



PRESENTS

WENDY AND LUCY



OPENS AT FILM FORUM IN NEW YORK – DECEMBER 10, 2008
LOS ANGELES- DECEMBER 12, 2008
NATIONAL EXPANSION JANUARY 23, 2009

Running Time: 80 minutes

Rating: Rated R by the MPAA for language

World Premiere: Cannes Film Festival, Un Certain Regard 2008

Press Materials: www.wendyandlucy.com

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- SYNOPSIS

Proving why she is one of the most highly-regarded auteurs of current cinema, Kelly Reichardt's (*OLD JOY*) subtle storytelling technique uses a formal minimalist style to weave together a unique emotional and political road film.

Wendy Carroll (Michelle Williams) is driving to Ketchikan, Alaska, in hopes of a summer of lucrative work at the Northwestern Fish cannery, and the start of a new life with her dog, Lucy. When her car breaks down in Oregon, however, the thin fabric of her financial situation comes apart, and she confronts a series of increasingly dire economic decisions, with far-ranging repercussions for herself and Lucy. *WENDY AND LUCY* addresses issues of sympathy and generosity at the edges of American life, revealing the limits and depths of people's duty to each other in tough times.

Based on the short story "TRAIN CHOIR" by Jon Raymond.

- QUESTIONS WITH DIRECTOR KELLY REICHARDT

How did you and your writer Jon Raymond work together on this project?

Two elements were there from the beginning: the dog and economics. We knew we had to have Lucy in the movie, since she came along anyway, and we felt like the times were right for a real financially driven plot-line. Jon wrote a few drafts of the story, with editing and commentary from me. And then I wrote the screenplay, making additions and subtractions, with editing and commentary from Jon. Once shooting began, the actors also made their own contributions to the dialogue and characterization.

What is it about Jon Raymond's writing that attracts you as a filmmaker?

There is something elliptical about his writing. His stories are very open and leave a lot of room for the reader to bring their own experiences to the subject. This translates well to my approach to filmmaking. He also is very good at setting people into their environments so that whatever is going on with them internally is linked to where they happen to be. The landscape becomes more than just a place, but something like a character in the story. Which fits with my own long-term interest in representing the American landscape.

Were there any restrictions, which worked out well for the film?

Wendy's limited monetary situation was certainly relatable as far as the production went. It's just a very fragile situation making a film on such limited funds, there's not a lot of room for mistakes. Anything that goes wrong, if any bad decisions are made or any unplanned events occurs, then everything is in jeopardy. And that's true for Wendy as well – the stakes are different for her but the whole fabric of her plan can easily fall away. It's either a really good idea to head off to Alaska, or to make a film, on a miniscule budget or a very stupid idea – in both cases it's a gamble.

How did you decide on working with Michelle Williams as Wendy?

It was easy to decide to work with her, I knew I needed someone who could be very still without coming across as emotionally dead or absent. In all her roles, Michelle seems to have a lot going on internally. She just has that thing where something is always coming through in her eyes.

The politics of the film say a lot about how people on the fringe of society are treated by the rest of us. Through the film, are you trying to say something in particular about today's real-life socio-political situation?

There's a Fassbinder quote that Todd Haynes likes to trot out sometimes. It's something about cinema "not being able to give you the revolution." Which is to say, film can show you the conditions that might make politics necessary, but it can't actually accomplish politics itself.

- READING WENDY AND LUCY

The following is an email sent to producer Neil Kopp from his father, David, following his reading the script for Wendy and Lucy:

Neil, how are you today? I enjoyed reading "Wendy and Lucy" and thought I'd send off some random-ish thoughts. Read when you have some time.

I like films that show affection (at least some) for all their characters. I imagine that if Kelly delivers this one in her quiet style, she'll be adding powerful dramatic irony to the sadness, alienation and loss that permeate the story. The script could be read simply as a story illustration of that iconic American sound, the train whistle. The soundtrack of mourning. The siren of passing hope in the night that better things wait somewhere, anywhere that is not here, another place we could just maybe start again.

I keep wondering about casting the character of Wendy. Obviously, so much hinges on that. She needs to be ineffectual enough to have gotten where she is but she needs to be sympathetic and caring and ordinary enough that she is everywoman. And appealing enough that I want to watch every twitch of tragedy play out on her face and in her posture and words, frame to frame. As I read, she's all that to me. I like the levels at which the story could be experienced. The dog Lucy could be every political candidate who ever came through smiling and promising. Or every friend Wendy ever had, or every boyfriend. Or every desire and dream that this world has a place and purpose for her.

The story feels condemning to me. I --and all salaried, mortgaged, voting citizens-- am John, the guard, who tells her politely, "You can't sleep here. You can't park here. You have to get off the property." I hope I have his humanity. I know that I have his comfortable way out: a wife, and a ride away from the parking lot. I hope that I am not neo-con Andy, who says "The rules apply to everyone equally." But sometimes I say that too and mean it.

"Wendy and Lucy" reminds me at points of Stephen Crane's well-known short story, "The Open Boat." In that instance, the forces of nature are utterly indifferent to the sailors' fate. For them, the romance of a benevolent universe proves to be a lie. In this instance, it's the forces of society and technology that are indifferent. There's not really a plot against Wendy. She's just overlooked, under resourced, a casualty that can be ignored without cost because nothing about her existence or predicament has a consequence to the people of Lombard Avenue greater than a procedural inconvenience (pay that fine, tow that car). All her attempts to influence her odds through "mind control" are useless.

I wonder where Wendy will end up and who she will become. Not as another drunk under the trestle or mental case rummaging through the park at night I hope.

I admit that I look for hope. Okay, partly so I don't have to feel the shared social burden of Wendy's life. But also for my own story. Unless she has changed somehow, the tracks can only take her to another Lombard Avenue where she'll have less than she did on this one. I don't want that for her story or mine.

So--still hunting for hope--does she change? I'm not sure. I'll be interested to see how the film experience plays it. I could, for example, feel hope in Wendy's choice at the fence with Lucy. It could be read as a choice to care for the weak when it costs, even when others around her don't. It could also be read as a hard but strong choice to abandon her pointless trust in technology, her "family" back in Indiana, and even her magical thinking that Lucy could ultimately give her what she needs. It could be read as her first actually independent act.

Neil, there's every chance that my take on this story is unbelievably off the mark or limited. But that would only make for more good conversation when we get together. Call when you can.
Dad

August 19, 2007

- CAST BIOS

MICHELLE WILLIAMS

Wendy

Michelle Williams starred opposite Heath Ledger in Ang Lee's "Brokeback Mountain." Her performance earned her an Academy Award nomination. She has appeared in Thomas McCarthy's "The Station Agent" and Todd Haynes' "I'm Not There." She is presently shooting with Leonardo diCaprio in Martin Scorsese's "Shutter Island."

WILL PATTON

Mechanic

Will Patton appeared with Angelina Jolie in Michael Winterbottom's "A Mighty Heart." He will soon be seen on screen in Tim Disney's "American Violet," Katherine Brooks' "Waking Madison" and Jodie Markell's "The Loss of a Teardrop Diamond." On stage, Patton played the lead in Sam Shepard's "A Lie Of The Mind." His performances in Richard Foreman's "What Did He See" and Shepard's "Fool For Love" earned him two Obie Awards as Best Actor.

JOHN ROBINSON

Andy

John Robinson made his acting debut in Gus Van Sant's "Elephant." He went on to star in Catherine Hardwicke's "Lords Of Dogtown," and play a supporting role in Michael Bay's "Transformers." He currently resides in Los Angeles, actively pursuing his own feature writing and directing career.

WILL OLDHAM

Icky

Will Oldham began his career playing a teen preacher in John Sayles' "Matewan." He has appeared in Phil Morrison's "Junebug" and Karl Shefelman's "Elysian Fields." As a prolific and influential musician, Oldham has performed under numerous names: Palace, Palace Music, Palace Brothers, Palace Songs, Bonnie Prince Billy and others. Artists who have covered his songs include Johnny Cash and Björk.

WALTER DALTON

Security Guard

Walter Dalton teamed up with his two brothers in 1960 to form The Dalton Boys, a folk group. In 1970, he was hired as staff writer and regular actor on "The Tim Conway Variety Hour." He has also written for the Smothers Brothers and Donny and Marie Osmond. Dalton was Executive Story Editor on the television shows, "Barney Miller," "Laverne & Shirley," "James at 15" and "It's a Living." On screen, Dalton appeared in Richard Donner's "Assassins" and Dwight H. Little's "Free Willy 2".

- FILMMAKER BIOS

KELLY REICHARDT

CO-WRITER/DIRECTOR/EDITOR

American landscapes and narratives of the road are themes that run throughout Reichardt's work. Reichardt's film "Old Joy," winner of a Tiger Award at the 2007 Rotterdam Festival, is an exploration of contemporary liberal masculinity in the Great Northwest. Reichardt's first feature, "River of Grass," a sun-drenched film noir shot in her hometown in Dade County, Florida, was cited as "one of the best films of 1995" by The Village Voice and Film Comment. Her 1999 short, "Ode," is a super-8 reinterpretation of the Herman Raucher novel "Ode to Billy Joe" and features an original soundtrack by Will Oldham. Reichardt's other super-8 shorts include "Then a Year" (2002) and "Travis" (2004). Kelly Reichardt is currently a Visiting Assistant Professor at Bard College.

JON RAYMOND

CO-WRITER

Jon Raymond is the author of the story "Train Choir," from which "Wendy and Lucy" was adapted and "Old Joy," the story on which Kelly Reichardt's film of the same name was based. His novel, "The Half-Life," was published in 2004. He is an editor of Plazm magazine, and his writing appears in Artforum, Bookforum and other publications.

NEIL KOPP

PRODUCER

Neil Kopp is a film producer based in Portland, Oregon, where he was born and raised. Kopp was the recipient of the 2008 Independent Spirit Awards' Producers Award. Kopp is the producer of Kelly Reichardt's two Portland based features "Old Joy" and "Wendy and Lucy" and Gus Van Sant's "Paranoid Park." He has also produced numerous music videos for several prominent Portland indie rock bands, including The Shins, The Decemberists, The Thermals and The Dandy Warhols.

ANISH SAVJANI

PRODUCER

Anish Savjani has produced six films since he formed his company filmscience in 2005. Savjani previously honed his production skills as an assistant to producer Scott Rudin and worked on numerous projects while in the Directors Guild of America's Assistant Director Program. With filmscience, Savjani is always exploring new ways of developing and producing personal films with distinct points of view. His latest project is Joe Swanberg's new feature "Nights and Weekends."

LARRY FESSENDEN

PRODUCER AND MAN IN PARK

Larry Fessenden produced Kelly Reichardt's first feature "River of Grass," Ti West's "House of the Devil," JT Petty's "Blood Red Earth," Ilya Chaiken's "Liberty Kid," Douglas Buck's "Sisters," Jeff Winner's "Satellite" and David Gebroe's "Zombie Honeymoon." Fessenden is the writer, director and editor of the award-winning art-horror movies "Habit," "No Telling" and "Wendigo." He has operated the production company Glass Eye Pix since 1985, with the mission of supporting individual voices in the arts.