Zac Efron stars with Taylor Schilling and Blythe Danner in the romantic drama “The Lucky One,” directed by Academy Award®-nominated writer/director Scott Hicks (“Shine”), based on Nicholas Sparks’ bestseller The Lucky One.

U.S. Marine Sergeant Logan Thibault (Efron) returns from his third tour of duty in Iraq, with the one thing he credits with keeping him alive—a photograph he found of a woman he doesn’t even know. Discovering her name is Beth (Schilling) and where she lives, he shows up at her door, and ends up taking a job at her family-run local kennel. Despite her initial mistrust and the complications in her life, a romance develops between them, giving Logan hope that Beth could be much more than his good luck charm.

Hicks directed “The Lucky One” from a screenplay by Will Fetters, adapted from the Nicholas Sparks novel of the same name. The producers are Denise Di Novi, whose previous collaborations with Sparks include the films “A Walk To Remember,” “Nights In Rodanthe” and “Message in a Bottle,” and Kevin McCormick. Ravi Mehta, Alison Greenspan and Bruce Berman served as executive producers, and Kerry Heysen as co-producer.

Rounding out the main cast are Jay R. Ferguson, Riley Thomas Stewart, and Adam LeFevre.

The behind-the-scenes creative team includes cinematographer Alar Kivilo, production designer Barbara Ling, editor Scott Gray and costume designer Dayna Pink. Oscar® nominee Mark Isham (“A River Runs Through It”) composed the score.

Warner Bros. Pictures presents, in association with Village Roadshow Pictures, a Di Novi Pictures production, a Scott Hicks film, “The Lucky One,”

www.theluckyonemovie.co.uk
ABOUT THE PRODUCTION

BETH
You think life has a plan for you?

LOGAN
If so, it hasn’t shared it with me yet.

Is there really such a thing as destiny? Is Fate shadowing our movements, stacking the deck, or are all our moments—ordinary and extraordinary—random? The age-old question of whether things happen by accident is at the core of Nicholas Sparks’ *The Lucky One*.

Director Scott Hicks offers, “That premise immediately drew me in: the notion that a chance event—finding a photo in the middle of nowhere—could change not only one man’s life, but the lives of everyone he comes into contact with, really hooked me at the outset. The idea of destiny is quite central, and I liked that it’s treated in a very realistic fashion.”

Sparks reveals that a very real item was the basis for his story. “This is the first book I’ve ever written that was inspired by a single image: that of a soldier finding a picture half-buried in the sand and pulling it out. I became obsessed with what happens when he begins to view this photo as his lucky charm.”

In “The Lucky One,” the photo becomes more than a good luck charm; it serves as the catalyst for a journey of discovery and healing.

*The Lucky One* marks the fourth of Sparks’ novels that producer Denise Di Novi has brought to the big screen. She relates, “I’ve been in love with Nicholas’ books since I first read *The Notebook*. Every one of his stories renews your faith in love and in the power of love, and this one is no exception. I think everybody wants to believe that love can conquer all, despite the odds.”

In the film’s central role, Zac Efron stars as Logan, a Marine who has seemingly defied the odds during three tours of duty in Iraq. The actor responded to the story’s interconnecting ideas of luck, love and destiny. “That’s what you hope love is, destiny,” he remarks. “You want it to be meant to be. It often feels like it is. Why can’t it be? And that’s what’s so intriguing about the story.”
Producer Kevin McCormick agrees. “Nick Sparks beautifully entwined the two themes of love and Fate, and Scott Hicks delivered that in a way that creates feelings of both surprise and inevitability.”

Will Fetters, who was responsible for adapting Sparks' novel for the film, notes, “I can’t say enough about how collaborative Scott was and how much his input helped me.” The screenwriter adds that the author had given him the best possible foundation. “Before I even picked up the book, I was caught by the idea of this soldier trying to piece together why he’s still here, which brings up the question of whether or not things happen for a reason. The question remains unanswered, but it was woven through the subtext of the script.”

Taylor Schilling plays the woman in the photograph, who becomes a talisman for a man she doesn’t even know exists. “I got a feel for the character right off the page. They’re both living with a duality of tremendous loss and potential joy. Whether it’s their destiny or not, it’s incredibly romantic.”

“I think most people have, at some point in their life, a lucky charm and, whether we truly believe in it or not, there’s something hopeful about it,” says Di Novi.

BETH
Why did you come here?

LOGAN
To find you.

“The Lucky One” opens in Iraq, where Efron’s character, U.S. Marine Sergeant Logan Thibault, is on his third tour of duty. Almost immediately, he is thrust into a firefight that changes his life forever.

The role itself changed Efron, who literally had to transform himself physically and emotionally, to look, move and react like a Marine who had served in a war zone and seen far more violence and loss than his family or peers at home could even imagine.

Hicks explains, “When we first see Logan, we need to know what he’s gone through and understand some of the sense of trauma that he carries with him out of this conflict. I was very impressed by Zac’s commitment to not only change his physique but also to get into the mindset of a soldier. He created the slightly stony exterior of someone a little mysterious—a character we don’t know a great deal about at first.”
“Initially I wasn’t convinced I could pull this off,” Efron recalls, “but the more I thought about it, and the more I talked to Scott, I realized if there was ever going to be a chance to play a role so different from what I’ve played before, this was it. I knew I had to put in the work to be able to play Logan, and I felt capable in Scott’s hands.”

Di Novi says, “One of my favorite things about being a producer is watching actors reinvent themselves, and that’s what Zac did. He just looks like a different person in this film. How he walks, how he stands, how he holds himself…it was a thrill to see him become Logan.”

McCormick concurs, “Even though he’d never done anything like it before, Zac was really able to bring a very specific and unique take on Logan. We literally saw somebody who’s been so youthful in every other movie legitimately turn into a man in front of our very eyes. That really helped make Nick Spark’s character come to life. Apart from looking like a Marine, Zac brought a reservoir of pain and strength in equal measure.”

Efron’s preparation to play a seasoned Marine included the physical rigors of training several months prior to production with military consultant James Dever, a retired Sergeant Major who spent twenty-five years in the U.S. Marine Corps, and rising at 3:30 a.m. during filming to continue the regimen. That and a strict diet added 20 pounds of bulk to the actor. To complete the exterior metamorphosis, Efron buzzed his signature hair.

The internal work was equally, if not more, demanding. In order to get into his character’s psyche, Efron travelled with Hicks to Camp Pendleton to talk to Marines and see combat through their eyes.

Efron recalls, “When I got there it was like stepping into a different world. They stood with a purpose. They had laser focus, never broke eye contact. This is my generation, on the front lines. They’ve experienced some pretty gruesome things. We sat and talked for several hours and they were the most amazing conversations I’ve ever had with anybody. In terms of research, it was priceless. I can’t thank them enough. The stories and personal feelings they shared became part of the canvas for Logan.”

“We took very seriously what these young guys go through serving overseas,” Di Novi remarks. “Zac respected it, absorbed it, really internalized it, and I think you see that on film. He does a great job in honoring those guys’ experiences.”

Interestingly, a number of the Marines with whom Efron and Hicks met had a variety of good luck charms that they had carried with them into battle. Hicks describes,
“One sergeant took out the remnants of what was barely recognizable as a playing card, which he’d taken with him on multiple tours. Once he’d lost it, which disturbed him deeply, but in the most extraordinary circumstances he found it again, quite by chance. The way he felt about it was very moving.”

Central to the film is Logan’s connection to what he comes to perceive as his own good luck charm—a photograph of a stranger he finds in the middle of the war zone.

Efron offers, “Just the act of finding the picture directly saved his life. He was in the right place at the right time and after that he seems to survive situations he shouldn’t be surviving, while others around him aren’t as lucky, so it takes on special meaning.”

Returning to the States, Logan is unable to fit back in with his own family. Will F etters says many of his friends who served echo that sentiment. “The disconnect these veterans feel when they come home is so immense. It takes a while to get back into the rhythm of life. Their once usual surroundings feel alien. Nothing will ever be the same.”

Logan is also unable to shake his curiosity about the woman in the photo, who inadvertently saved his life. Deciding he must try to locate her, he scours the internet to identify the lighthouse in the background, and finds the match. Soon he embarks on a trek from Colorado to Louisiana, with his dog Zeus at his side.

The filmmakers’ own search to find the object of Logan’s quest began and ended with actress Taylor Schilling, who was cast as Beth Green. “Taylor conveys a complexity of emotional expression that is really extraordinary,” Hicks says. “You read in her eyes so much depth and detail.”

When the filmmakers put Schilling and Efron together, their on-screen chemistry sealed the deal. “That’s always the great unknown,” notes Hicks, “the question of what it’s going to be like when you put your stars together. Is there going to be any chemistry? From the first moment, the connection between Zac and Taylor was apparent.”

However, when Beth meets Logan, there’s immediate distrust. “They’re both broken in a way,” Efron acknowledges. “She’s guarded and he can’t tell her the real reason he’s there.”

In the photo, Beth is smiling, but the woman Logan first encounters “has obviously experienced tremendous loss,” says Schilling. “She can’t help but bring all of her baggage to the table: her grief, her defensiveness, her pain, her vulnerability.
Whether she’s ready or not, Logan shows up and presents an opportunity for her to heal. I so admire in Beth the courage and strength to go for it, even though it’s scary.”

Di Novi adds, “Beth is a divorced single mother who put her dreams on hold until Logan comes into the picture and she begins to realize that maybe she does have a right to be happy and have love in her life again.”

Beth lives at her family home, where she runs a dog kennel and training business with her grandmother. Veteran actress Blythe Danner plays Ellie, who, upon observing Logan’s command over Zeus, hires him to help at the kennel, despite Beth’s objections. Hicks comments that Ellie might also have ulterior motives. “Ellie observes a spark between Logan and Beth and sees the possibility of a relationship between them. Blythe brought her consummate talent and wit to this atypical grandmother role.”

“I enjoyed being involved in ‘The Lucky One,’” Danner shares. “It’s full of heart. Ellie discreetly observes everything, though she stays in the background. She’s a protector, fervently loves her granddaughter and great-grandson, loves having them in her home, and they, along with her business, give her a zest for living. Although I don’t believe in Fate, it was nice to play a character that does and take that journey because she has no doubt this is Logan’s destiny—to become a part of their lives.”

McCormick observes, “Ellie has a huge heart and is open to life, whatever it holds for her. Blythe played her with so much humor. She lights up her scenes.”

Another person who welcomes Logan’s arrival is Beth’s seven-year-old son, Ben, played by Riley Thomas Stewart. The filmmakers auditioned hundreds of children to find the right fit for Ben and, says Di Novi, “We hit the jackpot with Riley.”

Logan becomes fast friends with Ben, who delights in beating him in chess and showing off his magic tricks. Logan also not only accepts but encourages Ben’s playing of the violin, something his own father dismisses. Stewart took violin lessons in order to play his solo. “Learning to play the violin was difficult; I had to start right with the hard stuff,” Stewart recalls. “But my favorite thing was the magic. I got to learn a whole routine.”

Schilling remarks, “In between takes, Riley wanted to play tag and race cars, but when the cameras rolled he could flip that switch. He was just remarkable.”

Hicks adds, “Finding Riley was an absolute gift. He has such a sweet natural charm and exuberance. He’s just like bottled energy, which we channeled into his character.”
Ben’s father, and Beth’s ex-husband, is the town’s Deputy Sheriff, Keith Clayton, who uses their son Ben as a pawn to intimidate and control Beth. It only gets worse when he jealously starts to view Logan as an interloper in his family.

Jay R. Ferguson, who plays the role, states, “Keith uses his position as a sheriff and as Ben’s father to his advantage. He likes to keep Beth in a box with that power. When Logan comes to town, it’s the first time anyone has challenged him without backing down.”

“He’s the antagonist in the film but, as with all great antagonists, you have to feel for him in some way. Jay has a great power and on-screen presence, which is layered and textured so you see a real conflict is going on inside him,” Hicks notes.

“I found the series of interconnected relationships between these different people so compelling,” the director continues. “It’s not just the promise of romance between Logan and Beth. There are five individuals whose lives are ultimately changed when Logan finds that photo in the sand.”

LOGAN
I just like dogs. More than people sometimes.

The canine cast members were also integral to the story, in particular, Zeus, Logan’s dog and constant companion. Played by Rowdy, a six-year-old-German Shepherd, Zeus is the only living thing Logan relates to when he returns home from the war.

Like their counterparts, Efron and Rowdy were inseparable on set. “It's interesting to have a sidekick like Rowdy,” Efron says. “Always having him right there with me immediately helped me identify with the character. We had an incredible bond.”

Sparks based Zeus on his own German Shepherd, Rex, one of five dogs who the author calls his “co-workers,” and who accompany him while he writes.

Rowdy has been with the film’s animal trainer, Boone Narr, since he was a year old, with a film resume including the lead role in the recent “Cats & Dogs: The Revenge of Kitty Galore.” Narr’s company, Boone Narr’s Animals for Hollywood, also provided the other dogs we see boarding and training at Beth and Ellie’s kennel.

Hicks wanted the relationship between the cast and the animals to feel as organic as possible, so Efron, Schilling and Danner worked with the dogs for a month at Narr’s ten-acre ranch in Castaic, California, before shooting began in Louisiana.
Playing experienced dog trainers, Schilling and Danner had to learn how to handle the dogs on an agility course. Schilling also had to become adept at jogging while simultaneously handling several dogs on leashes. The trainers started her off running with one dog, then two dogs, then five.

“It may look easy but they are big, and they will take you down!” she laughs. “I didn’t anticipate how much fun it was going to be. I think I became a part of the pack the day we all ended up in the pond by accident.”

Narr and two animal trainers drove from Los Angeles to New Orleans in a trailer with 15 varieties of dogs, from the largest, an Anatolian Shepherd weighing 160 pounds to the smallest, a Chihuahua mix weighing seven pounds. Among the other breeds that made the trip were a Bulldog, Rottweiler, Swedish Vallhund, Westie, and Golden Retriever. All the dogs were male, except for Jesse, an Irish Terrier. A black Labrador named Dexter, adopted from a Los Angeles animal shelter just a few weeks prior to filming, underwent extensive training to be featured as a military dog in the Iraq war sequence.

BETH
The thing is I don’t wanna go anywhere else.
I want Ben to grow up here; this is our home…
has been for generations.

“The Lucky One” was filmed entirely on location in Louisiana. The filmmakers chose to change the setting of the story in Sparks’ book from his familiar stomping ground of North Carolina to New Orleans, as well as to shoot on location there.

“It was a big decision for us to shoot in New Orleans but I’m really glad we did,” Di Novi says. “There’s something very magical there, a mystical quality to the people, the bayou, the whole Cajun influence is so unique. It has given the film a different texture and flavor. Scott really took advantage of the lushness and sensuality of the setting.”

The first five weeks of shooting took place about thirteen miles from downtown New Orleans in St. Bernard Parish, which stood in for the fictitious town of Hamden, Louisiana. A private thirty-acre property, which had been a sugar plantation in the 1800s, served as the location of the Green family home.
Hicks notes, “The most important location to find was the Green house and kennels. The thing that attracted me to that house was the extraordinary sight lines through it. Looking at behavior through windows or through doorways underlines the connections between people, or sometimes the distances between them.”

Production designer Barbara Ling, who has worked with Hicks for a decade, relates, “We were looking for a rural farmhouse that was a little shabby chic, which had at one time been a great piece of architecture but through time had been pared down to a little bit less of its former self.”

The original house had survived Hurricane Katrina, but most of the porch had been torn away. Ling and her team restored the porch, also connecting what was once an outside kitchen to the inside of the house.

“When Scott and I met and talked about the feeling of what this place was, we wanted to evoke that many generations of people had come through and left a piece of themselves…and I think we've achieved that,” Ling adds. “The owners had saved from Hurricane Katrina an enormous amount of the original farmhouse furniture, huge vanities, beautiful old desks and we ended up using some of that, since it was actually built for the house.”

She reveals, “There was an incredible woman who lived here until she passed away at 98 years old. We found out she was an artist, because we kept discovering her paintings tucked away throughout the house. We asked the family if we could display her art on the walls, so she's all over the place. She finally got her show.”

To serve as the kennel, they built a barn from scratch, using pressure treated recycled wood, complete with tin roof, full electrical capability, real windows and a concrete slab with drainage. Although Ling had never constructed a kennel before, hers got a thumbs up from the dog trainers, who wanted to replicate it in California. The dogs liked it too.

A real rose garden was also planted and tended to six weeks leading up to the start of filming and a dilapidated chicken coop was turned into the kennel office, complete with a bulletin board sporting a collage of dog photos, many belonging to the crew.

The production also took advantage of other locations along the North Shore communities of Lake Pontchartrain, including the Iraq war sequences where we first meet Logan. Hicks’ vision for the opening scenes of the film stemmed from raw footage he had seen on YouTube taken by soldiers. “It panics you just watching it,” Hicks
describes. “I wanted to recreate that feeling and also embrace the imperfections of that style of shooting so the audience would, on a raw emotional level, understand what Logan has seen and what haunts him when he returns home.”

Ling transformed the existing rubble at St. Bernard Port in Chalmette, Louisiana, into the bombed out section of an Iraqi city. The night raid was shot with handheld cameras equipped with actual night-vision lenses. There was no movie lighting, so it was pitch black in the abandoned building in which they shot.

“The pandemonium was very real,” director of photography Alar Kivilo recounts. “The only people who could see anything at all were the camera operators with their night-vision lenses, who were intent on keeping up with the fast action.”

Hicks agrees. “The sheer adrenalin felt on the set comes across on the screen.”

Ling added two bombed out walls to a rubble heap in a harbor just outside of New Orleans to create the aftermath of the night raid, where Logan first finds the photograph of Beth, a discovery which saves his life.

The photograph is also with Logan when he survives a sudden Humvee explosion, the slow-motion filming of which Hicks based on a conversation with a Marine. The extreme close-up of Logan as his face gets contorted and bent out of shape was achieved by shooting an air cannon at Efron and recording the result at 1000 frames per second with a Weisscam slow motion camera. “That suspension of time while everything goes chaotic was more interesting to me than showing a series of fireball explosions,” the director says. “By getting right in there with Zac, the audience is propelled right into Logan’s point of view, and becomes more than just an objective observer.”

“This kind of thinking is what I love about Scott Hicks,” Kivilo attests. “He thinks, feels and intuits like a storyteller. Whether it was a night raid or a conversation in the kitchen, he has a wonderful way of using the camera to tell the story.”

Hicks opted to use real Marines in uniform for the Iraq scenes, and Efron wasn’t spared any of the demands. The actor describes, “The gear is 100-plus pounds with the helmet. That along with wielding a machine gun was harder to handle than it looks. We spent weeks doing military drills and weapon practice. One day I was shooting a romantic scene in a row boat on a pond with Taylor, the next day I was holding a machine gun and in full camouflage.”

Costume designer Dayna Pink says, “We do research when it comes to the military, but the reality is it doesn't matter if I thought, ‘Oh, that hat would look a lot better
if we could just tilt it a little.' It does not work like that. There was a very specific way that everything has to go. They’re so meticulous on how they do everything because they really look at their uniform as an extension of themselves and their discipline."

Logan’s civilian clothing was also utilitarian. Pink offers, “He’s on the road, so if it can’t fit in his backpack, he can’t wear it. His clothes are jeans and t-shirts and boots, things he wears every day. The color palette of his wardrobe was deliberately dark, adding a heaviness to his character.”

By contrast, Taylor Schilling’s and Blythe Danner’s clothes are lighter in color, though also casual and functional. Pink notes, “After Beth begins to spend more time with Logan, she starts transforming and you can see a more romantic aspect to what she wears.”

Other New Orleans area locations included Camp Salmen Nature Park, where a 19th-century French-Creole trading post was used for Logan’s fixer-upper; the Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church in Abita Springs, where the actual Pastor, Dustin Bergene, and choir were featured in a scene; and the Houmas House Plantation and Gardens, once a flourishing sugar plantation on the Mississippi River, became the Clayton Family Estate, the site of an elaborate garden party.

The film’s stormy climax was shot in St. Tammany Parish, a North Shore community of Lake Pontchartrain. The St. Joseph Abbey and Seminary College was the site of young Ben’s tree house set and nearby bridge, suspended over a churning creek. A dam was built in order to make the water deeper. The special effects team had to rig wires that would keep a number of Jet-skis stationary in the water with their engines gunning to create a raging torrent. During the early December shoot, some of the camera crew had to wear wetsuits as they manned handheld cameras in the rumbling, freezing water. Between takes crew and cast alike would warm up by spraying each other with the hot water hoses that were hidden just below the surface.

One of the film’s most significant backdrops is the lighthouse seen in the photograph that leads Logan to Beth. The site is the River Lighthouse, located in Port Eads, Louisiana, at the southern tip of the Mississippi River. The white iron tower was one of the few structures still standing in the area after Hurricane Katrina.

Perhaps the photograph Logan found a half a world away in a place of destruction saved his life for a new beginning. Perhaps it was just coincidence. The filmmakers and cast agree they will leave it to the audience to decide.
“Whether or not it’s destiny, it’s very tender and very real and I think it’s a beautiful love story,” Efron states.

Schilling says, “I hope this film inspires someone, somewhere to trust a little more, or to find the courage to take a risk and follow their own heart, wherever that may lead.”

Kevin McCormick remarks, “I think the audience will enjoy going on this journey with Logan and Beth because it’s very emotionally told. In the end, I think the idea of Fate that Nicholas Sparks hints at in his book adds a twist to the romance.”

Di Novi agrees. “Nick embraces the concept of love and has found a way to tell these stories that give people hope—even if you lose someone, or have pain or grief or loss in your life, love can still remain a constant and it can come up and surprise you in the most mysterious ways.”

Hicks reflects, “There are some who believe we cross paths by chance, and others who are convinced that destiny brings people together. But either way, if you find love, you’re the lucky one.”

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ABOUT THE CAST

ZAC EFRON (Logan Thibault) will next be seen in Lee Daniels’ thriller “The Paperboy,” alongside Nicole Kidman, John Cusack, Matthew McConaughey and Scott Glenn. He also recently worked alongside Dennis Quaid in Ramin Bahrani’s latest film and appears in the comedy “Liberal Arts,” Josh Radnor’s directorial debut, which premiered to rave reviews at the Sundance Film Festival.

Previously, Efron starred in Garry Marshall’s ensemble romantic comedy “New Year’s Eve” and lent his voice to the animated feature “Dr. Seuss’ The Lorax.” He also starred in the title roles of the fantasy romance “Charlie St. Cloud” and the comedy “17 Again,” both from director Burr Steers, and as the lovable Link Larkin in 2007’s smash hit musical “Hairspray,” directed by Adam Shankman. As part of the all-star cast he shared a Critics Choice Award for Best Acting Ensemble, the 2007 Hollywood Film Festival Award for Ensemble of the Year, and was honored with a Screen Actors Guild Award® nomination for Outstanding Motion Picture Cast. In addition, he won an MTV Movie Award for Breakthrough Performance.

Efron also starred in Richard Linklater’s “Me and Orson Welles,” an adaptation of the novel by Robert Kaplow, which premiered to rave reviews at the 2008 Toronto Film Festival. More recently, he starred in Kenny Ortega’s “High School Musical 3: Senior Year,” which set a box office record for the highest grossing opening weekend for a musical.

He first garnered attention in 2006 as the star of the original “High School Musical,” for which he won the Teen Choice Award for Breakout Star. Efron returned to the role of Troy Bolton in “High School Musical 2,” which broke cable TV records with 17.5 million viewers. His additional television credits include a role on the WB series “Summerland” and guest-starring roles on such shows as “ER,” “The Guardian,” “CSI: Miami” and “NCIS.”

Efron is also developing projects through his production company.

TAYLOR SCHILLING (Beth Green) will next be seen in Ben Affleck’s latest directorial effort “Argo,” in theatres in September. She will star opposite Affleck, in the role of his wife, Christine, in the film that centers on the real-life C.I.A. plan to rescue a group of diplomats from Tehran after the 1979 Iranian revolution.
On television, Schilling is known for her role as Veronica Flanagan Callahan on NBC’s drama series “Mercy.” She had earlier made her big screen debut in the fact-based independent feature “Dark Matter,” starring Meryl Streep.

Schilling grew up in Massachusetts and graduated in 2006 from Fordham University with a Bachelor of Arts in Acting. She entered New York University's Graduate Acting Program and left after her second year to pursue her acting career, landing “Mercy” within four months.

**BLYTHE DANNER** (Ellie Green) is a prolific, Emmy Award and Tony Award-winning actress who has appeared in numerous stage, television and film roles.

Danner first appeared on stage with the Theater Company of Boston and the Trinity Square Repertory Company (now Trinity Repertory Company) in Providence. She gained national attention at age 25 by winning the Theatre World Award for her performance in the Lincoln Center Rep's production of “The Miser,” and went on to win a Tony Award in 1970 for her Broadway debut in “Butterflies Are Free.”

Danner received three additional Tony nominations: in 1980 for the original Broadway production of Harold Pinter’s “Betrayal”; in 1988 for a revival of the Pulitzer Prize-winning drama “A Streetcar Named Desire”; and in 2001 for a revival of Stephen Sondheim’s “Follies.” For more than 20 years, she has been a regular performer at the Williamstown Summer Theater Festival. On PBS, Danner has been seen in Chekov's “The Seagull,” Shaw's “Candida,” and Williams’s “Eccentricities of a Nightingale.”

One of her earliest starring film roles was in the title role of “Lovin' Molly,” directed by Sidney Lumet. She has appeared in two films based on novels by Pat Conroy, “The Great Santini” and “The Prince of Tides,” in the beloved musical "1776,” and two television movies adapted from books by Anne Tyler, “Saint Maybe” and “Back When We Were Grownups.” For director Woody Allen, she has appeared in “Another Woman,” “Alice” and “Husbands and Wives.”

More recently, Danner starred in “Hello I Must Be Going,” which was nominated for the Grand Jury Prize at the Sundance Film Festival in January; with Robert De Niro in the hit comedy “Meet the Parents” and its sequel, “Meet the Fockers,” alongside Barbra Streisand and Dustin Hoffman; the romantic comedy “The Last Kiss,” for director Tony Goldwyn; and the biographical drama “Sylvia,” about poet Sylvia Plath, in which she shared the screen with daughter Gwyneth Paltrow. Danner also lent her vocal talents to the animated adventure “Howl’s Moving Castle.”
In 2002, Danner’s performance in the television adaptation of Joyce Carol Oates’ “We Were the Mulvaneys” earned an Emmy Award nomination. In both 2005 and 2006, she won back-to-back Emmy Awards for Best Supporting Actress for her role as Izzy in Showtime’s acclaimed series “Huff,” and garnered an Outstanding Guest Actress nomination for her work on “Will & Grace,” and Outstanding Lead Actress nomination for her role in Hallmark Hall of Fame’s “Back When We Were Grownups,” the latter of which also earned Danner a Golden Globe nomination for Best Actress.

Danner sits on several environmental advisory boards and holds honorary Doctorates of Arts from her alma mater Bard College, Hobart and William Smith Colleges, and Williams College.

RILEY THOMAS STEWART (Ben) made his feature film debut in Jodie Foster’s “The Beaver.” His upcoming films include the comedy “Straight A’s,” starring opposite Anna Paquin and Ryan Phillippe.

On the small screen, Stewart has a recurring role on the hit comedy series “How I Met Your Mother” and previously had a recurring role on “90210.” He began his career appearing in a Leapfrog toy commercial.

Nicknamed “The Lego King,” the nine-and-a-half year old loves playing with legos, racing landspeed cars and dirt bikes, playing basketball, doing parkour, and spending time with his family on their ranch.

JAY R. FERGUSON (Keith Clayton) made his screen debut at age 14 portraying Ponyboy in Francis Ford Coppola’s episodic follow-up to his classic film “The Outsiders,” based on the novel by S.E. Hinton.

Ferguson can currently be seen on AMC’s acclaimed “Mad Men,” earning rave reviews for his portrayal of Stan Rizzo.

Other television credits include regular roles in several television series, including Showtime’s Emmy-nominated “Sleeper Cell,” NBC’s “Surface,” CW’s “Easy Money” and CBS’ “Evening Shade.”

Ferguson’s feature credits include Michael Winterbottom’s “The Killer Inside Me” and John Singleton’s “Higher Learning.”

On stage, he has performed in Brazilian director Gulu Monteiro’s “A Flea In Her Ear” at The Stages Theatre in Hollywood and “The Good Soul Of Szechwan” at the Electric Lodge Theatre.
ABOUT THE FILMMAKERS

SCOTT HICKS (Director) received international acclaim for the 1997 sensation “Shine,” which earned seven Academy Award® nominations, including Best Film, with Hicks receiving nominations for direction and screenplay. The film was awarded Best Film by the U.S. National Board of Review and won nine Australian Film Institute (AFI) Awards, including Best Film and Best Director. Eight BAFTA and five Golden Globe nominations also followed, in addition to nominations for Hicks from both the Directors’ and the Writers’ Guilds of America.

Hicks had already made his mark as a documentary filmmaker. In 1994, he received an Emmy Award for his direction of “Submarine: Sharks of Steel,” a four-hour series which he also co-wrote. His earlier work “The Great Wall of Iron,” an extensive portrait of the People’s Liberation Army of China, won the prestigious Peabody Award for Best Documentary Series Broadcast in the U.S in 1989. His most recent documentary was “Glass: A Portrait of Philip in Twelve Parts,” which he directed, produced and filmed. This cinema film, celebrating the iconic composer’s 70th year, won the AFI Award for Best Feature Length Documentary in 2009. It was also short-listed for Academy Award® nomination.

Hicks’ first studio film, “Snow Falling on Cedars,” featured a powerful ensemble cast including Ethan Hawke, Youki Kudoh, Max von Sydow, Sam Shepard, James Cromwell and Reeve Carney. Hicks co-wrote the screenplay with Ron Bass, adapted from the best-selling novel by David Guterson. He also directed “Hearts in Atlantis,” starring Anthony Hopkins and Anton Yelchin, based on stories by Stephen King as well as “No Reservations,” starring Catherine Zeta-Jones, Aaron Eckhart and Abigail Breslin. His most recent feature was “The Boys Are Back,” starring Clive Owen, which Hicks filmed in his homeland of South Australia.

Hicks has also enjoyed extensive success in American television commercials, one of which is in the permanent collection of the Museum of Modern Art in New York. In addition he has held three exhibitions of his own still photography.

Born in Uganda and raised in Kenya, Hicks migrated with his family first to England and then Australia as a teenager, graduating with Honors from the Flinders University of South Australia in 1975. He was awarded an honorary doctorate in 1997.

Hicks was honored as South Australian of the Year in 1999 and nominated as Australian of the Year for South Australia in 2008, both high accolades from his
homeland. He is also Patron of the Helpmann Academy Foundation and the Tutti Choir, and an Ambassador for the Sight For All Foundation.

He and his wife and collaborator, producer Kerry Heysen, live in Adelaide, South Australia, where they maintain their own Yacca Paddock Vineyards.

DENISE DI NOVI (Producer) counts “The Lucky One” as her fourth collaboration with author Nicholas Sparks, also including “Message in a Bottle,” “A Walk to Remember” and “Nights in Rodanthe,” all based on his novels. She is embarking on her fifth project with Sparks, having recently obtained the rights to his new book, The Best of Me, to be developed as a feature film.

Di Novi made her producing debut on the cult hit comedy “Heathers,” for which she won an Independent Spirit Award for Best First Feature. She then began a long association with groundbreaking filmmaker Tim Burton, during which time she produced such diverse hits as “Edward Scissorhands,” “Batman Returns,” “The Nightmare Before Christmas,” “Ed Wood” and “James and the Giant Peach.” In 1993, she set up her own production company, Di Novi Pictures, at Columbia Pictures.

Her early credits include the 1994 remake of “Little Women,” as well as “Practical Magic,” which took first place at the box office in its opening weekend.


Di Novi has also ventured into television production. She served as an executive producer on the longform projects “Eloise at Christmastime,” “Eloise at the Plaza” and “The `70s,” as well as the critically acclaimed series “The District.”

Di Novi currently has a production deal at Warner Bros. Pictures. She has a number of projects in development, including “The Illustrated Man,” with director Zack Snyder, based on a collection of Ray Bradbury stories; the love story “The Last Summer of You and Me,” based on the book by Ann Brashares; “The Jetsons”; and “Larklight,” based on a Philip Reeve novel.

KEVIN MCCORMICK (Producer) is President of Langley Park Pictures; a studio-based production company at Warner Bros. McCormick most recently produced the

Previously, McCormick was President of Production at Warner Bros. Pictures. Assuming this post in January 2008, he had day-to-day oversight of and responsibility for Warner Bros. Pictures’ creative team and the movies produced by the company, including the award-winning and critically acclaimed films “Gran Torino”; “The Dark Knight,” which broke box office records worldwide and is currently the third highest grossing film of all time, domestically; “The Hangover,” which is the highest grossing R-rated comedy of all time; and the worldwide hit “Sherlock Holmes.” Among the studios’ other films during his tenure were “Get Smart,” the continuing successful “Harry Potter” franchise, “The Informant!,” “Watchmen” and “Terminator Salvation.” In addition, he oversaw the division’s London office and reported directly to Jeff Robinov, President, Warner Bros. Pictures Group.


McCormick began his career as an executive producer on the film “Saturday Night Fever.”

NICHOLAS SPARKS (Author) is one of the world’s most beloved storytellers. All of his books have been New York Times bestsellers, with nearly 80 million copies in print worldwide, in over 45 languages, including over 50 million copies in the United States alone, and his popularity continues to soar.


Sparks lives in North Carolina with his family. He contributes to a variety of local and national charities, and is a major contributor to the Creative Writing Program (MFA) at the University of Notre Dame, where he provides scholarships, internships, and a fellowship annually. Along with his wife, he founded The Epiphany School in New Bern, North Carolina, and he spent five years coaching track and field athletes at the local public high school. In 2011, Nicholas and his wife launched the Nicholas Sparks Foundation to continue their charitable causes, which will kick off with the Nicholas Sparks Celebrity Golf Tournament in New Bern, North Carolina on April 19-22, 2012.

WILL FETTERS (Screenwriter) previously wrote “Remember Me,” starring Robert Pattinson. He has several projects in development at various studios, including Clint Eastwood’s “A Star is Born,” and an adaptation of Norman Ollestad’s survival memoir, “Crazy for the Storm.”

Fetters graduated from the University of Delaware with a degree in political science and finance.

RAVI MEHTA (Executive Producer) has served as Senior Vice President of Physical Production for Warner Bros. Pictures since 2008, overseeing theatrical productions including “The Astronaut Farmer,” “Nights in Rodanthe,” “Everything is Illuminated,” “North Country,” “The Assassination of Jesse James by the Coward Robert Ford,” “Lady In The Water,” “The Dukes of Hazard” and the upcoming “The Campaign” starring Will Ferrell and Zach Galifianakis, and “Gangster Squad,” starring Sean Penn, Josh Brolin, Ryan Gosling and Emma Stone, both releasing this year. He served as executive producer on the 2006 film “Mama’s Boy,” starring Diane Keaton, Jon Heder and Jeff Daniels and 2009’s “Jonah Hex,” starring Josh Brolin, John Malkovich, and Megan Fox.

Mehta’s entertainment career began at Paramount Pictures as a Feature Budget Analyst. After three years, Mehta moved to Warner Bros. Pictures as Director of

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Theatrical Estimating and as a Feature Production Accountant, working on such films as “Torque,” “Training Day,” “Rock Star” and “Romeo Must Die.”

**ALISON GREENSPAN** (Executive Producer), is president of Di Novi Pictures, which she joined as Vice President of Development in 1999. This is her third film based on a Nicholas Spark’s novel. She previously helped develop “A Walk to Remember,” starring Shane West and Mandy Moore and served as executive producer on “Nights in Rodanthe,” starring Richard Gere and Diane Lane.

Greenspan most recently produced Tom Bezucha’s “Monte Carlo,” starring Leighton Meester, Selena Gomez, and Cory Monteith and the critically acclaimed “Ramona and Beezus,” based on the beloved series of children’s books by Newbury Award-winning author Beverly Cleary.

Prior to that, she served as executive producer on “The Sisterhood of the Traveling Pants” and “The Sisterhood of the Travelling Pants 2.” Her other feature credits include “New York Minute”; “Catwoman”; and “What a Girl Wants,” and, for television, ABC’s “Eloise at the Plaza” and “Eloise at Christmastime.”

Greenspan began her career with a two-year stint at Creative Artists Agency and then spent three years as a creative executive at ImageMovers, Robert Zemeckis and Jack Rapke’s production company.

She graduated Suma Cum Laude from the University of Pennsylvania, where she enjoyed a four-year stint as performer, writer and director in the nation’s only all-female collegiate comedy troupe, Bloomers.

**BRUCE Berman** (Executive Producer) is Chairman and CEO of Village Roadshow Pictures. The company has a successful joint partnership with Warner Bros. Pictures to co-produce a wide range of motion pictures, with all films distributed worldwide by Warner Bros. and in select territories by Village Roadshow Pictures.

The initial slate of films produced under the pact included such hits as “Practical Magic,” starring Sandra Bullock and Nicole Kidman; “Analyze This,” teaming Robert De Niro and Billy Crystal; “The Matrix,” starring Keanu Reeves and Laurence Fishburne; “Three Kings,” starring George Clooney; “Space Cowboys,” directed by and starring Clint Eastwood; and “Miss Congeniality,” starring Bullock and Benjamin Bratt.

Under the Village Roadshow Pictures banner, Berman has subsequently executive produced such wide-ranging successes as “Training Day,” for which Denzel

Berman got his start in the motion picture business working with Jack Valenti at the MPAA while attending Georgetown Law School in Washington, DC. After earning his law degree, he landed a job at Casablanca Films in 1978. Moving to Universal, he worked his way up to a production Vice President in 1982.

In 1984, Berman joined Warner Bros. as a production Vice President, and was promoted to Senior Vice President of Production four years later. He was appointed President of Theatrical Production in September 1989, and in 1991 was named to the post of President of Worldwide Theatrical Production, which he held through May 1996. Under his aegis, Warner Bros. Pictures produced and distributed such films as “Presumed Innocent,” “GoodFellas,” “Robin Hood: Prince of Thieves,” the Oscar®-winning Best Picture “Driving Miss Daisy,” “Batman Forever,” “Under Siege,” “Malcolm X,” “The Bodyguard,” “JFK,” “The Fugitive,” “Dave,” “Disclosure,” “The Pelican Brief,” “Outbreak,” “The Client,” “A Time to Kill” and “Twister.”

In May of 1996, Berman started Plan B Entertainment, an independent motion picture company at Warner Bros. Pictures. He was named Chairman and CEO of Village Roadshow Pictures in February 1998.

ALAR KIVILO (Director of Photography) most recently lensed the box office hits “Bad Teacher,” starring Cameron Diaz and Justin Timberlake and “The Blind Side,” starring Sandra Bullock, which was nominated for an Oscar® for Best Picture.

A native of Montreal, Kivilo began his cinematography career shooting documentaries and short films, including “Boys and Girls,” which won an Academy Award® for Best Live Action Short in 1984. Kivilo next began shooting music videos, which eventually led to commercials and the formation of his own company, Propeller.
For the next ten years, he directed and shot many Bessie, Clio and Cannes Award-winning commercials.

In 1987, Kivilo lensed his first feature, “Da,” followed by Sam Raimi’s “A Simple Plan.” He has since served as the director of photography on such films as “Frequency,” “The Glass House,” “Hart’s War,” “Aurora Borealis,” “The Ice Harvest,” “The Lake House,” “The Lookout,” “Year One,” “The Blind Side” and “Bad Teacher.”

For his work on the small screen, he recently received an American Society of Cinematographers (ASC) Award for Outstanding Achievement in Cinematography in Motion Picture/Mini-Series Television for the acclaimed HBO movie “Taking Chance,” starring Kevin Bacon. Kivilo previously earned Emmy and ASC Award nominations for the HBO biopic “Gotti,” and an ASC Award nomination for the miniseries “The Invaders.” His other television credits include the HBO movies “Normal,” “Weapons of Mass Distraction” and “Rebound.”

SCOTT GRAY (Editor) previously collaborated with Scott Hicks on “The Boys Are Back,” starring Clive Owen. Among his other film credits are “Clubland” and “Somersault,” for which Gray garnered an Australian Film Institute Award in 2004 as well as The Cowboy Award at the Jackson Hole Film Festival.

In the nineties, Gray edited television commercials, short films, and music videos, winning an MTV Award for Best Editing in 1996 for his work on the Alanis Morrissette video “Ironic.”

Born and raised in Queensland, Gray did a brief stint at TVQ in Australia following high school before transitioning into the world of film as a production runner for Wim Wenders’ film “Until the End of the World.”

BARBARA LING (Production Designer) previously collaborated with director Scott Hicks on the mystery drama “Hearts in Atlantis” and the romantic drama “No Reservations.”

**DAYNA PINK** (Costume Designer) most recently designed the costumes for Glenn Ficarra and John Requa’s “Crazy, Stupid, Love.” starring Steve Carell, Ryan Gosling and Julianne Moore. Prior to that, Pink worked on “Hot Tub Time Machine,” directed by Steve Pink, and “Fame,” directed by Kevin Tancharoen. Her work will next be seen in “The Incredible Burt Wonderstone,” starring Steve Carell.

Pink previously served as a fashion consultant on the Sacha Baron Cohen comedy “Bruno,” and was the costume designer for the film “Crank: High Voltage.” Her other motion picture costume designer credits include “Tenacious D in the Pick of Destiny,” starring Jack Black; “Live!” starring Eva Mendes; and “Sarah Silverman: Jesus Is Magic.”

In addition to film costume design, Pink is a personal celebrity stylist with clients as diverse as Jack Black and Marilyn Manson. She has also worked on music videos for bands such as U2, Queens of the Stone Age and Five for Fighting.

**MARK ISHAM** (Composer) Oscar® nominee, Mark Isham has collaborated with such top directors and artists as Robert Redford, Tom Cruise, Brian De Palma, Chick Corea, Jodie Foster, Robert Altman, Sting, Will.i.am, Sidney Lumet, and Mick Jagger.

Isham began composing for film with “Never Cry Wolf,” and has written the scores for such films as “Of Mice and Men”; “Nell,” for which he received a Golden Globe nomination; “Fly Away Home”; “October Sky”; “Men of Honor”; “Life as a House”; “Miracle”; “Invincible”; Werner Herzog’s “The Bad Lieutenant: Port of Call – New Orleans”; “Reservation Road”; and “Bobby.” His collaboration with Robert Redford has yielded the scores for “A River Runs Through It,” for which he received an Oscar® nomination; “Quiz Show”; “Lions for Lambs”; and most recently “The Conspirator.” He scored the Oscar®-winning “Crash” and the celebrated miniseries “From the Earth to the Moon” and currently writes the music for the hit ABC series “Once Upon a Time.”

The native New Yorker showed an early gift for the trumpet, and went on to record with Herbie Hancock and Bobby McFerrin. He has released nine solo albums, and performed with the likes of Bruce Springsteen, Willie Nelson, and Kenny Loggins. He has scored over 125 films, as both an innovator in electronics and as a lush orchestral melodist. He was recently given the Henry Mancini Award for Lifetime Achievement by ASCAP.