actress” for her performance in Maggie Gyllenhaal’s directorial debut, *THE LOST DAUGHTER*. Also this year, Buckley won the Olivier Award for “Best Actress in a Musical” for her performance as Sally Bowles in *CABARET*, opposite Eddie Redmayne in London's West End. Buckley also received the “Tropheé Chopard” at the 2021 Cannes Film Festival.

In 2020, Buckley starred in Season 4 of Noah Hawley’s critically-acclaimed *FARGO* on FX, alongside Chris Rock and Jason Schwartzman. Buckley also starred in Netflix and Charlie Kaufman’s *I’M THINKING OF ENDING THINGS*, alongside Jesse Plemons. Her performance garnered her a Gotham Independent Film Awards nomination for “Best Actress.” That same year, Buckley starred alongside Josh O’Connor in a stage-to-film, present-day adaptation of *ROMEO & JULIET*, directed by Simon Godwin. Originally meant for the stage at the National Theatre in London, the filmed performance premiered on PBS in the US and on Sky Arts in the UK.

In 2018, Buckley starred in Tom Harper’s *WILD ROSE* alongside Julie Walters and Sophie Okonedo for which she earned a “Best Actress” nomination at the British Independent Film Awards and won the “Best Actress” award for BAFTA Scotland. She was also nominated for the BAFTA “Rising Star” award, where she performed a song from the film, becoming the only performer at the awards ceremony that year. In 2019, Buckley starred in Rupert Goold’s *JUDY*, alongside Renee Zellweger, and she appeared alongside Emily Watson and Jared Harris in the HBO and Sky Atlantic Emmy-nominated series, *CHERNOBYL*.

Other film and television credits include *The Voyage of Doctor Dolittle*, *The Courier*, the role of Princess Marya in the critically acclaimed BBC adaptation of Tolstoy’s epic novel *War And Peace* alongside Paul Dano; and starring opposite Tom Hardy in the historic drama series “*Taboo*”. In 2018, she worked alongside Stephen Campbell Moore, Ben Miles and Jessica Raine in the BBC One drama series “*The Last Post*”, written by Peter Moffat, and appeared in the BBC One adaptation of “*The Woman In White*”, Wilkie Collins’ classic psychological thriller adapted for television by Fiona Seres.

Buckley’s theatre credits include two productions simultaneously as part of the Kenneth Branagh Theatre Company’s inaugural season: *THE WINTER’S TALE*, in which she starred as Perdita, and

HARLEQUINADE, in which she starred as Muriel. Buckley starred as Miranda in Jeremy Herrin's THE TEMPEST, opposite Roger Allam (which was later released as a film). Further theatre credits include: A LITTLE NIGHT MUSIC at the Menier Chocolate Factory; as Princess Katherine opposite Jude Law in Henry V; and as Constanze in AMADEUS, alongside Joshua McGuire and Rupert Everett at the Chichester Festival Theatre. Born in Killarney, Ireland, Buckley graduated from the Royal Academy of Dramatic Arts (RADA).

### **Judith Ivey (Agata Friesen)**

Judith Ivey is a two-time Tony Award winner; she won for Best Featured Actress in a Play for Steaming, and later Hurllyburly. Her performances in Park Your Car in Harvard Yard and a revival of The Heiress were both nominated for Tony Awards. She was nominated for a Drama Desk award for her work in Precious Sons and The Lady with all the Answers, and won an Obie Award for The Moonshot Tape.

Ivey's television and film works spans four decades and includes The Devil's Advocate, Compromising Positions, Love Hurts, Brighton Beach Memoirs, Flags of Our Fathers, What Alice Found and Big Stone Gap. TV includes "Designing Women," "What the Deaf Man Heard" (Emmy nomination), "The Accidental Wolf", "Nurse Jackie," "Law & Order: SVU," "White Collar" and "New Amsterdam."

### **Sheila McCarthy (Greta Loewen)**

Sheila McCarthy stars in Sarah Polley's upcoming film WOMEN TALKING, and recurs in the highly anticipated Netflix series Grendel.

Other recent film credits include starring roles in Helen Shaver's HAPPY PLACE for Sienna Films, and the little indie thriller that could ANYTHING FOR JACKSON with Julian Richings, supporting roles in the TriStar/Sony film BROKEN HEART GALLERY, the TIFF selected film LIKE A HOUSE ON FIRE, and Norwegian director Bent Hamer's film THE MIDDLE MAN which premiered at TIFF last year.

Sheila won ACTRA's Best Actress Award for her film CARDINALS opposite Noah Reid, which also premiered at TIFF.

Recent TV credits include Netflix's UMBRELLA ACADEMY, ABC's THE GOOD DOCTOR, CBS' STAR TREK: Discovery, and Jason Priestly starrer PRIVATE EYES opposite William Shatner.

### **Michelle McLeod (Mejal Loewen)**

Toronto based Actor and comedian Michelle McLeod is a graduate of the Second City Conservatory Program in Toronto, and of the (CFC) Canadian Film Centre Actors Residency. McLeod starred opposite Geena Davis in the title role of the TIFF selected film Don't Talk To Irene. Other credits include Honey Bee alongside Julia Sarah Stone, Martha Plimpton and Peter Outerbridge, My Spy with Dave Bautista, "Tin Star" opposite Tim Roth, and BBC's "Creeped Out", and a recurring role in the upcoming season of Catherine Reitman's Workin' Moms.

### **Kate Hallett (Autje Loewen)**

Kate Hallett was born and raised in Alberta, Canada. Her love of acting began at an early age with local amateur theatre productions. This transitioned to an interest in film when she started watching behind the scenes footage. WOMEN TALKING is her debut in the film world. When she's not acting, Kate enjoys listening to music, singing and reading.

### **Liv McNeil (Neitje Frisen)**

Liv McNeil is an artist, filmmaker and actor living, working in Toronto and studying at Etobicoke School of the Arts. In 2020, as a grade 9 student, Liv produced, shot, edited and starred in a short film as an end of year school project that illustrated the effects of the COVID lockdown on teens' mental health. This passion project titled "Numb" hit a global nerve, reaching an audience of millions, and garnering Liv film festival awards and accolades from across the globe. This "gut punch" film thrust Liv to centre stage, putting her in touch with many creative industry heavyweights in the film industry and leading to several fun projects.

One such talented individual who took notice of Liv's talents was Sarah Polley, who called "Numb" the "best film I've seen in 2020". After a quick online friendship grew, Sarah asked Liv to read for a part in her latest project "Women Talking".



This role is a perfect fit for Liv, showcasing her passions for acting and drawing as well as learning the film process first-hand from an amazing role model in Sarah Polley. Other than starring and filming in her own projects, WOMEN TALKING is her first foray into feature film and she loved every minute of it. Following this incredible experience, Liv will head back to school and is in talks to direct a web series for kids who are coming out of the long COVID shadow.

### **August Winter (Nettie/Melvin)**

Born in Whistler, BC, August began acting at the age of six. Shortly after, they spent 6 seasons as a member of the company at the Stratford Festival, where they won the Mary Savidge Award for most promising young artist. Their on stage experience supported a transition into film and television, where they have been working steadily for the past ten years. They are best known for their series regular role as Jess Geller on “Mary Kills People” opposite Caroline Dhavernas. Other select credits include “Rookie Blue”, “Saving Hope”, Netflix’s “Between”, “The Detail”, “Wayne”, “Copper”, “Warehouse 13”, and feature film Unless opposite Catherine Keener. In addition to their acting career, Winter also thrives behind the camera as a screenwriter. They have written four short films that have been produced and screened at various festivals, and their first feature film, Every Seventh Wave, is currently in development.

### **Ben Whishaw (August Epp)**

Ben Whishaw is a multi-award-winning British actor who graduated from the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art in Spring 2003. Ben went on to appear in Enduring Love, a film adaptation of Ian McEwan's novel directed by Roger Michell and Layer Cake, a feature directed by Matthew Vaughn. In 2003, he also starred in the popular comedy-drama “The Booze Cruise” for ITV.

Ben subsequently made his West End debut at the National Theatre in their stage adaptation of Phillip Pullman's His Dark Materials and starred as Hamlet in Trevor Nunn's electric 'youth' version of the play at The Old Vic, for which he received tremendous critical acclaim and a Laurence Olivier nomination (2005).

Ben played the lead character Grenouille in the highly acclaimed Perfume which debuted in the UK in December 2006. Ben then shot a feature film called Stoned, in which he plays Keith Richards from the Rolling Stones. He also appeared in I’m Not There, Todd Haynes film portrayal of Bob

Dylan's life alongside the likes of Cate Blanchett, Richard Gere and Christian Bale where he plays the young, poetic Dylan. We next saw Ben in Nathan Barley from director Chris Morris. He returned to the theatre for Katie Mitchell's version of *The Seagull* at the National Theatre in the Autumn of 2006.

Ben appeared in *Brideshead Revisited* which was released to critical acclaim in September 2008. In 2008 Ben also starred in the hugely popular BBC drama "Criminal Justice" which saw him pick up the award for best actor at the 2009 Royal Television Society Awards, 'Best Actor' at the International Emmy Awards 2009 and was nominated for 'Best Actor' at the 2009 BAFTA Television Awards. 2008 also saw Ben in *The Idiot* in which he played the lead at the National Theatre.

2009 was another busy year for Ben, seeing him star as poet John Keats in *Bright Star*. Ben then played the lead at The Royal Court Theatre in Mike Bartlett's play *Cock*. Ben then played Ariel opposite Helen Mirren and Russell Brand in *The Tempest*.

Ben went on to star as Freddie Lyon in "The Hour" for the BBC opposite Dominic West and Romola Garai. This was followed by the lead role alongside James Purefoy and Patrick Stewart in the BBC's adaptation of Shakespeare's "Richard II", which earned him a TV BAFTA. Ben replaced John Cleese as the new Q in the Bond movie, *Skyfall* alongside Daniel Craig and Ralph Fiennes. The beginning of 2013 saw the release of *Cloud Atlas* in which Ben starred alongside an all-star cast including Tom Hanks, Jim Sturgess and Halle Berry. Ben also appeared on stage starring alongside Judi Dench in *Peter And Alice* which received rave reviews.

In 2014 Ben played the dark and tragic character of Baby in Jez Butterworth's *Mojo* in the West End and was the lead in the independent film *Lilting*. He also voiced the title role of Paddington Bear in the box office smash family movie, *Paddington*.

Premiering at the Venice Film Festival in 2015, Ben starred alongside Eddie Redmayne in the *DANISH GIRL*. Autumn 2015 saw Ben playing alongside Meryl Steep, Helena Bonham Carter and Carey Mulligan in *Suffragette*, returning to the role of Q in the the next Bond film, *Spectre*, directed by Sam Mendes and on film alongside Colin Farrell and Rachel Weisz in the Sci-Fi thriller

The Lobster which premiered at the 2015 Cannes Film Festival.

In November 2015 Ben also played the lead role in the BBC's exciting new spy drama – "London Spy". He then starred as Herman Melville in Warner Bros. In The Heart Of The Sea. Ben finished on stage in the Bakkhai at the Almeida Theatre at the end of 2015 and moved straight to New York to appear in the Broadway version of Arthur Millers The Crucible in early 2016.

2017 saw Ben reprise his role as the voice of Paddington Bear in Paddington 2. Ben also returned to the Almeida Theatre to appear in Against and played Brutus in Nicholas Hytner's adaptation of William Shakespeare's Julius Ceaser at The Bridge Theatre opposite David Morrissey and Michelle Fairley.

In 2018, Ben starred opposite Hugh Grant in BBC's (UK) and Amazon's (US) "A Very English Scandal". This performance saw Ben recognised with a Golden Globe for Best Supporting Actor in a Series, Miniseries, or Motion Picture Made for Television; a Primetime Emmy Award for Outstanding Supporting Actor in a Limited Series or Movie; a BAFTA TV Award for Best Supporting Actor as well as the Critics' Choice Television Award for Best Supporting Actor in a Movie/Miniseries.

Ben can also be seen playing Michael Banks, opposite Emily Blunt and Emily Mortimer in the much-anticipated sequel to Mary Poppins, titled Mary Poppins Returns for Disney.

In 2019, Ben returned to the stage to perform in Katie Mitchell's Norma Jeane Baker Of Troy alongside Renée Fleming at The Shed in New York City. Ben was also be seen opposite Tilda Swinton and Dev Patel in Armando Lanucci's The Personal History Of David Copperfield for FOX Searchlight, which premiered at the London Film Festival, Jessica Hausner's Sci-Fi Drama "Little Joe" alongside Emily Beecham and in 2020 Ben appeared in the fourth season of the incredibly popular FX crime drama series "Fargo" as Rabbi Milligan opposite Ewan McGregor and Billy Bob Thornton.

Ben went on to play the harrowing role of Joseph in Aneil Karia's stripped back thriller Surge. The story is set over 24 hours in London and follows Joseph on a bold and reckless journey of self-

liberation.

In 2021 we saw Ben reprise the role of Q in the hugely anticipated James Bond blockbuster *No Time To Die*.

Most recently Ben was seen in the lead role of Adam Kay in the BBC series adaptation of “*This Is Going To Hurt*”. The series is based on the best-selling non-fiction memoir of the same name and follows junior doctor Adam Kay as he navigates his chaotic job in Obstetrics and Gynecology.

### **Frances McDormand (Scarface Janz)**

Frances McDormand received a Masters Degree in Fine Arts from the Yale School of Drama, and has since established a worldwide audience with roles in a wide variety of films, television streaming projects and theater productions.

On stage, she received the Tony Award, Drama Desk and Outer Critics Circle Award for her performance in David Lindsay-Abaire's *Good People*. Other theatre credits include her Tony-nominated performance as ‘Stella’ in *A Streetcar Named Desire*; *The Country Girl* on Broadway; Caryl Churchill’s *Far Away* at NY Theatre Workshop; *The Sisters Rosenzweig* at Lincoln Center Theatre; *The Swan* at The Public Theatre; *A Streetcar Named Desire* (this time as ‘Blanche’) at the Gate Theatre in Dublin; *Awake and Sing!* at Circle in the Square; *Dare Clubb's Oedipus*; the Berkeley Repertory Theatre’s production of *Macbeth*; and a collaboration at national museums with the conceptual artist Suzanne Bocanegra on the performance piece, *Bodycast*. With The Wooster Group, she performed in *To You, The Birdie!*, *North Atlantic* and *Early Shaker Spirituals*.

McDormand was recently seen as “Lady Macbeth” opposite Denzel Washington in *The Tragedy of Macbeth*, directed by Joel Coen. Additional films include her Academy Award winning performances in Chloé Zhao’s *Nomadland*, Martin McDonagh’s *Three Billboards Outside Ebbing, Missouri*, and Joel and Ethan Coen’s *Fargo*, with three additional Oscar nominations for *Mississippi Burning*, *Almost Famous* and *North Country*; others include *The French Dispatch*, *Miss Pettigrew Lives for a Day*, *Short Cuts*, *Hidden Agenda*, *Lone Star*, *Paradise Road*,

Wonder Boys, Laurel Canyon, Friends With Money, Something's Gotta Give, City by the Sea, Madeline, Primal Fear, Palookaville, Chattahoochee, This Must Be The Place, Moonrise Kingdom, Promised Land, Transformers: Dark of the Moon, Beyond Rangoon and Darkman. Voice performances in animated features include Wes Anderson's Isle of Dogs, Pixar's The Good Dinosaur, and Madagascar 3: Europe's Most Wanted (as Captain Chantal Dubois and performing Edith Piaf's "Non, je ne Regrette rien"). McDormand has appeared in five additional collaborations with the Coens: Hail, Caesar!, Burn After Reading, The Man Who Wasn't There, Raising Arizona, and Blood Simple.

Television and streaming credits include Olive Kitteridge for HBO (Emmy Award); The Good Old Boys, directed by Tommy Lee Jones; Talking With..., directed by Kathy Bates; Crazy in Love, directed by Martha Coolidge; Hidden in America (Emmy nomination) directed by Martin Bell; and in Neil Gaiman's adaptation of Good Omens as the voice of God.

ORION PICTURES PRESENTS

A PLAN B ENTERTAINMENT PRODUCTION

A hear/say PRODUCTION

# WOMEN TALKING

Directed by  
Sarah Polley

Screenplay by  
Sarah Polley

Based upon the book by Miriam Toews

Produced by  
Dede Gardner, p.g.a.  
Jeremy Kleiner, p.g.a.

Produced by  
Frances McDormand, p.g.a.

Executive Producers  
Brad Pitt  
Lyn Lucibello Brancatella  
Emily Jade Foley

Director of Photography  
Luc Montpellier, CSC

Production Designer  
Peter Cosco

Editors  
Christopher Donaldson, CCE  
Roslyn Kalloo, CCE

Costume Designer  
Quita Alfred

Music by  
Hildur Guðnadóttir

Casting by  
John Buchan, CSA  
Jason Knight, CSA

Rooney Mara  
Claire Foy  
Jessie Buckley  
Judith Ivey  
Sheila McCarthy  
Michelle McLeod  
Kate Hallett  
Liv McNeil  
August Winter  
With  
Ben Wishaw  
And  
Frances McDormand

## END CREDITS

Unit Production Manager    LYN LUCIBELLO BRANCATELLA  
Production Manager        JESSICA CHEUNG

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First Assistant Director    DANIEL J. MURPHY  
Second Assistant Director   EMILY DRAKE

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### CAST

(in order of appearance)

Ona	ROONEY MARA
Agata	JUDITH IVEY
Miep	EMILY MITCHELL
Autje	KATE HALLETT
Neitje	LIV McNEIL
Salome	CLAIRE FOY
Greta	SHEILA McCARTHY
Mariche	JESSIE BUCKLEY
Mejal	MICHELLE McLEOD
Anna	KIRA GULOIEN
Helena	SHAYLA BROWN
Scarface Janz	FRANCES McDORMAND
Clara	VIVIEN ENDICOTT-DOUGLAS
August	BEN WHISHAW
Melvin	AUGUST WINTER
Julius	LOCHLAN MILLER
Aaron	NATHANIEL McPARLAND
Census Driver	WILL BOWES
Klaas	ELI HAM
Dark Haired Woman	EMILY DRAKE
Cornelius	MARCUS CRAIG
Woman on the Path	CAROLINE GILLIS

Stunt Coordinators        LAYTON MORRISON  
                                      PATRICK MARK

### STUNTS

ANGELA KOSTESKI	BJ PRINCE	BRACKEN CAMILLERI	BRIAN ROWORTH
CURTIS PARKER	GABRIELLE ANN DESY	JAMIE YUNGBLOOD	JENNIFER MURRAY
LUKE McCOAG	MARK SCHNEIDER	REMINGTON	SARAH SCHNEIDER
MARY ANN STEVENS	MELISSA KELLY	STEPHAN DAOUST	SUE PARKER



Key Stunt Rigger SIMON GIRARD  
Stunt Riggers BOB LAMON  
DAVE LEWIS  
DON GOUGH  
JOSH MADRYGA  
SPENCER JONES

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Art Director ANDREA KRISTOF  
First Assistant Art Director MAYUKO UEDA  
First Assistant Art Directors (Set Design) MIRA APCI  
SONIA GEMMITI  
ANDREW REDEKOP  
Art Department Coordinator ASTRID HO  
Trainee Assistant Art Department CHRIS O'KEEFE

Set Decorator FRIDAY LEIGH MYERS  
Assistant Set Decorator PETER KARMAZSIN  
Lead DAVID MILNER  
Second Lead DANNY BURKE  
Set Decoration Coordinator APRIL MOON  
On-Set Dresser STEPHEN MacDOUGALL  
Assistant On-Set Dresser NICOLE REDI  
Set Dressers ROBERT HILLMAN  
DUARTE CARREIRO  
DYLAN MARSHALL  
JONATHAN KOVACS  
NATE BELLAMY  
PAUL TRINIDAD  
SHERIDAN SHINDRUK  
STEVEN CORDEIRO  
ALAN HEMSWORTH  
PATRICK NUNZIATA  
Set Decoration Buyers ALEXANDRA ANTHONY  
ANDREA HAY

Assistant Costume Designer JENNIFER BUNT  
Costume Supervisors CAROL WONG  
KRISTIE PAILLE  
Truck Supervisor KAREN RENAUT  
Set Supervisor TRACYLEE GUERIN  
Assistant Set Supervisor GENEVIEVE PEARSON  
Background Costume Coordinator MARK DeMARCHI  
Assistant Background Costume Coordinator SUSAN ESKINS  
Background Set Supervisor LAURA FINES  
Breakdown Artist SUSAN WILLIS  
Cutter JANICE SKINNER  
Sewers MARIA BELPERIO  
MARY JANEIRO  
SO-SO LIN  
Costume Buyer DONNA WONG  
Costume Tracker DANIELA AGOSTA

Costume Production Assistant	TAVIS CUMMINGS
Property Master	STEPHEN LEVITT
Assistant Property Master	JOHN VAN LIESHOUT
Property Assistant	KARLEENA KELLY
Property Buyer	NIGEL HUTCHINS
Makeup Department Head	SHAUNA LLEWELLYN
Assistant Makeup Department Head	ANITA GUASTELLA
Key Makeup Artist	LARISSA PALASZCZUK
Makeup Artist	JENNIFER O'CONNOR
Background Makeup Artist	ASHLEY ROCHA
Hair Department Heads	PATRICIA CUTHBERT
	SUSAN EXTON-STRANKS
Key Hair Stylists	ANTOINETTE JULIEN
	KELLY WHETTER
Hair Stylist	JAIME DONNELLY
A Camera / MoVI Operator	SEAN JENSEN
B Camera Operator	LAINIE KNOX
A Camera First Assistant Camera	ROB MOUNTJOY
B Camera First Assistant Camera	ANDREW MACKLIN
A Camera Second Assistant Camera	MAESA DJENAR
B Camera Second Assistant Camera	ANDREI MATES
Location Second Assistant Camera	WILLIAM SCHEFFEL
Camera Utility	MAIKA BOETTCHER
Location Camera Trainee	TYRA HOUGHTON
DIT	JOSHUA JINCHEREAU
Video Coordinator	STEPHANIE GIRARD-HAMELIN
Video Assist	KELLY HEARNS
Dailies Processed by	PICTURE SHOP TORONTO
Script Supervisor	CONSUELO SOLAR GONZÁLEZ
Production Sound Mixer	HERWIG GAYER
Boom Operator	JORGE MUNIZ
Sound Utility	RONY ORMANGOREN
Post Production Supervisor	LORI WATERS
Post Production Coordinator	EMMA SANDERS FINLAYSON
Visual Effects Editor	CRAIG SCORGIE
First Assistant Picture Editors	LOUIS CASADO
	CRAIG SCORGIE
Assistant Picture Editor	SABRINA BUDIMAN
Trainee Assistant Picture Editor	HOWARD HAMILTON
Supervising Sound Editors	DAVID McCALLUM
	JANE TATTERSALL

Re-Recording Mixers	LOU SOLAKOFSKI JOE MORROW
Assistant Re-Recording Mixer	ELLA MELANSON
Re-Recorded at	FORMOSA GROUP TORONTO
Dialogue Editor	KRYSTIN HUNTER
Effects Editor	ALEX BULLICK
Foley Editor	CHRISTOPHER KING
ADR Mixers	RICHARD CALISTAN NICK KRAY NICK ROBERTS
ADR Group Coordinators	ALICIA JEFFERY MIA THEBERGE
Looping by	SHAUNA BLACK LISA NORTON ALEX PAXTON-BEESLEY EMILY PIGGFORD
ADR Dialect Coach	BRETT TYNE
Foley Artists	SANDRA FOX ANDY MALCOLM STEVE HAMMOND
Foley Mixers	CHELSEA BODY JACK HEEREN
Foley Editors	JENNA DALLA RIVA DAVI AQUINO KEVIN JUNG
Foley Recorded at	FOOTSTEPS POST-PRODUCTION SOUND INC.
Chief Lighting Technician	R. SCOTT PHILLIPS
Assistant Chief Lighting Technician	JERRY BORRIS
Electrics	CHRISTIAN MCKENDRICK LORNE BAINARD MIKE MELNECHENKO NASIM KOSARNIA ROHAN LAWRENCE
Genny Operator	J.W. LEE IONSON
Basecamp Genny Operator	ROB CONDE
Dimmer Operator	DESIREE LIDON
Chief Rigging Technician	NIKKI HOLMES
Assistant Chief Rigging Technician	DEAN MUTO
Rigging Electrics	BILLY BROWN PAUL QUESNEL SHAWN CHRISTIAN
First Company Grip	RICO EMERSON
Second Company Grip	SEAN BOURDEAU
A Camera Dolly Grip	ROBERT COCHRANE
B Camera Dolly Grip	PATRICK KRAUTER
Grips	ALEXIS TABINGA JOE SCHROEDER
First Company Rigging Grip	JOHN VRAKING

Second Company Rigging Grip Rigging Grip	RICK SCOTT FATIMA CAMARA
Special Effects Coordinator Special Effects Key	CAMERON GOLDIE JIM McFALL
Production Coordinator First Assistant Production Coordinator Second Assistant Production Coordinator Travel Coordinator Office Production Assistants	LINDSEY MOLNAR TARA REA DANIEL ROSEN BRETT McDERMID SOBIKA GANESHALINGAM MISCHA JACKSON
Third Assistant Director – Set Third Assistant Director – Trailer Set Production Assistants  Cast Assistants	SARTAJ AULAKH ANDREA LUFF JORDAN JACKSON MAXIMINA JENNINGS SCOTT WEEKS DIANE PELLEGRINO TEA NGUYEN
Assistant to S. Polley Assistant to D. Gardner Assistant to F. McDormand Assistant to L. Lucibello Brancatella	ALLIE CONNOP COLE EMHOFF EMMA HANNAWAY MADALENA BRANCATELLA
Location Manager Assistant Location Manager On-Set Assistant Location Manager Location Production Assistants  Locations Liaison	ANNE RICHARDSON JEREMY PINARD ALEX ANGUS ANDREW ANGUS EDDY P. LOMAS DANIEL POTTER DAVID KEARNEY SCOTT ALEXANDER
Key Animal Wrangler Animal Wranglers	RICHARD PARKER BJ PRINCE SUSAN PARKER ROBERT SOUTHORN
Production Accountant First Assistant Accountant General First Assistant Accountant Payroll Second Assistant Accountants  Third Assistant Accountant Post Production Accountant	SHELLEY PEARSON LOU MADOLEV LUZ MAGCAWAS ANGELA L. RYAN JASON HARRIS MARCIA ZEPEDA SAM PUM SHELLEY PEARSON
Casting Assistant	ALLIE CONNOP

Extras Casting Extras Casting Assistant	ZAMERET KLEIMAN MARK GORYS
Unit Publicist Still Photographer EPK	LISA SHAMATA MICHAEL GIBSON JULIE NG
Dialect Coach Tutor / Minor Welfare Worker	KATE WILSON SAT SIDHU
Construction Coordinator Head Carpenter Assistant Head Carpenters	PHILLIP TELLEZ THOMAS BARKER CATHERINE DALRYMPLE MEDI BRANCATELLA MICHAEL MCGREGOR
Location Head Carpenter Carpenters	THOMAS RACZKA ANGUS WILLOUGHBY BEN SMIT CHUCK LORIOT EARL BADOUR GREG HEARD HENDRIK DANNYS JARL MEDD JASON McCUSKER JEFF UYEDE JORDAN STEPHENS KEVIN TURNER KYLE ARCHER LUKE SMIT MARC STAPLEFORD MARTIN DANNYS OWAIN HARRIS SCOTT CLARKE STEVEN DUBOIS STEVE GOWER VOS VAN der MERWE
Standby Carpenter Welder Construction Labourers	FRANCIS LIVINGSTON CELIA MATOS CHEYNE VALERIOTE JEFF EMRICH
Construction Buyer Construction Covid Compliance Construction Tracker	GRANT LUCIBELLO JOHANNES KOTILAINEN VALERIE PHILLIPS
Head Scenic Artist Location Head Scenic Artist Scenic Artist Head Painter Second Painter Scenic Painters	VICTOR QUON ALEXANDER ROBERTSON JANET L. CORMACK STEVEN QUON DON QUON ANDREW R. BYRNE BOBBY QUON BRADLEY McINNIS BRANDON LANGFORD JENNIFER HARDING

Standby Scenic Painter	LINDY WIGLE NIKA NEMETH MARINA RESHETNIKOVA MELISSA MORGAN RILEY STEFANESCU SCOTT DONAIS WENDY AKERBOOM JAMES O'MEARA
Transportation Coordinator Transportation Captain Transportation Co-Captain Transportation Administrator	JOE S. NORRIS SHELLEY MANSELL ALIREZA DABBAGH SARA PICKETT
Catering Chef Assistant Chefs  Craft Service	DAVID MINTZ CATERING EZEQUIEL ROSENBLUN JASON KENNEDY TERESA PIMENTEL STARGRAZING
Set Medic Construction Medic Location Medic	THEO PANGAN KEVIN KOZAI ANGIE STONE
HSC-19 Supervisor HSC-19 Unit Manager HSC-19 Coordinator HSC-19 Assistant Coordinator HSC-19 Testing Assistant HSC-19 Testing Production Assistant HSC-19 Compliance Officers  HSC-19 Compliance Monitors  HSC-19 Assistant Location Manager HSC-19 Production Assistants  HSC-19 Screeners	MICHAEL WHITE NABIL BADINE VASSILIA MICHAILIDIS ANASTASSIOS MICHAILIDIS TAMARA BULAT-MATOSSIAN SONU LIDHAR LEXIE KAIZER BRETT HAYMAN SAMUEL NYHUUS ANDREW ROMHILD GEMMA EVA JUSTIN MARTINS SEAN MORIARTY COLIN CUMMINGS ELISA REEVE NATALIE TOTAYO ANDREA ELLIS PETER THOMSON
Visual Effects by Visual Effects Supervisor Visual Effects Producer	GHOST VFX TORONTO KEVIN CHANDOO AGNES LIM
Compositing Supervisor Compositing Lead Compositors	KEN NIELSEN ANDY CHAN MICHAEL KEY HONG KIM HARDAVE GREWAL MATT ADAMS

	LYNX ZUO BASILE DURIEUX DIPAK GAUR PAULA FANAIA CHAD CUTLER
CG Supervisor CG Artists	ERIN NICHOLSON ALBERT ANG MARK SCHREIBER DAMIAN ISHERWOOD BO MOSLEY
FX & Lighting Supervisor Scanning & Lidar Matte Painting	LORNE KWECHANSKY DAVID SANCHEZ HONG KIM SEEMA SCHERE
Visual Effects Editors	CHRIS COSTELLO KATHRYN FOSTER
Visual Effects Coordinator Technical Support	ASHWINI HEGDE ANDREW MACMILLAN EDWARD SPENCER
Colour and Finish by Colourist DI Assistant Colourist Technical Operations Manager DI Editor DI Supervisor DI Producer	PICTURE SHOP TORONTO MARK KUEPER CONNOR JAMES BRIAN REID REV. ROB GYORGY ANDREW PASCOE PATRICK DUCHESNE
Avid Services Provided by	FORMOSA GROUP TORONTO
Title Sequence Design by	JUSTIN STEPHENSON
Clearances	ASHLEY KRAVITZ / CLEARED BY ASHLEY, INC.
Special Effects Consultant Consultants	LAIRD McMURRAY MIRIAM TOEWS MARY ANNE HILDEBRAND ESTHER JANZEN
Music Editor	JASON RUDER
Score Produced by Score Recorded by	HILDUR GUÐNADÓTTIR SKÚLI SVERRISSON HILDUR GUÐNADÓTTIR EYVIND KANG
Score Mixed by Additional Production by Additional Arrangements by	FRANCESCO DONADELLO SAM SLATER SKÚLI SVERRISSON TOTI GUDNASON
Featured Guitars and Acoustic Bass Composer's Assistants	SKÚLI SVERRISSON GUNNAR TYNES RICK VINCENT WILL
String Orchestra Conducted by	PHILIP KLEIN

String Orchestra Recorded by  
String Orchestra Recorded at  
Orchestrations by  
Orchestra Contractors

JEFF ATMAJIAN  
GREG HAYES  
THE VILLAGE – MOROCCAN ROOM  
JEFF ATMAJIAN  
GINA ZIMMITTI  
WHITNEY MARTIN

Soundtrack on UNIVERSAL MUSIC GROUP

“Daydream Believer”  
Written by John Stewart  
Performed by The Monkees  
Courtesy of Rhino Entertainment Company  
By arrangement with  
Warner Music Group Film & TV Licensing

“Work For The Night Is Coming”  
Traditional

“Children Of The Heavenly Father”  
Traditional

“Nearer My God To Thee”  
Traditional

Production Insurance Provided by HUB INTERNATIONAL INSURANCE SERVICES INC.

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LARRY TOWELL / MAGNUM PHOTOS INC.  
NEITJE DRAWINGS by LIV McNEIL  
iSTOCK  
STOCK MEDIA PROVIDED by POND5

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IN MEMORY OF CAROL WONG

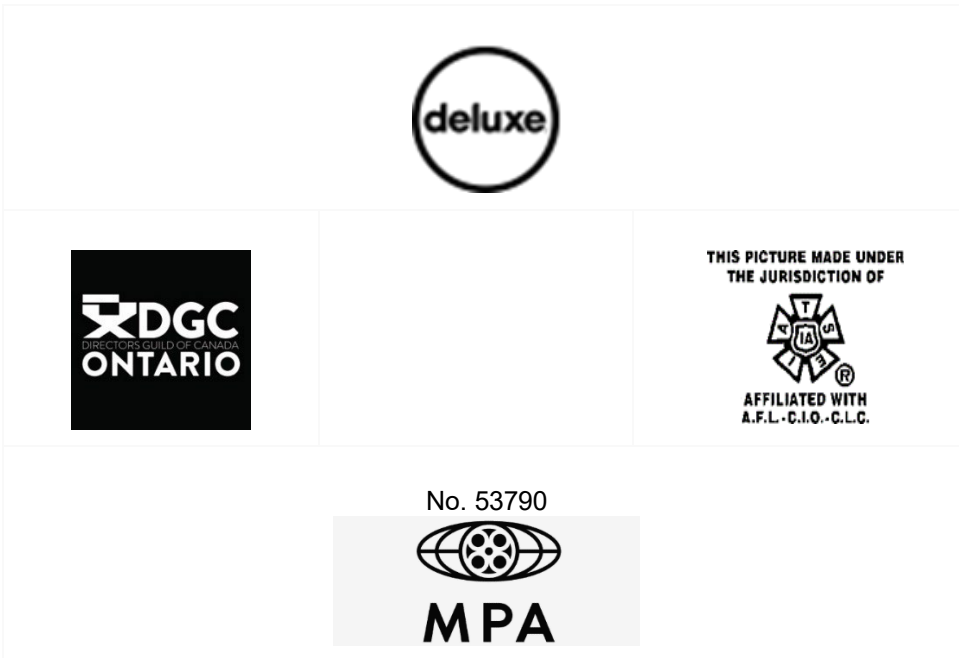
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With the participation of the Canadian Film or Video Production Services Tax Credit

Canada 



American Humane monitored some of the animal action.  
*No animals were harmed*® in those scenes. (AH 10881)



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