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# LEAN ON PETE

a FILM by ANDREW HAIGH  
CHARLIE PLUMMER STEVE BUSCEMI CHLOË SEVIGNY

PRESS NOTES

# SYNOPSIS

From acclaimed filmmaker Andrew Haigh (*Weekend*, *45 Years*), and based on the beloved novel by Willy Vlautin, comes *Lean on Pete* — a deeply moving story about love, loneliness, family, and friendship, told through the unique prism of one boy's connection to a very special racehorse.

Fifteen-year-old Charley Thompson (Charlie Plummer) arrives in Portland, Oregon with his single father Ray (Travis Fimmel), both eager for a fresh start after a series of hard knocks. While Ray descends into personal turmoil, Charley finds acceptance and

camaraderie at a local racetrack where he lands a job caring for an aging quarter horse named *Lean On Pete*. The horse's gruff owner Del Montgomery (Steve Buscemi) and his seasoned jockey Bonnie (Chloë Sevigny) help Charley fill the void of his father's absence — until he discovers that Pete is bound for slaughter, prompting him to take extreme measures to spare his new friend's life. Charley and Pete head out into the great unknown, embarking on an odyssey across the new American frontier in search of a loving aunt Charley hasn't seen in years. They experience adventure and heartbreak in

equal measure, but never lose their irrepressible hope and resiliency as they pursue their dream of finding a place they can call home.

Featuring an incredible breakout turn by Charlie Plummer (*The Dinner*, *King Jack*, *Ridley Scott's* forthcoming *All The Money in the World*) and memorable supporting work by indie stalwarts Buscemi, Sevigny and Steve Zahn, *Lean on Pete* is a compassionate and heartrending look at the desire for love, family, and acceptance that drives all of us.



## ABOUT THE PRODUCTION

For his fourth feature film, British-born writer-director Andrew Haigh (*45 Years*, *Weekend*, HBO's "Looking") turned to an adaptation by the Oregon-based novelist Willy Vlautin, whose works include *The Free* (2014), *Northline* (2008) and *The Motel Life* (2006). Vlautin's 2010 novel *Lean On Pete*, set in Portland, Oregon and across the Western United States, tells the story of a teenage boy who befriends an aging quarter horse while working at a racetrack, hitting the road together when the steed becomes marked for the slaughterhouse. In the course

of their epic journey across the modern frontier, the pair develops a profound bond. Haigh discovered the novel in the months leading up to the U.S. release of his 2011 breakthrough feature *Weekend*, which — like *Lean On Pete* — examines themes of loneliness and finding connection in unexpected places. Seeing cinematic potential in the novel's emotional bonds, wide-open spaces and insistence on hope and resiliency in the face of struggle, Haigh through his big-screen adaptation of *Lean On Pete* creates an American odyssey for the ages.



## THE SOURCE MATERIAL

Vlautin's novel centers on a lonely, self-reliant 15-year-old who is continually let down by the world but who refuses to give up in his search for stability, connection and a loving home. While he searches the Pacific Northwest for an estranged relative, *Lean On Pete* locates profound grace in the friendship and bond between its protagonist Charley Thompson and the titular quarter horse he cares for while working for Del Montgomery, the gruff horse racer who hires the teenager to sweep the stalls and care for Pete between races.

"Willy brings alive the reality of daily life at the local track in his novel," says Haigh. "This type of place is not like the top tracks. The purses are low and nobody makes a lot of money. They're just getting by. But there's also a community behind the scenes — a family almost."

Vlautin — who grew up in Reno but moved to Portland 20 years ago — prefaced his novel with an epigraph from John Steinbeck, America's foremost novelist and essayist of the Western experience: *It is true that we are weak and sick and ugly and quarrelsome but if that is all we ever were, we would millenniums ago have disappeared from the face of the earth.* Using the epigraph as an inspiration

for his own adaptation of the novel, Haigh began to consider Charley's indefatigable resilience in the face of constant struggle and setback, particularly during the novel's second half, as he roams the American countryside in search of a home.

"*Lean On Pete* is a story about a kid trying to find stability and a sense of belonging," says Haigh. "He wants to be cared about and cared for. As the story progresses, and he becomes less safe and less stable, it becomes a perilous journey about finding those essential things. Willy's novel is heartbreaking but never sentimental, and Charley's relationship with Pete reveals the inherent kindness of this kid — and his deep understanding that we all share a very basic need to feel protected."

Vlautin himself found an unexpected home at the Portland Meadows racetrack, which came to figure prominently in Haigh's adaptation of the novel. Over the years, Vlautin became friendly with the figures at the track, including the jockeys, handlers and gamblers that inspired him to create indelible, nuanced characters like Del Montgomery. He even went so far as to adopt an aging quarter horse named Meritable Dash, which planted the seed for the fictional *Lean On Pete*. "I love gambling on

horses but I also get crushes on them and find myself wondering what happens after they stop racing," admits Vlautin. "I wrote *Lean On Pete* as a way of figuring out my relationship with horse racing, but it's also about being 15 years old — Charley's age in the novel. He's so close to having independence, whether it's a job, a car or simply a voice, but he finds himself hitting the road in order to save this horse he loves."

*Lean On Pete* in its second half becomes an odyssey documenting Charley and Pete's journey across the frontier and serving up vivid snapshots of the side roads, byways and rural strivers in a hardscrabble American West similar to the one depicted by Steinbeck, Raymond Carver and Sam Shepard. One of Steinbeck's most enduring works remains *Travels With Charley: In Search of America*, the writer's 1960 travelogue detailing an unforgettable road trip across the U.S. with his beloved Standard Poodle. Vlautin's novel swaps Steinbeck's formula for a boy and his horse on the road together, finding poetic grandeur in their struggle to endure on their own in the wilds of the Pacific Northwest.

## FROM NOVEL TO SCREEN

For Haigh, it wasn't simply Lean On Pete's distinct world of small-time horse racers and gamblers that made the novel feel cinematic — even more palpable and immediate was its sense of yearning and loneliness, dovetailing with the tenor and themes of his own work. In Weekend, two strangers come together for a 48-hour period after meeting in a discotheque, finding unexpected intimacy and friendship in their brief encounter; in 45 Years, a married couple grapples over the course of several days leading up to an anniversary celebration of their nearly five-decade union; in the HBO series "Looking", which he helped write, produce and direct over the course of two seasons (including the 2016 Haigh-directed feature-length finale, "Looking: The Movie"), a group of close-knit San Franciscans come together and fall apart as they navigate personal and professional challenges in a gentrifying metropolis. "There's a simplicity to Lean On Pete that I wanted to capture in the film. Charley's struggle is less a coming-of-age identity quest than something more fundamental: What drives him is his desperate need to find that feeling of home — somewhere he can feel safe and secure."

A strong through-line in Haigh's work is his humane approach to characters and their struggles. In Lean On Pete, Haigh warmed to Vlautin's distinctly non-judgmental approach to his own characters, whether the young protagonist Charley or supporting characters like Del, Bonnie and Silver, the drifter Charley meets in Laramie, Wyoming during his travels. "Willy does not vilify any of his characters, even when they act in less than admirable ways," says Haigh. "He is acutely aware that these are people struggling to keep their head above water and that has a profound impact on how they act. In many ways the novel is about the need for kindness and compassion to those that are in need."

The novel was already on the radar of several other filmmakers, prompting U.K.-based producer Tristan Goligher of London and Paris-based outfit The Bureau — with whom Haigh made both Weekend and 45 Years — to option the film rights. Lean On Pete stayed on his radar through 2014 as he directed 45 Years, featuring award-winning turns by Charlotte Rampling and Tom Courtenay, and multiple episodes of HBO's "Looking". Soon thereafter, he flew to

Portland to meet with Vlautin and begin adapting the Oregon writer's third novel.

In Portland, Vlautin showed him some of the locations that inspired his novel, including nearby Portland Meadows, where Charley meets Del, Bonnie and Lean On Pete. Haigh then set off on a road trip around the Western United States, observing the same trajectory as Charley and Pete in the novel. He traveled across Oregon, Idaho, Wyoming, Utah and Colorado, visiting county fairs in remote Oregon towns like Tillamook and Burns, watching horse races along the way and immersing himself in regional culture. "I stayed in the motels named in the book," says Haigh. "I camped, ate cans of chili, and took rolls and rolls of slide film. It's ridiculous to consider that I could ever experience what Charley goes through on his epic journey, but

spending three months driving around at least gave me some idea of the world Willy writes about in his novels."

He sent drafts of the script to Vlautin, who replied with his thoughts on Haigh's slightly abridged version of the novel, which condenses some of the travelogue scenes and combines several characters into one — including the jockey Bonnie, who was also a waitress in the book. "There were tough decisions to make about what to keep and what to lose, but Willy was indispensable in that process," he says. "He was also tremendously forthcoming with contacts, including the trainers, jockeys and managers who work the track at Portland Meadows."

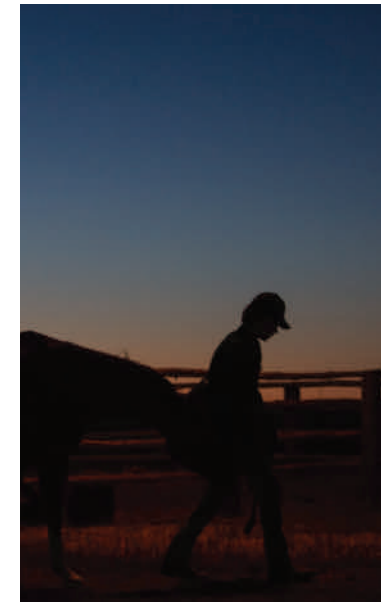
While Haigh was on the road, researching and drafting the script, Goligher met with the Oregon Film Office to talk about shooting the film in

the locations described in the source material; capturing the local and national truths of the novel became important to both producer and filmmaker. "This is a deeply personal story about one boy searching for a home and a family, but it also has an epic scale with political importance," says Goligher. "Charley is at the center of the story, but it's also about how we've come to abandon some of the most vulnerable people in Western society. Our protagonist embodies this — his journey to survive and find a home is something we are struggling with on a large scale right now."

Haigh found himself enchanted and inspired by what he discovered on his journey into the remote pockets of America. "It's a staggeringly beautiful country and I think it would take me years to come to grips with it as a nation," he says. "But it has an identity and drive that's

radically different from Europe." One of the most striking aspects for the filmmaker in this regard was the country's rich cultural and geographic diversity. "The personality of Utah is very different from Colorado," he says. "Portland itself feels miles away socially and politically from Eastern Oregon. It was sometimes shocking while traveling around to see the intense patriotism some Americans have for their country, even when faced with intense economic difficulties. People still seem to believe in the American Dream, even as it continues to fail so many."

Lean On Pete adopts a wistful, nostalgic and peripatetic approach to its story of friendship and survival on the road. In the simplest terms, it's a love story about a boy and his horse trying to hold on in an unforgiving but resilient America. "The story is contemporary but it's more connected to the classic American movies of the 1970s like Midnight Cowboy," adds producer Goligher. "We don't see these types of human dramas much anymore."



## THE CAST



When the script was complete, Haigh and company set about casting the lead roles, including the central character of Charley Thompson, who appears in every scene of the movie. Renowned casting director Carmen Cuba (*The Martian*, “*Stranger Things*”), was tasked with finding the perfect Charley, putting out a national call for teenage boys who exuded the kind of soulful resilience that’s a key feature in both script and novel. “We saw the young actor Charlie Plummer early on, but kept looking at other actors because you have to be rigorous,” says Cuba. “We’d seen him in his indie breakout *King Jack* and knew he was someone special.”

Plummer had a recurring role as a child on HBO’s “*Boardwalk Empire*” before breaking into features as a teenager, including *King Jack*, which won the Audience Award at the 2014 Tribeca Film Festival, earning notable accolades for Plummer’s bracing depiction of a vulnerable adolescent tough guy. Subsequent works include a recurring role in the Netflix Cold War drama “*Granite*

Flats” and a small role in Oren Moverman’s *The Dinner*, co-starring Richard Gere, Laura Linney, Rebecca Hall and Chloë Sevigny. In late 2017, he appears as John Paul Getty, Jr. in Ridley Scott’s *All the Money In the World*.

For his *Lean On Pete* audition, Plummer submitted a tape and followed up with detailed letter addressed to Haigh, describing why he was the ideal person to play Charley Thompson. “In his letter Charlie showed me how fundamentally he understood the story and the character,” says Haigh. “It was incredible how perceptive he was from the beginning. He’s a remarkably subtle actor, able to keep his emotions and pain buried deep, which I like in a performance.”

Plummer, who hails from the Hudson Valley in Upstate New York, turned to his own youthful hard knocks to help him shape the fictional Charley. “I traveled around a lot as a child, attending eight or nine different schools,” says Plummer. “I connected to Charley’s search for home and what that means to him.” The

character’s tenacity in the face of hardship deeply impressed the young actor, prompting him to aggressively pursue the role. “What stood out for me most of all is the fact that Charley never gives up,” Plummer adds. “I haven’t been forced to deal with everything Charley goes through over the course of this story, but I’ve felt the struggle of persuading yourself not to give up when things become unbearable. I saw him as such a hopeful character.”

For Haigh, Plummer was the leading candidate to play Charley after the casting team looked at hundreds of other teenagers. “I always look for the same thing in my actors, which is sensitivity and subtlety, and Charlie has both of those things,” says Haigh. “Plenty of actors can locate and act the appropriate emotions but with Charlie there is always something happening behind the eyes — something very delicate and hard to articulate, but it feels truthful and honest at all times.” The result is a breakout performance from what is certain to be one of this generation’s greatest talents.

## THE CAST (CONTINUED)

*Lean On Pete* took further shape as Haigh built the supporting cast around Plummer. Brooklyn-born Steve Buscemi (*Reservoir Dogs*, *Fargo*) was the next to come on board as Del Montgomery, the cantankerous quarter horse racer who gives Charley a summer job caring for Lean On Pete. The indie film veteran who began his career with *Parting Glances* in 1986, and who played Tony Soprano's cousin Tony Blundetto during the fifth season of "The Sopranos", exploded in the public imagination with his lead role in HBO's critically acclaimed period crime drama "Boardwalk Empire", playing Atlantic City political boss Enoch "Nucky" Thompson, a role that earned the actor two Emmy nominations and a Golden Globe Award. Conveniently, Plummer had already worked with Buscemi on "Empire" and had even talked with the veteran actor on set about the acting life.

For Buscemi, Del Montgomery was an intriguing addition to the vast arsenal of lovable losers and downwardly mobile strivers he's played over the years. "Del's a guy who grew up around the racetrack, following in his father's footsteps most likely, and it's kind of all he knows,"

says Buscemi. "He laments the glory days but since he's getting older, he's catching the tail end of all that and he struggles. He's got a good heart but he's not a sentimental guy. He's had a hard life and that informs everything he does." Adds Haigh: "I didn't want Del to be the obvious bad guy because he's someone who is trying to get by. Steve is a naturally sympathetic actor, supportive of everyone around him, which was essential to me in casting him."

Next to join the cast was Chloë Sevigny (*Kids*, *Boys Don't Cry*, HBO's "Big Love") as Bonnie, the jockey and close confidant of Del Montgomery who becomes a maternal figure to Charley after they meet at Portland Meadows. Sevigny appeared in *The Dinner* with Plummer, but the two actors never met on set. She also had previously worked with Buscemi, who cast the actress in what was only her second feature film, 1996's *Trees Lounge*, which also marked Buscemi's directorial debut. For *Lean On Pete*, Sevigny initially read for the role of Charley's aunt Martha, the elusive figure he searches for during his long journey across the Western states. But she also read for Bonnie, the kindly but hard-living jockey

who warms to the film's teenage protagonist as he yearns for family and community. "Bonnie is salt of the earth, grounded and maternal," says Sevigny. "Although you'd expect the only major female in the movie to be more nurturing, she's more like, whatever, kid — I'll buy you a soda. She doesn't treat Charley like a little boy, which I thought made for a nice relationship."

In Haigh's adaptation, Bonnie became an amalgamation of two characters in the novel, culminating in the kind of tough yet vulnerable role Sevigny has readily pursued for two decades. "She's a real horse person coming from a world she's known all her life," says Sevigny. "She's been thrown from horses a few times but still gets back up and goes for it again and again because otherwise she'd be waitressing. She loves the excitement of the track and has a long history with Del



Montgomery. They have a kind of camaraderie and ease, working together when it's convenient."

Having made her feature debut in Larry Clark's hard-hitting youth drama *Kids* in 1995, and reached mass appeal in HBO's polygamy drama "Big Love", Sevigny found *Lean On Pete* an obvious addition to her considerable and eclectic body of work. "I like female characters who are more hearty, like Nicki on 'Big Love', who was very capable," says Sevigny. "I've always liked playing women who take care of business and get things done and who aren't damsels in distress. I like to be on the same level as the boys."

For Haigh, seeing Sevigny and Buscemi on screen together again was a particular pleasure. "I was so excited to see them together for the first time since *Trees Lounge*, a film I greatly admire," says Haigh. "They have

an ease and chemistry that is hard to fake. And Chloë has always had a great mixture of toughness and vulnerability, which is perfect for the role of Bonnie."

Rounding out the cast are smaller turns by former Calvin Klein model turned TV and movie star Travis Fimmel ("Vikings", *Warcraft*), as Charley's hard-living, philandering father Ray, and indie stalwart Steve Zahn as the drifter Silver. "These are two very similar characters at each end of the story," says Haigh. "Both are big kids who can't grow up and who can't protect those they are meant to look after. Both characters are instinctually good people that make bad decisions, and Travis and Steve nailed that complexity."



## WORKING WITH HORSES



The casting of *Lean On Pete* continued in the form of its non-human cast members, including 20 Thoroughbreds for the Portland Meadows racing scenes and six “performing” horses, including Starsky, who makes his feature film debut as Lean On Pete. Animal trainers Lauren Henry and Roland Sonnenburg and horse racing adviser Terry Bechner worked with cast and crew in the weeks

leading up to production to ensure safety and sensitivity during the month-long shoot, which wrapped in September 2016.

“It’s a challenge when you’re trying to get two different things from a horse,” says Goligher. “One is a performance entailing interaction with our human actors — the emotional part of the story that needs to be told

— and the other requires physical actions, like horse races or the accident that arrives at the story’s midpoint.”

Both required extensive training for the actors as well as the horses. Plummer arrived in Portland three weeks prior to shooting to meet with Haigh and discuss his character while at the same time becoming comfortable working with his co-star, a 1,500-pound horse. This was achieved through trust-building exercises that over time developed unmistakable chemistry between boy and animal. “Horses are smart and can sense whether or not you’re comfortable with them,” says Plummer. “After I got to know Starsky, I knew immediately that it was going to be difficult to say goodbye to him later. He’s so smart and compassionate. Hopefully that shows up on the screen.”

Over time, and in particular during the trust-building exercises, Plummer came to see *Lean On Pete* as a unique love story between a boy and his horse. “Obviously not a love story in the romantic sense but in the way that they become true friends over the course of the story,” says Plummer. “Charley is constantly in search of love — from his father, from Del and Bonnie, eventually from

his aunt. When Pete gives him that kind of love, it’s the most amazing feeling in the world to him.” Adds Haigh: “Every morning Charlie got up and learned how to look after and care for the horse. Once I saw the connection they had together and how protective he felt towards Starsky, I knew we’d be fine.”

Sevigny also traveled to Portland prior to filming to work with Henry and Sonnenburg and practice leg-ups with Plummer and the horses Starsky and High Pockets. Additionally, she did extensive training in Los Angeles to become more comfortable around horses in general, watching movies like the horse-whispering documentary *Buck* in order to better acquaint herself with the vernacular of horseracing and equine handlers. “This helped me get over any fears I had about being around horses,” says Sevigny. “You have to learn a lot of sensitivity when you’re around them because every environment they go into is different to them. You learn where to nuzzle them or stroke them to make them feel more comfortable. This was a great opportunity.”



A particular challenge for Haigh and his director of photography Magnus Nordenhof Joenck (*Bridgend, A War, A Hijacking*) was filming the racing scenes at Portland Downs, many of which had to be shot in one take. “The races were especially stressful in that we usually only had one chance to get it right,” says Haigh. “We couldn’t afford to run more than one set of horses, and we had to mix professional horses like Starsky with actual race horses. Luckily we had very few problems with the animals. Starsky in particular was a complete professional who had been trained incredibly well by his handlers.”



## THE LOOK

*Lean On Pete* was shot in and around Portland in late summer 2016, at the Portland Meadows racetrack and in the Delta Park suburb north of the city, moving to the mountains around Mount Hood for the film's driving and river scenes, and on to the desert for three further weeks in the remote hamlet of Burns, Oregon. Working with Danish cinematographer Joenck, Haigh set out to capture the lush green tones of the Pacific Northwest and the parched, sun-drenched, wide-open spaces of the High Desert terrain that marks Charley's later journey toward Laramie, Wyoming and Denver, Colorado.

Haigh and Joenck watched a wide range of movies for inspiration, from John Huston's *Fat City* and Wim Wenders' *Paris, Texas* to Paul Thomas Anderson's *The Master*. They also

looked at realist photography from the likes of William Eggleston, Steven Shore and Joel Sternfeld, finding in their works a sense of epic desolation in America's remote corners. Haigh and Joenck worked together to push the emotional effect of the film's visuals, striving to elicit to maximum feeling through their images.

They center-framed Charley as much as possible and shot in the 1:85 aspect ratio instead of the more traditional 2:35 in order to emphasize height above rather than width on either side, resulting in screen characters that become almost dwarfed by the vast landscape surrounding them. "I liked the idea that we're watching this boy's life unfold, close at hand, but we're unable to help him," says Haigh. "Magnus and I talked about how to give the film the right kind of

movement — to use tracks and dollies alongside slow zooms, with a rule of always following the action without drawing attention to itself. I wanted the film to possess a gentle beauty and a tender realism."

Principal photography on *Lean On Pete* began on August 13, 2016 in Portland, Oregon and concluded on September 10, 2016. "It was a very challenging shoot," admits Goligher. "We were dealing with twenty horses, three races and our lead was a minor. The geography was unpredictable and the desert weather meant it could be 42 degrees during the day and absolutely freezing at night."



## THE CAST



### CHARLIE PLUMMER

CHARLIE PLUMMER (Charley Thompson) is currently starring in Ridley Scott's kidnap thriller *All the Money in the World*, playing John Paul Getty III alongside Kevin Spacey, Michelle Williams and Mark Wahlberg, shooting in Rome, Jordan, and London. Also forthcoming are the features *Behold My Heart*, with Marisa Tomei and Timothy Olyphant, and *Clovehitch* with Dylan McDermott. Following the production of *All the Money in the World*, Charlie will begin shooting *Gully*, directed from acclaimed filmmaker Nabil Elderkin (Kendrick Lamar's "DNA", Kanye West, John Legend, Nicki Minaj, among many others). Charlie played the titular role in *King Jack*, which won the Audience Award at

the 2015 Tribeca Film Festival, released theatrically in 2016. He was most recently seen in the 2017 indie thriller *The Dinner*, opposite Richard Gere, Laura Linney, Steve Coogan, Chloë Sevigny and Rebecca Hall, written and directed by Oren Moverman. Charlie began his professional career in *Sopranos'* creator David Chase's feature film *Not Fade Away*, and the same year was cast in a recurring role in HBO's award-winning "Boardwalk Empire." He was also a series regular on the Netflix Cold War drama "Granite Flats," starring with Christopher Lloyd and Parker Posey.



### STEVE BUSCEMI

STEVE BUSCEMI (Del Montgomery) has built a career portraying some of the most unique and unforgettable characters in recent cinema. Buscemi, a multiple award-winning actor, starred in the HBO hit drama, "Boardwalk Empire", which garnered him a Golden Globe Award, two Screen Actors Guild Awards, and two Emmy nominations. Buscemi has also won an Independent Spirit Award, The New York Film Critics Award and was nominated for a Golden Globe for his role in MGM's *Ghost World*. He was nominated for an Emmy for his role as Tony Blundetto in "The Sopranos", plus received additional Emmy nominations for his appearances on NBC's "30 Rock" and IFC's

"Portlandia". He was nominated for a Lola, from the German Film Academy Awards, for his work in *John Rabe*, which was directed by Academy Award winning director Florian Gallenberger and stars an international cast. Born in Brooklyn, New York, Buscemi began to show an interest in drama while in his last year of high school. Soon after, he moved to Manhattan to study acting with John Strasberg. There he and a fellow actor/writer Mark Boone Junior began writing and performing their own theatre pieces in performance spaces and downtown theatres. This soon led to Steve being cast in his first lead role in Bill Sherwood's *Parting Glances* as a musician with AIDS.

Buscemi is the actor of choice for some of the most respected film directors in the business, including: Martin Scorsese (*New York Stories*); Jim Jarmusch (*Coffee and Cigarettes* and *Mystery Train*); The Coen Brothers (*Miller's Crossing*, *Barton Fink*, *Fargo*, *The Hudsucker Proxy*, and *The Big Lebowski*); Quentin Tarantino (*Pulp Fiction* and *Reservoir Dogs*, for which he won an Independent Spirit Award as Best Supporting Male); Robert Altman (*Kansas City*); Tim Burton (*Big Fish*); Tom DiCillo (*Living In Oblivion*); Alexandre Rockwell (*In the Soup* and *Somebody to Love*); Oren Moverman (*The Messenger*, *Rampart*, and *Time Out of Mind*); Terry Zwigoff (*Art School Confidential*); Robert Rodriguez (*Desperado*); and Miguel Arteta (*Youth In Revolt*).

In addition to his talents as an accomplished actor, Buscemi has proven to be a respected writer and director. He marked

his feature film directorial debut with *Trees Lounge*, which he also wrote and starred in. Buscemi's second feature film as a director, *Animal Factory*, told the story about a young man sent to prison for an unjustly harsh sentence who eventually becomes a product of his environment. The film, based on a book by Edward Bunker, starred Willem Dafoe and Edward Furlong, and premiered at the 2000 Sundance Film Festival.

Buscemi also has many TV directing credits, including "Homicide: Life On the Street" (DGA Award nomination); "The Sopranos" (Emmy and DGA Awards for Season 3's "Pine Barrens" episode); "30 Rock", "Nurse Jackie", and "Portlandia".

In 2008, Buscemi started Olive Productions with Stanley Tucci and Wren Arthur, a New York based company which produces his Emmy-winning AOL series "Park Bench With Steve Buscemi" and various other projects including the documentary "A Good Job: Stories of the FDNY" for HBO.

Buscemi most recently co-starred opposite Louis CK in the critically acclaimed web series "Horace and Pete". He just wrapped production on Armando Iannucci's political satire *The Death of Stalin*. Buscemi appears opposite Richard Gere in *Norman* from director Joseph Cedar. His voice can be heard in the DreamWorks Animation film *The Boss Baby* opposite Alec Baldwin. He next appears in Channel 4 (UK) and Amazon Prime's upcoming anthology series "Philip K. Dick's Electric Dreams."

### CHLOË SEVIGNY

CHLOË SEVIGNY (Bonnie) is an Academy Award-nominated and Golden Globe-winning actress who was recently seen Oren Moverman's *The Dinner*, co-starring opposite Richard Gere and Steve Coogan, and Miguel Arteta's *Beatriz At Dinner*, with Salma Hayek and John Lithgow. The critically acclaimed series "Bloodline," in which Chloë stars with Sissy Spacek and Kyle Chandler, is currently airing its third and final season on Netflix. Being released in October 2017 is Tomas Alfredson's *The Snowman* with Michael Fassbender and *Golden Exits*, directed by Alex Ross Perry, with Jason Schwartzman and Mary Louise Parker. Chloë made her directorial debut last on the short film *Kitty*, which debuted at the 2016 Cannes Film Festival. She made her second foray into directing with the short film *Garmen*. Chloë made her film debut in the lead role of Jennie in the controversial *Kids*, directed by Larry Clark and written by Harmony Korine. For her performance as Lana Tisdel in Kimberly Peirce's *Boys Don't Cry*, Chloë received nominations for the Academy Award®, the Golden Globe®, and the Screen Actors Guild Award, as well as winning an Independent Spirit Award, the Los Angeles Film Critics Award, the Boston Film Critics Award, Chicago Film Critics and the National Society of Film Critics and a Golden Satellite Award. She makes her home in New York.



## TRAVIS FIMMEL

TRAVIS FIMMEL (Ray) is best known for playing the lead role of Ragnar on four seasons of History Channel's hit original series "Vikings". The show premiered in March 2013 to both critical acclaim and record audience numbers. His performance in Season 2 landed him on Variety's Emmy Contenders short list and his final season, which aired in 2016, is garnering equal acclaim. On the big screen, Fimmel was most recently seen as the lead role in *Warcraft* for Legendary Pictures/Universal, which amassed more than \$450 million worldwide. The film also stars Ben Foster, Dominic Cooper, Ruth Negga and Paula Patton and was directed by Duncan Jones. He was also seen in the romantic comedy *Maggie's Plan*, starring alongside Julianne Moore, Ethan Hawke and Greta Gerwig. The Rebecca Miller-directed film premiered at the Toronto International Film Festival



## STEVE ZAHN

STEVE ZAHN (Silver) is a versatile actor with extensive credits who has received critical praise for his work on both stage and screen. Currently Steve can be seen in the acclaimed film *War For the Planet of the Apes* and has just wrapped the feature film *Where'd You Go Bernadette?* As part of the cast of *Dallas Buyers Club* he was nominated for the SAG Award for Outstanding Performance by a Cast in a Motion Picture. He can be seen opposite Viggo Mortensen, Ann Dowd and Frank Langella in Matt Ross' film *Captain Fantastic*. His starring role in Werner Herzog's *Rescue Dawn*, opposite Christian Bale, prompted the New York Times to call him a "revelation" and resulted in an Independent Spirit Award nomination for Best Supporting Actor. Zahn's film work also includes starring alongside Jennifer Aniston in *Management*, *That Thing You Do!*, *Diary of a Wimpy Kid* and *Diary*



*of a Wimpy Kid: Rodrick Rules*, *A Perfect Getaway*, *The Great Buck Howard* and *Night Train*.

His television credits include four seasons on the hit HBO series "Treme", "Comanche Moon" alongside Val Kilmer and Rachel Griffiths, and USA's "Monk" as Tony Shaloub's half brother. He was the lead, opposite Christian Slater, in ABC's, "Mind Games". He also recurred on "Modern Family" as Ty Burrell's neighbor, Ronnie, and was the lead role in the series "Mad Dogs" for Amazon Studios. He is currently the lead in the ABC pilot "The Crossing".

Zahn has received critical acclaim for his scene-stealing work as Glen Michaels in *Out of Sight* and for his heartbreaking turn as a drug-addicted father in the Penny Marshall directed film *Riding in Cars With Boys*. His standout performance in Miramax Films' *Happy, Texas* garnered him numerous accolades, including a Grand Jury Special Actor Award at the 1999 Sundance Film Festival and an Independent Spirit Award for Best Actor.

Zahn was first introduced to improvisational theater in high school where he crashed the audition of a local production of *Biloxi Blues*, winning the lead role in the play. Following his debut, he trained for two years at the prestigious American Repertory Theater in

Cambridge, MA, before moving to New York and being cast in Tommy Tune's National Tour of *Bye Bye Birdie*. Following *Birdie*, Zahn went on to star in various theater productions and caught the eye of director Ben Stiller, who cast him in what would be Zahn's feature-film debut, *Reality Bites*. His breakthrough performance was for director Tom Hanks' directorial debut, *That Thing You Do!* as Lenny.

## THE CREW

### ANDREW HAIGH

ANDREW HAIGH (Writer, Director) has directed four features, including his latest, *Lean On Pete*. His previous film, *45 Years*, premiered at Berlinale 2015 where it won Silver Bears for the lead performances of Charlotte Rampling and Tom Courtenay. It went on to win a number of international awards and received an Academy Award® nomination for Best Actress for Charlotte Rampling. His second feature *Weekend* premiered at SXSW in 2011, where it won the Emerging Visions Audience Award. He was also the Executive Producer and lead writer/director on the HBO show "Looking" including the finale television movie broadcast in 2015.

### TRISTAN GOLIGHER

TRISTAN GOLIGHER (Producer) has been a producer at The Bureau since 2010. His latest film is Andrew Haigh's *Lean On Pete*. Premiering in Competition at the Venice Film Festival the film stars newcomer Charlie Plummer, Steve Buscemi, and Chloe Sevigny. His previous collaborations with Haigh include the award winning film *Weekend*, and the BAFTA and Academy Award® nominated *45 Years*. The latter premiered at Berlinale 2015 where it won two Silver Bears for the lead performances of Charlotte Rampling and Tom Courtenay. Goligher produced Peter Mackie Burns debut *Daphne*, which recently won Best Actress at the Edinburgh Film Festival, and will be released in the U.K. by Altitude in September 2017. He is currently in pre-production on Harry Wootliff's first feature, which will shoot in September 2017.

### MAGNUS NORDENHOF JOENCK

MAGNUS NORDENHOF JOENCK (Director of Photography) recently wrapped on *Hold the Dark* for A24 after working with Andrew Haigh on *Lean On Pete*. Magnus also recently shot Tobias Lindholm's *A War*, which was nominated for an Oscar in the category of Best Foreign Film and selected for Venice last year, following their collaboration on *A Hijacking*, selected for Venice and Toronto and for which he was nominated for Best Cinematography. Magnus also shot the award-winning *Bridgend* for Jeppe Ronde, and worked extensively with Michael Noer on his features *R* and *Northwest*.

### RYAN WARREN SMITH

RYAN WARREN SMITH (Production Design) is a multifaceted production designer working in commercials, music videos and independent feature films. He began his career as an on-set dresser working alongside high-profile directors including Sean Penn and Gus Van Sant. His first film as a production designer was Kelly Reichardt's *Wendy & Lucy*, starring Michelle Williams, which premiered at the Cannes Film Festival before screening at numerous festivals around the world. It was also nominated for two Independent Spirit Awards, including Best Feature. Ryan has designed nine feature-length films, including the Polsky Brothers' *The Motel Life*, starring Dakota Fanning, Emile Hirsch,



### JULIE CARNAHAN

Kris Kristofferson and Stephen Dorff; *For Ellen*, directed by So Yong Kim, starring Paul Dano, Jon Heder and Jena Malone; and Jeremy Saulnier's *Green Room*, starring Anton Yelchin and Patrick Stewart, which premiered in the 2015 Director's Fortnight at the Cannes Film Festival. He recently completed Saulnier's *Hold the Dark*, starring Alexander Skarsgård, Jeffrey Wright and Riley Keough.

JULIE CARNAHAN (Costume Designer) has over 28 years of experience designing costumes for film and television. Her TV credits include "The Ben Stiller Show," the first two seasons of "MADtv" and Season Two of "Dirk Gently's Holistic Detective Agency". Her work in feature films includes *Waiting for Guffman*, *C.O.G.*, *Brother Nature* and *I Don't Feel At Home in the World Anymore*. Julie currently lives in Portland, Oregon, and is a dual citizen of the United States and Ireland.



## CARMEN CUBA

CARMEN CUBA (Casting Director) is based in Los Angeles. Her award-winning career began in 1999 with the controversial filmmaker Larry Clark on the films *Bully* and *Ken Park*. In 2004, she began a long-standing collaboration with Steven Soderbergh, having cast his last eleven films. Recently, her work with Ridley Scott has included *The Martian*, *Alien: Covenant* and *All the Money in the World*. Other notable feature collaborators include Léos Carax, Sean Baker and Andrew Haigh. Her work expanded to television in 2012 with the HBO miniseries "Behind the Candelabra", for which she won an Emmy for Outstanding Casting for a Miniseries/Movie. Other notable television projects include "The Knick" and "The Girlfriend Experience" for Soderbergh; "Narcos" for José Padilla; "Sense8" for The Wachowskis, and "Stranger Things" for the Duffer Brothers. She is currently working on a series with Lena Waithe entitled "The Chi" and on a George Saunders/Hiro Murai pilot starring Glenn Close entitled "Sea Oak".

She was recently nominated for a 2017 Emmy for her work on "Stranger Things" and in the past has been nominated for the Artios Award for her work on "Narcos," "Looking," "Behind the Candelabra," and *Magic Mike*. Carmen is a member of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences, the Television Academy, and the Casting Society of America.

## JONATHAN ALBERTS

JONATHAN ALBERTS (Editor) is originally from Canada and attended McGill University in Montréal before receiving his MFA in editing from the American Film Institute. His films include *Wristcutters: A Love Story*, *Breathe In*, *Equals* and the Sundance Grand Jury Prize winner *Like Crazy*. His work in television includes HBO's "Hung" and Netflix's "The OA". Alberts' first collaboration with Andrew Haigh was on the pilot and series of HBO's "Looking", including the finale feature film "Looking: The Movie". Their film work continued with *45 Years* and *Lean On Pete*.

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