

# THE FIRST OMEN

## Production Information

20th Century Studios' psychological horror film "The First Omen" is a prequel to the classic horror film franchise. "The First Omen" is set in 1971 and follows Margaret, a young American woman who is sent to Rome to begin a life of service to the church. There, she encounters a darkness that causes her to question her own faith and uncovers a terrifying conspiracy that hopes to bring about the birth of evil incarnate. "The First Omen" stars Nell Tiger Free, Tawfeek Barhom, Sonia Braga, Ralph Ineson, with Charles Dance, and Bill Nighy.

The film is directed by Arkasha Stevenson based on characters created by David Seltzer, with a story by Ben Jacoby and a screenplay by Tim Smith & Arkasha Stevenson and Keith Thomas. The producers are David S. Goyer and Keith Levine, and the executive producers are Tim Smith, Whitney Brown, and Gracie Wheelan.

### ~ THE GENESIS OF THE CLASSIC HORROR FILM FRANCHISE ~

It was 1976 when Richard Donner directed the first chapter of "The Omen," in which Damien, a very young progeny of the Devil, was presented to the public for the first time. The film was a huge commercial success, grossing over \$60 million theatrically in the U.S. Two other films soon followed: "Damien: Omen II" (1978), and "The Final Conflict" (1981), both of which detailed the rise of Damien into his teenage and adult years.

In 1991's "Omen IV: The Awakening," which debuted on Fox Television, a young girl becomes the new Antichrist. And John Moore directed a remake, "The Omen," which opened in theaters in 2006 and was a financial success, grossing over \$120 million on a \$25 million budget. In 2016, the television series "Damien," created by Glen Mazzara, debuted on the A&E network.

Now, the prolific horror franchise has been given a prequel, "The First Omen." Arkasha Stevenson, who has directed episodes of "Legion" and "Briarpatch," makes her feature film directorial debut, resulting in a vibrant and stylishly terrifying new vision. "'The First Omen' is a prequel to the 1976 version," says Stevenson, "but what was also really important to us was that we create a story that could stand on its own. So, we really want you to watch the 1976 version, but we also have our own message to add to the conversation."

Producer David S. Goyer ("Hellraiser") says, "I always wondered where Damien came from—how that baby managed to find its way into the arms of Robert and Katherine Thorn. The desire was to

create an elevated horror film that was both timeless and topical. Something that would point to the past, but also our present. Elevated genre films work best when they function as dark mirrors reflecting our contemporary anxieties back at us.”

Goyer continues, “My producing partner Keith Levine and I dove into the development process with gusto. Our desire was to find a talented writer-director that would put their own, deeply personal spin on the story—and with Arkasha Stevenson, we struck horror gold. Arkasha elevated the film in every conceivable way. She made something that is artful, relevant, and completely terrifying. Under Arkasha’s steady hand we were also able to attract the kind of quality cast that I feel puts us on par with the original film.”

Director/co-screenwriter Stevenson was initially drawn to the project because of the character of Margaret. “I am a big Alan Pakula fan, and one of my favorite movies ever is ‘Klute,’” she explains. “I love that film because you could call it a horror movie, but first and foremost it is a character study. We truly get to know and care about Jane Fonda’s character, so when horrible things begin to happen to her, that is where the horror stems from. And that is true, grounded horror, I think, when it is character driven.”

Stevenson and her producing and writing partner Tim Smith, with whom she has worked on projects for AMC, Hulu, Amazon and Syfy, developed the script together, overseeing the project from start to finish. Smith also serves as an executive producer on “The First Omen.”

“We’ve always been so influenced by paranoid thrillers and psychological horror films from the seventies, so the opportunity to dive into the world of ‘The Omen’ was so exciting for us,” says Smith. “The ‘76 ‘Omen’ is such a seminal film that elevated the genre and tapped into the fears of its time. It rendered the otherworldly so disturbingly familiar and tactile, which is the kind of horror that really gets under my skin and stays with me.”

Smith continues, “With ‘The First Omen’ we set out to create the pervasive feeling of distrust and threat around every corner that characterizes films like ‘The Parallax View’ and ‘Repulsion.’ To do that, we knew we needed to anchor the film in Margaret’s subjectivity, tracing a psyche that becomes fractured and ultimately undone. More than anything, we wanted to delve into horrors that resonated with us and the turmoil of the time that we’re living in, while doing justice to Damien’s origins.”

“In addition to many other things, we are an origin story of baby Damien, who obviously is one of the iconic characters from the original film, directed by Richard Donner,” says producer Keith Levine (“The Night House”). “So, we very much take place before that movie, and I think when viewers see this film, they will instantly see how we connect, but will also realize that there is potential for the universe to widen a bit more.”

Levine continues, “Fans of ‘The Omen’ get to see a new, untold story in the ‘Omen’ universe, that can tee up the original film in a different way. Audiences can then get excited about going on another journey within the universe and follow new characters beyond just the Damien character. It shines a light on some of the stuff you already know, and then introduces you to some stuff that you didn’t know.”

“Fans of ‘The Omen’ will have a field day,” says Bill Nighy, who plays Cardinal Lawrence, “because there are so many references they will pick up on and know. It will be intriguing for them to know how certain characters develop, what happens, knowing their future, et cetera. There are plenty of thrills, horror, and suspense, but they will be able to trace, from this movie, the futures into the later four parts of the story, which is especially exciting.”

“I feel like the fans of ‘The Omen’ will love this movie because we are giving a reason for ‘The Omen’ to happen,” says Maria Caballero, who plays Luz. “We are given the background, we are given a why, and we are given a purpose for the Antichrist to be born. I feel that is interesting because when you watch ‘The Omen,’ you don’t know why everything is happening. We’re giving it a reason, and we’re grounding it in such a powerful world with the church and all these ideas that are lying in the background of the movie.”

“We are definitely a prequel,” reiterates Nell Tiger Free, who plays Margaret Daino, “so we’re at the beginning of ‘The Omen’ universe. Technically, we are the most important part. We are the origin story of how certain things in ‘The Omen’ came to be, so audiences will finally have answers as to what happened before, and how this story came to be, and who are the other people behind Damien.”

### ~ THE CAST ~

Nell Tiger Free (“Servant”) is Margaret Daino, a young American novice sent to Rome to work at an orphanage before she takes the veil. An orphan herself, Margaret instantly takes to the oldest girl at the orphanage, Carlita, who, like Margaret, is troubled at a young age.

“Margaret is a young woman from Pittsfield, Massachusetts, who comes to Rome to become a nun, so, she’s in the novice phase,” Free explains. “She is devout in her faith and loves life and loves the church and is very excited to be in Rome and to embark on this path that she believes is her destiny. And then things begin to derail around her. Margaret has always had a pain inside from her very turbulent childhood, and that manifests itself, sometimes outwardly, like all our pain does as humans. But she is a good person, I believe, with a good soul.”

Director/co-screenwriter Arkasha Stevenson agrees, saying, “Margaret is a very sweet girl, but she is very shy, which is something I relate to. She is very nervous, but you start to realize that the nervousness isn’t just because she has arrived at a new place and is meeting new people, but it’s something much deeper. We learn that Margaret grew up in an orphanage and suffered a lot of abuse at the hands of the nuns, and a lot of that is because Margaret experienced a lot of frightening hallucinations and visions and was subdued and restrained as a result.”

The 24-year-old actress impressed the cast and crew, many of them seasoned professionals. “I’m 72, and I actually learned a lot from her,” laughs Sonia Braga. “Nell is just amazing. She was born to be in movies and is always conscious of the cameras and her movements...just everything. I’m really impressed with her and how good she is at being so minimalist in her acting.”

“We go through this journey with Margaret, which is truly scary for her,” continues Braga. “I hope audiences feel how scary it can be for anybody to go into a place that you think is safe and then realize it is not.”

"I can't think of a better person to play this role than Nell Tiger Free, because one of the things that is so magical about Nell is that she has a strength that allows her to be extremely vulnerable on camera," adds Stevenson. "She is able to bring this delicate awkwardness that is so endearing about Margaret and that makes people love her immediately. Then, on the other hand, Nell is able to exude a ferociousness seemingly effortlessly. She is truly fearless."

Stevenson continues, "One of my favorite lines that Nell delivers in such a beautiful way is, 'You're not bad, they're just telling you you're bad because you're not doing what they want you to do,' and that is a huge theme throughout this movie."

Sonia Braga ("Kiss of the Spider Woman") is Sister Silva, the Abbess of Vizzardeli Orphanage in Rome, which is home to 62 girls. She oversees the nuns and novitiates. "In Sister Silva's mind, everything must always be in its place," says Braga. "She runs the convent with strength and order and treats the children almost like they are adults."

In describing the character, Free says, "Sister Silva is the head nun at the orphanage, and she rules with an iron fist but still has a lot of love for the girls. She is definitely a scary headmistress though. When she comes walking down the hallways, it's 'silencio,' kids...go to bed. No one else could play this role but Sonia. She is just so perfect, and she has made a character that could have just been scary and disconcerting but is actually cool as well."

Stevenson agrees, saying, "The way Sonia plays Sister Silva, it's as if there's a big ocean of boiling lava underneath this serene, put-together façade, and you feel that the second you meet her. You understand right away that there is a lot more going on with this woman: she's not a two-dimensional woman in a nun habit."

Ralph Ineson ("The Northman") is Father Brennan, an Irish priest who appears in the 1976 film (portrayed by actor Patrick Troughton). He seeks out Margaret to warn her of a terrifying conspiracy within the church. "I play him as a younger man," says Ineson. "After being excommunicated from the church, he is trying to prevent the birth of the Antichrist, which he has been trying to research for years, and which has led him to this orphanage in Rome. Now he is just trying to make good on all the terrible things he has done in the past."

"It was really spectacular to have Ralph on set," says Stevenson, "because he was loyal to the Troughton accent and was so helpful in bringing the weight of this conspiracy to screen because you can feel how much it has physically worn him and how much it haunts him. Seeing his desperation and his fear is what really helps ground the idea that this conspiracy is real and is about to wreak havoc on the world."

Says Ineson, "There are many things that I think people are going to love about this film. My favorite thing about this movie is the overall look. The costumes, the set design, taking huge squares in Rome and taking them back to 1970s with the colors, the road signs, hundreds of extras in fantastic 1970s fashion, et cetera; It was all just so immersive. It looks wonderful, but it is very, very dark as well. I mean, the original film is scary, but I think this film takes the whole legend into a much darker place."

Bill Nighy ("Living") is Cardinal Lawrence, a senior member of the Catholic church and a man of great influence and power within the Vatican. He previously served as a priest at Margaret's orphanage

in Massachusetts when she was a child. “Our film deals with a group within the Catholic Church which is very concerned that the younger generation are drifting away from the church,” Nighy explains. “My character is a cardinal with a very high rank within the Catholic Church, junior only to the Pope himself. He has specific responsibility to several institutions, including this orphanage in Rome.”

Free is extremely vocal in her praise for the veteran British actor, saying, “When you imagine how wonderful you think Bill Nighy would be, times it by a thousand, and that is how wonderful he is. He is just the most thoughtful person, is so pleasant to be around, and is as funny as anything.”

“Bill Nighy is probably one of the most regal, elegant men I’ve ever met,” says Stevenson, “so casting him was a complete no-brainer because for Margaret, Cardinal Lawrence is her only warm, safe place in the world. And Bill is a super safe place in life. He was always very supportive.”

Maria Caballero (“The Longest Night”) is Luz Valez, a young novitiate at the orphanage and Margaret’s roommate. The Spanish actress was thrilled to be cast in the role, and says, “It has been a dream to be a part of this movie. I learned a lot working with all these amazing actors and this amazing crew, and I loved playing this character and getting to spend so much time in Rome.”

“Luz is really interesting because she is a direct foil to Margaret’s character,” Stevenson explains. “She is opposed to Margaret, who has grown up in an orphanage and is now a novitiate who really hasn’t been exposed to the outside world or experienced much, while Luz has had many lives before deciding to become a nun. And you can really feel that in her.”

Tawfeek Barhom (“Mary Magdalene”) is Father Gabriel, a young member of the Catholic clergy working at the orphanage who befriends Margaret. He is mentored by Cardinal Lawrence.

Carlita Skianna, one of the older children currently at the orphanage, and someone who is ostracized from the rest of the girls, is played by Italian actress Nicole Sorace. “The First Omen” marks her first role in a feature film. “Nicole is an actress in her teens, but you would never guess that; she feels very much like an adult, so you forget that she’s really just a child,” says Stevenson. “And Nicole has this ability to become a ferocious animal at the drop of a hat, which is both terrifying and wonderful for a director.”

“Carlita is a lot taller than the other girls because she is older, and no one has wanted to adopt her,” adds Free. “And she is a quiet, sort of contained storm. There’s this storm of energy inside this kid and no one knows why, but Margaret feels it and feels a connection between the two of them.”

### ~ BEHIND THE SCENES ~

Principal photography on “The First Omen” took place from September 19 to November 22, 2022, on locations in and around Rome and on soundstages at Rome’s Lumina Studios. The creative team working behind the scenes to bring the film to life includes director of photography Aaron Morton, NZCS (“No One Will Save You”), production designer Eve Stewart (“Eternals”), costume designer Paco Delgado (“Death on the Nile”), film editors Bob Murawski, ACE (“Doctor Strange in the Multiverse of Madness”) and Amy E. Duddleston, ACE (“Mare of Easttown”), composer Mark Korven (“The Black Phone”), and prosthetic and creature designer Adrien Morot (“The Whale”).

“As producers, it was important to us to surround Arkasha (Stevenson) with the best of the best in terms of her heads of departments,” says producer David S. Goyer. “We were also determined to film the movie in Rome because we felt it would give it that sense of verisimilitude that just can’t be manufactured elsewhere. In a way, Rome itself is a character, and we wanted that ancient history to seep into every aspect of the filmmaking.”

Filming in Rome was a tremendous experience for the cast and crew. The city is known for its profusion of religious iconography and faith-based history. Director/co-screenwriter Arkasha Stevenson says, “Rome is just like this giant, beautiful museum, where it’s just gorgeous everywhere you look.”

Producer Keith Levine agrees, saying, “It was a joy to work in Rome. Usually, you set a movie somewhere and then you go shoot it in a completely different place, and you spend a lot of time and energy trying to make it look like some iconic location. So, to be in Rome, which, in some places, still feels like it did in the 1970s when the movie is set, was quite fortunate.”

Four-time Oscar®-nominated production designer Eve Stewart says she was thrilled to work with an entirely Roman crew. “It was very good for my Italian,” she laughs, “but also, their skill base was fantastic. They are amazing artisans. Everyone could make something or paint something. Working in London is almost like a machine because there is just so much being made. So, it was a joy to work in a different way.”

“One of the beautiful things about Eve is that if you wanted to move a mountain, she would do it in a day,” says Stevenson. “We shot on both practical sets, as well as in studio, and one of my favorite sets was the staff apartment that Margaret shares with Luz. There were all these small details that made you feel a little on edge. When you went into the apartment and sat down, you immediately felt on guard, but you didn’t know why.”

Adds Ralph Ineson, “Rome itself is such an unbelievable city, the eternal city, and everything about it, if you’re looking at it through the eyes of an excommunicated priest on the run, is incredibly oppressive. It feels terrifying.”

The orphanage is one of the biggest characters in the film. According to Stewart, it is the world that binds all the characters together. The buildings used for the orphanage were located in the beautiful setting of Villa Parisi and on a farm in Procoio, both of which are a few miles from downtown Rome. Stewart says, “We wanted it to be a very unique and beautiful building, and since we couldn’t find everything within one building, we put three buildings together and made sure that they all linked well with one another.”

The basement, which was constructed entirely at Lumina Studios in Rome, was especially challenging. Stewart explains, “The basement set was a tricky one because we wanted to make it the main body of the building, so we had to work with the well in the courtyard so that we then could look down into the basement through it.”

All the locations were carefully selected, as they needed to complement the color palette of the film. “The seventies have a very particular color palette,” says Stewart. “They are very warm tones: the mustards and the ochres, and that really played into the story that we were trying to tell. When Margaret first comes to Rome, it seems like a warm and golden experience for her, and one that is

full of hope. But as the story progresses, the colors desaturate and start to disappear as things become more difficult.”

The powerful colors of the '70s and the darkness and creepy atmosphere of the orphanage are brilliantly reflected in the costumes created by two-time Oscar®-nominated costume designer Paco Delgado. For the world in the orphanage with the nuns and the orphan girls, he wanted everything to have a sort of gothic feeling. “From day one, Kasha (Arkasha Stevenson) said she wanted to have these figures sort of floating through the hallways,” says Delgado. “So, we designed the costumes with light materials. They look heavy, but in fact, they are really light, and they move with the wind.”

Delgado continues, “Then for the girls, we knew that we were in an orphanage in the seventies, but we wanted a specific ambience, so the girls were dressed in uniforms and clothes that were made in the forties or fifties.”

Margaret’s look, however, was completely different. “We wanted to create an outfit that reflected the fact that she was almost a novice. But at the same time, she was out in the world. So for her costume, I looked back at what Yves Saint Laurent was doing in the seventies, when he did these amazing outfits. They looked really severe, but at the same time, they had a sense of glamour and style.”

In discussing Delgado’s craft, Stevenson says, “The details on all of Paco’s costumes were so magnificent. The nun habits are so unique: they had this unusual pleating, which became the common thread between everything in the orphanage.”

The cast and crew were unanimous in their praise for Stevenson. “My first conversation with Kasha was a Zoom conversation, and it was just so deep and intense and surprisingly emotional,” says Sonia Braga. “We talked all about making movies and being in Rome, the home of Fellini and the city of movies. It was just this very emotional, touching conversation.”

“I was very impressed seeing her at work on set, because I had no idea how big this movie was,” Braga continues. “I don’t like to relax when I’m working, I like to see everything, the cameras and all the new equipment. And what impressed me the most was that Kasha was controlling everything: the position of the camera, the light, the wardrobe...everything.”

“Arkasha Stevenson directed the shiz out of this movie,” says Nell Tiger Free. “She is like a force of nature but she is so sweet and cares so much about how we feel about the scene and what we think about the scene and isn’t precious with writing or material or anything. She’s just like, what you feel, what we feel together, is right and we’ll find it. And she is right 100 percent of the time. I have yet to ever meet a director in my life who was right 100 percent of the time with their notes and with what they are telling you to do, but she was.”

### ~ IN THEATERS ~

When “The First Omen” hits theaters, fans of the original 1976 film will finally learn how Damien came into existence. “What we’re really doing is playing a lot of horror beats, but we’re skinning them with a topicality that is going to elevate it for viewers who want to dig a little deeper and find a bit more,” says producer Keith Levine. “And for us that’s really fun because we get to evoke a response from the audience, and they get to have a fright. But they also get to think a little bit.”

“It has been fun to work on the film because everybody seems to be on the side of the angels. Actually, virtually nobody is,” laughs Bill Nighy. “Therefore, it’s a slow realization that these people, who are well meaning, their intentions are, broadly speaking, good. Nevertheless, they are also plainly on the side of the Devil. Therefore, what is scary is that everything seems super nice. Then very gradually you discover that’s not the case. There will be moments when even seasoned horror fans might want to look away because there is real horror. There is real blood. By the end of the film, you will be exhausted.”

Levine continues, “The fact that people or institutions with power would do horrible things, supported by what they think are amazing ideas and well intentioned, is really creepy. Here we get to see how those ideas of religious fundamentalists could lead to horrible things, all with the purpose of keeping their power or, in their eyes, making the world a better place.”

“I’m really proud of this film because I think we take a lot of big swings when it comes to horror,” says director/co-screenwriter Arkasha Stevenson. “And I do think that a lot of those are particular to the female experience and the female perspective, and the fact that we had a whole film production who was in support of that and ready to take that big jump with me is a really cool feeling.”

Adds co-screenwriter/executive producer Tim Smith, “There was such an incredible feeling of camaraderie on this project. Everyone really came together in support of Arkasha’s vision for the film, and elevated the finished product beyond what we could have ever imagined. From the beginning we have always viewed this film as a descent from heaven to hell. A dream that curdles into a nightmare through the lens of our protagonist, Margaret. We can’t wait for fans of the franchise and newcomers to go on that journey.”

### ~ ABOUT THE CAST ~

A talented and charming actress, **NELL TIGER FREE (Margaret Daino)** continues to expand her repertoire with dynamic roles alongside other notable actors and filmmakers.

Free can currently be seen starring in the fourth and final season of the M Night Shyamalan series “Servant,” in the titular role of Leanne Grayson or the Servant, opposite Lauren Ambrose, Rupert Grint, and Toby Kebbell. The psychological thriller follows a Philadelphia couple in mourning after an unspeakable tragedy creates a rift in their marriage and opens the door for a mysterious force to enter their home. The series’ first season was released on Apple TV+ on November 28, 2019, and remains one of the streamer’s biggest hits to date. The Hollywood Reporter cited her performance as “sad, halting and totally unreadable in all the ways the story demands,” and “eerily impassive” by Entertainment Weekly. Since the series premiere in 2019, it has been nominated for numerous accolades, including a Hollywood Critics Association Award for best streaming series, drama, as well as a Critics Choice Super Award in the category of best horror series, among others.

In 2019, she starred opposite Miles Teller in Nicholas Winding Refn’s limited series “Too Old to Die Young.” The thriller noir series follows a young detective-turned-vigilante-killer who lives in a post-moral universe in Los Angeles. The Amazon Prime series debuted at Cannes and was released for streaming on June 14, 2019.



Free gained international exposure from her recurring role on the critically acclaimed series “Game of Thrones” as a young Myrcella Baratheon, opposite Emilia Clarke, Kit Harrington, Lena Headey, Peter Dinklage, and Nikolaj Coster-Waldau.

Additional film credits include Rufus Norris’ “Broken,” with Lily James and Tim Roth, as well as “Mr. Stink,” opposite Hugh Bonneville.

**BILL NIGHY (Cardinal Lawrence)** is a multi-award-winning actor of both the stage and screen, with an expansive career spanning fifty years. Amongst other awards, he has been nominated for an Academy Award® for best actor (“Living”) and has received a BAFTA for best supporting actor (“Love Actually”).

Nighy can currently be seen in the action-comedy “Role Play,” from Amazon Prime Video. Kaley Cuoco plays the role of Emma, a woman who is seemingly living the perfect life alongside her loving husband (David Oyelowo) and two kids in the suburbs of New Jersey. When the couple decides to spice up their love life by doing a little role-playing, things go haywire when her husband David finds out his wife leads a secret life as an assassin for hire. Nighy plays Bob Kellerman, who has a mysterious connection to Emma’s secret life.

He has been announced as part of the leading cast of “Joy,” an upcoming Netflix feature based on the true story of the world’s first in-vitro fertilization baby. Spanning from 1968 to 1978, the film follows three trailblazers facing opposition from the church, state, media, and medical establishment, in their pursuit of the world’s first test tube baby, Louise Joy Brown. The three figures are a young nurse, a visionary scientist, and an innovative surgeon, played by Thomasin McKenzie, James Norton, and Nighy, respectively. Ben Taylor directs from a script by BAFTA-winning writer Jack Thorne, who co-created the story with his wife, Rachel Mason.

Nighy’s most recent project, “Living,” adapted from the 1952 Japanese classic “Iriku” by Akira Kurosawa, Shinobu Hashimoto, and Hideo Oguni, premiered at the 2022 Sundance Film Festival. Directed by Oliver Hermanus, he stars in the lead role of Mr. Williams, a veteran civil servant who learns he has a terminal illness and decides he can make one last change before he slips away from the world. For this role, he was nominated for an Academy Award® (best actor 2023), BAFTA (leading actor 2023), Critics Choice Award (best actor 2023), and a SAG Award® (outstanding performance by a male actor in a leading role 2023).

In August 2021 it was announced that Nighy would star in upcoming feature “The Beautiful Game,” a Netflix film directed by Thea Sharrock which revolves around a group of English homeless footballers who travel from London to Rome for the Homeless World Cup.

In 2022 he featured in Showtime’s “The Man Who Fell to Earth,” opposite Chiwetel Ejiofor and Naomi Harris. The series was a continuation of the novel by Walter Tevis and the iconic 1976 film starring David Bowie. Nighy starred alongside Johnny Depp in the redemptive thriller “Minamata,” which received its premiere at the Berlin International Film Festival 2020 and was released theatrically in 2021. The film follows war photographer W. Eugene Smith as he travels to Japan and challenges the corporation responsible for poisoning the people of Minamata in 1971. In early 2020 Nighy starred in Autumn de Wilde’s adaptation of Jane Austen’s classic novel “Emma,” in the role of Emma’s father, Mr. Woodhouse, alongside Anya Taylor-Joy and Johnny Flynn.

In 2019 Nighy was seen in Lone Scherfig's "The Kindness of Strangers," which opened the Berlin International Film Festival; the highly acclaimed "Pokémon: Detective Pikachu"; Scrabble-centric comedy drama "Sometimes Always Never"; and the romantic drama feature film "Hope Gap," opposite Annette Bening.

In 2018 he starred in the multi-award-winning film "The Bookshop," as reclusive book-lover Edmund Brundish, and in the TV miniseries adaptation of Agatha Christie's "Ordeal by Innocence," in which he played the lead role of Leo Argyll. In 2017 Nighy was seen in "The Limehouse Golem," which premiered at The Toronto International Film Festival in 2016. Also featured during TIFF 2016 was "Their Finest," which saw him star alongside Gemma Arterton and Sam Claflin. His iconic turn as an aging rock star in Richard Curtis' 2003 hit "Love Actually," won him the Evening Standard British Film Award, among others. He later reprised the role in the charity special "Red Nose Day Actually" (2017).

2014 saw Nighy star in "Pride," which won best British independent film at the 2014 BIFAs. In 2013, he once again teamed up with Richard Curtis for the time-travelling romantic comedy "About Time." He also played the role of Douglas Ainslie in "The Best Exotic Marigold Hotel" (2012) and its sequel, "The Second Best Exotic Marigold Hotel" (2015).

His extensive list of film credits also includes "Wild Target" (2010), "Pirate Radio" (2009), "Valkyrie" (2008), "Notes on a Scandal" (2006), "The Constant Gardener" (2005), "Lawless Heart" (2001), and "Still Crazy" (1998).

Nighy began his career on the stage and has since earned acclaim for his work in numerous plays, including David Hare's "Pravda" (1985), "Skylight" (1995), and "A Map of the World" (1983). He received an Olivier Award nomination in 2001 for best actor for his performance in Joe Penhall's "Blue/Orange."

**TAWFEEK BARHOM (Father Gabriel)** is best known for his impressive leading role in "Cairo Conspiracy," directed by Tarik Saleh, which won best screenplay and was nominated for the Palme d'Or at the 2022 Cannes Film Festival. He can next be seen starring in Terrence Malick's epic biblical drama "The Last Planet." He recently wrapped filming the French film "Les Fantomes," directed by Jonathan Millet.

Recent credits include Reed Morano's feature film "The Rhythm Section," alongside Blake Lively and Jude Law; "The Letter for the King," for Netflix; "Baghdad Central," for Channel 4; "Mary Magdalene"; "The Looming Tower," for Hulu; "Dig"; and "Tyrant."

**SONIA BRAGA (Sister Silva)** is a Brazilian American actress. She is known in the English-speaking world for her Golden Globe®-nominated performances in "Kiss of the Spider Woman" (1985) and "Moon Over Parador" (1988). Braga can most recently be seen in the Lionsgate/Amazon action-comedy feature "Shotgun Wedding" (2023), starring opposite Jennifer Lopez.

She also received a BAFTA Award nomination in 1981 for "Dona Flor and Her Two Husbands" (first released in 1976). For the 1994 television film "The Burning Season," she was nominated for an Emmy® and a third Golden Globe®. Her other film credits include "Aquarius" (2016)

and “Bacurau” (2019), and television credits include “The Cosby Show” (1986), “Sex and the City” (2001), “American Family” (2002), and “Alias” (2005).

**MARIA CABALLERO (Luz)** is an up-and-coming Spanish actress. Her film credits include the features “Amar,” directed by Esteban Crespo; “Tiempo Después,” directed by Goya Award winner José Cuerda; and “Olvido,” directed by Inés París, for which she won best performance by a lead actress at the Berlanga Awards and best upcoming actress in Un Futuro De Cine at Cinema Jove.

She was part of the main cast in the Netflix series “The Longest Night” and the Netflix series “Alma, the Girl in the Mirror.” She’s currently filming a new project which is confidential.

**RALPH INESON (Father Brennan)** was most recently seen in FilmNation’s “To Catch a Killer,” opposite Shailene Woodley, Screen Gem’s “The Pope’s Exorcist,” opposite Russell Crowe, and in Gareth Edwards’ “The Creator” for New Regency. Other film credits include Robert Eggers’ “Nosferatu” remake and the independent horror film “Lord of Misrule.”

He previously starred alongside Stana Katic in Amazon’s hit series “Absentia,” a 10-episode straight-to-series crime thriller for Sony Pictures Television. He also had significant arcs on “Willow,” “Trigger Point,” “The Accidental Medium,” “Chernobyl,” and more.

Ineson recently appeared in Amazon’s “Catherine Called Birdy” and Regency’s “The Northman,” opposite Alexander Skarsgård, Nicole Kidman, Ethan Hawke, and Anya Taylor-Joy. He previously appeared in Joel Coen’s A24 feature “The Tragedy of Macbeth,” STX Entertainment’s horror film “Brahms: The Boy II,” the independent film “The Last Victim,” opposite Ali Larter, and the action feature “Gunpowder Milkshake” for StudioCanal. He also appeared in Steven Spielberg’s feature film “Ready Player One” for Warner Bros., and in the Coen brothers’ film “The Ballad of Buster Scruggs,” alongside James Franco.

He is perhaps best known for starring in A24’s “The Witch,” which premiered at Sundance and won Robert Eggers an award for best directing. The film co-stars Anya Taylor-Joy and was also nominated for the grand jury prize. “The Witch” was the largest opening for A24 ever, surpassing “Ex Machina,” “Room,” and “Spring Breakers.”

**NICOLE SORACE (Carlita)** was born on June 24, 2008, in Polistena in the province of Reggio Calabria, Italy. From an early age she proved to be a lively and very ambitious child. She has always loved sports, in fact she practiced many of them, including horse riding, volleyball, skateboarding, and many others. But her biggest dream has always been to act. She has always loved observing people, putting herself in their shoes and impersonating them. At the age of 12 she was able to tell her parents, who, after discovering her passion, decided to enroll her in the SRC (the acting school of Calabria). The following year, at the tender age of 13, she was selected for her first TV series, “The Good Mothers.” Her latest TV series, “Summer Limited Edition,” was released in summer 2023, where she plays the character of Luce, the protagonist.

Sorace is 15 years old, and is studying at the Acting School of Calabria, and attending the second year of classical high school.

**ANDREA ARCANGELI (Paolo)** was born in Pescara, Italy, in 1993, and started acting in a theater company at the age of 16. A few years later he made his first foray into cinema and television,

joining Donald Sutherland and Hilary Swank in Danny Boyle's TV miniseries "Trust," which premiered on FX in 2018. The next year he was chosen to lead the TV show "Romulus," produced and directed by Matteo Rovere and distributed in more than 40 countries by Sky and HBO Europe.

In 2021 he starred in the feature film "The Divine Ponytail" for Netflix, based on the life of one of the most important Italian football players ever, Roberto Baggio. Other credits include "Like Sheep Among Wolves," which premiered at the Rotterdam International Film Festival in 2023. He is currently filming a TV series and has two feature films coming out in 2024: the Mexican-Italian production "Casi el Paraiso," based on the best-selling novel by Luis Spota, and "The First Omen," directed by Arkasha Stevenson for 20th Century Studios.

### ~ ABOUT THE FILMMAKERS ~

**ARKASHA STEVENSON (Director/Co-Screenwriter)** and **TIM SMITH (Co-Screenwriter/Executive Producer)** first worked together on the short film "Pineapple," which debuted at the 2017 Sundance Film Festival, which Stevenson wrote and directed, and Smith produced. They later sold the concept as a TV series to AMC, for which they both wrote the pilot. Together they have also written original projects for Hulu and Amazon, and both co-executive produced "Channel Zero: Butcher's Block" for Syfy, on which Stevenson directed every episode.

They continued their collaboration with Nick Antosca on "Brand New Cherry Flavor" at Netflix, with Stevenson directing the pilot and Smith serving as co-producer. Stevenson has also directed episodes of FX's "Legion" and USA's "Briarpatch."

Prior to entertainment, Stevenson was a photojournalist for the Los Angeles Times, while Smith worked on "Duck Butter" and "Searching" as a production supervisor.

**DAVID S. GOYER (Producer)** has earned a reputation for telling character-driven stories adapted from the otherworldly realms of superheroes, fantasy, and the supernatural. His breakout came in 1998 when he wrote the action hit "Blade," starring Wesley Snipes, based on the Marvel Comics vampire hunter. Since then, he has solidified himself as a writer, director, and producer who elevates genre-driven stories.

Goyer currently serves as executive producer and showrunner for one of television's most epic series: "Foundation" on Apple TV+, based on the iconic Isaac Asimov novels. The second season was recently named to Vanity Fair's, Esquire's, Polygon's, and Rotten Tomatoes' lists of the best shows of 2023, and the third season has begun production. Also, for Apple TV+, Goyer and his company, Phantom Four Films, will be producing the upcoming "Murderbot" series, to star Alexander Skarsgård, based on the books by Martha Wells.

On the film side, Goyer and Phantom Four have just announced a reimagining of "The Blob," with David Bruckner set to direct. Phantom Four and Bruckner previously partnered on such hits as "The Night House," starring Rebecca Hall, and "Hellraiser." Other Phantom Four films include "Antlers" and "The Tomorrow War."

Previously, Goyer scripted and collaborated with Christopher Nolan on the story for "Man of Steel." Goyer also worked with Nolan on the mega-hit "Dark Knight" trilogy, starting with the screenplay for "Batman Begins." Goyer went on to team with Nolan on the story for the billion-

dollar blockbuster “The Dark Knight,” for which they received a Writers Guild of America Award nomination for best adapted screenplay, followed by the story’s conclusion in “The Dark Knight Rises.” Additionally, Goyer co-wrote and produced “Batman v. Superman,” which broke the record for biggest March opening weekend in box-office history.

In 2002 Goyer made his feature film directorial debut with the drama “Zigzag,” for which he also wrote the screenplay, based on the acclaimed novel by Landon Napoleon. In the same year Goyer wrote 2002’s “Blade II,” on which he also served as an executive producer. His other directing credits include “The Invisible,” starring Justin Chatwin and Marcia Gay Harden, and the hit supernatural thriller “The Unborn,” starring Odette Annable and Gary Oldman. In 2004 he directed, wrote, and produced the last of the trilogy, “Blade: Trinity.”

In addition to filmmaking, Goyer made his debut in video games with the story for the smash hit “Call of Duty: Black Ops,” and penned the follow up, “Call of Duty: Black Ops 2,” as well as “Black Ops: Cold War.” Goyer also wrote and executive-produced the groundbreaking VR series “Vader Immortal” for Lucasfilm and Oculus.

In television, Goyer’s other work includes the series “Da Vinci’s Demons,” for which he served as creator, director, and executive producer, focusing on the life of Leonardo da Vinci; “Constantine Krypton”; and the cult classic “Flashforward.” Goyer also co-wrote the pilot and serves as executive producer for Neil Gaiman’s “Sandman,” which is currently filming its second season.

Most recently, Goyer has forayed into the Web 3 space as the advisor to Story Protocol, an innovative startup building a new IP-collaboration, story-based platform that will debut later this year.

**KEITH LEVINE (Producer)** currently serves as president of Phantom Four Films, where he oversees a massive slate of both TV and film projects. Past films produced while at Phantom Four include Searchlight’s “The Night House” and “Hellraiser” for Spyglass/Hulu.

Prior to his time at Phantom Four, Levine worked as a studio executive at Dimension Films, where he was involved in overseeing numerous feature films, including “Polaroid,” “47 Meters Down,” “Piranha 3D,” “Youth and Revolt,” “The Road,” “Scream 4,” “Spy Kids 4,” “Scary Movie 5,” “Dark Skies,” “Apollo 18,” “Sin City,” “A Dame to Kill For,” “Paddington,” “Gold,” “Paddington 2,” “The War with Grandpa,” and “Amityville: The Awakening,” to name a few.

Before that he got his start in the film business working as an independent sales agent with New York-based Submarine Entertainment, helping to find distribution for acclaimed documentaries such as “Food, Inc.,” “Dear Zachary,” and “The Cove,” as well as narrative features like “Humpday.” In the TV space, Levine was an executive producer on the Netflix animated series “Spy Kids: Mission Critical,” and a producer of both MTV’s series adaptation of “Scream” and Spike TV’s “The Mist,” based on the story by Stephen King. He also served as an executive producer on the massively successful “Batman Unburied” podcast for Spotify and DC Entertainment.

**WHITNEY BROWN (Executive Producer)** is an executive/line producer based in Toronto, Canada, with extensive film production experience not only in the U.S. and Canadian film industry, but also

in production centers around the globe for over 20 years. Location shoots, which highlight her specialized skills, have included Holland, Spain, Malta, Hungary, France, Italy, and the U.K.

Her many feature film credits include independent lower budget films as well as larger studio pictures, including the political satire “Dick,” starring Will Ferrell, Michelle Williams, and Kirsten Dunst; “The In-Laws,” starring Michael Douglas and Albert Brooks; the successful first installment of “X-Men,” starring Hugh Jackman, Patrick Stewart, and Halle Berry; the highly praised and box-office favorite “Red,” starring Bruce Willis, Helen Mirren, John Malkovich, and Morgan Freeman; “Charlie Bartlett,” starring Robert Downey, Jr. and Anton Yelchin; the critically praised “Lars and the Real Girl,” starring Ryan Gosling and Emily Mortimer; “My Spy,” starring Dave Bautista; and most recently “8-Bit Christmas,” directed by Mike Dowse and starring Steve Zahn and Neil Patrick Harris.

She is a member of DGC, DGA, and PGA, and is a bilingual French speaker.

**GRACIE WHEELAN (Executive Producer)**, currently vice president at Phantom Four Films, recently served as co-producer on “Hellraiser,” directed by David Bruckner, as well as an executive producer on Spotify and WB’s original audio series “Batman Unburied” and “The Riddler: Secrets in the Dark.”

Prior to joining Phantom Four, she worked on “Venom” and “Jumanji: Welcome to the Jungle” as an executive at Matt Tolmach Productions. In addition to producing independent films, she started at Sony Pictures Worldwide Acquisitions, working on such films as “Don’t Breathe,” “Professor Marston and the Wonder Women,” and “Boundaries.”

**AARON MORTON, NCZS (Director of Photography)** had his first credit as a 2nd AC on “Xena: Warrior Princess.” Over the show’s six seasons, he worked his way up to 2nd unit director of photography and shot one episode as main unit director of photography. In the following years he worked as 2nd unit director of photography on many international productions that came to New Zealand, including “30 Days of Night” and “Underworld 3: Rise of the Lycans.” In 2009 he began shooting “Spartacus: Blood and Sand,” followed several years later by the reboot of the “Evil Dead” film franchise.

In the last few years Morton has shot on television series including “Orphan Black,” for which he won four consecutive Canadian screen awards, multiple “Black Mirror” episodes and “American Gods.” He was also 2nd unit on “Mulan.” He shot four episodes of “The Lord of the Rings: Rings of Power” series for Amazon, and most recently worked on “No One Will Save You” for Brian Duffield, which aired on Hulu.

**EVE STEWART (Production Designer)** is a native Londoner who worked as a theatre designer for many years before going back to the Royal College of Art to study architecture, while she had her two daughters. She went on to design several architectural projects as well as several international art exhibitions, but always continued to design for theater.

After designing a play for director Mike Leigh, Stewart was asked to art direct on his controversial feature “Naked” (1993), progressing to production designer on other Leigh titles, including “Topsy Turvy” (1999) and “Vera Drake” (2004). As production designer, she has collaborated with director and friend Tom Hooper on several titles, including “The Damned United” (2009), “The King’s Speech” (2010), “Les Misérables” (2012), “The Danish Girl,” (2015) and “Cats” (2019).

An established member of the British film industry, Stewart has been nominated four times for Academy Awards® for best achievement in production design, and five times by BAFTA for best production design, winning for “Les Misérables” in 2012. Other Academy Award nominations are for “Topsy Turvy” (1999), “The King’s Speech” (2010), “The Danish Girl,” (2015) and “Cats” (2019).

In addition to her film accolades, her work in television was recognized for Emmy® Awards for outstanding art direction for a miniseries or movie for “Elizabeth I” (2005), and she was nominated in the same category for “Upstairs Downstairs” (2010).

Other film credits include Gore Verbinski’s “A Cure for Wellness” (2016), Paul McGuigan’s film “Stars Don’t Die in Liverpool” (2017), Fede Alvarez’s “The Girl in the Spider’s Web” (2018), and Chloe Zhao’s “Eternals” (2021).

Stewart most recently worked on Sony’s “Kraven the Hunter,” directed by J.C. Chandor and starring Aaron Taylor-Johnson, Ariana DeBose, Fred Hechinger, and Russell Crowe, and “Ghostbusters: Frozen Empire.”

**PACO DELGADO (Costume Designer)** is based in Madrid, Spain. He studied set and costume design at Institut del Teatre in Barcelona and completed a master’s degree at Motley Theatre Design School in London. He has received numerous Academy Award®, BAFTA, Critics Choice, Costume Designers Guild, and Satellite Award nominations throughout his career in the film industry, which has spanned more than 20 years.

Delgado has been a frequent collaborator of writer-director Álex de la Iglesia. To date they have worked on five films together, from “800 Bullets” in 2002 to “Witching and Bitching” in 2013. He has worked with writer-director Pedro Almodóvar on two films: “Bad Education” and “The Skin I Live In,” the latter for which he received a Goya Award nomination. Delgado also won Goya, Gaudí and European Film Awards for his costume designs on the black-and-white film “Blancanieves” for writer-director Pablo Berger. His work on Alejandro González Iñárritu’s “Biutiful,” starring Javier Bardem, earned him an Ariel Award nomination.

Delgado has worked with many acclaimed directors. He designed the costumes for the second and third installments in M. Night Shyamalan’s “Unbreakable” trilogy, “Split” and “Glass.” He worked on the Disney film “A Wrinkle in Time,” directed by Ava DuVernay and based on the children’s novel. Jaume Collet-Serra’s “Jungle Cruise,” based on the Disney theme park ride, also highlights his designs, as does “Death on the Nile,” directed by Kenneth Branagh, “John Wick 4,” directed by Chad Stahelski, and “The Unbearable Weight of Massive Talent,” directed by Tom Gormican.

Most notably, he received Academy Award® nominations for his costume designs in Tom Hooper’s films “Les Misérables” and “The Danish Girl,” the latter for which he also received a Costume Designers Guild Award.

In addition to his many feature film accomplishments, Delgado is also a prolific costume designer for opera and theater productions and is a member of the Spanish cinema syndicate TACE, the Costume Designers Guild, the Academy of Motion Pictures Arts and Sciences, and the European Film Academy.

**AMY E. DUDDLESTON, ACE (Film Editor)** has over 30 years of experience in feature and television picture editing. Starting out as an apprentice editor, she quickly made her way up to assistant editor, working on films like “My Own Private Idaho,” “Corrina, Corrina,” and “To Die For.”

As editor, she has cut 20 features films, including “High Art,” “Laurel Canyon,” “Elegy,” and Gus Van Sant’s remake of “Psycho,” as well as 80 hours of television on series such as “Dexter,” “The Killing,” “Vida,” “In Treatment,” and “Mare of Easttown,” for which she was nominated for two Emmys® for outstanding editing for a limited series, and won an Eddie Award from the American Cinema Editors. Most recently she edited episodes of the HBO limited series “Love & Death,” starring Elizabeth Olsen and Jesse Plemons. She has been a member of the Motion Picture Editors Guild since 1991, and currently serves on the board of directors. She is also a member of American Cinema Editors, AMPAS and the Television Academy.

Duddleston is a graduate of the University of Arizona with a BFA in fine arts studies. She lives in Los Angeles with her wife, Hilary, and their child, Vincent.

**BOB MURAWSKI, ACE (Film Editor)** is an Academy Award®-winning film editor, known for his longtime collaboration with Sam Raimi on “Army of Darkness,” “Spider-Man,” “Drag Me to Hell,” and “Doctor Strange in the Multiverse of Madness.”

In addition to his work with Raimi, Murawski won acclaim for his editing on Kathryn Bigelow’s 2009 best picture Academy Award® winner “The Hurt Locker,” for which he took home the coveted Oscar® (shared with frequent co-editor and wife, Chris Innis), as well as the American Cinema Editors (ACE) award, England’s BAFTA prize, and a slew of national film critics’ awards and nominations. In 2018, Murawski completed the editing of Orson Welles’ legendary unfinished film “The Other Side of the Wind,” earning numerous citations, including the prestigious Campari Passion for Cinema Award at the 75th Venice International Film Festival.

Other credits include John Woo’s “Hard Target,” Hammer Films’ “The Resident,” and music videos for The Ramones and Motorhead.

Outside of the editing room, Murawski operates Grindhouse Releasing, a Hollywood-based distribution company dedicated to the restoration and preservation of classic cult films. Founded in 1996, Grindhouse has produced critically acclaimed deluxe edition DVDs and Blu-rays of such films as the notorious “Cannibal Holocaust,” Lucio Fulci’s Italian horror masterpiece “The Beyond,” the 1971 drive-in theater epic “I Drink Your Blood,” and the late-sixties Burt Lancaster classic “The Swimmer,” which was awarded the Best Blu-ray of 2014 by the International Press Academy. Grindhouse Releasing is also committed to theatrical distribution. The company recently presented the premiere theatrical release of Duke Mitchell’s previously unfinished 1976 crime saga “Gone with the Pope,” and the restoration and re-release of the original “Evil Dead,” presented in glorious 35mm in cinemas throughout the world.

**MARK KORVEN (Composer)** is a Toronto-based composer for film and television. He is best known for his work on the 2015 period horror film “The Witch,” which won the best director award at Sundance for director Robert Eggers. He also scored Eggers’ follow-up, “The Lighthouse,” starring Willem Dafoe and Robert Pattinson, which won the critics prize at the Cannes Film Festival in 2019.



Korven has composed for episodic television series such as Ridley Scott's "The Terror," "The Terror: Infamy," "Them," "Chapelwaite," and the No. 1 Amazon science fiction series "The Peripheral." Director Scott Derrickson chose Korven to score his feature film "The Black Phone," which earned over \$160 million at the box office on an \$18 million budget.

Korven is also a multi-instrumentalist specializing in world music and, together with Tony Duggan-Smith, developed the notorious horror musical instrument the Apprehension Engine.

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