



Presents

BURDEN

A film by Andrew Heckler

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Mongrel Media Inc
217 – 136 Geary Ave
Toronto, Ontario, Canada, M6H 4H1
Tel: 416-516-9775 Fax: 416-516-0651
E-mail: info@mongrelmedia.com
www.mongrelmedia.com

 @MongrelMedia

Publicity

Bonne Smith
Star PR
Tel: 416-488-4436
Twitter: @starpr2
E-mail: starpr@sympatico.ca

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BURDEN

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Genre: Drama
U.S. Distributor: 101 Studios
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Cast: Garrett Hedlund, Forest Whitaker, Tom Wilkinson, Andrea Riseborough, Tess Harper, Crystal Fox, Usher
Directed by: Andrew Heckler
Written by: Andrew Heckler
Produced by: Robbie Brenner, Bill Kenwright

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SYNOPSIS

When a museum celebrating the Ku Klux Klan opens in a small South Carolina town, the idealistic Reverend Kennedy (Academy Award®-winner Forest Whitaker) resolves to do everything in his power to prevent long-simmering racial tensions from boiling over. But the members of Kennedy's congregation are shocked to discover that his plan includes sheltering Mike Burden (Garrett Hedlund), a Klansman whose relationships with both a single-mother (Andrea Riseborough) and a high-school friend (Usher Raymond) force him to re-examine his long-held beliefs. After Kennedy helps Mike leave behind his violent past, the Baptist preacher finds himself on a collision course with manipulative KKK leader Tom Griffin (Tom Wilkinson). In the face of grave threats to himself and his family, the resolute Kennedy bravely pursues a path toward peace, setting aside his own misgivings in the hopes of healing his wounded community. From Oscar®-nominated filmmaker Robbie Brenner (Dallas Buyers Club) and writer/director Andrew Heckler comes this dramatic true story of compassion and grace in the American South.

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From Oscar®-nominated filmmaker Robbie Brenner (*Dallas Buyers Club*) comes BURDEN, a dramatic true story of compassion and grace in the American South.

Orphaned at a young age, Mike Burden (Garrett Hedlund) has spent years living on the margins of society under the spell of manipulative Ku Klux Klan leader Tom Griffin (Tom Wilkinson). Rising through the ranks of the hate group to the status of Grand Dragon, Mike has become one of Griffin's most loyal lieutenants, and he proudly assists in the opening of a museum celebrating the Klan's horrific legacy in the center of their small South Carolina town. But once the storefront is open for business, long-simmering racial tensions threaten to finally boil over.

Enter the idealistic Reverend David Kennedy (Academy Award®-winner Forest Whitaker), who vows to do everything in his power to maintain order—yet Kennedy's inner resolve is tested once a former enemy comes to him seeking guidance. After falling in love with a courageous single-mother (Andrea Riseborough) and reconnecting with a high-school acquaintance (Usher Raymond), Mike ultimately chooses to abandon his long-held beliefs, leaving behind his violent past in the hopes of building a brighter future.

Soon, both Burden and Kennedy find themselves on a collision course with Griffin, who is determined to lure Mike back into the fold—or to see him punished for his betrayal. Penniless and desperate, Burden relies on Kennedy to help him escape a terrible fate. In the face of grave threats to himself and his family, the resolute Kennedy sets aside his own misgivings and bravely pursues a path toward peace, seeing in Mike a chance to save a lost soul and to heal his wounded community.

Written and directed by first-time filmmaker Andrew Heckler, BURDEN stars Garrett Hedlund (*Mudbound, Unbroken*), Forest Whitaker (*Arrival, The Last King of Scotland*), Andrea Riseborough (*Nocturnal Animals, Birdman*), Tom Wilkinson (*Michael Clayton, In the Bedroom*), Crystal Fox (*The Haves and Have Nots, Third Watch*) and Usher Raymond (*Hands of Stone*). BURDEN is produced by Robbie Brenner (*Dallas Buyers Club*) and executive produced by Kevin McKeon, Gabby Revilla Lugo and Jeff Kwatinetz.

101 Studios will release BURDEN in theaters February 28, 2020.

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A TRUE STORY OF FORGIVENESS AND REDEMPTION IN THE AMERICAN SOUTH

The circumstances sound like a work of fiction, but the events depicted in first-time writer-director Andrew Heckler's *BURDEN* are shockingly real. In 1996, Mike Burden, a grand dragon in the Ku Klux Klan, helped open the infamous Redneck Shop and KKK Museum inside the confines of an old single-screen movie house on the historic town square of Laurens, South Carolina. African-American religious leader and social activist Reverend David Kennedy organized peaceful protests outside the modest storefront, yet Burden and the other members of the hate group remained committed to operating the museum at any cost. The conflict seemed intractable—until Kennedy found a surprising ally in his one-time enemy.

An orphan who had been indoctrinated into racist ideology since childhood, Burden came to question the teachings he'd been raised to believe after falling in love with a single mother deeply opposed to the Klan. Leaving the organization, though, had consequences for Burden, who found himself homeless and out of a job. Kennedy accepted Mike's disavowal of his past and welcomed him into his home and his church. Together, they faced down vengeful Klan members and won over Reverend Kennedy's skeptical parishioners, forming a true bond and forging an alliance that stood as a testament to the power of forgiveness and an astonishing true-life story of redemption.

Filmmaker Heckler first stumbled upon the fascinating events in 1996 after noticing a small news item about the opening of the Redneck Shop. When he read a piece about Burden and Kennedy in the *Washington Post* the following year, he immediately was struck by the cinematic potential inherent in the saga and decided to investigate further. "When I found this story, I looked at the phone, and I said, 'I'm going to call this guy, Reverend Kennedy,'" Hecker says. "I spoke with him, very nice guy. I said, 'Look, I'm going to come down and see you.' He said, 'Sure.' So, I went down to Laurens, South Carolina, and I ended up spending two weeks. I spent a lot of time with Reverend Kennedy and all the members of the church. During the course of that two weeks, I ended up sitting at bars, going to restaurants, getting to know people, talking to people in coffee shops and getting to know what was going on down there. I was surprised by the nuances that I picked up."

By that time, both Mike and Judy Burden and Reverend Kennedy and the members of his Baptist congregation had received numerous offers to adapt their lives for the screen, but, wary of the attention, they repeatedly declined to participate in any retellings of their story. Heckler, however, remained undaunted. Riveted by the events and people of Laurens, he returned time and again hoping to foster connections with everyone involved—including the founders of the

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Redneck Shop. Heckler felt strongly that to truly understand why Mike Burden became so seduced by the Klan's doctrine, he needed to talk to the members of the hate group to learn what was so appealing about their ideology and why these people could come to espouse such beliefs.

"I wanted to do this because I wanted to figure out who these people were and get under their skin a little bit so I can tell a story about how you change someone like that," Heckler explains. "How you can effectively change someone's life from real bigotry and racism? How did Mike Burden get in this situation and how'd he get out? In order to write that movie, I have to understand who he is, how that Klan lifestyle can be attractive, what it feels like to be in that family?"

Posing as a member of a white supremacist group from Colorado, Heckler visited the shop and was eagerly welcomed by the men there. "Mike Burden was already gone," Heckler says. "It was like me going to visit a college and them trying to recruit me. They showed me all of their trophies, they showed me their robes, they showed me everything to get me to go back to Colorado and say, You guys have no idea how cool this is."

He also traveled to nearby Joanna, South Carolina, a tiny town of less than 2,500 people and had lunch at the local diner, which he had been told was another location often frequented by members of the KKK. "For me, I'm not telling superhero movies where there's a good guy and a bad guy and one wears a cape and the other wears a black mask," Heckler says. "I'm telling movies about people. I'm making movies about situations and stories that we think we know, but in order to do the kinds of stories that I want to tell, the kinds of stories that could actually affect people, you've got to take the hood of the Klansman and talk to them for a minute and figure out who he is. What everyone thinks is evil, they don't. So how is that possible?"

The more time Heckler spent in Laurens, the better he understood that bigotry is a learned cycle of behavior. He saw that Mike Burden's remarkable transformation, the restoration of his moral compass, proved that the cycle can be destroyed and delegitimized. "One of the biggest things I learned is that people are people," says Heckler. "There is no black or white. We are all products of our environment, and Mike is a compelling example of that. Reverend Kennedy is incredible—he has a very strong sense of justice for everyone and is thoughtful, loving and relentless."

"Andrew came to the church and became acquainted with all of the members, and Mike and Judy," adds Reverend David Kennedy. "He brought a different style. He knew how to communicate, and the church enjoyed his presence. Andrew had staying power, and he built a real relationship with us."

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Heckler committed so deeply to Burden and Kennedy and their shared ideals that he devoted nearly two decades to perfecting a screenplay telling their story as he attempted to bring BURDEN to the screen. At the 12-year-mark, he gave the script to his longtime friend Robbie Brenner, the Academy Award®-winning producer who had demonstrated remarkable skill with another real-world drama, *Dallas Buyers Club*. That film, which earned star Matthew McConaughey the best actor Academy Award®, told the story of electrician Ron Woodruff's personal battle to obtain and distribute medication to those suffering with AIDS in 1985.

Says Brenner of that early draft of BURDEN: "It was one of those scripts that was so raw, so important and so visceral and provocative, that it just stayed with me. It is a movie about love and acceptance and about this character finding strength in adversity. I think it's a movie that will really appeal to a wide audience."

In Brenner, Heckler had found a crucial ally. "She is everything you could dream of in a producer and in a friend. She is as passionate today as she was the day we connected about this special story," the filmmaker says. Suddenly, BURDEN was on its way to the big screen.

CASTING FOR REAL: PUTTING TOGETHER *BURDEN'S* ENSEMBLE

Knowing the players as intimately as he did, Heckler felt a responsibility to find the perfect actors to portray them on film. Coming from an acting background himself—Heckler started his career as the founder of New York City's Workhouse Theater in Tribeca—he knew the levels of commitment that would be required to draw each of the characters with nuance and depth.

Depicting Mike Burden's journey from hate to love, coupled with the responsibility of portraying a person who is still very much alive, required a special talent with deep emotional intelligence. Heckler and Brenner turned to Garrett Hedlund, who had earned praise for his memorable work in such films as *On the Road*, *Unbroken* and *Mudbound*. The filmmakers saw Hedlund as someone who could beautifully convey Mike's inner turmoil as he slowly comes to the realization that everything he's ever been taught is a lie. He also had the capacity to play Mike as a product of his environment, someone whose lack of education and affection has shaped his vengeful worldview.

"Garrett Hedlund has been on our radar for a long time, and Robbie thought he would be perfect," says Heckler. "I also felt he could inhabit the character and be from that part of the world."

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Says Hedlund: “I got an email from Robbie Brenner the producer—I’ve known her for a long time—she expressed her passion about this story. She said she hadn’t read something that she gravitated to so much since *Dallas Buyers’ Club*. She does these films that usually have a tricky subject matter, that require a lot of bravery. She sent me the script and asked me to play this role. I spoke with Andrew Heckler, and he seemed very passionate about it. I thought it could be very interesting.”

After reading Heckler’s screenplay, Hedlund quickly signed on to the film, knowing that the role would be an enormous challenge. “Mike Burden’s a rough guy,” the actor says. “He did a lot of things that he now regrets. When I met him, he asked me why I wanted to play him. In our story, there’s a redemption side to it at the end where the Reverend and him really form this bond, this relationship, and the Reverend turns his life around.”

For the pivotal role of Reverend Kennedy, the filmmakers cast Forest Whitaker, the towering talent who had won the best actor Academy Award® for his indelible portrayal of African dictator Idi Amin in the 2006 drama *The Last King of Scotland*.

“I had never met or seen a protest ministry character inside of a film of this degree,” Whitaker says. “It was different, different than Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. or the others. He’s a small-town protest minister, but his work is huge, centered on what we are dealing with in the world. He is doing battle with injustice, inequity, racism, and sexism. He’s a man of deep moral fiber and conviction, and he believes that all ministers should be fighting so that we all have a good quality of life.”

Whitaker developed a special bond with Kennedy, meeting the preacher’s family and his flock at the New Beginnings Missionary Baptist Church in Laurens. The time they spent together resonated deeply with the actor and informed the way in which he evolved specific aspects of his performance.

“He was courteous enough to let me engage and go on into his life, meeting his family, his children, his wife and then his extended family, the church,” Whitaker says of Kennedy. “That really informed me a lot about who he is, what his ideals are. Then he took me around the city and showed me where a lot of things occurred, where his uncle was lynched. He brought me to where the Redneck shop really was, to the streets and to the town. It was an amazing experience. At the same time, it helped me understand his integrity, his ethics.”

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Whitaker also came to understand the complexity of Kennedy's relationship with Mike Burden, a man who had done grievous harm to the community and who still posed a threat even after he turned to Kennedy for help. That firm grounding in their off-screen rapport helped Whitaker more accurately depict their relationship on screen. "Mike wants to be saved, and my character knows that if he dismisses him and refuses to help him change, he won't be able to preach anymore," Whitaker says. "Mike Burden is his test of whether he can really love."

It's an unimaginably difficult test. Burden was indoctrinated into the KKK from childhood, rising to the ranks of Grand Dragon through his affinity for violence. When the film opens, he's proud to be one of the founders of the Redneck Shop; what little he has in life—his meager apartment, his job as a repo man—he owes to his affiliation with the Klan. He's someone who can't imagine what his life would look like without the group as a kind of surrogate family.

Early on, charismatic Klan leader Tom Griffin is the center of Mike's world, the only father figure he's ever truly known—for Mike, earning Griffin's approval means everything, nor is he alone. The older man prides himself on the control he exerts as a racist patriarch over not just Mike but also his devoted wife Hazel (Tess Harper) and his son Clint (Austin Hébert). When Mike begins to display his doubts about the Klan's philosophies, Griffin's cruel, vindictive nature comes to the fore.

For the filmmakers, casting the role of Griffin proved especially difficult. In the end, it was Academy Award®-nominated actor Tom Wilkinson who understood the importance of portraying Griffin not as a mustache-twirling villain but as someone who had an insidious influence over both Mike and many of the residents of the town. "Tom loved the script and said it served the character very well," Heckler says. "He often plays complex, gray characters, so he got Griffin's layers."

Well before filming began, Heckler sent footage to Wilkinson of the man who served as the inspiration for Tom Griffin, though the character in the film is notably different from the man Mike Burden served in real life. "He told me, 'I don't want you to play the real guy—there's a coarseness about him,'" Wilkinson says. "He didn't want my character to be some stereotypical racist, bigot maniac. I got it. My Tom Griffin seems a nice-enough guy, but he has this horrible stuff that comes out from time to time that is rooted in real and deep-seated prejudice. It was important and more interesting to convey all of that."

Judy Harbeson sees through Griffin's affable, stately veneer. Struggling single-mom to young son Franklin (Taylor Gregory), Judy meets Mike when he comes to repossess her television. The encounter proves to be the beginning of a love affair, but there are complications from the start.

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Judy despises the Klan's vice-like hold over the community, and she's reluctant to begin seeing Mike, knowing he's part of the organization. Showing her and Franklin small acts of consideration and kindness, Mike begins to win her over.

When searching for an actress to play the woman who ultimately convinces Burden to renounce his violent past, the filmmakers looked for someone, who, as Brenner says, "Had the balls to be able to go toe to toe with the Klan." They found her in gifted talent Andrea Riseborough, who was struck by Judy's remarkable strength in not only convincing Mike to leave the Klan, but also in withstanding the non-stop campaign of threats and harassment that followed.

"I had the pleasure of meeting Judy and seeing her spirit, and I have such warm feelings toward her," Riseborough says. "I was amazed by her bravery. If you're born into an environment of white supremacy, it's kind of a hopeless situation because there isn't enough diversity or cultural currency to dig out of that hole—and I don't mean that in a patronizing way. You have to have tremendous compassion and integrity to get over that kind of indoctrination."

Adds Hedlund: "I'd met Andrea quite a few years back, and she's always blown me away as an actress. She's always been so dedicated. She's a chameleon. She is so brave, and she jumps into a lot of tricky characters that most people would either be too scared to do or didn't have in them to do. I've just always wanted to work with her."

Kennedy, too, has an incredibly strong partner by his side. Crystal Fox plays Janice Kennedy, the Reverend's formidable wife, who is deeply alarmed by her husband's decision to shelter Mike when he leaves the Klan. Although she is a tremendously compassionate and giving person, offering support to a violent racist understandably tests her limits, and she fears, too, that the Reverend is placing both of them, and their teenage son Kelvin (Dexter Darden), in grave danger.

For Fox, who lives in Atlanta, BURDEN touched on some deeply troubling memories: At a civil rights march through Georgia's KKK-heavy Forsythe County, Fox noticed a young woman standing in her yard holding her toddler, silently watching the protestors walk by. As Fox passed her, she prompted the child to shout a racial epithet. "You know what hurt me the most?" Fox says. "It was my knowing how difficult it is to teach a baby to say something like that. It's the opposite of their nature. The film breaks my heart a little bit because I wish it weren't so relevant."

Fox greatly impressed Whitaker, who was completely taken with her performance. "Crystal is a really talented actress," he says. "She's incredibly centered and strong. She made the reality complete."

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Rounding out the cast is musician and actor Usher Raymond in the key role of Clarence Brooks, a parishioner at the New Beginnings Baptist Church and a childhood friend of Mike Burden who finds himself at the center of the conflict in the town and in the battle for Mike's future. Clarence is a man who can stand in the gap. While he loathes what the KKK stands for, he's not opposed to the group's right to free speech—he also knows that racism learned, can be unlearned.

"I thought that it would definitely be a great representation of the type of work that I want to do," Raymond says of his decision to accept the role. "Clarence sees things differently. He makes a choice to not see color. While he recognizes there is serious racism in Laurens, he believes in the decency of this small town. He knows that most people want to come together and be good citizens."

"Usher brings so much to the table," says Brenner. "He loves the script, he gets it, and he's a lovely, lovely guy. He's incredibly committed to his craft."

Raymond reached out to Whitaker for guidance early on, well before filming began, to discuss the intricacies of the story. "We did a film many years ago called *Light It Up*," Raymond says. "We had a great deal of scenes together. I learned so much from him there, and I felt so supported by him there. So, I wanted to make sure this was a passion piece, that we were lending our celebrity to BURDEN for the right reason—to help."

Adds Hedlund: "For Usher to jump onto this was really a gift. He is a lot like Clarence. There's a sensitivity to him, an understanding and an acceptance and a heart of gold that's very similar to Clarence. Usher himself is one of the sweetest guys I've ever met. I have a lot of respect for him, and I always have."

Clarence is the father to young son, Duane (Devin Bright), who is Franklin's best friend. Against the backdrop of protest rallies and KKK meetings, the two characters become inseparable, further illustrating that racial animosity isn't innate. Children must be taught how to hate. That message is at the heart of the film—and at a time when our country is so divided, the filmmakers hope that BURDEN's message of hope and change can offer much-needed uplift.

"I think it's a really fair and unbiased look at a human being from one set of circumstances and making a journey toward something in his life that's more fulfilling," offers Riseborough.

"We have so much going on in the world—there is so much violence and discontent wreaking havoc," Brenner says. "I feel we're at the precipice of a revolution. And this story is really an

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allegory for all the hate we're witnessing and experiencing. It's also proof that no matter where you are, love and acceptance are hate's most powerful adversaries."

ABOUT THE PRODUCTION

With a limited budget and shooting schedule, filmmaker Heckler and producer Brenner had to put together an intrepid team that could work rapidly to deliver the equivalent of a six-week shoot in 27 days. Heckler had done impeccable research and knew that the production design, cinematography and costume design were critical to depicting the environment that both birthed Reverend Kennedy and Mike Burden and became the setting for Mike's spiritual transformation.

"Andrew was very dedicated to the story's authenticity," says production designer Stephanie Hamilton (*The Tribes of Palos Verdes, Newly Single*). "He wanted it to feel gritty and really true to the script that he wrote and the real-life events and people.

"When I first read the script, I saw a world that was very desaturated and passed over," Hamilton continues. "So, I wanted to help create this feeling that there had been this vibrant community that was disrupted when big franchises came in, and now there's a lot of shut-down buildings and people without jobs."

Trying to recreate 1990s-era Laurens, South Carolina, was the first challenge. The town itself looked very different than it had at the time the story was set, which forced the production to look further afield. The filmmakers scouted for weeks to find the right location, finally discovering it in Jackson, Georgia, a virtual time capsule that needed little modification. Hamilton's vivid re-creation of the film's biggest and most detailed set, The Redneck Shop.

"My goal was to make it as authentic to the real one as I could," Hamilton says. "I took a little bit of creative license here and there, but we went through real footage of the shop looking for small details, like a heritage sign on the wall that was spelled wrong. I really wanted to be as true as possible to what that shop was and to capture the meaning of what that shop really is. I wanted people to feel how shocking and jarring a shop like that truly is to walk into."

Her efforts proved to be particularly convincing—almost alarmingly so. "Several people thought it was real and asked when it was going to open," Brenner recalls.

In developing a specific cinematic language for BURDEN, the production team opted to keep to that desaturated palette, avoiding bright colors and instead featuring light reds and natural earth shades. Director of photography Jeremy Rouse (*Fysh*) sought to create a naturalistic feel for the

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film, which strongly influenced his choice to use only handheld cameras and employ natural light to the greatest degree possible.

“I sat down with Andrew and initially discussed how I imagined how I would see this world,” Rouse says. “We definitely wanted to make it feel extremely real and extremely honest—cinematic and beautiful, but also raw and real and natural. We wanted to try to immerse the audience in the experience and make them feel like they were right there with Reverend Kennedy and Mike Burden. This is a lot about the turmoil inside Mike Burden’s mind and the decision-making processes he has to go through, so we were trying to find interesting ways to get close to him and put the audience somewhere where they can start to feel or think about what he’s feeling.”

While Rouse’s lighting bathes the local Klan characters in warm reds, mirroring the faded Confederate flags that are on ample display, the imagery in scenes featuring the Reverend and his church signal are significantly brighter and cleaner to underscore their radically different mindset. “At the church, it was cleaner and more neutral,” Rouse says of the visual aesthetic. “Certainly, at the Reverend’s house, it was a homely feel and palette, and when we’re in the places where Tom Griffin and Mike Burden existed, it was a more of a hostile palette and feel.”

Costume designer Annette Cseri drew on period- and location-specific details. She was closely attuned to the fact that Laurens is in a poor pocket of the South and the characters are barely scraping by. She dressed them in worn, often slightly outdated styles that would help convey their status as people on the margins with little means.

“Annette has done this wonderful thing with the costumes where everything feels a bit like it’s acid washed,” explains Andrea Riseborough. “Even though it’s set in the ’90s, there’s a feeling that it could even be the early ’80s. It’s a little behind aesthetically and, in some ways, the mindset, and that’s really reflected in the costumes.”

Heckler himself had a hand in creating Burden’s look. “Garrett and I went for three days thrift shopping for Mike Burden’s clothes at the craziest second-hand stores—half the T-shirts he’s wearing are mine from way back when,” says the writer-director. “We did that because I felt that I knew him.”

During filming, it was important to Heckler to foster an open, collaborative environment on set, so he purposely kept things loose during filming to allow actors to find interesting character moments as the scenes unfolded. “I’m an actor first,” Heckler says. “I think I scared everybody on set because [I said] we were going to let the cameras find the actors doing whatever they

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wanted to do. It's out there, but it's the way I wanted to shoot the movie. It's unconventional, but for me, it's OK. The actors need to feel good about everything they're doing or it won't feel good for me."

Offers Hedlund: "Andrew's excited about everybody being unpredictable and surprising him. He sits back and appreciates the surprise. The world is there, and then he lets you get comfortable in it and live in it. I think he takes great joy out of watching what he's been working so hard at for the last 20 years come to life."

Adds Whitaker: "He's very open to input to allowing the characters to take shape realistically and honestly. He's extremely supportive. He's so passionate about the project, so involved in every moment and committed to every moment in a way that you don't always see."

Watching from behind the camera, the filmmaker was struck by the remarkable dedication each of the actors brought to their roles—including the degree to which Hedlund so fully inhabited the role of the Klansman who finds redemption through the extraordinarily courageous acts of those around him, particularly the Reverend Kennedy. "He's created a character that's so layered and interesting and different and it's ballsy. His attitude, his work ethic, he's been a dream for me as a director."

Applying a *vérité* lens to a story with deep real-world modern relevance, Heckler and the filmmakers have created in *BURDEN* a powerful, provocative drama that asks us to consider the virtues of compassion and forgiveness—it's a singular film showing that an act of kindness can have radical implications not only for one man, but for an entire community.

"I hope that the movie sparks dialogue about issues of equality and issues of healing," says Whitaker. "I think there's a broad statement here about someone who is filled with hate and whether you can rid yourself of those kinds of things and move forward in your life with love. I think ultimately the biggest message of the movie is that love can heal. It's important that people look at this film and start to recognize the parallels between this story and other areas in our lives, to apply the concept that we're all in this as one large family."

Producer Brenner echoes those same sentiments. "Ultimately, *BURDEN* is the story of this man's journey to finding love and acceptance. He was raised in a certain way, he was taught this is who you should be, this is what you should do. Ultimately, he was able to find the strength inside of himself to divert from that, to go up against that. I think we all have that in ourselves— whatever it is in life, [it's so important] to be able to find your inner strength and to be able to walk in your own truth and not conform to what everybody else is doing."

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Concludes Heckler: "This movie is not political. It's just a story about opening your ears and showing love and faith instead of hatred and bigotry and starting the conversation to heal us as opposed to continuing to divide us."

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ABOUT THE CAST

GARRETT HUDLUND (Mike Burden) has had a multitude of starring roles since he made an auspicious debut as part of the all-star cast in Wolfgang Petersen's *Troy* with Brad Pitt, Eric Bana, Orlando Bloom and Diane Kruger when he was just 18 years old.

Hedlund recently completed production on "The United States Vs. Billie Holiday," directed by Lee Daniels and inspired by the 2015 New York Time's Bestseller *Chasing the Dream: The First and Last Days of the War on Drugs* written by Johann Hari. Hedlund stars as Harry J. Anslinger, alongside Andra Day, Trevante Rhodes, Evan Ross, and Natasha Lyonne. Hedlund also recently completed production on "Keyhole Garden," which traces the sprawling romance of a man and woman whose love for each other struggles to overcome the divisiveness of life on America's southern border. Hedlund stars alongside Zoe Saldana, Tom Waits, and Luce Rains.

In Andrew Heckler's *BURDEN* Hedlund portrays the lead character based on the true story of a KKK Klansman who's life course is changed when he finds love. *BURDEN* also stars Forrest Whitaker, Andrea Riseborough, and Usher. The film will be out in theaters on February 28, 2020 from 101 Studios. Next year will also see the release of the independent film *Dirt Music* in which Hedlund stars opposite Kelly MacDonald and directed by Gregor Jordan.

Hedlund starred in the award-winning Netflix film *Mudbound* for director Dee Rees and based on the Hillary Jordan novel. *Mudbound* also starred Carey Mulligan, Jason Mitchell Jason Clarke and Mary J. Blige. The cast won the Robert Altman Award at the Spirit Awards as well as the Breakthrough Cast Award at the Hollywood Film Awards and was nominated for Critic's Choice Award, SAG Awards and BET Awards among many others. The film itself also received numerous award recognitions including Academy Award nominations for Best Cinematography and Best Writing Adapted Screenplay.

Last year Hedlund co-starred in Netflix's *Triple Frontier*, a story of five friends who re-unite to take down a South American drug lord, directed by J.C. Chandor. The all-star cast also includes Ben Affleck, Charlie Hunnam, Oscar Isaac, Adria Arjona, and Pedro Pascal. The film received 52 million views in the first four weeks on the streamer.

Hedlund received critical accolades for his starring role in Walter Salles' *On the Road* opposite Sam Riley and Kristen Stewart, based on the novel by Jack Kerouac. He also starred alongside Vin Diesel, Steve Martin and Chris Tucker and his *On the Road* co-star Kristen Stewart in *Billy Lynn's Long Halftime Walk* from director Ang Lee. Hedlund was also in William Monahan's *Mojave* in which he appeared once again with his *Inside Llewyn Davis* co-star, Oscar Isaac.

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Hedlund also starred alongside Hugh Jackman and Rooney Mara in Warner Bros' *Pan*, directed by Joe Wright, in which he portrayed 'Hook.' Previous film credits include; Universal's *Unbroken*, based on the Laura Hillenbrand book and directed by Angelina Jolie; *Inside Llewyn Davis* alongside Oscar Isaac, Carrie Mulligan and John Goodman and *Lullaby*.

Hedlund has had the opportunity to work with great actors and directors in: Twentieth Century Fox's *Death Sentence* opposite Kevin Bacon, Kelly Preston and John Goodman; Universal Pictures' *Georgia Rule* opposite Lindsay Lohan and Jane Fonda; and *Eragon* co-starring with Djimon Honsou, Jeremy Irons and John Malkovich. Hedlund also starred in Paramount Pictures' *Four Brothers* with director John Singleton and co-stars Mark Wahlberg, Andre 3000 and Tyrese Gibson and Universal's *Friday Night Lights*, directed by Peter Berg and produced by Brian Grazer and Imagine Entertainment. Hedlund starred as tailback Don Billingsley, co-starring with Billy Bob Thornton, Derek Luke, Jay Hernandez, Lucas Black and Tim McGraw. He also starred in *Tron: Legacy* alongside Jeff Bridges and Olivia Wilde and *Country Strong* opposite Gwyneth Paltrow, Leighton Meester and Tim McGraw. HBO premiered Stephen Soderbergh's "Mosaic," which starred Hedlund and Sharon Stone. The project was an experimental show which had a tie-in with a newly developed app that helped viewers follow different character's story lines.

Hedlund was born in northern Minnesota and spent his high school years in Scottsdale, Arizona before starring in Petersen's iconic film at the age of eighteen. He began taking private acting classes while in high school and took a unique approach to his pursuit of the craft by reading screenplays of older films, watching those films on video, and then pretending he was auditioning for one of the roles in the film. He also spent countless hours reading the Hollywood trade papers at his local bookstore and calling agents in Los Angeles. He graduated from high school a semester early and immediately packed his bags and headed for Hollywood.

Hedlund has been honored with the Young Hollywood "Film Actor of the Year" Award, the Glamour UK "Man of the Year" Award and the Maui Film Festival's "Rising Star" Award. The *Mudbound* cast won the Robert Altman Award at the Spirit Awards as well as the Breakthrough Cast Award at the Hollywood Film Awards and was nominated for Critic's Choice Award, SAG Awards and BET Awards among many others.

FOREST WHITAKER (Reverend Kennedy), one of Hollywood's most accomplished actors, directors, and producers, has showcased his talents in a multitude of demanding and diverse roles. In 2007, he earned critical acclaim for his performance as Ugandan dictator Idi Amin in *The Last King of Scotland*, receiving the Academy Award, BAFTA Award, SAG Award, and Golden Globe Award for Best Actor. His intensive character work in films such as Lee Daniels' *The*

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Butler, The Crying Game, Ghost Dog: The Way of the Samurai, and Bird, for which he was named Best Actor at the 1988 Cannes Film Festival, have made him one of the most versatile performers of all time.

In television, Whitaker currently serves as executive producer and star of the critically acclaimed EPIX series *Godfather of Harlem* that tells the true story of crime boss Bumpy Johnson (Whitaker), who in the early 1960s returned after 10 years in prison to find the neighborhood he once ruled in shambles. The role earned him a NAACP Image Award nomination, one of four for the series. He recently had a multi-episode arc on Fox's *Empire*, playing a charismatic and duplicitous music icon and hitmaker. Whitaker also garnered an Emmy Award for *Door to Door* where he served as an executive producer.

Recent films include *Black Panther*; Denis Villeneuve's sci-fi drama *Arrival*; *Rogue One: A Star Wars Story* alongside Felicity Jones; *The Forgiven* and Netflix's *How It Ends*.

Up next, he will be seen in *BURDEN* opposite Tom Wilkinson and the upcoming Netflix holiday film *Jingle Jangle* directed by David E. Talbert in 2020. He is currently in production on *Respect*, the life story of the legendary Aretha Franklin, slated to also premiere in 2020.

In addition to his film and television work, Whitaker made his Broadway debut in Eugene O'Neill's *Hughie*, directed by Tony Award Winner Michael Grandage, and starred in A&E Network's remake of the 1977 miniseries, *Roots*, where he took on the role of 'Fiddler'.

In 2010 he launched Significant Productions which aims to support young, talented filmmakers. In 2013, he co-produced Ryan Coogler's directorial debut, *Fruitvale Station*, earning Sundance Film Festival's Grand Jury Prize and Cannes Film Festival's Best First Film Award. Significant Productions' latest films, *Sorry to Bother You*, *Dope*, *Songs My Brothers Taught Me*, and *Roxanne Roxanne* were also selected to debut in competition at the Sundance Film Festival, where they received excellent reviews. *Dope* was selected for Best Editing with *Roxanne Roxanne* as the Special Jury Prize for Breakthrough Performance at the festival. Additionally, *Dope* and *Songs My Brothers Taught Me* were selected for inclusion in the 2015 Cannes Directors' Fortnight.

Whitaker made his directorial debut with *Strapped* in 1993, for which he won the International Critics' Award at the Toronto Film Festival. Since then, he has directed and executive produced *Waiting to Exhale*, *Hope Floats*, and *First Daughter*. He has produced numerous other award-winning films and documentaries, including the Peabody Award winning *Brick City*, and has executive produced several made-for-television movies and miniseries.

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Under Frank Cooper, he served as the creator and producer of DEWmocracy.com, an interactive video game, short film, and website that allowed people to select a new flavor of Mountain Dew. This campaign turned into the most successful launch of a soft drink in Mountain Dew's history.

Over the past decade, Whitaker has devoted much of his time to his humanitarian work. He is the founder and CEO of The Whitaker Peace & Development Initiative, which has current branches in Uganda, South Sudan, South Africa, Mexico, and the United States. He is also the co-founder and chair of the International Institute for Peace, a UNESCO Special Envoy for Peace and Reconciliation, and was a member of President Obama's Committee on the Arts and the Humanities. He previously served on President Obama's Urban Policy Committee and started collaborating with the Office of the Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict as an Advocate for Children Affected by War, a topic on which he was invited to speak before the UN Security Council in September 2014. Additionally, he is on the steering committee for the UN's work with the Reintegration of Child Soldiers and is an Advocate for the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.

ANDREA RISEBOROUGH (Judy) is an immensely talented actress with a true gift for transformation, Andrea Riseborough continues to captivate audiences and earn critical acclaim with each role.

Upcoming, Riseborough will next star in Nicolas Pesce's reboot of *The Grudge* opposite Damian Bichir and John Cho. Sony is slated to release the film on January 3, 2020. Following, she will be seen in Stefano Sollima's *ZeroZeroZero*, Amazon's true-crime series focusing on the cocaine drug trade. The show, which begins streaming in 2020, premiered two episodes at the 2019 Venice Film Festival. Also upcoming, Riseborough will be seen in Lone Scherfig's *The Kindness of Strangers* opposite Zoe Kazan and Bill Nighy, which opened the 2019 Berlin Film Festival, Brandon Cronenberg's thriller *Possessor* and Zeina Durra's drama *Luxor*, both of which are set to premiere at the 2020 Sundance Film Festival.

She is currently in production on BBC Film's *Here Before*, and recently completed production on *Louis Wain* opposite Benedict Cumberbatch and Claire Foy. Riseborough is also attached to star in a variety of projects including, Amanda Kramer and Noel David Taylor's *Please Baby Please*, Stuart Ford and Glendon Palmer's *Geechee* and Michael Morris's *To Leslie*.

Most recently, Riseborough starred in *Nancy*, which premiered in competition at the 2018 Sundance Film Festival and was awarded the prestigious Waldo Salt Screenwriting Award. The film was also nominated for two Film Independent Spirit Awards in the categories of Best Supporting Female (J. Smith Cameron) and Best First Screenplay (Christina Choe). Riseborough

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earned momentous critical praise for her performance in the title role opposite Steve Buscemi, Ann Dowd and John Leguizamo in the film, which she also produced under her production banner, Mother Sucker.

Prior, she starred in Armando Iannucci's *The Death of Stalin*, which premiered to rave reviews at the 2017 Toronto International Film Festival and the 2018 Sundance Film Festival. It was later released by IFC in March 2018. Riseborough's performance garnered a 2017 British Independent Film Award nomination and, more recently, the film was ranked as one of the Top Ten Independent Films of 2018 by the National Board of Review. Additionally, she starred in *Mandy* and *BURDEN*, both of which premiered at the 2018 Sundance Film Festival. *Mandy* previously appeared in the Director's Fortnight at the 2017 Cannes Film Festival.

Previously, Riseborough starred in Jonathan Dayton and Valerie Faris' *Battle of the Sexes* alongside Emma Stone and Steve Carell, which tells the true story of the 1973 tennis match between Billie Jean King and Bobby Riggs. Earlier, she starred in Alejandro González Iñárritu's *Birdman or (The Unexpected Virtue of Ignorance)*, which won four Academy Awards, including Best Picture, and the Screen Actors Guild Award for Outstanding Performance by a Cast in a Motion Picture.

Riseborough's additional film credits include Tom Ford's *Nocturnal Animals*; Mark Romanek's *Never Let Me Go*; Nigel Cole's *Made in Dagenham*; Rowan Joffe's *Brighton Rock*; Madonna's *W.E.*, as Wallis Simpson; Amit Gupta's *Resistance*; Henry Alex Rubin's *Disconnect*; Joseph Kosinski's *Oblivion* opposite Tom Cruise; Eran Creevy's *Welcome to the Punch*; Corinna McFarlane's *The Silent Storm*; the Duffer Brothers' *Hidden* and James Marsh's *Shadow Dancer*, opposite Clive Owen, for which Riseborough won the British Independent Film Award (BIFA), the Evening Standard British Film Award, and the London Critics' Circle Film Award for Best Actress.

On the small screen, she appeared in Paramount Network's six-part limited series *Waco* alongside Taylor Kitsch, Michael Shannon and John Leguizamo. The series is based on the true story of the 51-day standoff that began when the FBI and ATF seized religious leader, David Koresh's, Branch Davidian compound in Waco, Texas in the spring of 1993.

Prior, she starred in an episode of the fourth season on Netflix's critically-acclaimed drama *Black Mirror*, and Hulu's four-part mini-series *National Treasure* alongside Robbie Coltrane and Julie Walters and written by BAFTA®-winning writer Jack Thorne, Netflix's drama *Bloodline*, Julian Jarrold's TV movie, *The Witness for the Prosecution*, based on Agatha Christie's play of the same name and *Party Animals*, which marked Riseborough's first leading role in a television series.

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Growing up in the U.K. seaside resort of Whitley Bay, she wrote and created her own worlds. At the age of nine, her drama teacher recommended her for an audition at the People's Theatre (home of the Royal Shakespeare Company in Newcastle), and she appeared in her first public production there. While still attending the Royal Academy of the Dramatic Arts (RADA), she began taking external acting roles in telefilms and theatre productions. After leaving RADA, she starred the Oppenheimer Award-winning play *A Brief History of Helen of Troy* at the Soho Theatre, directed by Gordon Anderson, and was nominated as Best Newcomer at the 2005 Theatre Goers' Choice Awards. Riseborough's first feature film role was in Roger Michell's *Venus* (2006), starring her good friend Jodie Whittaker and Peter O'Toole.

She starred for six months at the National Theatre, in Deborah Gearing's *Burn*, Enda Walsh's *Chatroom* and Mark Ravenhill's *Citizenship*, all directed by Anna Mackmin. She was honored with the Ian Charleson Award for her performance in Peter Hall's Royal Shakespeare Company staging of *Measure for Measure*.

Mike Leigh offered her a place in the company of his film *Happy-Go-Lucky*. She made the movie and then starred at the Royal Court Theatre in Bruce Norris' *The Pain and the Itch*, for which she was nominated as Best Supporting Actress at the 2007 Theatre Goers' Choice Awards. Later, she starred in Dorota Maslowska's *A Couple of Poor, Polish-Speaking Romanians*, at The Soho Theatre; and in the Donmar Warehouse production of *Ivanov*, opposite Kenneth Branagh and Tom Hiddleston. She made her U.S. stage debut in Alexi Kaye Campbell's *The Pride*, directed by Joe Mantello.

Following, Riseborough starred as Margaret Thatcher in the telefilm *Margaret Thatcher – The Long Walk To Finchley*, directed by Niall McCormick, for which she received a BAFTA Award nomination; starred in the short film *Love You More*, directed by Sam Taylor-Johnson and written by Patrick Marber; starred in Avie Luthra's independent feature *Mad Sad & Bad*; and played the lead role in the miniseries *The Devil's Whore*, about the 17th-Century English Civil War, directed by Marc Munden.

TOM WILKINSON (Tom Griffin) is an award-winning actor of stage and screen. Wilkinson received an Academy Award® nomination for Best Supporting Actor in Tony Gilroy's Academy Award®-nominated *Michael Clayton*. He received an Academy Award® nomination for Leading Actor for his unforgettable performance in Todd Field's acclaimed drama *In The Bedroom*, opposite Sissy Spacek. Wilkinson also received a BAFTA nomination, won the Independent Spirit Award, a Sundance Film Festival Special Jury Prize and a New York Film Critics Circle Award for the role. Prior to that, Wilkinson won a BAFTA for his role in the 1997 British and international box-office sensation *The Full Monty*, and garnered another BAFTA nomination the following year.

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for his performance in the Oscar®-winning Best Picture *Shakespeare In Love*. He received Emmy and Golden Globe Award nominations for his courageous performance in HBO's 2003 film *Normal*, opposite Jessica Lange. Wilkinson won an Emmy Award and a Golden Globe Award for Supporting Actor for the HBO miniseries *John Adams*, in which he portrayed Benjamin Franklin. He also appeared on the Reelz Channel, in the U.S. playing Joe Kennedy in *The Kennedys* and was nominated for an Emmy for Best Supporting Actor in a miniseries. Wilkinson was also Golden Globe nominated for his co-starring role in the Golden Globe winning TV movie *Recount* playing James Baker opposite Kevin Spacey.

Tom's upcoming work includes the limited series, *Belgravia*, for ITV, and the features *SAS: Red Notice*, and *Dr. Bird's Advice for Sad Poets*.

AUSTIN HÉBERT (Clint Griffin) Houston native, Austin Hebert realized his passion for acting when casting legend Mali Finn discovered him in an audition for *The Assassination of Jesse James by the Coward Robert Ford* and encouraged him to move to Los Angeles. Austin finished his studies at Southern Methodist University's theater program determined to pursue a career in acting. He went on to appear on stage in The Living Theater's European tour of *The Brig* by Kenneth H. Brown and early television credits include guest star roles on HBO's *True Blood*, CBS's *Vegas* and A&E's pilot for *Longtime* (Netflix).

In 2013 Austin starred opposite William Hurt and Emile Hirsh in Sony's mini-series *Bonnie & Clyde* for A&E, Lifetime and The History Channel. He earned a supporting role in the Ed Zwick-directed sequel for Paramount Pictures *Jack Reacher: Never Go Back* starring Tom Cruise. That was followed by a leading role in the Phillip Noyce-directed film *Above Suspicion*, starring along side Jack Houston and Emilia Clarke. Next came a supporting role in the *Untitled Detroit Project* for acclaimed director Kathryn Bigelow alongside John Boyega and Anthony Mackie, as well as a supporting role in the Lionsgate feature *12 Strong* for Jerry Bruckheimer with Michael Shannon and Chris Hemsworth. In 2019, Austin won a supporting role in the Golden Globe nominated Netflix series *Unbelievable*. He is set take on pivotal roles on Paramount's flagship series *Yellowstone* and Showtime's critically acclaimed *Ray Donovan*.

Also a guitarist/singer/songwriter, Austin can be found honkytonking the streets of Brooklyn, NY where he currently lives with his dog Harlan.

CRYSTAL FOX (Janice Kennedy) is best known for her lead role on the hit NBC police drama series *In the Heat of the Night* and can be seen as Zoe Kravitz's mother in season 2 of the HBO hit series, *Big Little Lies*. She can also be seen in the upcoming Independent feature, *BURDEN*, opposite Forest Whitaker. Crystal also plays one of the lead roles on Tyler Perry's OWN series *The Haves*

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and the Have Nots. Crystal made her big screen debut playing 'Katie Bell' in the Academy Award-winning comedy-drama film *Driving Miss Daisy*, starring Morgan Freeman and Jessica Tandy. Fox has also had supporting roles in films *Drop Squad* and *Once Upon a Time... When We Were Colored* opposite Phylicia Rashad and Al Freeman, Jr. Crystal also co-starred opposite Phylicia Rashad and Debbie Allen in the 2001 PBS production of *The Old Settler*. She has appeared in shows such as *Law & Order*, *The Sopranos*, and Tyler Perry's *House of Payne*.

Crystal has also appeared on many stage productions during her career. She received Helen Hayes Award nomination for performance in 2002 play *Home*. Her other stage credits include *For Colored Girls Who Have Considered Suicide*, *Antony and Cleopatra*, *A Raisin in the Sun*, *The Colored Museum*, *Bessie's Blues*, and *The Rocky Horror Picture Show*, to name few. Most recently she was the lead in the play *Blues for an Alabama Sky* at the Alliance Theater in Atlanta.

USHER RAYMOND (Clarence Brooks) Challenging himself creatively and testing musical boundaries are characteristics that have defined Usher's career since he was first discovered twenty years ago on Star Search. Usher has been ranked by the Recording Industry Assn. of America as one of the best-selling artists in American music history, having sold over 65 million albums worldwide. He has won numerous awards including 8 Grammy Awards and was named the #1 Hot 100 artist of the 2000s decade. Billboard named him the second most successful artist of the 2000s decade, with his career-propelling 2004 album "Confessions" being ranked as the top solo album of the 2000s decade. Usher has attained nine Hot 100 #1 hits (all as a lead artist) and 18 Hot 100 top-10 singles.

2020 continues to be a busy year for Usher. Musically, he is currently in the studio recording his 9th studio album which will be released in 2020. Late 2018 he released a collaborative project with Zaytoven entitled "A" which was an ode to the Atlanta sound and culture. His acting career continued to develop with his role in the film *Burden*. *Burden* debuted at the 2018 Sundance Film Festival and won the "Audience Award for Best Film". It is due out for national release in early 2020.

In 2017 the release of his most recent studio album entitled "Hard II Love" spawned his 15th N #1 single with the song "No Limit". In Film, Usher garnered critical acclaim for his role as boxer Sugar Ray Leonard in *Hands of Stone*. The film is a biopic of boxer Roberto Duran in which he co-starred opposite Robert DeNiro and Edgar Ramirez.

Recently Usher finished his world tour entitled "The UR Experience". Usher also completed 2 seasons as a coach on NBC's Emmy award winning hit TV show *The Voice* where he proved his top-notch coaching capability by becoming the champion of season 6.

Realizing that with success comes responsibility. Usher has also proven to be a major philanthropic force. Founded in 1999, his New Look Foundation empowers youth from

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impoverished communities to become leaders. In recognition of his accomplishments, Usher has been honored by the Boys & Girls Clubs of America, the Trumpet Foundation, Do Something, the NAACP, and as the 2010 Ford Freedom Award Scholar. Usher's business ventures include a best-selling line of fragrances, and a business venture with RBMG (Raymond Braun Media Group).

TESS HARPER (Hazel) attended Southwest Missouri State University, now known as Missouri State University, in Springfield, Missouri. During the late 1960s, she did “street” acting in the theme parks, Dogpatch, USA, in Jasper, Arkansas, and Silver Dollar City in Branson, Missouri.

Harper was discovered while doing theater work in Dallas, Texas. After being turned down at an audition for a Chuck Norris movie, Harper was recruited to come do a reading for *Tender Mercies* with Robert Duvall, for which she was selected to play the supporting role, earning her Academy Award® and Golden Globes nominations for best supporting actress. She also received high praise for her performance in *Crimes of the Heart*. At the Manhattan Theatre Club, Harper again received high praise for her stirring performance in *Abundance*.

ABOUT THE FILMMAKERS

ANDREW HECKLER (Director/Writer) As actor, writer, director and producer, Andrew Heckler has participated in all aspects of the entertainment industry. In 2016, Heckler directed the feature film *BURDEN*, starring Forest Whitaker, Garrett Hedlund, Usher Raymond, Andrea Riseborough and Tom Wilkinson, based on a screenplay he wrote in 1999. *Burden* received the Audience Award at both the 2018 Sundance Film Festival and Nantucket Film Festival, where Heckler was also presented with the Visionary Award for screenwriting. Heckler also founded the Tribeca-based Workhouse Theater in 1992, where he produced, directed and acted in over 35 plays over the course of six years.

ROBBIE BRENNER (Producer), As Executive Producer of Mattel Films, Robbie Brenner is responsible for transforming Mattel’s iconic portfolio of brands into cinematic experiences that delight audiences around the world. The Academy Award®-nominated producer assumed leadership of the new film division in September 2018. Since then, Ms. Brenner has set up eight films at major studios, including *Barbie* starring Margot Robbie, *Masters of the Universe* with Noah Centineo, and *Magic 8 Ball* with producer Jason Blum.

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Ms. Brenner is an Academy Award®-nominated producer with 20 years of industry experience working alongside established and emerging filmmakers, whose projects include Academy Award®-winning films such as *Dallas Buyers Club* and *The Fighter*.

Prior to joining Mattel, Ms. Brenner served as the President of Production at Relativity Media, where she played a pivotal role in the studio's acquisition of the Sundance documentary *Catfish*. Under Ms. Brenner's leadership, Relativity also acquired Joseph Gordon-Levitt's directorial debut, *Don Jon*, starring Gordon-Levitt and Scarlett Johansson and Disney's family adventure *Earth to Echo*. As an executive producer, Brenner worked on Tarsem Singh's stylish Snow White adaptation, *Mirror Mirror*, starring Julia Roberts and the 3-D epic *Immortals* with Henry Cavill, which grossed over \$225 million worldwide. She championed the release of *The Fighter*, which won two Academy Awards and received a total of seven Academy Award nominations, including a nomination for Best Picture. Ms. Brenner also oversaw the successful Nicholas Sparks book adaptations *Dear John* starring Channing Tatum and *Safe Haven*, with Josh Duhamel and Julianne Hough. Additional films to Ms. Brenner's credit include: *Beyond The Lights*, co-starring Minnie Driver and directed by Gina Prince-Bythewood of *Love & Basketball*, Luc Besson's *The Family*, and Scott Cooper's *Out of the Furnace*, with Christian Bale and Zoe Saldana.

Before joining Relativity, Ms. Brenner ran the classics division at Davis Entertainment. From 2005 to 2006, Ms. Brenner served as Senior Vice President of Production at Twentieth Century Fox, acquiring and developing movies for the studio. Prior to Twentieth Century Fox, she spent nine years as a production and development executive at Miramax Films before serving as Senior Vice President.

In 2018, Brenner produced *Burden* with Garrett Hedlund, Forest Whitaker, and Andrea Riseborough, telling the true story of a racial extremist who learns tolerance. The film won the U.S. Dramatic Audience Award at Sundance that year.

In 2015, the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences invited Ms. Brenner to join the executive branch for her longstanding contributions to cinema.

Ms. Brenner is a film graduate of New York University's Tisch School of the Arts.

KEVIN MCKEON (Executive Producer) is the Vice President of Production at the newly formed Mattel Films. While still developing and producing content under Unburdened Entertainment, Kevin is responsible for shepherding films through development and production along with principal, Robbie Brenner. Currently he is serving as a producer on the film: *Call Janes*, a pre-Roe

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v. Wade drama with Sian Heder directing from a script by Hayley Schore & Roshan Sethi. McKeon also secured the life and book rights to Elaine Brown and her memoir, *A Taste of Power*, which chronicles her rise as the first and only female leader of the Black Panther party in 1970s Oakland. Alyssa Hill is adapting while Brown herself is serving as Executive Producer.

Previously, McKeon worked as VP and then SVP of Production in the film department at entertainment conglomerate, The Firm. While at the Firm he served as Executive Producer on IFC's coming-of-age film, *The Tribes of Palos Verdes* with Jennifer Garner and Maika Monroe, and the forthcoming redemption drama, *BURDEN*, starring Garrett Hedlund, Forest Whitaker, Andrea Riseborough, Tom Wilkinson and Usher. *BURDEN* bowed in competition at the Sundance Film Festival and won the 2018 US Dramatic Audience Award. The film also won the Narrative Audience Award at the Nantucket Film Festival in June.

Prior to joining The Firm, McKeon served as a Creative Executive at Relativity Media's independent label, Relativity Squared or R2. There he and Robbie Brenner, then President of Production of both Relativity Studios and R2, developed and oversaw a slate of filmmaker driven and independent-minded content including both production and acquisitions for the indie label. Previously, he worked as Brenner's executive assistant at Relativity Studios and during the film, *Dallas*, *Buyers*, *Club*.

McKeon also worked at Oliver Stone's production shingle, Ixtlan, Inc, during the production of Universal's *Savages* and at Flower Films as Drew Barrymore's executive assistant.

McKeon started his career in physical production on such films as *Valentine's Day*, *Edge of Darkness* and *Seven Pounds*. He is a graduate of Emerson College and a member of the Producers Guild of America in the Producers Council.

GABRIELA REVILLA LUGO (Executive Producer/Line Producer) is an accomplished Nicaraguan-American Writer, Producer.

As a Producer, Gabby has found much success in very special, high quality, low budget projects. In 2013, she produced Damien Chazelle's, *Whiplash*, which won the Sundance Jury Selection Short Film Award. The feature film went on to win Sundance Jury Selection the following year and took home several Academy Awards. In 2014 she produced the Warner Bros horror darling, *The Gallows*, which she produced for \$350K and grossed over \$42M worldwide. In 2016, she was the Executive Producer on, *The Tribes of Palos Verdes*, starring Jennifer Garner as well as Forest Whitaker and Tom Wilkinson's, *Burden*, both produced by Robbie Brenner of *The Dallas Buyers Club*. In 2019, she served as Executive Producer on Khalid's feature, *Free Spirit*, in

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conjunction with Sony Music, and the feature film, *Palm Springs* starring Andy Samberg and JK Simmons, which will be premiering at Sundance 2020. She also Executive Produced, *The Starling*, helmed by Director Ted Melfi and starring Melissa McCarthy, Chris O'Dowd and Kevin Kline. She is currently putting together a fund to support projects by women and people of color. She is a member of Women in Film, Film Independent, the PGA with multiple films in development for 2020.

JEFF KWATINETZ (Executive Producer) Throughout his 30-year career, Jeff Kwatinetz has been responsible for engineering the careers of prominent figures and programming across the recording, film and television sectors. Before founding the BIG3 with longtime business partner Ice Cube, Kwatinetz established the biggest talent management company in the world, The Firm, guiding artists such as Snoop Dogg, Cameron Diaz, Backstreet Boys, Vin Diesel, Kelly Clarkson, Amy Adams, Korn, Martin Scorsese, Enrique Iglesias and Jennifer Lopez, among many others. He earned his J.D. with honors at Harvard Law School and holds both an M.A. and B.S. from Northwestern.

JEREMY ROUSE (Cinematographer) is a multi-award-winning cinematographer working across international television and film projects.

Jeremy worked on the German feature *Jonathan* (dir. Piotr J. Lewandowski/ Kordes & Kordes Film, 2016), which was selected for the Panorama section of the 66th Berlinale and earned Jeremy a Gold ACS Award for his cinematography on the film.

He has shot award-winning shorts, commercials and music videos. Short film credits include *Tough & Cookie* (wr/dir. Madeleine S. Parker, 2015), *Florence Has Left the Building* (wr/dir. Mirrah Foulkes, 2014), *Sam's Gold* (wr/dir. Julietta Boscolo, 2012) and *Lois* (wr/dir. Alexandra Schepisi, 2011), starring Jacki Weaver, which screened at MIFF in 2011. Other credits include *Spider Walk* (dir. Raphael Sammut, 2011), *Eli the Invincible* (dir. Miranda Nation, 2011), for which Jeremy won a Bronze ACS Award and *One Night* (dir. Alexandra Schepisi, 2009), Jeremy was awarded a Silver ACS Award and nominated for Best Cinematography at St Kilda Film Festival in 2010 and further ACS winning shorts include *The Pistachio Effect* (ACS Bronze, dir. Nick Ball and Gus Johnstone, 2009) and *Buses and Trains* (ACS Silver, dir. Christopher Frey, 2008).

Jeremy shot a segment of *The Turning* (dir. Shaun Gladwell, 2013), produced by Arena Media in 2012, which had its world premiere at Melbourne International Film Festival, 2013. He also worked on David Michôd's *The Rover* (Porchlight Films, 2014) as part of the DOP Splinter Unit.

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Recent credits include the feature film *Burden* (dir. Andrew Heckler/ The Firm, 2018) which stars Forest Whitaker, Andrea Riseborough and Tom Wilkinson and screened at the 2018 Sundance Film Festival as well as the US feature film *Emperor* (dir. Mark Amin/ Sobini Films, 2019).

STEPHANIE HAMILTON (Production Designer) is a Production Designer/ Art Director in IATSE Local 800, working primarily on feature films in Los Angeles, CA. After completing her BA at UCSC in History of Art and Culture, Stephanie went on to study Interior Architecture through UCLA and Cal State Pomona. Her background in historical interiors and architecture has fueled her interest in period pieces and historical realism. Most recently, Stephanie wrapped *The Starling*, starring Melissa McCarthy, Chris O'Dowd, and Kevin Kline. Last year she completed *BURDEN*, starring Garrett Hedlund, Tom, Wilkinson and Forest Whitaker. *Burden* premiered at Sundance in 2018 and won the U.S. Dramatic Audience Award.

ANETTE CSERI (Costume Designer) earned her Bachelor's degree in Theatre and Music and continued working in many regional theaters, always inspired by the fantastical and the real worlds of characters. For many years, she traveled the world creating costumes in many mediums: TV, Film, Music Videos and Commercials and was nominated for Excellence in Costume Design by the Costume Design Guild in 2015. She even designed the costumes for producer Robbie Brenner's *The Tribes of Palos Verdes*. And before that, she was the costume designer of a TV short, *Sarang Song*. She dressed some of the biggest rock stars, some very big puppets and some very small puppets and helped create some unforgettable costumes for characters in film.

SAAR KLEIN (Editor) edited the racially charged drama, *BURDEN*, starring Garrett Hedlund and Forest Whitaker, which won the Audience Award at the 2018 Sundance Film Festival. He most recently cut Antonin Baudry's thriller, *The Wolf's Call*, for Netflix. He was nominated for an Academy Award and won the ACE Eddie Award for his film editing on *Almost Famous*, directed by Cameron Crowe starring Frances McDormand and Kate Hudson. He received nominations for an Academy Award and an ACE Eddie Award for Terrence Malick's *The Thin Red Line* starring Sean Penn, Woody Harrelson, and Adrien Brody. He also worked with Malick on *The New World*, starring Colin Farrell, Christopher Plummer, and Christian Bale.

Klein first teamed up with Doug Liman as his editor on *The Bourne Identity* starring Matt Damon. He had also worked with Liman on the crime thriller, *American Made*, starring Tom Cruise; *Fair Game* starring Naomi Watts and Sean Penn; the sci- fi thriller *Jumper* starring Hayden Christensen, Samuel L. Jackson, and Rachel Bilson; and several commercials. Klein started his career with Oliver Stone as an associate editor on *Natural Born Killers*, *Heaven and Earth*, *JFK*, and as an editor on Stone's *U Turn*, starring Sean Penn and Joaquin Phoenix. Klein has also worked

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as an additional editor on Dito Montiel's *Fighting* and Darnell Martin's *Cadillac Records*. He also consults on a variety of other films projects.

Saar wrote and directed the feature *After the Fall* starring Wes Bentley, where Liman served as Executive Producer.

In addition to his feature work, Klein has a prolific career as a commercial editor. He edits for the bi-coastal editorial company, Lost Planet, on public service announcements and advertising campaigns for brands such as the Matthew McConaughey Lincoln spots, an immersive VR spot for Samsung and 24 LEGACY, and Cadillac.

JULIE MONROE (Editor)

Moxie is the second collaboration with Amy Poehler for esteemed editor Julie Monroe, who first worked with Poehler on *Wine Country*.

Her other recent credits include *Life Itself*, directed by Dan Fogelman, with whom she also worked on *Danny Collins*; and critically-acclaimed *Loving*, directed by Jeff Nichols, with whom she also worked on *Mud*, starring Matthew McConaughey, and *Midnight Special*, starring Michael Shannon, Joel Edgerton, Kirsten Dunst, and Adam Driver.

Monroe has shared a long association with director Oliver Stone, working together on films such as *Wall Street: Money Never Sleeps*, starring Shia LaBeouf and Michael Douglas; *W.*, starring Josh Brolin; and *World Trade Center*, starring Nicholas Cage. Monroe first collaborated with Mark Mylod on the 2005 film *The Big White* starring Robin Williams and Holly Hunter. Later, she would work with Mylod on *What Your Number?*, *Shameless*, and pilots for *The Minority Report* and *Once Upon a Time*.

In her early career, Monroe frequently collaborated with director Irwin Winkler, working together on *De-Lovely* – for which she received an *Eddie Award* nomination – *Life is a House*, and *At First Sight*. She also worked on *Gigli*, directed by Martin Brest, starring Ben Affleck, Jennifer Lopez, Al Pacino and Christopher Walken; as well as *Lolita* and *Indecent Proposal*, both directed by Adrian Lyne.

Monroe came up through the editing ranks as an assistant editor on numerous features, including Stone's *The Doors*, *Born on the Fourth of July* and *Wall Street*, as well as Curtis Hanson's *The River Wild*.

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