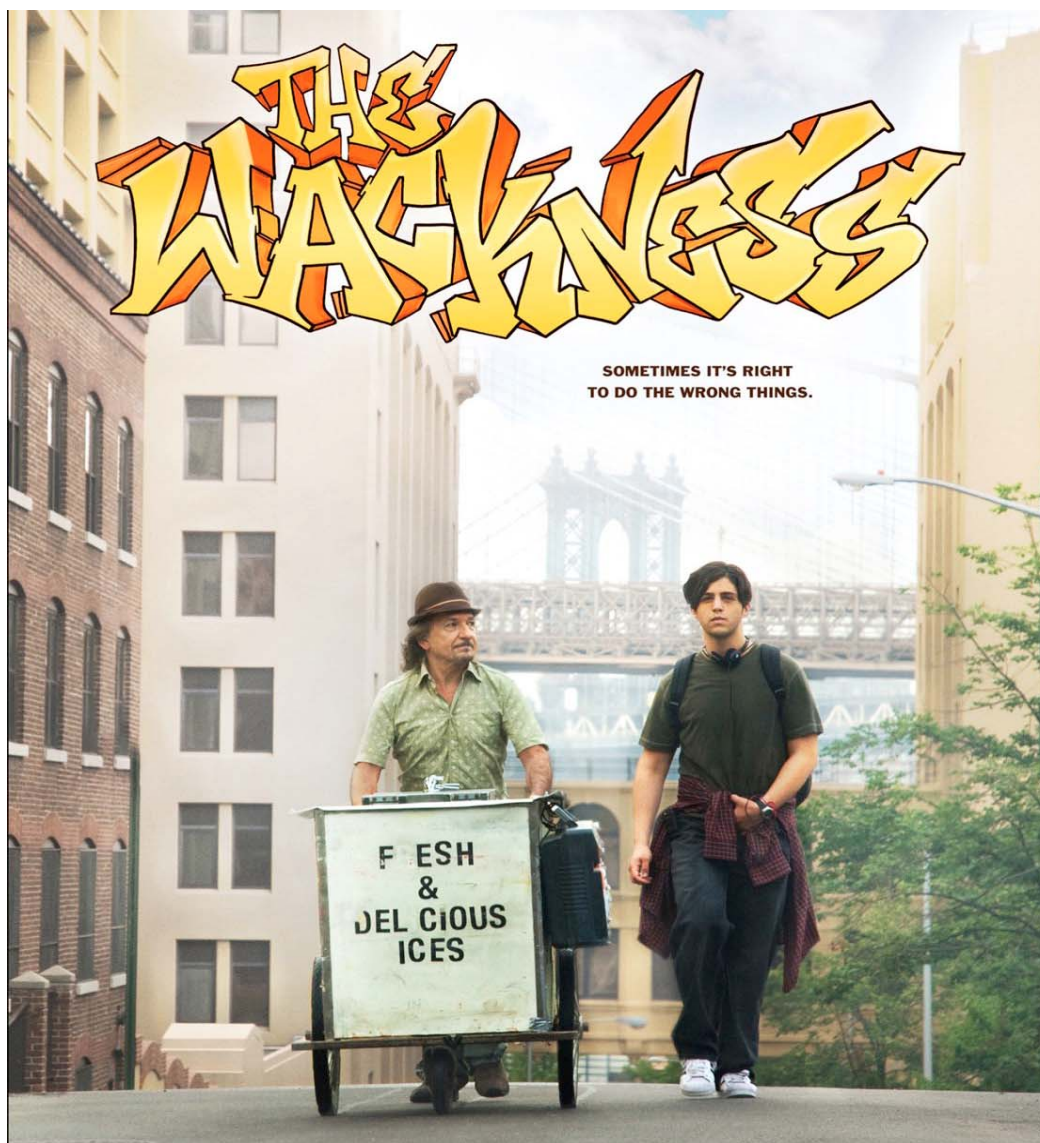


mongrel

Presents



(110 mins, USA, 2008)

Distribution

mongrel

1028 Queen Street West  
Toronto, Ontario, Canada, M6J 1H6  
Tel: 416-516-9775 Fax: 416-516-0651  
E-mail: [info@mongrelmedia.com](mailto:info@mongrelmedia.com)  
[www.mongrelmedia.com](http://www.mongrelmedia.com)

Publicity

Bonne Smith  
Star PR  
Tel: 416-488-4436  
Fax: 416-488-8438  
E-mail: [starpr@sympatico.ca](mailto:starpr@sympatico.ca)

High res stills may be downloaded from <http://www.mongrelmedia.com/press.html>

# Synopsis

## **Short Synopsis:**

It's the summer of 1994, and the streets of New York are pulsing with hip-hop and wafting with the sweet aroma of marijuana--but change is in the air. The newly-inaugurated mayor, Rudy Giuliani, is beginning to implement his anti-fun initiatives against "crimes" like noisy portable radios, graffiti and public drunkenness. Set against this backdrop, Luke Shapiro (Josh Peck) spends his last summer before college selling dope throughout New York City, trading it with his shrink (Ben Kingsley) for therapy, while crushing on his step-daughter (Olivia Thirlby). Famke Janssen, Mary Kate Olsen, and Method Man round out the cast in this edgy, bittersweet, and funny coming of age story.

## **Detailed Synopsis:**

It's the summer of 1994, and the streets of New York are pulsing with hip hop and wafting with the sweet aroma of marijuana. The newly-inaugurated mayor, Rudolph Giuliani, is only beginning to implement his anti-fun initiatives against "crimes" like noisy portable radio, graffiti and public drunkenness.

Two people, however, are missing out on the excitement: Luke (Josh Peck) is a socially uncomfortable teenage pot dealer with no friends, issues with his parents, and a colossal lack of confidence with girls. He trades weed for sessions with his therapist, Dr. Squires (Sir Ben Kingsley), whose much-younger wife (Famke Janssen) is slipping away from him. Squires, a drug-addled shrink with a hairline retreating to the back of his neck and a state of mind slouching back to adolescence, is an unlikely role model—but the two of them forge a friendship based on a mutual need: getting laid.

The intergenerational duo set off on a crawl that takes them all over New York, where they encounter several of Luke's "business associates," including a Phish-following dreadlocked pixie (Mary Kate Olsen), a New Wave, keyboard-playing one-hit-wonder (Jane Adams), and Luke's supplier (Method Man).

Luke has long had an aching crush on Dr. Squires' way-out-of-his league stepdaughter, Stephanie (Olivia Thirlby from "Juno"), and is stunned at his good luck when she returns his affections. Luke's innocent first love experience with Stephanie becomes a life lesson that sets him on the pathway towards adulthood. And when Squires breaks down, it is up to the younger man to throw the older one a lifeline.

Propelled by an exuberant hip hop score, "The Wackness" captures the spell of 1994--a time of pagers, not cell phones; a time when Tupac and Biggie were alive but Kurt Cobain had just died. Funny and moving, "The Wackness" is an offbeat tale of two lost souls stumbling towards maturity.

# Directors Statement

I graduated high school in the Summer of '94, much like THE WACKNESS' Luke Shapiro (although I never sold weed. I swear.). 1994 found New York at a crossroads. And it found hip hop at its creative apex. I suppose I was at my own crossroads in '94, for I latched onto this music and never let go.

1994 featured debut albums from artists like Nas, Notorious B.I.G., Outkast, and Method Man. Although these albums weren't necessarily made with me in mind, they spoke to me nonetheless. There was a restlessness to the music, a sense of provocation with which I identified. It's not so much that these albums had the right answers (they rarely did); it was more that they were asking the right questions. That, and they were cool to dance to.

Rap music, like New York itself, was at a very different place in '94. For me, that's what is so interesting about setting the movie 13 short years ago – assessing those similarities and differences. When we take stock of this recent past, we have a more fully-realized understanding of the present. Or, as Ghostface Killa put it back in the day, "if you forget where you come from, you never gonna make it where you're going." That sentence encapsulates a lot of what making this movie meant to me. I hope it's a sentiment that comes across in some small part as you watch THE WACKNESS. And I hope the same restless spirit that pervaded those great '94 hip hop albums lives on in the film. Most of all, though I hope it's cool to dance to. You know, in that movie kind of way.

# Cast

Dr. Squires	<i>Sir Ben Kingsley</i>
Luke	<i>Josh Peck</i>
Mrs. Squires	<i>Famke Janssen</i>
Stephanie	<i>Olivia Thirlby</i>
Union	<i>Mary-Kate Olsen</i>
Eleanor	<i>Jane Adams</i>
Percy	<i>Method Man</i>
Justin	<i>Aaron Yoo</i>
Mrs. Shapiro	<i>Talia Balsam</i>
Mr. Shapiro	<i>David Wohl</i>
Grandpa Shapiro	<i>Bob Dishy</i>
Grandma Shapiro	<i>Joanna Merlin</i>
Bodyguard #1	<i>Shannon Briggs</i>
Homeless Man	<i>Roy Milton Davis</i>
Kid in Bar	<i>Alexander Flores</i>
Oliver	<i>Ken Marks</i>
Police Officer #1	<i>Kiah Fredericks</i>
Principal Edward	<i>Robert Armstrong</i>
Bartender	<i>Flint Beverage</i>
Corrections Officer	<i>Corrections Officer</i>
Albert	<i>Nick Schutt</i>

# Crew

Writer/Director	<i>Jonathan Levine</i>
Producers	<i>Keith Calder</i>
	<i>Felipe Marino</i>
	<i>Joe Neurauter</i>
Editor	<i>Josh Noyes</i>
Director of Photography	<i>Petra Korner</i>
Co-Producer	<i>Brian Udovich</i>
Line Producer	<i>Jared Goldman</i>
Production Designer	<i>Annie Spitz</i>
Art Director	<i>Beth Kuhn</i>
Set Decorator	<i>Cherish Magennis</i>
Costume Design	<i>Michael Clancy</i>
Production Supervisor	<i>Dave Donars</i>
Casting	<i>Joanna Colbert</i>
	<i>Richard Mento</i>

## A Conversation between Jonathan Levine and Josh Peck

**JONATHAN:** People are always asking me how autobiographical “The Wackness” is. I think anytime you write something about a time in your life, you need to access whatever emotions you were feeling at the time, and I definitely needed to go there in order to write something that rang true. Certainly the world is the world I grew up in, and the characters and a lot of the alienation that Luke’s feeling is the stuff I felt, but as far as the facts and details, none of it’s based on reality.

**JOSH:** In one way or another, I have been in those situations that Luke goes through in the movie, like trying to think of something cool to say to the girl I’m trying to get hooked up with. or just kicking back with friends and questioning whether these people are really my friends, or whether these people are cats that I wouldn’t wanna hang out with five years from now. There are so many things flying through your mind when you’re 18, 19, 20, and the feelings are so visceral, they feel so real in the moment and all encompassing and are such all or nothing. I really identified with Luke’s bleakness. It literally came down to the fact that I was two years older than Luke was in the script. It was a part of my life that I felt that I was more at the end of the chapter with, while Luke was just beginning it.

I remember when I auditioned for you the first day: it was the scene where I’m in the bathroom with Olivia. You gave me a note that maybe this kid isn’t so comfortable in this situation—maybe he isn’t good at acting like this cool guy who is feeling fine. And I was like, “alright cool,” so then I kind of referred back to what comes naturally to me—being semi-neurotic, always trying to make light of the situation whenever I feel pressure. You afforded me the freedom to make him funny. It’s rooted in this sort of pain and uncertainty that Luke has about life and people.

**JON:** I think I never had an exact idea in my mind about what this kid was going to be until you came in. When you’re writing, you write what you know and hope that an actor will be able make it his own and take it to the next level. As a director, I wanted to give you as much freedom as possible, as long as the spirit of what you were doing was consistent with what the ideas I had in the script. I never wanted to handcuff you with any preconceived notions. But now of course, I would want you to do the exact same thing. (laughs)

**JOSH:** When you asked me where my family was from, I said, “I’m from New York, but most of my family lives in New Jersey, and I fucking hate Jersey!” And so Luke started having this thing for Jersey too. He says in the movie, “Well, I can’t live in Jersey!” I thought it was really funny.

**JON:** Once you put your mind on Luke there was no such thing as a wrong decision. It just became part of the life of the character.

And you had a pretty good knowledge about the music of the time. You really identified with Biggie and the sentiments in Biggie's songs. To me, the music is the biggest thing about grounding yourself in '94. Of course, you were only eight then.

**JOSH:** A precocious eight.

**JON:** You do have significant memories from that time...

**JOSH:** I was watching "Power Rangers" in '94. I was playing "Duck Hunt" in my room on the Nintendo NES, you know what I'm saying? For me it was a different reality. But I tried to remember the major subjects that adults were talking about in '94. Everybody was talking about Clinton coming in. I remember all the older kids talking about "Pulp Fiction," and how unbelievable it was—people were seeing it 7, 8, 9 times. And those were all things that were incorporated into the movie, with the video games, and the culture and the high tops, and the haircuts. I remember my babysitter was always watching "90210," and I had the same haircut as five out of six of the guys on that show. I was just trying to reinvestigate that part of my brain and psyche that might have gone dormant if I wasn't doing the movie. Also, a lot of the slang is still used now.

**JON:** The vernacular hasn't changed that much.

**JOSH:** When I started on the movie, I found myself saying a lot of words that are used more sparingly now—words that we probably would've used a lot more in '94. I found myself saying: "that's mad cool," or "that's mad crazy," or "that's really dope." They just became second nature in a way.

**JON:** But sometimes you'd say something that was—

**JOSH:** Totally. You were like, "No, we didn't say that in 94." And then we would change it.

**JON:** It helped a lot that you and Olivia happened to be from New York. That's not why I cast you two—it's just a coincidence. But it made things a lot easier.

With Sir Ben, it wasn't about authenticity. He is not the kind of "New York Actor" you might expect in that role—he's just an amazing actor. He gave this distinctly ballsy performance, a strange concoction. Our idea was to just bring him into this world and have the world react to him.

**JOSH:** I remember Olivia and I were in a state of perpetual anticipation, this whirlwind of: “Sir Ben! Oh my God, what do we expect? “What’s it going to be?” He came to me the first day of shooting and gave me a hug and said, “This part chose you; you didn’t choose this part.” And right then, every wall, every piece of trepidation, everything fell away—because he truly made me feel like an equal.

**JON:** I think, to Ben’s credit, he knew we would be intimidated, and he knew that this was not going to work if Josh and I were scared of him. Not to mention the fact that he’s just a sweet man.

**JOSH:** Sir Ben said at one of our interviews at Sundance that we had to be comfortable in order to be vulnerable in front of each other. There are scenes in the movie where I break down in front of Sir Ben—near tears, totally heartbroken. And if our relationship hadn’t been one of mutual respect, I don’t think I would have had this comfort going to such places of vulnerability. My character’s in front of him, sort of oozing out all of this uncertainty, this state of unhappiness, and just cynicism and kind of being angry at the world, which I think is a definite theme with most young men. You’re so unsure of yourself, you don’t know who to be mad at... you just pretty sure you’re mad at something.

**JON:** Kingsley’s character identifies with Luke’s restlessness, his malaise, his kind of unfocused anger. I think people like Squires intellectually know that they’re doing the wrong thing. I’m sure he knows he’s in a loveless marriage. I think that in a way, Squires starts to think that if he can help Luke through this, he can also teach *himself* a lesson or two.

**JOSH:** I think Squires is trying to caution Luke as much as possible. He’s telling Luke that this is what you could end up being if you’re not careful. And you don’t want to end up being like me! From the first scene he says tells Luke that he’s graduating tomorrow and he sees no sense of happiness inside Luke. Squires is trying to save Luke from all the pain and the suffering that Squires has sort of figured out too late in his life. And now he really can’t do much about it.

**JON:** But I think by choosing to mentor Luke, he’s also trying to live vicariously through Luke.

**JOSH:** Olivia said a really interesting thing—that Luke kind of wishes he was Squires, and Squires kind of wishes that he was Luke.

**JON:** Both of them are pretty clueless about women.

**JOSH:** Luke was unbelievably kind of needy toward Stephanie because it was this new relationship. There was so much unfulfilled shit in his life. To have someone come out of the woodwork that kind of gets you—you want to kind of throw yourself at this person and never let go. Get as much out of them as you can. I think that that was the downfall—they both weren’t ready for this kind of

relationship. She was just kind of damaged, and maybe unable to love in that moment.

**JON:** I think there was a genuine connection. It was just about a time and a place. If these two had met three years after college, they might have gotten married. Unfortunately, it just didn't work out at the time.

**JOSH:** Even now, being a couple years older, I constantly say to anyone who will listen, that even if the right girl came into my life right now, I would know what the hell to do with her. Because I know that psychologically I'm not ready to completely be there in a relationship at this point in my life.

**JON:** Originally when I wrote the script, Stephanie was like the "Fuck You" to every girl who dumped me when I was at that age. The character was definitely a lot less appealing on the page. But Olivia injected the character with such humanity. She did this wonderful thing in the last scene. When Josh tells her that he's never been heartbroken before, she smiles to herself as he goes down the elevator: she knows he's gonna be okay; she knows that whatever they went through was worth it because they had that connection. And so it went from being the "Fuck You" to every girl that ever dumped me to being, "Okay, I know why you dumped me, and you were right," which is a much more constructive way to go about it. But it really is a testament to how much Olivia identified with the inner life of that character. It's hard for me as a guy to write girls...if I understood girls I'd be a lot better off. But she did such a wonderful job I feel like I gained insight into my own life.

**JOSH:** You're right about that. I came into the movie a bit heartbroken from stuff that went down in my own life. And it was great be able to incorporate that into Luke. I had a crystal-clear image of who Stephanie was to me in my life. You know, they say acting isn't therapy, but it can be a great way to get through shit. And it was true for me. By the end of the movie, I had a much better perspective on my life through Luke's eyes. It was great to be able to bring out these emotions every day and for me to be able to put them to use, instead of welling up from some sappy John Mayer song on the radio. It was a great luxury I was afforded. I think Luke is just pretty damn cool. I definitely was proud to play this kid, and to be in his skin.

# # #



# The Soundtrack

*For me, hip hop was at its best in '94: at its most creative and most authentic. And while the lives of my friends and I were distant from the gangsta life of the rappers, we identified with their spirit, and the authenticity of feeling that they embodied. So we listened.*

*These days, I don't really listen to much hip hop. I don't think today's artists have as much to say; the production's too slick. In '94, it was a movement; in '08, it's pop. Things just aren't the same as they were then. No music has ever spoken to me like the Class of '94.*

*-Jonathan Levine*

**The World Is Yours** is the third single from Nas' '94 debut album "Illmatic." During the final chorus, the title of the song is repeated over and over in a stirring shout-out to people in the various neighborhoods of New York ("South Bronx, the world is yours...etc.) It was named seventh on about.com's list of the top 100 rap songs.

*"We toyed with a lot of different options for the first song in the film--the one that introduces us to Luke's world. We chose something off "Illmatic" because, for me, it defined the year. "Illmatic" was the first album of the '94 rookie class (Nas, Biggie, Outkast, etc.), and it's an undisputed classic. It introduced the world to a natural-born storyteller who could transport you with his evocative rhymes. It came out in April, and I distinctly remember playing the CD on repeat in my bedroom as I studied for finals."*

**Heaven & Hell** is a collaboration between Raekwon and his fellow Wu-Tang Clan member Ghostface Killah. It originally appeared on the soundtrack album for Boaz Yakim's hip-hop-oriented movie "Fresh" (which debuted at the '94 Sundance ), the story of a 12-year-old boy selling drugs for the local dealers. The film starred Samuel L. Jackson and Giancarlo Esposito.

*"Raekwon was the first member of the Wu-Tang Clan to release a solo album. **He did so in '94.** For me, this track changes the whole vibe of the roof party scene, as Luke sits up on the water tower, isolated from this socially oppressive high school environment. When Luke looks down at his classmates having a good time, RZA's dark production gives the scene a new feel: it's almost scary. High school was hell for Luke, and this song illustrates that beautifully.*

**The What** is a track from The Notorious B.I.G.'s '94 debut album, "Ready to Die." It features a duet with Wu-Tang Clan member Method Man, who is seen in the film (playing Percy, Luke's Rastafarian drug supplier) in the scene over which this song plays.

*"The spirit and themes of Notorious B.I.G. were my biggest creative influence for the movie. As hardcore as he could be, "Ready to Die" was willing to speak openly about very personal things: everything from his own suicidal thoughts to his mom's cancer. He never censored himself. He spoke the words I felt, and he's the first true artist I ever discovered."*

**Summertime** is the Grammy Award-winning single by DJ Jazzy Jeff and the Fresh Prince (Will Smith). Taken from the duo's fourth album, "Homebase," it reached #1 on Billboard's Hot R&B/Hip-Hop Songs and #4 on the Billboard Hot 100. (It samples Kool & the Gang's "Summer Madness.")

*"Before Will Smith was the biggest movie star in the world, he was The Fresh Prince. I remember the video for this song debuting on NBC after an episode of 'The Fresh Prince of Bel Air.' The sample, and Smith's laid-back rhyming style, perfectly capture that lazy summer feeling that serves as the backdrop for Luke and Stephanie's relationship."*

**Can I Kick It?**, the third single from A Tribe Called Quest's debut album "People's Instinctive Travels and the Paths of Rhythm" (1990), is instantly recognizable by its sample of the sinuous bassline of Lou Reed's "Walk on the Wild Side." The song wasn't an immediate hit but became popular as the soundtrack to the first "Just Do It" Nike commercial.

*"A Tribe Called Quest's anthemic music evokes a strong sense of nostalgia among my generation. When that Lou Reed sample kicks in, so too do hundreds of associations in my head and the heads of other heads amongst my peers: remembrances, places, people... I like the way those associations interplay with the film itself. I'm sure the original Lou Reed song has similar associations for people who came of age in the '60's and '70's. And for those who came of age later, I hope this song is as much a discovery for them as it was for me."*

**Bump & Grind** is the second single from R. Kelly's his first solo album "12 Play" in '94. The track became Kelly's first number one single on the U.S. Billboard Hot 100 and it spent twelve weeks at number one on the U.S. Hot R&B/Hip-Hop Songs chart, becoming the longest-running number-one U.S. R&B single at that time.

*"Before he was trapped in the closet, R. Kelly was an upstart R&B singer whose soulful crooning made the ladies melt. A well-timed R. Kelly track could also convince even the most ineffectual white boy that he was good in the bedroom."*

**Tearz** is a track from Wu-Tang Clan's debut album "Enter the Wu-Tang (36 Chambers)." It uses a sample from Memphis Soul singer Wendy Rene's biggest hit "After Laughter (Comes Tears)", which came out in 1964.

*"When released in late '93, 'Enter the Wu-Tang (36 Chambers)' kicked off a new era of the New York hip hop scene. I used to walk around the streets of New York City listening to the cassette of this album in my Walkman. RZA's pitch black production make this a hip hop classic, and the anthem for Luke and Squires' downfall. Wendy Rene recently emailed the production saying how much she loved this particular reinvention of her music."*

# 1994 Timeline

**January 2** Former Federal prosecutor Rudolph William Giuliani is inaugurated as the 107th Mayor of New York City, defeating New York City's first African-American mayor, David Dinkins.

**January 6** The first two MetroCard-compatible turnstiles open in the New York subways.

In Detroit, Michigan, Olympic medalist figure skater Nancy Kerrigan is clubbed on the leg by an assailant hired by her rival Tonya Harding's ex-husband.

**January 24** Mayor Giuliani declares he will break away from his predecessor David Dinkins' community policing policies—analyzing crime problems and working with city agencies and communities to solve them—and keep their primary focus on preventing crime.

**January 25** President William Jefferson Clinton delivers his first State of the Union address.

Mayor Giuliani and his new Police Commissioner, William J. Bratton, begin a major reorganization of the department, pledging to concentrate on quality-of-life offenses ranging from open-air drug markets to panhandling squeegee men.

**January 30** The Dallas Cowboys defeat the Buffalo Bills at the Super Bowl.

**February 1** Green Day's first major label studio album, "Dookie," debuts.

**February 6** Police Commissioner Bratton authorizes officers to carry 9-millimeter semiautomatic handguns equipped with a magazine of 15 rounds. Bratton's predecessor, Raymond W. Kelly, had imposed a 10 round limit to address concerns that officers in stressful situations could empty their guns and possibly wound bystanders.

A story in the New York Times relates that marijuana is making a major comeback among teen-agers, in a form twenty times more potent and much more expensive than the street marijuana of the 1960's and 1970's.

**February 24** The New York Times reports that the MTA will no longer allow movie producers to film scenes in the subway that officials think are too violent. The MTA says that such scenes don't reflect the reduction in subway crime and give off a negative impression that subways are dangerous.

**February 25** Israeli Kahanist Baruch Goldstein opens fire inside the Cave of the Patriarchs in the West Bank. He kills 29 Muslims before worshippers beat him to death.

**March 1** A 28-year-old man, Rashid Baz, opens fire on a van full of 14 Hasidic students on the Brooklyn Bridge, killing one.

**March 4** Mohammad Salameh, Mahmud Abouhalima, Nidal Ayyad, and Ahmad Ajaj are convicted for carrying out the February 26<sup>th</sup>, 1993 bombing of the World Trade Center, which killed six and injured more than a thousand.

**March 7** The NYC police department begins a program to increase enforcement for minor offenses like noisy portable radios, public urination, graffiti vandalism and unlicensed vending in Greenwich Village.

**March 8** Nine Inch Nails release their groundbreaking album "The Downward Spiral."

**March 10** Several NYC City Council members complain that the Giuliani administration is trying to hobble the police watchdog Civilian Complaint Review Board, by leaving positions unfilled.

**March 12** The police department announces a new campaign to make it more difficult for people committing minor offenses like urinating in public and possessing marijuana to escape punishment. Violators who do not carry ID will be taken to a police station to be interrogated and even photographed, fingerprinted and held for arraignment.

**March 16** The New York Times reports that the Giuliani administration has ordered severe cuts in a program that awards landlords financial incentives for providing apartments to homeless families living in shelters.

**March 21** Steven Spielberg's "Schindler's List" wins seven Oscars, including Best Picture, at the 66th Academy Awards.

**March 23** Putting new pressure on New York City's municipal unions, the administration of Mayor Giuliani orders commissioners of the city's agencies to select 10,000 workers who could be laid off quickly if the Mayor's carefully drafted budget proposals fall apart.

**April 6** The Giuliani Administration announces a new policy to train patrol officers to make arrests whenever they see drug transactions, shifting from the previous reliance on undercover operations.

**April 7** The Rwandan Genocide begins in Kigali, Rwanda.

**April 8** Kurt Cobain, lead singer of Nirvana, is found dead in Seattle, Washington.

**April 13** The NYPD is considering switching to hollow-point bullets that expand on contact with human flesh to inflict more damage than traditional ammunition.

**April 14** "Space Ghost Coast to Coast" premieres on Cartoon Network.

**April 19** Nas releases his debut album, "Illmatic."

**April 22** Former United States President Richard Nixon dies in New York City.

**April 24** Outkast releases their debut album, "Southernplayalisticadillacmuzik."

**May 6** The New York Times reports that prosecutors will argue in their case against World Trade Center bombing mastermind Sheik Omar Abdel Rahman, that various terrorist acts dating back to 1991 were all part of an overall conspiracy by a "jihad organization" that had headquarters in several American cities and ties to similar groups in other countries.

**May 7** Mayor Giuliani announced a new homeless plan that for the first time would deny shelter to homeless families who refuse to participate in treatment and training programs.

**May 9** The New York City Medical Examiner's office says that a Staten Island man who died in the custody of police officers ten days ago suffocated because of pressure on his chest and neck while he lay in a prone position with his hand handcuffed behind his back.

**May 10** Nelson Mandela is inaugurated as South Africa's first Black president. Tupac Shakur begins serving a 15-day sentence in a county jail for attacking director Allen Hughes on the set of a video shoot. Illinois executes serial killer John Wayne Gacy by lethal injection for the murder of 33 young men and boys.

**May 17** The reclamation of Times Square was declared underway with a ceremony at the 94-year-old Victory Theater, set to re-open the following year with performances for children. The Victory project is symbolic of a long hoped turnaround in grungy 42<sup>nd</sup> Street, as is the New Amsterdam Theater across the street, which the Walt Disney Company has agreed to lease and rebuild with the use of a low-interest loan from the government.

**May 19** Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis, widow of President John F. Kennedy and of the Greek tycoon Aristotle Onassis, dies of a form of cancer of the lymphatic system at age 64.

**May 31** Beastie Boys release their fourth album, "Ill Communication."

**June 12** Nicole Brown Simpson and Ronald Goldman are murdered outside O.J. Simpson's home in LA.

"Passion," the Stephen Sondheim-James Lapine collaboration, and "Perestroika," part two of Tony Kushner's AIDS epic, "Angels in America," are the big prize-winners at the 48th annual Tony Awards.

**June 14** The New York Rangers defeat the Vancouver Canucks at Madison Square Garden in New York in Game seven of the 1994 Stanley Cup Finals to win their first Stanley Cup Championship in 54 years and end the "Curse of 1940."

**June 17** O.J. Simpson and his friend Al Cowlings flee from police in his white Ford Bronco.

**June 24** "Forrest Gump," starring Tom Hanks, opens. It will go on to be nominated for thirteen Academy Awards and win seven, including Best Picture, Best Director, Best Actor, and Best Adapted Screenplay. "The Lion King" also opens that day; it will become the third highest-grossing animated film of all time.

**June 28** Members of the Aum Shinrikyo cult release Sarin gas attack at Matsumoto, Japan. Seven people are killed and 660 are injured.

**July 5** Hootie and the Blowfish release their debut album, "Cracked Rear View." It will become the best-selling album of the 1990's (17.5 Million copies).

**July 6** Proclaiming success with their March program to combat quality-of-life crimes in the West Village, the New York City Police Department said yesterday it would take the strategy citywide by giving precinct commanders increased power to fight graffiti, public beer drinking, aggressive panhandling, loud radio playing, selling alcohol to minors, and prostitution.

**July 7** The fourth Lollapalooza tour kicks off in Henderson Nevada, with an opening lineup that includes Smashing Pumpkins, the Beastie Boys, George Clinton & the P. Funk All-Stars, The Breeders, A Tribe Called Quest, Nick Cave and the Bad Seeds, L7, and Boredoms.

**August 12** The Major League baseball strike begins, leading to the cancellation of 938 games, including the entire 1994 postseason and World Series. "Woodstock '94" opens at the original site of the festival in Saugerties, New York, celebrating the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the original Woodstock festival in 1969.

**August 25** "My So Called Life," starring Claire Danes, premieres on ABC.

**August 26** "Natural Born Killers," written by Quentin Tarantino, directed by Oliver Stone, and starring Woody Harrelson and Juliette Lewis, opens. The New York Times reports that the Giuliani administration's aggressive effort to crack down on street crime is placing new strains on New York City's courts and

jails, forcing the city to scramble to handle the overload. Correction Department officials requested an emergency procedure this week to speed up the building of temporary prison cells at Rikers Island, to be completed by next spring at a cost of \$30 million.

**September 13** The Notorious B.I.G. officially releases his first album, "Ready to Die." (Songs from the album had been circulating all summer long in mixtapes.)

# Slang Dictionary

## BLUNT

-noun

A cigar that has been hollowed out and refilled with marijuana.

*[From "Phillies Blunts," a brand of cigars often used to make blunts.]*

## BOUNCE

-verb

To leave a place: *This party sucks. Let's bounce!*

*[Possible origin: Bouncer]*

## BREASTESES

-noun

Plural form of *breast*.

*[Possible origin: Sketches from the TV sketch comedy series "In Living Color" (1990-94), in which David Alan Grier plays a convicted rapist called Tiny who always says "breasteses" instead of breasts.]*

## CRAZY HORSE

-noun

A brand of malt liquor with a very high alcohol content.

## DOPE

-adjective

Cool, nice, awesome.

-noun

Slang name for heroin, derived from its high dopamine content.

*[Note: weed is not dope (noun), although weed is always dope (adjective)]*

## FADED

-adjective

Totally high, too stoned to care. *Dude, you faded?*

## GANJA

High quality marijuana, often of Jamaican origin.

*[Hindi word, introduced to Jamaicans by West Indian laborers.]*



## HOMEBOY/HOMEGIRL

-noun

A close friend.

## ILL

-adjective

1. Cool, awesome, the best

2. Wild, crazy, disgusting

(*Ill is good or bad depending on how it is said*)

[Origin: illicit]

## ILLIN'

-verb, variant of *ill*

1. Doing things that can get you in trouble, i.e. vandalism, doing drugs, etc.

Antonym for **chillin'**

## MAD

-adjective

1. Extremely, very: *That girl is mad hot.*

2. A lot. *How many blunts are you going to smoke? Mad blunts!*

[Derived from the word's non-slang meaning, i.e. "insane"]

## MIXTAPE

-noun

An underground tape or CD made by a DJ, containing authorized or unauthorized remixed songs that are sold on the street and in shops, usually in the styles of Hip Hop, R&B, or Reggaeton.

## PEACE OUT

-interjection

Goodbye, See ya later: *I'm going to bounce. Peace out, homeboy.*

## WACK

-adjective

Very bad, the worst: *All politicians are bad but Giuliani is wack.*

[Perhaps back formation from wacky or wacko]

## **WEED**

*-noun*

Marijuana

## **WORD**

*-interjection*

1. An expression of approval and agreement. -*This weed is wack.* -*Word.*
2. Is that right? Really? -*My homeboy and I smoked five blunts last night.* -*Word?*

*[Origin: A shortened version of "You have my word" or "My word is my bond."]*

# About the Cast

## ***Sir Ben Kingsley (Dr. Squires)***

One of the world's most respected film, television and theatre actors, Academy Award winner Sir Ben Kingsley was last seen in *You Kill Me* for director John Dahl, also starring Tea Leoni and Luke Wilson. Sir Ben recently wrapped production on the highly anticipated film *Elegy* for director Isabel Coixet. The film is based on Philip Roth's acclaimed novel *The Dying Animal* and also stars Penelope Cruz and Dennis Hopper. He also starred in *Lucky Number Seven* opposite Josh Hartnett, Bruce Willis and Morgan Freeman. Kingsley is also remembered for his performance in Vadim Perelman's *House of Sand and Fog*, for which he received an Oscar nomination. In 2002, Sir Ben received an Oscar nomination, A Broadcast Film Critics Award, as well as both a SAG and a Golden Globe nomination for Best Supporting Actor for his performance in Jonathan Glazer's *Sexy Beast*, starring alongside Ray Winstone and Ian McShane.

On television, Ben recently gained critical acclaim for his starring performance in Phyllis Nagy's *Mrs. Harris* opposite Annette Bening for HBO Films. Kingsley also earned kudos for his work in Robert Dornhelm's four hour television production of *Anne Frank* portraying Anne Frank's father, Otto Frank, for which he received a SAG Award as well as Emmy, Golden Globe and Critics Choice nominations as Outstanding Lead Actor in a miniseries or feature film.

In 1982, Kingsley won the Academy Award for Best Actor for his performance in Sir Richard Attenborough's *Gandhi* followed by a BAFTA Film Award for Best Actor and Best Newcomer. Kingsley then earned the London Evening Standard Award for Best Actor for his performance in Harold Pinter's *Portrayal*. Sir Ben's other film credits include Steven Spielberg's harrowing holocaust drama *Schindler's List*, for which he won the London Evening Standard Award and a BAFTA Film nomination; *Bugsy* for which he received an Oscar nomination as Best Supporting Actor; Trevor Nunn's *Twelfth Night*; Roman Polanski's *Oliver Twist*; Bernardo Bertolucci's *Triumph of Love*; Stephen Zaillian's *Searching for Bobby Fischer*; James Dearden's *Pascali's Island*; Tony Palmer's *Testimony*; Roman Polanski's *Death and the Maiden*; Ivan Reitman's *Dave*; and the narrator in Steven Spielberg's *A.I.*

Kingsley's upcoming projects include *The Love Guru* with Mike Myers and Jessica Alba; *War, Inc.* with John Cusack; the animated epic *The Ten Commandments*; *Transsiberian* with Woody Harrelson; *Number 13* with Ewan MacGregor; the Coen Brothers' *Gambit*; and Martin Scorsese's *Shutter Island*.

## ***Josh Peck (Luke Shapiro)***

Raised in Manhattan, Josh Peck has been doing stand-up comedy since the age of eight, and began his acting career at the age of 14 with a role in the independent film *The Newcomers* with Kate Bosworth. After he became a regular on *The Amanda Show* with Amanda Bynes, Josh and friend Drake Bell were asked to star in their own family show, *Drake and Josh*, one of Nickelodeon's most popular shows. His other credits include the films *Mean Creek*, *Special*, and as the voice of Eddie in the animated hits *Ice Age* and *Ice Age 2: The Meltdown*.

In addition to continuing production on *Drake and Josh*, Peck will appear in the upcoming feature films *Drake and Josh in New York!*, *American Primitive* with Stacey Dash, *Drillbit Taylor* with Owen Wilson, and *Safety Glass* with Hillary Duff and *The Wackness* co-star Olivia Thirlby.

### ***Olivia Thirlby (Stephanie)***

Olivia resides in New York City, where she was born and raised. She has trained extensively in classical Shakespearian acting in New York at the American Globe Theatre, and in London at the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art. In 2006, Olivia was seen in the critically acclaimed film, *United 93*, directed by Paul Greengrass. Olivia also starred in David Gordon Green's *Snow Angels*, opposite Sam Rockwell and Kate Beckinsale, which premiered in competition at the 2007 Sundance Film Festival.

Olivia's next projects Vincent Perez' *The Secret (Si j'étais toi)*, a film produced by Luc Besson, in which she stars opposite David Duchovny and Lili Taylor; Scott McGehee and David Siegel's *Uncertainty*; and Kenneth Lonergan's *Margaret* with Anna Paquin and Matt Damon. Olivia also co-stars in the current *Juno*, directed by Jason Reitman, with Ellen Page. She is set to co-star with Page again in the upcoming *Jack and Diane*, and with *The Wackness* co-star Josh Peck in *Safety Glass*, directed by Jonathan Glatzer. Olivia was named one of 2006's New Faces of Independent Film by *Filmmaker* magazine.

### ***Talia Balsam (Mrs. Shapiro)***

Talia Balsam has appeared in numerous films including *All the King's Men* with Sean Penn, directed by Steve Zaillian; New Regency/Fox's *Little Manhattan*; and the independent feature *Line of Fire*. Other films include *Killing Emmett Young* with Tim Roth and Gabriel Byrne, which premiered in the first Tribeca Film Festival; *In the Mood* with Patrick Dempsey; *Trust Me*; *Valerie Flake*; *Cold Blooded*; *Camp Stories*; *Mass Appeal*; and the cult horror film *Crawl Space* opposite Klaus Kinski. Talia was seen in the indie film *Cake Eaters*, directed by Mary Stuart Masterson, which premiered at the 2007 Tribeca Film Festival.

On television, Ms. Balsam currently appears on AMC's *Mad Men*, and had a recurring role on CBS' *Without A Trace*. Talia co-starred for one season on HBO's *K Street*, produced by Steven Soderbergh. She appeared in the pilot *Commander in Chief* with Geena Davis for ABC, and has guest starred in *Law and Order*, *Law and Order: Criminal Intent*, *The Larry Sanders Show* and *Mad About You*, among others.

Theater credits include the Broadway production of Neil Simon's *Jake's Women*, for which she received a Theater World Award; John Patrick Shanley's *Psychopathia Sexualis*; *Snakebit*, directed by Campbell Scott; *Vicious* (L.A. Weekly Award); New York Stage and Film's *Hand to Hand*; and *The Democracy Projects* for *Naked Angels*.

### ***David Wohl (Mr. Shapiro)***

Since his debut in the acclaimed *Sophie's Choice* in 1982, David Wohl's film credit includes memorable efforts like *Changing Lanes*, *Joe Gould's Secret*, *Saving Private*

*Ryan*, *Hot Shots part Deux*, *Presumed Innocent*, *War of the Roses*, *Brewster's Millions*, and *Revenge of the Nerds*. On television, he was a series regular on *Brooklyn Bridge*, *D.E.A.*, and *Once a Hero*, and in recent years has guest-starred on *The X-Files*, *Now and Again*, *The District* and *Law and Order*. His Broadway credits include *Fiddler on the Roof*, *Dinner At Eight* (Lincoln Center) and *The Man Who Had All the Luck* (Roundabout). Recent off-Broadway credits include *The Frugal Repast* (Abington theatre), *Sonia Flew* (Summer Play Festival), and *Don Juan* (Theatre for a New Audience).

### ***Famke Janssen (Mrs. Squires)***

The Dutch-born Ms. Janssen recently completed shooting Pierre Morel's suspense thriller *Taken*, opposite Liam Neeson, for 20<sup>th</sup> Century Fox; and the Jonathan Sanger-produced *100 Feet*, directed by Eric Red.

Recently, Janssen starred in *X-Men 3*, directed by Brett Ratner, as Jean Grey. She originated that role in *X-Men* and *X-2*, both directed by Bryan Singer, and her illustrious co-stars included Sir Ian McKellan, Hugh Jackman, Halle Berry, Patrick Stewart, James Marsden and Anna Paquin.

Last year, Janssen wrapped the independent films *Turn the River* and *The Ten*, which premiered at Sundance. She also appeared in the independent film *The Treatment* opposite Sir Ian Holm. In 2006, Janssen was awarded with the Golden Starfish Award for Career Achievement in Acting at the Hamptons Film Festival as well as the Susan B. Anthony "Failure is Impossible" Awards at the High Falls Film Festival. She recently reprised her role on the FX original drama series *Nip/Tuck*, after starring as a "life coach" to Joely Richardson in the show's blockbuster first season. Janssen received a Movieline Breakthrough Award for her star turn on the show, and the provocative drama received outstanding critical acclaim as well as AFI Award and Golden Globe nominations.

Janssen's other film credits include *Hide and Seek*, *Eulogy*, *I Spy*, *Don't Say a Word*, *Made*, and *Love and Sex* which premiered at the Sundance Film Festival in 2000. Previous credits include William Malon's *House on Haunted Hill*, *The Faculty*, *Rounders*, Woody Allen's *Celebrity*, *Deep Rising*, *The Gingerbread Man*, *Monument Avenue*, *City of Industry*, and as Xenia Onatopp in the James Bond thriller *GoldenEye*.

### ***Mary-Kate Olsen (Union)***

As an actress, entrepreneur and fashion icon, Mary-Kate Olsen has already established herself as one of the fashion and entertainment industries' most influential young women. Mary-Kate is just finished a season on Showtime's critically acclaimed dark comedy *Weeds*, playing Tara, a devoted Christian girl who falls in with a family of drug-dealing suburbanites.

Last year, Mary-Kate co-created the clothing collection The Row with her sister Ashley. She continues to design for the high-end apparel brand. Named after London's Savile Row, which began its three-century history tailoring fine suits for English gentry and statesmen, The Row has, over its first year, already earned a reputation among a sophisticated female clientele.

Mary-Kate Olsen made her TV debut at age nine months, sharing the role of Michelle Tanner on the ABC hit TV series *Full House* with twin sister Ashley. The two quickly established themselves as a dominant force in children's entertainment with the addition of numerous other television projects, home videos, feature films, books and musical albums, achieving unmatched results in each. Also serving as executive producer of many filmed projects and soundtrack albums, Mary-Kate aspires to produce and direct other positive, family-friendly entertainment that may or may not feature her acting talents. Her feature film credits include *Factory Girl*, *New York Minute*, and *Charlie's Angels Full Throttle*. Mary-Kate currently resides in Los Angeles.

### ***Method Man (Percy)***

A veteran of the legendary hip-hop recording outfit Wu-Tang Clan, Method Man has successfully established himself as one of the most charismatic recording artists to cross over into mainstream film and television. After smaller roles in the feature films *187*, *Cop Land* and *Belly*, Method Man got attention for a recurring role on HBO's hit series *Oz*, then co-starred with fellow Wu-Tang Clan artist Redman in the cult comedy *How High*. This was followed by appearances in *Garden State*, *Soul Plane* and *Venom*, and guest starring gigs on television shows such as *Third Watch*, *Boston Public*, *The Twilight Zone*, *CSI*, and a recurring role on the HBO series *The Wire*. His musical collaborations with the industry's most esteemed recording artists continue to appear routinely on film and television soundtracks.

# About the Filmmakers

## ***Jonathan Levine (Writer / Director)***

Born and raised in New York City, Levine has been making films since he was 12 years old. Following his graduation from Brown University's Art/Semiotics program, he worked in New York as personal assistant to renowned writer/director Paul Schrader.

In 2002, Jonathan moved to Los Angeles to attend the American Film Institute Conservatory as a director. Jonathan's thesis film, SHARDS, about a hip hop DJ's attempt to kick his crystal meth habit, screened at film festivals around the world, and won the Best Short Film award at the American Black Film Festival. HBO acquired the rights to distribute the film, and it has aired on the network since 2005. As recognition for his work on SHARDS, AFI awarded Jonathan their prestigious Richard P. Rogers Spirit of Excellence Award.

Jonathan's first feature, the slasher film ALL THE BOYS LOVE MANDY LANE, premiered at the Toronto International Film Festival in 2006, and was acquired for distribution by Senator Entertainment. It will be released in early 2008 nationwide.

## ***Felipe Marino (Producer)***

Raised in Bogota, Colombia, Felipe Marino started his entertainment business career working in literary Affairs at Paramount Pictures in New York. In 2003, he left Paramount to join Fox Searchlight, where he worked for company president Peter Rice. Marino previously also held positions with Artisan Entertainment and Scott Rudin Productions. In 2005, he founded Occupant Films with Joe Neurauter and Keith Calder, which has produced the feature films *All the Boys Love Mandy Lane*, *The Key Man* and *The Wackness*. Marino was awarded the Desi Arnaz Award for Best Motion Picture Treatment at the Latino International Film Festival. He received an M.F.A. from the highly regarded Peter Stark Producing Program at the University of Southern California as well as a B.A. from Columbia University.

## ***Joe Neurauter (Producer)***

Joe Neurauter started his career as a journalist writing stories for Austria's most prestigious news magazines *Trend* and *Profil* at the age of 20. In 1999, he founded and built a successful creative advertising company, with offices in Italy and Austria. In 2002, he came to the US to pursue his passion in film, where he attended the Peter Stark Producing Program. During his studies, he gained experience in development at New Line Cinema and at producer Mark Gordon's company. In 2005, he founded Occupant Films with Felipe Marino and Keith Calder, which has produced the feature films *All the Boys Love Mandy Lane*, *The Key Man* and *The Wackness*. Mr. Neurauter holds an M.A. in journalism and media economics from the University of Vienna, Austria and an M.F.A. from the Peter Stark Program at the University of Southern California.

### ***Keith Calder (Producer)***

Keith Calder is an alumnus of the prestigious Peter Stark Film Producing MFA Program at the University of Southern California, where he now serves as adjunct faculty. He also received a BA in business administration and entrepreneurship from Carnegie Mellon University, where he was honored with the Entrepreneurial Finance Award. Calder has several years of experience in the international film industry, having worked for producer Jeremy Thomas' London-based Recorded Picture Company (*Sexy Beast*, *The Last Emperor*), Spyglass Entertainment (*Bruce Almighty*, *Seabiscuit*) and the Weitz Brothers' Depth of Field

Productions (*American Pie*, *About a Boy*, *In Good Company*). In 2005, he founded Occupant Films with Felipe Marino and Joe Neurauder, which has produced the feature films *All the Boys Love Mandy Lane*, *The Key Man* and *The Wackness*. Calder is also the founder of Occupant Films' sister company Snoot Entertainment.

### ***Occupant Films***

Occupant Films is an independent production and financing company established in August 2005 by producers Keith Calder, Felipe Marino and Joe Neurauder. Occupant's first film *All the Boys Love Mandy Lane*, premiered at the 2006 Toronto Film Festival, where it was picked up by The Weinstein Company. Senator Entertainment will release the film domestically in Spring, 2008. The company is currently in post-production on *The Key Man*, written and directed by Peter Himmelstein, starring Hugo Weaving, Brian Cox, Jack Davenport and Judy Greer. Occupant is also set to produce Himmelstein's comedy *Peep World*, a script he penned which was selected for the Sundance Directors Lab in 2004, and has optioned the rights to the book *The Food Chain* by Geoff Nicholson, which has been adapted by Captain Mauzner and James Townsend.

### ***Petra Korner (Director of Photography)***

Cinematographer Petra Korner has been working with director Jonathan Levine since his first short film, *Shards*, and also lensed Levine's documentary short *Love Bytes*. Her other short film credits include the horror *Mommy's House* starring Veronica Cartwright and Alonso Mayo's *Stefan's Green Card*. Her next feature assignment is the Gregor Jordan-helmed *The Informers*, based on the novel by Bret Easton Ellis and starring Winona Ryder, Brandon Routh and Billy Bob Thornton.

### ***Josh Noyes (Editor)***

Josh Noyes has also been working with filmmaker Jonathan Levine for several years, having served as editor on the short film projects *Shards* and *Love Bytes* as well as Levine's feature film debut *All the Boys Love Mandy Lane*. Noyes was also the assistant editor on the features *Wake with Martin Landau* and *My Tiny Universe* with John Heard. He was also the editor on Peter Himmelstein's feature film debut, *The Key Man*, produced in 2007 by Occupant Films.



***Annie Spitz (Production Designer)***

Annie Spitz served in the art department for several short films before receiving her first feature credit as set dresser for the acclaimed independent feature *Man in the Chair* with Christopher Plummer. She also served as production designer for the upcoming thriller *Devil You Know* starring Lena Olin, and was set decorator on the films *Inside* and *The Key Man*.