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THE CURRENT WAR



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THE CURRENT WAR PRODUCTION NOTES

“The great Edison... the man who invented the Twentieth Century”

E. L. Doctorow, *Ragtime*

“If someday they say of me that in my work I have contributed something to the welfare and happiness of my fellow man, I shall be satisfied.”

George Westinghouse

SHORT SYNOPSIS

Starring Benedict Cumberbatch as Thomas Edison and Michael Shannon as George Westinghouse, *THE CURRENT WAR* is the epic story of the cutthroat competition between the greatest inventors of the industrial age over whose electrical system would power the new century. Backed by J.P. Morgan, Edison dazzles the world by lighting Manhattan. But Westinghouse, aided by Nikola Tesla, has seen fatal flaws in Edison’s direct current design. Igniting a war of currents, Westinghouse and Tesla bet everything on risky and dangerous alternating current. Directed by Alfonso Gomez-Rejon (*Me and Earl and the Dying Girl*) and written by playwright Michael Mitnick (*Sex Lives of our Parents*), *THE CURRENT WAR* also stars Katherine Waterston, Nicholas Hoult, Tom Holland, Matthew Macfadyen, and Tuppence Middleton.

LONG SYNOPSIS

Winter, 1880. A train carries a group of New York fat cats to a field in the depths of the New Jersey countryside. Shrouded by darkness, a lone figure emerges: Thomas Alva Edison, illuminated only by the faint glow of his trademark cigar. Suddenly a switch is flicked and the landscape is bathed in the glow of row upon row of outsized bulbs. Using his direct current system, the Wizard of Menlo Park has, seemingly, cast his greatest spell yet.

Three hundred or so miles to the west, rival industrialist George Westinghouse hears of Edison’s breakthrough in his Pittsburgh mansion, Solitude. With his wife, Marguerite, and loyal chief engineer, Franklin Pope (an old colleague of Edison’s), he takes stock of the news. He asks for Edison to be invited to dinner to meet the famed inventor in person.

Now in Washington, Edison coaxes and cajoles the great financier J.P. Morgan to throw his money behind his invention. Instead, he finds himself in The White House with his wife Mary, children Dash and Dot, and his British personal secretary, Samuel Insull, showing off another invention, the Edison Phonograph. There, President Chester A. Arthur attempts to entice him to design weapons of war for the military. Edison is unequivocal. “The only device I shall never build is that which takes a human life,” he tells Arthur.

Leaving the Oval Office without the funds he’d sought, Edison unveils his plan: to light up a square mile of Manhattan with his electrical globes and six giant dynamos. Insull is instructed to set up a new enterprise — Edison Electric — in New York.

At Pittsburgh train station, Westinghouse prepares to welcome Edison and his family, only for the tired Edison to snub the engagement. Stung, Westinghouse returns to Solitude. Back at his home and laboratory Menlo Park, New Jersey Edison he learns that Morgan will fund his project after all.

As Edison lights up New York’s Pearl Street in a fanfare of publicity and public clamor, Westinghouse muses over how he’ll generate enough power to expand the grid across the city using direct current. So, too, does Nikola Tesla. The Serbian immigrant — an impoverished inventor — offers his services, and his idea for alternating current (AC), to Edison. It will, he promises, send more electricity over longer distances. Edison believes AC to be too dangerous and unmanageable to harness, but hires Tesla, offering him a meagre \$10 a week to work at Menlo Park.

As Edison plots to expand his electricity across 12 US cities using DC, Westinghouse’s AC system successfully sends electricity a mile, lighting up the town of Great Barrington, Massachusetts, and outraging his rival in the process. To Edison’s annoyance, Westinghouse seems to be cracking it — and using his own invention, the bulb, too. Tesla offers to design a motor to power Edison’s own AC system, but is turned down flat. Edison believes too stubbornly in his own genius to course correct. His obligations to Tesla lie in tatters. The Serb leaves to set up his own company, Tesla Electric.

Instead, Edison takes the fight to Westinghouse. He smears him in the press, and even prank calls him using his phonograph, but succeeds only in redoubling his rival’s efforts. With the Westinghouse Electric Company set up, and a new patent for his system submitted, the genteel industrialist steels himself for battle.

For Edison, the only solution is to work harder and drive his men more ferociously. Then tragedy strikes: his beloved wife, Mary, falls ill and dies. The inventor, disconsolate, buries himself ever-deeper into his work, even as Westinghouse's lighting finds favor with increasing numbers of towns around the country. Morgan counsels him to switch to AC; Edison again refuses. Seattle, Fort Worth, New Orleans... as Mary Edison is buried, city after city falls to Westinghouse's system. Money runs low.

The 1893 Chicago World's Fair puts Edison and Westinghouse head-to-head in a high-profile tender bid. Both seek to light up the city for the world-famous event. In the frenzy to invent a motor to boost his system, Westinghouse's trusty engineer Pope is killed. Rumors swiftly spread that alternating current is deadly after all. After soul-searching with Marguerite, George Westinghouse resolves to overcome the loss and win the War of the Currents.

Edison, meanwhile, takes a final opportunity to discredit his rival by using a secretly-sourced Westinghouse generator to power the first electric chair. A court case is brought by Westinghouse, in which Edison claims that, while his rival's system is dangerous, 'Westinghousing' is the most humane way to execute those on death row. The two men meet, finally and briefly, on the steps of the Buffalo courthouse.

Duped and defrauded by unscrupulous businessmen and reduced to digging ditches, Tesla finally meets Westinghouse in his dowdy hotel room. The two immediately hit it off, as Tesla outlines his vision for a new form of power that harnesses the energy of Niagara Falls. The like-minded men collaborate: one providing the AC system, the other the motor to magnify its power.

Using a private investigator, Westinghouse uncovers and publicizes Edison's scheme to discredit him via the electric chair. He wins the World Fair contract — and the War of the Currents — as the execution of a murderer, William Kemmler, ends in a grizzly, headline-grabbing fiasco. Westinghouse is triumphant but remains a little-heralded figure; Edison is beaten but his fame and determination to innovate remain undimmed. He pours himself into the infant motion picture industry, setting up the Edison Motion Picture company, patenting the Kinetograph and making images dance.

MAKING THE CURRENT WAR

THE SPARK...

Not many screenplays have had their genesis in the rush of a college orientation week. But that's exactly where *The Current War* began. On its screenwriter, Michael Mitnick's first day at Yale University's School of Drama he was given a simple assignment: to bring an idea from history to class. "My mind flashed back to an Apple computers poster of Thomas Edison I'd had on my childhood bedroom wall," he remembers, adding with a laugh: "I'd picked [that poster] mainly because I thought Edison looked like a mad scientist." That first night in New Haven, he set to work researching the famous inventor. He quickly discovered that there was much more to his story than the invention of the lightbulb and a shock of mad scientist hair. "I stumbled upon 'The War of the Currents' — an epic battle between Edison and [industrialist] George Westinghouse to determine the world's standard of electricity," Mitnick says. The story took all sorts of unexpected, tragic and thrilling turns. There was a scurrilous smear campaign, the secret invention of the electric chair, the violent death of a man, and the advent of a unique scientific talent in Serbian immigrant Nikola Tesla. It was a eureka moment. "I remember thinking, 'How did I not know this?'" he marvels. "Then it became a ten-year process of writing it, first as a musical and finally as a film."

His initial musical featured songs such as 'I Believe' ("Edison tries to scare the crowd into choosing his electricity by zapping a horse dead with Westinghouse's generator," explains Mitnick of the lyrics). It played for four nights at Yale's Black Box Theatre in 2008. "We had a cardboard horse and the Westinghouse generator was a metal switch I bought for a buck from a New Haven hardware store," he says. With a \$250 budget, a real Westinghouse generator — or horse — were out of the question. He tried to move the show to the grander surrounds of the Manhattan Theatre Club in New York, only to be met with frustration. "The theatre didn't want to produce it," he says, "and no-one else did." The story seemed to have ended there. Except, well, it hadn't.

As his screenwriting and playwriting career took off after leaving Yale, his *Current War* musical gathered dust. But it nagged away at his newly-hired movie agent. "He asked if I'd ever thought about making it into a movie," says Mitnick. "He meant [for me] to keep the songs, but I went away and wrote it as a straight-up drama. I used the places where there were songs to go deeper

into [Edison] and [Westinghouse's] characters." Suddenly, there was a chance of making *The Current War* into a movie. He'd even get real horses this time.

COMPLETING THE CIRCUIT...

Mitnick's first draft began to come together. Out went the songs; in came a deep dive into these famous, but much misunderstood figures. "I had a long period of research," he remembers, "going through archives, newspapers, primary sources." Key reference books for his two — with Tesla, three — main characters were Francis Jones' 'Thomas Alva Edison', 'A life Of George Westinghouse' by Henry G. Prout, and Tesla's own autobiography, 'My Inventions'. Three books by a one-time Edison employee called Francis Jehl, 'Menlo Park Reminisces', offered invaluable, if partisan insights into life at Menlo Park. All went into the pot. Mitnick also scoured Edison's extensive notebooks and journals, paid visits to the Library of Congress and Pittsburgh's history museum, and enlisted the help of pre-eminent Edison historian Paul Israel. Unsurprisingly, perhaps, the first draft clocked in at a hefty 168 pages. "It went everywhere," he remembers.

Fined-tuned and pared down (there were more than 60 drafts in total), the screenplay for *The Current War* made its way onto the prestigious Black List, Hollywood's repository of highly-rated, unmade scripts. It was quickly picked up, initially by Russian filmmaker Timur Bekmambetov, before finding its way into the hands of American director Alfonso Gomez-Rejon. Fresh from directing the much-loved *Me And Earl And The Dying Girl*, the American director was at a crossroads at the time. "I had choices and that can be very confusing and distracting," he says. "I didn't want to get lost." Gomez-Rejon didn't immediately connect with the script, until his agent suggested he take another read. "There was more to it than I'd seen," the director recalls. "This idea of the nature of success and how far a man would go to win, and how far will you go to be remembered."

His imagination was stoked, too, by the contrast in how its central figures approached their lives. "One, Westinghouse, through staying anonymous and leaving the world a better place," he explains, "and the other, Edison, [was] aware of his own iconography. He lost the War of the Currents, but he's the one we remember the most. It brought out questions of ego versus humility. I saw a lot of my father in Westinghouse, [and then] I started to see what it could be."

There was a thematic progression from *Me And Earl And The Dying Girl* that had a pull, too. "Earl was an attempt to understand loss," he adds, "and *The Current War* looked beyond that. A feeling of rebirth through creativity, spontaneity, invention. A love of making things and a chance to explore the true nature of winning." Edison would be defeated by his rival and broken by a huge loss, but remain undaunted. He'd go on to help invent the motion picture business, for one thing.

"It may seem to be a cold and ruthless story about science and ambition on the surface," says Mitnick, "[but] the emotions run so deep."

FLICKING THE SWITCH...

The screenwriter recalls his first meeting with *The Current War's* director, Alfonso Gomez-Rejon. "It was in a Manhattan bar," he remembers, "and we talked about what drew each of us to the story. One of the things was that these people were changing the world aged forty. We think of Thomas Edison as this white-haired Benjamin Franklin-type who 'invented' the lightbulb. What these guys [really] invented was the idea of not playing by the rules."

The rules weren't in Gomez-Rejon's playbook, either. Rather than a fusty, Masterpiece Theatre-style movie, or taking a painterly Merchant Ivory approach, he wanted to juice the story up with energy and bring a modern spirit to its telling. "I love Merchant Ivory — *The Remains Of The Day* is one of my favorite films — I just didn't think it was what this movie needed," he says. "These men are futurists and I wanted it to be in sync with the spontaneity of their ideas."

"The reason why we love Alfonso for the movie," says producer Basil Iwanyk, "other than that we needed it to be emotional and *Me And Earl And The Dying Girl* is very emotional, is that this is a very American movie. He wanted it to feel like an American movie, not a BBC-style [period piece]. He's a Scorsese protégé and like Scorsese, he plays with the [medium], whether it's where he puts the camera, the montages, the music... he just wants it to feel lively and fun and visual."

Gomez-Rejon took inspiration from the tumultuous changes of the late 19th century. "Everything that was happening in the world at that time — art, music — was evolving quickly," he says. "I felt that if I could capture that energy then maybe this could be decent."

As Iwanyk notes, he had modern inspirations too. “Alfonso connected with it on a very rock ‘n’ roll level,” he explains. “He saw this movie like Mick Jagger and David Bowie, or Steve Jobs and Elon Musk, going toe-to-toe.”

Gomez-Rejon assembled a look book to share the visual language of the film he wanted to make. “It was full of life and color,” he says of the reference guide. “It wasn’t black-and-white sepia. There were very few film references. It was all back to rock ‘n’ roll: concert films like *Gimme Shelter*, *D. A. Pennebaker*, that was the vibe.”

“The thing Alfonso told me that I always thought was interesting was that this wasn’t a movie about the past, it was a movie about the future,” adds the man who plays George Westinghouse, Michael Shannon. “I thought that was a really cool way of looking at it.”

LIGHTS, CAMERA, ACTION...

Teaming up with his *Me And Earl And The Dying Girl* cinematographer, Chung Chung-hoon, Gomez-Rejon set about injecting energy into the period. Shooting with an Alexa XT Plus, DP and director soon settled back into their old rhythms. “We don’t need to talk much on set anymore,” says Chung. “We understand each other without saying much.”

The results were dynamic and original. “Alfonso and Chung’s cinematography and staging of the drama felt incredibly fresh,” enthuses Benedict Cumberbatch (Thomas Edison). “Very, very rarely was it the master and the close-up.” Their snap pans, zooms, oners and crane shoots were all in service of the story. “He got the beating heart of every single one of these characters,” the actor adds.

“Alfonso was always pushing the boundaries in the way he used the camera,” says Tuppence Middleton (Mary Edison), “so every day was really educational for me. I’d go into to watch on days when I wasn’t filming.”

Screenwriter Michael Mitnick got a similar buzz from seeing his story unfold. “It was exhilarating,” he says. “He’d taken these three characters I’d written — the story primarily takes place between 1886 and 1893 — and filmed them like we’re following David Bowie or Mick Jagger. It was such an aggressive and cool approach.”

With the two main characters kept apart for most of the movie, the shoot logically broke down into two parts. “I shot two movies, basically,” says Gomez-Rejon. “It was very hard on the crew because you get into a rhythm, and overnight it’s a different cast, a different setting, a different everything. But it was re-energizing.”

THE CHARACTERS

THOMAS EDISON (BENEDICT CUMBERBATCH)

The man picked to play Edison, Benedict Cumberbatch, was already aboard when Gomez-Rejon took the reins. Cumberbatch had been entranced by the screenplay right from its opening scene. In it, Edison — the so-called ‘Wizard of Menlo Park’ — dazzles a gathering of New York fat cats by lighting up a wintry field with giant bulbs. “All you see is this wave of furs and silk-top hats and spats getting covered in mud,” says Cumberbatch, reliving his first impression. “Then in the distance there’s this glowing ember of a cigar. Then the flick of the switch and this pop and crunch of all these bulbs coming on. It was the idea of this man dragging money into a muddy field and playing god — making light out of dark.” It was, he remembers, “a bobby dazzler” of an opening.

For Gomez-Rejon, who came on board after Cumberbatch, the casting was perfect. “He’d have been my first choice,” he says. “His curiosity was so infectious and his energy made the set feel so alive. And he went so effortlessly into the dark side of Edison.”

Cumberbatch speaks equally warmly of the collaboration. “Anytime I felt insecurity over accent or being far away from the experience of Edison and straying into the territory of doing something safe, he’d go: ‘C’mon man, you don’t need to worry. Just go for it.’ I felt I didn’t need to entertain or explain or show; I could just be this character. I absolutely loved working with him.”

Knowing only Edison’s broader brushstrokes before taking the role, Cumberbatch quickly discovered a life overflowing with nuance and complexity. “I think I’d been sold the idea of him as the inventor of the modern age in America, rather than the complexities of what that involved,” he says. “He was actually in a way less than that, but also more than that.”

It’s not just Edison’s fabled smarts, ruthlessness and creativity that he was able to embody. He captured another, less renowned side to the man: his human

side. “Benedict is a jokey, down-to-earth, accessible guy,” Iwanyk points out, “and the side he’s bring to Edison is that he is a jokester, he is a huckster, he is a larger-than-life guy and he does like to dominate the room.” As the producer explains, Edison had an almost prophetic grasp of the power of celebrity. “He’s a movie star, and he embraces that persona and throws that energy out to dominate the room. That’s a side of Benedict I haven’t seen before.”

Playing the cigar-puffing Edison had one downside for Cumberbatch. “The cigars can definitely take an early retirement,” he laughs. “They weren’t proper cigars, they were nicotine-free, but we’d often put a bit of normal cigar smoke in there. Your mouth feels rotten by the end of the day, which is an unhealthy reminder that the guy probably had halitosis.”

Another unusual challenge came in portraying Edison’s struggle with his increasing deafness. “[By the end of the film] he’s completely deaf in his left ear and partially in his right,” Cumberbatch explains. “Benedict wanted to know to what degree was Edison deaf at the year he was playing him,” adds Mitnick. “[Edison historian] Paul Israel came into the conversation and fortunately the truth supported what we hoped: Edison wouldn’t need to say ‘WHAT?’ or ‘HUH?’ before every line. Yet, if you watch the film closely, you can see Benedict cocking his head ever so slightly.”

Painstaking research, long conversations with Gomez-Rejon, and much thought enabled the actor to navigate the complex fault lines between Edison and Westinghouse. The Current War doesn’t have a “baddie” or a “goodie”, he stresses. “I just relaxed about siding with one person or the other, and [about] thinking of George Westinghouse as the quiet, heroic tortoise to the loud-mouthed Edison hare, and Tesla as somehow overseeing the whole show. I stopped dividing them and just really absorbed myself into Edison’s world.”

Of course, Edison’s competitive, uncompromising worldview leads him into murky terrain as the film unfolds. His thirst to defeat Westinghouse will lead him to betray his firmest principle: never to help take a life. “The irony of that guy helping create the electric chair to win the War of the Currents is really sad,” says Iwanyk. “Edison loses his moral compass early in the film, and loses his way.”

“I’d turn to Alfonso and say, ‘I’m losing empathy with Edison,’” Cumberbatch adds. “He said, ‘Why? He’s a human being.’ He’s dealing with an extraordinary mind he doesn’t understand in Tesla, he has a really strong conviction and he

bets all of his money on one horse, but the great thing about him is that he picks himself up and throws himself into another field in invention.”

Cumberbatch describes Edison not as the villain, but as the “fallen hero” of the story. “It’s about stripping the man from his image of himself as a god of industry — a Steve Jobs or Bill Gates or Mark Zuckerberg — into being an embittered loser. But then he dusts himself off and he’s off again in search of a new prize. The wheels don’t stop turning in his head just because he’s fixated with one battle and fighting court cases over patents, he’s still doing the good stuff in tandem. He’s a remarkable man with many, many human flaws.”

GEORGE WESTINGHOUSE (MICHAEL SHANNON)

For the role of George Westinghouse, Gomez-Rejon turned to another Oscar nominee, Michael Shannon. “I’d just seen him in *Long Day’s Journey Into Night* on Broadway and met him briefly backstage, although he doesn’t remember,” says the director. “I’d been a fan of his for many, many years. There’s something unmistakable about what he does, but he hasn’t done anything quite like this and it was exciting to see him go places I hadn’t seen before.”

The pair first met in Shannon’s local café in Brooklyn to discuss the role. “I told him that I didn’t really enjoy making movies very much and was trying to stop doing it so often,” the actor recalls, “and he told me that he really wanted me to play George Westinghouse anyway.” Gomez-Rejon had something up his sleeve: an antique book about Westinghouse. He slid it across the table. “It wasn’t even a biography,” says Shannon, “more a kind of eulogy about what a great man he was. I think he knew when he gave me it that it was good bait. Then he left and I realized, ‘Well, I’ve got to get this back to him somehow, because this is obviously a very valuable book.’”

“It wasn’t a trick,” grins his director, “I wish I was that Machiavellian! It was a completely genuine. I found it on eBay: it was leather-bound, included rare photographs of Westinghouse, and I thought it was very moving and tangible. I wanted to share it with Michael, and if that moved the needle, I’m glad I did.”

To characterize Westinghouse as the kind-hearted industrialist vying with Edison’s ruthless schemer in *The Current War* is a simplification, but his side of the War of the Currents is undoubtedly the kinder, gentler place. We owe the idea of having Saturdays off to Westinghouse, for one thing. “He said, ‘Good men do reasonable work in the time allotted’, which is actually a line in the

script,” says Mitnick. “He gave them half days on Saturdays so they could go play baseball.” Beloved by his employees at a time when our big businessmen — namely, union-busting moneyman Henry Clay Frick — were being shot by theirs, Westinghouse evoked loyalty from all around him. “He seemed to be a gentle and thoughtful individual,” says Shannon. “I’m not really good at picking out heroes, but I always enjoyed working on it and I enjoyed trying to approximate his perspective.”

Unlike Edison, Westinghouse didn’t court celebrity or try to reinvent himself as a brand. “He never put his name on any invention,” notes producer Iwanyk, “while Edison put his name on everybody’s inventions.” Only 13 pictures of Westinghouse survive, and he burnt his papers before his death in 1914. Consequently, his fame has dimmed. “Most people now would assume he was an inventor of sorts,” cedes Shannon, “but the name lives on. I saw it in the paper not long ago.”

Shannon contrasts this modest, secretive man with playing the King in *Elvis & Nixon*. “When I played Elvis, that’s someone people have a lot of expectations on, a lot of preconceived notions. But no matter who you play, whether it’s a real person or not, they’re still a figment of your imagination.”

There was a yin and yang to the actors, as well as their characters. “Edison is a showy part and we needed to find a Westinghouse who could go toe-to-toe with Benedict as an actor and wasn’t intimidating by the role,” explains Iwanyk. “It mirrors the movie: Thomas Edison takes up a lot of space in the room; Westinghouse is the more quiet, noble character.”

“Michael is so different from Benedict — one’s AC, one’s DC in their process and approach — and that was a very exciting tension,” says Gomez-Rejon. “It was a pairing I really believed in.”

Of course, Edison and Westinghouse barely met in real life — or, for that matter, on set. Mitnick took on the challenge of maintaining intense rivalry in which the two rivals share only two scenes. “I had to take on a model closer to Michael Mann’s *Heat*, where you have two people who despise each other and who never really get to meet until they finally do,” he explains. “In reality, Westinghouse and Edison did meet, but most of their battle was waged via reporters as front page news.”

“We didn’t spend a lot of time together,” says Shannon, “but there is a scene

we have together towards the end of the movie and it's a wonderful, well-written scene and kind of the moral of the story. That was a lot of fun to shoot."

NIKOLA TESLA (NICHOLAS HOULT)

The role of Serbian inventor Nikola Tesla, the man who ultimately decides the outcome of the War of the Currents, is played by Nicolas Hoult. "Reading the script for the first time I thought: 'Wow, I didn't know how it all played out!'" Hoult explains. "Westinghouse and Telsa were the ones that essentially provided the electricity we use today, whereas I'd mistakenly thought it was Edison. It was educational."

Initially a single scene cameo in which Telsa meets Westinghouse in a hotel room, the part quickly became much meatier. "I met up with Alfonso and we spoke about the character," says Hoult, "and that they were going to write more about how his journey intertwined with Edison and Westinghouse. He said what a fun role he could be." The actor didn't take much persuading. "To work with Michael and Benedict, two of my favourite actors, and being a fan of *Me And Earl And The Dying Girl* made it a very exciting prospect," he explains. "He was very different to any character I'd played before."

Producer Basil Iwanyk lauds the leftfield energy Hoult brings to the role. "When Nick Hoult comes on screen his energy is so different from the energy you've had up to that point that it's refreshing, and it's fun, and it's a little bit loopy and crazy."

The actor's preparation for the role took in Tesla's autobiography. "He was a fascinating man," he says. "He was ethereal and otherworldly, and he had quite a rough go of things. He felt like he was from a different time and he could see so far into the future." Cumberbatch stresses the point. "Tesla was the genius among them," he says. "Where Edison and Westinghouse could see ten years into the future, he could see a hundred." Tesla's preternatural vision deeply impressed Hoult. "My dialect coach, Sarah Shepherd, found a quote where Tesla was talking about a time when we'd all have screens where we'd be able to see each other around the world," remembers Hoult.

Shepherd, who also worked with Cumberbatch to capture Thomas Edison's American accent, helped Hoult master Tesla's East European drawl. "Obviously, it's my first time doing [that kind of accent]," says Hoult, "but Sarah was fantastic. Alfonso didn't want the accent to sound Russian or like a Bond villain,

and she was there on set to help. Ultimately, you do whatever you think works and just go for it.”

Hoult picked up another, more unexpected skill for the role. Tesla’s real-life fondness for Fast Eddie-style pool hustling had him sharpening his cue skills. “I had to have lessons, because Tesla was a very sharp pool-shooter,” recalls the actor. Even coaching couldn’t save him from a Shannon schooling on set. “I remember Michael nailing a couple of shots when we were rehearsing where I was like, ‘Damn, Shannon’s good’. I wasn’t sure I’d be able to keep up with him, even with my coaching.”

There was some science homework, too. “Benedict and I had a science lesson for this,” Hoult says. “We started out asking questions larger than we could ever comprehend and then going backwards until we could understand what was going on.” In a few hours of tuition, the two actors could get under the skin of their more technical dialogue. “It’s important not just to be a blank slate saying things you don’t understand,” says Hoult.

Tesla, nearly the subject of a Robert Zemeckis movie in the 1990s, did appear in Christopher Nolan’s *The Prestige*, played by David Bowie. “I’d seen *The Prestige* a while back,” says Hoult, “but I didn’t watch it again as research. I wanted to find out what I could about the man and develop from there.” Instead, he listened to Bowie’s music — along with recordings of Canadian pianist Glenn Gould — during his prep. “It was a weird link [to Bowie] that felt nice to me.”

The strange, otherworldly Tesla may have found himself marginalized in his own lifetime, but, says Mitnick, he’s now finding his rightful place in science’s pantheon. “The coolest new car on the planet is named after Tesla,” notes the screenwriter, “so I think his place in history is being restored.”

SAMUEL INSULL (TOM HOLLAND)

Another British actor, Tom Holland, plays Edison’s young confidant and personal secretary, Samuel Insull. As luck would have it, Holland had met the director for a coffee in 2012, fresh from his breakthrough performance in *The Impossible*. “Tom was so young at the time, he had mum with him,” recalls Gomez-Rejon. Holland was high on his wish list. “He’s an extraordinary actor,” says the director. A fan of *Me, Earl And The Dying Girl*, Holland responded immediately to *The Current War* screenplay. “It’s a fantastic story – I had no

idea it even existed — and I was intrigued to find out more about the character,” says Holland. “Once I spoke to Alfonso it became obvious that he was someone I’d really like to work with, and once he told me the cast it was a no-brainer.”

Unlike his fellow Brits in the cast, Holland didn’t have to put on an American accent for the role. “Samuel Insull is a kid who grew up in Putney, then moved to Chicago and New York, so it was very interesting to try to keep that British spirit going throughout my performance,” explains Holland. “For me, especially, when I come out to America, my accent slowly started to change and I say things in different ways. Samuel Insull was the complete opposite of that: he stuck to his guns and kept his Britishisms.” If anything, Holland cranked up his English tones up a notch for the character. “I didn’t go overly RP posh, just did a posher accent of what I already have.”

Insull’s scenes had Holland acting opposite Benedict Cumberbatch. The pair swiftly developed a rich rapport that helped deepen the father-and-son dynamic of their characters. “There’s a great affinity between the two,” says Cumberbatch. “It’s more of a father-son relationship, sadly, than he has with his own offspring.”

Staunchly loyal to Edison but prepared to stand up to him, Insull adds an intriguing dimension to *The Current War*. “There is a bit of steamrolling at the beginning,” notes Cumberbatch of their relationship, “but Samuel is a formidable guy and he gives as good as he gets in a couple of scenes.” Holland remembers one of those scenes particularly vividly. “There was a scene where Insull is really pushing back, so there’s little old me telling Benedict Cumberbatch he’s wrong and in one of the takes Benedict shouted at me,” he charts. “I jumped out of my socks, I was so scared. I think it was the best take that we did.”

More arduous were the transatlantic flights that whizzed Holland back and forth between the concurrent shoots for *The Current War* and *Avengers: Infinity War*. It turns out even Spider-Man can get jetlag. “Any time I spent off set I was on another set, going back and forth two days in Atlanta and two days in London,” rues Holland. “We went back and forth to Atlanta about five times in two weeks. It was crazy, but Alfonso and [Infinity War directors] the Russo brothers looked after me.”

MARY EDISON (TUPPENCE MIDDLETON)

Edison's smart, compassionate wife Mary is a key figure in the story. Played by British actress Tuppence Middleton, she's more than just 'the woman behind the man' in the film. "I wanted her to be quite a forward-thinking woman," explains Middleton. "She met Edison when she was working for him — she would have been 16 or 17 — and for her to have been working at that time in history, that's quite a modern woman. She was a tough lady and doesn't suffer fools, and I wanted that to come across. She loved him and her family, and she forgives him his emotional flaws and glitches."

Middleton's casting owed plenty to the brief but pivotal scene she'd shared with Cumberbatch in their codebreaking thriller, *The Imitation Game*. "She was spot-on, really brilliant in a crucial scene," recalls Cumberbatch. "We were all, like, 'Wow, she's on the money.'" As a result, he advocated for her to play his on-screen wife in *The Current War*. "He was really in my corner when they were casting, really gunning for me," says Middleton. "It was lovely."

For Cumberbatch, their second time working together was a charm. "There's more to Mary Edison than is on the page and you need an actress of real depth to carry that off. The only regret is that there weren't more scenes." Middleton returns the compliment. "What makes Benedict amazing for these very intelligent, cerebral characters is that he's very quick-thinking," she notes. "He always brings something new every scene."

Working opposite a fellow Brit had another advantage for the actress. "Benedict kept his accent the whole way through the project," she says, "which was really helpful, because you're not flicking back and forth between all these accents."

Middleton was delighted to see the screenplay bringing Edison's home life, a sanctuary away from the politics and power plays of his business world, to three-dimensional life. "We wanted to show more of his family side," she stresses. "They were a confidant and support for him." Edison's interactions with his children, Dot (Sophia Ally) and Dash (Woody Norman), show his playful side. "It was really important for us to show that lightness, because there's not much room to show it otherwise," says the actress. "To show him proposing in Morse code and nicknaming his kids Dot and Dash were really sweet touches." The role took Middleton into new territory as an actress. "I haven't played a mother before," she laughs. "I'm slipping into that bracket where I play young mums."

Tragically, Mary Edison would die of a brain tumor aged only 29. The event left Edison both guilt and grief-stricken. “We tried to do her death justice,” recounts Middleton, “but also recreate that feeling that it was too soon and too quick, and unfair. [We didn’t want to] overdo it or “play” the brain tumor. Because there wasn’t a huge number of scenes to show what was happening to her, we had to figure out a way to show it that didn’t feel too sudden or rushed.” Adds Cumberbatch: “The death of his wife floors him in the film.”

MARGUERITE WESTINGHOUSE (KATHERINE WATERSTON)

The extrovert livewire to her husband’s measured introvert, Marguerite Westinghouse is played by Alien: Covenant star Katherine Waterston. “I’d seen Katherine in the Paul Thomas Anderson film [Inherent Vice] and I was a fan,” says Gomez-Rejon. “She and Michael Shannon just seemed like a great rock ‘n’ roll couple.” Unbeknownst to their director, Waterston and Shannon were already friends. “I’ve known Katherine for years,” says Shannon. “We made a movie – it hasn’t come out yet – in Toronto last year called State Like Sleep, and I knew her from doing theatre in New York City.”

It was a canny casting. “Michael and Katherine look amazing together: tall, stoic but loose and modern,” says Gomez-Rejon. “There’s a warmth and chemistry between them that was effortless.” Like her director, the story chimed with Waterston on a personal level. “When we Skyped about the role she said it reminded her of her grandmother,” he says. “She’d been one of those women who were feminists before the term even existed.” Katherine, he adds, offered “a very striking, regal yet accessible quality” as Westinghouse’s wife. “Marguerite was such a big part of George’s life,” adds Shannon. “It was a lovely relationship.”

While Thomas and Mary Edison are played by Brits in *The Current War*, the casting of *Inherent Vice* and as Marguerite Westinghouse alongside Michael Shannon completed a transatlantic face-off. It was, their director promises, entirely coincidental. “It wasn’t conscious that we’d cast Americans or Brits, it just worked out that way.”

CREATING THE WORLD

THE LOCATIONS

The initial plan was to shoot *The Current War* in America, using several locations around Westinghouse's hometown of Pittsburgh. But in the summer of 2016, Gomez-Rejon flew across the Atlantic to scout possible locations in the UK — “just to do our due diligence”. He was immediately sold. “We realized all the possibilities in England,” he says, “then in the process of scouting, I fell in love with London. The pool of actors here was extraordinary. Everything just worked out.”

Recreating late 19th century American locations in 21st century England required ingenuity. “That was a big struggle,” admits producer Basil Iwanyk. Production designer Jan Roelfs set to work with his director recreating the story's real-life settings in a variety of locations around England, and on studio space at Leavesden outside London. “I'd just finished *Ghost In The Shell*, so it couldn't have been more different,” says Roelfs. In keeping with Gomez-Rejon's loose interpretation of period, he didn't seek to create slavish facsimiles of the real locations. “I'm not really interested in being period correct — it's ‘what do you want to say?’ and ‘how do you want to develop the atmosphere around the characters’,” Roelfs explains.

The film's field-set opening was filmed in a remote corner of Leavesden's backlot, while Edison's house was reconstructed on a studio soundstage. Leavesden was also, surprisingly, where most of the movie's train scenes were shot. “We rented a train in really bad shape from Bluebell [train yard] near Brighton and rebuilt it there,” says Roelfs. “We used it for three different trains, using different interiors and painting each side different colors. We cut big holes in it to get the equipment in, upholstered it and made furniture for it, until it looked like what we wanted.”

The stately home of Cragside, an hour north of Newcastle, was used for Westinghouse's estate, Solitude. “It's beautifully set in the forest,” says Roelfs, “and we shot there for a week.” Edison's lab, meanwhile, was created at Royal Gunpowder Mills at Waltham Abbey in Essex. Kitting out the locations often required Edison-like feats of engineering from Roelfs and his team. “We built between ten and 15 huge dynamos and transformers for Edison's lab,” he says. “We had to go into the research and figure out what scale to make them.” Designing Edison's bulbs and the electric chair demanded historical accuracy, too. “With certain things you can't take liberties,” stresses the production designer. “We copied the key details of the electric chair, and the lightbulbs were made exactly the way he made them. We used etchings and newspaper clippings and researchers from the Thomas Edison labs in the US.”

One of the bigger challenges was replicating the movie's Buffalo courtroom in England. "It was the one set that was impossible to find," admits Gomez-Rejon. So, with a few simple additions, Central London's grand Freemasons' Hall was turned into an 19th century seat of justice. "It was an empty hall," remembers Iwanyk, "and we put in a desk and a fence, and suddenly it became a whole courtroom."

The biggest challenge of all, though, was capturing the scale and spectacle of the Chicago World's Fair — a five-month-long jamboree of invention in 1893 that introduced the world to the zip, Wrigley's Gum, Crackerjack and, of course, Westinghouse's alternating current. "The World's Fair is kinda crazy," says Iwanyk. "There's elephants, weird stuff going on everywhere and we've got to get a sense of that craziness coupled with the size of it. We spent a lot of resources making it feel grand."

Using exterior shots of London's Alexandra Palace and interiors filmed at the Brighton Pavilion, stitched together with VFX and animated montages of colorized black-and-white photography, the movie's World's Fair offers a suitably grand setting for its climactic events. "We worked really hard to get the Brighton Pavilion in for the World's Fair, because they don't let filming happen there a lot," says Roelfs. "We took the whole banquet table out of the banquet room and put a Chinese pavilion in there, with gold floors and bamboo railings and calligraphy. The people there were, like, 'Holy moly, what happened here?'"

It wouldn't have been an accurate depiction of the 1893 Chicago World Fair without the occasional wild animal. The Current War wasn't about to go zebra-free just because they're not indigenous to Sussex. "We did have a zebra budget," laughs Iwanyk. "They make these weird noises — like, 'Rrrrrrhhh!'. Someone sent a video round before we started filming of a zebra attacking a human, with the message 'be careful'."

THE CLOTHES

The job of creating the film's intricate, expressive period wardrobe fell to Oscar-nominated costume designer Michael Wilkinson (American Hustle, Man Of Steel). Gomez-Rejon's fresh approach captured the designer's imagination. "Alfonso's vision was very intriguing to me," he says, "telling a slice of history in a modern, passionate, engaging way."

Offering a key starting point was his director's photographic look book, and references as diverse as Bob Dylan, David Bowie and Silicone Valley entrepreneurs Mark Zuckerberg and Elon Musk. "We wanted to avoid dustiness and heaviness and to give [the clothes] a modern appeal," says Wilkinson. In other words, there'd be no Victorian stuffiness on display.

The story's 13-year span added to the task. "The film takes place over 12 or 13 years – 1880 to 1893 – so each character had quite the closet," says Wilkinson. "We also had 16 day players and about 100 extras." Dealers in Victorian costumes provided some of the outfits — though mostly as references to work from — but the rest had to be created from scratch.

There portraits and photographic references of Edison to work from, but more creative leeway was to be found away from the frock coats and formalwear of his public persona. "We wanted to show the side of him that he never really allowed to be photographed," he explains, "which was the more vulnerable, domestic guy who was trying to be a father and hold onto his relationship with his wife. We wanted to show the cracks in the armor."

As for Westinghouse, the clothes were designed to hint at the what lay beneath the restrained surface. "I wanted to show that there was an inner life and a passion behind the façade," Wilkinson explains. "Michael did a hell of a job," enthuses Shannon. "Beautiful clothes and I loved all of them." There was one small exception, the actor admits. "I wasn't a huge fan of my tux. It had one of those shirts that has the hard front on it — you have to put it together with studs."

Working with the two leads was "fascinating", says Wilkinson. "Benedict was very involved in choice of fabrics and silhouette, and in expressing the passing of time, so all the details were very important to him. He really liked the idea of discovering the man behind the portraits." Shannon, by contrast, was less hands-on. "He was more trusting and a little less involved," says the designer, "but he was happy to take my guidance."

And Tesla? "Alfonso referred to him as 'the man who fell to Earth'," says Wilkinson. "He was extremely formal, always turning up to work in morning coats, spats, top hat and a glove, whereas Edison was famous for being crumpled and scruffy." Nicholas Hoult was full of appreciation for the results. "Michael did a fantastic job getting all these beautiful suits made that were really perfect for the character."

The thick, comparatively rigid fabrics of the period meant the costumes were often heavy. “It took a little getting used to for the actors,” says Wilkinson. “I was very relieved that we were filming in the middle of winter.” Tuppence Middleton and Katherine Waterston endured the additional horrors of “extremely uncomfortable” tight-lacing corsets. “Don’t eat too much lunch” is Middleton’s advice for successful corset acting. “Also, sit down a lot, otherwise it restricts your breathing, and don’t rush around too much.” Long petticoats, billowing skirts, big bustles and heels, all late-19th century staples, were key components in the wardrobes Wilkinson designed for Marguerite Westinghouse and Mary Edison. “They both loved and hated the clothes,” cedes Wilkinson of the two actresses. “They had an interesting relationship with them, like the women of the period.”

The results, though, dazzled. “Michael did an incredible job,” raves Middleton. The designer’s proudest achievement on the movie was the 14 costumes he created for Marguerite Westinghouse. “She was well known for enjoying all the fine things in life,” says Wilkinson. “She travelled to Paris every year to get the latest fashions, so I was able to show the different sleeve shapes, skirt shapes, the different combinations of colors and textures over the 14 years [of the film]. The bold, black-and-white striped dress that she wears to the World’s Fair was one of my favorites, but I had lots of fun working with Katherine. She’s super-smart and had lots of interesting input into the look of her character.”

As Samuel Insull, Tom Holland found himself drawn to the period garb. “I think I was born at the wrong time,” he laughs. “The fashion of those days is so much cooler than what we have now. People took such pride in their clothes. There was no version of throwing on some sweatpants and a T-shirt; it was either a three-piece suit or nothing. I love clothes, so I think I would have enjoyed living in those days.” If some actors like to stay in period costume right down to their underwear, Holland wasn’t one of them. “I wore my pajamas under my costume because it was so cold,” he remembers. “I’d come from Atlanta so I was so used to the heat — and being in the Spider-Man suit is so hot — so coming back to London was freezing.”

THE LOOKS

Charged with creating the characters’ individual looks was Make Up and Hair Designer Sharon Martin. In truth, the job involved much more of the latter than the former. “It’s one of the jobs I’ve used the least make-up on,” she says. “We just went along with the skin as it was, and the lighting was so beautiful, I didn’t want people to look too perfect. I used a lot of hair, a lot of glue, a lot of J Crew

pomade, but actual make-up, nope, we didn't need that."

A departure from her previous projects, Martin even listened to the music of Patti Smith to get in synch with the mood of Gomez-Rejon's film. "He wanted to show the loucheness of the film he wanted to make," she recalls. The director encouraged her to push the looks just a little further than the average period drama. "They wouldn't look out of place in Hackney today. We kept to the quirkiness of that time."

As you'd expect from the Victorian setting, there's plenty of splendid facial hair on display in *The Current War*. Some of the cast grew their own; some enlisted Martin's help. Because he came straight from a role in which he'd been clean-shaven, Shannon, who sports a formidable moustache and sideburns in the film, needed both applied daily. "It can be a hassle, but Sharon made it a very pleasant experience," he says. "He's not exactly forthcoming," laughs Martin, "but he said: 'Yup, I like it.' That means he's happy."

Tom Holland admits that having Insull's mutton chops applied was an uncomfortable process — at least, at first. "The sticking-on of the sideburns was probably the most uncomfortable thing ever," he says, "but once they were on it wasn't all that bad. They did look good though, so it was well worth it." Adds Martin: "Tom was sitting there having his mutton chops on and thinking, 'Oh my god, this is a whole new world.'"

Nicholas Hoult grew his own moustache to play the elegant Tesla. "He was a little self-conscious at first," says Martin. "I guess it aged him a little bit, and it wasn't that cool because it wasn't a beard, so I guess he took more notice of his look." Off-set the actor found himself explaining that, no, the moustache wasn't just a daring new look. "Lots of people thought that was a choice being made at the time," he remembers. "It was quite fun in a weird way."

Cumberbatch, one of the few male cast members with no facial hair in the film, was also alone in being aged up. "We had a scene of him 20 years later, sitting in a cinema," says Martin of *The Current War*'s coda, "but no-one else ages significantly."

ABOUT CAST

BENEDICT CUMBERBATCH (THOMAS EDISON)

Academy Nominee Benedict Cumberbatch is best known for playing the title role of “Sherlock Holmes” in Steven Moffatt And Mark Gattiss’ stunning adaption of the Conan Doyle books. It is a role that has earned him international acclaim and several awards including an Emmy as best actor in 2014.

In 2015 Benedict portrayed Alan Turing in the multi award winning film *The Imitation Game*. It was a role that earned him overwhelming critical acclaim and a BAFTA, Golden Globe and Academy nomination as Best Actor.

Notable big screen performances include the role of the dragon Smaug in Peter Jackson’s *The Hobbit* trilogy. Khan in JJ Abrams’ blockbuster *Star Trek: Into Darkness* (2013). Julian Assange in *The Fifth Estate* (2013), Little’ Charles Aiken in *August: Osage County* (2013), Ford in Steve McQueen’s Oscar winning *12 Years A Slave* (2013) and Billy Bulger alongside Johnny Depp in *Black Mass* (2015). Other film work includes Major Stewart in Steven Spielberg’s film adaptation of *Warhorse* (2011) and Peter Guillam along side Gary Oldman, Tom Hardy and Colin Firth in Tomas Alfredson’s *Tinker Tailor Soldier Spy* (2011), *Starter for Ten* (2016), *Amazing Grace* (2006), *Stuart: A Life Backward* (2007), *The Other Boleyn Girl* (2008) and the role of the dastardly Herbut Marshall In Joe Wright’s Oscar-nominated *Atonement* (2007) Due for release *Jungle Book* and *How the Grinch Stole Christmas*.

Cumberbatch studied Drama at Manchester University before training at The London Academy of Dramatic Art (LAMDA). Early TV roles included 'To The Ends Of The Earth', 'The Last Enemy' and his incredibly powerful portrayal of Stephen Hawking, in the BBC’s highly acclaimed drama 'Hawk' which earned him his first BAFTA nomination. A second BAFTA nomination came in 2010 for his portrayal of Bernard in the BBC adaptation of 'Small Island'. Benedict’s portrayal of Christopher Stejens in the BBC/HBO drama 'Parades End' earned him an Emmy nomination. In 2016 his portrayal of Richard III in the BBC’s 'Hollow Crown' series cemented his place as one of the finest actors of his generation earning him another BAFTA nomination.

A fourth series of 'Sherlock' aired in January 2017 to record-breaking International audiences.

On stage there have been two seasons in Regents Park with The New Shakespeare Co, Linsrand in Trevor Nunn’s production of 'Lady From The Sea'; George in Tennessee Williams’ 'Period of Adjustment'; Teesman in Richard Eyre’s stunning West End ensemble production of 'Hedda Gabbler',for which he

received Olivier and Ian Charleston Award nominations; Berenger in Ionesco's 'Rhinocerus'; plus 'The Arsonists' and 'The City' at the Royal Court and David Scott Fowler in Thea Sharrock's, National Theatre, award-winning Rattigan revival 'After The Dance'.

In 2011 Benedict returned to The National Theatre, alternating the roles of creature and Dr. Frankenstein in Danny Boyle's production of 'Frankenstein' earning him a Laurence Olivier Award and an Evening Standard Award for Best Actor. In 2015 his 'Hamlet' at London's Barbican Theatre broke box office records.

More recently Benedict has played the title role of Stephen Strange in Marvel's *Dr Strange* (2016). He will once again take on his role as Dr Strange in *Avengers: Infinity War* (2018) this summer. Other projects currently underway include 'Melrose' and BBC's 'The Child In Time'.

MICHAEL SHANNON (GEORGE WESTINGHOUSE)

Michael Shannon grew up in Lexington, Kentucky and began his professional stage career in Chicago, Illinois.

Academy Award, Golden Globe and Tony Award nominee actor Michael Shannon continues to make his mark in entertainment, working with the industry's most respected talent and treading the boards in notable theaters around the world. Shannon can recently be seen in Tom Ford's *Nocturnal Animals* (2016), an adaptation of Austin Wright's 1993 novel *Tony and Susan* in which he stars opposite Jake Gyllenhaal, Amy Adams and Aaron Taylor Johnson. For his performance, Shannon received a Critics Choice nomination. Shannon can also be seen in Jeff Nichol's *Loving* (2016), alongside Ruth Negga and Joel Edgerton.

Shannon has recently wrapped production on the Nicolai Fuglsig-directed *Horse Soldiers* (2018) opposite Chris Hemsworth. The project follows a team of CIA agents and Special Forces who head into Afghanistan in the aftermath of the 9/11 attacks in an attempt to dismantle the Taliban. Prior to that, he lensed Meredith Danluck's *State Like Sleep* (2017), alongside Katherine Waterston. Shannon plays the deceased Belgian husband of an American photographer (Waterston) who, one year after the unexpected death of her husband, receives a call that pulls her back to Brussels and the life she has tried to forget. As she packs up the loft she once shared with her husband, she discovers his phone and becomes swept up in unraveling the mysteries surrounding his last days.

Shannon will start lensing on *Waco*, a mini-series that will explore the true-life events leading up to and chronicling the two-month siege between the FBI, ATF and Koresh's sect in Waco, Texas. Shannon portrays FBI negotiator 'Gary Noesner' opposite Taylor Kitsch who plays the role of 'David Koresh,' the notorious leader of the religious group. Written and directed by John Erick Dowdle and Drew Dowdle, Shannon serves as a co-executive producer on the project.

Shannon has also been seen in Bart Freundlich's *Wolves*, opposite Carla Gugino, which IFC Films released in March 2017. Following that is Guillermo del Toro's *The Shape of Water*, which is set against the backdrop of Cold War era America with a love story at the center of it. The film co-stars Sally Hawkins, Richard Jenkins and Octavia Spencer. Fox Searchlight is set to release the film in 2017. Also upcoming, projects include Werner Herzog's thriller, *Salt and Fire*, alongside Gael Garcia Bernal and Veronica Ferras; as well as Seth Henrikson's *Pottersville* opposite Thomas Lennon and Judy Greer.

In 2016, Shannon was seen on Broadway co-starring alongside Jessica Lange, Gabriel Byrne, and John Gallagher Jr. in 'Long Day's Journey into Night'. Produced by the Roundabout Theater Company and directed by Jonathan Kent, the revival of Eugene O'Neill's landmark 1956 drama led Shannon to a Tony nomination for Supporting Actor as well as 2016 Drama Desk Award for Outstanding Featured Actor in a Play.

Prior to that, Shannon starred in Jeff Nichols' *Midnight Special* (2016), a sci-fi thriller about a father (Shannon) desperate to protect his uniquely gifted eight-year-old son (Jaeden Lieberher). Shannon leads opposite Joel Edgerton, Kirsten Dunst, Adam Driver and Sam Shepard. Shannon's previous collaborations with Nichols include *Take Shelter*, for which he received a 2011 Film Independent Spirit Award nomination for Best Actor; as well as the films *Mud* (2012) and *Shotgun Stories* (2007).

Most notably, Shannon garnered critical acclaim for his Oscar nominated supporting role in *Revolutionary Road* (2008), playing John Givings, the psychologically troubled neighbor's son. Directed by Sam Mendes and adapted by Justin Haythe, Shannon stars opposite Leonardo DiCaprio, Kate Winslet and Kathy Bates. He went on to receive additional acclaim for Ramin Bahrani's timely drama *99 Homes* (2014), co-starring opposite Andrew Garfield. Set against the backdrop of the economic crisis, Shannon portrayed 'Rick Carver,' a charismatic and ruthless real estate tycoon gaming the market and home banking system. He

was nominated for a Golden Globe, Screen Actors Guild, Critics Choice, Gotham Award and Film Independent Spirit Award on behalf of this performance.

With over forty roles in film, Shannon's credits include Matthew M. Ross' *Frank & Lola* (2016), Joshua Marston's *Complete Unknown* (2016), Liza Johnson's *Elvis & Nixon* (2016); Jonathan Levine's *The Night Before* (2015); Peter Sollett's *Freeheld* (2015); John McNaughton's *The Harvest* (2013); Jake Paltrow's *Young Ones* (2014); Zack Snyder's *Man of Steel* (2013); Ariel Vromen's *The Iceman* (2012); David Koepp's *Premium Rush* (2012); Liza Johnson's *Return* (2011); Marc Forster's *Machine Gun Preacher* (2011); Floria Sigismondi's *The Runaways* (2010); Werner Herzog's *My Son, my Son, What Have Ye Done* (2009) and *Bad Lieutenant* (1992); Sydney Lumet's *Before the Devil Knows You're Dead* (2007); Oliver Stone's *World Trade Center* (2006); William Friedkin's *Bug* (2006); Curtis Hanson's *Lucky You* (2007); Michael Bay's *Bad Boys II* (2003); Curtis Hanson's *8 Mile* (2002); David McNally's *Kangaroo Jack* (2003), Cameron Crowe's *Vanilla Sky* (2002); Michael Bay's *Pearl Harbor* (2001); John Waters' *Cecil B. DeMented* (2000); Noah Buschel's *The Missing Person* (2009) and Shana Feste's *The Greatest* (2009).

On television, Shannon's credits include Martin Scorsese's HBO series, *'Boardwalk Empire'*, which recently completed its fifth and final season. Based on Nelson Johnson's book of the same name, the hit show centers on an Atlantic City liquor distribution ring at the onset of Prohibition. Shannon portrayed Nelson Van Alden, a dedicated senior agent with the Treasury Department who has a strong interest in controlling bootlegging.

Outside of his roles on screen, Shannon maintains a strong connection to theater. In 2012, Shannon appeared opposite Paul Rudd, Ed Asner, and Kate Arrington in *'Grace'* at the Cort Theatre. For his portrayal of Sam, a distrustful and lonely computer genius who had recently lost his fiancé in a car accident, Shannon was nominated for a 2013 Distinguished Performance Drama League Award.

In 2010, Shannon led Craig Wright's off-Broadway play, *'Mistakes Were Made'*, at the Barrow Street Theater. Directed by Dexter Bullard, Shannon portrays Felix Artifex, a small time theatre producer, who gets in way over his fast-talking head when he takes on an epic about the French Revolution. The play received its world premiere at A Red Orchid Theatre in Chicago in 2009 with the same cast and director. The critically acclaimed production garnered numerous accolades for Shannon, including an Outstanding Lead Actor Lortel Award nomination, an Outstanding Actor in a Play Drama Desk Award nomination, an Outstanding Solo

Performance Outer Critics Award nomination, and a Distinguished Performance Drama League Award nomination.

Additional theater credits include 'Pilgrim's Progress' (A Red Orchid Theater), 'Uncle Vanya' (Soho Rep Theatre), 'Our Town' (Barrow Street Theatre), 'Lady' (Rattlestick Theatre), 'The Metal Children' (Vineyard Theatre), 'The Little Flower of East Orange' (Public Theatre), 'The Pillowman' (Steppenwolf Theatre), 'Bug' (Barrow Street Theatre, Red Orchid Theatre and Gate Theatre), 'Man From Nebraska' (Steppenwolf Theatre), 'Mr. Kolpert' (Red Orchid Theatre), 'Killer Joe' (SoHo Playhouse, Next Lab Theatre and Vaudeville Theatre), 'The Idiot' (Lookingglass Theatre), 'The Killer' (Red Orchid Theatre), and 'Woyzeck' (Gate Theatre).

NICHOLAS HOULT (NIKOLA TESLA)

Nicholas Hoult has become one of Hollywood's most sought-after actors. Known both in blockbuster films like the X-MEN franchise as well as in independent projects like *A Single Man* (2009), his upcoming projects reflect this agility with appearances in international franchises as well as character-driven dramas.

Hoult is also seen in the Iraqi war drama *Sand Castle* (2017) produced by Mark Gordon. Based on the true story of a machine gunner in Iraq's Sunni Triangle, the film premiered on Netflix this spring. At this year's Sundance Film Festival, Hoult was seen as J.D. Salinger in the Salinger biopic *Rebel in the Rye* (2017), directed by Danny Strong from his own screenplay. The film explores the life and mind of the beloved author and tell the story of the birth of *The Catcher in the Rye*. Also at Sundance this year was Drake Doremus's drama *Newness* (2017), a film set in contemporary Los Angeles about two millennials (Hoult and Courtney Eaton) navigating their relationship in a social media-driven hookup culture.

Last year, he starred as Nux opposite Charlize Theron and Tom Hardy in George Miller's *Mad Max: Fury Road* (2015), which received multiple Oscar nominations including Best Picture. He also reprised his role as Hank McCoy AKA 'Beast' in *X-Men Apocalypse* (2016), the ninth installment of X-MEN which is directed by Bryan Singer. Previously he appeared in *X-Men: First Class* (2011) and *X-Men: Days of Future Past* (2014) alongside an all-star cast including Michael Fassbender, Jennifer Lawrence and James McAvoy. He also starred opposite Kristen Stewart in *Equals* (2015), a futuristic love story set in a world where emotions have been eradicated, directed by Drake Doremus.

In 2013, Hoult played the zombie character R in the cult classic Jonathan Levine's *Warm Bodies* (2013) in which his character slowly starts to become human again after falling in love with a girlfriend of one of his victims.

In 2009, he was seen in Tom Ford's critically acclaimed directorial debut *A Single Man* (2009) opposite Colin Firth and Julianne Moore for the Weinstein Company. Hoult made his West End debut the same year in 'New Boy' alongside Mel Giedroyc and Ciara Jason. The play, which opened to outstanding reviews and sold out performances, was adapted and directed by Russell Labey.

Hoult first received critical acclaim at only 11-years-old when he starred opposite Hugh Grant in Chris and Paul Weitz's *About A Boy* (2002) as the young Marcus Brewer. He also starred on the acclaimed E4's television series 'Skins'.

Other credits include: Bryan Singer's *Jack the Giant Slayer* (2013), Jake Paltrow's *Young Ones* (2014), Owen Harris' *Kill Your Friends* (2015), Gilles Paquet-Brenner's *Dark Places* (2015), Eran Creevy's *Collide* (2016), Louis Leterrier's *Clash of the Titans* (2010) Julie Anne Robinson's *Coming Down the Mountain* (2007), Menhaj Huda's *Kidulthood* (2006), Richard E Grant's *Wah-Wah* (2006) and Gore Verbinski's *The Weather Man* (2005).

KATHERINE WATERSTON (MARGUERITE WESTINGHOUSE)

Stage and film actress Katherine Waterston garnered critical acclaim for her breakout role in Paul Thomas Anderson's film *Inherent Vice* (2014). She has positioned her as one of Hollywood's leading ladies, working with top filmmakers including Anderson, Danny Boyle and Ridley Scott.

Katherine has recently been seen in *Alien: Covenant* (2017), a new chapter in Ridley Scott's ground-breaking *Alien* franchise that takes Scott back to the universe he created. Katherine also appeared in Steven Soderbergh's heist film, *Logan Lucky* (2017) with Adam Driver, Channing Tatum, Seth MacFarlane, Daniel Craig, Katie Holmes, Hilary Swank, and Sebastian Stan.

In February 2017, Katherine acquired the screen rights to 'A Separation,' the latest novel from author Katie Kitamura and is also attached to star in the adaptation.

This past year, she starred in David Yates' *Fantastic Beasts and Where to Find Them* (2016), opposite Eddie Redmayne. The film debuted at number one in the box office on November 18, 2016 and has since surpassed \$776.8M in worldwide ticket sales.

In 2015, Katherine appeared in Danny Boyle and Aaron Sorkin's *Steve Jobs* (2015), alongside Michael Fassbender and Kate Winslet, whose performances earned them each an Academy Award nomination. She also starred in *Manhattan Romance* (2015) and Alex Ross Perry's independent film *Queen of Earth* (2015) opposite Elisabeth Moss.

In 2014, Katherine starred alongside Joaquin Phoenix in Paul Thomas Anderson's '70s drug-fueled crime drama *Inherent Vice* for Warner Brothers. Previously, Katherine was seen in *The Disappearance of Eleanor Rigby* (2014) opposite Jessica Chastain and James McAvoy which premiered at the 2013 Toronto Film Festival. She also appeared in Kelly Reichardt's *Night Moves* (2013) opposite Dakota Fanning, Peter Sarsgaard, and Jesse Eisenberg, which also premiered at the 2013 Toronto Film Festival.

Katherine's other credits include *Michael Clayton* (2007) directed by Tony Gilroy for Warner Brothers, *Taking Woodstock* (2009) directed by Ang Lee for Focus Features, and *Being Flynn* (2012) directed by Paul Weitz. In 2012, Katherine was seen on the small screen recurring in the critically acclaimed HBO series "Boardwalk Empire".

TOM HOLLAND (SAMUEL INSULL)

Tom Holland is quickly emerging as Hollywood's most exciting and versatile young actor. He recently wrapped shooting the highly anticipated film *Spider-Man: Homecoming* (2017) in which he plays the title role of Peter Parker / Spider-Man. Holland debuted his role as Spider-Man in Marvel's *Captain America: Civil War* (2016)

Holland made his screen debut opposite Ewan McGregor and Naomi Watts in Juan Antonio Bayona's captivating film *The Impossible* (2012). Other film credits include, the 2015 Warner Bros. drama *In the Heart of the Sea, Edge of Winter* (2016) alongside Joel Kinnaman, *How I Live Now* (2013), and *Locke* (2013). Holland recently starred in James Gray's *The Lost City of Z* (2016) opposite Charlie Hunnam, Rob Pattinson and Sienna Miller.

In 2008, he made his stage debut at the Victoria Palace Theatre in London in which he played Billy in 'Billy Elliot the Musical'.

Holland was honored with the 2017 BAFTA *Rising Star Award*. In addition, he was named *Breakthrough Actor of the Year* by the National Board of Review and received a Critics Choice Nomination for Best Young Actor /Actress for his role in *The Impossible* (2012).

STANLEY TOWNSEND (FRANKLIN POPE)

Currently in rehearsals for Connor McPherson's highly anticipated new play at the Old Vic 'Girl From The North Country'. Stanley has worked with such great directors such as Sam Mendes in both 'King Lear' and 'The Plough and the Stars', Richard Eyre in 'Guys and Dolls', Nicholas Hytner in 'Phedre', Howard Davies in 'Gethsemane' and at The Royal Court; Rufus Norris in 'Under the Blue Sky', Ian Rickson in 'The Alice Trilogy' and Conor McPherson in 'The Shining City'. Most recently Stanley played the lead in Jeremy Herrin's 'The Nether' both at The Royal Court and The West End Transfer.

Stanley's television work began on a number of shows for RTE in Dublin. Since moving to London, television appearances have included acclaimed shows such as; 'Fleming', '24 Live Another Day', 'New Worlds', 'Quirke', 'Call The Midwife', 'The Shadow Line', 'Zen', 'Spooks', 'The Commander', 'Hustle', 'Waking the Dead' and 'Sherlock'. 2016 proved a jam packed year for Stanley on the small screen we saw him in The BBC's critically acclaimed 'The Hollow Crown II', Amazon's 'The Collection' and The Second series of 'The Tunnel'. He also reprised his role in ABC's hilarious 'Galavant'.

Most recently seen in our cinemas in Stephen Frears' Academy Award winning *Florence Foster Jenkins* (2016) alongside Meryl Streep and Hugh Grant. Other film credits include Marjane Satrapi *The Voices* (2014) and David Frankel's *One Chance* (2013), in the iconic role of Luciano Pavarotti. *Lovely Louise* (2013), *Killing Bono* (2011) directed by Nick Hamm, Mike Leigh's *Happy Go Lucky* (2008), Mike Newell's *Into the West* (1992), Jim Sheridan's *In the Name of the Father* (1993) with Daniel Day-Lewis, *The Van* (1996) directed by Stephen Frears, Peter Greenaway's *Tulse Luper*, and *The Libertine* (2004) with Johnny Depp.

MATTHEW MACFAYDEN (J.P. MORGAN)

Matthew trained at RADA.

Film credits include: Lasse Hallström's *The Nut Cracker and the Four Realms* (2018) Gary Yates' *The Last Christmas* (2010) Ben Hopkins' *Lost in Karastan* (2014) Joe Wright's *Anna Karenina* (2012) Paul Thomas Anderson's *The Three Musketeers* (2011) and *Robin Hood* (2010), Rom Howard's *Frost/Nixon* (2008) Sharon Maguire's *Incendiary* (2008) Neil LaBute's *Death at a Funeral* (2010) Brian Kirk's *Middletown* (2006) Joe Wright's *Pride and Prejudice* (2005) Brad McGann's *In my Father's Den* (2004) Paul McGuigan's *The Reckoning* (2002) Michael Apted's *Enigma* (2001) and Hugh Laurie and Ben Elton's *Maybe Baby* (2000).

Macfayden's television credits include: HBOs '*Succession*', Daybreak Picture/Masterpiece's '*Churchill's Secret*', Carnival television's '*The Last Kingdom*', Eleven Film and Sky Living's '*The Enfield Haunting*', BBC's *Our Men*, BBC's '*Ripper Street*' Series 1-5 (Nominated for the Best Actor Award, TVChoice Awards, 2013), Carnival television's '*Any Human Heart*', Tandem Production's '*Pillars of the Earth*'; BBC's '*Criminal Justice*' (Supporting Actor Nomination BAFTA 2010), Carnival Television's '*Enid Blyton's Great Adventure*', BBC's '*Little Dorrit*', Granada's '*Miss Marple*', Kudos Production's '*Ashes to Ashes*', Channel Four's '*Secret Life*' (Royal Television Society Award for Best Actor for Best Actor 2008, BAFTA Television Nomination for Best Actor 2008), BBC TV's '*The Project*', BBC One's '*Spooks*', Deep Indigo's '*The Way We Live Now*', Talkback TV's '*Perfect Strangers*', BBC TV's '*Warriors*', (Royal Television Society Nomination for Best Actor 2000), and LWT Production's '*Wuthering Heights*'.

Theatre credits include: '*Perfect Nonsense*' (Duke Of York's Theatre); '*Private Lives*' (Theatre Royal Bath/Sonia Friedman/DW Productions); '*The Pain and the Itch*' (Royal Court Theatre); '*Henry IV: Parts 1 and 2*' (National Theatre); '*Battle Royal*' (National Theatre); '*School for Scandal*' (RSC); '*Much Ado About Nothing*' (Cheek By Jowl); '*Duchess of Malfi*' (Cheek By Jowl); '*A Midsummer Night's Dream*' (RSC).

TUPPENCE MIDDLETON (MARY EDISON)

In 2016 Tuppence Middleton starred in '*War and Peace*', a BBC and Weinstein Company co-production. Tuppence was seen in all 6 episodes alongside Gillian Anderson, Jim Broadbent and Lily James. Tuppence also starred in BBC's *Dickensian*. A 20-part series based around iconic, Charles Dickens characters. Tuppence played young Amelia Havisham.

Tuppence appeared in Bharat Nalluri's *Spooks: The Greater Good* (2015) opposite Kit Harrington as well as the Wachowski's Netflix series, '*Sense8*', which has been renewed for a second season and is due to be released in Summer 2017. Tuppence's other credits include the Wachowski's *Jupiter Ascending* (2015) and the award-winning *The Imitation Game* (2014), where she appeared alongside Benedict Cumberbatch and Keira Knightley.

Other credits include the BBC One adaptation of the Hitchcock classic *The Lady Vanishes* (2013), Iain Softley's *Trap for Cinderella* (2013) and Joel Hopkin's *Love Punch* (2013) with Pierce Brosnan, Emma Thompson and Timothy Spall. Tuppence also appeared in *A Long Way Down* (2014) opposite Rosamund Pike, Aaron Paul and Toni Collette, and Danny Boyle's *Trance* (2013) with James McAvoy and Rosario Dawson.

ABOUT FILMMAKERS

ALFONSO GOMEZ-REJON (DIRECTOR)

Born in Laredo, Texas on the Texas/Mexico border, Alfonso Gomez-Rejon garnered two Emmy nominations for his work as director and co-executive producer on FX's '*American Horror Story: Coven*', the show's lauded third season; he had previously directed episodes on '*American Horror Story*'s' first four seasons, in addition to the first four seasons of FOX's '*glee*'.

Gomez-Rejon began his career as a personal assistant to Martin Scorsese, Nora Ephron and Alejandro González Iñárritu, and later became a sought-after second unit director after his work on films like Iñárritu's *Babel* (2006) and Ben Affleck's *Argo* (2012). The second film he directed, the critically-acclaimed, *Me and Earl and the Dying Girl*, was the 2015 Sundance Film Festival winner of both the Grand Jury Prize and the Audience Award and was released by Fox Searchlight.

TIMUR BEKMAMBETOV (PRODUCER)

Timur Bekmambetov is a Russian-born producer/director whose work spans genres and continents. Bekmambetov was born in the city of Guryev, Kazakhstan in the former USSR. At the age of 19, he moved to Tashkent, where in 1987 he graduated from the Ostrovsky's Theatrical and Artistic University with a degree in theater and cinema set design.

Between 1992 and 1997, Bekmambetov was one of the directors for Bank Imperial's series of popular World History commercials. In 1994 he founded Bazelevs Group, an advertising, film production, distribution and marketing company. Bekmambetov's first feature, *Peshavar Vals* (1994) aka *Escape from Afghanistan* (US title) was a violent and realistic look at the war between Soviet Union and Afghanistan. The movie participated in several prestigious film festivals, winning a number of awards, including the Grand Prix at the International Film Festival in San Remo. In 2002 the film was dubbed in English and released direct-to-video by Roger Corman.

In 2001 Bekmambetov began his association with Corman when he invited the upcoming Russian filmmaker to direct a remake of the 1974 movie *The Arena* aka *Gladiatrix* - a feminist version of *Gladiator*.

Next Bekmambetov produced and directed an eight-part mini-series for the Russian television commissioned by RTR Media entitled '*Our '90s*'. In 2002, he directed and co-produced documentary '*GAZ-Russian Cars*' about the iconic GAZ car plant and it's impact on the Russian history.

In 2004, Bekmambetov wrote and directed *Night Watch* (2004), a popular Russian fantasy film based on the series of books by a renowned author Sergey Lukyanenko. The film was highly successful in Russia, and at the time became its highest-grossing release ever, making US\$16.7 million in Russia only. The sequel to *Night Watch*, *Day Watch* (2006), was also written and directed by Bekmambetov.

Bekmambetov followed up *Day Watch* with the smash hit *The Irony of Fate-2* (2007). This sequel to the famous Soviet comedy remains one of the most successful films in Russian history. Once again it became at that time the most commercially successful movie release in Russia grossing more than US\$40 million domestically.

His Hollywood directorial debut was Universal Studios' *Wanted* (2008), an action blockbuster about a secret society of assassins, based on a comic-book miniseries of the same name written by Mark Millar and starred Angelina Jolie, Morgan Freeman and James McAvoy. In 2012 Fox released Timur Bekmambetov's *Abraham Lincoln: Vampire Hunter* starring Benjamin Walker, Dominic Cooper and Anthony Mackie, produced by Tim Burton.

Bekmambetov has also produced a number of films in the US and Russia, including Shane Acker's animated feature *9* (2009), Aleksandr Voytinskiy's Russian superhero movie *Black Lightning* (2009), Gonzalo López-Gallego's micro-budget horror *Apollo 18* (2011), and Chris Gorak's sci-fi action *The Darkest Hour* (2011). His Russian film company, Bazelevs, is one of the leaders in the domestic market. In 2013 Bazelevs produced the third installment of its Christmas franchise "YOLKI", which became the top-grossing comedy in Russia.

The romantic comedy *Lucky Trouble*, produced by Bekmambetov and directed by Leo Gabriadze, was released in 2011 and not only became the most profitable film of 2013, but also received 9 nominations at the Russian Film Academy Awards. *Lucky Trouble* was the first Russian film to feature a contemporary Hollywood star – Milla Jovovich, who was joined by Konstantin Khabensky and Ivan Urgant.

His 2015 US production, cyber horror *Unfriended* ushered in a new era of fear, unfolding over a teenager's computer as she and her friends are stalked by an unseen figure seeking vengeance. The film grossed nearly 30 times its original budget.

In 2016 Bekmambetov directed historic action drama *Ben-Hur*, based on Lew Wallace's timeless novel, starring Jack Huston as the lead along with a truly international cast – Morgan Freeman, Toby Kebbell, Nazanin Boniadi, Rodrigo Santoro, Sofia Black D'Elia, Ayelet Zurer, Moises Arias and Pilou Asbaek. Written by John Ridley and Keith Clarke, produced by Sean Daniel, Mark Burnett, Joni Levin and Duncan Henderson. Executive producers were Roma Downey, Keith Clarke, John Ridley and Jason Brown. The film was shot on location in Rome and Matera, Italy. MGM produced and Paramount released the film.

Also in 2016 Bekmambetov produced revolutionary first-person project *Hardcore: Henry* with Charlto Copley, Haley Bennett and Tim Roth that won People's Choice Award at Toronto International Film Festival and got released by STX stateside.

BASIL IWANYK (PRODUCER)

Basil Iwanyk is the founder and owner of Thunder Road Pictures, which he started in 2004. Iwanyk's most recent releases include: *Wind River* (2017), currently in theaters and starring Jeremy Renner, Elizabeth Olsen and directed by Oscar-nominated writer Taylor Sheridan; the actioner Chad Stahelski's *John Wick*:

Chapter 2 (2017) and *John Wick* (2014) starring Keanu Reeves, both of which were critical and commercial successes.

Iwanyk's upcoming film credits include: Stefano Sollima's *Soldado*, starring Benicio Del Toro and Josh Brolin, which is the sequel to the three time Academy Award nominated crime thriller *Sicario* (2015); the Dev Patel and Armie Hammer starrer *Hotel Mumbai* (2018), based on the Mumbai terrorist attack in 2008; *A Star Is Born*, directed by Bradley Cooper, who will also star alongside Stefani Germanotta; *Hood*, a gritty take on the classic Robin Hood tale with Otto Bathurst directing, Taron Egerton and Jamie Foxx starring; and *24 Hours To Live* starring Ethan Hawke.

Basil recently wrapped production *Three Seconds*, an action thriller based on the bestselling Swedish novel by Anders Roslund and Börge Hellström that stars Joel Kinnaman, Rosamund Pike, Clive Owen, Common and Ana de Armas.

Thunder Road's films have collectively grossed over \$2 billion worldwide. Past films include: the epic action adventure Louis Leterrier's *Clash Of The Titans* (2010), and its sequel, *Wrath Of The Titans* (2012); three installments of *The Expendables*; Antoine Fuqua's *Brooklyn's Finest* (2009); *We Are Marshall* (2006); and Richard Loncraine's *Firewall* (2006). Iwanyk most notably produced the critically acclaimed drama *The Town* (2010), directed by and starring Ben Affleck. Thunder Road also produced the television series '*The Messengers*' for CBS Studios that aired on the CW network.

After graduating from Villanova University, Iwanyk began his film career as an agent trainee at United Talent Agency. Joining Warner Bros. Pictures in 1995, Iwanyk was involved in the development and production of films such as Antoine Fuqua's crime drama *Training Day* (2001), starring Denzel Washington in an Oscar®-winning performance; Steven Soderbergh's *Ocean's Eleven* (2001) and Christopher Nolan's thriller *Insomnia* (2002).

HARVEY WEINSTEIN (EXECUTIVE PRODUCER)

Harvey Weinstein launched The Weinstein Company (TWC), a multi-media company, with his brother Bob on October 1st, 2005. Since its inception, TWC has released such acclaimed films as *The King's Speech* (2010); *The Artist* (2011); *Silver Lining's Playbook* (2012); *Django Unchained* (2012) and *The Imitation Game* (2014). TWC also encompasses Dimension Films, which has released such

popular franchises as *Scream* (1996), *Spy Kids* (2001) and *Scary Movie* (2000). Together TWC and Dimension Films have released a broad range of mainstream, genre and specialty films that have been commercial and critical successes. During Harvey and Bob's tenure at Miramax and TWC, they have received 357 Oscar nominations and won 82 Academy Awards. TWC's recent major releases included *Carol* (2015), *The Hateful Eight* (2015), *Hands of Stone* (2016), *The Founder* (2016) and Academy Award nominee for Best Picture: *Lion* (2016).

TWC boasts an active television production division, which garnered twelve Emmy nominations in 2015. Weinstein Television produces such reality powerhouses as Lifetime's '*Project Runway*' and its spin off series '*Project Runway All Stars*' and '*Project Runway Junior*', as well as scripted series that include '*Peaky Blinders*' with Netflix, which premiered its third season in May, '*Scream*' with MTV, and critically acclaimed miniseries '*War and Peace*', which premiered on A&E, Lifetime and '*History*' in January 2016. Projects currently in development include Mario Puzo's '*Omerta*' with Antoine Fuqua and Sylvester Stallone, Stephen King's "The Breathing Method", UK series '*SS-GB*', and military drama '*Six*'.

Weinstein Books, a partnership between TWC and The Perseus Books Group, publishes titles from the most important and influential authors and personalities including *New York Times* bestsellers '*Finding Me*' by Michelle Knight and '*Obsessed*' by Mika Brzezinski. In 2015, Weinstein founded the Weinstein Live Entertainment, an independent faction that produces and invests in theatrical productions, including the Broadway musical '*Finding Neverland*', directed by Diane Paulus; Radio City's '*New York Spring Spectacular*' starring the Rockettes, '*Fun Home*', '*The Elephant Man*', '*Wolf Hall*', and '*The Audience*'.

Weinstein and his brother founded Miramax Films in 1979, naming the company after their parents, Miriam and Max. Under their leadership, Miramax Films released some of the most critically acclaimed and commercially successful independent feature films in modern cinema, including sixteen Best Picture nominations over a span of sixteen years. The outstanding quality of Miramax's films under the Weinsteins was represented in the company's success in the annual Academy Awards race.

MICHAEL MITNICK (SCREENPLAY / EXECUTIVE PRODUCER)

Mitnick is a playwright and songwriter. He has a BA from Harvard University and an MFA in playwriting from the Yale School of Drama. He lives in Brooklyn. Mitnick was born and raised in Pittsburgh. His plays include 'Sex Lives of Our Parents' (Second Stage), 'Fly By Night' (Playwrights Horizons), and 'The Siegel' (South Coast Rep). His songs have been sung at Lincoln Center, Joe's Pub, The Guggenheim and on HBO. TV/Film writing includes *'The Giver and Vinyl'*.

DAVID TRACHTENBERG (EDITOR)

Originally from the Philadelphia area, David began his editing career as an intern with The Academy of Television Arts and Sciences in 1993. He spent several years as an assistant editor working in finishing and graphic design houses in Los Angeles until he landed his first commercial editing job in 1996, winning the Silver Hugo at the Chicago Film Festival later that year.

As a commercial editor, Trachtenberg has cut for Nike, Ford, Chevy, ESPN, T-Mobile and Mazda, among others. His work has been recognized by Ad Age, Shoot, Creativity and AICE.

In 2012, David completed his first feature, the Matt Piedmont film, *Casa De Mi Padre*, starring Will Ferrell, Gael Garcia Bernal and Diego Luna, and followed it two years later with *The Spoils of Babylon* (2014), a mini-series for IFC, which earned Kristen Wiig an Emmy nomination. This collaboration also led to the HBO series *'Funny or Die Presents'* (2010), and the Sundance Jury Prize-winning short, *'Brick Novax's Diary'* (2011) all directed by Piedmont.

David also edited the viral sensation, *Portal: No Escape* (2011), for his brother and director, Dan Trachtenberg. After cutting commercials with Alfonso Gomez-Rejon, in 2015, David edited the Sundance Jury Prize and Audience Award winning film, *Me & Earl & the Dying Girl*, which marked his first feature film collaboration with the director and earned him an ACE nomination in 2016.

JAN ROELFS (PRODUCTION DESIGN)

Jan Roelfs is a Dutch production designer and has previously worked as an art director, whose work has been nominated for an Academy Award on two occasions. Roelfs is noted for his decade-long collaboration with fellow designer

Ben Von Os. Beginning in 1983, the pair collaborated on over 25 films, most notably several for British director Peter Greenaway, including *A Zed and Two Noughts* (1985), *Drowning By Numbers* (1988), *The Cook, the Thief, His Wife and Her Lover* (1989) and *Prospero's Books* (1991). Roelfs has worked on films such as Justin Lins' *Fast & Furious* (2013), Rupert Sanders' *Ghost In The Shell* (2017) and Oliver Stone's *Alexander* (2004), as well earning Academy Award nominations for Andrew Niccol's *Gattaca* (1997) and Sally Potter's *Orlando* (1992).

CHUNG-HOON CHUNG (DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY)

Korean Cinematographer Chung-hoon Chung broke out in the Asian film industry by being a constant collaborator with director Chan-wook Park on the very stylistic *Oldboy* (2003), which won the Grand Prize at Cannes in 2004. Chung-hoon also received acclaim from shooting movies such as Chung-Hoon Park's *Lady Vengeance* (2005), *I'm A Cyborg, But That's OK* (2006) and *Thirst* (2009). Chung-hoon made his American debut with *Stoker* (2013), also directed by Park, and most recently worked with Park on the beautifully crafted *The Handmaiden* (2016). Chung-hoon shot the teenage drama *Me And Earl And The Dying Girl* (2015) for director Alfonso Gomez-Rejon who he re-teamed with on *The Current War*. Chung-hoon also shot the highly anticipated *IT* (2017) by Stephen King for director Andrés Muschietti. His future projects include *Hotel Artemis* starring Jodie Foster, directed by Drew Pearce.

ELLEN LEWIS (CASTING DIRECTOR)

Ellen grew up in Chicago, Illinois, and started her career in casting working for Juliet Taylor for 8 1/2 years before venturing out on her own. Ellen has had the pleasure of working with Martin Scorsese for 25 years and counting, working on films such as *Goodfellas* (1990), *The Age of Innocence* (1993), *Casino* (1995), *Kundun* (1997), *Gangs of New York* (2002), *The Departed* (2006), *Hugo* (2011), *'Boardwalk Empire'* (pilot, 2010), *The Wolf Of Wall Street* (2013), and *Silence* (2017).

Ellen also has a long-standing relationship with Jim Jarmusch, starting from *Dead Man* in 1995. Their films together also include, *Ghost Dog: Way Of The Samurai* (1999), *Broken Flowers* (2005), *The Limits of Control* (2009), *Only Lovers Left Alive* (2013) and *Paterson* (2016).

Ellen's other credits include: Martin Brest's *Scent of A Woman* (1992), Penny Marshall's *A League Of Their Own* (1992), Mike Nichol's *Postcards From The Edge*

(1990) *The Birdcage* (1996) and *Angels In America* (HBO film, 2003), Robert Zemeckis' *Forrest Gump* (1994), Stanley Tucci and Campbell Scott's *Big Night* (1996), Gary Winick's *13 Going On 30* (2004), David Frankel's *The Devil Wears Prada* (2006), Douglas McGrath's *Infamous* (2006), Aaron Sorkin's *Charlie Wilson's War* (2007), Phyllida Lloyd's *Mamma Mia!* (2008), Sidney Lumet's *Before The Devil Knows You're Dead* (2007), Sam Mendes' *Revolutionary Road* (2008), Spike Jonze's *Her* (2013), HBO's *'The Leftovers'* (pilot, 2014) and Steven Spielberg's *Bridge of Spies* (2015).

In 2006, Ellen received the NY Women In Film & Television Muse Award and in 2015, she received the Hoyt Bowers Award from the Casting Society of America. Ellen has been nominated for three Emmy Awards and won for *Angels in America* (2003) and *'Boardwalk Empire'* (2010). She has been nominated for thirteen Artios awards and has won three for *A League Of Their Own* (1992), *'Boardwalk Empire'* and *The Wolf Of Wall Street* (2013).

MICHAEL WILKINSON (COSTUME DESIGNER)

Wilkinson is a costume designer based in London. He has a degree in Design from the National Institute of the Dramatic Arts in his hometown, Sydney, Australia. He is a member of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences (AMPAS), the British Academy of Film and Television Arts (BAFTA) and the Costume Designers Guild.

Recent costume designs include: David Russell's *American Hustle* (2013) and *Joy* (2015), Zack Snyder's *Batman vs. Superman: Dawn of Justice* (2016), *Man of Steel* (2013), *Sucker Punch* (2011), *Watchmen* (2009), and *300* (2006); Darren Aronofsky's *Noah* (2014), Joseph Kosinski's *Tron: Legacy* (2010), Alejandro González Iñárritu's *Babel* (2006), McG's *Terminator Salvation* (2009), Zach Braff's *Garden State* (2004), Shari Springer Berman and Robert Pulcini's *American Splendor* (2003) and Fenton Bailey and Randy Barbato's *Party Monster* (2003). Upcoming releases include *Justice League* for Warner Bros and *Aladdin* for Disney.

Michael has an Oscar nomination, a BAFTA nomination, 2 Saturn award nominations and five CDG award nominations. He has won a Saturn Award, and was awarded Costume Designer of the Year by the Hollywood Film Festival. Variety magazine recently included Wilkinson in their "Below the Line Impact" list of film-makers that have significant impact in their field of expertise.

His theater work includes award-winning costume designs for the Sydney Theater Company, Radio City Hall, Opera Australia and The Australian Dance Theater. Michael also designs commercials and works in Special Event design – he created hundreds of costumes for the Opening and Closing Ceremonies of the OLYMPIC GAMES in Sydney.

SHARON MARTIN (MAKE UP AND HAIR DESIGNER)

Sharon started her make-up career working within the theatre. This opened the door for her to work with British music legends Soul II Soul. Sharon soon found a huge creative talent that would take her around the world and lead her from the glamorous world of pop music into an ever-evolving career as an exceptionally versatile Designer for Film and TV.

Sharon went on to work with Forest Whitaker on his Oscar winning performance for *The Last King Of Scotland* (2006) and was shortlisted for an Oscar nomination for her Make-Up Design on *Snow White and the Huntsman* (2012). Sharon's Film career has taken her around the world, working the last few years in locations such as Prague, South Korea, Canada, USA and Nigeria to name but a few, building on and inspiring Sharon's love for story telling.

Sharon has enjoyed collaborations with directors such as Woody Allen, Anton Corbijn and most recently Gore Verbinski. Sharon's TV work earned her a BAFTA nominated for her Hair and Make-Up Design on the adaptation of Zadie Smiths '*White Teeth*' starring Naomi Harris and James McAvoy.

Her latest credits include make-up and hair design for the forthcoming *A Cure for Wellness* (2016) as well as the 80's crime thriller *Infiltrator* (2016) starring Bryan Cranston and Diane Kruger. Sharon's long list of film credits also include *Blood Diamond* (2006), *Prince of Persia* (2010), *Pirates of the Caribbean: On Stranger Tides* (2011) and most recently Personal Hair and Make-Up Artist on Marvels *Dr. Strange* (2016), to Rachel McAdams and Chiwetel Ejiofor, to name but a few.

THOMAS WOODS (SUPERVISING LOCATION MANAGER)

Thomas Woods has a wealth of industry experience working in location management. Woods began his career as a location assistant working on Pat Holden's, Fringe Report Award winning, *Awaydays* (2009). Woods went on to work as an Assistant location manager on Sam Taylor-Johnson's 3-times BAFTA nominated and 4-times BIFA nominated *Nowhere Boy* (2009), starring Aaron Taylor-Johnson, Kristin Scott Thomas, Anne-Marie Duff and David Morrissey.

Woods has also worked as a location scout on Matthew Vaughn's Empire nominated *X-Men: First Class* (2011), starring James McAvoy, Michael Fassbender, Jennifer Lawrence and Nicholas Hoult. Woods worked as the location manager on John Madden's *The Second Best Exotic Marigold Hotel* (2015), starring Dev Patel, Maggie Smith, Bill Nighy and Judi Dench and Rufus Norris' *London Road* (2015), starring Olivia Coleman, Anita Dobson and Tom Hardy. Recently Woods has worked on Scott Derrickson's Oscar nominated and three-times BAFTA nominated *Doctor Strange* (2016), starring Benedict Cumberbatch, Chiwetel Ejiofor and Rachel McAdams.

Woods has also been involved in Matthew Vaughn's *Kingsman: The Golden Circle* (2017) and Kenneth Branagh's *Murder on the Orient Express* (2017).

DUSTIN O'HALLORAN (COMPOSER)

It's always tempting to draw conclusions as to why a musician feels drawn to a certain style or sound. In Dustin O'Halloran's case, one can't help but wonder whether it has something to do with a childhood spent in Phoenix, Arizona, one of America's most populated cities, yet one buried in the Sonoran Desert. Does this sparse yet vivid music reflect an early desire to escape from the hustle of urban life to the peace of the desolate wilderness? Or is it connected to Los Angeles, where he continued to grow up beneath clear blue skies in a thriving cultural metropolis? Perhaps, though, it's indicative of seven years spent living in the rural Emilia Romagna region of Northern Italy, where O'Halloran developed his idiosyncratic piano skills following time spent in the underappreciated but critically acclaimed band, Devics. Maybe, even, it's symptomatic of his current existence in Berlin, a city famed for its bohemian nightlife, but whose wide streets and plentiful parks offer a rarely celebrated tranquillity that's unusual for a capital city. In all honesty, the answer's probably not important. What really matters is the music.

It's this music that has led O'Halloran to become known as one of the most significant figures in a scene that has variously – and perhaps misleadingly – become referred to as, among other things, 'neo-classical' or 'post-classical'. Neither are terms with which O'Halloran is comfortable: though he's worked predominantly with piano and strings in recent years, his collaboration with Adam Wiltzie (*Stars Of The Lid*) under the name *A Winged Victory For The Sullen* underlines his enthusiasm for other textures, and he's dabbled with electronica too, something he acknowledges is far from unlikely to happen again. Instead,

O'Halloran would prefer it if his music were simply labelled 'timeless', and a cursory listen to any of his work since the first Devics album suggests it's as accurate an epithet as one is likely to muster.

O'Halloran first received widespread recognition after Sofia Coppola invited him to contribute music to her award-winning *Marie Antoinette*. Amid the film's vibrant colours, and the admirably incongruous sounds of the new wave, post-punk and electronic acts who dominated the movie's soundtrack, O'Halloran's solo piano pieces provided welcome moments of eloquent stillness. He'd already been composing for a considerable time, though: in fact, it wasn't long after he'd begun to teach himself how to play piano at the age of seven – having been inspired by the sounds coming from the ballet lessons that his mother gave – that he started to perform his own work. Soon, the influence of the likes of Chopin, Arvo Pärt and Debussy was supplanted by a fondness for more esoteric acts – Cocteau Twins (whose Simon Raymonde would later sign him to his label, Bella Union), Gavin Bryars, Morton Feldman and Joy Division – and, by the time he was 19 or so, he was writing songs with Sara Lov, whom he met at Santa Monica College, where he was studying art.

Devics, whose hazy dream pop won them considerable plaudits, went on to record five albums. (Formally, they've never actually split up.) But, by the time their last release, *Push The Heart*, came out in 2006, O'Halloran already had two albums of solo piano pieces under his belt, written in the Italian farmhouse to which he'd relocated after the turn of the millennium. It was the first of these that attracted Coppola's attention – the second called largely upon work for the movie itself – but initially he'd been reluctant to release it, as he considered his compositions too naïve and his playing too unskilled. Arguably, however, it was their very Satie-esque simplicity that made them so haunting and earned them a place in the Bella Union catalogue, while the simultaneous emergence of other likeminded souls – including Jóhann Jóhannsson, Max Richter and Nils Frahm – helped establish a healthy musical environment in which he could flourish. Indeed, Frahm has regularly engineered recordings for O'Halloran, while Jóhannsson mixed 2011's *Lumiere*, his last studio album (released by UK independent label Fat Cat), and has a studio beside O'Halloran's.

Since the release of *Piano Solos Volumes 1 and 2* in 2004 and 2006, O'Halloran has gone on to score a number of films and TV shows. These include Garth Davis' Oscar and Golden Globe nominated *Lion* (2017), Drake Doremus' *Breathe In* (2013) (starring Guy Pearce and Felicity Jones) and *Like Crazy* (2011), which won Sundance's Grand Jury Prize, as well as the new sci-fi drama, *Equals* (2015)

(starring Kristen Stewart, Nicholas Hoult and Guy Pearce), which he scored in collaboration with Sascha Ring of Apparatus. In 2015, O'Halloran scored the Indian drama *Umrika* (2015) directed by Prashant Nair – which won the Audience Award at Sundance, and gave him his first opportunity to compose for a full string orchestra – as well as the new comedy drama, *'Transparent'*, for which O'Halloran won an Emmy Award for Outstanding Original Main Title Theme Music. O'Halloran also released two further solo collections, including the live recording, *Vorleben* (2011), as well as winning further fans – and selling out prestigious seated theatres – with *A Winged Victory For The Sullen*, whose two albums (released by Erased Tapes in Europe and Kranky in the USA) showcase O'Halloran's trademark, delicate melodies awash in his colleague Adam Wiltzie's ambient atmospherics. Their most recent release – *ATOMOS* (2014) – emerged from an irresistible invitation to work with Wayne McGregor, the Resident Choreographer of The Royal Ballet in London, and further emphasizes O'Halloran's eagerness to explore new musical realms.

Whatever his influences or inspirations, whether they be cultural or geographical, it's clear that O'Halloran's become a singularly serene presence in a world full of noise. A minimalist master of the intricate and the intimate, he's earned respect and admiration across the globe, and his work is more than deserving of – and increasingly associated with – the very accolade that he's always sought: timeless.

HAUSCHKA (COMPOSER)

Since the release of his debut album, *Substantial*, in 2004, Volker Bertelmann – aka Hauschka – has, slowly but surely, earned a remarkable reputation as a purveyor of imaginative, distinctive, prepared piano music. This isn't, to be fair, a heavily populated field, but it's one he's made his own, and while some might have dismissed his work early on as a novelty, Bertelmann has proven himself to be uncommonly inventive, coaxing ever more unprecedented, euphonic sounds and rhythms out of his instrument. Even so, on *What If* which finds him adding player pianos (also known as pianolas) to his armoury – Bertelmann expands his range even further, defying expectations and delivering what is without doubt his most ingenious album yet.

It's somewhat astonishing, given his recent schedule, that Bertelmann has found time to record this eighth solo studio album at all. Since 2014's *Abandoned City*, the Düsseldorf pianist and former hip hop artist – he was a member of major label duo God's Favorite Dog in the early 90s – has released a collection of

remixes and outtakes from *Abandoned City* (A NDO C Y) as well as a live album (2.11.14). He's also toured the world, contributed to dance performances – *Swan of Tuonela* found him reinterpreting Jean Sibelius' tone poem alongside Samuli Kosminen and Markus Hohti for a ballet choreographed by Finnish circus performer Ville Walo – and worked with a variety of musicians and ensembles. His collaboration with Amsterdam's Alma Quartet was performed as part of *The New Romantics*, a concert series he curated at 2016's Schumannfest in Düsseldorf, while *Lost*, a piece written for acclaimed cellist Nicolas Altstaedt, receives its UK premiere at London's Kings Place in the spring.

Furthermore, Bertelmann has found increasing amounts of work as a soundtrack composer, working on scores for a number of documentaries and feature films, not least James Franco's adaptation of John Steinbeck's *In Dubious Battle* (2016) and, alongside Dustin O'Halloran, *Lion* (2017), for which they've both been nominated for a Golden Globe.