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AMERICAN UNDERDOG



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Rating:	PG
Running Time:	112 Minutes
U.S. Release Date:	December 25, 2021
Official Site:	http://americanunderdog.movie/
Twitter:	@AmericanUnderdg
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Hashtag:	#AmericanUnderdog

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Production Information

AMERICAN UNDERDOG chronicles the inspirational true story of Kurt Warner (Zachary Levi), who went from stocking shelves at a supermarket to becoming a two-time NFL MVP, Super Bowl champion, and Hall of Fame quarterback. The film centers on Warner's unique story and years of challenges and setbacks that could have derailed his aspirations to become an NFL player. His dreams seemed all but out of reach, but with the support of his wife, Brenda (Anna Paquin) and the encouragement of his family, Warner perseveres and finds the strength to show the world the champion that he already was, inside. *AMERICAN UNDERDOG* is an uplifting story that demonstrates that anything is possible when you have faith, family, and determination.

The film also stars Dennis Quaid as the famed St. Louis Rams football coach Dick Vermeil.

Lionsgate presents a Kingdom Story Company production, an Erwin Brothers film, *American Underdog*. Starring Zachary Levi, Anna Paquin, Ser'Darius Blain, and Dennis Quaid. Directed by the Erwin Brothers. Screenplay by Jon Erwin & David Aaron Cohen and Jon Gunn. Based on the Book "All Things Possible" by Kurt Warner with Michael Silver. Produced by Jon Erwin, p.g.a., Andrew Erwin, p.g.a., Daniel Lefever, Kevin Downes, p.g.a., and Mark Ciardi, p.g.a. Executive producers are Kurt Warner, Brenda Warner, Tony Young, and Jon Gunn. Director of Photography is Kristopher Kimlin. Production Designer is Nicole Elespuru. Editors are Sean Albertson, ACE and Andrew Erwin. Costume Designer is Karyn Wagner. Music by John Debney. Casting by Tamara-Lee Notcutt, CSA.

AMERICAN UNDERDOG is rated PG by the MPA. The film will be released in theaters nationwide on December 25, 2021 – and is the perfect holiday movie to share with and inspire your family and friends.

ABOUT THE FILM

"Many people think my story is a rags-to-riches story," says Kurt Warner, the former quarterback whose unexpected rise to fame – and the relationships that were the foundation for his success – are chronicled in the new film *American Underdog*. "It is, but there's so much more involved, including the relationships that were built, and which sustained my wife Brenda and me. Our journey is defined by perseverance.

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"That's who we are and what really makes the two of us tick," he continues. "This is the story we wanted to tell – and what I believe will impact audiences. People should be ready to step into new and bigger things, and to not allow their circumstances to define them."

American Underdog is both a football movie and an inspirational, emotional story for families to share. Kurt Warner reflects on his hopes for the film that captures his life story: "Like so many people, Brenda and I have struggled. I hope that audiences will be cheering at the end of the movie. I would hope it gives people the ability to dream for their own life, to unite with others, to focus on the things that are important in this life, to celebrate not just accomplishments but purpose."

"You can't tell one part of Kurt's story without the other," says Jon Erwin, who partners with his brother Andy Erwin to direct, and along with their Kingdom Story Company partner Kevin Downes, produce *American Underdog*. "Football is such an important part of his life and the reason his story resonates with so many."

Andrew Erwin adds, "But football isn't the reason Kurt is a champion. He's a champion because of who he is – Kurt was a champion before he ever put on an NFL uniform. Through life's fires, he found the love of his life and a higher purpose. And that's something we can all take with us, long after we leave the theater."

"I am so proud of this story and this film," says Downes. "Jon and Andy know how to weave a narrative that immerses the audience, whether it be the love story or the football action on the field. The film represents a beacon of hope that stirs the soul: no matter our circumstances, no matter how hard it is, if we never give up, the realization of a dream is always within reach. With Kurt and Brenda, we see that played out in a way that we all can relate to."

FILMMAKERS INSPIRED

"Everyone always says that Kurt's life would make a great movie because he exemplifies the classic Cinderella sports story of hidden talent rising to the top, but the real reason we were drawn to *AMERICAN UNDERDOG* is because of the rest of the story – the tragedy and triumph, the broken hearts crying out to God, and the incredible love story between Kurt and Brenda Warner," says Jon Erwin. Adds

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his brother, Andrew Erwin, "Anyone lucky enough to be in love will recognize that humility, inner strength, faith, grace, and a focus on what really counts in life, makes anything possible."

The two filmmakers specialize in telling inspirational and faith-based stories and Warner's trajectory is the ultimate underdog tale. Through the brothers' Kingdom Story Company production label, and their movies, including *I Can Only Imagine* and *I Still Believe*, the Erwins have created uplifting stories that speak to audiences of all ages. With *AMERICAN UNDERDOG*, they were on the same page with the Warners about what made the couple's story resonate. "Kurt has been a legend in the sports community for years, but the journey behind what they went through at home was what really attracted us," says Jon. "It always struck me there was more to Kurt Warner's story. Turns out there is a unique, authentic and compelling relationship story and romance behind it."

"It's a tale of determination, perseverance against incredible odds, and of family – all of the themes that mean so much to us all," adds Andrew Erwin.

The brothers' goal for *AMERICAN UNDERDOG* – and all their films – is, says Jon, "to bring back that spirit of those wonderful films of Frank Capra, which focused on courage and its positive effects and the triumph of the underdog. Our release on Christmas Day is the perfect platform for this inspirational, real-life story. Family audiences can come together and have their dreams rekindled. We're thrilled to give them a movie with themes of faith and motivation."

Producer Kevin Downes, one of the Kingdom Story Company founders, agrees, adding that even as a Kurt Warner football fan, the *rest* of the Warners' incredible history appealed to him just as much as his fabled gridiron exploits. "Kurt and Brenda exemplify hope, love, encouragement, fidelity – everything we need in our society, especially today," Downes observes. "Kurt and Brenda's love story, their love for each other and their kids, is just magical."

The movie also offered Downes' inner fan a treat – the producer also routinely acts in the Erwins' films and in *AMERICAN UNDERDOG* he portrays St. Louis Rams coach John Ramsdell.

Producer Mark Ciardi, a former professional athlete who has served in key capacities on several sports-themed movies, including *Miracle*, *Invincible*, and *Secretariat*, has always believed that the genre was less about athletic prowess and more about the human spirit, and never more so than in *AMERICAN*

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UNDERDOG. "Every film I've been involved with is an underdog story," he points out, "and I can't think of a better example of that than Kurt Warner. When I saw it unfold 20 years ago, I thought, this is going to be a movie someday."

ZACHARY LEVI EMBODIES KURT WARNER

Zachary Levi, who is best known for portraying the titular superhero in the *Shazam!* motion picture franchise, portrays Warner, a true-life hero whose exploits and life story are as compelling as a comic legend's world-saving deeds.

"Zac has superstar charisma, a world-class athlete's physicality, and lovable cockiness – all of which were necessary to portray Kurt Warner," notes Andrew Erwin. "Zac checked every box. Of course, he's a much in-demand actor, but he actually asked us about the project!"

Telling the Warners' story would go way beyond football – but getting the football right was still a top priority. "I knew it was going to be a challenge to step into the shoes of a Hall of Fame quarterback," Levi says. The actor has a natural athleticism but portraying an NFL player would be a task unlike any he had tackled. "I had three-and-a-half months solid of strength and conditioning training, followed by a month-and-a-half of quarterback training," Levi remembers. "And of course, I had personal time with Kurt Warner. It was important to me to capture the Kurt everyone knows – the football hero – and the Kurt that maybe most people don't know so well ... the guy inside the helmet."

Levi and Warner spent quality time together, on and off the gridiron. "I gave him some football tips during our time together – and not just how I throw a football," says Warner. "Zac wanted to see how I processed things, how I watched the game, what I was looking at on a play. He was even more interested in observing me outside of the game – who is this guy, how does he relate to his kids, how does he relate to his wife, how does he go about his job? He wanted to get to the essence of who I am. If Zac could get that; he knew he could do the role justice."

BRENDA: KURT'S TEAMMATE FOR LIFE

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Warner's teammate-for-life, his wife Brenda Warner, is portrayed by Academy Award® winner Anna Paquin. "I wanted to be Brenda's voice and to tell her story," Paquin comments. "Brenda is a survivor – a Marine who went through some incredible challenges. Brenda has that tough exterior, but she's the sweetest, kindest human being on the planet. There are a lot of nuances that are hugely important to Brenda that she wanted to make sure came through. I feel really lucky to play her."

"Anna really brings Brenda to life on screen," says Andrew. "She and Zac together were incredible partners who really set each other up to win. It all starts with the two of them."

Paquin thoroughly researched the role, beginning with some long-distance but invaluable conversations with Brenda. "Brenda and I had some long chats via FaceTime," she remembers. In addition, Paquin pored over a trove of material from the Erwins. "Andy and Jon sent me a ton of background materials and interviews with the Warners," she remembers. "I also listened to Brenda's book – at least four times. It was an organic and fun process."

That process also included connecting emotionally with the character. As Paquin elaborates, "Honesty and openness are key. So, I found it so extraordinary how open Kurt and Brenda are; it's an amazing relationship, and I felt lucky having the opportunity to depict that with Zac."

Paquin also embraced Brenda's faith, which Paquin describes as "personal and being very much a part of Brenda's daily life, and in the way she processed the world. She's been through so much, and it's made her faith stronger. It's really beautiful."

SUPPORT ON AND OFF THE FIELD

Dennis Quaid portrays the legendary coach Dick Vermeil, and Chance Kelly is the renowned Rams offensive coordinator Mike Martz. Both men were hugely influential to Kurt's career and life, and both had his best interests in mind, even if Martz had a cranky way of showing it. Their good-cop-bad-cop routine prepared Kurt well for what would be the game that changed his life.

When an injury felled the Rams' starting quarterback Trent Green, it was Vermeil who put Warner in as Green's replacement. The famously emotional coach held a press conference announcing the switch, at

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which he commented, "We will rally around Kurt Warner, and we'll play good football." Warner more than lived up to Vermeil's expectations. His breakthrough season was so unexpected that *Sports Illustrated* put him on the cover with the caption "Who *Is* This Guy?"

The Erwins had previously worked with Quaid on their hit film *I Can Only Imagine* and knew he could embody Vermeil's gravitas and emotionality. "I texted Dennis saying, 'I think it's special to have an icon play an icon.' And he just came in and owned the role," Andrew says.

Quaid found Vermeil's life and career to be fascinating, especially his resilience and optimism, even when tasked with achieving the impossible. "After Dick left Philadelphia, he took some time off that became 15 years," Quaid explains. "But Dick was still known for taking losing teams to victory and he spent three years building the Rams, only to have his star quarterback injured. He also spent that time watching and nurturing Kurt Warner and he took a chance on him, the same kind of chance he took when he joined the Rams."

Cantankerous offensive coordinator Mike Martz was the yin to Vermeil's yang and was played so convincingly by Chance Kelly that even Mark Ellis and his seasoned players were impressed and occasionally intimidated. "Chance Kelly as Mike Martz steals the show," Andrew Erwin notes. "When he auditioned for the role, he had prepared a whole monologue based on Martz's speeches and came in and really knew the character inside and out. He created this nuanced character who can intimidate with a whisper and is captivating in every scene."

Kelly and Quaid screened footage of Kurt playing in the Arena League, just as their real-life counterparts did. Kurt's ball handling and focus, amidst the manic, fast-paced style of his team mesmerized them.

Ser'Darius Blain plays Mike Hudnutt, Kurt's longtime friend and teammate, who became the instrument of Kurt's introduction to Brenda. As the story goes, Hudnutt dragged his friend to the country western bar, the Wild E. Coyote and Kurt was determined *not* to have fun – until he saw Brenda across the crowded room.

Another key cast member is Bruce McGill, who portrays Arena League impresario Jim Foster, known as a consummate salesperson and showman – PT Barnum crossed with revival preacher.

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Foster was one of pro football's great, quixotic characters, and his wild, entertaining Arena football provided Kurt with many opportunities, including a steady paycheck. It also became the gateway to Kurt's shot at the NFL.

AN INDEFATIGABLE YOUNG SOUL

Brenda's son Zack, whom Kurt later adopted, is as inspirational as his parents and he and his younger sister are pivotal to Kurt and Brenda's love story. A brain injury led to blindness and intellectual developmental issues, but Zack is a relentlessly positive and indefatigable soul. The Erwins found those qualities and so much more in Hayden Zaller, who makes his movie debut in *AMERICAN UNDERDOG*.

Jon recalls the events that led to the casting of the youngster. "We wanted the character to feel real and felt it was important to be authentic with the casting. It was also important to us to honor the real-life Zack, the many challenges and obstacles he faced, and the strength and dignity he brought to that fight. We went through hundreds of submissions. After our casting director, Tamara-Lee Notcutt, saw Hayden, Andy and I communicated with him via Zoom, and he was full of life, joy, and gratitude.

"Hayden really captures Zack's essence," Jon continues. "It was so beautiful to work with him and to adapt our process to his world. One of my favorite moments with Hayden came when he completed his last scene – and we all started crying because we didn't want the experience of working with him to end. He is so special."

Hayden, age 11 during production, says he identified with his real-life counterpart's dream of driving a tractor. "It was a lot of fun driving that tractor when we were filming," he remembers. "Zac Levi actually let me steer the tractor. When I was about to bump into something, Zac would grab the wheel and turn it really fast – and then I would take it back."

Hayden found much to identify with Zack Warner, beyond their respective vision impairments. "We both love singing and music," he says, adding that his favorite songs are oldies, Broadway tunes, and several from The Beatles. Then, there's the all-important farming essential: "Zack and I were both introduced to the tractor by Kurt Warner. And I really liked it when Kurt started calling me 'H-man,' because he was already calling Zack 'Z-man.'"

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Paquin, who knows something about being a child actor – she won her Oscar® for supporting actress at the ripe old age of eleven for her work in *The Piano* – says, “Hayden is this amazing, talented, incredibly smart and really sweet kid, just a spectacular human being. I bonded with him and his mom Shannon, who is now a dear friend. As an actor, Hayden was able to do things completely naturally, without even having been able to watch what somebody else is doing and mirror it. His gift comes from within. I’m so happy and lucky I got to meet and work with him.”

Paquin worked closely with Shannon and Hayden to navigate the unique challenges and opportunities of working with a blind child. “I obviously felt a big responsibility as far as portraying his parent. Shannon was so open with me and gave me a crash course in things as basic as how to guide him up and down the stairs and how to be the eyes and safety net for him in the sighted world. That was an incredible privilege.”

Levi also fell hard for Hayden: every time he saw him on set, his face lit up and he beelined to the youngster. “Hayden’s mind is so sharp, and his disposition is unbelievably kind and loving, and full of empathy,” Levi notes. “Hayden has an understanding far beyond his years.”

The Erwins tailored some of their prep to ensure Hayden felt comfortable on set. His rehearsal time included visiting some of the hero sets prior to filming, so Hayden could walk around with his mom and his cane, touching the set decorations, memorizing where things were in the room, and acclimating to his surroundings.

PRODUCTION

AMERICAN UNDERDOG was filmed in and around Oklahoma City and in nearby Frisco, Texas at Star Stadium, the 91-acre campus of the Dallas Cowboys world headquarters and practice facility.

The Erwins and Levi were already familiar with Oklahoma, having filmed their upcoming film *The Unbreakable Boy* in the Sooner State. Before that, the directing duo lensed *I Can Only Imagine* on location in Oklahoma.

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Leading up to the first of several big football sequences, Levi trained with the production's quarterback coach, Clint Dolezal, an erstwhile Arena Football League player and coach, and Mark Ellis, who served as the production's football coordinator. Levi's work has long been characterized by an impressive athleticism, through his award-winning performances in musical theater and epic stunts and super heroic physical prep in *Shazam! Still*, football presented the actor with a different kind of physical challenge. Levi's work with Dolezal and Ellis introduced him to the physical *and* the mental aspects of the game.

"Clint gave me all sorts of insight into football, starting with breaking down how to throw properly," Levi recounts.

When the actor arrived in Oklahoma, he met his on-screen teammates and his new coach, Mark Ellis, all of whom were larger than life in their own ways. Ellis, a famed stunt and sports coordinator, has overseen the physical training of Oscar®-winning actors and Hall of Fame athletes in over fifty movies. He played a critical role in films honored with nine ESPY nominations for best sports movie of the year.

Over the years, Ellis has assembled an impressive, worldwide network of players, from ex-pros to college athletes, many of whom joined him on *AMERICAN UNDERDOG*. In fact, one of his crew members was the nephew of the great wide receiver and Hall of Famer Isaac Bruce, the recipient of Warner's dramatic, game-winning 73-yard touchdown pass to clinch the championship.

Ellis was in his element, barking instructions, running drills, telling stories, cheering on his team members, including "quarterback" Zachary Levi, and, importantly, working with the directors and camera crew to safely create seamless plays that evoked Kurt's career. He even borrowed some of Kurt's trademark plays, complete with their numerical calls, and wove them into the movie.

Ellis explains his approach to capturing Andrew and Jon's vision. "We saw Kurt's story as unfolding through three periods of football – college, [the now defunct indoor league] Arena Football League, and the NFL – and we wanted each period to look and feel distinct. Each is like a character in the movie and Andy and Jon really understood and embraced that. We looked at the arc of it, how it works with the characters, the story and the audience."

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Ellis closely collaborated with cinematographer Kris Kimlin, another Erwin brothers productions alum. To capture the trajectory of Warner's life and career, Kimlin employed specific camera moves, speed and angles, in combination with Arri cameras and various lenses.

For a scene capturing Kurt's thrilling NFL debut, Kimlin used large format photography. "We decided to go with the LF approach for the NFL because everything in those scenes is bigger, faster and has more intensity," he explains. "We wanted the audience to share that feeling, and what better way to put you *into* the action than utilizing the largest picture format."

Kimlin also employed a radio controlled (RC) camera, a tiny, wheeled platform that B camera operator Sam Willey jerry-rigged so that he could attach an Arri mini camera to it. Willey zoomed that little makeshift camera up and down the field with the football players – when he wasn't sprinting with them himself. He also routinely strapped on an Arri, using the MoVI gimbal that allowed him flexibility, control, and speed as he captured the action as it was happening around him.

Kimlin describes the daunting task of recreating Kurt's history-making NFL debut: "We knew shooting the apex of the film and the rite of passage for Kurt was going to be that first game in the NFL against the Ravens. We also knew that the moment had to feel real and epic in scope, and had to intercut with the actual game footage, which was why we implemented large format cameras and put them right in the action. Everyone performed at such a high level to pull off those three amazing days of filming."

Costume designer Karyn Wagner immediately connected with Brenda Warner, which helped the filmmaker chart Brenda's iconic style over the years. "Brenda Warner was kind enough to share photos of herself during this period and I was able to base my design ideas around them. This helped me tell her story realistically; where she was geographically in a time before Internet, emotionally and also financially. Although they went through some tough times, you can see that she was always put together," Wagner says.

Throughout her life, Brenda made distinctive hair and wardrobe choices, which fascinated Wagner. "Brenda has a huge heart, which manifests itself in a wonderful, heart-on-her-sleeve kind of way," says Wagner. "It also manifests itself in her style. You know who she is immediately. No florals or small prints for this bold woman, so, none on Anna Paquin! This era can lean on the bulky side. We also focused on keeping our silhouettes clean and crisp. Because Brenda was so determined to make a good life for her

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children and stand beside Kurt through thick and thin, she often thought through life situations more carefully than a lot of other people, so I wanted her to really stand out from the crowd around her. More vibrant colors, sharper lines; that kind of thing. Later on in the story Brenda became a metal smith and we were able to incorporate some of her hand made jewelry into Anna's costumes."

Wagner kept the color palette contained, so as not to distract from the story, and added meaningful personal touches. "When I'm working on a biography, I like to cross the lines as much as possible to bring the characters together," Wagner continues. "Sometimes that means recreating an outfit exactly, sometimes it means finding a story in a piece of jewelry or clothing that helps the actor identify. In this case, we used Brenda's hand made jewelry on Anna and that moment just drew the bond between the two women even closer." Wagner sourced much of the clothing at thrift shops and altered them and she made sure to subtly reflect Brenda's evolving social status.

KURT WARNER: THE AMERICAN UNDERDOG

Warner played in the National Football League for twelve seasons, primarily with the St. Louis Rams and Arizona Cardinals. His career, which saw him ascend from an undrafted free agent (and grocery store employee) to a two-time Most Valuable Player and Super Bowl MVP, is regarded as one of the greatest stories in NFL history.

Before joining the American NFL, Warner played several seasons in the Arena Football League and NFL Europe. He signed as a free agent with the St. Louis Rams in 1998 and saw only brief action in the last game of the season, when injuries ravaged the Rams quarterbacks.

Warner was abruptly handed the reins as the starting quarterback in 1999 when Trent Green, the Rams' big free agent acquisition in the offseason, suffered a season-ending knee injury in the preseason. Warner made the most of the opportunity and began a Cinderella story for the ages. With Warner at the helm, he led an explosive offense that scored 526 points. Warner passed for 4,353 yards and a league-leading 41 touchdowns to post a 109.2 rating, the first of two career passing crowns. He was named the NFL's Most Valuable Player that year as the Rams posted a 13-3-0 mark. The team cruised through the playoffs and capped the magical season with a 23-16 victory over the Tennessee Titans in Super Bowl

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XXXIV. Warner set a Super Bowl record with 414 passing yards and threw a pair of touchdowns to lead the Rams to their first Super Bowl title and was named the game's MVP.

He recorded another MVP season two years later when he guided the Rams back to the Super Bowl. His season totals included a league-leading and career-high 4,830 yards and thirty-six touchdowns to post a 101.4 passer rating.

Warner made a third trek to the Super Bowl during the 2008 season, when he led the Arizona Cardinals to the franchise's first division title since 1975 and its first-ever Super Bowl appearance. He sparked the Cardinals' attack that season as he established numerous club records, completing 401 of 598 passes for 4,583 yards, 30 touchdowns, and a 96.9 passer rating. Warner then guided the Cardinals through the playoffs as he engineered wins over the Atlanta Falcons and the Carolina Panthers before leading Arizona to a thrilling 32-25 win over the Philadelphia Eagles in the NFC Championship Game, where he completed 21 of 28 passes for 279 yards and 4 touchdowns. He followed that performance by throwing for 377 yards and 3 TDs in a narrow loss to the Pittsburgh Steelers in Super Bowl XLIII. He was the only quarterback to throw for 300 or more yards in three Super Bowls and the three single-game totals still rank as the top three Super Bowl passing marks.

Named first-team All-Pro twice and selected to four Pro Bowls, Warner racked up 32,344 career yards, threw 208 touchdowns and recorded a 93.7 career passer rating.

But none of Warner's heroics on the gridiron would be been possible without the incredible personal growth off the field. As Andrew Erwin notes, "Kurt had the arm and body of a champion but did not initially have the *heart* of a champion. He found his heart of a champion through his relationship with his wife Brenda his family. It was in that discovery of things that were more important than himself, including living in service to his family, which enabled him to become a true champion on the field. That was a powerful idea for Jon and me."

Warner's autobiography, *All Things Possible: My Story of Faith, Football and the Miracle Season*, was published in 2000. The first-hand account of one of the greatest underdog stories in the history of sports, is the story of his life both on and off the field, and the faith that keeps him going through bad times and good. As a Christian, Warner writes eloquently of his gridiron reminiscences and expressions of his beliefs.

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ABOUT THE CAST

ZACHARY LEVI (Kurt Warner) has proven himself to be a triple threat – he is an accomplished actor, singer, and dancer, which was displayed with his Tony-nominated performance for Best Leading Actor in a Musical in the critically praised Broadway production “She Loves Me.”

Levi recently wrapped production on reprising his role as Shazam! in the Warner Bros. DC franchise with the sequel *Shazam! Fury of the Gods*. Directed by David F. Sandberg, this highly anticipated film is following the success of the first film *Shazam!*, which held the #1 spot at the box office for weeks following its release.

In spring 2022, Levi will return to theaters with the Erwin brothers for another Lionsgate film: *The Unbreakable Boy*, based on the true story of the most inspiring boy who touched and changed the lives of those around him.

In a fan favorite recurring role, Levi took home a SAG Award for Best Ensemble in a Comedy Series for season two and three of Amazon Studios’ Emmy winning series “The Marvelous Mrs. Maisel.” The first season of the show won six Primetime Emmys, two Golden Globes, as well as a Peabody Award and two Critics’ Choice Awards. The second season won one Golden Globe, three Screen Actor Guild Awards, one PGA Award, two Broadcast Film Critics Association Awards, one Critics Choice TV Award, and TV Program of the Year at the AFI Awards.

Additional previous film credits include *Thor: The Dark World*, *Alvin & The Chipmunks: The Squeakquel*, and *Tangled*. The song “I See the Light,” written for *Tangled* (performed by Levi & Mandy Moore) was nominated that year for an Oscar® and Golden Globe for Best Original Song. The pair performed the duet at the 83rd Annual Academy Awards® ceremony. “I See the Light” also won the Grammy Award for Best Song Written for Visual Media at the 54th Grammy Awards.

Levi is best-known for his fan favorite performance as Chuck Bartowski in the hit NBC series “Chuck.” Other previous TV credits include the Netflix miniseries “Alias Grace” and “Heroes Reborn.”

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Levi currently serves as an Ambassador to Active Minds, a nonprofit organization dedicated to raising mental health awareness among college students, via peer-to-peer dialogue and interaction.

ANNA PAQUIN's (Brenda Warner) work in film, television and theater has proven her as an extraordinary and diverse performer in the entertainment industry.

Paquin stars in "Flack," an original television comedic-drama which follows witty publicity maven Robyn, who is an expert at her craft but a self-saboteur in her personal life. The show, produced through Paquin and her production company CASM Films and Hat Trick Productions, was recently picked up by Amazon for its second season.

Paquin starred in Showtime's critically acclaimed drama series "The Affair," which ran for five seasons. The series explored the emotional and psychological effects of an affair that destroyed two marriages and the crime that brings these individuals back together. Paquin played a pivotal role as Alison (Ruth Wilson) and Cole's (Joshua Jackson) adult daughter, Joanie Lockhart.

Paquin was last seen opposite Robert De Niro in Netflix's 2019 Best Picture-nominated crime drama *The Irishman*. Directed by Martin Scorsese, the film centers on Frank "The Irishman" Sheeran, a reputed hitman suspected of involvement in the disappearance and murder of Teamsters leader Jimmy Hoffa. The film had its world premiere at the 2019 New York Film Festival and closed out the London Film Festival. At the 92nd Academy Awards®, the film received 10 nominations including Best Picture along with five nominations including Best Motion Picture – Drama at the 77th Golden Globe Awards. The cast was also nominated for Ensemble awards from the Screen Actors Guild.

Paquin starred in Annabel Jankel's *Tell It to the Bees* with Holliday Grainger. The film tells the story of Lydia (Grainger), who, gripped by a failing marriage and the responsibilities of having a young son, finds solace in her growing bond with the town's new doctor Jean (Paquin). The film premiered at the 2018 Toronto International Film Festival.

Paquin also starred in Stephen Moyer's *The Parting Glass*, which she co-produced and co-starred in alongside Cynthia Nixon, Denis O'Hare, and Ed Asner. The film follows a family who, after their sister's

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death, embark on a journey to collect the remnants of her life. *Variety* lauded Paquin's portrayal of the deceased Colleen as "piercingly moving" following the film's debut at the Edinburgh Film Festival.

In 2017, Paquin starred on "Bellevue," a CBC & WGN America detective eight-part drama series set in a blue-collar Canadian town. She also appeared in "Electric Dreams" alongside Terrence Howard, Rachelle Lefevre, and Jacob Vargas. The science fiction show is based on Philip K. Dick's anthology series. It aired on Channel 4 in the UK and Amazon Video in the United States.

Paquin was seen on CBC and Netflix's "Alias Grace" the same year, based on the novel by Margaret Atwood. The show tells the story of Grace Marks and James McDermott, who were convicted of the brutal murders of their employer, Thomas Kinnear and Nancy Montgomery (Paquin) in 1843. In 2016, Paquin was seen as Nancy Holt in History's remake of "Roots" in "Night Four." She was nominated for a Critics' Choice Award for her role.

For seven seasons, Paquin starred in the HBO drama "True Blood," for which she won a Golden Globe for Best Performance by an Actress in a Television Series – Drama. Paquin's other television credits include starring in the CBS Hallmark Hall of Fame movie "The Courageous Heart of Irena Sendler" and HBO's original film "Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee."

Additional film credits include *Margaret*, *X-Men*, *X-Men 2*, and *X-Men: The Last Stand*, *The Squid and The Whale*, *25th Hour*, *Finding Forrester*, *Almost Famous*, *Amistad*, *Buffalo Soldiers*, *A Walk on the Moon*, *Fly Away Home*, *Jane Eyre*, *The Romantics*, and *Straight A's*. Her performance in *Margaret* earned her Best Actress Awards from both the London and Chicago Critics Circle. Paquin also starred in and co-produced *Blue State* with her brother Andrew, under their banner Paquin Films. Paquin's film debut in Jane Campion's *The Piano* led to her winning the Academy Award® for Best Supporting Actress at the age of eleven.

On stage, Paquin performed the lead in "The Glory of Living" for director Phillip Seymour Hoffman. Other stage credits include Kenneth Lonergan's "This Is Our Youth," "After Ashley" directed by Terry Kinney, and Neil Labute's "The Distance from Here."

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In 2014, Paquin and Stephen Moyer, through their production company CASM, signed a two-year, first-look deal with HBO to develop series, films, and miniseries for them to produce, direct, and star. In 2013, Paquin starred in "Free Ride," which she produced through CASM. Based on a true story, the film follows Christina (Paquin), an abused single mother in the 1970's who is caught up in the Florida drug trade.

SER'DARIUS BLAIN (Mike Hudnutt) has a lead role in Fox's highly anticipated drama series "The Big Leap." He'll follow that up starring in Taj Stansberry's drama *Mission Street*. He recently wrapped work on the horror/romance drama *The Knocking* from Matt Leslie and Stephen Smith.

Blain is one of the stars of the Sony Pictures franchise *Jumanji*. Collectively, *Jumanji: Welcome to the Jungle* and *Jumanji: The Next Level* have grossed more than \$1.75 billion at the global box office, and *Welcome to the Jungle* is Sony's highest grossing film of all-time domestically.

Ser'Darius previously starred in Sony's *When the Game Stands Tall*, an inspirational sports drama directed by Thomas Carter and produced by Mandalay Pictures.

While his feature film debut was in Paramount's 2011 remake of *Footloose*, Blain's other feature credits include *Bolden*, the biopic of the iconic New Orleans jazz legend Buddy Bolden, Roadside Attractions' war drama *The Last Full Measure*, where he played a younger Samuel L. Jackson; 2014's Sundance film *Camp X-Ray*, opposite Kristen Stewart. Blain would find himself working alongside Stewart again in Amazon's 2019 biographical thriller *Seberg*.

Ser'Darius has credits on the small screen as well. He was a series regular in the CW re-enfranchisement of "Charmed," and recurred in Starz' "Survivor's Remorse." His other credits include "Shameless," "Chicago P.D.," "NCIS," and "The Vampire Diaries."

Since D-Day and his Harley roared up the Delta House stairs in *Animal House*, BRUCE MCGILL (Jim Foster) has been a memorable screen presence. He has appeared in over 150 films, television movies, and series spanning the last five decades. Throughout his career — from *Lincoln* to *Law Abiding Citizen*, from *Collateral* to *My Cousin Vinny*, from "Miami Vice" to "MacGyver" to *The Insider* — he has consistently received rave reviews for his stand-out performances and shows no signs of slowing down.

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McGill recently ended his seventh and final season of portraying Detective Vince Korsak on TNT's hit series "Rizzoli & Isles." He was also recently seen on NBC's "Shades of Blue." An avid golfer, McGill's favorite role to date was playing legendary golfer Walter Hagen in *The Legend of Bagger Vance*, directed by Robert Redford.

And being a native Texan, McGill was deeply honored to be inducted into the Texas Film Hall of Fame in 2010.

HAYDEN ZALLER (Zack) is a Chinese-born American actor who is also blind. He has performed as a singer on stage at the Savannah Theatre in Savannah, Georgia where he lives with his parents and three siblings. He has also taken jiu-jitsu and enjoys video games and superhero films and tv shows. He enjoys trying new foods and watching cooking and baking shows. He would like to someday make video games that are accessible for people who are blind, and possibly play a superhero in a movie.

CHANCE KELLY (Mike Martz) has enjoyed a wide array of roles, noted for his character's intensity and presence. His notable projects include "For Life" (ABC), "Ray Donovan" (Showtime), "Banshee" (Cinemax), "Aquarius" (NBC), "Law & Order: Criminal Intent" (NBC), "Generation Kill" (HBO), "Fringe" (Fox), and *Unbreakable* (dir. M. Night Shyamalan).

Additional credits include *American Sniper*, "Homeland," "The Blacklist," *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles*, and "House of Cards." Kelly also played lead roles in the independent films *Beyond the Night* (2018) and *Gutterbee* (2019).

Before he was an actor, Kelly played college football and fought as an amateur boxer, winning the super heavyweight division of the NYC Metros tournament. He also fought in the NYC Golden Gloves, winning his first fight by knockout, only to have to subsequently drop out of the competition for work on a film. Today, Kelly remains active in the sport of boxing.

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Kelly holds a BA in English & Writing from New York University and an MS from Columbia University. His podcast "Island" from Cavalry Audio, iHeartRadio, and executive producer Alec Baldwin, chronicles the history of Manhattan Island from 1609 to 1909 and is available on all major podcast directories.

Kelly currently resides in New York with his wife and three beautiful children.

Multi-hyphenate superstar DENNIS QU Aid (Dick Vermeil) is an Emmy Award and two-time Golden Globe® nominee, known for his roles in the hit films *The Rookie*, *The Day After Tomorrow*, *Traffic*, *Vantage Point*, *Frequency*, *The Parent Trap*, *Soul Surfer*, *The Right Stuff*, *Breaking Away*, *Midway*, and many more. More recently, his latest big-screen credits include starring roles in Sony's thriller *The Intruder*, Universal's *A Dog's Journey* and *A Dog's Purpose*, and Roadside Attractions' *I Can Only Imagine*, among others. On the television side, Quaid starred in and executive produced Netflix's holiday-themed multi-camera comedy series "Merry Happy Whatever." He also starred in the third season of Amazon's "Goliath" opposite Billy Bob Thornton, which premiered in 2019. Quaid is currently in production portraying the 40th president of the United States in the biopic *Reagan*, produced by Mark Joseph and directed by Sean McNamara. Other upcoming projects include *The Tiger Rising* opposite Katharine McPhee and Queen Latifah. Quaid is also developing *The Charley Pride Story*, which he will produce along with Ben Howard's production company, Third Coast Content. On the musical side, Quaid is currently in the recording studio working on a new gospel album slated for release this summer.

ABOUT THE FILMMAKERS

ANDREW ERWIN (Director / Producer / Editor), half of the filmmaking duo The Erwin Brothers, began his career as a teenager working for ESPN as a camera operator in his hometown of Birmingham, Alabama. As a sports cameraman, Erwin worked with ESPN's College Football Primetime, Sunday Night Football, FOX NFL, the NBA, and covered events such as the X Games and the Super Bowl. In 2002, Andrew founded a production company with his brother Jon. Their first ventures were commercials, documentaries, and music videos. The brothers soon were directing videos and producing concerts and television programs for platinum recording artists such as Amy Grant, Michael W. Smith, Casting Crowns, Switchfoot, Skillet, and others. They received 11 GMA Dove Awards nominations and 3 wins for Music Video of the Year.

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In 2010, Jon and Andrew began exclusively developing dramatic feature films. Their features have all opened in the top-ten box office and they have received the coveted A+ CinemaScore® twice. Their features include *October Baby*, *Moms' Night Out*, *Woodlawn*, and the breakthrough hit *I Can Only Imagine*, which became the #1 independent film of 2018, earning more than \$83 million at the box office. Their most recent film, *I Still Believe*, opened in March, 2020.

In 2019, Jon and Andrew launched Kingdom Story Company alongside their partners Kevin Downes and Tony Young, with a first-look deal with Lionsgate. The first film from that venture was *I Still Believe*. Andrew serves as Chief Creative Officer at Kingdom Story Company as well as produces and directs feature films with his brother Jon and Kevin Downes.

They most recently produced *The Jesus Music*, a documentary focusing on the advent of Contemporary Christian Music.

Along with his brother, JON ERWIN (Director / Co-Writer / Producer) began his career as a teenager working for ESPN as a camera operator in his hometown of Birmingham, Alabama. Jon worked as a sports cameraman and covered University of Alabama games all over the country and also worked with ESPN College Football Primetime, FOX NFL, and the NBA. In 2002, he founded a production company with his brother, Andrew. Their first ventures were commercials, documentaries and music videos. The brothers soon were directing videos and producing concerts and television programs for platinum recording artists such as Amy Grant, Michael W. Smith, Casting Crowns, Switchfoot, Skillet and others and received eleven GMA Dove Awards nominations and 3 wins for Music Video of the Year.

Alongside their award-winning music videos, Jon and Andrew have also produced and directed several documentaries. These include the multi-award winning 9/11 story "The Cross and the Towers."

In 2010, Jon and Andrew began exclusively developing dramatic feature films. Their features have all opened in the top ten box office on opening weekend and they have received the coveted A+ Cinema Score twice. Their features include *October Baby*, *Moms' Night Out*, *Woodlawn*, and the 2018 surprise hit *I Can Only Imagine*, which became the #1 independent film of 2018, earning over \$83 million at the box office.

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In 2019, Jon and Andrew launched Kingdom Story Company, alongside their partners Kevin Downes and Tony Young, with a first-look deal with Lionsgate. The first film from that venture was *I Still Believe*, a biopic about CCM megastar Jeremy Camp, which was released in over 3,200 theaters in the U.S. In 2020, Jon produced the documentary film *The Jesus Music*, which chronicles the history of Christian music.

Jon serves as Chief Executive Officer at Kingdom Story Company alongside writing and directing feature films.

DAVID AARON COHEN (Co-Writer) has been working in Hollywood for over 25 years, writing screenplays for every major studio. Cohen wrote three scripts for director Alan J. Pakula, one of which, *The Devil's Own*, starred Brad Pitt and Harrison Ford.

Also for Pakula, Cohen wrote *Friday Night Lights*, which became a critical and box-office success. This gritty drama about high school football in West Texas was produced by Brian Grazer (Imagine Entertainment), and starred Billy Bob Thornton and Derek Luke. The screenplay for *Friday Night Lights* was nominated for the USC Scriptor Award, and inspired the award-winning television series of the same name.

Cohen's television credits include writing and producing a limited series for Lionsgate/Sci-Fi Channel called "Five Days Til Midnight," starring Timothy Hutton and Randy Quaid. Cohen also sold a limited series to TNT called "The Pettys," based on the true father/son story of NASCAR champions Lee and Richard Petty.

More recently, Cohen has adapted the New York Times best seller [Son of Hamas](#), an espionage thriller about a terrorist leader's son who spied for Israel. His latest feature is *The Miracle Season*, an inspirational sports pic about a prep volleyball star whose tragic death galvanizes her team and her community. The movie, produced by LD Entertainment, stars Oscar® winners Helen Hunt and William Hurt.

Coming up, Cohen has *Rockets Red Glare*, a biopic about a famous Chinese rocket scientist driven out of the U.S. during the McCarthy Era (Silver Dream Productions).

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Over the last 25 years, JON GUNN (Co-Writer / Executive Producer) has worked as a writer, director, editor and producer. His work ranges from independent comedy and drama to studio tentpoles. As a director, his feature films include *My Date With Drew*, *Like Dandelion Dust*, *The Case for Christ*, and the upcoming *The Unbreakable Boy*.

My Date with Drew, which had a worldwide theatrical release in the summer of 2005, swept the festival circuit, beating films like *Napoleon Dynamite*, *Super Size Me*, and *Garden State* for Best Feature. *Like Dandelion Dust* is a feature drama for Fox starring Mira Sorvino and Barry Pepper, which Gunn co-wrote with Oscar®-nominated screenwriter Stephen J. Rivele (*Ali*, *Nixon*). The film won over 30 festival awards and was released theatrically in the fall of 2010. *The Case for Christ* stars Mike Vogel, Erika Christensen, Faye Dunaway, and Robert Forster, and grossed \$17MM in theaters in 2017. *The Unbreakable Boy*, starring Zachary Levi and Patricia Heaton, will be released in theaters by Lionsgate in Spring 2022.

Gunn has also co-written numerous studio movies, including *The Magic 8 Ball* for Paramount, *The Nutcracker* for Universal, *Monopoly* for Hasbro/Sony, and multiple features for Dreamworks animation.

Most recently, Gunn co-wrote the musical biopic *I Still Believe* with Jon Erwin, based on the life of singer Jeremy Camp.

DARYL LEFEVER (Producer) has been in the film industry for 28 years, and spent 15 of them as a feature film controller, traveling to locations around the world for up to a year at a time. His studio credits include *X-Men*, *The Polar Express*, *Nancy Drew*, *Where the Wild Things Are*, *The Lucky One*, and *Wild, Wild West*. Directors for whom he has provided day-to-day production guidance include Tom Hanks, Robert Zemeckis, Roland Emmerich, Spike Jonze, and George Miller. In 2008, Lefever decided to focus on producing Christian-themed filmmaking. His credits since then include *Faith of Our Fathers*, *The Lost Medallion*, *Amazing Love*, *Moms' Night Out*, *Woodlawn*, *I Can Only Imagine*, and *Unplanned*.

KEVIN DOWNES' (Producer) career of producing, acting, directing, and writing spans over 25 years. Some of his fan-favorite roles include Officer Shane Fuller in *Courageous*, videogame-loving Kevin in *Moms' Night Out*, series regular roles on "Hitting the Breaks" and "Malibu Dan," and a brief cameo in the 2018

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breakout box office hit and #1 box office grossing independent film of the year, *I Can Only Imagine*, starring Dennis Quaid.

Downes has produced six films with the Erwin Brothers. In addition to *American Underdog*, Downes' work with the Erwins includes *Moms' Night Out*, *Woodlawn*, *I Can Only Imagine*, *I Still Believe*, which released in 2020 and stars KJ Apa, Britt Robertson, Shania Twain, and Gary Sinise. His next film with the Erwin brothers, *The Unbreakable Boy*, will be released next year.

Early in his career, Downes produced the critically acclaimed film *Like Dandelion Dust* from best-selling author Karen Kingsbury, which starred Academy Award® winner Mira Sorvino and won over a dozen audience awards for best picture at prestigious film festivals around the world. In August 2018, Downes partnered with the Erwin Brothers and Tony Young to launch Kingdom Story Company, a new entertainment company in partnership with Lionsgate that endeavors to create life changing content from a variety of talented storytellers

MARK CIARDI (Producer) is the Founder and Producer of Select Films. Prior to Select Films, Ciardi was the co-founder of Mayhem Pictures, which had an overall first look deal with Walt Disney Studios for twelve years. Recently, Ciardi produced *Chappaquiddick*, *The Miracle Season*, and the Disney film *Safety*. At Mayhem, Ciardi produced several films, including *The Rookie*, *Miracle*, *Invincible*, *The Game Plan*, *Secretariat*, *Million Dollar Arm*, and *McFarland, USA*, starring Kevin Costner. Mark also produced the Emmy Award winning ESPN 30 for 30 documentary "Big Shot" and the 30 for 30 "42 to 1."

Ciardi played baseball at the University of Maryland, where he earned his B.S. in Business. He was drafted in 1983 by the Milwaukee Brewers organization and was called up to the majors in 1987.

Ciardi is a member of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences and serves on the board of trustees at the University of Maryland.

In addition to his full-time responsibilities as President of Diversified Automation, the engineering firm he founded 18 years ago, TONY YOUNG (Executive Producer) is the volunteer executive director of City on a Hill, a production company that uses the language of film to tell contemporary stories of faith that

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connect people to Christ and the Gospel message. City on a Hill is a leading provider of resources for pastors and churches that has equipped more than 75,000 ministries, has broadcast programs around the world, and has impacted literally millions of lives.

When founding his business in 1993, Young committed to doing “Business by the Book.” He and a long-time group of friends joined together to run their companies with Kingdom motivation.

Young is chairman of the Elder Board at Southeast Christian Church in Louisville, Kentucky. He joined the Board of Elders in 2014 and served as a deacon for five years prior. Young and his wife Patty joined Southeast in 2001 and continue to be active members in the church, participating in weekly small groups and assorted committees.

In 2018, Young was executive producer of the breakout faith film *I Can Only Imagine* and became chairman of Kingdom Story Company, a new venture with the Erwin brothers in partnership with Lionsgate Films, Inc. Kingdom Story Company released *I Still Believe* in 2020 with several films, including *The Unbreakable Boy*, slated for release.

Young’s favorite leisure activities include University of Kentucky basketball, travel, and spending time with his wonderful wife Patty and their children Brianna, Logan, and Luke.

After a 20-year career as a Visual Effects Supervisor, where he contributed to over 50 studio feature films, SEAN DEVEREAUX (Executive Producer) recently transitioned into producing, developing a successful slate of feature and documentary projects, including the upcoming Lionsgate film *The Unbreakable Boy*. Partnering with Chris Pratt's Indivisible and Tom Brady's Religion of Sports, Devereaux recently wrapped production on the feature-length doc *Helen* about Olympic wrestler Helen Maroulis' triumphant return to gold medal contention after suffering a traumatic brain injury.

As a VFX Supervisor, Devereaux worked with every major studio, closely collaborating with legendary directors like Denzel Washington, Antoine Fuqua, Katherine Bigelow, and Peter Berg on films like *Fences*, *The Equalizer*, *Detroit*, and *Patriots Day*, just to name a few. In 2010, Devereaux co-founded ZERO, a boutique animation and visual effects studio, which grew from three employees and one office in Boston

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to over 100 team members with additional locations in Los Angeles and New York. In 2015, he sold his second company, ZYNC, to Google.

In 2018, Devereaux was incredibly honored and proud to have been inducted into the Academy of Motion Pictures Arts and Sciences.

While the football narrative of NFL quarterback KURT WARNER (Executive Producer / Based on the Book All Things Possible by) reads like a rags-to-riches Hollywood script, it is the story of a man filled with dignity, class, and undeniable faith that captured the imagination of the sports world and beyond. Warner continually beat the odds to quarterback two perennial doormat franchises to the Super Bowl and etched his name in the NFL record books along the way.

The first chapter of Warner's tale was written in 1999 when he defied logic by emerging from obscurity to lead the St. Louis Rams to a victory in Super Bowl XXXIV. In that same year, Warner was named the NFL and Super Bowl Most Valuable Player. For the next two years, Kurt continued to be a dominant force in the NFL as the ringleader of what became known as the "Greatest Show on Turf." He led the Rams to two additional playoff appearances – including another Super Bowl - and received Pro Bowl honors for three consecutive years (1999-2001). He also was one of a few NFL players to be recognized with two NFL MVP awards, receiving his second after the 2001 season.

After suffering from injuries and watching from the sideline, Warner was released by the Rams in 2004 and signed a one-year contract with the New York Giants. In March 2005, he was signed by the Arizona Cardinals, where most football experts expected him to unceremoniously end his career. In 2007, the veteran signal-caller battled through an elbow injury to begin his renaissance with a passer rating of 89.8. In 2008, he led the Cardinals to their first-ever Super Bowl berth, was voted to his fourth Pro Bowl, and surpassed several Cardinals' franchise records including touchdowns, attempts, completions, completion percentage, and passer rating.

Arguably at his best in the postseason, Warner earned several NFL career postseason records at the time (passing yards per game, career completion percentage, yards per attempt). Having three of the top six passing performances in Super Bowl history (414, 377, 365), Warner holds the record for second-most career Super Bowl passing yards with 1,156.

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After a record-laden 12-year career, Warner retired from the NFL following the 2009 season. His post-NFL career is anything but relaxing as he continues to impress with his football knowledge in broadcasting as an analyst with the NFL Network and Westwood One. Warner often captivates crowds as a motivational speaker and in 2010 he joined the cast of "Dancing with the Stars" – Season 11, finishing a respectable 5th thanks to his charm, competitive spirit, and growing fan base. In 2013, Kurt hosted a new reality series "The Moment" on USA Network. In nine episodes, Warner took men and women on a life-changing journey by giving them a second chance at a career path they never dreamed possible.

In 2013, Warner was nominated for a Sports Emmy as Outstanding Studio Analyst for his work on NFL Network. For his role on "The Moment," Kurt was nominated for the Critic's Choice Television Award - Best Reality Host.

Kurt Warner reached the pinnacle of success on the field but, his gridiron accomplishments pale in comparison to the dedication he devotes to the community. In 2001, Kurt and his wife Brenda established the First Things First Foundation, a non-profit public charity dedicated to impacting lives in a lasting way by promoting Christian values, sharing experiences and providing opportunities to encourage everyone that all things are possible when people seek to put first things first.

First Things First has compiled an impressive philanthropic resume blessing countless children and families through the diverse programs of the foundation. A small sampling of First Things First's outreach includes: hosting annual week-long trips to Disney World for children in medical crisis and their families; rewarding hard-working single mothers who achieve the dream of homeownership; raising over \$875,000 for rebuilding efforts after the 2008 Midwest floods; collecting and distributing more than 270,000 coats from an annual coat drive in greater St. Louis; annually delivering more than 100 stockings for a Christmas Day surprise for foster children; providing scholarships to youth groups doing service-based mission trips; and fostering an attitude of inclusion for children and adults with special needs.

www.kurtwarner.org

In 2012, Kurt and Brenda founded Treasure House, a Christian-based supported living community for young adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Treasure House offers an affordable residential opportunity to cultivate independence with the appropriate resources. The first community

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opened in the Phoenix, AZ area in 2018 with a vision to expand to other communities.

www.treasurehouse.org

Warner's off-the-field accolades include the Walter Payton NFL Man of the Year, The Good Guy Award from the Pro Football Writers Association, USA WEEKEND's Most Caring Athlete, ABC World News Person of the Week, Forbes Magazine-America's Most-Like Sports Figure, Sports Illustrated-Best Role Model, and the Bart Starr Award. In 2017 Warner was given the ultimate praise in professional football when he was inducted into the Pro Football Hall of Fame.

Kurt Warner lives in Arizona with his wife Brenda and seven children – Zachary, Jesse Jo (Daniel), Kade, Jada Jo, Elijah, and twins Sienna and Sierra – and two grandchildren, Nola and Romy.

BRENDA WARNER (Executive Producer) is a speaker, philanthropist, and New York Times best-selling author. She is the mother of seven children, a grandmom, of two, a registered nurse, and a marine. But most of all, she is a storyteller who candidly shares her struggles in hopes that her life experiences can help other women. Through her message of hope and faith, and her charitable work, she inspires others during their own dark days.

As a sought-after speaker nationwide, Brenda encourages her audiences to take responsibility for their choices and to depend on their faith when they hit rough patches. Audiences have cried and belly-laughed during her keynote speeches at women's conferences, banquets, churches, sporting events, and business expos. Listeners have found practical hope through her stories about her family, her work with special needs children, her triumphs over obstacles, and the blessings and burdens of being a celebrity wife.

Together with her husband, Hall of Fame NFL QB Kurt Warner, Brenda is also co-founder of two non-profit organizations: First Things First and Treasure House. As the creative catalyst for most of the First Things First Foundation programs, Brenda's ideas often originate from her own life experiences. Under the direction of Brenda and her husband, the foundation seeks to promote Christian values and to bless those who are struggling. Several years ago, Brenda had a vision for a home where young adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities could participate in their community, achieve independence, and realize their purpose. That home, called Treasure House, opened its doors to residents in 2018.

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Brenda also uses her passion for creating works of art through her welding shop as a fundraising catalyst for Treasure House. Metal Art by B includes a unique collection of jewelry and metal art.

In 2009, Brenda joined Kurt in co-authoring a book appropriately entitled, First Things First: The Rules of Being a Warner, which debuted on the New York Times Best Seller list. In 2011, she released her memoir One Call Away – Answering Life’s Challenges with Unshakable Faith.

You can learn more about her, her art, and the work of her foundations at: www.metartbyb.com, www.kurtwarner.org, www.treasurehouse.org, or follow her on Twitter @WarnerBrenda.

KRISTOPHER KIMLIN (Director of Photography) is an award winning Canadian/American cinematographer best known for his work on *I Can Only Imagine*. Kimlin moved to the US from Canada in his formative years and this is where he found a love for acting and the theater. Being involved in as many stage productions as he could, it would be in his senior year of high school where Kimlin would have his first brush with film. When hearing about a movie that was filming in his hometown, Kimlin spent weeks sneaking away from school onto the set, acting as a PA. This would lead to the first time he looked through the eyepiece of the camera and when his perspective changed forever.

Years later, while attending school in New York, Kimlin’s love for photography and film expanded into the realm of cinematography. It was also there in New York where Kimlin met Jon Erwin, half of the Erwin brothers directing team. It was not long after that meeting when they began working towards their dream of making movies. In 2012, Kimlin took on the role of cinematography of the Erwin Brothers feature film *Moms’ Night Out*.

With over 19 feature films as a cinematographer, Kimlin has extensive credits to his name outside of the feature realm. Well-versed in commercial and music videos, Kimlin’s inventory of work is deep and critically acclaimed. In 2021, Kimlin received a nomination for an Emmy for his work on Fox’s documentary “Tua.”

Kimlin currently resides with his wife, makeup artist Jennifer Kimlin, in Nashville.

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So *who* did NICOLE ELESURU (Production Designer) know in sunny L.A. when she moved there from Overland Park, Kansas 20+ years ago? Umm...no one. Then, *what* did Nicole know about 'breaking into' show business? Ummm...nothing.

Still, within eight years of working in Hollywood, she had garnered multiple Art Director Guild Award nominations (including one win!) and an Emmy nomination for her production design work on one of her favorite tv shows, "MADtv." (Seriously, the girl loves to laugh!)

Of course, Elespuru also takes her craft seriously, honing her skills for decades working with and learned from, the industry's highest caliber artisans in multiple cities across this country. Some recent credits include her work as the art director on Disney+ biopic "Safety" and AMC's critically acclaimed "Lodge 49."

After earning her Bachelor of Arts degree in Interior Design, Elespuru immediately started her career... nope, not at a design firm... but rather drafting in the scene shop at Nickelodeon Studios. This was the first big sign that the art of filmmaking (and the smell of sawdust) is what truly brings joy to her heart.

SEAN ALBERTSON, ACE (Editor) is currently editing Netflix's *Boo* for director Jeff Wadlow. Albertson most recently edited and co-produced Wadlow's *Fantasy Island* for Sony Pictures; he previously edited Wadlow's *Truth or Dare* and *True Memoirs of an International Assassin*. His many other credits include editing and executive producing *Escape Plan 3* for Lionsgate, serving as an additional editor on *Creed II*, and editing *Expendables 3*, *Warrior*, *Rambo*, and *Rocky Balboa*. For television, he has edited "Are You Afraid of the Dark" (Season 2), "Lovecraft Country," and episodes of many other programs.

KARYN WAGNER (Costume Designer) is best-known for her work on the iconic films of luminary directors, such as Frank Darabont's *The Green Mile*, starring Tom Hanks' *The Majestic*, starring Jim Carrey; and Nick Cassavetes' *The Notebook*, starring Ryan Gosling and Rachel McAdams. More recent work includes the limited series "Waco" for Paramount TV, AMC's series "Preacher," starring Dominic Cooper and Ruth Negga, as well as two seasons of "Underground" for Sony TV. Her film credits include Daniel Barnz's *Cake*, starring Jennifer Aniston; *Mr. Church*, directed Bruce Beresford, starring Eddie Murphy and Britt Robertson; and *The Last of Robin Hood*, starring Kevin Kline and Susan Sarandon. Wagner designed D.J. Caruso's *The Salton Sea*, with Val Kilmer and Vincent D'Onofrio; *Eve's Bayou*, directed by Kasi Lemmons

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and starring Samuel L. Jackson; Steven Soderbergh's *Underneath*, starring Peter Gallagher; and *Lovelace*, with Amanda Seyfried, James Franco, and Peter Sarsgaard. Her television credits include the Antoine Fuqua-directed "Murder Book" and the wildly successful "Friday Night Lights" series. Wagner is a third-generation film industry veteran and a native of California, whose grandfather met her grandmother on the set of an Erich Von Stroheim film. Wagner's father, Richard Wagner, was a sound mixer, so she grew up on Hollywood studio backlots. Armed with a degree in Art History from the University of California Davis, Wagner first worked in production, and then in the camera department before finding her true passion in costume design, where her thirst for knowledge of the culture and sociology of a film's period informs her designs. Most recently, Wagner designed the series "#freerayshawn," directed by Seith Mann and starring Laurence Fishburne and Stephan James, and the Netflix series "Self Made" starring Octavia Spencer, Tiffany Haddish, Blair Underwood, and Carmen Ejogo. She more recently designed Martin Campbell's *The Protégé*, starring Michael Keaton, Samuel L. Jackson and Maggie Q, and the antebellum drama *Alice*, featuring Keke Palmer and Common.

JOHN DEBNEY (Music) is the ultimate film music character actor. In equal demand for family films such as Elf and adventure films like *Iron Man*, to the powerful and poignant *The Passion of the Christ*, for which he received an Academy Award nomination for Best Original Score. Debney is an agile jack-of-all-genres, composing for comedies (*Bruce Almighty*), sci-fi action (*Predators*), horror (*Dream House*) and romance (*Valentine's Day*) with the same confidence and panache. Debney is also known for his work in such films as *Princess Diaries*, *Sin City*, *Liar Liar*, *Spy Kids*, *No Strings Attached*, *The Emperor's New Groove*, *I Know What You Did Last Summer*, and *Hocus Pocus*. Debney's work also includes Disney's *The Jungle Book* directed by Jon Favreau, Fox's *Ice Age: Collision Course* directed by Mike Thurmeier, Twentieth Century Fox's award-winning musical *The Greatest Showman*, Paramount Pictures' family adventure feature *Dora and the Lost City of Gold*, and the Warner Bros. comedy *Isn't It Romantic* starring Rebel Wilson. Most recent for Debney is *Come Away* directed by Brenda Chapman, starring Angelina Jolie and David Oyelowo, and Netflix's first original live-action musical *Jingle Jangle: A Christmas Journey*, for which his score was shortlisted for the 93rd Academy Awards. Upcoming releases include Paramount's *Clifford the Big Red Dog*, *Home Sweet Home Alone* (the Disney+ reboot of *Home Alone*), and Jennifer Lopez's new romantic comedy, *Marry Me*.

Born in Glendale, California, Debney studied composition at the California Institute of the Arts, when he went to work writing music and orchestrating for Disney Studios and various television series. He won his

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first Emmy in 1990 for the main theme for “The Young Riders.” He has since won three more Emmys (“Sea Quest DSV”) and received nominations for a total of six. Debney has scored numerous episodes of “The Orville” for Seth MacFarlane, including conducting each recording session with a nearly 100-piece orchestra. His foray into videogame scoring—2007’s “Lair”—resulted in a BAFTA nomination and a Best Videogame Score award from The International Film Music Critics Association.

Debney has collaborated with acclaimed directors as diverse as Robert Rodriguez, Garry Marshall, Mel Gibson, the Farrelly Brothers, Jon Favreau, Jim Sheridan, Ivan Reitman, Peter Chelsom, Rob Cohen, Brian Robbins, Tom Shadyac, Sam Raimi, Adam Shankman, Howie Deutch, Renny Harlin, Peter Hyams and Kenny Ortega. In 2005 he was the youngest recipient of ASCAP’s Henry Mancini Career Achievement Award.

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CREDITS

A **Lionsgate** Release

A **Kingdom Story Company** Production

An **Erwin Brothers** Film

AMERICAN UNDERDOG

Credits Not Contractual

Directed by **The Erwin Brothers**

Screenplay by **David Aaron Cohen, Jon Erwin, Jon Gunn**

Produced by

Jon Erwin & Andrew Erwin

Produced by

Daryl Lefever / Mark Ciardi / Kevin Downes

Executive Producers **Kurt Warner & Brenda Warner**

Executive Producers **Tony Young / Jon Gun / Sean Deveraux**

Based on the Book by

Kurt Warner & Michael Silver

Zachary Levi

Academy Award Winner **Anna Paquin**

and **Dennis Quaid**

Ser'Darius Blain / Hayden Zaller / Bruce McGill

Chance Kelly / Cindy Hogan / Adam Baldwin

Danny Vinson / McKylin Rowe

Director of Photography **Kristopher Kimlin**

Production Designer **Nicole Elespuru**

Editor **Sean Albertson, ACE**

Music by **John Debney**

Music Supervised by **Kevin Edelman**

Costume Designer **Karyn Wagner**

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Casting by **Tamara-Lee Notcutt, CSA**