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AN OLIVE BRANCH

# CASINO JACK

Kevin Spacey  
Barry Pepper  
Kelly Preston  
Jon Lovitz  
with Rachelle Lefevre  
and Maury Chaykin

Directed by  
George Hickenlooper

RATING: R  
RUNNING TIME: 108 Minutes

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**CASINO JACK RECENTLY HAD ITS WORLD PREMIERE AT THE 2010  
TORONTO INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL**

## **DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT**

In 2005, when the lobbying scandal surrounding Jack Abramoff and Michael Scanlon broke, and how, together, they were involved in what was being touted as the biggest political impropriety to hit the Beltway since Watergate, I became fascinated. It was a story of hubris and greed so Gothic that as details unfolded it seemed to play out more like a satiric novel by Paddy Chayefsky rather than Woodward's non fiction masterpiece All the President's Men. More interestingly, Abramoff came to be an icon of the "culture of greed" that seemed to be sweeping the capitol. The butt of jokes from Letterman to Leno, scorned publicly by George Clooney while he accepted his Golden Globe award for GOOD NIGHT AND GOOD LUCK, Abramoff became the focus of news specials and documentaries that made his outrageous misdeeds seem worthy of the big screen.

First, in order to get to the heart of the story, I felt I needed to meet the Jack Abramoff himself who had been sitting inside a federal prison in Cumberland, Maryland for two years. After several months of back and forth between an Abramoff representative, the Federal Bureau of Prisons, and the Abramoff family, I was allowed six prison visits and approximately thirty hours of interview time with Jack Abramoff, where he was being held on a six-year sentence.

My first imaginings of Abramoff's incarceration were that he might be zipping around in a golf cart in a country club-like atmosphere that appeared to be the standard for all the former Watergate conspirators decades before. Times had changed. Walking into Cumberland Federal Prison, I found it to be stark, oppressive, impersonal, and feeling very much like... well, like a prison. It wasn't brutal or harsh like Attica or Alcatraz, but it certainly wasn't a holiday; Abramoff's living quarters being a 175-square-foot concrete, cinder-block room with six bunks snugly filled with six prisoners, some convicted of white-collar crimes, others convicted for robbery or the sales of narcotics.

As we walked into a large gymnasium-like auditorium I spotted Abramoff in the flesh, sitting by himself in the corner, on a metal folding chair. My first visual impression of him was that of a humbled, beaten man who was slouched in defeat, wrapped in a green prison jumpsuit, incongruously donning a yarmulke. It wasn't until my first ten minutes of conversation that I realized what his friends, colleagues, and former associates had claimed -- despite being portrayed in the media as being the Don Corleone of D.C., he actually had an extremely charismatic, hilarious, and animated personality. In fact, he seemed so polished and charming one might suggest, like Eliot Spitzer, he should be deemed suitable to host his own cable television show.

After each prison visit (there would be five in all), I would retire to my hotel room and relay these stories to Norman Snider directly over my cell phone who would then incorporate them into his screenplay (Norman was a journalist himself who had spent hundreds of hours researching the Abramoff case and interviewing his associates for what would eventually become our finished screenplay). For our second-to-last rendezvous, Kevin Spacey (who had just been cast) made the three-hour drive with me for what turned out to be a private meeting in the warden's conference room. He came with an open mind and grudging reverence for a man who had spent his last four years behind bars. As the two spoke, I watched Kevin listen to Jack for hours, absorbing his mannerisms, his intonations, his persona, like a sponge absorbs liquid. I mostly just listened and watched as the two seemed to get along like a house on fire. It was my view at that very moment that both Spacey and Abramoff could have had successful careers as stand-up comics. And in fact, the meeting culminated with Kevin doing impersonations of Bill Clinton and speaking to Jack as the President, and Abramoff speaking back to Spacey as Ronald Reagan. For a moment, it became a kind of hilarious, surreal presidential summit with these two iconic personalities from opposite worlds finding a kind of affable synchronicity – at least enough of one for Spacey to leave the meeting feeling as though he might have struck an emotional chord within himself and within Jack – a similar enough note that might make this vilified, Washington bad guy a palatable figure to portray as a kind of empathetic anti-hero.

During each prison visit, I felt the story we wanted to tell was transforming a serious subject from a third-person narrative into a kind of comical, first-person opera (only without the score). From Abramoff's opening monologue (aria) in CASINO JACK, to his character's purchase of Zamboni machines, to his ultimate fantasy about impersonating Al Pacino in ...AND JUSTICE FOR ALL while telling Senator John McCain and his senate colleagues that they are all a bunch of hypocrites – these were all stories humorously told to me by Jack himself, from his point of view, coming from the emotional core of who he was. As these new yarns began filling out new draft after new draft, it was during these visits that Kevin, Norman and I realized exactly what the tone of the picture would be -- dramatically comic with a touch of satire. Why? Because the Abramoff story itself was so Gothic that at times, if it were fiction, you would never believe it really happened. We also felt that the subject of lobbying itself was so dry, that to have taken a solemn or earnest approach would have been the equivalent of watching paint dry on a White House wall. It had to be funny, not only because Jack was funny, but because the real story was almost too farcical to begin with. And, as the director, I also felt that through humor, I could actually say more about what the problems in Washington were and continue to be to this day, and reach a larger audience by doing so. In a television and Internet age saturated with political pundits, programs and news shows, we had to come up with a fresh, new and original take on the very serious world of politics. So in this way, CASINO JACK, needed to be a funny and off-beat look at a very serious matter.

I hope you enjoy the film.

George Hickenlooper

## **CASINO JACK**

### **Synopsis**

Two-time Academy Award® Winner Kevin Spacey gives the performance of a lifetime in **CASINO JACK**, a riotous new film starring Spacey as a man hell-bent on acquiring all that the good life has to offer. He plays in the same game as the highest of rollers and resorts to awe-inspiring levels of conning, scheming and fraudulent antics to get what he wants.

Inspired by true events that are too over-the-top for even the wildest imaginations to conjure, **CASINO JACK** lays bare the wild excesses and escapades of Jack Abramoff. Aided by his business partner Michael Scanlon (Barry Pepper), Jack parlays his clout over some of the world's most powerful men with the goal of creating a personal empire of wealth and influence. When the two enlist a mob-connected buddy (Jon Lovitz) to help with one of their illegal schemes, they soon find themselves in over their heads, entrenched in a world of mafia assassins, murder and a scandal that spins so out of control that it makes worldwide headlines.

Directed by George Hickenlooper (*FACTORY GIRL*, *THE MAN FROM ELYSIAN FIELDS*), **CASINO JACK** returns Spacey to the type of role that made him famous—a cool-headed, articulate snake charmer whose wild ambition knows no limits or boundaries. The film also stars Kelly Preston and Rachelle Lefevre and is produced by Gary Howsam, Bill Marks and George Zakk from an original screenplay by Norman Snider. Executive producers are Richard Rionda Del Castro, Lewin Webb, Donald Zuckerman, Dana Brunetti, Patricia Eberle, Warren Nimchuk, Angelo Paletta and Domenic Serafino. The associate producer is Rick Chad.

**CASINO JACK** had its World Premiere as a gala screening at the Toronto Film Festival.

## THE MAN IN THE MIDDLE

Playing a character as rich with contradictions and complications as the one at the center of **CASINO JACK** is an actor's dream. But, finding an actor who could personify a character so complex and mercurial and also find the humor in the role, could have been a filmmaker's nightmare. Fortunately, the filmmakers were able to attract an actor whose nuanced portrayals of flawed, multifaceted individuals has made him one of the most acclaimed stage and screen stars of his generation.

"I read this and immediately thought: Kevin Spacey!" says producer Bill Marks. "The first person any of us thought of was Kevin. Getting him to play this role is a career high for me."

Director George Hickenlooper had been following Spacey's career since seeing him perform on Broadway in the 1980s. "I also saw him in the film versions of HURLYBURLY and GLENGARRY GLEN ROSS," the director adds. "Those performances had the kind of manic, energized persona I thought would lend itself to the role.

"And he is perfect in this role," says Hickenlooper. "Audiences love a good antihero and Kevin Spacey is one of the great leading bad guys of all time. He's a man of great charm, wit and intellect, and that informs the roles he plays.

"Kevin is not impersonating anyone in this film," the director continues. "He is doing a very sharp and shrewd interpretation while lending a lot of himself to the character. I've never been on a set before where the crew not only breaks out into applause when the scene ends, but they also applaud at the playback. He gave so much to all of us—to the cast, to the crew and to me as a director. Working with him has been the richest experience of my career."

Because Spacey has remained deeply unaffected by the film industry, he brought a certain charming irreverence to the set, according to Hickenlooper. "He is a wonderful storyteller and funny as hell. Kevin just has a solid core as a person."

Jack Abramoff is a larger-than-life personality who had even bigger ambitions. His outrageous schemes mesmerized his D.C. cohorts until his web of deceit, money, sex and corruption spun wildly out of control. Spacey, who has previously expressed his preference for portraying complex, manipulative characters, hit his stride with this role. "He is enormously charismatic, as well as very self-deprecating," the actor says of the real-life Abramoff. "It's an appealing combination. At the height of his power, he owned every room which he walked into. I can also understand why he had as many enemies as he did. The part opened itself up to being a good actor's piece, because Abramoff is such a complicated person and, surprisingly, a very, very funny individual."

Actor and director were in agreement about the way they wanted the film to portray Abramoff. "Our mutual desire was to bring out the nuances of the character," says Hickenlooper. "He's not just a two-dimensional villain. We want the audience to have empathy, not sympathy, for him."

For Spacey, who previously knew nothing about his character other than what could be gleaned from press reports at the time of the trial, it was an opportunity to get to know his character up close and personal. "I made a point of not reading anything else on the subject until I had met with Jack Abramoff himself," he says. "I also spoke with several people with whom he had worked, and educated myself on the lobbying industry."

"Kevin watched and listened and absorbed his mannerisms and persona like a sponge absorbs liquid," the director says. "They got along like a house on fire. I think their similar senses of humor and ability to do excellent impressions helped them connect. At the end of the day, Kevin was speaking to Jack as Bill Clinton and Jack was answering as Ronald Reagan in what seemed to me like a hilarious, surreal presidential summit."

### **TELLING THE STORY**

At the center of **CASINO JACK** is the saga of Jack Abramoff's biggest scam ever, an unlikely tale of floating casinos, family-values conservatives, a Delaware surfer dude and a mobbed-up mattress entrepreneur. "It's about Jack Abramoff and Michael Scanlon's outrageous mission to dupe Indian casino tribes out of millions of dollars," says George Hickenlooper. "**CASINO JACK** is a story of greed and hubris so Gothic that it seems more like a crime thriller."

It is also the story of a classic American striver, a man who learns to play the game of politics, perhaps too well. "Abramoff is a swing-for-the-fences kind of guy," Hickenlooper observes. "He has a lot of ambitious dreams, but I think he lost sight of the consequences of his actions as he tried to achieve his goals. Then the scandal made him an icon of the 'culture of greed' that seemed to be sweeping the capitol. He was the butt of jokes made by late-night talk show hosts, the focus of news specials and documentaries."

Hickenlooper, an award-winning writer, director and producer of both narrative and documentary features, knows a good story when he sees one. At the recommendation of producer George Zakk, he approached veteran screenwriter and journalist Norman Snider to create a riveting narrative that encompassed all the intrigue of the true events. "Norman has a wicked, dark sense of humor, like my own, that seemed appropriate for this," says the director. "And as a Canadian, he brought a unique outsider's perspective to the story."

As he made his way through the mountain of press clippings and magazine articles Hickenlooper gave him, Snider was delighted to uncover a fast moving, suspenseful story that needed no embellishment. "It combined politics and crime and showbiz and religion," he says. "I was astounded that no one had already done it. It's made for the screen."

Snider spent the next two months researching Abramoff and his associates. "Once it became known in Washington circles that I was working on this script, people who were obsessed with Abramoff came out of the woodwork," the writer says. "They pointed me toward great caches of material, including Senate reports."

"The anecdotes I was able to gather from people who had known Abramoff, Scanlon and Adam Kidan showed me the richly comic and absurd human reality of the situation," he adds. "You couldn't make it up. This is a guy who was inspired to convert to Orthodox Judaism by the movie version of FIDDLER ON THE ROOF."

To paint an even fuller picture of the man at the center of the controversy, screenwriter Snider delved into his personal life: his commitment to and love for his family, his passion for his charities, his devotion to Judaism. "It's easy to see him as a villain," says Zakk. "It's easy to say he ripped this one off, he ripped that one off. When I read the script, I realized he was a family man. He was a guy who was living the American dream and was anti-mediocrity. Norman was able to make that apparent in the screenplay."

Snider chose to emphasize the sometimes absurd circumstances of the story, but stayed true to the facts. "George Hickenlooper and I have the same sense of humor," says Snider. We both always saw this as primarily a dark comedy and committed to coupling the humor with journalistic accuracy."

Zakk clearly remembers the day Hickenlooper told him about the finished script. "When Norman delivered the script, George called me and said 'It's like a gangster movie,'" says Zakk. "He was over the moon about it."

With Snider's script in hand, Hickenlooper contacted old friend and colleague Donald Zuckerman, who produced the director's 1995 feature film, THE LOW LIFE. "George called me and told me they were trying to put the movie together," says Zuckerman, who eventually agreed to become executive producer of **CASINO JACK**. "He asked for my advice. When I gave it to him, he asked me if I wanted come on board and actually do what I was suggesting."

Producer Gary Howsam joined the team after hearing about the film from Hannibal Pictures' CEO Richard Rionda Del Castro. "He was so impressed, he sent it to me the day he received it," says Howsam. "The tone George was developing for the film was so fresh. He is very interested in politics, so he brought a great deal of understanding of the issues, events and personalities involved. But instead of making a political insider's movie, George used all of that information to make an accessible, enjoyable movie intended to appeal to a broad audience."

Zuckerman agrees the story is much bigger than one man. "It's a classic story of someone bent on accomplishing something epic who forgets about the rules in order to get where he wants to go," the producer says. "It's stranger than fiction and an entertaining ride throughout."

Zakk attests to the universal appeal of the story, admitting his own interest in politics is not as deep as Hickenlooper's. "I wasn't really aware of the details when George told me about the project," says Zakk. "He told me there had been a lot of press coverage and the story had become the biggest scandal to come out of Washington, D.C. since Watergate. My ears perked up immediately."

As the producing team began to put together the practical aspects of the film, Hickenlooper and Snider continued to dig deeper into their story, looking for what the director

calls “the main character’s emotional core.” He says the criticisms the media aimed at Abramoff were deserved, but secondary to the story he is telling. “What they didn’t do that we tried to do is tell the human side of the story,” says the director. “What leads someone to make those kinds of decisions? How does someone who is perceived to be a bad guy feel? What was he thinking?”

“I’ve always been fascinated by antagonists and anti-heroes, from Travis Bickell in TAXI DRIVER to Norman Bates in PSYCHO,” he continues. “When I was a child, I loved the GODZILLA movies. I always felt sorry for the monster when he was destroyed at the end. I’ve always been interested in people who are perceived to be bad, because I believe that underneath, everyone is inherently good, or at least starts off good and becomes corrupted. I was interested in seeing that arc. How did Jack Abramoff become corrupted? What led him down that path? They say the path to hell is paved with good intentions and I think that’s true with him. He had a lot of good intentions, but he went astray.”

Hickenlooper got important clues about his subject from a source he never expected—Facebook. The director was posting updates about the progress of the film on his page on the social networking site. “I suddenly found myself being ‘friended’ by former associates of Abramoff,” he says. “That included former Ohio Representative Bob Ney, Emily Miller and Adam Kidan, all real life players in this drama.”

Abramoff was pilloried in the press for his actions and his name has become synonymous with lobbyists’ abuse of power. But the filmmakers were not interested in assigning blame. “The movie has to be entertaining to work,” says Zuckerman. “And people have to like the character played by Kevin Spacey to make it work. I don’t know that Jack Abramoff is a good guy and I don’t think we’re trying to sell him as a good guy, but this is a somewhat sympathetic version of him.”

As the filmmakers learned more details about Abramoff and the scandal surrounding him, a picture of a fascinating and somewhat mysterious man began to emerge. “I think he is something of a misunderstood person,” Zuckerman says. “In our society, we make examples of people. On Wall Street, there were titans who bent the rules and went to jail. There were also some who bent the rules and are now billionaires. Jack Abramoff bent the rules on K Street, like a lot of other people. He was the top guy there and became the guy who paid the price. That’s the story we’re telling.”

## **ROUNDING OUT THE ROOM**

With Spacey onboard and the script rapidly evolving, the filmmakers began the search for an actor who would embody Abramoff’s hyper-charged partner, Michael Scanlon. They offered the role to Golden Globe®-nominated Barry Pepper.

“Michael Scanlon was described in the media as Jack Abramoff’s evil elf,” says Marks. “Barry Pepper is charming and savvy and slick in the role—and then you see something special



behind his eyes. Barry became the most incredible evil elf you can imagine. He took such glee in being so bad. As he says in the film, when a man is down, not only do you kick him, you roll him up in a rug and throw him off a cliff into the pounding surf below. Barry delivered that line with such glee." (The line is based on an actual e-mail Scanlon sent to a colleague—about Bill Clinton at the height of the Monica Lewinski scandal.)

The opportunity to delve into the motives behind Scanlon's Machiavellian machinations was what brought Pepper onboard. "The unflawed hero is not always that interesting to play or to watch," he says. "I enjoy digging into the flawed characters. I like to explore what made them the way they are. I want to find something other than the cliché.

"When I read the script, I was instantly hooked," says the actor. "But I have to be honest—when I first heard about it, I thought that it would be pretty dry. I mean, lobbyists in Washington? Then I read it and realized that what they did was so ludicrous, it was perfect for the screen."

Pepper was able to research his character through books on the scandal, as well as people who had firsthand experience with the man who served as the model for his character. "I've played some smooth operators, but Mike Scanlon is a different kind of individual," he says. "This is a real guy who had a real life, a real fiancée and coworkers. I didn't have the luxury of meeting him, but I was able to speak to co-workers and friends. The information they gave me was so valuable in getting to the heart of the character. They were so giving and generous with their personal histories and stories. Remember, many of them were also indicted. They had to testify before Congress and they could have gone to prison, as Jack did."

The actor was also able to access Hickenlooper's extensive research on the scandal and its participants. "He was a vault full of information," he recalls. "George is one of the best directors with whom I've worked. He was so open and collaborative. He was easy to work with and very sensitive. There was no emotional manipulation of the actors. He coaches you in such a sensitive way that you're not aware of it. Maybe he just throws out one word, and it helps you find the music of your character's arc."

Re-enacting the symbiotic relationship between Abramoff and Scanlon required Pepper and Spacey to develop a close working relationship. The lobbyists may have brought out the worst in each other, but Pepper feels that Spacey did just the opposite for him. "Working with Kevin was like opening a Christmas gift every day," he says. "He's so present. His eyes are on fire and you can't help but be invigorated by him. It was so much fun to collaborate with him. Plus, he has about 1,000 impersonations and stories that kept the cast and crew entertained. And then, when it was time to work, he stepped into the truth of his character and I found myself lit up by him."

Watching Pepper and Spacey work side-by-side was a highlight of the shoot for Hickenlooper. "Barry is an amazing Method actor who committed totally to the role, even though he had a very short time to prepare," says the director. "Kevin is a classically trained actor who

went to Juilliard. It was amazing to see them working in two very different styles and achieving complete synchronicity.”

Kelly Preston plays Abramoff’s stalwart wife, Pam, one of the few major players in this drama to emerge with her reputation unscathed. “Kelly Preston is one of the finest human beings I have ever met,” says Hickenlooper. “And one of my favorite actresses of all time. She made this film at a very difficult time for her personally. She had just lost her son and I think she used that emotion in a very positive way to bring to life this woman who is at her wit’s end to protect her family.”

From Preston’s point of view, **CASINO JACK** is the story of a family trying to weather an extraordinary crisis. “Pam Abramoff is very devoted to her husband,” says Preston. “To this day, she stands by him. As a couple, they’re very connected, very much in love. They are a strong family unit, but she watched her husband spin out of control and she tried to be the voice of reason.”

Preston brings first-hand experience as an activist in Washington, where she advocated for the Child Medication Safety Act. “The adrenaline can be addictive. A lot of people are trying to do the right thing and are there for the right reasons, but you’ve got many other people who are motivated by the money. I think Jack Abramoff feels that he was unjustly tried or got a much longer sentence than he deserved.”

Like Jack Abramoff, she says, Spacey is incredibly charismatic. “He commands the room. He commands the scenes he is in. Kevin is so prepared and yet he will throw all of that away, so he brings a freshness and spontaneity to each take that is extraordinary.

“And, he created a truly complex character,” adds Preston. “It would be easy to see Jack as black and white, but what Kevin does with him is far more ambiguous, which makes it so much more interesting.”

Working with Spacey made the sometimes tedious filmmaking process easy, she says. The hardest part? “Trying not to laugh all the time!”

Emily Miller, **CASINO JACK’S** woman scorned, is played by Rachele Lefevre. “Rachele is a very giving, talented and hardworking actress,” says Hickenlooper. “She brought great enthusiasm and humor to the set. I think she was able to draw on some of her own experiences as a young woman to make the character really breathe.”

She also embodies the righteous anger of a woman who has been betrayed by the man she loves. “You see her come in with that fiery red hair and those eyes, and you know she’s a force of nature,” says Marks. “She’s not someone to mess with, as Mike Scanlon finds out.”

Lefevre had to grow used to hearing “The vicious whistleblower fiancée,” muttered as she walked through the set. “Emily Miller is a very, very smart woman,” according to the actress. “She is a former journalist with a degree from Georgetown. After working as press secretary for House Majority Leader Tom Delay, she went to the State Department.”

Delay's office is where Miller met her former fiancé, Mike Scanlon, with whom she shared committed neo-conservative views. "Emily seems quite happy to live the high life and climb the ladder with Scanlon, even if it means there's a bit of shady dealing going on," says Lefevre. "Then he makes the mistake of having an affair—a mistake not just in a moral sense. It results in her turning Abramoff and Scanlon in for their wheelings and dealings. She picks up her cell phone and calls a reporter at the *Washington Post*, and then goes to the FBI with her story."

Almost all of Lefevre's scenes are with Barry Pepper. The actors developed a friendship off-camera that helped inform their onscreen chemistry. "We didn't have to have a conversation about the characters' relationship," she explains. "We did what couples do. We went to dinner, had a glass of wine. We hung out and became comfortable together."

"Barry is amazing," she says. "He has a great big cowboy heart, which makes him perfect to play the part. I can see how someone like Emily from a conservative background in upper-crust Baltimore might be attracted to a guy who shoots from the hip."

Lefevre is equally enthusiastic about working with Spacey and Hickenlooper. "If somebody had told me when I was watching *AMERICAN BEAUTY* that I would be working with Kevin Spacey, I wouldn't have believed it," she says. "His attention to detail is astonishing."

"And George was so upbeat," she continues. "He kept the energy going on set. He was very specific in terms of what he wanted and always completely genuine when he gave feedback."

One of the film's biggest surprises is Jon Lovitz as Adam Kidan, a disbarred lawyer and former mattress entrepreneur with a shady past and possible mob connections who acts as front man for a casino deal made by Abramoff and Scanlon. Hickenlooper says casting an actor best known for his over-the-top comic characters is in keeping with his long history of casting against type, which includes putting Mick Jagger in the role of an aging procurer of male escorts in *THE MAN FROM ELYSIAN FIELDS*. "I think many comic actors are also great dramatic actors," says the director. "They have trouble finding those roles because they've been pigeonholed. Jon has such great comedic range. I knew he would have that kind of dramatic range as well. He impressed me by coming from a very real, very dark place and still finding the humor in it."

"Jon comes to the role battling certain preconceptions about him as an actor," adds Marks. "He gives Kidan a wonderful mystery. This performance is going to surprise a lot of people with the darkness and depth, the charm and the disappointment he brings to this role."

Lovitz displayed another unexpected talent on the set, says Hickenlooper. "When things got hectic or intense, we could always count on Jon to regale us with a tune. Not many people know this, but he's an accomplished pianist and has the most beautiful singing voice."

Kidan was a key figure in the downfall of Abramoff and Scanlon. "Adam Kidan is a complicated character," Marks says. "I think Jack Abramoff knew right from wrong and chose to do wrong sometimes. I wonder if Adam Kidan really knew right from wrong. He wants to be a player, but he seems to just follow his nose and it leads him to the wrong places."

## THE REAL DEAL

The story of Jack Abramoff and Michael Scanlon is also the story of the world of the Washington lobbyist, a secretive and powerful breed of politicians who influence every major decision made in the nation's capitol. Legend has it that the word lobbyist was coined by President Ulysses S. Grant to describe the political wheelers and dealers who assembled in the lobby of the capitol's Willard Hotel in an effort to capture the ear of legislators relaxing in its renowned bar.

Over the decades, that informal network has evolved into a highly organized and lucrative industry. Former politicians, political aides and attorneys serve as advocates for businesses, trade organizations and special interests. Based primarily on K Street in Washington, D.C., lobbyists serve as go-betweens with the kinds of connections that give them often unfettered access to lawmakers and other government officials.

Director George Hickenlooper sees lobbyists as a necessary evil that keeps the government functioning. "It's fashionable to be cynical about Washington and how it works," says Hickenlooper. "I think a lot of people want to idealize politics. They want to think it's possible to create a democratic utopia. In reality, government gets bogged down in bureaucracy and inertia, and in order for it to work, people need to be prompted or given incentives. In essence, lobbyists are the grease for the wheels of government."

Washington, D.C. and lobbyists are inextricably linked, both in the public's imagination and in reality. To recreate the iconic buildings and landmarks of the capitol, the filmmakers looked north to Canada. "We found some spectacular locations in Hamilton, just outside Toronto," says Hickenlooper. "It was sometimes a challenge making it look like D.C., but we discovered an amazing White House set hidden away on a soundstage. It hadn't been used since it was built in 1996 for another film. We were also able to use the West Wing offices on that set as our Senate offices."

They also made use of the latest digital technology to create a screen version of the nation's capitol. Altogether, approximately 100 scenes use CGI effects, according to producer Gary Howsam. "We did have to do a lot of matte work to make it look authentic. For example, there's a scene set on the steps of the Capitol building. It was actually shot on the steps of a church and we put the Capitol in later."

Access to some of the real players in the scandal, as well as the extensive public record surrounding it, gave the filmmakers a window into a world that has rarely been as fully exposed. "Norman Snider didn't have to embellish anything when he wrote this script," says Pepper. "The truth was all he needed. What took place was incredible. It would have been a tremendous comedy of errors if so many innocent people hadn't been hurt."

Hickenlooper learned firsthand the power of an influential advocate when he and Kevin Spacey visited Abramoff in Cumberland Federal prison outside of Washington, D.C. "Kevin and I both are politically very different from Abramoff," says the director. "But, we wanted his side

portrayed in a balanced way, so we sat down with him. We spent four or five hours at the prison. I sat down with him on four more occasions for four or five hours each time. It was invaluable.”

For anyone who’s met him, it’s not hard to understand how Abramoff became one of Washington’s most popular and successful lobbyists, says the director. “He’s charming, smart and charismatic,” Hickenlooper explains. “You have to be careful not to be seduced by his unrelenting magnetism. He was more than willing to regale us with funny and insightful stories about his case.”

The script continued to evolve based on Hickenlooper’s conversations with Abramoff. “After each visit I would return to my hotel and either call Norman to relay the stories I’d just heard or incorporate them into the script myself,” he says. “It was a whirlwind of creative activity that allowed me to apply my experience as a documentarian to this film.”

Hickenlooper believes that Abramoff agreed to meet with him and Spacey because he saw an opportunity to reach a larger audience with his version of events. “I think he felt it was to his advantage to meet with us because he had been so vilified and demonized in the press,” says Hickenlooper. “With us, he was at least able to tell his side of the story. Jack felt betrayed by Bush and the Republicans. He knows their skeletons. He thinks that’s why Bush turned down the Justice recommendation for a reduced sentence. He’s too dangerous to let out.

“From his point of view, he was thrown under the bus by the Republican Party to take the focus off K Street,” the director says. “They made him the sacrificial lamb, so the attention would go away from K Street and what really goes on there.”

Although Barry Pepper was unable to arrange a meeting with Michael Scanlon, he spent time with people who knew him well who gave him a window into his character. “Michael Scanlon’s friends and co-workers told me what kind of cigarettes he smoked,” says Pepper. “They told me that he never lit a cigarette with a lighter, only matches. He would have ice in his red wine. He walked a certain way and had certain phrases he used often. I even found out what he liked to eat for lunch.

“For an actor, that kind of information is gold,” he says. “It gives you all the little gems that make the character sparkle. I was able to bring all of that to George and we put it directly into the script. Having so many great idiosyncrasies to play with made this guy come to life in a way that grounded me as an actor.”

Jack Abramoff and Michael Scanlon were the top dogs on K Street during much of the late ‘90s and early 2000s. “For a long time, Abramoff and Scanlon were role models for the conservative movement,” says Pepper. “The Republican party hailed them as heroes until the scandal broke. It was said in Washington that what the Republicans needed was 50 men like Jack Abramoff to run the town.”

Both men, but perhaps especially Abramoff, rose higher and fell further than any Washington lobbyists before them. Driven by ambition, Abramoff and Scanlon played the system for all it was worth—until it caught up with them. “They were working in the most stressful, high-

flying environment in the world,” says Bill Marks. “Washington lobbyists try to talk the president of the United States into doing something he doesn’t necessarily want to do—and they do it on a regular basis. That world is such a high-stakes environment. You are either a winner or a loser—you’re either Jack Abramoff or you’re that guy rolled up in the carpet. There’s no middle ground.”

## **ABOUT THE CAST**

**KEVIN SPACEY (Jack Abramoff)** is artistic director of London’s Old Vic Theatre Company. He directed its inaugural production, *CLOACA*, before going on to appear in *NATIONAL ANTHEMS*, *THE PHILADELPHIA STORY*, *RICHARD II*, *A MOON FOR THE MISBEGOTTEN*, which subsequently moved to Broadway, and most recently, *SPEED-THE-PLOW*, with Jeff Goldblum, directed by Matthew Warchus. Previous stage credits include *THE ICEMAN COMETH* (Evening Standard and Olivier Awards for Best Actor), directed by Howard Davies (Almeida, Old Vic and Broadway); *LOST IN YONKERS* (Tony® Award, Best Supporting Actor); *LONG DAY’S JOURNEY INTO NIGHT*, with Jack Lemmon, directed by Jonathan Miller (Broadway and West End); and *THE SEAGULL* (Kennedy Center). His most recent stage appearance was in The Old Vic production of *INHERIT THE WIND*, which marked his second production with Trevor Nunn.

Spacey’s films include *SUPERMAN RETURNS*, *BEYOND THE SEA* (director and actor), *THE USUAL SUSPECTS* (Academy Award, Best Supporting Actor), *AMERICAN BEAUTY* (Academy and BAFTA Awards, Best Actor), *SWIMMING WITH SHARKS*, *SE7EN*, *L.A. CONFIDENTIAL*, *GLENGARRY GLEN ROSS*, *THE NEGOTIATOR*, *HURLYBURLY*, *K-PAX* and *THE SHIPPING NEWS*.

Spacey also produced and starred in *SHRINK*, which premiered at the Sundance Film Festival in January 2009. Also in 2009, he starred in *MEN WHO STARE AT GOATS*, opposite George Clooney, Ewan McGregor and Jeff Bridges, as well as Nick Moran’s film *TELSTAR*, opposite Colm O’Neil and Pam Ferris, which debuted at the London Film Festival. He recently completed production on the films *MARGIN CALL*, with Jeremy Iron, Paul Bettany, Demi Moore, Zach Quinto and Simon Baker, and *HORRIBLE BOSSES* with Jason Bateman, Jennifer Aniston, Jamie Foxx and Colin Farrell for Warner Bros., directed by Seth Gordon.

His production company Trigger Street has produced the films *THE UNITED STATES OF LELAND*, *THE BIG KAHUNA*, *21* for Sony Pictures, *FANBOYS* and *BERNARD AND DORIS*, starring Ralph Fiennes and Susan Sarandon, which was nominated for 10 Emmy® Awards and three Golden Globes. Spacey was nominated for an Emmy, Golden Globe and SAG Award as Best Actor for his performance as Ron Klain in *RECOUNT*, a co-production between Trigger Street and HBO.

It was a behind-the-scenes account of the 36-day battle for the presidency in 2000 between Bush and Gore, and won the Emmy for Best Film of the Year.

This fall Sony Pictures will release the Trigger Street-produced feature film *THE SOCIAL NETWORK*, the story of the founding of Facebook, directed by David Fincher, and written by Aaron Sorkin.

**BARRY PEPPER (Michael Scanlon)** has in just a few years become one of the most sought-after talents in Hollywood. Pepper gained critical attention for his remarkable portrayal of Private Jackson in the Academy Award and Golden Globe-winning feature *SAVING PRIVATE RYAN*.

Pepper recently wrapped filming *TRUE GRIT*, playing the role of "Lucky" Ned Pepper opposite Josh Brolin, Matt Damon and Jeff Bridges. The film is slated to release on December 25, 2010. His latest films include *LIKE DANDELION DUST*, which made the festival circuits, winning awards in Sedona, San Luis Obispo, Vail, Sonoma, Las Vegas and Palm Springs. He was seen in Matador Films' *PRINCESS KA'IULANI*, the true story of a Hawaiian princess' attempts to maintain the independence of the island against the threat of American colonization. Pepper also appeared in Columbia Pictures' *SEVEN POUNDS*, starring opposite Will Smith, as well as Clint Eastwood's World War II epic *FLAGS OF OUR FATHERS*, for Dreamworks/Warner Bros., and *UNKNOWN*, for The Weinstein Company, starring alongside Jim Caviezel and Greg Kinnear.

His film *THE THREE BURIALS OF MELQUIADES ESTRADA* for Sony Pictures Classics marked Tommy Lee Jones' directorial debut and won two awards at Cannes—Best Actor for Tommy Lee Jones and Best Screenplay for Guillermo Arriaga. Pepper portrays a border patrol officer who accidentally kills an illegal immigrant and is later kidnapped by the deceased's friend (Jones) who forces him to dig up the dead man and take him home for a proper burial. Pepper received a nomination for Best Supporting Male in the 2006 Independent Spirit Awards.

Pepper executive produced and starred in the title role of ESPN's *3: THE DALE EARNHARDT STORY*, a biopic of the NASCAR star who died in a crash during the final lap of the 2001 Daytona 500. He was a nominee for the 11th Annual SAG Awards for Outstanding Performance by a Male Actor in a Television Movie or Miniseries.

Pepper also executive produced and starred in *THE SNOW WALKER*, for which he received a Best Actor nomination for the 24th Annual Genie Awards in Canada, among eight other nominations for the film. The film also garnered six awards, including Best Actor, at the Sixth Annual Leo Awards, which celebrate excellence in British Columbia Film and Television.

Pepper had a starring role in Buena Vista Films' *25TH HOUR*, for director Spike Lee, alongside Edward Norton, Philip Seymour Hoffman and Rosario Dawson. He starred opposite Mel Gibson and Madeleine Stowe in the critically acclaimed Paramount Pictures' *WE WERE SOLDIERS*, for director Randall Wallace. Pepper also had a lead role in the New Line feature *KNOCKAROUND GUYS*, opposite John Malkovich, Dennis Hopper and Vin Diesel.

His other feature credits include the Academy Award-winning feature *THE GREEN MILE*, with Tom Hanks and Michael Clarke-Duncan, and the Bruckheimer/Scott thriller *ENEMY OF THE STATE*, with Will Smith and Gene Hackman.

Pepper has also shined on the small screen. His starring role in the HBO feature *61\** earned him nominations for a Golden Globe, an Emmy and a Critic's Choice Award. The film tells the story behind the competition between the New York Yankees' Roger Maris (Pepper) and Mickey Mantle (Thomas Jane) to break Babe Ruth's single-season homerun record in 1961. The critically acclaimed film was directed and executive produced by Billy Crystal.

Pepper spent five years of his childhood living with his family on a 50-ft. hand-built sailboat, touring the South Pacific islands by traditional celestial navigation. Confined to a sailboat for month-long crossings between countries—and with no television—Pepper developed a love of performance. Back home in Canada, his passion for acting became more focused through his involvement in the Vancouver Actors Studio.

**KELLY PRESTON (Pam Abramoff)** has demonstrated her captivating talent in a diverse range of motion pictures, such as *JERRY MAGUIRE*, *CITIZEN RUTH* and *FOR LOVE OF THE GAME*.

Preston has been seen in the comedy *OLD DOGS*, released in 2009, starring alongside her husband John Travolta, their daughter Ella Bleu and Robin Williams. The film, directed by Walt Becker, is the story of two friends and business partners who find their lives turned upside down when strange circumstances lead to them being placed in the care of seven-year-old twins. Preston was recently seen on a four-episode arc on the hit NBC show *MEDIUM*. Preston plays the role of Meghan Doyle, an attractive venture-capitalist who likes what she sees when she teams with Joe Dubois (Jake Weber), which ultimately creates tension in his marriage.

Preston's most recent projects include *THE LAST SONG*, starring Miley Cyrus, which was released in March 2010; the HBO pilot, *SUBURBAN SHOOTOUT*, directed by Barry Sonnenfeld (*MEN IN BLACK*, *PUSHING DAISIES*); and the Lifetime Original Movie *THE TENTH CIRCLE*, with Ron Eldard. Based on the *New York Times* best-selling novel by Jodi Picoult, *THE TENTH CIRCLE* is a powerful account of an American family, and a story that probes the unbreakable bond between parent and child. Preston can also be seen in the Fox thriller *DEATH SENTENCE*, with Kevin Bacon, directed by James Wan.

Preston made her feature-film debut with a well-received role in the hit motion picture *TWINS*, opposite Arnold Schwarzenegger and Danny DeVito. Preston also starred in the Academy Award-nominated short *LITTLE SURPRISES*, directed by Jeff Goldblum.

Preston appeared to rave reviews opposite Tom Cruise in Tri-Star's number-one box-office hit *JERRY MAGUIRE*, written and directed by Cameron Crowe. She also starred opposite Kevin Costner in *FOR LOVE OF THE GAME*, directed by Sam Raimi. She was seen in a pivotal role in the critically acclaimed motion picture *CITIZEN RUTH*, for Miramax. In addition, Preston starred with Kurt Russell in *SKY HIGH*, as Josie Jetstream; *THE CAT IN THE HAT*, alongside Mike Meyers; the



dark comedy EULOGY, with Ray Romano and Debra Winger; ADDICTED TO LOVE co-starring Meg Ryan and Matthew Broderick; and the comedy NOTHING TO LOSE, opposite Tim Robbins and Martin Lawrence.

Preston also starred in the feature comedy THE HOLY MAN, with Eddie Murphy and Jeff Goldblum; JACK FROST, opposite Michael Keaton for Warner Bros.; DADDY AND THEM, directed by Billy Bob Thornton; VIEW FROM THE TOP, with Gwyneth Paltrow and Christina Applegate; and the Warner Bros. film WHAT A GIRL WANTS, opposite Amanda Bynes and Colin Firth.

Preston was born and raised in Hawaii, with stints in Iraq, when she was five, and in Australia, as a teenager. Her early work in television commercials in Hawaii piqued her interest in acting, which she studied at USC and UCLA before launching her professional career.

**RACHELLE LEFEVRE (Emily Miller)** was recently seen on the big screen in the international blockbusters TWILIGHT and NEW MOON, based on the first and second books in the best-selling series by Stephanie Meyer. In the films, Lefevre plays Victoria, the ruthless, flame-haired vampire hell-bent on revenge against Kristen Stewart's heroine, Bella.

Lefevre is currently starring next to Paul Giamatti and Dustin Hoffman in BARNEY'S VERSION, now making the festival circuit. BARNEY'S VERSION is adapted from the novel by acclaimed author Mordecai Richler and recounts the ways in which the life of Barney (Giamatti) is forever altered by the three women he marries. Lefevre stars as Clara, the young, troubled and ultimately suicidal feminist poet who becomes his first wife.

Lefevre also stars in the upcoming psychological thriller "The Caller" opposite Stephen Moyer. In "The Caller," Lefevre's character Mary Kee is a woman trying to regain her strength after an abusive relationship and becomes tormented by mysterious phone calls from the past.

In 2011, Lefevre will star in the new ABC series "Off the Map." Created by Shonda Rhimes (Grey's Anatomy, Private Practice), "Off the Map" is a medical drama that takes place in a small town in the South American jungle which has one severely understaffed and under-stocked medical clinic. Lefevre's character Ryan Clark is among one of the young doctors that staff the medical clinic. She is courageous and outspoken but harbors a mysterious past which comes to light as stories unfold.

In previous film work, Lefevre has played a diverse range of characters. In THE POOL BOYS, a RISKY BUSINESS update from AMERICAN PIE producer Warren Zide, Lefevre stars opposite Matthew Lillard and Tom Arnold as Laura, the straight-talking escort who becomes a madam for the summer. In a very different turn, Lefevre starred with Stephen Dillane and Rosamund Pike in FUGITIVE PIECES, adapted from the internationally best-selling novel by Anne Michaels, directed by Jeremy Podeswa (THE PACIFIC) and produced by Robert Lantos (EASTERN PROMISES). In the film Lefevre plays Naomi, a young, spirited, Jewish wife whose marriage is severely impacted by wounds left after the Holocaust.

Lefevre moved to Los Angeles when she landed the female lead in the FOX comedy series LIFE ON A STICK, in which she played Lily, a girl Lefevre describes as "a smart, free-spirited wildcard." Lefevre has since gone on to enjoy a successful television career. She had a five-episode arc on CBS' summer hit SWINGTOWN, as well as a recurring role on the critically acclaimed series BOSTON LEGAL, as Jerry's love interest, Dana Strickland, a role David E. Kelly wrote specifically for her.

Lefevre was recently seen starring in the CBC/BBC produced mini-series THE SUMMIT, a political thriller revolving around a terrorist threat at a G8 Summit. Lefevre stars as the Canadian prime minister's (Bruce Greenwood) activist daughter, Leonie, who after an attack is exposed to the smallpox virus and threatens the safety of everyone at the Summit.

Lefevre also starred on the small screen as Heather, the self-assured stripper who wins Matt Davis' heart on the second season of ABC's WHAT ABOUT BRIAN.

**JON LOVITZ (Adam Kidan)** has a long list of television and film credits but to this day is most recognized for his seven-year stint on SATURDAY NIGHT LIVE, for which he received two Emmy nominations. Lovitz has also appeared in THE CRITIC, SEINFELD, FRIENDS, LAS VEGAS, TWO AND A HALF MEN and THE SIMPSONS.

In addition to his exceptional television work, he also has numerous film appearances including HAPPINESS, which won him an NBR award, LITTLE NICKY, HIGH SCHOOL HIGH, THE WEDDING SINGER, CITY SLICKERS II, LOADED WEAPON 1, A LEAGUE OF THEIR OWN and BIG.

**MAURY CHAYKIN (Big Tony)** was one of the top Canadian-American character actors of his generation and one of the most recognizable faces on stage, television and film. *Maclean's* magazine film critic Brian D. Johnson observed that Chaykin brought "an unnerving edge to whatever character he play[ed]." Born in Brooklyn, New York, Chaykin studied acting at SUNY Buffalo, where beat poets Allen Ginsberg and Gregory Corso were his faculty sponsors. Chaykin worked on stage and screen virtually non-stop from then on.

In 1990, Kevin Costner cast him as a mentally unstable cavalry officer in DANCES WITH WOLVES. In 1991, Chaykin played an obsessive games player with more money than sense in Atom Egoyan's THE ADJUSTER, arguably his finest work. In 1994, he won a Best Leading Actor Genie for his portrayal of an agoraphobic rock star in WHALE MUSIC.

One of his rare leading roles was as Nero Wolfe. Chaykin first played the detective genius in THE GOLDEN SPIDERS: A NERO WOLFE MYSTERY (2000), an A&E telefilm adaptation of the 1953 novel by Rex Stout. Timothy Hutton costarred as Archie Goodwin. The *New York Times* described Chaykin's "undisguised delight" at starring in THE GOLDEN SPIDERS. The original movie's success led to the weekly series, A NERO WOLFE MYSTERY, which played for two seasons on A&E and continues to air internationally.

Chaykin also had supporting roles in many Hollywood films including DEVIL IN A BLUE DRESS, with Denzel Washington; THE MASK OF ZORRO, with Antonio Banderas; and ENTRAPMENT with Sean Connery. Two of Chaykin's recent film projects premiered at the 2008 Cannes Film Festival: Fernando Meirelles' feature film BLINDNESS, which opened the festival, and Atom Egoyan's ADORATION. He also appeared with Paul Giamatti and Dustin Hoffman in the current feature film BARNEY'S VERSION. Chaykin most recently played Col. Fox in the upcoming CONDUCT UNBECOMING, directed by Sidney Furie.

He also appeared in dozens of television series including CSI, BOSTON LEGAL, STARGATE and ENTOURAGE. For his guest role on LA FEMME NIKITA, Chaykin won a Gemini award, and he recently wrapped the second season of the critically acclaimed television comedy series, LESS THAN KIND, for City TV.

Maury Chaykin died on July 27, 2010 in Toronto.

## ABOUT THE FILMMAKERS

**GEORGE HICKENLOOPER (Director)** who tragically passed away at the age of 47 on October 30<sup>th</sup>, 2010, was a writer, director and producer of both narrative and documentary films. In 2007, Hickenlooper's controversial biopic *FACTORY GIRL*, about the tumultuous love affair between Andy Warhol and his muse, Edie Sedgwick, was released to great critical acclaim by The Weinstein Company. The film was produced by Harvey and Bob Weinstein and stars Sienna Miller, Guy Pearce, Hayden Christensen, Jimmy Fallon and Mena Suvari.

Hickenlooper directed the internationally acclaimed documentary, *MAYOR OF SUNSET STRIP*, which at the time of its 2003 world premiere (as the Centerpiece of the IFP/Los Angeles Film Festival) sold for \$1.3 million, making it the second-highest-selling documentary of all time, next to Michael Moore's *BOWLING FOR COLUMBINE*. The film tells the story of fame through the eyes of pop impresario Rodney Bingenheimer and his friends David Bowie, Courtney Love, Brian Wilson, Cher and Paul McCartney. The film was also an official selection of the 2003 New York and Toronto International Film Festivals and was released theatrically by Samuel Goldwyn Films in March 2004. It was nominated for an Independent Spirit Award for Best Documentary that same year.

Hailed by Roger Ebert as "One of the Best Films of 2002," *THE MAN FROM ELYSIAN FIELDS* is George Hickenlooper's acclaimed psycho-sexual drama starring Andy Garcia, Mick Jagger, James Coburn, Anjelica Huston, Olivia Williams, Michael Des Barres and Julianna Margulies. Nominated for a Golden Globe award, *THE BIG BRASS RING* is his 1999 critically acclaimed political thriller, adapted from an Orson Welles screenplay and starring William Hurt, Nigel Hawthorne, Miranda Richardson and Irène Jacob.

Hickenlooper also won a Best Director Emmy Award for his work on the internationally acclaimed *HEARTS OF DARKNESS: A FILMMAKER'S APOCALYPSE* (a documentary about the making of *APOCALYPSE NOW*), in addition to receiving international praise for his dramatic short *SOME FOLKS CALL IT A SLING BLADE*, starring Billy Bob Thornton, Molly Ringwald and J.T. Walsh (the basis for the Oscar<sup>®</sup>-winning feature *SLING BLADE*).

Among Hickenlooper's other feature work is *THE LOW LIFE*, a tragicomedy starring Kyra Sedgwick, Sean Astin, Rory Cochrane and Renée Zellweger; *PERSONS UNKNOWN*, an off-beat thriller starring Naomi Watts, Joe Mantegna, Kelly Lynch and J.T. Walsh; and *DOGTOWN*, a drama starring Mary Stuart Masterson, Jon Favreau and Natasha Gregson Wagner.

Hickenlooper's films have received numerous awards and have been shown as official selections at the Cannes, Sundance, Telluride, New York, London, Locarno, Moscow, Tokyo and Toronto International Film Festivals. Other films by Hickenlooper include the documentaries *PICTURE THIS* (about director Peter Bogdanovich); *ART, ACTING, AND THE SUICIDE CHAIR* (about Dennis Hopper); and *MONTE HELLMAN: AMERICAN AUTEUR*. Additionally, he has done

television work for ABC/Disney, CBS, NBC, FOX, and Aaron Spelling. He is also the author of the 1991 book Reel Conversations (Citadel Press), a collection of interviews with directors and critics.

Hickenlooper also produced, with Cary Woods (BEAUTIFUL GIRLS, KIDS, SWINGERS), a feature-length documentary about two Haitian ganglords during the fall of President Aristide titled GHOSTS OF CITÉ SOLEIL. The film won the prestigious DGA Award for Best Documentary in 2007. Hickenlooper also served with Bruce Beresford as a producer on the independent feature CANVAS, starring Marcia Gay Harden and Joe Pantoliano. The film won the Grand Prize at the Rome International Film Festival and was hailed by *Rolling Stone* magazine as one of the best films of 2008. Hickenlooper also produced SECRETS OF THE CODE (based on the *New York Times* best-selling book) about the world's fascination with controversy surrounding Dan Brown's The Da Vinci Code.

Hickenlooper most recently directed and produced the documentary series "HICK" TOWN about his cousin, new Colorado Governor-elect John Hickenlooper, hosting the historic 2008 Democratic National Convention. The series covers the struggles of a big-city mayor as he deals with the chaos surrounding a huge political event descending upon his territory. The show includes special personal appearances by President Barack Obama in addition to Bill and Hillary Clinton, Oprah Winfrey and Senator John Kerry. "HICK" TOWN was produced by Hickenlooper and R.J. Cutler (THE WAR ROOM, AMERICAN HIGH).

George Hickenlooper's engagement in movies and filmmaking was sparked by the involvement of his great uncle, conductor Leopold Stokowski, in the Disney classic FANTASIA. Hickenlooper's interest was further fueled by his father's work as a playwright and his mother's creation of a guerilla theater troop, which appeared at political demonstrations against the war in Vietnam.

Hickenlooper learned the techniques of storytelling from his parents, whether it was to make a political or an aesthetic statement. He made his first serious Super 8mm short films while attending an all-boys Jesuit high school. Many of those shorts (TELEFISSION, A DAY IN THE LIFE, A BLACK AND WHITE FILM, and THE REVENANT) were premiered on public television in St. Louis and Kansas City. After graduating from Yale University, Hickenlooper moved to California and interned for producer Roger Corman. He lectured on film at USC, UCLA, Stanford, NYU, Kenyon College, Harvard and Yale.

**NORMAN SNIDER (Screenwriter, Co-Producer)** has written extensively for movies and television. His work includes the Juno award-winning, internationally recognized psychological drama DEAD RINGERS, directed by David Cronenberg and starring Jeremy Irons; FOX's 1989; the USA Network's 2004 crime drama CALL ME: THE RISE AND FALL OF HEIDI FLEISS, directed by Emmy winner Charles McDougall and starring Jamie-Lynn Sigler (THE SOPRANOS); Showtime Network's 2000 RATED X, directed by Emilio Estevez and starring Charlie Sheen; and the 1998

HBO crime thriller VALENTINE'S DAY, starring Mario Van Peebles. He has also worked with renowned directors Bob Rafelson, Edward Zwick, Norman Jewison and Atom Egoyan.

Considered one of the premiere magazine journalists in Canada, Snider has been nominated for four National Magazine Awards, appearing regularly in such publications as *Toronto Life*, *Saturday Night*, *Maclean's*, and *Rolling Stone*. For seven years, he was a weekly columnist for Canada's National Newspaper, *The Globe and Mail*. Norman Snider is the author of the bestselling true-crime book, *Smokescreen* (Stoddart); a work of political journalism and Book-of-the-Month Club selection, *The Changing of the Guard* (Lester, Orpen, Dennys); and a collection of non-fiction, *The Roaring Eighties and Other Good Times*. Snider teaches at the University of Toronto.

**GARY HOWSAM (Producer)** has been producing filmed entertainment for over 25 years. He and his companies have produced or executive produced numerous television properties and over 100 features during this period. Most recently, he served as executive producer on THE BIG BANG, starring Antonio Banderas and Sam Elliott. Currently, Howsam serves as president and CEO of Rollercoaster Entertainment Inc., which provides packaging, financing, production and licensing/rights management support for feature-film and long-format television projects.

For a period of five years, he served as director and CEO of Peace Arch Entertainment Group, Inc., during which time Howsam's credits include producing the award-winning series THE TUDORS, starring Jonathan Rhys Meyers, and THE GOOD SHEPHERD, starring Christian Slater, Stephen Rea and Molly Parker. Howsam also served as executive producer on WINGED CREATURES, starring Kate Beckinsale, Forest Whitaker, Dakota Fanning, Guy Pearce and Jennifer Hudson; THE DEAL, starring William H. Macy and Meg Ryan; CHAPTER 27, starring Jared Leto and Lindsay Lohan; WATCHING THE DETECTIVES, starring Lucy Liu and Cillian Murphy; and DELIRIOUS, with Steve Buscemi, Michael Pitt and Elvis Costello. In 2004, Howsam also executive produced SHADOWS IN THE SUN, with Harvey Keitel, Joshua Jackson, Clare Forlani and Giancarlo Giannini as well as OUR FATHERS, starring Christopher Plummer, Ellen Burstyn and Ted Danson. In 2002 Howsam produced CRIME SPREE, starring Gérard Depardieu, Harvey Keitel and Johnny Hallyday.

Howsam founded Toronto-based Greenlight Film & Television, Inc., having previously been the chairman and CEO of Greenlight Communications, Inc., overseeing its entertainment and education divisions from 1991 to 1996. Between 1987 and 1991, Howsam was a founding partner and CEO of Producers Group International, Inc., an international communications company offering TV and film production and distribution services, and from 1980 to 1987 he was president and owner of Greenlight Productions Ltd., which specialized in commercials, computer graphics, special effects and educational documentaries. During this period, Howsam produced and directed over 100 documentary shorts.

**BILL MARKS (Producer)** began publishing the science fiction magazine *Miriad* in 1979, printing early works by writers who would go on to become some of the most prominent in the genre, including Hugo-winner Robert J. Sawyer, Charles de Lint, S.M. Stirling and Tanya Huff.

Marks founded Vortex Comics, Inc., in 1982 and built the company to be one of the top-ten publishers of English-language comic books in the world. Vortex is the winner of over 50 industry awards for excellence in content and sales. Vortex published such notable titles as *Mister X*, *Black Kiss*, and *Yummy Fur*, and brought to light such mainstays of the field as Neil Gaiman, Chester Brown, Seth, Maurice Vellekoop, Fiona Smyth and Gilbert and Jamie Hernandez, as well as publishing significant works by many of the industry's established stars. In 1989 Vortex published the hugely popular car-racing comics *Legends of NASCAR*, which were consistently among the 10 best-selling comics in North America during the entire run of the series.

In 1984 Marks co-founded Modern Imageworks Design with Dean Motter. This design and marketing company serviced a broad range of corporate and entertainment industry clients, and produced over 200 album covers, winning three Juno Awards for Best Album Cover Design. Attending the Canadian Film Centre in 1994 as a producer resident, Marks produced numerous short films and directed the short films *THE LIE* and *JACK MAKES A PAINTING*.

Marks produced the feature films *STOLEN HEART*, starring Randy Hughson, Lisa Ryder and Gary Farmer, and *ENTER...ZOMBIE KING*, which he also wrote, winning the award for best screenplay at the Buenos Aires "Rojo Sangre" film festival. *STOLEN HEART* was the winner of the award for Best Canadian Feature Film at the Victoria Independent Film Festival.

Additionally Marks has line produced the feature films: *TERMINAL RUSH*, starring Roddy Piper, *MOVING TARGET*, with Billy Dee Williams, *SAY NOTHING*, starring Nastassja Kinski and William Baldwin, *STORMY WEATHER: THE MUSIC OF HAROLD ARLEN*, and David Bezmozgis' debut feature *VICTORIA DAY*. Most recently, Marks produced and directed the feature films *14 DAYS IN PARADISE* and *CURSE OF THE IRON MASK*.

**GEORGE ZAKK (Producer)** George's films have grossed \$536 million at the domestic box office and more than \$910 million worldwide, including the international blockbusters *XXX*, the hit Disney comedy *THE PACIFIER*, and Universal studio's *THE CHRONICLES OF RIDDICK*.

George is Founder, President, and Creative Director of An Olive Branch Productions, Inc. He is currently in development on a sci-fi/cyberpunk action thriller *WHEN GRAVITY FAILS* based on the award-winning novels by George Alec Effinger written by Brian Klugman and Lee Sternthal (*TRON:LEGACY*), a psychological thriller titled *THE PHILOSOPHERS* by writer/director John Huddles, a drama written by Tom Serchio (*UNTAMED HEART*) titled "The Girl Who Invented Kissing", as well as a number of other films and television projects from varied genres.

For ten years, George was President of One Race Films, building the brand of action star Vin Diesel along with co-producing partner Revolution/Sony Studios. During his tenure at One Race, George was instrumental on such films as *PITCH BLACK*, *THE FAST AND THE*

FURIOUS, and THE IRON GIANT. George served as Executive Producer on both the 2002 summer blockbuster XXX and the hit Disney comedy THE PACIFIER. He also served as Producer on FIND ME GUILTY in 2006, directed by Lifetime Achievement Oscar winner Sydney Lumet. Other credits include Co-Producer on New Line's A MAN APART and Executive Producer of Universal's THE CHRONICLES OF RIDDICK.

George also helped establish Tigon Studios, which produced the video game THE CHRONICLES OF RIDDICK – ESCAPE FROM BUTCHER BAY, based on the RIDDICK franchise. He helped integrate the film with the game, which received numerous accolades including Editor's Choice awards from IGN, GameSpot, and GameSpy. The PC version was IGN's Game of the Month for December 2004 and later ranked it 12<sup>th</sup> on its list of the 25 greatest Xbox games of all time while Game Informer placed ESCAPE FROM BUTCHER BAY as the 8th best on their list of 25 greatest Xbox games of all time. GamesRadar placed it in their "Top 7 movie games that don't suck" list and said that "ESCAPE FROM BUTCHER BAY was a triumph on almost every level."

A member of the Producers Guild of America, George began his career on the music side of the entertainment business, working on stadium tours for such acts as Guns N' Roses, Mötley Crüe, Depeche Mode, Elton John, and Eric Clapton, and producing and arranging music tracks for garage bands in Montreal, Canada.

**ADAM SWICA (Director of Photography)** has been cinematographer and collaborator to the legendary George A. Romero on such films as SURVIVAL OF THE DEAD, DIARY OF THE DEAD, and BRUISER. His other feature credits include THE HAUNTING IN CONNECTICUT (Virginia Madsen, Elias Koteas), WEIRDSVILLE (directed by Alan Moyle and starring Scott Speedman and Wes Bentley), and THE LIFE AND HARD TIMES OF GUY TERRIFICO (Kris Kristofferson).

Swica co-founded The Funnel, an experimental film and theater group, and made experimental movies. Adam then began his apprenticeship in lighting, ending as director of photography. A native of Nottingham, U.K., currently residing in Canada, Swica is an advanced diver, enjoys chainsawing, and makes maple syrup in the spring. Lighting film is his passion.

**WILLIAM STEINKAMP (Editor)** earned Oscar nominations for his editing on TOOTSIE, OUT OF AFRICA and THE FABULOUS BAKER BOYS, and earned an Ace nomination for SCENT OF A WOMAN. Additional credits include THE EXPRESS, AUGUST RUSH, THE INTERPRETER, THE RUNAWAY JURY, DON'T SAY A WORD, HEARTBREAKERS, RANDOM HEARTS, GOODBYE LOVER, A TIME TO KILL, HEAVEN'S PRISONERS and THE FIRM.

**MATTHEW DAVIES (Production Designer)** has completed a total of sixteen projects, eleven of which have been features for theatrical release. Career highlights include FUGITIVE PIECES (directed by Jeremy Podeswa), which opened the 2007 Toronto International Film Festival



and earned him a Genie nomination, as well as SNOW CAKE (directed by Marc Evans), which opened the 2006 Berlin Film Festival.

In 2004 Davies received the DGC Award for Outstanding Achievement in Production Design for his work in Guy Maddin's visually ambitious THE SADDEST MUSIC IN THE WORLD. In the last five years, Davies has been nominated for this same award a total of four times.

His television work has been equally well-regarded with Gemini nominations for ELIZABETH REX (directed by Barbara Willis Sweete) and THE INCREDIBLE MRS. RITCHIE (directed by Paul Johansson).

Recent box office releases include CRY OF THE OWL (directed by Jamie Thraves) and BLINDNESS (directed by Fernando Meirelles), which was selected to open the 2008 Cannes Film Festival.

**DEBRA HANSON (Costume Designer)** received a 2009 Gemini Award for Best Costume Design for OTHELLO, a 2007 Gemini Award for Best Costume Design for ROXANA, and a 2004 Genie nomination for Best Costume Design for THE GOSPEL OF JOHN, starring Christopher Plummer and Henry Ian Cusick, and again in 2001 for NEW WATERFORD GIRL.

Hanson's recent work includes Atom Egoyan's CHLOE, starring Liam Neeson and Amanda Seyfried; Egoyan's ADORATION; Howard McCain's OUTLANDER; Sarah Polley's feature-film directorial debut, AWAY FROM HER, starring Julie Christie and Gordon Pinsent; SNOW CAKE, starring Alan Rickman, Sigourney Weaver and Carrie-Anne Moss; and Don McKellar's second feature CHILDSTAR, starring Jennifer Jason Leigh.

Her list of film credits also includes George Mendeluk's 1999 action/drama, MEN OF MEANS and Daniel D'Or's sci-fi asteroid pic, FALLING FIRE.

On the small screen, Hanson has costumed Sturla Gunnarsson's miniseries ABOVE AND BEYOND; the TV movies THE MAN WHO SAVED CHRISTMAS and IN GOD'S COUNTRY; the television docudrama STORMY WEATHER: THE MUSIC OF HAROLD ARLEN, starring Paul Soles, Deborah Harry, Sandra Bernhard and Rufus Wainwright; Steven Williams' VERDICT IN BLOOD; and A KILLING SPRING. Hanson designed costumes for Laurie Lynd's miniseries, I WAS A RAT, starring Tom Conti and Brenda Fricker; the period television movie WHAT KATY DID, based on a novel by Susan Coolidge; Clement Virgo's multi-award-winning contemporary love story, LOVE COME DOWN starring Larenz Tate and Deborah Cox; and THE TAMING OF THE SHREW, starring Henry Czerny and Colm Feore.

For the stage, Hanson worked in the Stratford Festival Theatre where she established herself as one of Canada's foremost designers and head of design from 1989 to 1994. She has also designed for the theater in Toronto and New York. She won a Dora Mavor Moore Award for Outstanding Costume Design for her work on the play TRANSLATIONS.

