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AMERICAN
ASSASSIN

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ASSASSIN

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CBS Films and Lionsgate present A Lorenzo di Bonaventura/Nick Wechsler production. A film by Michael Cuesta. Directed by Michael Cuesta, the screenplay is by Stephen Schiff and Michael Finch and Edward Zwick & Marshall Herskovitz, and is based on a novel by Vince Flynn. The film stars Dylan O'Brien, Academy Award®-nominee Michael Keaton, Sanaa Lathan, Shiva Negar, David Suchet, Navid Negahban, Scott Adkins, and Taylor Kitsch. "American Assassin" is produced by Lorenzo di Bonaventura and Nick Wechsler, and executive produced by Daniel M. Stillman. The Director of Photography is Enrique Chediak, ASC. Production design by Andrew Laws. Film Editor is Conrad Buff, ACE. Costume Designer is Anna Sheppard. Music by Steven Price. And Casting by Elaine Grainger.

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AMERICAN ASSASSIN

ABOUT THE FILM

"Never, ever let it get personal."
– Stan Hurley, CIA Trainer

A one-of-a-kind American assassin possessed of savage skills and a ferocious drive for payback is born in this non-stop action-espionage thriller rooted in the raw reality of today's hard-to-detect enemies invisible black ops, high-level surveillance, portable nukes and murky agendas. This is the story of a 21st Century counterterrorist spymaster-in-the-making who, in a world of new rules, breaks all the old molds. But much as we're in the midst of a new era of bold individualists, this is also a story of far-flung global agents discovering what truly matters: working together for the greater good.

Based on the mega-bestselling book series by the late Vince Flynn, "American Assassin" introduces film audiences to one of contemporary fiction's most popular heroes working in the shadows: CIA super-agent Mitch Rapp. When Rapp's promising future is torn apart by a shocking burst of violence, it ignites his career as a clandestine warrior on the frontlines of the Age of Terror. Now he must discover how to turn his blistering rage into fuel for hunting those who would destroy others' dreams – in a world where clarity isn't easy to come by.

"American Assassin" traces Rapp's origins from heartbroken fiancé to cunning renegade to off-the-charts CIA trainee to his first must-not-fail mission on the trail of 15 kilos of stolen plutonium. The film brings together rising star Dylan O'Brien – who creates the no-holds-barred Rapp for the first time on screen – with Oscar® nominee and Golden Globe® winner Michael Keaton as legendary CIA trainer Stan Hurley. Seeking to right his own devastating mistakes, Hurley prepares Rapp to join Orion, the most deeply concealed network within the CIA. But even as Hurley teaches Rapp that spy work can't be personal, Rapp makes personal connections that help him penetrate a web of mercenaries, arms dealers, extremists and an angry ex-agent not unlike himself, all colluding to spark a new World War.

The story takes off with propulsive speed, with one white-knuckle action sequence topping the last, brought to life by a team of filmmakers who know the territory: director Michael Cuesta (“Homeland”), screenwriters Stephen Schiff (“The Americans”), Michael Finch (“The November Man”), Edward Zwick & Marshall Herskovitz (“The Last Samurai,” “Jack Reacher: Never Go Back”) and producers Lorenzo di Bonaventura (“Salt,” “RED”) and Nick Wechsler (“The Road,” “Under The Skin”). Cuesta creates the film as a rough but riveting transcontinental journey that careens from Washington D.C. to Istanbul to Rome to the deck of a U.S. aircraft carrier...and right into the moral gray zones of our world in 2017.

Says Cuesta: “This is the origin story of Mitch Rapp – as he transforms from a man seeking personal vengeance to a professional who operates with a fierce sense of justice. I’m excited to have fans of the books and everyone else get to see Dylan O’Brien become Mitch. Dylan has a very contemporary appeal as an action star for this millennial, and I think audiences are going to love his interaction with Michael Keaton who nails Hurley’s tough-guy persona like a 21st Century John Wayne.”

Per Vince Flynn’s widow, Lysa, seeing her husband’s work come at last to the screen was deeply moving. She says of the experience: “After viewing the movie, I could not be more excited and at peace inside knowing that Vince is so proud and humbled. The integrity of the characters was successfully transferred from the page to the big screen.”

VINCE FLYNN BREAKS OUT ON FILM

What Tom Clancy was to the 1980s espionage thriller – plying the raw material of the Cold War and the darkest recesses of American spy operations to craft fiercely entertaining stories – Vince Flynn became to a new millennial. As the world shifted into a dizzying, post-9/11 maze of menaces that were nearly impossible to see coming, Flynn shifted the spy novel with it. He steered away from an era of cool, East-West-divide techno-thrillers and into a brave new world of spontaneous, red-hot threats that can come from anywhere. He saw early on that the global rise of terrorism against civilians meant the CIA would need a fresh kind of recruit. With terrorists emerging from diverse backgrounds and regions, intelligence agencies would put a new premium on spies capable of climbing inside the pitch-black minds of those motivated not so much by political aims as to light up the world with their fury.

That’s why he created the addictive Mitch Rapp series, focused on the unrelenting skills of one man – a man who uses his anger, idealism, pride and deeply personal venom to respond in kind to the vengeful, morally rootless threats that increasingly define these times.

In 1999, Flynn first introduced Rapp. He was already a veteran CIA asset reserved for the most precarious missions in Transfer of Power, in which a terrorist attack turns the entire White House into a hostage situation, with Rapp sent in as the last-ditch commando to save the very same U.S. government that rankles him. It was an instant hit, praised by *Publisher’s Weekly* as offering “endless intrigue.” The book then set off a rapid-fire series encompassing 13 Mitch Rapp novels written by Flynn – as well as more subsequently written by Kyle Mills, chosen to keep the series going after Flynn’s untimely death.

Flynn quickly racked up endorsements from real-life intelligence community members stunned by the pinpoint accuracy of his novels. He wrote with an insider's knowledge of how government agencies function, how covert operations go down, as well as how Washington's political in-fighting and the machinations of global powers can generate a thick fog around the battle to keep Americans secure.

The Rapp series garnered fans of all stripes, from inside the beltway to foreign heads of state – from Bill Clinton to George W. Bush to King Abdullah II of Jordan – and especially among American troops serving abroad, where barrack bunks are said to be littered with his paperbacks. Every single one of his books hit the *New York Times* bestseller list, with more than 12.5 million copies of the Rapp novels sold in the U.S., as well as traveling internationally to 20 different markets.

In 2010, Flynn responded to fans' fervent calls to hit the rewind button – and at last he gave readers the story they wanted: Rapp's origins, exploring how a lonely, emotionally-wounded kid fresh out of college became every terrorist's worst nightmare. This was *American Assassin*. It would become one of his most critically praised and beloved books, as it laid out Rapp's tormented past – the love he lost, the grief that spurred him and his recruitment into a top-secret program to train agents to work outside conventional rules. This time *Publisher's Weekly* said: "Flynn delivers his usual high-octane international thriller, but, in giving us Rapp's back story, he's infused it with more depth and heart."

Tragically, in 2013, Vince Flynn passed away at the age of 46 of prostate cancer. But before his death, he made a deal with di Bonaventura and Wechsler to bring Rapp's post-millennial brand of spycraft to today's movie audiences. Flynn continued writing throughout his fight against cancer, maintaining his dedication to Mitch Rapp's millions of loyal fans. Likewise, after Flynn's passing, di Bonaventura and Wechsler remained as committed as ever to getting Rapp's story to the screen. It was clear that "American Assassin" had to be the first story out of the blocks.

"'American Assassin' is the prequel to the entire series, so this was a great way for us to bring Mitch's origin story to movie audiences, whether fans of the book or newcomers alike," says di Bonaventura. "By starting with Mitch as a young man in his 20s rather than with the savvy, war-torn veteran he becomes you get to see how his gravitas developed."

Di Bonaventura continues: "This is at heart a story about how someone becomes a hero. That's where Vince Flynn really shined. He wanted to take readers not only into the physical world of today's intelligence agents, but also the emotional world of those men and women who are driven to protect the rest of us, to explore why some are so willing to go to any lengths of sacrifice even though no one may ever know what they've done to keep us safe. And that's what 'American Assassin' does."

The filmmakers brought aboard a crack team of writers led by Stephen Schiff, known for his work on television's multi-layered Soviet spy drama "The Americans," to translate the story to the screen. The decision was made to move Rapp's origins to the present-day to reflect Flynn's love for of-the-moment stories in a world that is changing second by second. The emphasis also switched to the new character of Ghost as the story's villain – a character who reflects just how blurry global terror can be now, coming from the least expected people and places, and who also serves as a kind of dark mirror for Rapp as he forges his persona. Other changes were made to maximize pace and visual excitement in a 2-hour span – but from day one the foundation was about staying true to the spirit of Flynn's creation.

Michael Keaton was drawn to a mix of elements that are very 2017 but with Flynn's unique POV on modern espionage. "The script made real changes from the book – but I felt it kept the core of what Vince was trying to say while complicating things morally and globally in a very intriguing way," he says.

For Nick Wechsler going fully contemporary was in sync with Flynn's work. "What appealed to me most about the entire Mitch Rapp series is that it's not about villains from the past. It's about the villains and chaos that we see in the world right now," he says. "I felt that could be very exciting on screen."

Wechsler continues: "Part of what people love about Mitch is that he is never afraid of getting at the truth, and that is equally true whether he is confronting terrorists, politicians or those deemed to be his superiors. He's just a no B.S. character. And because Mitch doesn't suffer fools on any side, he will evolve into a kind of secret Sheriff of the entire Western world, keeping the worst evil at bay."

Stephen Schiff sees "American Assassin" as a coming-of-age story of sorts: "At the beginning, Mitch is a boy really, not unlike people we all know – our friends, brothers, sons and daughters. He has unique skills and abilities but we don't learn of those until later. When tragedy strikes, he begins his journey to become a man. All of the characters he comes to meet help form him into who he will become, but he has his own path to follow, his own pain and passion and drive. Only he can create the Mitch Rapp that will be – the American Assassin."

To give the film that edgy, current immediacy and to line it wall-to-wall with pulse-pounding set pieces that hit the high bar of today's action epics, di Bonaventura and Wechsler went in search of a director as adept at probing drama as taut suspense. That's what led them to Michael Cuesta.

Cuesta was attracted to a story that is both global in nature and bucks the stereotypes to explore the drives and consequences of terror on a more personal level. He was also drawn to the story's mounting momentum and wanted that acceleration to be real and visceral for the audience without every becoming comic book or fantastical. "I love that there's a real sense of geopolitical movement as well as psychological movement in this story. My approach was to never overtly stylize the story – but rather to ground things in reality, as Flynn did in his books, even in the most intense action," the director elaborates.

For all of the quite literally high-explosive sequences, Cuesta wanted to indeed make things personal for the audience. "I love edge-of-your-seat thrillers but I believe action has to be earned," he explains. "An irony is that even the most extreme, cutting-edge action can feel boring if you don't care about the characters caught up in it. So that's why from the start we felt this film had to center on Mitch's appeal as a person. He's a guy you'd follow anywhere, into the most hazardous situations."

The production's commitment to Vince Flynn's perspective made a big impression on Flynn's widow, Lysa Flynn, who became an early supporter of the film. She believes Vince would have gotten a huge kick out of seeing Rapp – a character who hit home so hard that some fans even believed Vince himself was Mitch in disguise – become flesh-and-blood from the page.

"I truly wish Vince could have been here to see this happen," says Lysa Flynn. "If he were here, I know he would have been on set talking to everyone behind the camera as much as in front of it. He really appreciated a strong work ethic, and I saw people at every level working so hard to make this movie. It's been awesome to see."

When she visited the set, Lysa was moved not only by the work ethic but also by the insight she could feel the actors bringing to her husband's characters. "It was really important to me that the characters stay true to what mattered to Vince. My feeling was that it was OK to change the story in all kinds of ways, but doing justice to his characters is what I cared about most. And I really felt that was there. When I met the actors playing the characters, I was even more convinced," she says.

She notes that the production's emphasis on keeping the story contemporary to 2017 fits with Flynn's penchant for always staying one step ahead of the game. "Vince always did lots of research and that was one of his favorite parts of writing. He loved learning," she explains. "I think Vince had sort of a 6th sense when it came to looking into the future, and that's part of what makes his books so relevant."

RECRUITING DYLAN O'BRIEN

Mitch Rapp is not your mother's spymaster. Forged out of tragedy in the Age of Terror, he is cut from a different kind of cloth than the more urbane, deferentially dutiful agents of yore. He is certainly smart, intrepid and efficiently deadly, but he's also an impatient, rough-edged, highly individualistic freelancer in a world of career politicians. He is a man who, from the start, is short on trust, skeptical of unearned authority and refuses to let the bureaucratic clogs of the system get in his way.

The Rapp of "American Assassin" is also a Mitch Rapp at the very start of his formation. He's still very young for such a brutal profession, still green at handling combustible situations and hungrily learning all that will combine inside him to make him so successful at his lethal craft. That's why the filmmakers went in search of a youthful actor also at the beginning of his career, someone on the verge of becoming the deeper, darker adult who will ultimately be Mitch Rapp at the peak of his powers.

They found what they were seeking in 25 year-old Dylan O'Brien, who has never tackled a role like this one before. It was O'Brien's turn as the maze-escaping Thomas in the hit dystopian series "The Maze Runner" that convinced them he had the blend of gutsiness and self-driven confidence to embody Rapp as a haunted young man.

Di Bonaventura had recently worked with the rising actor in "Deepwater Horizon" and intuited a heroic streak. "The audience has to invest in Mitch emotionally and you can do that with Dylan," says the producer. "He came at the role with humility but he also understood that Mitch is a tough son of a bitch who rises to a different level of engagement with the enemy. In some scenes, you see a Mitch who is still not quite all put together, but the second somebody pushes up against him, he pushes back really hard. Then you think, 'oh, there's Mitch Rapp starting to emerge.' And that's exactly right."

Adds Nick Wechsler: "Dylan is as American as apple pie with the feel and appeal of an everyman. We soon found out he's also a very strong, fluid athlete who was able to deliver on the action far beyond our expectations. Mitch is dealing with a lot of emotional trauma, which Dylan was able to tap into in a very personal way. He not only had to focus and train to get his body in shape but also his mind and he took all of it very seriously."

Vince Flynn's wife Lysa was intrigued by the choice. "It was obvious to me that Dylan was the perfect guy for the role," she comments. "He's very passionate. He's disciplined. He's smart, and I think he really does encompass everything that Vince intended that Mitch Rapp be."

For Michael Cuesta it was exciting to work with an actor who is not yet an established action star, just as Mitch Rapp is not yet established in the intelligence arena, and has to prove himself at every turn. “I think we got Dylan at a great age for this role, because he’s the same age as Mitch in Flynn’s origin story,” he says. “There is something about the idealism of youth that the camera always captures so that works well for a character who is facing his first epic rite of passage.”

O’Brien loved the idea of taking the audience on a journey into how a current-day intelligence operative is created via a blend of personal psychology, breakneck training and the sink-or-swim hazards of early missions. “What’s cool about “American Assassin” is that you get to see where Mitch Rapp started and you get to follow his personal path into this world of the CIA, driven by his own urge for vengeance that he has to learn to control,” says O’Brien. “When I started talking to guys who work for the CIA, I discovered that often they have similar kinds of stories, where some dark, harsh experience set them down the road of becoming an agent; and often that story still drives them to this day.”

He goes on: “There are a lot of spy movies out there, but rarely do any show how agents start out before they become savvy and I think it’s pretty interesting to watch a kid in his 20s experience an incredible tragedy and find this new path that transforms him.”

O’Brien notes that Mitch needs to find a way to reconcile what has happened to him with his future. “His whole world has been shattered and he knows nothing will ever be the same,” he says. “In the beginning, all he wants is to get back at the people who caused him so much pain. And he truly believes he can do better by operating alone with no one to hold him back. He has no interest in working for the government. Instead, the CIA seeks *him* out – and that’s when he realizes he has the chance to do much more than he ever imagined with their resources.”

The CIA quickly realizes that much as Mitch chafes against bureaucracy, he has something raw and unteachable they’re unlikely to find among their usual ranks of disciplined careerists. “I think Mitch interests the CIA because he has such a pure, single-minded passion for finding the person who killed his fiancée and he is also very unassuming,” elaborates O’Brien. “No one would look at Mitch and think this guy is capable of killing you with his bare hands, but that’s part of what makes him so deceptive and effective.”

Yet Rapp can’t fully succeed until he confronts the source of his motivation. He quickly discovers that no amount of avenging will ever fill the gaping hole his fiancée left behind – and that’s when his impetus to act broadens beyond easing his own pain. This especially intrigued O’Brien. “Mitch is confronting something deep and dark inside himself even as he’s undergoing his training,” he observes. “He’s realizing that killing someone isn’t going to heal him in the way that he hoped it might. So now he has to find a way to channel that anger which is never going away into more than just personal revenge. He begins to see that he can impact the world in a way that is not just about him. Truthfully, he can never fix what happened to him, but what he can do is serve his country and give everything he can to protect others.”

Just as Rapp needs to dive into the hardest of hardcore training to sharpen his skills so too did O’Brien. He worked intensively with legendary fight trainer Roger Yuan to meld martial arts, creative fight choreography and most of all supreme focus into Rapp’s arsenal. “Roger was truly my sensei and a great friend throughout the whole process of preparing for and making this film,” says O’Brien.

“For Roger, it was about more than getting me into great physical shape. It was as much about honing the mental side of things – and that became really important to the portrait of Mitch.”

The more he trained, the more O’Brien keyed into the meditative, self-exploratory side of the combative arts, which he himself found transformational. “Roger’s training actually played a huge role in informing the way I play Mitch, because Mitch learns to use a kind of Zen focus to counter the feral anger he carries with him. Roger and I didn’t just talk about pumping iron and fight moves. We talked just as much about how you can use the hardest parts of your life to make you stronger and better, and that taught me a lot in general and also a lot about Mitch.”

Cuesta notes that the filmmakers were going after a sleeker, leaner take on the action hero silhouette. “We definitely didn’t want to bulk Dylan up,” says the director. “We all agreed the look of a millennial action hero should be different from an 80s action hero – and we loved that Dylan’s look is more about speed, intensity and agility than how much he can bench. Dylan is almost like a panther in the film, focusing all his mental acuity on his prey, until he’s ready to pounce. Even in his physicality, Dylan shows the truth of who Mitch is and what’s going on with him internally.”

The icing on the cake for O’Brien was the chance to work alongside Michael Keaton who sunk his teeth into the role of badass CIA trainer Stan Hurley. O’Brien loved playing off the contrasts in their characters. “Hurley and Mitch have a really compelling relationship because they’re both such difficult guys,” muses O’Brien. “Neither one of them trusts easily but from the start what makes it work is that they respect one another. And I think Mitch genuinely wants to learn all he can from Hurley and prove himself to Hurley. He wants Hurley to see that there’s more to him than meets the eye.”

The two wind up changing one another. “Mitch is like a caged animal when he meets Hurley but Hurley teaches him there are times when you have to keep your emotions in check. At the same time, Mitch reminds Hurley that sometimes emotion is what lies behind loyalty. You need that blend of detachment and passion to be able to survive as a successful assassin,” O’Brien describes. “It was inspiring to explore all this with Michael. He goes about this business in his own way and the passion and energy he still brings to it every day just stunned me. I’m 25 and I feel more jaded than he is!”

MICHAEL KEATON GOES DARK

Just as important as finding the film’s Mitch Rapp was casting Stan Hurley, who runs a secret training camp for U.S. agents known cryptically as “The Farmhouse” – a camp so covert new recruits are brought to it blindfolded. Having seen it all and then some, including a devastating betrayal, Hurley is extremely skeptical about taking the clearly undisciplined Rapp under his wing – but he cannot deny that Rapp has a passion and unwavering commitment that is urgently needed on today’s frontlines.

Taking the role of a man considered to be one of the most feared officers in the CIA is Michael Keaton. Keaton is already renown for his versatility – in roles that range from “Nightshift,” “Mr. Mom” and “Batman” to the Oscar®-winning films “Birdman” and “Spotlight” to the recent superhero hit “Spider-Man: Homecoming” – but Hurley is the most steely hard-ass he’s yet portrayed.

The filmmakers were thrilled to see Keaton take on a tough-talking, cynical, physically volatile character who goes through a gauntlet in the course of the film. “Michael has created so many notable and acclaimed performances, but this is a type of role we’ve not really seen Michael do before so it’s exciting,” says Nick Wechsler. “We wanted Hurley to be much more than a rubber stamp of an action guy. We wanted him to have great depth of character, and that’s why Keaton was such a great choice.”

Keaton’s comic abilities also struck Lysa Flynn as a lock with Vince Flynn’s style. “I felt it was important for Hurley to be somebody with a pretty good sense of humor and a little rough around the edges, so it was great to see Michael in this role. It had to be someone who is able to pull off a smart-ass kind of character with a comical undertone, because that was Vince, too,” she says. “Vince was funny and very witty and he wanted his characters to be likable and real.”

This certainly isn’t Keaton’s first foray into action, but he says what drew him to “American Assassin” was Michael Cuesta’s singular approach. “Michael is really intelligent and what I admired most is that he wanted to create a spy thriller that’s more nuanced and reflective of the world as we know it today. I didn’t want to do something that would be another cliché spy movie with the usual kinds of bad guys and Michael did some smart things to avoid stereotypes and not over-simplify really complicated things. The film reflects just how complicated the world is right now,” says Keaton.

Digging into Stan Hurley’s hard-bitten reality was both a mental and physical process. It started with research into his character, talking at length with Cuesta and working with the film’s ex-CIA consultants. “I started by asking myself who this guy was outside of the CIA – what makes him tick just as a person,” says Keaton. “I see him as someone who is very smart, who is definitely a badass but who believes there can be no room for mistakes in his line of work, and he’s made a serious mistake with his ex-student, Ghost, so he has to confront that.”

On the physical side, Keaton threw himself with relish into hardcore training, even practicing fight choreography during his downtime on the set of “Spider-man: Homecoming.” “I stay in pretty good shape all year-round, so I wasn’t too far off,” Keaton notes. “But when I realized how intensely fit and trained Dylan was – he was so impressive – I also realized that audiences have to believe Stan can stand up to that. So instead of cardio, which is what I usually do, I did a lot more weights for this film.”

Performing a sweat-inducing regimen designed by athletic trainer Steve Zim, the result was a tight, sinewy physique that seems to mirror Hurley’s controlled tension. “The physical part was really important for this role because I think a guy like Stan would have the mentality that if he wants to keep doing this for a living, he going to have to stay in top condition, both in head and in body,” says Keaton.

Cuesta was especially exhilarated to see the organic chemistry between Keaton and O’Brien, which seemed both on a tense hair-trigger and full of potential. “It’s an unlikely pairing but you could see they had amazing synergy,” Cuesta says.

Says Keaton of O’Brien: “Dylan is very truthful as an actor and what really impressed me about him is that he always asks the most insightful, logical questions that go right to the heart of things.”

As for what Hurley thinks of Rapp, Keaton notes that while Hurley at first wishes this young upstart hadn't darkened his door, he also can't quite turn away. "When Mitch first arrives, Stan thinks it's maybe 25 minutes max before this guy is out of here," Keaton laughs. "But there's something he kind of sniffs out in Mitch, something that I think he doesn't even want to admit to himself is there. Having seen so many of these guys, he knows Mitch has got something different but it's not necessarily a something that he wants to deal with. Given Stan's age, given the experience he just had with a student going off the rails, and given the stakes for the country, he really isn't sure if he needs any of this!"

Despite his many doubts, Hurley is ultimately won over by Mitch. Still, things do not go easily for Hurley, who in one of the film's most harrowingly intense sequences, is barbarically tortured by his ex-student, ironically using the very same expert techniques Hurley taught him. A lot of back-and-forth went into the making of the scene.

"Michael Cuesta wanted it to be gritty and he didn't want to draw on things you've seen in other films so he came up with several really good ideas and we tried them all. It was all miserably uncomfortable but that's par for the course with this kind of scene," notes Keaton. As to how you get under the skin of someone experiencing that kind of extreme physical horror, Keaton explains: "You have to think about what he's hoping to achieve by not cracking, who he's trying to protect and how he hangs on to whatever endurance he has left in him. You ask yourself how you think you would get through that and then you add that into the mix of how capable and strong a guy like Hurley is."

Di Bonaventura sums up: "Hurley is a favorite character in the books but his full story wasn't known until 'American Assassin.' Now we have an opportunity to show audiences why he's viewed as a legend. He represents a different generation's worldview – and Michael came in and created a fresh version of a classical spy mentor. He brings an edgy tautness that's everything you want for Hurley."

SUPERVISORS, ALLIES AND ENEMIES: THE SUPPORTING CAST

Vince Flynn populated the Mitch Rapp books with a running cast of palpably real characters from throughout the CIA and U.S. government circles, several of whom come to life in "American Assassin." Key among them is Irene Kennedy, the Deputy Director of the CIA who decides to take a huge risk by recruiting Rapp, hoping to create an unassuming-looking agent with killer instincts.

Bringing a new vision of the fan-favorite character who grows throughout the series to become head of the CIA is Sanaa Lathan. The Yale-trained, Emmy Award-winning actress is known for her roles in "The Best Man," "Love & Basketball" and "Shots Fired." "We wanted a very strong dramatic actor who could feel her way into this powerful woman," says Nick Wechsler. "That's why Sanaa got the part."

Lathan was instantly drawn to Kennedy as an unusually commanding female character – one who has to juggle the gung-ho nature of her agents with the cautious political machinations of Washington D.C., as she responds to both in her own uncompromising way. "I think Irene is a total badass," Lathan remarks. "She's a patriot who understands all the immense subtleties and the importance of her job, and yet she will stop at nothing to get justice."

At the same time as she felt an affinity with Kennedy's strength and devotion, Lathan was also acutely aware that she does not match the physical description of Kennedy in the Vince Flynn books. Yet this too struck her as an exciting opportunity. "Irene is not a black woman in the books," Lathan acknowledges, "but I was so excited about playing an African-American woman who has achieved such a high-level elite intelligence job. I felt right away that this says a lot about how complex Irene is, how smart and strong she has had to be, and I really wanted to investigate a woman like that."

Lathan picked the hard-edged brains of several CIA consultants to understand more about both the satisfactions and frustrations of Kennedy's high-stakes job. As she did so, she began to understand why Kennedy looks outside the system to recruit agents for Orion. "Orion is a top-secret black ops division that reports only to Irene and her boss Stansfield, so they're an incredibly elite group but they're a certain 'type,'" Lathan explains. "With Mitch, Kennedy sees someone who isn't that type and won't be an instant target. He comes off as a real guy so he can blend in anywhere – yet, underneath that, he has all the lethal skills of the best. She also sees that he's in a lot of pain from his loss and that if she could hone that with Hurley's help he could be an assassin like no other America has at its disposal."

Kennedy's need for Rapp couldn't be more urgent because the U.S. is being threatened by one of its own – a former Orion assassin gone rogue known internally by the nickname Ghost. Ghost reflects a terrifying reality of our times: that anyone can become a terrorist in a world where personal experiences are as likely to spark violence as a set of beliefs. Taking the role of Hurley's ex-student who has turned against the ideals of the West is Taylor Kitsch – the Canadian actor who garnered attention as running back Tim Riggins on the acclaimed "Friday Night Lights" television series, as well as playing Gambin in "X-Men: Wolverine" and starring as Navy SEAL Michael P. Murphy in "Lone Survivor."

It was Kitsch's compelling work in "Lone Survivor" as the leader of an ill-fated SEAL team that led Lorenzo di Bonaventura to seek him out for Ghost. "The idea behind Ghost is that he was once a highly talented and confident CIA recruit, but now he feels betrayed by America, which makes him incredibly dangerous," the producer explains. "To play him we needed someone who could really make the audience think 'wow, the CIA really uncorked the wrong force with this guy.'"

He goes on: "In the course of the story, you start to see that Mitch and Ghost are very similar in some ways. Ghost sees in Mitch the new version of who he was a few years ago, and both are driven by vengeance. They could be the same guy, which takes their battle against one another to another level."

To get deep into what drives someone to transform from young idealist to a sinister traitor against those who trained him, Kitsch delved into Ghost's deeper backstory. "They plucked this kid from Texas from out of nowhere to be a special ops guy for the CIA. Then they put him in a program that's not even supposed to exist, and found he was way ahead of the curve, a fast learner who aced all the training – and in that time, Stan Hurley became like a father figure to him. But now he feels abandoned by these very same people who made him into such a skilled killer."

When Ghost tortures Hurley it turns into a battle of the psyches on a terrifying level – which meant he and Keaton had to find a way to go to the wall with each other. "We both really wanted to deliver on the emotional part of that that scene and to do something different from what you usually might see," says Kitsch. "I thought Keaton was just so perfect as Hurley. He has that wryness to him yet you buy him as a leader and he was just amazing."

Cuesta especially enjoyed watching Kitsch do a 180 from how he's previously been seen on screen. "Taylor usually plays American good guys – soldiers and football players – but here he subverts that. Ghost is a guy who was psychologically damaged by the job. The whole Orion philosophy of creating assassins backfired with this one guy and so, through him, you get to see the flip side of what Mitch Rapp is in the process of becoming," he observes.

As Mitch goes all-in on his first mission – chasing Ghost and the arms-dealers he's colluding with to the Middle East and then to Europe – he joins forces with Annika, a mysterious Turkish agent with an equally traumatic past. But trust does not come easy between them. Taking on the tricky role is Shiva Negar, who was born in Iran, then raised in Turkey and Canada before becoming a child performer. "American Assassin" marks her first major Hollywood role. "We really wanted someone authentic to play Annika, and Shiva wowed us," recalls Nick Wechsler. "The camera just loves her and we saw behind her beauty a mix of guts and truthfulness."

Negar felt the character had almost been custom-made. "It's crazy how many similarities Annika and I have," she muses. "But Annika also has a tragic past and lots of layers to her. She's someone who proves that if you don't give into terrible pain it only makes you stronger. She is truly a survivor."

Annika also feels an underlying emotional link to Rapp, with whom she must pretend to be a married couple. "She and Mitch have both lost loved ones and this connects them on a level others can't understand," Negar observes. "Annika sees Mitch's anger and his bitterness, but she also knows where it's coming from. He's so deep in darkness, she just wants to show him he can relax a bit more and maybe even enjoy working with her."

In one of her most intense scenes, Negar had to simulate her character's brutal interrogation and near drowning. "It was pretty challenging, because I've never done anything like that before," she notes. "But sometimes when you try something new, you surprise yourself, and I learned I was able to hold my breath underwater for a long time. We had a hand signal system if I needed to come up for air, but I never needed it. I gave it my all and hopefully you feel that."

Negar also discovered an unforeseen passion for stunt work. "I've always worked out but what I loved about the training for this film was learning so many new techniques, how to handle weapons and the artistry that goes into designing fight moves. It made me really excited to do more. For Annika, shooting and fighting are quite natural, so I felt I had to really go for it," she says.

That 100% commitment made an impression on Cuesta. "Shiva was able to bring out the bravery and intensity of Annika in very unexpected ways and there's a real toughness to her performance," comments the director. "She and the whole cast understood that when the audience cares about the characters and what they are going through that's when the action really works."

TRAINING AN AMERICAN ASSASSIN: SPY BOOT CAMP AND STUNTS

From its opening moments “American Assassin” thrusts Mitch Rapp into intense peril and from there the stakes only skyrocket as he faces a staggering array of threats, from military shoot-outs to hand-to-hand combat to car chases to confronting the ultimate bomb. To prepare for it all, Dylan O’Brien, Michael Keaton, Taylor Kitsch, Shiva Negar and the rest of the cast spent months undertaking their own intensive training. They worked closely with a group of ex-military and ex-intelligence officers on every physical and mental detail, from martial arts to intelligence terminology to high-speed driving.

Early on, O’Brien started working one-on-one with one of Hollywood’s most veteran fight trainers and action coordinators: Roger Yuan, who has starred with such action legends as Jackie Chan and Chow Yun-Fat and trained Daniel Craig for “Skyfall,” in which he also plays Severin’s bodyguard. It was instantly clear to Yuan that O’Brien had a knack for action. “Dylan is a very, very talented young man. He’s a fast learner and he’s a stickler for technique, which is everything you want,” says Yuan.

The aim of the training was that O’Brien should be ready for any kind of fighting, from MMA-style grappling to high-flying martial arts to handling any kind of weapon at hand. Says di Bonaventura: “There’s not one single style Rapp uses. He uses many different techniques – sometimes in desperation, sometimes by calculation – which makes him more realistic and not necessarily unbeatable.”

Yuan continues: “To give Mitch more realism, Dylan and I did a wide range of fight training: and also we worked on general physical movement – honing his agility, speed, power and precision. I also had a good friend who is a Jujitsu Black Belt work with him on MMA grappling, so we implemented every style we could.” Even as O’Brien was building a sleekly adaptive body, Yuan was equally thinking about Rapp’s mind. “We both wanted Mitch’s interior feelings of rage to come through physically,” says Yuan, “so Dylan and I talked a lot about how to use his anger and trauma in the way he fights.”

Yuan’s training was then furthered by Joost Janssen, who served as a military and intelligence consultant to “American Assassin” and oversaw the film’s tactical and weapons training. Says Janssen of O’Brien: “He is an extremely good athlete but what really stands out is his speed of learning. You could show Dylan something one or two times and he’d be able to do it over and over again without needing any further practice. That’s a rare thing.”

Janssen was equally impressed with Michael Keaton. “Michael has great curiosity and he wants to know everything about everything when it comes to training. When I was teaching him about weapons, we went over every inch of things, from cleaning a weapon to taking it apart and putting it back together because Michael had to know how it all works,” he describes.

For Janssen, a big part of Vince Flynn’s appeal was his accuracy and he wanted to bring that to the film’s extended training sequences. “It was clear to me reading Flynn, that he must have visited a real Navy SEAL training compound because his description was so right all the way through. That meant to me he cared enough to go down there and get it straight,” he says.

He aimed for the same authenticity. “I felt it was important to get the military aspects of the film right and while one small detail might not make any obvious difference, when you bring hundreds of authentic details together that’s what make for realism in filmmaking,” Janssen summarizes.

Says Taylor Kitsch of Janssen's contributions: "I've been very fortunate to get to know and work with Navy SEALs – and Joost being one of them was very important to this film. The weapons training he gave me and Dylan was key, because how we handle weapons is so much a part of our characters. Just having a real SEAL there grounds you and makes it all more meaningful."

Meanwhile, stunt coordinator Buster Reeves was choreographing the lethal ballet of the film's many fights and battles, as well as training the rest of the cast and adding to O'Brien's work with Yuan. Reeves, a former karate champion who is now a sought-after stunt performer, trainer and designer, started by inducting the cast into his own boot camp. "We started with a very heavy training regime combining calisthenics, yoga, weights and martial arts. We had them all in the gym at least two hours a day everyday doing jujitsu, boxing, kickboxing, lifting and weapons training," Reeves explains.

All the creative stunt work exhilarated Reeves. "This was not a quiet project," he laughs. "There are epic fights, rooms full of smoke bombs, tunnel car chases, boat chases and more. The idea was to keep everything so real that the audience feels there in the moment."

Everything builds to a frantic chase through a maze of secret tunnels with Mitch behind the wheel of a nimble Alfa-Romeo 4C. The tunnel scene also called on the special experience and expertise of visual effects supervisor Paul Norris, whose work includes "Avengers: Age Of Ultron," "Ex Machina" and two "Harry Potter" films; and special effects supervisor Simon Cockren whose resume includes "Saving Private Ryan," "The Bourne Ultimatum," "Fast And Furious 6" and "The Lost City Of Z."

Says Norris: "We wanted to do as much practically as we could on this film, so we had to come up with creative ways to carry off some crazy stuff while keeping everyone safe. We coordinated with the effects, stunts and makeup teams to create set pieces that are heart-stopping – but also believable."

MITCH RAPP'S EXPLOSIVE WORLD: LOCATIONS AND LOOK

In the first moments of "American Assassin" Mitch Rapp is hurled into an international catastrophe, returning him to the United States a broken man. But that is just the beginning of his travels, as his quest for retribution and his mission for the CIA takes him places he never imagined. To recreate Rapp's globe-hopping fight against terror – from the U.S. to the Middle East and Europe – the filmmakers faced a major logistical challenge: preparing for the heavy location work of a thriller that moves through the back alleys of disparate cities. Filming spanned from the United States to England, Italy, Malta and Thailand – and throughout emphasized a subdued but rich naturalism that keeps the audience fully immersed in Rapp's laser-focused POV.

"One of the things that's so important about the Mitch Rapp series is that it reveals that no country is truly isolated anymore – threats ripple from one nation across the planet. So I think having multiple international locations really reflects how the world is now," observes Lorenzo di Bonaventura.

The work of pulling that off fell to a crack team recruited for the behind-the-scenes work including director of photography Enrique Chediak ("The Maze Runner," "Deepwater Horizon") and production designer Andrew Laws ("Jack Ryan: Shadow Recruit," "Phone Booth"). Chediak, Laws and Cuesta all agreed on putting verisimilitude front and center, turning the page from last century's slick, stylized techno-thrillers to something more rough-and-ready.

“Michael didn’t want our film to be glossy,” Laws says. “Instead we wanted the audience to feel they are with the characters in real cities, not in some heightened, alien universe. I love big challenges, so I loved the challenge of working with so many real environments.”

Chediak continues, “Much as we didn’t want a glossy look we also didn’t want the film to have the grainy action movie look, either. We wanted to use a more true-to-life color palette that feels current. At the same time, this is a world of people who are working behind closed windows and doors, so there was a lot of playing with light. The movie gets warmer and warmer as Mitch discovers his path.”

The cinematography focused most on immersing the audience into Rapp’s subjective, disrupted POV. “We used a lot of long, wide angle lenses with very, very shallow depth of field so your eyes always go to Mitch,” Chediak explains. “The camera is always with him.”

The chance to use the stunning environs of Rome, aka “the Eternal City,” was especially exciting to Laws, but he wasn’t looking for postcard images. Instead, he went in search of a more underground Rome. “Rome is very much a character in the film,” Laws points out. “But as beautiful as it is, we wanted to use the parts of Rome that most people never see. That’s what led us to the housing complex of Corviale where we shot some of the film’s climactic moments.”

Built on Rome’s outskirts in the 1970s, Corviale is the longest residential building in Europe, a gigantic Corbusian rectangle housing some 6000 people in a kind of mini-city. With a tunnel sequence already in the script, the filmmakers were thrilled to discover tunnels beneath. They then crafted their own destructible tunnels to match. “The tunnels we built were wet, dusty and full of steam. It made for a very intense working environment, but that was intentional, so that you really feel it,” says Laws.

One of Laws’ favorite interiors is the Langley “war room” from which Irene Kennedy manages Orion. “Because this is a secret subgroup within the CIA, we felt we had some license to create our own world and not focus on the Langley people have seen in films before. We created our own fresh take on a ‘situation room’ built into an old server facility at Sun Microsystems,” he explains. “We also had a CIA advisor with us throughout so if we did anything unrealistic, we immediately got a reality check.”

For Stan Hurley’s infamous “Farmhouse” facility, Laws scouted out an unlikely house in the woods of Guildford, England. “The lodge we found felt uncannily American and it was an environment that really seemed to fit with Hurley’s primal attitude,” Laws says.

Laws also painstakingly re-created the deck of the U.S.S. Dwight D. Eisenhower – the storied, 114,000-ton aircraft carrier – on a stage. “We’ve got such intense action happening on the carrier that we needed the versatility of a stage,” he explains. “Shooting on a real military vessel these days can be a very controlled environment, but on a stage we had very few limits to how we could shoot.”

Perhaps the most unusual job that faced Laws was making an accurate replica of a portable nuclear bomb. To get it right, Laws worked with a nuclear physicist. “First, the bomb needed to look real to anyone who knows their stuff and second it needed to spotlight the scary reality of just how small and light a modern nuke can be,” he explains. “We looked at everything from where the bomb’s components came from to using carbon-fiber to keep the weight of the bomb lighter. It’s definitely one of those things you never expected you would be researching when you started your career!”

IMAGINING THE UNIMAGINABLE: THE NUCLEAR EXPLOSION

The thriller in which a covert agent must stop a rogue atomic weapon has been seen before. But the weapon in “American Assassin”— a 70-kg portable nuke with about 30 times the power of the bomb dropped on Nagasaki – actually deploys, in remarkable circumstances near a major U.S. warship. This meant creating the starkly unimaginable for real on-screen. “Usually in this type of film someone clips a wire and prevents catastrophe at the last moment – so it’s really something to have a scene where those wires don’t get clipped,” says production designer Andrew Laws.

To re-create the mushroom cloud of an atomic blast, the filmmakers started by looking at the existing footage, most of which comes from the 1950’s atomic tests on Bikini Atoll, but they then went for a more eye-of-the-storm viewpoint that literally sucks viewers into an astonishing vacuum. Says Academy Award®-winning VFX supervisor Paul Norris: “Bikini Atoll is the most detailed visual reference we have, but it’s also the look everybody associates with an atom bomb. We wanted something audiences have never seen before.”

Norris continues: “We had to take a lot of things into account, like the vacuum created by the bomb and the disturbance and the shockwaves. We shot all the action aboard the aircraft carrier on the stage set, using blue-screen for the windows, so we could later add the extreme visuals of what’s happening outside. And then we created the underwater images with this enormous ball of fire in the ocean and this colossal hole of water that is created, which is like a mixture of a crater and a whirlpool.”

That same sequence involves a speedboat and a helicopter, which were set atop a hydraulic gimbal to re-create the extreme tilts to which both are subjected. That was particularly exciting with the speedboat. Recalls effects supervisor Simon Cockren: “We were using a 62-foot long speedboat but that was too massive a set to gimbal, so we created a 30-foot by 20-foot replica of the boat kitted out with a rubber interior and then we were able to make it rise and fall like it was riding on huge waves.”

“American Assassin” marks the first time director Michael Cuesta has worked with such large-scale, demanding visuals – and he fell in love with the process. “It was really exciting to design these big, intricate action set-pieces and then see them fully realized on screen,” he says. “Large as they are, I always felt the more real, the more the audience will feel they are there with Mitch.”

Ultimately, realism had to be the bottom line in “American Assassin” because the reality of invisible threats was always what drove Vince Flynn’s novels. Sums up Lorenzo di Bonaventura: “Part of the enduring appeal of Mitch Rapp is that he is so real you can see yourself in him. He is somebody who experiences loss, who gets hurt, who has to risk everything, and that’s what makes him different from a superhero. He represents real people who are out there trying to protect others.”

Concludes Nick Wechsler: “I think ‘American Assassin’ will surprise, entertain, captivate and frighten audiences – in part because they know that what’s at stake in the movie is similar to what’s at stake in the world right now.”

THE MITCH RAPP SERIES TIMELINE

Kick-started by Vince Flynn in 1999 at the cusp of the new millennium, the Mitch Rapp series of books now numbers 16, with 13 written by Flynn prior to his death – and every single one of those reaching the *New York Times* bestseller list. The full list of books to date, in chronological order of Rapp's life, follows below:

TITLE	YEAR PUBLISHED	AUTHOR
American Assassin	2010	Vince Flynn
Kill Shot	2012	Vince Flynn
Transfer of Power	1999	Vince Flynn
The Third Option	2000	Vince Flynn
Separation of Power	2001	Vince Flynn
Executive Power	2002	Vince Flynn
Memorial Day	2004	Vince Flynn
Consent to Kill	2005	Vince Flynn
Act of Treason	2006	Vince Flynn
Protect and Defend	2007	Vince Flynn
Extreme Measures	2008	Vince Flynn
Pursuit of Honor	2009	Vince Flynn
The Last Man	2012	Vince Flynn
The Survivor	2015	Kyle Mills
Order to Kill	2016	Kyle Mills
Enemy of the State	2017*	Kyle Mills

*Available September 5, 2017

ABOUT THE CAST

DYLAN O'BRIEN / MITCH RAPP

A dynamic young actor, Dylan O'Brien is quickly emerging as one of Hollywood's brightest talents. "American Assassin" marks the second time that O'Brien has led a big screen adaptation of a best-selling book series. In 2014 he starred as Thomas in "The Maze Runner," adapted by Fox from James Dashner's young adult novel of the same title. Next year, Dylan will reprise that role in "The Death Cure," the third film in the hit franchise, in which Thomas and friends search for a cure to a virus that turns people into zombies in a post-apocalyptic world.

O'Brien is also one of the stars of the television series "Teen Wolf," a reimagining of the 1980's cult film of the same title. He has become a fan favorite on the show as Stiles, whose best friend Scott McCall is turned into the teen wolf. "Teen Wolf" will return to MTV for its final season this summer.

Previously, O'Brien appeared opposite Mark Wahlberg in the Lionsgate feature film "Deepwater Horizon" (2016). The film, directed by Peter Berg, recounts the true story of the 2010 BP oil rig explosion in the Gulf of Mexico. O'Brien plays Caleb Holloway, the youngest crewmember aboard the doomed rig when the disaster occurred. In 2013, O'Brien was featured in the Fox comedy "The Internship," directed by Shawn Levy and starring Vince Vaughn and Owen Wilson as two down on their luck salesman who get internships at Google only to find themselves competing for jobs with much younger, tech-savvy interns there. Prior to that, O'Brien starred opposite Britt Robertson and Victoria Justice in the feature film "The First Time" (2012) for director Jon Kasdan. "The First Time" is a romantic comedy in the vein of "Say Anything" that follows two high school students through the first weekend of their newfound love. The film premiered in competition at the 2012 Sundance Film Festival and was released by Sony in Fall 2012.

His first feature film role was in the 2011 entirely improvised independent film "High Road" directed by Upright Citizens Brigade co-founder Matt Walsh and co-starring veteran comedic actors Horatio Sanz, Rob Riggle, Abby Elliott and Lizzy Caplan. O'Brien was first discovered via YouTube in a series of comic online shorts, which he directed, produced and starred in. He currently resides in Los Angeles.

MICHAEL KEATON / STAN HURLEY

As the star of the 2015 Academy Award® Best Picture winner “Birdman: Or (The Unexpected Virtue of Innocence),” Michael Keaton garnered critical and public acclaim for his role as Riggan, a one-time celebrated, now washed-up actor battling to regain his ego and career by mounting a Broadway play.

For his work in “Birdman,” Keaton was nominated for an Academy Award® and won the Golden Globe®, Independent Spirit and National Board of Review awards for Best Actor as well as many other nominations and honors including a SAG® Ensemble Cast win.

Keaton first achieved national attention with the hit comedy “Night Shift,” followed by starring roles in such popular films as “Mr. Mom,” “Johnny Dangerously” and “Dream Team.” In 1998 Keaton earned the Best Actor Award from the National Society of Film Critics for “Clean and Sober” and for Tim Burton’s “Beetlejuice.” He re-teamed with Burton to play the title role in the blockbusters “Batman” and “Batman Returns.” Keaton also starred in HBO’s highly-regarded true-life drama “Live From Baghdad” for which he received a Golden Globe® nomination for his role as intrepid CNN reporter Robert Weiner.

He also starred in the Universal thriller “White Noise” and in “Game Six” which premiered at the 2005 Sundance Film Festival. Keaton starred in the Academy Award® Best Picture winner “Spotlight,” the compelling true story of how *The Boston Globe* uncovered a massive scandal within the Catholic Church. And in 2016 starred in “The Founder,” in which he portrayed Ray Kroc, the founder of McDonald’s.

Keaton is currently seen portraying Vulture in “Spiderman: Homecoming.” Keaton is a member of American Rivers.

SANAA LATHAN / IRENE KENNEDY

Tony Award®-nominated actress Sanaa Lathan delivers a striking presence and undeniable energy to each project she takes on and continues to build on an already impressive career.

Recently, she starred in Fox’s limited event series “Shots Fired,” which premiered on March 22, 2017. Created by “Love & Basketball” filmmaker Gina Prince-Blythewood and produced by Academy Award®-winning producer Brian Grazer, the series also stars Helen Hunt, Stephen Moyer, and Richard Dreyfuss. “Shots Fired” examines the dangerous aftermath of racially charged shootings in a small town in Tennessee. Lathan plays an expert investigator who digs into the case, alongside a special prosecutor sent to the town by the Department of Justice. The pair must navigate the media attention, public debate and the social unrest that comes with such volatile cases, as they seek justice before the divided town erupts.

Last summer, Lathan was seen starring in “Now You See Me Too” in which she plays a police captain paired with Mark Ruffalo in Jon Chu’s sequel to the Lionsgate hit film about four world renowned illusionists accused of pulling off bank heists during their performances.

She also starred in the Sony thriller, “The Perfect Guy,” which finished first at the box office during its opening weekend. Entertainment Weekly wrote in its review, “Lathan wavers deftly between strength and victimhood” while Variety commented, “Sanaa Lathan is as tough as she is fetching.”

Lathan's other credits include the smash hit, "The Best Man Holiday" with Taye Diggs, Terrence Howard, Regina Hall and Morris Chestnut. The wildly popular sequel has grossed more than \$71M at the box office. She is signed on for the third film, "The Best Man Wedding." Lathan starred in the title role in the play "By The Way, Meet Vera Stark" at The Geffen Playhouse in Los Angeles, a role she originated at the Second Stage Theatre in New York. She received the Lucille Lortel Award for Best Actress for her leading role in the play. Prior to that, Lathan starred as Maggie the Cat in the West End (London) in the critically acclaimed and Olivier Award-winning revival of "Cat on a Hot Tin Roof."

Film credits include Warner Brothers' feature film "Contagion," opposite Matt Damon, Kate Winslet, Marion Cotillard and Laurence Fishburne and directed by Steven Soderbergh, Focus Features' "Something New" with Simon Baker, Tyler Perry's "The Family That Preys," alongside Kathy Bates and Alfre Woodard, "A Wonderful World" opposite Matthew Broderick, Fox Searchlight's romantic comedy "Brown Sugar," alongside Taye Diggs, Queen Latifah and Mos Def, Gina Prince-Blythewood's romantic drama "Love and Basketball" with Omar Epps, the romantic comedy "The Best Man," one of the top-ten highest grossing African-American films in history, "Alien vs. Predator," a box office success for director Paul W.S. Anderson, and the thriller "Out of Time," with Denzel Washington. Lathan received an NAACP® Image Award nomination for her role on the FX Network series "Nip/Tuck." Lathan reprised her role as Beneatha Younger in the highly-rated and critically-acclaimed ABC Network production of "A Raisin in the Sun" alongside Sean Combs, a role she performed on Broadway and received a Tony Award® nomination for Best Performance by a Featured Actress.

SHIVA NEGAR / ANNIKA

Shiva Negar comes from a very diverse background, born in Iran and raised in Turkey and Canada. She began her career as a child performer by performing on piano and guitar at recitals and in singing competitions. In high school, Negar was involved in several school plays and theatre, which quickly became her art of choice and decided to take her passion for acting to the next level. She then went to film school in Los Angeles, in between following her passion and her auditions. Negar also managed to graduate from York University with a degree in Psychology and finished her post-graduate program in Events Management & Public Relations.

Negar just wrapped shooting in Sun Valley on Albert Chi's independent film, "The Amarath."

Aside from her work in "American Assassin," she will also be seen as the lead of Telefilm's upcoming feature "Becoming Burlesque" for director Jackie English.

In television, Negar has guest starred on Canada's "Murdoch Mysteries," Netflix's "Hemlock Grove USA's – Covert Affairs," SyFy's "Alphas" and Disney Channel's "My Babysitter's a Vampire." In addition, she has recurred on the CBC series "Four in the Morning," ABC's "Combat Hospital," and Crackle's "The Art of More." In features, Negar was previously seen in the independent film "Lost Journey," in the short film "Day Players," and in "Lorraine" for which she won her first award for Best Actress.

DAVID SUCHET / STANSFIELD

David Suchet is an Associate Artist and Governor of the Royal Shakespeare Company, known around the world for his portrayal of Agatha Christie's Hercule Poirot having starred in all 74 Poirot TV films. He was awarded the CBE in 2010. In November 2015 he finished an extremely successful run of "The Importance of Being Ernest" at the Vaudeville Theatre, playing Lady Bracknell. Other theatre

work includes “Long Day’s Journey Into Night,” for which he was nominated for the Best Actor Olivier Award. Suchet was again nominated for the Olivier Award for “All My Sons,” also garnering a Critics’ Circle Award. His performance in “Amadeus” (West End, London and Broadway) won Best Actor at the USA Awards, and nominations for Olivier and Evening Standard Awards, as well as a Tony® nomination. For “Who’s Afraid of Virginia Woolf?” at the Aldwych Theatre, he was commended with the Critics’ Circle Award and nominated for the Evening Standard Best Actor and Olivier Awards.

In October 2014, Suchet completed a world theatre tour of “The Last Confession.” Further stage credits include “Complicit” (The Old Vic), “The Last Confession” (West End and Chichester Festival Theatre), “Once in A Lifetime” (Royal National Theatre), “Man and Boy” (West End and No.1 Tour), “The Play What I Wrote” (West End), “Saturday, Sunday, Monday” (Chichester Festival Theatre), “What a Performance” (Plymouth Theatre Royal and Queens Theatre), “Oleanna” (Royal Court and Duke of York’s –Best Actor, Royal Variety Club, Best Actor nominated Olivier Awards), “Timon of Athens” (Young Vic – Best Actor, Evening Standard Awards) and “Separation” (Hampstead Theatre and Comedy Theatre – Olivier nomination for Best Actor). He has also acted extensively in the regional theatre and as Associate Artist of the Royal Shakespeare Company, he has played Lago in “Othello,” Shylock in “The Merchant of Venice,” Caliban in “The Tempest,” Bolingbroke in “Richard II,” Angelo in “Measure for Measure” (all nominated for Olivier Best Actor Awards).

He has starred in various films such as “Effie,” “The Bank Job,” “Act of God,” “Foolproof,” “The In-Laws,” “Live From Baghdad,” “Sabotage,” “Wing Commander,” “A Perfect Murder,” “Sunday” (Winner of Best Film at the Sundance Film Festival), “Deadly Voyage,” “Executive Decision,” “The Lucona Affair,” “Harry and the Hendersons,” “When the Whales Came,” “Iron Eagle,” “Gulag,” “Hunchback of Notre Dame,” “Song for Europe” (Channel 4 – Best Actor Award, RTS Awards), “Falcon and the Snowman,” “The Last Innocent Man” (HBO Best Actor, Ace Awards®), “Red Monarch” (Channel 4- Best Actor Award, Marseilles Film Festival), and “A World Apart” (Working Title – Best Actor Nomination, BAFTA®).

His award-winning television appearances includes the BBC’s “The Way We Live Now,” for which he won a Best Actor Olivier Award nomination and Best Actor BAFTA® Award, “Blott on the Landscape” (BBC – Best Actor, BAFTA) and “The Life of Freud” (BBC – Best Actor, RTS Awards). He received an Emmy Award® for his performance as Robert Maxwell in “Maxwell” on British and American television. He has recently appeared as Dr. Fagan in the BBC’s adaptation of Evelyn Waugh’s “Decline & Fall” and also as a guest lead in the latest series of “Doctor Who,” for which his performance received widespread praise.

As well as theatre, film and television, Suchet has also been involved in a number of radio productions such as “The Kreutzer Sonata” (Best Actor Award), “Never Been Kissed in the Same Place Twice,” “Ironhand,” “First Night Impressions,” “The Merchant of Venice,” “Richard II,” “Debussy,” Gorky on “Tolstoy/Gorky on Chekhov,” Wilkie Collins – “Rich Pickengs,” “The Shout,” and Rosenburg in the “Trenches and Life of Chekhov.” He has just finished recording the complete “Bible One Voice- One Bible.” He has been featured in many documentaries including “Who Do You Think You Are,” “In the Footsteps of St Paul” and “Being Poirot” to celebrate the end of 25 years of playing Hercule Poirot.

NAVID NEGAHBAN / BEHURZ

Negahban just completed filming the Afghanistan war drama “Horse Soldiers,” directed by Danish filmmaker Nicolai Fuglsig and produced by Jerry Bruckheimer Films and Black Label Media for

Lionsgate. He stars alongside a stellar cast that includes Chris Hemsworth, Michael Shannon, Michael Peña, and Trevante Rhodes. The film follows a team of US Special Forces who head into Afghanistan following the aftermath of September 11 and enlist the help of a local warlord (Negahban) to fight off Taliban forces.

He recently received a historic BAFTA® nomination for his performance as Hajj Agha in the video game series *1979 Revolution: Black Friday*, marking the first time a Middle Eastern & Muslim actor has been nominated in this category. The series, based on the Iranian revolution, was granted support from the Doris Duke Foundation in partnership with Sundance Institute's New Frontier Program for the Islamic Art's New Frontier Fellowship.

In addition to "American Assassin," Negahban currently stars in "Sand Castle" alongside Henry Cavill and Nicholas Hoult. Netflix premiered the film on April 21, 2017. Additional upcoming film credits include the espionage thriller "Damascus Cover" opposite Jonathan Rhys Meyers, Olivia Thirlby, and John Hurt, as well as Gerard Barrett's "Brain On Fire," which premiered at the 2016 Toronto Film Festival. The film is based on Susannah Cahalan's memoir of the same name and Negahban stars opposite Chloe Grace Moretz, Richard Armitage, Carrie-Anne Moss, Thomas Mann, and Jenny Slate.

He also stars in the independent film "Baba Joon," inspired by director Yuval Delshad's life. The film follows three generations of men who struggle to manage a ramshackle turkey farm in an isolated desert community of Farsi speakers. He portrays Yitzhak, who has given his life to the farm and wants nothing more than to see his young son take over his life's work. The film premiered at the 2015 Toronto International Film Festival and went on to win five Ophir Awards, the equivalent of the Israeli Oscar.

Negahban is a stand-out in Clint Eastwood's "American Sniper" opposite Bradley Cooper. He portrays Sheikh Al Obodi, an Iraqi local paid to help the snipers locate their targets. The film went on to be the top grossing film of 2014 and was nominated for countless awards including six Academy Award® nominations.

Other feature credits include significant supporting roles in "Brothers" starring Tobey Maguire and Jake Gyllenhaal, "Charlie Wilson's War" starring Tom Hanks, Julia Roberts and Amy Adams, and "Words and Pictures" with Clive Owens and Juliette Binoche. He also stars in Henry Hughes' "Day One" which was nominated for an Oscar® for Best Short Film, Live Action in 2015.

The versatile scene stealer has drawn critical praise as IRK delegate Jamot on the final season of Fox's hit series, "24," and has a diverse TV portfolio that includes guest work on "Curb Your Enthusiasm," "The Catch," "Scorpion," "Law and Order: SVU," "VEEP," "The Messengers," "CSI:NY," "The Closer," "The West Wing," "Without a Trace," "The Shield," among many others.

Born in Mashhad, Iran, Negahban caught the acting bug at the age of eight, when his portrayal of an old man drew laughter from a large audience at an elementary school play. His passion for acting led him to Germany where he spent eight years honing his theatrical skills prior to arriving in the United States. He is fluent in English, Farsi and German. In his spare time, he enjoys traveling, studying anthropology, shooting pool, driving and playing poker.

SCOTT ADKINS / VICTOR

Scott Adkins is a very well respected English actor who also happens to possess amazing skills as a martial artist. At the age of 14, Adkins began to train in Tae Kwon Do under the instruction of Ron Sergiew with the T.A.G.B. After a few years he moved on to kickboxing under Anthony Jones. He is now a fully trained kickboxing instructor for the P.K.A. He also holds a red belt in Tae Kwon Do and a black belt in kickboxing, and is skilled in Wushu and Judo.

His first professional break came when he was offered a role in a Hong Kong martial arts film called "Extreme Challenge" and found himself in the East for the first time. Here, Adkins got the chance to work with some of Hong Kong cinema's leading action directors including Yeun Wo Ping, Cory Yeun, Sammo Hung and Jackie Chan.

Starring roles in feature films soon followed for him, with his portrayal of Talbot in "Special Forces" and Boyka in "Undisputed II: Last Man Standing." It was this film that broke him into the mainstream with his villainous portrayal of a Russian MMA underground fighter Boyka in what has been hailed as one of the best American made martial arts films of recent times. Along with lead actor Michael Jai White, fight coordinator J.J. Perry and the slick direction of Isaac Florentine this movie boasts some unbelievably heart-stopping fight scenes. He went on to gain guest starring roles in bigger budget films like "The Bourne Ultimatum," "The Tournament," "Weapon XI" and "X-Men Origins: Wolverine." His first lead role came with "Ninja" and was soon followed with "Undisputed III: Redemption" where he reprised his role as Russian MMA fighter Uri Boyka. He has recently filmed the co-lead role of Flint in "Assassin Games" opposite Jean Claude Van Damme and the lead role of John in "Universal Soldier- A New Dimension." In 2012 Adkins filmed the lead role of The Man in "El Gringo" for After Dark Films, and Hector in "Expendables 2" for director Simon West. He then went on to play John in Kathryn Bigelow's "Zero Dark Thirty" and the leading role of Travis in the feature "Legendary."

He also appeared in the lead role of Danny in the British feature "Green Street- Never Back Down" and then reprised his role of Casey in the second installment of the "Ninja" title "Shadow of a Tear." He then took the leading role of Tom Cat in "Wolf War" opposite and directed by Jacky Wu and then the role of King Amphitron in "Hercules" and "Angels-Zero Tolerance."

Other work includes the Sacha Baron Cohen feature "Grimsby" and "Criminal" with Kevin Costner, Gary Oldman and Ryan Reynolds, as well as the features "Close Range," "Eliminators," "Hard Target 2," "Savagedog," "Altar Rock" and "Marvel's Doctor Strange."

Adkins recently finished "Accident Man" which is also due for release in 2017.

TAYLOR KITSCH / GHOST

Taylor Kitsch grew up in British Columbia, Canada. In 2006, Taylor landed his breakout role playing Tim Riggins on NBC's critically acclaimed sports drama, Friday Night Lights (FNL). Taylor then starred in "The Bang Bang Club" as Kevin Carter, a true story about four young photojournalists whose graphic images drew the world's attention to the last stages of apartheid in South Africa.

Two years later, Taylor collaborated again with FNL's creator, Peter Berg, starring in Berg's acclaimed war thriller, "Lone Survivor," with Mark Wahlberg and Eric Bana. From there, Taylor went on to act in Oliver Stone's "Savages," and Disney's live-action film "John Carter," directed by the acclaimed Andrew Stanton.

In 2014 Taylor made his return to television, appearing alongside Julia Roberts and Mark Ruffalo in HBO's Emmy Award-winning movie, "The Normal Heart" directed by Ryan Murphy. The following year, he starred in the second season of HBO's "True Detective" with Colin Farrell, Rachel McAdams and Vince Vaughn. He's set to return to television in 2018, executive producing and appearing as David Korean the in Paramount's miniseries, "Waco".

ABOUT THE FILMMAKERS

MICHAEL CUESTA / DIRECTOR

Michael Cuesta is an Emmy Award-winning Director/Executive Producer who directed such the pilots as for “Homeland” and “Dexter”. In addition to multiple episodes of Emmy-winning dramas including “Six Feet Under”. On the feature side, he has directed several films including “L.I.E.” which he co-wrote, and for which he won multiple awards at film festivals worldwide. Other films include the intimate domestic drama “Twelve And Holding,” which was released by IFC Films and was nominated for the John Cassevetes Award at the 2007 Independent Spirit Awards, and the 2009 Tribeca Film Festival premiere “Tell Tale,” starring Brian Cox and Josh Lucas for Scott Free Productions. His more recent feature work includes “Roadie,” starring Bobby Cannavale, Ron Eldard and Jill Hennessy for Magnolia Pictures and “Kill The Messenger” starring Jeremy Renner for Focus Features. His latest project, the highly anticipated feature film “American Assassin,” stars Michael Keaton and Dylan O’Brien for CBS Films. Based out of New York, Cuesta has emerged over the past decade as an Emmy and DGA winning premiere director as he has having helmed five pilots to series including “Elementary” and “Blue Bloods”.

VINCE FLYNN / BASED ON THE NOVEL BY

The fifth of seven children, Vince Flynn was born in St. Paul, Minnesota, in 1966. He graduated from the St. Thomas Academy in 1984, and the University of St. Thomas with a degree in economics in 1988. After college he went to work for Kraft General Foods where he was an account and sales marketing specialist. In 1990 he left Kraft to accept an aviation candidate slot with the United States Marine Corps. One week before leaving for Officers Candidate School, he was medically disqualified from the Marine Aviation Program, due to several concussions and convulsive seizures he suffered growing up. While trying to obtain a medical waiver for his condition, he started thinking about writing a book. This was a very unusual choice for Flynn since he had been diagnosed with dyslexia in grade school and had struggled with reading and writing all his life. Having been stymied by the Marine Corps, Flynn returned to the nine-to-five grind and took a job with United Properties, a commercial real estate company in the Twin Cities. During his spare time he worked on an idea he had for a book. After two years with United Properties he decided to take a big gamble. He quit his job, moved to

Colorado, and began working full time on what would eventually become Term Limits. Like many struggling artists before him, he bartended at night and wrote during the day. Five years and more than sixty rejection letters later he took the unusual step of self-publishing his first novel. The book went to number one in the Twin Cities, and within a week had a new agent and two-book deal with Pocket Books, a Simon & Schuster imprint.

Term Limits hit the *New York Times* bestseller list in paperback and started a trend for all of Flynn's novels. Since then, his books have become perennial bestsellers in both paperback and hardcover, and he has become known for his research and prescient warnings about the rise of Islamic Radical Fundamentalism and terrorism. Read by current and former presidents, foreign heads of state, and intelligence professionals around the world, Flynn's novels are taken so seriously one high-ranking CIA official told his people, "I want you to read Flynn's books and start thinking about how we can more effectively wage this war on terror." October 2007 marked another milestone in Flynn's career when his ninth political thriller, Protect and Defend, became a #1 *New York Times* bestseller. A few months later, CBS Films optioned the rights for Flynn's Mitch Rapp character with the intention of creating a character-based, action-thriller movie franchise. American Assassin and Kill Shot, published in October 2010 and February 2012 respectively, are prequels in the Mitch Rapp saga and both reached #1 on the *New York Times* bestseller list. Works by Flynn include American Assassin, Kill Shot, Transfer of Power, The Third Option, Separation of Power, Executive Power, Memorial Day, Consent to Kill, Act of Treason, Extreme Measures, Pursuit of Honor, The Last Man, The Survivor and Term Limits (not part of the Mitch Rapp series). Influences: Ernest Hemingway, Robert Ludlum, Tom Clancy, J.R.R. Tolkien, Gore Vidal, and John Irving.

STEPHEN SCHIFF / SCREENWRITER

Stephen Schiff is a screenwriter, TV writer-producer, and journalist.

In addition to "American Assassin", his film work includes "Lolita," "The Deep End of the Ocean," "True Crime," "Wall Street: Money Never Sleeps."

In television, he has been, since 2013, a writer, consulting producer, co-executive producer, and (currently) executive producer of the acclaimed FX series "The Americans."

From 2011-2015, Schiff was also the writer and executive producer of the extreme-sports documentary series "Ultimate Rush."

Before becoming a film and television writer, Schiff had an extensive career in journalism. A Pulitzer Prize finalist in Distinguished Criticism, Schiff was a staff writer at *The New Yorker* for nine years and was *Vanity Fair's* Critic-at-Large for nine years before that. He has also been film critic of *National Public Radio's Fresh Air*, *The Atlantic*, *Glamour*, and *The Boston Phoenix*; a Correspondent on CBS-TV's newsmagazine *West 57th*; and a contributor to *The New York Times*, *Newsweek/The Daily Beast*, *Conde Nast Traveler*, and other publications.

Schiff was the winner of the Writer's Guild of America's Richard B. Jablov Award® in 2002. In conjunction with "The Americans," he won the 2017 Writers Guild of America Award® for Outstanding Drama Series; he was also nominated in 2016. He received a nomination for the Primetime Emmy Award® for Outstanding Drama Series, the Online Film & Television Association Award for Best Drama

Series and Best Writing in a Drama Series, and the Gold Derby Award for Best Drama Series and also for Drama Episode of the Year. During his tenure as a writer-producer with “The Americans,” the show has also won the Peabody Award® (2015), two Television Critics Association Awards for Outstanding Achievement in Drama (2015 and 2016), four AFI Awards for TV Program of the Year (2014, 2015, 2016, and 2017), and the Critics Choice Television Award for Best Drama Series (2015).

MICHAEL FINCH / SCREENWRITER

Michael Finch is an American screenwriter known for “Predators,” November Man,” “Agent 47” and “American Assassin.” When not writing, Finch teaches screenwriting at the University of California at San Diego’s Masters of Fine Arts program. He currently lives in Del Mar, CA with his wife and two children.

EDWARD ZWICK / SCREENWRITER

Born in Winnetka, Illinois, Edward Zwick began directing and acting in high school. While studying literature at Harvard, he continued writing and directing for the theatre. Upon graduation, he was awarded a Rockefeller Fellowship to study in Europe with some of the major innovative theatre companies.

Zwick was accepted as a Directing Fellow at the American Film Institute in 1975. “Timothy and the Angel” Zwick’s AFI short film, won first place in the student film competition at the 1976 Chicago Film Festival and caught the attention of the producers of the television series, “Family,” where he served first as story editor, and then as a director and producer.

For his work on the television movie “Special Bulletin” (as director, producer and co-writer), Zwick received two Emmy Awards®. It also marked the beginning of his collaboration with Marshall Herskovitz, with whom he then created the Emmy Award® winning television series, “thirtysomething.” Together Herskovitz and Zwick created The Bedford Falls Company as their home for film and television projects, including the critically acclaimed television series “My So-Called Life,” “Relativity” and the Emmy Award® and Golden Globe award® winning series “Once and Again.” Currently Herskovitz and Zwick are Executive Producers on the series “Nashville.”

Zwick began his feature film career directing “About Last Night.” He went on to direct the Academy Award® winning films “Glory” and “Legends on the Fall.” Zwick also directed “Courage Under Fire,” “The Siege,” “The Last Samurai,” “Blood Diamond,” “Defiance,” “Love & Other Drugs” and “Pawn Sacrifice.” Zwick and Herskovitz produced “I Am Sam,” as well as “Traffic”- winner of two Golden Globes® and four Academy Awards®. Zwick most recently directed “Jack Reacher: Never Go Back” starring Tom Cruise.

Zwick has been honored with three Emmy Awards®, the Humanitas Prize®, the Writer’s Guild of America Award®, two Peabody Awards®, a Director’s Guild of America Award®, and the Franklin J. Schaffner Alumni Award® from the American Film Institute. He was nominated for an Academy Award® as a producer of “Traffic”, and won the Best Picture Oscar® for 1999’s “Shakespeare in Love.”

MARSHALL HERSKOVITZ / SCREENWRITER

Marshall Herskovitz is a writer, producer, and director who has won numerous awards for his work in television and film. Born in Philadelphia, he attended Brandeis University then moved to Los Angeles

in 1975, where he attended the American Film Institute and met his longtime creative partner Edward Zwick. In the years since, he has helped create such TV series as “thirtysomething,” “My So-Called Life,” and “Once and Again.” He currently serves as the Showrunner for “Nashville” on CMT. Among the films he has produced are “Legends of the Fall,” “Traffic,” “The Last Samurai,” and “Blood Diamond.” He also directed “Jack the Bear” and the cult-favorite “Dangerous Beauty.” In 2007, Herskovitz created the groundbreaking online series and social network “quarterlife,” which at the time was the Internet’s most successful scripted series. Herskovitz, a longtime environmentalist, has served on the board of several organizations dedicated to fighting climate change. Herskovitz is a past president of the Producers Guild of America.

LORENZO DI BONAVENTURA / PRODUCER

Lorenzo di Bonaventura is a prolific film producer best known for producing the “Transformers” franchise. He is CEO of di Bonaventura Pictures and di Bonaventura Pictures Television.

In February 1989, Mr. di Bonaventura joined Warner Brothers as Vice President of Production. While at Warner Brothers, he was involved in over 130 productions and eventually became President of Worldwide Production. Amongst his biggest commercial and critical successes were: “Falling Down,” “A Time to Kill,” “The Matrix,” “Analyze This,” “The Perfect Storm,” “Ocean’s Eleven,” “Harry Potter and the Sorcerer’s Stone,” and “Training Day.”

In 2002 he left Warner Brothers and started di Bonaventura Pictures, based at Paramount Pictures. Since then he has produced over 30 movies including “Constantine,” “Stardust,” “G.I. Joe: The Rise of Cobra,” “Salt,” “RED,” “Jack Ryan: Shadow Recruit” and “Deepwater Horizon” (2016).

Upcoming releases include “Kidnap” starring Halle Berry, “Only the Brave” starring Josh Brolin, Miles Teller and Jennifer Connelly, “Meg” starring Jason Statham, “Replicas” starring Keanu Reeves, and “American Assassin.” He is currently in pre-production on the “Bumblebee” film for Paramount. In 2011, the company branched into television production with the formation of di Bonaventura Pictures Television, which produced “The Real O’Neals” for ABC.

Mr. di Bonaventura received his undergraduate degree in Intellectual History at Harvard College and his Master of Business Administration at the University of Pennsylvania’s Wharton School of Business. He was awarded the Golden Eye Career Achievement Award from the Zurich Film Festival in 2016 and is on the Board of Directors for the American Cinematheque, the board of advisors for Claremont Graduate Colleges and is on the honorary committee of the Epilepsy Foundation of Greater Los Angeles.

NICK WECHSLER / PRODUCER

Nick Wechsler is an independent film producer whose producing credits are a distinctive and award-winning mix of independent and studio films. Wechsler started his career as an entertainment attorney, then transitioned into music management and film production. His clients included Robbie Robertson, Steve Earle, John Lydon, Michael Penn and Chris Whitley. He then focused on the film business and was a founder and co-chairman of Industry Entertainment (formerly Addis-Wechsler and Associates). Industry became a leading management and production company that produced feature and television motion pictures and television series and represented writers, directors and actors, including Leonardo DiCaprio, Angelina Jolie, Cameron Diaz, Al Pacino, Tobey Maguire, Whoopi Goldberg, Benicio Del Toro, Kirsten Dunst, and others. Wechsler left Industry after fifteen years to focus on production.

His recent films include: “Magic Mike,” directed by Steven Soderbergh and starring Channing Tatum and Matthew McConaughey; “The Road,” an adaptation of Cormac McCarthy’s Pulitzer Prize-winning book, directed by John Hillcoat and starring Viggo Mortensen, Charlize Theron, and Robert Duvall; “Under the Skin,” based on the Michel Faber novel, adapted and directed by Jon Glazer, starring Scarlett Johansson, and nominated for Best British Film at the 2015 BAFTAs®; “The Counselor,” written by Cormac McCarthy and directed by Ridley Scott, starring Michael Fassbender, Brad Pitt, Cameron Diaz, Penelope Cruz, and Javier Bardem.

Wechsler’s other producing credits include “The Time Traveler’s Wife,” “We Own the Night,” a Cannes Film Festival Palme d’Or selection; “The Fountain,” a Venice Film Festival Golden Lion selection, “North Country,” for which Charlize Theron and Frances McDormand earned Oscar® and Golden Globe Award® nominations, “Requiem for a Dream,” which earned an Independent Spirit Award® Best Picture nomination and an Oscar® nomination for star Ellen Burstyn, “The Yards,” a Cannes Film Festival Palme d’Or selection, “Quills,” a Best Picture winner from the National Board of Review, “Eve’s Bayou,” an Independent Spirit Award® winner for Best First Feature, “Love Jones,” a Sundance Film Festival Audience Award winner for Best Film, “Little Odessa,” which won the Venice Film Festival Silver Lion Award, “The Player,” a Golden Globe Award® winner for Best Motion Picture, Comedy, and “Drugstore Cowboy,” which took Best Film honors from the National Society of Film Critics. Wechsler was also an executive producer of “sex, lies and videotape,” which received the 1989 Cannes Film Festival Palme d’Or Award as well as an Academy Award® nomination for Best Original Screenplay.

DANIEL M. STILLMAN / EXECUTIVE PRODUCER

Danny Stillman’s film career spans nearly 30 years and over 50 films. He has worked with a host of esteemed directors including Mike Nichols, Brian De Palma, Sidney Lumet, Woody Allen, David Fincher, Chris Nolan, Jim Brooks, Harold Ramis and Michael Mann.

Stillman broke into the industry in the late 80s and over the following decade completed more than 25 films either as a First or Second Assistant Director. This work included such films as “Primary Colors,” “Multiplicity,” “The Nutty Professor,” “Carlito’s Way,” and “The Last of the Mohicans.”

Stillman then made the jump to Unit Production Manager in 2000 working on such films as “The Curious Case of Benjamin Button,” “The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo,” “The Bourne Legacy” and “Interstellar.”

Stillman executive produced on “Dropping Out,” “Broken Horses,” and “Krampus,” co-produced “Out of the Cold” and associate produced “The Bourne Legacy.”

Stillman is an executive producer on the upcoming release “Maze Runner: The Death Cure”.

ENRIQUE CHEDIAK, ASC / DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY

Ecuadorian cinematographer Enrique Chediak has an impressive resume that spans genre and language. Early on, he shot the iconic horror film “28 Weeks Later.” Soon thereafter, he shot the critically-acclaimed Danny Boyle film “127 Hours” for which he was nominated for many awards, including a BAFTA® for best cinematography. Recently, he shot Wes Ball’s big dystopian film, “The Maze Runner,” and followed it up with the action-thriller “Deepwater Horizon” from director Peter Berg.

He is currently shooting “Transformers: Bumblebee” for Paramount.

ANDREW LAWS / PRODUCTION DESIGNER

In a career spanning over 20 years, Andrew Laws has worked on a variety of diverse genres of film, including: comedies “Down with Love,” directed by Peyton Reed and John Hamburg’s “I Love You, Man,” contemporary thrillers “Phone Booth,” starring Colin Farrell and Keifer Sutherland and directed by Joel Schumacher, “1408” and “Derailed” for director Mikael Håfström, and the Bobby Darin based musical biopic “Beyond the Sea” directed by Kevin Spacey.

More recently he designed the action thriller “Jack Ryan,” for director Kenneth Branagh, “The Gunman,” starring Sean Penn and the war zone drama “The Last Face,” starring Charlize Theron and Javier Bardem and directed by Sean Penn.

“American Assassin” represents Laws first collaboration with director Michael Cuesta and his fifth with producer Lorenzo di Bonaventura.

CONRAD BUFF, ACE / EDITOR

Conrad Buff won an Academy Award® for his editing on James Cameron’s record-breaking blockbuster “Titanic,” for which he also won an American Cinema Editors Eddie Award and earned a BAFTA® nomination. Buff also received a Best Editing Oscar® nomination for his work on Cameron’s “Terminator 2: Judgment Day,” and teamed with Cameron on the hit action-comedy “True Lies” and the groundbreaking sci-fi thriller “The Abyss.”

Buff has also repeatedly collaborated with several other noted directors. He has worked with Antoine Fuqua on four features: the action-thriller “Shooter,” the period epic “King Arthur,” the war drama “Tears of the Sun,” and the acclaimed crime drama “Training Day,” which starred Denzel Washington. For director Roger Donaldson, Buff edited the Cuban missile crisis drama “Thirteen Days,” the disaster thriller “Dante’s Peak,” the sci-fi horror hit “Species” and the romantic thriller “The Getaway.”

Buff’s additional film credits include Rupert Sanders’ “Snow White and the Huntsman,” Rupert Wyatt’s “Rise of the Planet of the Apes,” McG’s “Terminator Salvation,” M. Night Shyamalan’s “The Happening,” Jim Sheridan’s “Get Rich or Die Tryin’,” Denzel Washington’s directorial debut “Antwone Fisher,” “Mystery Men,” “Arlington Road,” “Short Circuit 2,” Mel Brooks’ “Spaceballs,” and Richard Marquand’s hit thriller “Jagged Edge.”

A Los Angeles native, Buff began his film career as visual-effects editorial supervisor on such blockbusters as “Star Wars: Episode V—The Empire Strikes Back,” “Raiders of the Lost Ark,” “E.T. The Extra-Terrestrial,” and “Poltergeist.” He also served as assistant film editor on “Star Wars: Episode VI—Return of the Jedi” and as visual effects editor on “Ghostbusters.”

ANNA SHEPPARD / COSTUME DESIGNER

Anna B Sheppard is a London-based costume designer with over 40 feature film credits to her name. Highlights of her achievements include three Academy Award® nominations for “Schindler’s List,” “The Pianist,” and most recently “Maleficent.”

Her other credits include the HBO miniseries “Band of Brothers,” “The Insider” (dir. Michael Mann), “Sahara,” “Around the World in 80 Days,” “Oliver Twist” (dir. Roman Polanski), “Shanghai Knights,” “Fred Claus” (both directed by David Dobkin), “Inglorious Bastards” (dir. Quentin Tarantino), “Fury,” “The Book Thief” and “Now You See Me 2.”

STEVEN PRICE / MUSIC BY

Steven Price is an Academy Award-winning® composer. In 2014 his groundbreaking score for Alfonso Cuarón's "Gravity" won him not only the Academy Award® but also the BAFTA®, Critics' Choice Award®, the Satellite Award®, and ASCAP's first-ever Film Composer of the Year Award. Subsequent projects have included "Fury," the WWII epic written and directed by David Ayer, starring Brad Pitt, "Believe," a drama series produced by Alfonso Cuarón and JJ Abrams for NBC, the BBC's "The Hunt," a landmark natural history documentary series for which Price won his second BAFTA®, and Warner Brothers's 2016 hit "Suicide Squad."

"Baby Driver" marks the latest in a series of collaborations with Edgar Wright, starting in 2010 with his work on "Scott Pilgrim vs. The World." Price's debut feature score was for Joe Cornish's 2011 feature "Attack the Block," produced by Wright. The score earned Price the award for Best Original Soundtrack from both the Austin Film Critics Association and the Sitges Film Festival. Their collaboration then continued in 2013, with Price composing the original score for Wright's Universal comedy "The World's End."

Aside from "American Assassin," Price's forthcoming projects include Paramount Animation's "Amusement Park."

ELAINE GRAINGER / CASTING BY

Elaine Grainger is a leading casting director in the entertainment industry. Her numerous film credits include "Clash of the Titans," "Jack Ryan: Shadow Recruit," "London Has Fallen," "Criminal," and "The Zoo-Keeper's Wife." In addition, earlier in her career, Grainger worked in casting on such hits as "Batman Begins," "The Dark Knight," "Inception," and "Red 2."

In addition to her feature films, Grainger has worked in TV with credits including "Marco Polo" for Netflix. She received an Emmy® nomination for HBO's "House of Saddam."

Aside from "American Assassin," her upcoming credits include "The Hitman's Bodyguard" with Ryan Reynolds and Samuel L. Jackson.