

OSCAR ISAAC

OLIVIA WILDE

MANDY PATINKIN

OLIVIA COOKE

LAIA COSTA

with ANNETTE BENING

and ANTONIO BANDERAS

LIFE ITSELF

Written & Directed By: Dan Fogelman

Runtime: 118 minutes

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OSCAR ISAAC

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OLIVIA COOKE

SERGIO PERIS-MENCHETA

LAIA COSTA

ÀLEX MONNER

ISABEL DURANT

LORENZA IZZO

with ANNETTE BENING

and ANTONIO BANDERAS

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A Film by
DAN FOGELMAN

Life Itself

Short Synopsis

As a young New York couple goes from college romance to marriage and the birth of their first child, the unexpected twists of their journey create reverberations that echo over continents and through lifetimes in *Life Itself*. Director and writer Dan Fogelman (“This Is Us”) examines the perils and rewards of everyday life in a multigenerational saga featuring an international ensemble including Oscar Isaac, Olivia Wilde, Antonio Banderas, Annette Bening, Olivia Cooke, Sergio Peris-Mencheta, Laia Costa, Alex Monner and Mandy Patinkin. Set in New York City and Carmona, Spain, *Life Itself* celebrates the human condition and all of its complications with humor, poignancy and love.

Long Synopsis

Director and writer Dan Fogelman, creator of the groundbreaking series “This Is Us,” takes a poignant and expansive look at love, family, tragedy, joy and fate in *Life Itself*. In a heartbreaking, hilarious and relentlessly human film, Fogelman weaves a sprawling multigenerational saga that celebrates life and all of its complications, set to a soundtrack inspired by Bob Dylan’s landmark album *Time Out of Mind*.

Life Itself follows college sweethearts Will (Oscar Isaac) and Abby (Olivia Wilde) as they fall in love, get married and prepare to bring their first child into the world. As their story unfolds, fate will link them to Dylan (Olivia Cooke), a troubled young woman trying to find a way out of her pain, Irwin (Mandy Patinkin), bringing up his son’s daughter in a perilous world, to Mr. Saccione (Antonio Banderas), a moneyed landowner in Spain, his plantation manager Javier (Sergio Peris-Mencheta) and Javier’s family, Isabelle (Laia Costa) and Rodrigo (Alex Monner), in ways large and small, ordinary and exceptional.

With an esteemed cast and settings that range from the crowded streets of Manhattan to sunbathed olive groves in the Spanish countryside, *Life Itself* asks us to question our assumptions about luck and misfortune, about triumph and tragedy, and ultimately about life itself.

Life Itself is written and directed by Dan Fogelman (“This Is Us,” *Crazy, Stupid, Love*). The film stars Oscar Isaac (*Star Wars: The Last Jedi*, *Ex Machina*), Antonio Banderas (*The Mask of Zorro*, *The Skin I Live In*), Olivia Wilde (*The Lazarus Effect*, “House”), Olivia Cooke (*Me and Earl and the Dying Girl*, “Bates Motel”), Annette Bening (*The Kids Are All Right*, *American Beauty*), Mandy Patinkin (“Homeland,” *The Princess Bride*), Laia Costa (*Victoria*, *Piercing*), Sergio Peris-Mencheta (*Resident Evil*:

Afterlife, “Isabel”), Alex Monner (“The Red Band Society,” *The Next Skin*) and Samuel L. Jackson (*Pulp Fiction*, *The Avengers* franchise).

The film is produced by Marty Bowen (*The Maze Runner*, *The Twilight Saga*), Wyck Godfrey (*The Maze Runner*, *I, Robot*) and Aaron Ryder (*Arrival*, *The Prestige*). Director of photography is Brett Pawlak (*The Glass Castle*, “This Is Us”). Production designer is Gerald Sullivan (*The Grand Budapest Hotel*, *Me and Earl and the Dying Girl*). Editor is Julie Monroe (*Danny Collins*, *Mud*). Costume designer is Melissa Toth (*Three Billboards Outside Ebbing, Missouri*, *Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind*). Music is by Federico Jusid (*The Secret in Their Eyes*, *Exodus: Gods and Kings*.)

Executive producers are Ben Browning (*The Big Sick*, *Miss Sloane*), Alison Cohen (*Mud*, *All Is Lost*), Glen Basner (*Midnight Special*, *Arrival*), Adrián Guerra (*Red Lights*, *Palm Trees in the Snow*), Isaac Klausner (*The Fault in Our Stars*, *Paper Towns*) and Milan Popelka (*Arrival*, *Michael Clayton*). Co-producers are Erika Hampson (*The Layover*, *Wanderland*) and Michael Jackman (*Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind*, *Arrival*).

ABOUT THE PRODUCTION

Over the course of the last 15 years, Dan Fogelman has established himself as one of the most versatile, creative cinematic talents working today. As a director, producer and writer, his resume includes everything from a wildly popular and deeply emotional dramatic series (“This Is Us”) to a bittersweet romantic comedy about a straight-laced middle-aged guy forced to reenter the dating world (*Crazy, Stupid, Love*). His latest project, *Life Itself*, is his most ambitious and perhaps most personal project yet. Heartbreaking and hilarious by turns, the film combines an unconventional narrative with exquisitely realized characters for a story as unusual as it is poignant.

With an already packed schedule, Fogelman did not take the decision to direct this film lightly. “But something about this movie got in my bones and I had to do it,” he says. “The film is about a lot of different things. It’s about life and how big and messy and full of love and of tragedy it is. It’s about people. It explores the ups and downs, the sad and the happy, and this beautiful, weird thing we’re all in together — life itself. The plot is nearly impossible to describe — which is one of the things that really excites me about it.”

Being one of the most successful writers and producers in Hollywood is no guarantee that someone can succeed behind the camera, but Fogelman is a visionary with a unique cinematic point of view and the skills to make his ambitious vision a reality, according to producer Aaron Ryder of FilmNation. “This is such a complicated movie, not only in its structure and the way the story is told, but in a practical way,” he says. “You have a story spanning decades, two different continents and two different languages. There’s a huge ensemble cast. We really had to bring our A-game.”

Fogelman deftly connects the multiple storylines as the setting moves from New York City to Spain and back again. “That makes the film seem epic to me,” says Fogelman. “This movie addresses big loss, big tragedy, big love, big moments. It’s like a larger-than-life novel in which you follow generation after generation.”

With its multiple protagonists and subtle misdirection, the film is designed to play with audience expectations, not fulfill them, he says. As a director, he has deliberately packed the film with unexpected moments and surprises, big and small. “At times, the audience will be surprised to realize whose story they are watching, which is by design. I want people to have to pay attention in a different way. The hope is we could keep people on their toes via the narrative.”

Off the Black List and into the Director's Chair

Life Itself had instantly sparked interest throughout Hollywood in 2016 when it was included on the Hollywood Black List of best unproduced screenplays. Fogelman says he had two of the most important people in his life on his mind while writing it: his wife and his mother. “At first, I was surprised at how emotional some of the scenes made me,” he remembers. “Eventually, it occurred to me that I was making this film for my mom, who passed away 10 years ago. We were very close. And shortly after that I met my wife and I love my wife the way Will loves Abby in the film. I realized that all along I had been writing for the two great loves of my life.”

Ryder heard that Fogelman had written a very personal script — and that he wanted to direct it. “We quickly managed to get our hands on a copy of it,” says the producer. “It was one of our favorites because it felt so timely and original. It’s a gift when a script this good comes across my desk.”

But Fogelman’s skillful direction makes the film even more engaging, says Ryder. “The lives of two families intersect because of a tragedy. You see how these lives become intertwined over decades. It’s an incredibly funny movie, but it’s got a deep emotional core and that’s what I think people will respond to. It’s what Dan Fogelman does better than anybody else.”

From early on in preproduction, it was clear to Ryder that Fogelman had a singular vision for the film. “Dan is a guy who is built to direct,” the producer says. “He is unbelievably cinematic in the way he thinks, in the way he’s able to describe a scene to people. He is very decisive, and he knows exactly what he’s after. On set, his ability to communicate not only with the crew but with the actors is exceptional. I was taken aback every day by how skillful and thoughtful a director he is.”

Producer Marty Bowen says Fogelman started out a step ahead of most filmmakers, because he had already put so much information about how he envisioned the film on the page. “But very few people have the capacity to direct in the way he does under any circumstances,” Bowen adds. “For *Life Itself*, he knew every single shot he wanted to do. He knew where the characters needed to go. He came ready to execute, not to figure it out. And that makes him very rare.”

Although the film’s international, multigenerational story is epic, perhaps Fogelman’s greatest accomplishment is how simple he makes it all seem, says Bowen. “It’s like the Beach Boys. When you hear those harmonies with an unsophisticated ear, it just sounds like really happy music. But they are really brilliant complicated harmonies. I think Dan has elevated this story in a way other people would find almost impossible to do.”

The New Yorkers

With more than a half dozen potential protagonists, *Life Itself* required an ensemble cast, one that included acclaimed award winners, youthful up-and-comers and international actors making their Hollywood debuts. But where some might have seen a daunting challenge, for Fogelman the process was a dream come true.

“I had images in my head of who I wanted,” he says. “We were able to get them all. We have famous actors who don’t audition. We have new discoveries and younger actors who not only hold their own, but by the end take over the film. Each of them has incredible movie-star magic that holds the screen when not a lot is happening.”

Essential to the entire endeavor was finding the right Will, the character whose tragic love story launches the movie. “A perfect Will could be both young and old; funny, charming, and utterly broken,” says Bowen. “It required a truly special actor.”

Fogelman knew exactly the right man for the job: Oscar Isaac. Guatemalan-born and Juilliard-trained, Isaac has played roles ranging from an anguished Off Broadway Hamlet to the villainous mutant Apocalypse in the blockbuster *X-Men: Apocalypse*. “Oscar is not only, for my money, the actor of a generation,” says Fogelman. “He’s also the most funny, charming leading man you’ll ever work with. Women like him. Men like him. He’s a great actor and he’s a star.”

Isaac was intrigued by what he calls the subversive nature of the storytelling, as well as the depth of the characters. “I was taken aback by how unusual and rebellious the writing is,” he says. “Every character is a lead character with a full life to be investigated. I was constantly surprised. The most challenging thing in talking about the film is that the movie is about the unreliability of trying to narrate your own life. When you try to tell the story of one person, everything that goes into making that one person comes with a long history, and everything this person does affects what happens from here on out.”

Will is smart, handsome and funny, but his life has fallen apart. With the help of his therapist, played by Annette Bening, he tries to explain what has happened to him by telling her how he met Abby, the love of his life, and realized she was the person he would spend the rest of his life with.

“He’s a romantic extremist,” explains Isaac. “He just plunges himself in completely with utter loyalty and utter commitment to the point that it’s even overwhelming to Abby. As the story continues, he starts to narrate Abby’s life even before they met. You get to meet his parents, and slowly understand the construct that Will has made in order to survive.”

Fogelman made it easy for the actors to excel, Isaac says, by always being willing to go where the scene naturally took them: “So many unexpected things would happen under his direction. Dan set the stage for us to feel confident and free and open to anything.”

Olivia Wilde, who plays Abby, would be a hard woman not to fall hopelessly in love with, as Isaac describes her. “I couldn’t have imagined how versatile and funny and heartbreaking and present and imaginative and inventive this woman would be,” he says. “At every turn, she was there with me. She would take me into other places that I couldn’t imagine.”

Or as Bowen puts it, “Abby is always the smartest person in the room, the prettiest woman in the room and the one person that every guy would love to have a beer with. And Olivia is all of those things, too.”

Wilde signed on, eager to work with Fogelman, and was not disappointed. “He is an awesome communicator which makes him a great director,” she says. “Dan ran our set in a way that provided the most fertile environment for all of us. What impressed me most was the way he created a very specific and tricky tone for this film, but made it look so easy.”

The point of the film, to Wilde, is that the events of a lifetime are different for each of us, and *Life Itself* is a completely different movie from each character’s perspective. “For Abby, it is about finding love in a life that has been challenged,” says the actress. “Her parents both died in an accident when she was a kid. She survived that heroically, went to college and fell in love with Will.”

But as the couple is expecting their first child, something changes between them. “I was really moved by how intensely unfair things can seem when we are so accustomed to happy endings,” says Wilde. “Dan Fogelman has made a movie that accurately mirrors the way life surprises us, shocks us, thrills us and devastates us. This film urges us to consider that we each are but one piece of a bigger picture. I think it’s optimistic and romantic, so I hope it inspires people to think about how they view themselves and the world.”

At age 21, Will and Abby’s daughter, Dylan (named after Bob Dylan, her mother’s favorite musical artist), becomes the focus of the film. Played by Olivia Cooke, Dylan is finding an identity through the punk band she performs with. “Olivia Cooke is quickly becoming the finest actor of her generation,” says Bowen. “She’s only been working a few years but the work that she’s doing is incredible.”

Dylan seeks catharsis through her music, says Cooke, who previously starred in the Fogelman-produced film *Me and Earl and the Dying Girl*. She sings a raucous punk rendition of Bob Dylan’s tender ballad “Make You Feel My Love,” a song that is integral to the film’s soundtrack.

“To sing that song and twist it in an angry, staccato way reflects how she feels about her life so far. She has become an enraged, depressed, anxious, unhappy person, but with a wry sense of humor she inherited from her parents.”

Director Fogelman has a gift for building emotional tension in unexpected ways, according to the actress. “This has just the right amount of tragedy and melancholy mixed with witty dialogue and hilarious moments,” Cooke says. “Dan is brilliant at creating such sadness, and then picking up the mood with a funny line or a slapstick moment. And then he might confront you with a complete shock. But then he will again lift it up with comedy. And then he is able to settle into a very emotional scene and just let it breathe.”

As Will’s parents the filmmakers cast veteran actors Mandy Patinkin and Jean Smart. “They’re consummate professionals,” says Ryder. “And they were Dan’s first choices for those parts. Dan has a true fondness for Mandy and believed he would ground that character dramatically better than anybody else.”

According to Patinkin, Dylan’s grandfather takes his role in her life very seriously. “It’s Irwin’s job to hope and pray that she doesn’t fall into the soup and to teach her to fight to be alive,” says the Tony® and Emmy® Award-winning actor. “He wishes it was in his control, but he knows that life itself is the one in charge.”

Patinkin, whose four-decade career has encompassed memorable roles in projects ranging from the Stephen Sondheim movie musical “Sunday in the Park With George” to the taut espionage series “Homeland,” says the director runs a tight ship, but always makes it enjoyable. “He makes it quiet and concentrated, but also easy and fun. As a director, he’s as good as they get. I just hope I live long enough to work with him again.”

In the New York section of the film, Fogelman includes a sly tribute to the Quentin Tarantino films that Abby and Will bond over early in their relationship, as the unmistakable voice of Samuel L. Jackson recounts the love story between the young couple. But as the film unspools, his authoritative voiceover begins to seem at odds with the onscreen action, introducing the idea of the unreliable narrator.

In a surprise cameo, Jackson also appears briefly in the film as himself. “Somebody sent me a script and I was a character in it,” he says. “It always intrigues me when people think I can lend something different to whatever’s going on — especially with my voice. Then I realized that script was by Dan Fogelman. I have watched ‘This Is Us’ and I loved his show ‘Galavant.’ So, I said yes.”

Although the intense preparation for the movie was as complicated as any Ryder had ever

worked on, he says the shoot was surprisingly easy. “One thing I hadn’t factored in was just how good these actors are. We put Mandy Patinkin, Jean Smart, Oscar Isaac and Olivia Wilde together at a dining room table and we couldn’t believe what they could do, how intimately they knew their characters and how well they were working with each other. They are just pros and, man, did they bring it. My God, that was a lot of fun to watch.”

La Vida Misma

Fogelman knew that he was taking a huge risk by abruptly changing the setting of *Life Itself* from New York City to Sevilla, Spain, and an even bigger one switching the dialogue from English to Spanish, but it was integral to the film’s core concept. “We are trying to say that we’re all living this giant experience together,” he says. “Isn’t it more interesting to connect all these people who also experience love and loss and life on different continents in a different language?”

Knowing that the decision could be controversial, Ryder threw his full support behind Fogelman. “It takes a lot of courage to defy convention like that,” he says. “But it’s a measure of Dan’s confidence and his savvy as a filmmaker. He knew it wouldn’t have the same resonance otherwise.”

Although he is now confident that he made the right the choice, the shift in language was the scariest part of making the film, admits the director. “People have gotten very attached to the English-speaking characters by that point in the film. But I always knew that the moment we switched to Spain and the movie turned into Spanish was going to be terribly exciting. Antonio Banderas begins that part of the film with a long monologue in Spanish, so we’re asking the audience to not only switch continents but language as well. But the first time we screened it, the American audience was with him. You could hear a pin drop.”

It was important to Fogelman that all of the actors in the segment be from Spain, and he particularly wanted Banderas in the film. “Dan wanted to make sure we had one Spanish actor who was internationally known and respected to play Mr. Saccione, the owner of the olive grove and a powerful man in his world,” Ryder explains. “For all the other Spanish characters, he felt that people relatively unknown to an American audience would be a fresh window into that side of the world.”

Mr. Saccione, the half-Italian, half-Spanish owner of an olive plantation, was brought up in Italy by a wealthy and tyrannical Italian father who made life intolerable for both his wife and son. But when his father died without a will, Mr. Saccione inherited his considerable fortune, and his heart took him back to his mother’s country.

Part of the script's appeal for Banderas was its lack of a typical cinematic plot structure. "It follows the narrative of life," he says. "Life is very surprising. My own story is. I have lived in two worlds: Spain and then the United States, in which I have lived for 25 years. My life is divided between these two worlds and that's what happens with this movie."

The actor, who first came to international attention in the stereotype-smashing black comedies of Spanish auteur Pedro Almodóvar, says *Life Itself* marks the second opportunity he has had to explore uncharted cinematic territory. "I took a risk at the beginning of my career in Pedro's films, which experiment with the traditional content and form of the movie," he says. "Suddenly I met Dan Fogelman, who is trying to do the same thing. From an artist's point of view — and I think from an audience's point of view also — the possibility of being surprised is very attractive."

After viewing footage of Isaac and Wilde shot in New York, the actor was convinced. "It's magnificent," says Banderas. "It's of an incredibly emotional intensity that is difficult to obtain, but at the same time it's very natural. That captures your heart and in the end that's what all of this is about. I think he is a truly great director. Not for a moment did he lose the rhythm of the movie."

Fogelman still seems a bit awed by Banderas' presence in the film. "There's a reason he's a gigantic movie star," says Fogelman. "He's the coolest guy in the world. When he asked me what I thought he should wear for a scene, I was like, 'Antonio, I'm a schlub from New Jersey. I'm not going to tell Antonio Banderas what clothes to put on to look cool.' I cast him because I had an instinct that taking a guy with that kind of power and charisma, and exposing this really vulnerable, slightly broken side of him, would be a really exciting thing to watch."

Mr. Saccione unexpectedly reaches out to Javier, a laborer on his farm. He has noticed that unlike the other *olivaderos* (olive pickers) who use rakes and nets to harvest the crop, Javier will only pick by hand. "Javier has a different rhythm from the other characters in the movie," says Sergio Peris-Mencheta, who plays the character. "He's not in a hurry. He's a simple country man with no remorse or pain inside."

Peris-Mencheta says he was shocked to learn that the script was written by an American. "The story seems very Spanish. Federico García Lorca used to write this kind of story. It had all the twists of a Lorca story, jumping from one age to the other, and changing the setting from the U.S. to Spain. Dan's characters have unusual humanity and truthfulness in them."

Working on *Life Itself* gave the actor a chance to fulfill two longtime dreams: working with Banderas and making a film in New York City. "To meet Antonio and be able to talk with him between takes was amazing," he says. "And to work in New York — Times Square, Central Park —

was very special.”

Laia Costa, who plays Isabelle, the naïve village waitress who becomes Javier’s wife, is a rising star in European cinema and television but was unknown to American filmmakers. Her audition, a 30-minute video sent to Fogelman from Spain, earned her the role. “She had taped all of Isabelle’s scenes,” he remembers. “She was off book, looking directly into the lens. I was so blown away. If it was a better-quality recording, I would have just put it into the film. When we shot those scenes, I just tried to re-create her audition.”

Costa loved the fact that the character ages 20 years over the course of the film, transforming from an innocent girl into a mature, capable woman. “Isabelle looks fragile and delicate, but at the same time she’s able to make very strong decisions,” says Costa. “Everyone’s trying to save her, and at the end you realize she doesn’t need to be saved at all.”

The character’s love for her son, Rodrigo, and determination to give him a better life are what keep her moving forward, according to Costa. “From Isabelle’s perspective, this movie is about the life we live and how we can explain it through generations, and also how pain links us all in a very magical way,” she says. “The tragedy and the beauty of life are so rolled up together, one can’t exist without the other. The film seems very true to life in an epic way, and then a very simple way.”

With the roles of Mr. Saccione, Javier and Isabelle cast, finding Rodrigo was the next challenge. “Rodrigo is a big part and an important character,” says Fogelman. “We knew we wanted somebody from Spain. Alex Monner came to an audition in Sevilla and I loved him.”

Life Itself was the Barcelona-born actor’s first American film, and he would be shooting part of it in New York City. He was eager and apprehensive about learning the way an American film set worked. “Meeting with everyone, I was like, okay, it’s going to be fun,” he says. “Because I’m performing a Spanish character my English didn’t need to be perfect, which made me more comfortable. Then the first time we started shooting, Dan said, okay, now start improvising. And I thought, let’s go!”

Monner found everyone on the set warm and committed to working together to make the best film possible. “Dan really talks with the actors. Before every shot, he comes to you and tells you something important about the situation or the character. And that’s nice for me as an actor. I haven’t experienced that a lot in Spain.”

From the Big Apple to Spanish Olive Groves

Fogelman was insistent that the movie needed to be shot in New York City and the province

of Sevilla, Spain, two places for which he has great affection. A New Jersey native, he says he always felt that the city that never sleeps encapsulates life. “I pictured the energy of New York,” he says. “I’m constantly struck by the pace of it and the beauty of it and the contrast between that and the difficulty of life in the city. Sometimes you need to get the hell out of it and sometimes it’s the only place you want to be, because it’s so exciting and passionate and beautiful.”

Along with its unique energy, New York brings a host of challenges for filmmakers, but Ryder says it would have been disingenuous to shoot anywhere else. “It’s complicated for sure,” he adds. “New Yorkers don’t like their sidewalks blocked by film crews and they don’t like their roads to be clogged up, which you can understand. But there is something about New York that you can’t duplicate in another city.”

During a four-day scouting excursion in Spain, Fogelman, Ryder and Bowen, along with cinematographer Brett Pawlak and production designer Gerald Sullivan, sought not only picturesque settings for the story but a way to create a cohesive look for the film. “Dan not only wrapped his head around all of the intricacies of the story, he was hugely supportive of the art department,” Sullivan says. “His mind is very deceptive because he’s so easygoing even in the most stressful moments of production, but he’s intensely involved with everything.”

Sullivan, who has also worked with director Wes Anderson to create the richly imagined retro New England island of New Penzance for *Moonrise Kingdom* and the Mitteleuropean fantasy world of *The Grand Budapest Hotel*, was tasked with designing timeless, seamless visuals for a story that takes place over several decades and in two countries.

“We had talked about the design for months before we went into production,” says Sullivan. “Dan and Brett were intimately involved in every decision. We decided to use a palette inspired by our travels in Spain that runs through the entire course of the movie.”

The concept, explains Sullivan, was to find a common ground between Sevilla’s centuries-old artisanal aesthetic and New York City’s hard-edged urban modernity. Incorporating visual themes that recurred throughout the Spanish countryside into the New York settings, including unique materials, frequently used colors and motifs, he was able to create to a unified feeling for locations that could not be more different.

The settings range from a campus fraternity house, a classic New York brownstone (where Will’s parents live) and a minimalist psychiatrist’s office in Manhattan, to a small-town café and a modest cottage in Spain. But Sullivan’s favorite is the historic olive plantation in the small town of Carmona that serves as Mr. Saccione’s gracious estate. “It is a hacienda that was constructed over

several centuries,” says Sullivan. “There are fragments from each different era. It is an amazing compound with acres and acres of olive orchards, which is what we were looking for.”

Covering All the Angles

Director of photography Brett Pawlak says that from the first meeting, he and Fogelman were on the same page in terms of the film’s aesthetics. “The script is very much about the narrator,” he explains. “We talked about the ways we could amplify this narrator and help tell the story without being untruthful. It’s an expansive story, which is what drew me to it in the first place, but that meant finding cinematic ways to keep things connected.”

Fogelman came to the production with very specific ideas about what he wanted visually, according to Pawlak, right down to the composition of the shots. “You can see his wheels turning all the time,” he says. “If something doesn’t feel right, he’s able to go in there and tweak it just enough to make it fit. When he walks into a location, he is able to take it all in. It’s kind of magical and really mesmerizing to see.”

Pawlak’s unusual shooting approach is character-driven, with an emphasis on giving the actors room to be comfortable. “Dan and I went through the script a few times during prep, going back over the coverage and finding themes we could come back to repeatedly or that we used for just one person,” he says. “For example, we tried to let Dylan’s scenes play in one shot whenever possible. That character brings a different energy to the movie and we wanted to set her scenes apart.

“With Will and Abby, we developed a cinematic language that doesn’t really fit in other people’s stories, but that really made sense for them,” he continues. “For a lot of their scenes we used a mini with transmitters. I would just carry around the body and the room would be clear. I’d just kind of float with them and follow them.

“There is a strong correlation between the film’s use of the unreliable narrator in its storytelling and its cinematography,” he says. “What we do for a living, whether we’re writing, photographing, doing production design, or even composing music, is giving people cues that tell a story, and those cues can steer them either in the wrong or right direction. So we talked about how not to be untruthful, and even to make the audience aware of what we are doing, so they have to wonder if we are actually reliable or not.”

Time Out of Mind

While Fogelman was writing *Life Itself*, he was listening to Bob Dylan's landmark *Time Out of Mind* album, particularly the song "Love Sick." Written after Dylan's divorce from his second wife, the 1997 double album is a collection of songs that take a melancholy look at love and loss. "I thought 'Love Sick' would be the right song to start this movie with," Fogelman says.

While he was working on the script and listening to the album, Fogelman read an essay about *Time Out of Mind* that gave him another idea. "The writer was bashing one particular song, 'Make You Feel My Love,' saying it was too romantic and too uplifting for such a sad, beautiful, melancholy album. I decided then that it would be the end of this film and that Dylan would tie it all together."

The potential road-block would be getting Dylan's permission to use the songs. "None of us believed we could make this movie without Dylan's music," says Bowen. "There is no other version of this that would have the same dramatic impact."

Fogelman was able to connect with Jeff Rosen, who administers the rights to the music, through the film's music supervisor. Rosen liked the script and shared it with Dylan, who signed off on the use of his songs. "I wrote it all in without knowing if we could use it," says Fogelman. "And we are lucky enough to have seven Bob Dylan songs and a score based on Dylan's music throughout the film."

Life, Itself

For Bowen, *Life Itself* defies simple definition. "Dan has a definite point of view, but to try to articulate it is a disservice to the experience of watching it," says the producer. "Life is a complicated fabric and Dan is exploring that in a unique way. Sometimes bad things happen to good people. Sometimes good things come from bad experiences. That is the nature of the journey we all go on."

Bowen applauds Fogelman's fearlessness about confronting issues that may seem cruel to others. "He can find something emotionally uplifting in the darkness," says the producer. "Most people experience good and bad in their lives. The challenge is to try to reach for that silver lining. Dan has a way of finding that beautiful insight. He makes you think, but along the way he also makes you laugh and he makes you cry. Only great filmmakers are able to do that."

As with anything he works on, Fogelman hopes the film will move people. "I hope it reflects real life while also giving people a respite from their own circumstances," he says. "I hope that they're going to walk out emotionally drained but uplifted also. For all the people like myself who

sometimes feel there's nothing really original out there, I hope this will fill that gap. It's ambitious and entertaining, something that is full of emotion and overall positive about life. If people have a good two hours at a movie theater and they feel they've seen something that sticks with them, I'll be happy."

ABOUT THE CAST

OSCAR ISAAC (Will Dempsey) gained critical acclaim, a Golden Globe Award[®] nomination and an Independent Spirit Award for Best Male Lead for his portrayal of the title character in the Coen brothers' film *Inside Lleynn Davis*. The film premiered at the 2013 Cannes Film Festival, where it won the Grand Prix Award, and it also garnered Isaac the Toronto Film Critics Award for Best Actor. In 2015 Isaac starred as Resistance pilot Poe Dameron, in *Star Wars: The Force Awakens*, which swiftly became the highest-grossing domestic release of all time. In addition to being the fastest film to reach \$700 million, it broke opening day box-office records (domestic and worldwide). Isaac recently reprised his role in *Star Wars: The Last Jedi*, which netted \$220 million in its opening weekend.

After receiving rave reviews for his starring role opposite Catherine Keener in the HBO miniseries "Show Me a Hero," Isaac went on to receive a Golden Globe for Best Actor in a Miniseries or Television Film and a Critics' Choice nomination for Best Actor in a Movie or Miniseries.

In 2014 Isaac toplined J.C. Chandor's action-packed drama *A Most Violent Year*, for which he earned the National Board of Review Award for Best Actor. The following year Isaac starred alongside Alicia Vikander and Domhnall Gleeson in *Ex Machina*, written and directed by Alex Garland. The National Board of Review recognized the sci-fi thriller as one of the 10 best independent films of the year.

Most recently, Isaac costarred in Garland's *Annihilation*, alongside Natalie Portman. Last summer, he headlined The Public Theater's summer production of "Hamlet." He recently wrapped production on *Operation Finale*, alongside Ben Kingsley and Melanie Laurent.

Previously, Isaac was seen in such films as *Suburbicon*, alongside Matt Damon and Julianne Moore; *The Promise*, with Christian Bale; *Ten Year*, for which Isaac wrote an original song that he performs in the film; Zack Snyder's *Sucker Punch*; *Agora*, directed by Alejandro Amenábar; *Balibo*, for which Isaac received an AFI Award for Best Supporting Actor; and *In Secret*, based on the Emile Zola novel *Thérèse Raquin*.

Other film credits include Bryan Singer's *X-Men: Apocalypse*, Ridley Scott's *Body of Lies*, Daniel Barnz's *Won't Back Down*, Steven Soderbergh's *Che*, Vadim Perelman's *The Life Before Her Eyes* and Catherine Hardwicke's *The Nativity Story*.

Off Broadway, Isaac appeared in Zoe Kazan's play "We Live Here" at Manhattan Theatre Club, played Romeo in "Romeo and Juliet" and co-starred in "Two Gentlemen of Verona," both for the Public Theater's Shakespeare in the Park. He also appeared in "Beauty of the Father" at Manhattan Theatre Club and was seen in MCC Theater's "Grace." Additional theater credits include "Arrivals and Departures," "When It's Cocktail Time in Cuba" and "Spinning Into Butter."

Isaac studied performing arts at the famed Juilliard School and currently resides in New York.

OLIVIA WILDE (Abby Dempsey) is an actress, director, producer and activist. The modern-day renaissance woman stars in films and popular television shows, sharing the screen with renowned actors while simultaneously giving back to the community. On the acting front, Wilde has received acclaim in television, film and now theater. Last year she wrapped her Broadway debut in "1984," a harrowing adaptation of George Orwell's dystopian tale. Starring alongside Tom Sturridge and Reed Birney, Wilde anchored the play as Julia, the female lead.

On the motion picture side, Wilde kicked off 2018 by announcing her directorial debut *Booksmart*, with Kaitlyn Dever and Beanie Feldstein set to star. She recently starred in *A Vigilante*, which premiered at SXSW to rave reviews. Last year, Wilde also produced and starred in the drama *Meadowland*, earning rave reviews for her emotionally charged performance. Her past film credits include the Oscar[®]-winning drama *Her*, the Golden Globe nominee *Rush* and the critically acclaimed indie comedy *Drinking Buddies*, which she also executive produced. Wilde has also served as executive producer on several documentary films. Her most recent documentary short, *Body Team 12*, premiered at the 2015 Tribeca Film Festival, won the award for Best Documentary Short and was nominated for an Academy Award[®] for Best Documentary Short Subject.

On the television side, Wilde starred in HBO's rock 'n' roll drama "Vinyl" from creators Martin Scorsese, Mick Jagger and Terence Winter. She also previously starred on Fox's hit medical drama "House."

Along with her work in front of the camera, Wilde continues to expand her roles behind-the-scenes as well. She most recently directed the video for "Dark Necessities," a five-minute music short for the well-known funk rock band Red Hot Chili Peppers. Additionally, she directed the music video "No Love Like Yours," the first single off of Edward Sharpe and the Magnetic Zeros' sophomore album.

Wilde co-founded the philanthropic company Conscious Commerce with the mission to create a guide for conscious living by promoting the causes, brands, people and lifestyles that are forging a new paradigm of living. Wilde was also recently honored by Save the Children, receiving their Advocate Award to recognize her galvanizing support for frontline health workers through the 1 Million Community Health Workers Campaign to help save lives of thousands of mothers and babies. Additionally, the organization named Wilde as an artist ambassador focusing on maternal, newborn and child survival. She is also a board member of Artists for Peace and Justice and the ACLU of Southern California.

ANNETTE BENING (Dr. Cait Morris) is a four-time Academy Award nominee as well as a two-time Golden Globe and Screen Actors Guild Award winner. For her role in “Coastal Disturbances” she received a Tony Award® nomination and won the Clarence Derwent Award for Outstanding Debut Performance of the Season. Most recently, Bening starred opposite Jamie Bell in Paul McGuigan’s *Film Stars Don’t Die in Liverpool*, for which she earned her fourth BAFTA Award nomination. Her upcoming projects include *The Seagull*, Michael Mayer’s film adaptation of Anton Chekhov’s play, starring Saoirse Ronan, Elisabeth Moss and Corey Stoll; Christoph Waltz’s directorial debut *Georgetown*, opposite Waltz and Vanessa Redgrave; and William Nicholson’s *Hope Gap*, alongside Bill Nighy.

Bening’s additional film credits include *20th Century Women*, *Rules Don’t Apply*, *Danny Collins*, *The Search*, *The Face of Love*, *Ruby Sparks*, *Girl Most Likely*, *Ginger & Rosa*, *The Kids Are All Right*, *Mother and Child*, *Being Julia*, *American Beauty*, *In Dreams*, *The Siege*, *The American President*, *Mars Attacks!*, *Richard III*, *Love Affair*, *Bugsy*, *Regarding Henry*, *The Grifters*, *Guilty by Suspicion*, *Valmont*, *Postcards From the Edge* and *The Great Outdoors*.

The actress was last seen on stage in The Public Theater’s 2014 Shakespeare in the Park production of “King Lear.” Additional theater credits include “Ruth Draper’s Monologues” at the Geffen Playhouse; Chekhov’s “The Cherry Orchard” at the Mark Taper Forum; Alan Bennett’s “Talking Heads” at the Tiffany Theater; Henrik Ibsen’s “Hedda Gabler” at the Geffen Playhouse; and “Medea” at UCLA.

Bening graduated from San Francisco State University and trained at the American Conservatory Theater in San Francisco until she joined the acting company.

MANDY PATINKIN (Irwin Dempsey) has been fortunate to carve out a varied career including theater, the concert stage, film, television and work as a recording artist.

In his 1980 Broadway debut, Patinkin won a Tony Award for his role as Che in Andrew Lloyd Webber's "Evita." He was nominated in 1984 for his starring role as George in the Pulitzer Prize-winning musical "Sunday in the Park With George." Patinkin's other stage credits include "Compulsion," "Paradise Found," "The Tempest," "Enemy of the People," "The Wild Party," "Falsettos," "The Secret Garden," "The Winter's Tale," "The Knife," "Leave It to Beaver Is Dead," "Rebel Women," "Hamlet," "Trelawny of the Wells," "The Shadow Box," "The Split," "Savages" and "Henry IV, Part I."

In 1989, Patinkin began his concert career at Joseph Papp's Public Theater in New York City. Since then he has toured (and continues to) in various solo concerts across North America, in London's West End, through Australia and New Zealand, as well as on and Off Broadway. In 1997 he played a sold-out Broadway engagement of "Mandy Patinkin in Concert," with all profits benefiting five charitable organizations. After the Columbine massacre and the Bosnian War, Patinkin ended each concert on his 1999 tour by heading to the theater lobby with a cardboard box, asking patrons to empty their pockets for PAX, a gun safety organization, and Doctors Without Borders.

In addition to his solo concerts, Patinkin has enjoyed collaborations with artists such as opera star Nathan Gunn, his dear friend Patti LuPone and performance artist Taylor Mac.

Patinkin has appeared in many feature films, including *Ali and Nino*, *The Queen of Spain*, *Wish I Was Here*, *The Choking Man*, *Pinero*, *The Adventures of Elmo in Grouchland*, *Lulu on the Bridge*, *Men With Guns*, *The Princess Bride*, *Yentl*, *The Music of Chance*, *Daniel*, *Ragtime*, *Impromptu*, *The Doctor*, *Alien Nation*, *Dick Tracy*, *The House on Carroll Street*, *True Colors* and *Maxie*. He has also lent his voice talents to numerous animated films, including *Smurfs: The Lost Village*, *The Wind Rises*, *Everyone's Hero* and *Castle in the Sky*. Most recently, Patinkin appeared in the hit movie *Wonder*, playing Mr. Tushman.

On the small screen, Patinkin can be seen in the award-winning Showtime drama "Homeland," as CIA agent Saul Berenson. He won a 1995 Emmy Award® for his performance in the CBS series "Chicago Hope." Patinkin's other TV credits include CBS' "Criminal Minds" and Showtime's "Dead Like Me."

Patinkin's solo albums include *Mandy Patinkin in Concert: Dress Casual*, *Experiment*, *Oscar & Steve*, *Leonard Bernstein's New York*, *Kidults* and *Mandy Patinkin Sings Sondheim*. In 1998 he debuted his most personal project, *Mamaloshen*, a collection of traditional, classic and contemporary songs sung

entirely in Yiddish. The recording won the Deutschen Schallplattenpreis (Germany's equivalent of the Grammy Award®).

Together, Patinkin and the International Rescue Committee are on a mission to bring attention to the global refugee crisis, the greatest upheaval of humanity since World War II. Patinkin visited Greece with the IRC in November 2015, where he met families who had fled Syria and other war-torn countries. A passionate supporter of refugee rights, he has since traveled to Serbia and Germany with the humanitarian organization to bear witness to the ongoing crisis.

Patinkin resides in New York with his wife, actress and writer Kathryn Grody.

JEAN SMART (Linda Dempsey) is the winner of three Emmy Awards, with an additional five nominations. She made her presence known on the big screen and garnered an Independent Spirit Award nomination for her critically acclaimed performance in the Miramax feature film *Guinevere*. On television Smart can be seen in both seasons of "Legion," Noah Hawley's new FX series. Smart also co-starred on the second season of Hawley's acclaimed FX series " Fargo," a role for which she won a Critics' Choice Award and was nominated for an Emmy Award.

She recently wrapped production on the features *A Simple Favor*, *Brampton's Own* and *Senior Moment*. She was last seen on the big screen alongside Anna Kendrick and Ben Affleck in Gavin O'Connor's *The Accountant*. Other recent film work includes *Hope Springs*, with Meryl Streep; *Barry Munday*, with Patrick Wilson and Judy Greer; *Youth in Revolt*, with Michael Cera; and the dark comedy *Miss Meadows*, opposite Katie Holmes and James Badge Dale.

During her career, Smart has showcased her talents alongside numerous top Hollywood actors, including Drew Barrymore and Eric Bana, in *Lucky You*; Reese Witherspoon, in *Sweet Home Alabama*; Steve Martin, in *Bringing Down the House*; Mark Wahlberg, in *I Heart Huckabees*; Zach Braff and Peter Sarsgaard, in *Garden State*; Bruce Willis, in *The Kid*; Robert De Niro and Martin Landau, in *Mistress*; and Jack Lemmon and Walter Matthau, in *The Odd Couple II*.

On stage, Smart was nominated for a Tony Award for Best Actress for her starring role on Broadway opposite Nathan Lane in "The Man Who Came to Dinner." She received a Drama Desk bid for "Last Summer at Bluefish Cove." In 2016, Smart was Grammy-nominated for Best Spoken Word Album for her work on *Patience and Sarah*.

OLIVIA COOKE (Dylan Dempsey) is best known for her role on the A&E acclaimed "Bates Motel," starring opposite Freddie Highmore and Vera Farmiga. She can now be seen as the

female lead in Steven Spielberg's *Ready Player One* and Cory Finley's *Thoroughbreds*. She recently wrapped production as the lead of Amazon's new series "Vanity Fair," an adaptation of the 1848 novel by William Makepeace Thackeray. She recently starred opposite Bill Nighy and Douglas Booth in *The Limehouse Golem*, an adaptation of Peter Ackroyd's novel. She was also seen alongside Jim Belushi and Mireille Enos in the indie drama *Katie Says Goodbye*. Both films premiered at the 2016 Toronto International Film Festival.

Previously, Cooke starred in Alfonso Gomez-Rejon's *Me and Earl and the Dying Girl*, opposite Connie Britton and Nick Offerman, which won both the U.S. Dramatic Grand Jury Prize and Audience Award at the 2015 Sundance Film Festival. Cooke's additional feature film credits include *Onija*, *The Quiet Ones* and *The Signal*.

Cooke hails from Manchester, England.

SERGIO PERIS-MENCHETA (Javier González) is a renowned Spanish actor who currently stars in the FX original series "Snowfall." He previously starred opposite Helen Mirren in *Love Ranch*, directed by Taylor Hackford, and was seen in *Resident Evil: Afterlife*. In Europe, amongst other projects, he is known for his work in *His Majesty Minor*, directed by Jean-Jacques Annaud, and *The Borgias*. Peris-Mencheta is also a passionate theater actor and director who won a 2014 Max Award (the equivalent of a Tony Award in Spain) for Best Stage Play.

ANTONIO BANDERAS (Mr. Saccione) is irrefutably one of the leading international actors of his generation. Since his introduction to American cinema in the highly acclaimed musical drama *The Mambo Kings*, he has received critical praise for his performances in film, television and theater, as well as behind the scenes as a feature film director. In 2005, he was honored with a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame.

Banderas will next be seen in the Andrea Bocelli biopic *The Music of Silence*, directed by Michael Radford. His upcoming projects include the TV series "Genius 2," in which he is playing Picasso. It was recently announced that he will star in Stephen Gaghan's *Dr. Dolittle* with Robert Downey Jr., Ralph Fiennes, Emma Thompson and Tom Holland.

Banderas has worked with some of Hollywood's top directors and leading actors. He starred in Robert Rodriguez's *Desperado*, opposite Salma Hayek, and its sequel *Once Upon a Time in Mexico*, alongside Johnny Depp; *Original Sin*, opposite Angelina Jolie; Alan Parker's *Evita*, with Madonna (Golden Globe nomination, Best Actor); Martin Campbell's *The Mask of Zorro*, opposite Catherine

Zeta-Jones (Golden Globe nomination, Best Actor), and its sequel *The Legend of Zorro*; Neil Jordan's *Interview With the Vampire*, with Tom Cruise and Brad Pitt; Jonathan Demme's *Philadelphia*, opposite Tom Hanks and Denzel Washington; Bille August's *The House of the Spirits*, alongside Meryl Streep and Glenn Close; and Brian de Palma's *Femme Fatale*, co-starring Rebecca Romijn. He was nominated for his third Golden Globe for Best Actor after his performance in HBO's "And Starring Pancho Villa as Himself" (2003), playing the title role.

Born in Malaga, Spain, Banderas attended the School of Dramatic Arts in his hometown. Upon graduation he began his acting career working in a small theater company before moving to Madrid and becoming an ensemble member of the prestigious National Theater of Spain.

In 1982 Banderas was cast by filmmaker Pedro Almodóvar in *Labyrinth of Passion*. It was the first of seven films Banderas would do with Almodóvar, the others including *Matador*, *Law of Desire*, *Women on the Verge of a Nervous Breakdown* and *Tie Me Up! Tie Me Down!* The international success of these films introduced him to Hollywood. Banderas was reunited with Almodóvar for *La Piel Que Habito* (*The Skin I Live In*) and *I'm So Excited*.

The actor's other film credits include *Act of Vengeance*, *Black Butterfly*, *The 33*, *Automata*, *Knight of Cups*, *The Expendables 3*, *The SpongeBob Movie: Sponge Out of Water*, *Machete Kills*, *Justin and the Knights of Valour*, *Ruby Sparks*, *Haywire*, *Black Gold*, *Day of the Falcon*, *Puss in Boots*, *You Will Meet a Tall Dark Stranger*, *The Big Bang*, *The Other Man*, *Shrek 2*, *Shrek the Third*, *Shrek Forever After*, *Take the Lead*, the *Spy Kids* trilogy, *Miami Rhapsody*, *Four Rooms*, *Assassins*, *Never Talk to Strangers*, *Two Much*, *The 13th Warrior*, *Play It to the Bone* and *Ballistic: Ecks vs. Sever*.

Banderas made his directorial debut with *Crazy in Alabama*, starring Melanie Griffith. His second directorial feature was the Spanish film *El Camino De Los Ingleses* (titled *Summer Rain* in the U.S.). This coming-of-age story follows the first loves, lusts and obsessions of friends on vacation at the end of the 1970s.

In 2003, Banderas earned a Tony Award[®] nomination for Best Actor in a Musical for his Broadway debut in the Roundabout Theater Company production of "Nine," a musical inspired by Federico Fellini's *8 1/2*. He also received Drama Desk, Outer Critics Circle, Drama League and Theatre World awards.

LAIA COSTA (Isabel Diaz) starred in the critically acclaimed film *Victoria*, which was almost entirely improvised by the actors. Amazingly, the 138-minute film was shot in a single take and the finished film was only their third attempt at doing so. Costa won the Lola (Germany's

equivalent of our Oscar) for Best Actress and was nominated for a European Film Award for Best European Actress. The film was also nominated for Best European Film. Her performance garnered her a nomination for the prestigious BAFTA EE Rising Star Award, which shines a spotlight on young talent that has “captured the attention of both the public and the film industry.”

Costa was the female lead opposite Nicholas Hoult in Drake Doremus’ romantic drama *Newness*. In addition to co-starring with Mia Wasikowska and Chris Abbott in Nicolas Pesce’s *Piercing*, she is the lead of two films premiering at the 2018 Tribeca Film Festival: Miguel Arteta’s *Duck Butter*, with Alia Shawkat, and *Maine*, with Thomas Mann. Costa recently completed shooting the British independent film *Only You*, with Josh O’Connor.

ALEX MONNER (Rodrigo González Diaz) is, at the tender age of 23, one of Spain’s brightest young talents and he has already starred in over a dozen films. In 2013 he won Best Actor at the Gaudí Awards for *The Wild Ones*, a performance that also earned him a Goya Award nomination. He was also the lead in *The Next Skin*, for which he was nominated for almost every award in the Spanish circuit. On the small screen, he starred in the original version of “The Red Band Society,” later adapted by Fox in the U.S.

SAMUEL L. JACKSON (Himself) has appeared in well over 100 films and is one of the most respected actors in Hollywood. Jackson’s portrayal of philosopher hitman Jules in Quentin Tarantino’s *Pulp Fiction* made an indelible mark on American cinema. In addition to unanimous critical acclaim, he received Academy Award and Golden Globe nominations as well as a Best Supporting Actor award from the British Academy of Film and Television Arts.

Jackson stars in *Avengers: Infinity War*, reprising his role as Nick Fury, and the long-awaited sequel to *The Incredibles*, which will be released in June. In 2019 he stars with Bruce Willis and James McAvoy in *Glass*, the follow-up to M. Night Shyamalan’s iconic film *Unbreakable*. Jackson recently wrapped production on *Shaft* reboot *Son of Shaft* and is currently filming *Captain Marvel*, opposite Brie Larson.

Previously, Jackson starred in *The Hitman’s Bodyguard*, with Ryan Reynolds, Salma Hayek and Gary Oldman; *Kong: Skull Island*, with Brie Larson and Tom Hiddleston; Quentin Tarantino’s Oscar-nominated Western *The Hateful Eight*, alongside Walton Goggins, Jennifer Jason Leigh and Kurt Russell; *The Legend of Tarzan*, with Alexander Skarsgård, Margot Robbie and Christoph Waltz; *The Last Full Measure*, with Sebastian Stan and Christopher Plummer; and *Django Unchained*, opposite

Christoph Waltz, Jamie Foxx and Leonardo DiCaprio. Jackson was also seen in Joss Whedon's *The Avengers*, Tim Burton's *Miss Peregrine's Home for Peculiar Children*, Matthew Vaughn's *Kingsman: The Secret Service*, Spike Lee's *Chi-Raq*, Brie Larson's directorial debut *Unicorn Store*, the Russo brothers' *Captain America: The Winter Soldier* and George Lucas' *Star Wars* prequel trilogy.

Jackson's other film credits include *RoboCop*, *Oldboy*, *Mother and Child*, *Iron Man 2*, *Lakeview Terrace*, *Soul Men*, *The Spirit*, *Jumper*, *Resurrecting the Champ*, *1408*, *Black Snake Moan*, *Snakes on a Plane*, *Coach Carter*, *The Incredibles*, *S.W.A.T.*, *Caveman's Valentine*, *Eve's Bayou*, *Unbreakable*, *Rules of Engagement*, *Deep Blue Sea*, *The Negotiator*, *The Red Violin*, *Jackie Brown*, *187*, *A Time to Kill*, *Die Hard With a Vengeance*, *Jungle Fever*, *The Long Kiss Goodnight*, *Ragtime*, *Sea of Love*, *Coming to America*, *Do the Right Thing*, *School Daze*, *Mo' Better Blues*, *Goodfellas*, *Patriot Games* and *True Romance*.

On the small screen, Jackson served as executive producer for the Spike TV animated series "Afro Samurai," which premiered in 2007. The series received an Emmy nomination for Outstanding Animated Program. The first edition of the "Afro Samurai" video game launched in February 2009.

Jackson appeared in two HBO telefilms, "The Sunset Limited" and John Frankenheimer's Emmy winner "Against the Wall." His performance earned him Golden Globe and Cable Ace nominations (Best Supporting Actor in a Movie or Miniseries).

Jackson's career began onstage, after his graduation from Morehouse College in Atlanta with a degree in dramatic arts. His early stage credits include "Home," "A Soldier's Play," "Sally/Prince" and "The District Line." He also originated roles in two of August Wilson's plays at Yale Repertory Theatre. For the Public Theater/New York Shakespeare Festival, Jackson appeared in "Mother Courage and Her Children," "Spell #7" and "The Mighty Gents." In 2011 he made his Broadway debut in "The Mountaintop" at the Bernard B. Jacobs Theater, playing Martin Luther King Jr. The play also starred Angela Bassett and was directed by Kenny Leon.

ABOUT THE FILMMAKERS

DAN FOGELMAN (Director, Writer) is the creator and executive producer of the acclaimed NBC drama “This Is Us,” which after two seasons has been nominated for 10 Emmys and a Golden Globe for Best Drama. His feature directorial debut, *Danny Collins*, starred Al Pacino in a Golden Globe-nominated performance.

Fogelman’s first feature film was the Pixar film *Cars*. His other animated screenplays include *Bolt* and *Tangled*. His live-action films include *Crazy, Stupid, Love*, starring Steve Carell and Ryan Gosling, and the semi-autobiographical *The Guilt Trip*, starring Barbra Streisand and Seth Rogen.

Fogelman was the recipient of the 2016 Humanitas Prize for his “This Is Us” pilot script. He also co-created and executive produced Fox’s drama “Pitch.” Fogelman’s period musical comedy series “Galavant” featured the music of award-winning composer Alan Menken.

MARTY BOWEN (Producer) is a partner at Temple Hill Entertainment, a Los Angeles-based film and television production company established with co-founder Wyck Godfrey in 2006. Over its first decade in business, the company triumphed with a number of successful film franchises, notably the *Twilight Saga* (based on Stephenie Meyer’s popular novels) and *The Maze Runner* trilogy.

A Texas native, Bowen began his career in the UTA trainee program and worked his way up to agent and ultimately partner before leaving to co-found Temple Hill. The company’s first project was *The Nativity Story*, directed by Catherine Hardwicke. This modestly budgeted Christmas-themed movie led to the company’s big break two years later, when Hardwicke helmed the first feature in the *Twilight Saga* franchise. *Twilight* claimed an opening weekend box-office record of \$69.6 million on its way to a \$400 million global take. The pair continued in the same role on the franchise’s four sequels (*New Moon*, *Eclipse* and *Breaking Dawn Parts 1 and 2*). The series surpassed \$3 billion in worldwide theatrical ticket sales.

The *Twilight* franchise established Bowen and Godfrey in the key young-adult moviegoing demographic, where they continued to work as producers of hit romantic dramas adapted from the novels of John Green and Nicholas Sparks. These titles included *The Fault in Our Stars*, *Paper Towns*, *Dear John*, *Safe Haven* and *The Longest Ride*.

Following *The Fault in Our Stars*, which grossed over \$300 million worldwide, Bowen and Godfrey launched another popular film franchise in the YA adaptation *The Maze Runner*, which

earned \$350 million worldwide. Directed by Wes Ball, the original film's success spawned two sequels, *Maze Runner: The Scorch Trials* and *Maze Runner: The Death Cure*.

Currently, the company is in post-production on the Neil Armstrong biopic *First Man*, based on Jim Hansen's biography about the historic Apollo 11 mission in 1969. The film is directed by Academy Award winner Damien Chazelle and stars Ryan Gosling.

Recent and upcoming films include Greg Berlanti's *Love, Simon*, starring Nick Robinson; *The Hate U Give*, based on the critically acclaimed bestselling young-adult novel by Angie Thomas; *Uncle Drew*, a feature adaptation of the online spots that have become a viral phenomenon for Pepsi; and Dan Krauss' *The Kill Team*, a tense character-driven thriller starring Alexander Skarsgård and Nat Wolff.

Apart from Bowen and Godfrey's successful film franchises, Temple Hill has also ventured into television, with the pair executive producing the recent Fox crime drama "Rosewood," the long-running ABC series "Revenge," and David E. Kelley's adaptation of "Mr. Mercedes," the first novel in Stephen King's trilogy. Starring Brendan Gleeson, "Mr. Mercedes" is now in production on its second season.

Bowen resides in Los Angeles with his wife and three children.

AARON RYDER (Producer) is the co-president of production and acquisitions at FilmNation Entertainment. Since joining the company in 2009, the veteran producer has established himself as one of the brightest and most prolific independent producers working today. Among the films Ryder has produced with FilmNation are Denis Villeneuve's Academy Award-winning sci-fi epic *Arrival*, starring Amy Adams, Jeremy Renner and Forest Whitaker; Jeff Nichols' critically acclaimed *Mud*, a 2012 official selection at Cannes starring Matthew McConaughey, Reese Witherspoon and Michael Shannon; John Lee Hancock's *The Founder*, starring Michael Keaton; and *The Lodge*, starring Riley Keough. He also executive produced *Miss Sloane*, starring Jessica Chastain, and *The Sense of an Ending*, starring Jim Broadbent.

In collaboration with director Christopher Nolan, Ryder produced *Memento* in 2000 and then *The Prestige* in 2007. His other credits include Wally Pfister's sci-fi actioner *Transcendence*, with Johnny Depp and Morgan Freeman; the Sundance hit *Hamlet 2*, with Steve Coogan; *The TV Set*, for director Jake Kasdan; *My One and Only*, with Renée Zellweger; *The Mexican*, starring Brad Pitt and Julia Roberts; and *Donnie Darko*, with Jake Gyllenhaal.

GLEN BASNER (Executive Producer) is the founder and chief executive officer of FilmNation Entertainment, a leading producer, distributor and financier of independent films. The company has quickly become a destination for many of the world's most renowned filmmakers, including Denis Villeneuve, Steven Soderbergh, Terrence Malick, Pedro Almodóvar, Woody Allen, Jonathan Glazer, Jeff Nichols, J.C. Chandor, Rian Johnson, Morten Tyldum, Lenny Abrahamson and John Lee Hancock. One of the highest-grossing independent international film distributors, FilmNation has amassed more than \$1.24 billion in global box office since 2013. The company has also garnered 44 Academy Award nominations since its inception, including Best Picture nominations for *The King's Speech*, *The Imitation Game*, *Nebraska*, *Room* and *Arrival*.

FilmNation's notable production and finance titles include Sebastian Lelio's *Disobedience*, starring Rachel Weisz, Rachel McAdams and Alessandro Nivola; Richard Eyre's *The Children Act*, with Emma Thompson; Denis Villeneuve's *Arrival*, starring Amy Adams and Jeremy Renner; John Lee Hancock's *The Founder*, with Michael Keaton; John Madden's *Miss Sloane*, featuring Jessica Chastain; Marc Webb's *Gifted*, starring Chris Evans; Ritesh Batra's *The Sense of an Ending*, with Jim Broadbent; and Michael Showalter's *The Big Sick*, starring Kumail Nanjiani.

Previously, Basner was president, international for The Weinstein Company (TWC), where he oversaw all international operations for TWC and Dimension Films. His responsibilities included the exploitation of all TWC and Dimension films abroad in all media, which spanned the sales, marketing and distribution functions within those companies. Before joining TWC, Basner was executive vice president, international sales and distribution, at Focus Features. He transitioned to this role after quickly rising up the ranks to become the head of international sales at the venerable New York independent film company Good Machine, which was acquired by Universal to create Focus Features in 2002.

A graduate of Boston University, Basner is based at FilmNation's New York City headquarters.

BEN BROWNING (Executive Producer) currently serves as co-president of production and acquisitions at FilmNation Entertainment. FilmNation is a leading distributor, financier and producer of independent films that is a destination for many of the world's most renowned filmmakers. In his current position Browning packages and supervises many of FilmNation's internal production, financing and acquisition titles, which have included three consecutive Academy Award nominees for Best Picture: Denis Villeneuve's *Arrival*, recipient of eight Oscar nominations;

Lenny Abrahamson's *Room*, for which Brie Larson won Best Actress; and Morten Tyldum's *The Imitation Game*, another Oscar winner.

Browning's other recent feature credits include executive producing Michael Showalter's *The Big Sick*, which premiered to rave reviews at the Sundance Film Festival before selling to Amazon Studios; producing John Madden's Golden Globe nominee *Miss Sloane*, starring Jessica Chastain; executive producing Morten Tyldum's *Passengers*, starring Jennifer Lawrence and Chris Pratt; executive producing *Gifted*, Marc Webb's recent indie hit; and executive producing Ritesh Batra's critically acclaimed *The Sense of an Ending*.

Next, Browning is executive producing Jeremy Saulnier's *Hold the Dark* and Jennifer Kent's *The Nightingale*. Outside FilmNation, Browning is also developing an adaptation of Neil Gaiman's *The Graveyard Book*, for Disney.

Prior to joining FilmNation, Browning co-founded the private-equity-backed film finance and production company Wayfare Entertainment in 2008. He rose from managing partner to CEO and teamed up with James Cameron as executive producers on *Sanctum*, which generated worldwide box office of \$110 million. During his tenure Browning produced, developed and financed Anna Boden and Ryan Fleck's *It's Kind of a Funny Story*, starring Zach Galifianakis; Neil Jordan's multiple-award winner *Ondine*, starring Colin Farrell; and Sebastian Cordero's sci-fi hit *Europa Report*.

Prior to founding Wayfare Browning was an executive at Industry Entertainment, producing independent television shows such as "Masters of Horror," for Showtime; "Fear Itself," for NBC; and "Masters of Science Fiction," for ABC. Browning also worked at the talent agency APA. After graduating from the London School of Economics, he started his career at the advertising agency Saatchi & Saatchi in London.

MILAN POPELKA (Executive Producer) is the chief operating officer of FilmNation Entertainment, a leading producer, distributor and financier of independent films. The company has quickly become a destination for many of the world's most renowned filmmakers, including Denis Villeneuve, Steven Soderbergh, Terrence Malick, Pedro Almodóvar, Woody Allen, Jonathan Glazer, Jeff Nichols, J.C. Chandor, Rian Johnson, Morten Tyldum, Lenny Abrahamson and John Lee Hancock. One of the highest-grossing independent international film distributors, FilmNation has amassed more than \$1.24 billion in global box office since 2013. The company has also garnered 44 Academy Award nominations since its inception, including Best Picture nominations for *The King's Speech*, *The Imitation Game*, *Nebraska*, *Room* and *Arrival*.

FilmNation's notable production and finance titles include Sebastian Lelio's *Disobedience*, starring Rachel Weisz, Rachel McAdams and Alessandro Nivola; Richard Eyre's *The Children Act*, with Emma Thompson; Denis Villeneuve's *Arrival*, starring Amy Adams and Jeremy Renner; John Lee Hancock's *The Founder*, with Michael Keaton; John Madden's *Miss Sloane*, featuring Jessica Chastain; Marc Webb's *Gifted*, starring Chris Evans; Ritesh Batra's *The Sense of an Ending*, with Jim Broadbent; and Michael Showalter's *The Big Sick*, starring Kumail Nanjiani.

Prior to joining FilmNation, Popelka oversaw creative/finance at Samuels Media (*Michael Clayton*), worked in the Independent Finance Group at Creative Artists Agency (CAA), and served as a consultant in the entertainment practice of McKinsey & Company.

ALISON COHEN (Executive Producer) is executive vice president of business & legal affairs at FilmNation Entertainment, a leading producer, distributor and financier of independent films. The company has quickly become a destination for many of the world's most renowned filmmakers, including Denis Villeneuve, Steven Soderbergh, Terrence Malick, Pedro Almodóvar, Woody Allen, Jonathan Glazer, Jeff Nichols, J.C. Chandor, Rian Johnson, Morten Tyldum, Lenny Abrahamson and John Lee Hancock. One of the highest-grossing independent international film distributors, FilmNation has amassed more than \$1.24 billion in global box office since 2013. The company has also garnered 44 Academy Award nominations since its inception, including Best Picture nominations for *The King's Speech*, *The Imitation Game*, *Nebraska*, *Room* and *Arrival*.

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Prior to joining FilmNation, Cohen was a partner at both Frankfurt Kurnit Klein & Selz, P.C. and Epstein, Levinsohn, Bodine, Hurwitz & Weinstein, LLP, two preeminent entertainment law firms based in New York. During her 13 years in private practice, Cohen represented the specialty divisions of several studios as well as independent film producers, production companies, film funds and individual financiers. Cohen received her J.D. as a Harlan Fiske Stone Scholar at Columbia University of Law. She is currently based in New York.

BRETT PAWLAK (Director of Photography) is known for his work on the award-winning *Short Term 12* (2013), which opened to widespread critical acclaim at Austin's South by Southwest Film Festival and won both Grand Jury Narrative Feature and Narrative Audience Award. Pawlak's diverse range of film credits include *The Meddler*, starring Susan Sarandon, and Katie Holmes' directorial debut, *All We Had*. He also lensed the pilot episode of the NBC show "This Is Us."

The cinematographer's most recent credits include *The Glass Castle*, starring Brie Larson and Woody Harrelson. Pawlak reunited with Larson for her directorial debut, *Unicorn Store*.

JULIE MONROE (Editor) previously worked with director Dan Fogelman on *Danny Collins*, a feature starring Al Pacino. She is also a frequent collaborator with Jeff Nichols, for whom she edited *Mud*, starring Mathew McConaughey; *Midnight Special*, starring Michael Shannon and Joel Edgerton; and *Loving*, with Edgerton and Ruth Negga (who received an Academy Award nomination for her performance).

Monroe's recent work includes Andrew Heckler's Sundance Audience Award winner *Burden*, starring Garrett Hedlund and Forest Whitaker. Previously, she edited *What's Your Number?*, starring Anna Faris and Chris Evans, and *The Big White*, with Robin Williams and Holly Hunter.

The editor's other credits include Adrian Lyne's *Indecent Proposal*, Roland Emmerich's *The Patriot*, Diane Keaton's *Hanging Up* and four Oliver Stone films, *Wall Street: Money Never Sleeps*, *W.*, *World Trade Center* and *JFK*. Monroe has also worked with director Irwin Winkler several times, editing films such as *De-Lovely*, *Life as a House* and *At First Sight*. Her television credits include the Amazon sci-fi drama "The Man in the High Castle" and Showtime's "Shameless."

Monroe came up through the editing ranks as an assistant editor on numerous features, including Oliver Stone's *The Doors*, *Born on the Fourth of July* and *Wall Street*, as well as Curtis Hanson's *The River Wild*.