

# ***HOODWINKED***

About The Production

## **TROUBLE IN THE HOOD: The True Story of Little Red Riding Hood**

Everyone knows the story of Little Red Riding Hood . . . or so they think. That's all about to change because no one has ever seen their favorite fairy tale quite like this -- turned upside-down, inside-out and reinvented as a computer-animated caper comedy that at last reveals the shocking true-crime investigation behind the legend. At last, the full story can be revealed of how Red (ANNE HATHAWAY), Granny (GLENN CLOSE), The Woodsman (JIM BELUSHI) and the Wolf (PATRICK WARBURTON) all came together as criminal suspects in a case that almost ***HOODWINKED*** the law. With inventive story telling, spunk and wit, filmmakers Cory & Todd and Tony Leech bring to the screen a story for the young, the young at heart and everyone in between.

***HOODWINKED*** begins at the end of the tale and winds its way back . . . It all begins as a feathered and furry assortment of cops and detectives turn up at Granny's cottage in the woods to answer a domestic disturbance call. It looks at first to be just another open-and-shut case of a woodsman assaulting a wolf impersonating a granny, with an assortment of criminal charges including breaking and entering, intent to eat and wielding an axe without a license.

But looks can be deceiving. As debonair detective Nicky Flippers (DAVID OGDEN STIERS) and hard-nosed (or is that furry-nosed?) Police Chief Grizzly (XZIBIT) and fellow police officer Bill Stork (Anthony Anderson) question the slippery suspects, they discover each one has a completely different, yet equally wild and woolly, tale to tell. Not only that, but it seems that this crime has ties to the notorious "Goody Bandit" who has been ravaging the woods by stealing the valuable recipes that keep the forest in muffins.

None of the group is exactly what they seem, and each has their own deep secrets and wily deceptions. The detectives soon uncover that seemingly innocent Red is worldly wise; that the big, bad Wolf has been terribly misunderstood; that Granny has a secret life no one could have imagined; and that the insecure Woodsman, whose brawn just might outweigh -- well you know the stereotype -- has some surprising ambitions of his own.

They're not your usual suspects -- yet the investigators must use their clashing eyewitness accounts to solve the increasingly convoluted riddle of who among them has committed a crime. When at last the nefarious villain's true identity is revealed, it's up to Red, the Wolf, The Woodsman and Granny to put aside their differences and find their own original twist on happily ever after.

The Weinstein Company presents **HOODWINKED**, the all-CGI feature-film directorial debut of Cory Edwards with co-directors Tony Leech and Todd Edwards. The screenplay is written by Cory Edwards, Todd Edwards and Tony Leech. The film is produced by Maurice Kanbar, Sue Bea Montgomery, Preston Stutzman and David K. Lovegren for Kanbar Entertainment in association with Kanbar Animation Studio.

**HOODWINKED** features the voice talents of Anne Hathaway (“The Princess Diaries,” “Ella Enchanted”), Glenn Close (“101 Dalmatians,” “Tarzan,” “The Big Chill”), Patrick Warburton (“Seinfeld,” “The Emperor’s New Groove”), David Ogden Stiers (“Lilo and Stitch”), Andy Dick (ABC’s “Less Than Perfect”), Chazz Palminteri (“The Usual Suspects,” “Stuart Little,” “Analyze This”), Xzibit (“Derailed,” MTV’s “Pimp my Ride,” “XxX”), Anthony Anderson (“Hustle & Flow,” “Barbershop,” “Me, Myself & Irene”) and Jim Belushi (“According to Jim,” “K-9,” “Joe Somebody”).

### **INVESTIGATION OF A FAIRY TALE:** **The Origins of HOODWINKED**

Behind every legend lies the real and surprising story of what *actually* happened – and there’s no more world-famous legend than that of “Little Red Riding Hood.” This seemingly simple story of a wolf who masquerades as a grandmother in order to gobble up a hooded girl has become an indelible part of the global cultural consciousness, with its classic “my, what big teeth you have!” climax. But perhaps the story isn’t quite so straightforward after all.

Indeed, so many questions remain unanswered from the original story as we know it. What was the Wolf’s *true* motive? Where was Granny anyway? Why did the Woodsman raise his axe? And just who was Red Riding Hood deep down inside that red robe?

Breaking the celebrated story wide open, **HOODWINKED** takes no prisoners as it irreverently and joyfully re-frames the fairy tale as a criminal investigation that combines humor, heart and wild hijinx in a story about the power of believing in who you truly are.

**HOODWINKED** marks the first film from the brand new Kanbar Animation Studio, a joint effort between entrepreneur and inventor Maurice Kanbar (inventor of SKYY Vodka, among others) and animation veteran Sue Montgomery. Kanbar and Montgomery launched their new company specifically to provide highly creative, story-focused, computer-generated films for increasingly sophisticated family audiences. Both share a life-long love of classic fairy tales. . . and they envisioned having a lot of fun taking those same beloved childhood favorites apart and turning them on their sides with a thoroughly modern POV.

In choosing their premiere project, Kanbar and Montgomery were drawn to the talents of two young movie-making brothers, Cory and Todd Edwards, whose Christmas special, “Wobots,” a children’s sci-fi adventure about a rag-tag group of misfit robots, showcased their skill at carving out moving, funny, original stories in a compelling digital animation style.

“We saw the Edwards as being real renaissance men with an abundance of storytelling talent,” explains Montgomery. “They were a terrific match for what we wanted to do with Kanbar.”

The Edwards brothers, in turn, pitched to Kanbar a completely unexpected re-telling of “Little Red Riding Hood,” re-spun with tongue firmly planted in cheek as a twisting, turning, psychological detective story – marrying the archetypal characters of “Red Riding Hood” with the hard-boiled wit and humor of a “Usual Suspects” or “Blood Simple” and the emotion of a “Shrek” for a family audience. Kanbar and Montgomery were immediately enchanted.

As the Edwards developed the story further, along with co-writer and co-director Tony Leech, they decided to unfold the tale in a series of “Rashomon”-like flashbacks from Red, The Wolf, The Woodsman and Granny – as the forest’s most brilliant amphibian, the debonair detective Nicky Flippers, tries to determine who should take the fall for the disturbance at the cottage. As each one tells an equally entertaining but quite different version of the day’s harrowing events, a revealing big picture and the true identity of the villain emerges, leading to a climactic chase to bring the culprit to justice.

The Edwards brothers and Leech were convinced that young and old audiences alike would have a blast playing along and following the wild-and-crazy curves of the investigation.

Says Cory Edwards, “Our take was that, thanks to music videos, commercials and especially video games, kids are now quite used to non-linear stories – what we call 3D storytelling. So, in *HOODWINKED*, we thought they’d have a lot of fun going back in time to learn how these four classic characters they thought they knew so well – Red Riding Hood, Granny, the Wolf and the Woodsman – all ended up in the cottage on that fateful night in the first place. Anybody who thought they knew the story of Red Riding Hood is bound to be in for some surprises.”

To give the film’s well-known characters a whole new sense of depth and humanity, the writing team decided to take them out of the realm of the magical and fantastical and re-imagine them as down-right *real*, with real quirks, foibles and hopes for the future to which people of all ages and backgrounds could relate.

“Our forest purposefully doesn’t have any fairies or magic in it and all the characters could easily be part of the modern world,” notes Todd Edwards. “Take a character like Nicky

Flippers, for example. He might be a four-footed, green frog but he's also a very savvy and polished detective who's devoted to solving this crime. You can relate to him just as you can relate to Red, Granny, the Wolf and the Woodsman.”

Maurice Kanbar also gave the writers total freedom to be as playful, bold and sharp-tongued in their dialogue and storytelling as they yearned to be. “One of Maurice’s creative edicts in the beginning was this – ‘Thou Shalt Not Bore’ – and I think we’ve really stuck to that,” Cory Edwards laughs.

Yet at the heart of the rollicking tale the Edwards brothers and Leech came up with is not only an action-packed adventure with elements of slapstick comedy, quick-witted repartee, music videos and extreme adventure films but also a heartfelt fairy-tale moral. The core of the story becomes how the teen-aged Red learns how to make her seemingly far-away dreams come true in the course of *HOODWINKED*.

The combination of the story’s high-flying hijinx and heartwarming emotions made it irresistible to those who saw the final screenplay. Recalls Montgomery: “We knew we really had something when I started to read the story out loud to my kids and then they started to spread it to the neighborhood kids!”

Adds producer Preston Stutzman, “This is not a lightweight re-telling of the tale of Red Riding hood. We knew from the beginning that it had to go way beyond a simple bedtime story and bring a completely new twist. In the tradition of ‘The Incredibles’ and ‘Toy Story,’ we hope it’s the kind of smart yet fun-loving tale that appeals equally to kids and adults.”

### **CRIMES AND MYTH DEMEANERS: ABOUT THE CHARACTERS**

No matter how cleverly written, engagingly drawn or realistically programmed a digitally animated character might be, the only thing that truly can bring them to life are human performances. The filmmakers of *HOODWINKED* were thrilled to be able to have the film’s drama and comedy delivered by a diverse cast of accomplished screen personalities and comic talents.

Among the accused are:

**NAME: Red**

**OCCUPATION: Goody Deliverer**

**CHARGE: Possible Goody Thief**

**LAST SEEN: In a red hood with a basketful of muffins dreaming of far-away places**

Although she is best known as an endangered little girl without much to say for herself, this updated version of Red Riding Hood redraws the character in an entirely new light, as a teenaged rebel with her own hopes, dreams and tough-as-nails attitude. The idea, say the Edward brothers, was to “take the little out of Red Riding Hood!” This big-dreaming, karate-kicking version of the girl now known simply as Red was inspired in part by George Bailey’s travel fantasies in Frank Capra’s “It’s a Wonderful Life,” in part by the swagger of James Dean, and in part by the alluringly wide-eyed designs of Japanese Anime characters.

To give a believable and emotionally true voice to Red, the filmmakers always had one actress in mind: the prodigiously talented young star Anne Hathaway, who came to the fore in the run-away hit “The Princess Diaries” and has gone on to become one of the most promising screen stars in Hollywood. Hathaway’s unique mix of comic wit and inner strength seemed to suit the character and her transformative journey to a T. “Anne has the perfect personality for a character who is constant jeopardy,” notes Tony Leech. “Her Red brings something entirely new to a character everything thinks they know.”

**NAME: Big, Bad Wolf**

**OCCUPATION: Under-the-covers Reporter**

**CHARGE: Intent-To-Eat**

**LAST SEEN: On the prowl . . . for a story, that is**

The infamous Big, Bad Wolf also gets a major makeover in *HOOKWINKED*. Once the unquestionable villain of the “Red Riding Hood” story, he is now a far more complex and comical character -- the Bob Woodward of the woods. He’s not visiting Granny’s house to find a meal. Instead, according to his story, he’s gone under cover to track down the truly terrifying recipe thief, Goody Bandit.

To turn around the notoriously negative image of the Big Bad Wolf, the filmmakers turned to Patrick Warburton, who has made a career of crafting off-beat, fiercely funny characters such as Elaine’s boyfriend David Puddy on “Seinfeld” and Kronk in animated “The Emperor’s

New Groove.” “Patrick was always our first choice for the Wolf,” says Cory Edwards. “He has that sly sense of humor that makes the character so much fun.”

**NAME: The Woodsman**

**OCCUPATION: Actor, “Paul’s Bunion Cream” Spokesman, Would-Be Yodeler**

**CHARGE: Wielding an Axe Without a License**

**LAST SEEN: Eating Schnitzel**

Though he wields a mighty axe, the Woodsman of *HOODWINKED* is hampered by a hilariously pea-sized brain. He might appear to be a happy tree-chopper but in fact this Woodsman longs to be a successful actor and yodeling sensation. “The Woodsman was always the big wild card when we were writing the screenplay,” notes Tony Leech. “It was challenging to figure out where to put him in the scheme of events – and he wound up right in the middle of it all, in the wrong place at the wrong time as usual!”

The filmmakers knew that to bring the Woodsman’s delightfully dumb qualities to life they would need a voice actor with real comic chops – which brought them to Jim Belushi, who most recently has been starring in and producing the hit television comedy “According To Jim.” “Jim has such a wonderfully exuberant quality and he has a real gift for being equally funny to kids and adults,” says up Todd Edwards. “He kept us all in stitches as The Woodsman.”

**NAME: Granny**

**OCCUPATION: Granny, Skydiver, Snowboarder, Mountain Climber**

**CHARGE: Alleged to be the notorious Goody Bandit**

**LAST SEEN: Flying down a gnarly steep ski slope**

While all the characters of *HOODWINKED* shatter stereotypes, Granny might turn out to have the most unexpected personality quirks of all. Far from being the frail, fragile, stay-at-home grandmother of yore, this bold old lady is secretly readying her extreme sports skills for the X Games.

From the beginning, the Edwards brothers and Leech wanted to create a Granny unlike any other on the animated screen. Says Todd Edwards: “We thought it would be a lot of fun to take this Granny who seems very mild-mannered on the outside and turn her into this outrageous thrill seeker who would just as soon be skydiving and snowboarding as sitting in her rocker.”

To nail the character’s two sides – sweet and incredibly sassy – the filmmakers recruited

one of Hollywood's most lauded actresses: Golden Globe winner, Tony Award winner, Emmy Award winner multiple Academy Award nominee Glenn Close. . "Glenn gave the character so much life, very effectively mixing the sweet old Granny character with an extreme sports junkie," says producer Montgomery.

Meanwhile, on the other side of the law and in the woods at large are an equally entertaining crew of characters and voice talents. These include comedian Andy Dick in the role of the cute and fluffy – or is he? – bunny named Boingo; rap star and screen Xzibit as Chief Grizzly, who just wants to solve the crime as fast as he can; comedian Anthony Anderson as Detective Bill Stork; Academy Award nominee Chazz Palminteri as Woolworth the Sheep; and director Cory Edwards doing a comic turn as the over-caffeinated squirrel Twitchy.

But the criminal investigation at the center of *HOODWINKED* would certainly get nowhere without the supreme interrogating genius of detective Nicky Flippers, who is one fantastically smart frog. Originally, the filmmakers considered several other species for the role. They went through a whole mini menagerie before a drawing of the sleek, skinny, elegant amphibian lit up their imaginations.

"Nicky the Flippers was definitely our man, and David Ogden Stiers gave him the perfect mix of wisdom and Cary Grant kind of sarcastic wit that was exactly what we envisioned," sums up Cory Edwards.

### **MEANWHILE, BACK IN MANILA: ABOUT THE DIGITAL ANIMATION OF HOODWINKED**

*HOODWINKED* not only breaks the conventional mold of fairy-tales. It also breaks the mold of animation production, becoming an example of the new boom in a more iconoclastic, *independent* digital animation. It's a frontier that has finally opened up thanks to the increasing accessibility to cutting-edge technology.

Having created a highly stylistic fairy tale world – and with Edwards and Leech having painstakingly drawn detailed storyboards and eye-popping set designs for locales ranging from quaint cottages to dangerous mountain peaks -- the filmmakers of *HOODWINKED* knew they would need some serious computer power to bring it all to life.

Luckily, in today's world, that was for the first time a real possibility. *HOODWINKED* producer David Lovegren, who worked for years producing large-scale animation projects for

Disney, explains: “Six or seven years ago, the idea of doing *HOODWINKED* as an independent animation feature would have been impossible. High-quality computer animation was just too expensive and only major companies like Disney could afford budgets that reached a million dollars a minute.” Continues Sue Montgomery: “Now the playing field has finally been leveled because the same software and technology that once revolutionized animated films is available to many more filmmakers.”

To turn bits and bytes into the wolves and bears of Red’s “hood,” the filmmakers jetted off to 5,000 square foot studio in the capitol of the Philippines, Manila, where a team of top-notch animators was assembled. Lovegren and Montgomery chose Manila not only because it has a vast and experienced pool of animation talent but because most of the people there have grown up on American pop culture – and had a real appreciation for the sly humor and visual style that make *HOODWINKED* so distinctive.

In Manila, Lovegren and Montgomery worked together to establish cutting-edge procedures that significantly shrank the normal multi-year animation film schedule and turbo-charged the entire process. The break-neck pace was a constant challenge to the Manila artists, who fine-tuned and layered the characters and sets of *HOODWINKED* in the 3D world of Maya Software. To further speed up the production, an Indian animation team was later brought on board to finish the detailed digital lighting of more than 1300 digital shots.

By the climax of production, work was taking place on three different continents connected only by the thread of broadband. For a fairy tale that’s been around for centuries it was a whole brave new world.

### **ONCE UPON A TUNE: ABOUT HOODWINKED’S MUSIC**

As the crime investigation gets under way in *HOODWINKED*, and each main character spins an equally outrageous tale of how they wound up in Granny’s cottage, their stories are in part propelled by a soundtrack comprised of fifteen original pop, rock and soul tunes. From the bluesy “Red is Blue” to the hilarious gyrations of the Woodsman’s “Schnitzel Song,” the music of the film lends a hand in the storytelling and carries a lot of emotion to the story.

A former “coffeehouse performer,” Todd Edwards wrote nine of the songs for the movie, composing them on his acoustic guitar while he was working on the screenplay, so that the dialogue inspired the songs and vice versa in an organic process.



Edwards also performs four of the songs for the movie including “Eva Deanna” (a punk-style rocker written about his two-year old niece, daughter of associate producer Katie Hooten) and “Tree Critter,” a ‘70s-rock screamer that features Edwards as an animated woodchuck.

In addition, Cory Edwards wrote two rap-style songs for *HOODWINKED*: “The Real G” which serves as Granny’s extreme sports theme song and the high-energy “Bounce,” which runs during the credits. Building on the songs the Edwards wrote, composer John Mark Painter scored the film, harking back to the dramatic jazzy riffs of classic detective movies in his compositions.

As with the rest of the film’s creation and design, the music for *HOODWINKED* took the Edwards brothers into wholly new directions, but that’s their favorite kind of path. Sums up Cory Edwards: “We’ve always loved pushing our creative resources to the limit, taking a medium and stretching it into something much more epic than what you might expect – and we had a great time doing that with *HOODWINKED*.”

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