
SONY PICTURES CLASSICS

THE MEDDLER

**Written and Directed by
Lorene Scafaria**

Produced by Joy Gorman Wettels

Official Selection
Toronto International Film Festival 2015

RT: 100 min

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THE MEDDLER

Cast

Marnie Minervini	SUSAN SARANDON
Lori Minervini	ROSE BYRNE
Zipper	J.K. SIMMONS
Freddy/Fredo	JERROD CARMICHAEL
Jillian	CECILY STRONG
Emily	LUCY PUNCH
Trish	CASEY WILSON
Jacob	JASON RITTER
Elaine	SARAH BAKER
Mark	MICHAEL McKEAN
TV Mom	LAURA SAN GIACOMO
TV Dad	HARRY HAMLIN

Production Crew

Written and Directed by	LORENE SCAFARIA
Producer	JOY GORMAN WETTELS
Executive Producers	PAUL GREEN
	STEVE GOLIN
	SHEA KAMMER
	SUSAN SARANDON
Line Producer	FIONA WALSH
Director of Photography	BRETT PAWLAK
Editor	KAYLA M. EMTER
Music Score	JONATHAN SADOFF
Production Designer	CHRIS L. SPELLMAN
Set Designer	KARUNA KARMARKAR
Costume Designer	ANNIE BLOOM

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Synopsis

Even though her husband's death changed her life forever, that hasn't stopped eternal optimist Marnie Minervini (SUSAN SARANDON) from doing the best she can to be there for her grown daughter, Lori (ROSE BYRNE), a successful (but still single) television writer. Marnie has relocated from New Jersey to Los Angeles to live near Lori. Armed with her new iPhone and a comfortable bank account, Marnie approaches every day as a new adventure, embracing every opportunity to make a new friend or strike up a conversation with a stranger.

She's also a daily – make that hourly – presence in Lori's life. The onslaught of advice – about Lori's breakup with handsome actor Jacob (JASON RITTER), or what Lori really needs to be happy, or what Lori should be talking about with her therapist – is starting to drive Lori a bit crazy as she tries to finish a new project. Of course, Marnie doesn't think she's meddling – she's just loving her daughter, the way that only a mother can. With five or six phone messages a day. And texts. And visiting Lori's therapist for a chat. And sharing every detail of every encounter.

Lori finds an opportunity to draw some strict boundaries when her job takes her to New York. She insists that Marnie remain in L.A. to watch her dogs, and Marnie doesn't seem too eager to be near her husband's family, as there are still decisions to be made about his final resting place. Ripped away from the only person she thinks needs her, Marnie quickly involves herself in other people's lives. She'll pay for the wedding of one of Lori's friends (even if she can never quite remember the friend's name); she'll help the friendly sales clerk at the Apple Store go back to college; she'll volunteer at a local hospital; even stumble onto a film set where she is mistaken for an extra. Anyplace where someone needs her.

Her generosity wins her many new friends, but Marnie can't deny to herself that she's still avoiding the thing that drives her compulsion to help: she's frightened of being alone, and unsure of how to let go of the memory of her husband and make things better with Lori. She avoids, as best as she can, the advances of two very different suitors (MICHAEL McKEAN and J.K. SIMMONS). As she navigates the unexpected consequences of her desire to meddle in other people's lives, Marnie discovers a stronger, more genuine part of herself, more secure in her ability to take care of herself before she reaches out to help others.

Short synopsis

With a new iPhone, an apartment near the Grove, and a comfortable bank account left to her by her beloved late husband, Marnie Minervini has happily relocated from New Jersey to Los Angeles to be near her daughter Lori, a successful (but still single) screenwriter, and smother her with motherly love. But when the dozens of texts, unexpected visits, and conversations dominated by unsolicited advice force Lori to draw strict personal boundaries, Marnie finds ways to channel her eternal optimism and forceful generosity to change the lives of others – as well as her own – and find a new purpose in life.

THE MEDDLER

Director's Statement

It was a few years ago. My boyfriend had just dumped me and my father was still dead. I hated my job and LA and every thought in my head. And just when I wanted to pick up and go anywhere else, my mother sold the house in New Jersey and moved three thousand miles to be closer to me.

I've been raising her in Los Angeles ever since.

My mom spends a lot of time by herself. I have a lot of guilt about that. And a lot of resentment about the guilt, and then some more guilt about the resentment, with lots of layers of love in between. I wish I could fill the void that my father left, but he was larger than life. And I miss him like crazy.

After he died, my mom and I were grieving so differently, it was hard to find common ground. But in watching her handle her grief so beautifully, so optimistically, I realized that I wanted to tell her story. And I wanted to be honest about it—how lonely it was, how mean I could be, how annoying she could be, but also how generous and giving, and how unbelievably brave she was for making that big of a sea change.

So this is *her* story, but with a little more adventure and trouble and fun and even a love interest with a mustache. It's an apology and a pep talk and a reality check and a bunch of wish fulfillment. But it's not just for my mother. It's for your mother. It's for you. It's for anyone who knows what it's like to start over. It's for anyone who's been left behind. It's about our struggle to be understood, to not be forgotten. But above all, it's the story of someone we should all be so lucky to be annoyed with sometimes: a mother who loves us a little too much.

Lorene Scafaria – “The Meddler”

THE MEDDLER

About the Production

“The Meddler” came to life on the set of Lorene Scafaria’s first feature film, “Seeking a Friend for the End of the World.” Although Scafaria was thrilled to be helming her first film and working with the likes of Steve Carell and Keira Knightley, she admits she was still in something of a daze after the death of her larger-than-life father, Joe, the year before. In the middle of her grief and this important time in her career, Scafaria’s mother, Gail, decided to relocate to Los Angeles to be near her only daughter. “The Meddler” producer Joy Gorman, who also produced “Seeking,” remembers Gail hanging around the set, making friends with everyone: “I remember Lorene joking to Gail– ‘the next one is going to be all about you, and it’s going to be called ‘The Meddler.’ But she wasn’t joking. It eventually became very real.”

For Lorene Scafaria, finding a project on which to focus after the completion of “Seeking a Friend for the End of the World” eventually came around to that joke – but not just because it was a silly idea among friends. In the time since her father’s death, Scafaria had seen how much her mother’s life had changed, and how their own relationship had evolved through their different approaches to moving on. “We’re all survivors of something,” Scafaria says about the story she wanted to tell about a woman like her mother. “We’ve all been left behind by someone, by our ancestors – sometimes it happens ahead of schedule, sometimes right in front of our eyes. There’s something unifying and comforting in it - we’re all in it together.”

As she dealt with her own “normal” personal and career crises, Scafaria, like her on-screen counterpart Lori, for a while felt overwhelmed by her mother’s new daily presence in her life, and the need to respond to her mother’s need to constantly give. To the writer and her producer, that simple concept and character suggested a number of ideas. A “Fargo”-like series where an aggressively generous older woman gets involved in solving crimes? An exploration of a mother-daughter relationship? Ultimately these felt too contrived, and against the spirit of how Lorene conceived of the character named Marnie Minervini. “Lorene wanted to create a portrait of a woman who touches people’s lives with this incredible generosity and hopefulness,” Gorman observes about the eternally optimistic and surprisingly effective Marnie. “Like many women of her generation, Marnie lived her entire life for everyone else, and for the first time in her life she gets to make decisions about what she wants to do.”

The point wasn’t to force the character into a late-life crisis, or insist that her story could only be told through the prism of her relationship to another character – a romantic partner or a child. Certainly those elements are there in Marnie’s life, but they are things that give her balance and perspective rather than a sole source of meaning or comfort. “This is not a dysfunctional family movie,” Scafaria says plainly, explaining the way in which “The Meddler” avoids traditional “will our family survive the crisis” melodrama. “I came from an Italian family – we’ve always fought and cried and yelled at each other, but we always loved each other and had the best intentions.

Scafaria clarifies that “The Meddler” is not simply an account of what happened to her mother in the years following her husband’s death, nor is it a kind of personal diary of her own perspective intended for personal cathartic effect. “It’s really a kind of wish fulfillment for her,” she says. Scafaria was often inspired by real-life comments or events that were reimagined as larger events in Marnie’s life. For example, when Gail Scafaria first moved to Los Angeles, she did indeed propose footing the bill for Joy Gorman’s wedding. “That conversation actually happened, although we didn’t go through with it…” Gorman remembers today. “Having lost my own Italian mother who called 6 times a day, Gail acted as a mother to me like she does for Jillian and Freddy. It’s such a breath of fresh air to have someone be so truly kind and generous. So many people in this world are jaded and competitive, and those are not words that are in Gail’s – or Marnie’s – lexicon.”

“The more specific I got, the more universal the story started to become,” says Lorene Scafaria of bringing Marnie to life out of her mother. “I obviously had this very specific person – someone whose voice I can hear in my head – but it seemed like other people could relate to it.” Certainly, the “pushy” mother / mother-in-law character type – often Jewish, Irish, or (as in Marnie’s case) Italian – is something that would be familiar to most audiences, though that character is usually used for anything except comedic effect and occasional pearls of wisdom along the younger character’s journey. But Scafaria thinks that the appeal of Marnie ran a lot deeper than simply rethinking that stereotype: “A lucky percentage of people have a mother who really loves them,” she observes. “Marnie is a character who is defined by how she loves others and she does it well, so most people really see their own mother in this – and themselves.” In fact, Scafaria recalls the reaction of actor Bobby Cannavale, Rose Byrne’s fiancé, when Byrne shared the script with him. “He told her, ‘this is me, I’m the meddler!’ So I guess you are either the one who is doing the calling and texting and meddling, or you’re the one on the receiving end,” she says.

As they were imagining it, Gorman and Scafaria were well aware that the project didn’t exactly sound like a typical studio film. It’s about a woman in her mid-sixties who finds direction by reaching out and connecting to new people through compulsive and unusual acts of generosity – neither superhero movie nor traditional rom-com - with a story rooted in characters’ emotions and connections, not by life-or-death crises and last-minute plot twists. “I can’t tell you how many times someone told us that they loved the character, but could we make it a two-hander? Can we make Lori’s part more important?” remembers Scafaria. At one point, she even switched representation when she felt like she wasn’t getting the support for the project that she needed. “Some people told me this had to go to TV because that’s where female characters are allowed to be heard,” she remembers, even penning a “pilot episode” version of Marnie’s story at one point. “My heart wasn’t in it,” she says. “Marnie should have a cinematic life. Characters her age on film are so often disrespected and laughed at. Marnie isn’t someone who has done much with her life except be there for her family, but there is something really important and compelling about what she goes through in the film.”

“I had learned a lot about what mistakes I didn’t want to make,” Scafaria says recalling how making “Seeking a Friend for the End of the World” helped give her the confidence to stick

by her choices as a storyteller. “I learned what to fight for, what the deal-breakers are. Your first film, you are so desperate to get it made that you are willing to compromise on things. I went into this story with a totally different head.” She also allowed “The Meddler” to teach her a bit more about the process of moviemaking as a career. “As a director, it’s really important to be involved in the money side of things,” she says, “because that’s where you really make decisions about what you will and won’t accept,” such as the crucial decision to shoot the film in Los Angeles. Ultimately, LA was the only setting for Marnie’s character. Budget constraints aside, this was something the filmmakers could not compromise on. LA was part of the true story and in itself a “character” in the film. “We made the film the right size, the way we knew we needed to make it – I wish we had an extra hour in every day during production, but overall we got what we wanted.”

Scafaria also knew that it was important to consider the film as something that more than just a specific demographic might understand or identify with. “I wasn’t trying to write a ‘woman’s story,’” she says. “I was just trying to write people who are part of the human condition.” She also comments that the much-needed discussion about issues related to gender and filmmaking often lack a broader critical context. “It’s not just about the number of women directors, though that is another conversation,” she says. “It’s also about how we talk about the idea of ‘women’s stories’ and why so few of them get made. When it’s a female director or about a female character, it’s too easy to limit the film by labeling it, saying it is about ‘the female condition’ instead of ‘the human condition.’”

Producer Gorman shared her friend’s convictions and vision. “This is a movie about what a woman does when her daughter leaves for a while. It’s not an ‘odd couple’ movie or a fish-out-of-water story – it’s a movie about what your mother does all those hours when you don’t call her back. It’s not a film about her changing – your mother’s never going to change, you may never change, but you make slight adjustments as you grow up together.”

Even if interested parties loved the script (which many did), it was still a tough sell, says Joy Gorman. “This was a woman filmmaker, and one that wasn’t going to be made with huge male stars. As much as the market says ‘you can’t do it,’ we were able to find actors who loved the script and wanted to do it as it was written.” That started with the film’s star (and eventual executive producer) Susan Sarandon. Lorene Scafaria admits that Sarandon was at the top of her list, even though the actress is, Scafaria admits, “a lot cooler and sexier than my mom.” “I sent it cold to Susan’s agent because I couldn’t stop thinking that she was the one person who could pull this off in every way. I hadn’t seen her in a leading role in a while, and I knew that she can be so funny and so warm.”

Indeed, Sarandon’s best remembered roles from her storied career are of strong, self-determined women who are able to assert themselves forcefully and actively without coming across as needlessly shrill, unpleasant, or emasculating. Sally in “Atlantic City,” Sister Helen Prejean in “Dead Man Walking,” Louise in “Thelma and Louise,” and Annie Savoy in “Bull Durham” illustrate just how much Sarandon can bring to well-drawn characters who manage to dominate through compassion and an open heart. Marnie Minervini joins those indelible

Sarandon performances, the character and actress a perfect fit. “By the time we got on set,” Scafaria remembers, “Susan had my mother down perfectly – not just an imitation, but a real understanding and intuitive sense of how Marnie sees the world and her place in it. She took over and the film really became about us telling Marnie’s story. It wasn’t a ‘personal’ film about me and my mother at all, it was really about Marnie.”

Although it still took about a year to find the right combination of supporting talent, particularly in the key roles of Lori, who occupies a crucial point of reference in the first and third acts of the film, and Zipper, the retired cop-turned-movie set security guard whose gentle, patient demeanor is one of the few things that Marnie seems genuinely surprised by. “We eventually got reads from Rose Byrne and J.K. Simmons at about the same time,” remembers Gorman. “They loved the script, and of course they were thrilled about being able to work with Susan.” With two strong names to go along with Sarandon’s star power – Simmons was just off of winning a well-deserved Oscar for “Whiplash” and Byrne was about to star in “X-Men: Apocalypse” – financing the film on a relatively small budget soon became feasible. “We owe a huge thanks to Jason Taylor and Bryan Singer,” Gorman says of the “X-Men” producer and director. “We got Rose for the days we needed her because they were able to accommodate our shooting schedule. It forced us into production pretty quickly with a shorter prep period, which although scary at the time, in hindsight was really a blessing.” Scafaria, too, was thrilled with the cast. “Everyone was willing to be a little less comfortable than usual,” she says of the many veteran performers like Simmons, Michael McKean, Jason Ritter, or even Laura San Giacomo and Harry Hamlin in brief cameos. “We also shot in LA, so it’s a lot easier to get people when they can go home at night and sleep in their beds.”

Such good fortune – as if the moviemaking universe were being as generous as Marnie herself might be – seemed to follow “The Meddler” throughout production. Some of that good fortune was facilitated by some shrewd producing and writing a lot of impassioned letters. In order for details in the script to come to life, such as Marnie’s relationship with an Apple Store employee (Jerrod Carmichael), or Marnie’s obsession with The Grove, or Marnie having a certain Beyonce song on repeat, the filmmakers had to reach out and lock down such elements before financing was even secured. Executive Producer Paul Green approached “The Grove” Owner Rick Caruso at a Town Hall meeting when a letter hadn’t reached him. “It is a meaningful script with such a universal message,” Gorman explains, “we were able to appeal to people’s hearts and souls when they read Lorene’s script. It’s a film for anyone who has a mom that they are not quite sure how to take care of. People were rooting for us to get it made as written.”

Indeed, nearly every ambitious detail Lorene Scafaria imagined for the film – from locations to soundtrack choices– ended up being “doable” even though such decisions are often mitigated by financial and legal obstacles. “You put things in the script that are at the top of your wish list – and then the script actually gets to Beyonce and she lets us use the song for almost nothing,” she explains. It was another stroke of luck that one of the more spectacular scenes in an otherwise intimate film – the wedding of Lori’s friend Jillian (Cecily Strong) – could also be shot as written by Scafaria, on a boat with the band Blues Traveler (from Scafaria’s home state of New Jersey) playing their 1990s hit “Run-Around.” Lorene’s friend, fellow director David

Dobkin, knew the band and got them the script. The timing turned out to be perfect as the band have just released a new album (“Blow up the Moon”) and were eager to make an appearance where their presence was an important story detail and not just background music.

As production commenced on a very modest budget and relatively quick 23-day shooting schedule, both Gorman and Scafaria were inspired by the effort made by Sarandon to embody the character as well as anchor the film. “For young filmmakers and crew with so few resources – making a movie with someone like Susan could have been intimidating,” remembers Joy Gorman. “But the way she rolled up her sleeves and joined us in our work was amazing. I learned something every day about the business, production, acting, lighting – just being in her presence and getting to collaborate with her, getting her input and direction, was invaluable to all of us.” That focus and energy also emerged quickly in Sarandon’s performance: “She embraced everything about it, and then made it her own,” says Lorene Scafaria. “At first, the role was my mom, then it was Susan Sarandon, but it soon became Marnie – Susan lost herself in Marnie.”

One thing that audiences are likely to recognize in “The Meddler” that they might recall from Scafaria’s first film is how strongly her characters can represent optimistic, positive traits and actions without being shamed or traumatized or made fun of. Even though both films ostensibly are rooted in very dark, personal places – literally facing the end of the world alone, or literally facing a sudden tragedy with someone so close to you going through the same thing – neither film allows the characters to wallow in cynicism or freeze more than a moment in self-pity, or get forced into pointlessly bizarre circumstances or cookie-cutter romantic comedy misunderstandings. Scafaria’s characters are survivors who struggle but never stop wanting to believe, bend but never break, and genuinely want the people around them to be happy. The stories emerge from the way characters make small decisions as well as big ones, usually with great humor and affection. “So much humor today is about how mean people can be,” says Scafaria. “For Marnie, we see things that can be funny without being mean. It’s kind of crazy that someone like Marnie or my mother could be so generous with strangers, and easy to think from a cynical perspective that they are being taken advantage of. But from her perspective, it’s amazing, she’s done this great thing. Even if it gets a little out of control, like with Marnie paying for the wedding, it all generates good feelings.”

It makes sense then that such a film was made by someone who refused to compromise her vision. “As female filmmakers, we have to be even more relentless,” says Joy Gorman. “We can’t take no for an answer, and we have to lead with our hearts on a movie like this. This business is too hard – if I’m not telling stories that I believe in some way can inspire change, if I’m not fighting to the death to get these projects made on behalf of the filmmakers I love, if the work doesn’t ultimately have a positive effect on the audience, then why do it?” That is easy to accomplish when working with Scafaria. “I think the film is really a testament to Joe and Gail Scafaria,” Gorman says. “Because they raised a kid who is fearless, and a visionary.”

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About the Cast

SUSAN SARANDON (Marnie Minervini)

The extremely versatile SUSAN SARANDON brings her own brand of sex appeal and intelligence to every role – from her fearless portrayal in *Bull Durham* to her Oscar®-nominated performances in *Thelma and Louise*, *Lorenzo's Oil*, *The Client*, and *Atlantic City* to her Academy Award®-winning and SAG® Award-winning role in *Dead Man Walking* as Sister Helen, a nun consoling a death-row inmate.

Film credits include *Wall Street 2: Money Never Sleeps*, *Lovely Bones Enchanted*, *Speed Racer*, *Elizabethtown*, *Shall We Dance?*, *The Banger Sisters*, *Mr. Woodcock*, *In the Valley of Elah*, *Alfie*, *Moonlight Mile*, *Igby Goes Down*, *Romance and Cigarettes*, *Twilight*, *Step Mom*, *The Hunger*, *Jeff Who Lives at Home*, *That's My Boy*, *Cloud Atlas*, *Robot & Frank*, *Arbitrage*, *Snitch*, *The Company You Keep*, *Tammy*, *The Last of Robin Hood* and *The Calling*.

Sarandon made her acting debut in the movie *Joe*, which she followed with a continuing role in the TV drama *A World Apart*. Early film credits include *The Great Waldo Pepper*, *Lovin' Molly*, Billy Wilder's *The Front Page*, the 1975 cult classic *The Rocky Horror Picture Show* and Louis Malle's controversial *Pretty Baby*. She went on to receive her first Oscar® nomination in Malle's *Atlantic City*.

Her additional feature credits include *The Witches of Eastwick*, *Cradle Will Rock*, *King of the Gypsies*, *Compromising Positions*, *The January Man*, *White Palace*, *The Buddy System*, *Sweet Hearts Dance*, *A Dry White Season*, *Bob Roberts*, *Light Sleeper*, *Little Women*, and *Safe Passage*.

The hard-working actress has made a career of choosing diverse and challenging projects both in film and television. In 2008, she received an Emmy® Nomination for Outstanding Lead Actress in a Miniseries for her role in the HBO film *Bernard and Doris*, as well as a Golden Globe® and SAG® nomination. She received an Emmy and SAG nomination for her work in Barry Levinson's *You Don't Know Jack* with Al Pacino for HBO.

She starred in the 2003 CBS Movie *Ice Bound*; in the Sy-Fy Channel Mini Series *Children of Dune*; in the TV Movie *The Exonerated*; in HBO's *Earthly Possessions*; in the CBS Movie *Women of Valor*; and the HBO Miniseries *Mussolini: The Decline and Fall of Il Duce*. She has made guest appearances on *30 Rock*, *The Big C* and in the "Mother Lover" video on *Saturday Night Live*.

Upcoming films include *About Ray* with Naomi Watts and Elle Fanning and *The Meddler* with J.K. Simmons and Rose Byrne.

ROSE BYRNE (Lori Minervini)

Rose Byrne is best known for her role as Ellen Parsons in “Damages,” opposite Glenn Close. The series, created by Daniel Zelman, Glenn Kessler and Todd Kessler, ran for five seasons on FX and later DirecTV. Byrne earned two Golden Globe nominations and one Emmy nomination for her role. She is also known for her role in the Paul Feig directed comedy, “Bridesmaids” alongside Kristen Wiig, Maya Rudolph, and Melissa McCarthy. The film was nominated for a Golden Globe Award for Best Motion Picture – Comedy and Musical and a Screen Actors Guild Award for Outstanding Performance by a Cast in a Motion Picture.

Byrne is currently in production on “X-Men: Apocalypse.” She will be reprising her role as Moira MacTaggart in the franchise. The film is slated to be released on May 27, 2016. Later this summer, Byrne is will be reprising her role as Kelly Radner in “Neighbors 2,” alongside Seth Rogen and Zac Efron. This film will be released in theaters in 2016.

Earlier this year, Byrne completed production on “The Meddler,” alongside Susan Sarandon and J.K Simmons. This film is about an aging widow from New York City, who follows her daughter to Los Angeles in hopes of starting a new life after her husband passes a way. “The Meddler” will be released in theaters in 2016.

Next, Byrne will be seen in the Paul Feig directed comedy “Spy,” opposite Melissa McCarthy and Jude Law. The film is scheduled to be released on June 5, 2015. This past year, Byrne appeared in the independent film, “Adult Beginners,” alongside Nick Kroll and Bobby Cannavale. The film premiered at the 2014 Toronto International Film Festival on September 8, 2014, where its distribution rights were acquired by The Weinstein Company’s boutique label, Radius-TWC. The film was released in limited theaters on April 24, 2015.

Earlier this year, Rose concluded her limited engagement run on Broadway’s “You Can’t Take it With You.” She played the lead role of “Alice Sycamore” opposite James Earl Jones and Kristine Nielsen. This was Byrne’s Broadway debut.

At the end of 2014, Byrne appeared in the remake of “Annie,” alongside Jamie Foxx, Quvenzhané Wallis, Cameron Diaz and Bobby Cannavale. The film opened in theaters on December 19, 2014. That same year, Byrne also appeared in Shawn Levy’s “This is Where I Leave You,” alongside Jason Bateman, Tina Fey, Corey Stoll, Adam Driver and Jane Fonda. The film was released in theaters on September 19, 2014. She also appeared in the Nicholas Stoller comedy “Neighbors,” opposite Seth Rogen and Zac Efron. The film opened in theaters on May 9, 2014 and earned over \$268 million worldwide.

In 2014, Byrne also starred in the film, “The Turning,” which was released in Australia on January 26, 2014. She won an award in the category of Best Actress in a Supporting Role from The Australian Film Critics Association and The Film Critics Circle of Australia.

Byrne’s other film credits include: The Internship, The Place Beyond the Pines, Insidious, Get Him to the Greek, X-Men: First Class, Marie Antoinette, Troy, Adam, and 28 Weeks Later, among others. Theatre credits include Sydney Theatre Company’s La Dispute and Three Sisters.

J.K. SIMMONS (Zipper)

J.K. Simmons has appeared in a diverse range of projects spanning from motion pictures, television and the stage on and off-Broadway. He won the 2015 Academy Award for Best Supporting Actor for his portrayal of merciless jazz instructor, 'Fletcher' in Sony Pictures Classics' "Whiplash." His performance in the film also garnered him a Screen Actors Guild Award, Golden Globe, Independent Spirit Award and BAFTA Award, as well as many critics' group awards around the world. "Whiplash" premiered at the 2014 Sundance Film Festival and won the Dramatic Audience Award and Grand Jury Prize for Best Film. The film also received five Academy Award nominations including Best Picture and received awards for Best Editing and Best Sound Mixing in addition to Simmons' Best Supporting Actor award.

Most recently, Simmons wrapped production on the independent film "The Runaround" that also stars Emile Hirsch. Earlier this year, Simmons completed production on Gavin O'Connor's "The Accountant" co-starring Ben Affleck and Anna Kendrick, in addition to the "The Meddler" co-starring Susan Sarandon and Rose Byrne. This summer, Simmons appeared in the much-anticipated "Terminator" reboot, "Terminator: Genisys" alongside Arnold Schwarzenegger, Jai Courtney and Emilia Clarke. Also this summer, Simmons appeared in the independent film "Break Point" with Jeremy Sisto.

In 2014, Simmons appeared in Jason Reitman's "Men, Women and Children" with Adam Sandler and Jennifer Garner. He also starred on the NBC comedy "Growing Up Fisher," opposite Jenna Elfman, "The Rewrite" opposite Hugh Grant and Marisa Tomei and Gillian Raimi's feature "Murder of a Cat."

In 2013, he was seen in theaters in the Steve Jobs biopic, "Jobs," and in Jason Reitman's film, "Labor Day." He is known for playing the character J. Jonah Jameson in Sam Raimi's "Spider Man" trilogy and memorably, his portrayal of the off-beat but not deadbeat father, Mac McGuff, in the hit comedy "Juno."

Past projects include "The Words," "The Music Never Stopped," "Jennifer's Body," "Extract," "The Vicious Kind," "I Love You Man," "Beginner's Guide to Endings," "Contraband," "Hidalgo," "The Ladykillers," "The Mexican," "Off the Map," "For Love of the Game," "The Gift," "Thank You for Smoking," "Rendition," "Burn After Reading" and the Academy Award-nominated "Up in the Air."

On the small screen Simmons played LAPD Assistant Chief Will Pope in TNT's hit series "The Closer." He also played Vern Schillinger on HBO's acclaimed drama "Oz," and had a recurring role as Dr. Emil Skoda on NBC's "Law & Order." He has had guest starring roles on NBC's "Parks and Recreation," and a recurring role on TBS' hit comedy "Men at Work." Simmons has appeared on the Broadway stage in performances of "Guys and Dolls," "Laughter on the 23rd Floor," "A Change in the Heir," "Peter Pan" and "A Few Good Men."

JERROD CARMICHAEL (Freddy/Fredo)

Jerrold is an LA-based standup comedian and performer originally from Winston-Salem, North Carolina. Jerrold is currently in production on his NBC Series The Carmichael Show, of which he is the star and an executive producer. The show will air on August 26th. Jerrold starred in the Nick Stoller-directed summer blockbuster NEIGHBORS, opposite Seth Rogen and Zac Efron, and

will be reprising his role in the upcoming sequel. His one hour standup special "Love At The Store," directed by Spike Lee, premiered on HBO in the fall of 2014. In addition, Jerrod is currently writing a feature that Gary Sanchez & Point Grey will co-produce based on his original idea. Next up, he can be seen in Lorene Scafaria's *The Meddler* opposite Rose Byrne and JK Simmons.

CECILY STRONG (Jillian)

Cecily Strong returns to "SNL" for her fourth season.

Strong earned rave reviews for her "Weekend Update" character "The Girl You Wish You Hadn't Started a Conversation with at a Party," which *Rolling Stone* hailed as an "instant classic." Her recurring character of a ditzy porn star-turned-aspiring-pitchwoman she plays alongside Vanessa Bayer also quickly became an audience favorite. Strong has co-hosted "Weekend Update" alongside both Seth Meyers and Colin Jost.

In Chicago, Strong improvised regularly at iO and served as an understudy for the Second City Main Stage and E.T.C. shows. She performed as a member of the Second City national touring company and has also appeared at the Chicago SketchFest, Chicago Just for Laughs, the New York Sketch Fest and the Edinburgh Fringe Festival.

Strong can next be seen in the upcoming films "Ghostbusters," "The Bronze," "Michelle Darnell" and "The Meddler." Additionally, Strong headlined the 2015 White House Correspondents' Association dinner.

Strong was raised in Oak Park, Ill., and has a BFA in theater from the California Institute of the Arts.

LUCY PUNCH (Emily)

LUCY PUNCH's recent credits include Peter Bogdanovich's *SHE'S FUNNY THAT WAY* (starring Jennifer Aniston, Owen Wilson and Imogen Poots); Disney's *INTO THE WOODS* (opposite Johnny Depp, Anna Kendrick, Emily Blunt, Chris Pine and Meryl Streep); and *CAKE* (with Jennifer Aniston, Sam Worthington, Anna Kendrick and William H. Macy)

Lucy is known from such films as Paramount Pictures' *DINNER FOR SCHMUCKS* (alongside Steve Carell and Paul Rudd); Woody Allen's *YOU WILL MEET A TALL DARK STRANGER* (with Naomi Watts, Anthony Hopkins and Josh Brolin); Columbia Pictures' *BAD TEACHER* (alongside Cameron Diaz, Jason Segel and Justin Timberlake); and Lionsgate's *STAND UP GUYS* (with Al Pacino, Christopher Walken and Alan Arkin). Her most prominent television role is that of "BJ" - a series regular in the Fox network series *BEN & KATE*

Lucy began her feature film career working opposite Geoffrey Rush in 2004's *THE LIFE AND DEATH OF PETER SELLERS*. This was followed by the family fantasy, *ELLA ENCHANTED* (with Anne Hathaway). In 2006, Lucy was chosen as the British Shooting Star by the Berlin Film Festival for her work in *BEING JULIA* (opposite Annette Bening and Jeremy Irons). She has also appeared in *ST. TRINIANS* and Edgar Wright's British action comedy *HOT FUZZ*. Lucy worked with Topher Grace and Anna Faris in Universal Pictures' *YOUNG AMERICANS* and starred in the musical dramedy, *UNTITLED* (alongside Adam Goldberg and Marley Shelton).

Lucy has also appeared in numerous television series in the UK such as, DAYS LIKE THESE, DOC MARTIN and LET THEM EAT CAKE. She made her West End debut as Elaine Robinson in THE GRADUATE directed by Terry Johnson. In 2007, Lucy returned to TV in the CBS comedy, THE CLASS alongside Lizzy Caplan, Jason Ritter and Jesse Tyler Ferguson. She also worked on the HBO TV Movie 1% alongside Donal Logue and Kim Dickens. In 2010, she starred in the three part mini-series VEXED for BBC opposite Toby Stevens.

Lucy was born and raised in London, England. She divides her time between London, Los Angeles and New York.

CASEY WILSON (Trish)

Casey Wilson was a series regular on the sitcoms *Marry Me* and *Happy Endings*. She was twice nominated for a Critics' Choice Award for her performance on the latter show, and Variety has called her one of the "Top 10 Comics to Watch."

Wilson's most recent credits include the *Untitled Tig Notaro Project* for Amazon, directed by Nicole Holofcener, and the upcoming indie film *The Meddler* with Rose Byrne and Susan Sarandon.

Wilson was a featured player [on Saturday Night Live](#) for two seasons and has guest starred on HBO's *Bored to Death* and *How I Met Your Mother* on CBS. Wilson also stars in the *Hotwives* series, a Hulu original comedy taking place in a different city each season. The second season, *Hotwives of Las Vegas* premiered in August 2015.

Her film credits include David Fincher's *Gone Girl*, Christopher Guest's *For Your Consideration*, Nora Ephron's *Julie and Julia*, and Kyle Alvarez's indie feature *C.O.G.* which is based on a short story by David Sedaris.

Wilson hails from Alexandria, VA, and is a graduate of NYU's Tisch School of the Arts, the Stella Adler Studio of Acting. After graduation she co-wrote and performed (along with best gal pal June Raphael) the two-woman sketch comedy show, "Rode Hard and Put Away Wet" at the Upright Citizens Brigade Theatre in New York and Los Angeles. The show ran for eleven months, was an official selection of HBO's U.S. Comedy Arts Festival in Aspen, and was listed as a Critic's Pick in TimeOut NY.

Wilson and Raphael's comedy partnership branched out into the film world. They co-wrote *Bride Wars* starring Anne Hathaway and Kate Hudson. They played the leads in *Assbackwards*, an indie female road trip comedy which they also wrote together. The film was directed by Chris Nelson and premiered at the 2013 Sundance Film Festival.

JASON RITTER (Jacob)

A graduate of New York University's Tisch School of the Arts, Ritter most recently starred in GHOST STORIES: THE SHAWL & PRAIRIE DU CHIEN, a new collection of short plays written by David Mamet and produced by the Atlantic Theater Company.

Ritter starred on NBC's critically acclaimed "Parenthood" as Lauren Graham's love interest and can currently be seen as a recurring character on HBO's "Girls," the Comedy Central series "Another Period," and Disney's "Gravity Falls." He recently wrapped the feature film "Intervention," directed by Clea Duvall and can next be seen starring in "The Steps" and "The Meddler," both featured at the 2015 Toronto International Film Festival.

Ritter's other television credits include series regular roles on "The Event," "The Class" and "Joan of Arcadia." His other film credits include "7 Minutes," "Hits," "You're Not You," "Good Dick," "Wild Canaries," "The Education of Charlie Banks," "Our Very Own," "Happy Endings," and "Raise Your Voice."

SARAH BAKER (Elaine)

Native to Washington, D.C. and a graduate from James Madison University in Theatre and English, Sarah Baker started out doing theatre and improv in Atlanta, Georgia where she helped build the Whole World Improv Theatre. After moving to Los Angeles, she honed her craft, working a good deal with the well-known Groundlings Theatre.

Sarah got her start on screen in various roles from hit comedies such as THE OFFICE and MODERN FAMILY. In 2012, Sarah got her big break playing Zach Galifianakis' wife opposite Will Ferrell in the Warner Bros comedy feature, THE CAMPAIGN. After the film's release, Sarah was cast as a regular on the NBC series, GO ON. Sarah also recurs on Fox's animated show BOB'S BURGERS and recently returned to her sketch roots in an episode of KEY AND PEELE.

Last year Sarah was nominated for a Critics Choice Award for her memorable performance in FX's LOUIE. She was also seen opposite Melissa McCarthy in the Warner Bros feature, TAMMY and the Reese Witherspoon drama, THE GOOD LIE.

Sarah next has a slew of films on the horizon including THE MEDDLER with Rose Byrne and JK Simmons, SPEECH & DEBATE with Liam James and New Regency's UNTITLED WARREN BEATTY feature. She'll also play opposite Bill Murray and Bruce Willis in Open Road's ROCK THE KASBAH and appear in BROTHER IN LAWS produced by Lorne Michaels' Broadway Video. Sarah is currently prepping to shoot Christopher Guest's next film, MASCOTS.

She resides in Burbank, C.A.

MICHAEL McKEAN (Mark)

Michael McKean studied acting at Carnegie Mellon University and at NYU (with Olympia Dukakis) before heading out to L.A., where he joined Harry Shearer and David L. Lander in the satirical squad, The Credibility Gap. In 1976, McKean and Lander became notorious as "Lenny & Squiggy" on the iconic TV series Laverne and Shirley.

Steven Spielberg's 1941, Used Cars, Young Doctors in Love, and Rob Reiner's This is Spinal Tap, on which McKean shared starring, screenwriting and composing credits. Other films include: Clue, Planes, Trains and Automobiles, The Brady Bunch Movie, Jack, True Crime, and

about seventy others including Christopher Guest's *The Big Picture* (which he co-wrote), *Best in Show*, *A Mighty Wind* and *For Your Consideration*, and Woody Allen's *Whatever Works*.

McKean has also appeared as a regular on *Saturday Night Live*, *Dream On*, *Sessions* and *Tracey Takes On*, and acted as bandleader/straight man for Martin Short's *Primetime Glick*. His most recent TV work includes *Family Tree* (HBO) and he is currently starring in *Better Call Saul* (AMC).

Among his many TV guest appearances: *Friends*, *Murphy Brown*, *The Simpsons*, *The X Files*, *Law & Order*, *Smallville*, *Curb Your Enthusiasm*, *Sesame Street*, *The Unit*, *Off The Map*, *Happy Endings*, *Homeland* and *L&O/SVU*.

McKean made his Broadway acting debut in 1990 in Rupert Holmes' *Accomplice*, which netted him a Theater World Award. After this, McKean made his Broadway musical debut in *Hairspray*, followed by Woody Allen's original stage production *A Secondhand Memory*; and Williamstown Theatre Festival in Tom Stoppard's *On the Razzle*. McKean then appeared in the successful Broadway revival of *The Pajama Game* with Harry Connick Jr. before starring on London's West End in "Love Song".

Summer 2008 had McKean originate Tracy Letts' play "Superior Donuts" at Chicago's famed Steppenwolf Theatre which went on to Broadway the following year. Michael starred in the Barrow Street Theatre production of *Our Town*, *King Lear* at The Public, and the Randy Newman musical *Harps And Angels* at LA's Mark Taper and Yes, Prime Minister at The Geffen Playhouse.

McKean was back on Broadway in Gore Vidal's *The Best Man* along with Angela Lansbury, James Earl Jones; and most recently appeared in *All The Way* starring Bryan Cranston.

As Spinal Tap's David St Hubbins, McKean has record multiple albums, appeared in the reunited Spinal Tap performance at Live Earth (2007) at Wembley Stadium, raising awareness about Global Warming; and the band performed at a few very select concert appearances in UK during summer 2009. As lead singer/guitarist/songwriter for Spinal Tap, St. Hubbins was nominated (along with his fellow band members) for two (2) Grammy awards for BEST COMEDY ALBUM and BEST RECORD PACKAGE (January 2010).

In 1999, Michael had the good sense to marry actress Annette O'Toole, with whom he wrote the Oscar-nominated song, "A Kiss at the End of the Rainbow" for *A Mighty Wind*. He also collaborated with Guest and Eugene Levy on the title song ("A Mighty Wind") of that film, which won a Grammy Award.

He is the first and only million dollar *Celebrity Jeopardy* champion.

THE MEDDLER

About the Filmmakers

LORENE SCAFARIA (Writer/Director)

Lorene Scafaria is the writer/director of *THE MEDDLER* (Official Selection: Toronto International Film Festival), starring Susan Sarandon, Rose Byrne and J.K. Simmons.

Scafaria made her directorial debut with her original screenplay *SEEKING A FRIEND FOR THE END OF THE WORLD*, starring Steve Carell and Keira Knightley. The film debuted in theaters in 2012, with Mandate Pictures, Anonymous Content, and Indian Paintbrush producing and Focus Features distributing. She also adapted the young adult novel *NICK AND NORAH'S INFINITE PLAYLIST* for Mandate Pictures and Sony, which premiered at the 2008 Toronto International Film Festival and was released in theaters later that year.

Scafaria's screenwriting credits include *THE MIGHTY FLYNN*, *MAN AND WIFE*, *THE MARLA RUZICKA STORY* and, most recently, *40 DAYS OF DATING* for Warner Brothers. She has kept busy directing and producing episodes of Fox's *NEW GIRL* and *BEN & KATE* respectively, as well as acting in 2014's critically-acclaimed *COHERENCE*. Scafaria is also a singer-songwriter whose songs are featured in Drew Barrymore's *WHIP IT!* and *THE ROMANTICS*.

JOY GORMAN WETTELS (Producer)

Joy recently wrapped Lorene Scafaria's *THE MEDDLER* (Official Selection: 2016 Toronto International Film Festival) for Sony Pictures Worldwide Acquisitions, which stars Susan Sarandon, Rose Byrne and JK Simmons. Sony Pictures Classics will distribute. Previously, Joy produced Scafaria's directorial debut *SEEKING A FRIEND FOR THE END OF THE WORLD* starring Steve Carell and Keira Knightley for Focus Features and Scott Coffey's *ADULT WORLD* starring John Cusack and Emma Roberts (Tribeca Film Festival/ IFC). She has several TV and Film projects in active development. They include *SCORE!* for Robert Downey Jr. At Warner Bros. and a TV adaptation of NY Times Bestselling YA Novel *13 REASONS WHY* at Paramount TV written by Pulitzer and Tony winning playwright Brian Yorkey. Joy is currently developing both television and stage projects based on the acclaimed Civil Rights Era Documentary series *EYES ON THE PRIZE* in partnership with John Legend's Get Lifted Film Co.

Joy Gorman Wettels is an Executive at Anonymous Content, where she has developed the careers of writers and directors of film, television and theater. They include Scafaria, Dana Fox and Yorkey, with whom she developed the acclaimed Broadway musicals *NEXT TO NORMAL* and *IF/THEN*. Prior to Anonymous, Joy was Vice President of Production at Robert Simonds Company, Head of Development for Tom Lassally and worked in production, development and post-production at Miramax Films in New York. She started a management business out of her home with only two young clients who had never sold a script (Fox and Yorkey). After building a successful list, Joy joined Anonymous Content's management division. In 2007, Joy was

named one of The Hollywood Reporter's NEXT GENERATION / "35 under 35". Joy grew up in Yonkers, New York and commuted to Barnard College of Columbia University, where she graduated with a degree in Urban Affairs and Political Science, completing her thesis on the federal desegregation case that re-defined her hometown. When she wasn't working several jobs to pay for college, Joy spent her time on the famed Columbia Varsity Show, where she produced Brian Yorkey and Tom Kitt's early musical collaborations. Joy is a member of the Producers Guild of America.

BRETT PAWLAK (Director of Photography)

He worked on SXSW Grand Jury, and Audience award winning "Short Term 12", as well as lensing Halo franchise's first feature length live-action narrative for 323 Industries, "Halo 4 – Forward Unto Dawn." "Halo" earned a cinematography nomination and win at the 2013 Streamy Awards.

KAYLA M. EMTER (Editor)

Kayla Emter was born and raised in Bismarck, North Dakota and graduated from Columbia College Chicago with a BA in Film. Wanting to continue refining her editing skills she moved to Los Angeles to attend the American Film Institute, with a specialty in Film Editing.

Following AFI, Kayla began her journey as an Assistant Editor and worked for some of the most highly respected Film Editors around, including Dody Dorn, ACE on Casey Affleck's critically acclaimed film *I'm Still Here* starring Joaquin Phoenix. She then worked with another top Film Editor, John Axelrad, ACE, on Warner Bros' romantic comedy *Something Borrowed* starring Kate Hudson and Ginnifer Goodwin. With the help of Axelrad's vision and support, Emter earned her first Add'l-Editing credit, on the Summit Entertainment thriller *Gone*. This was followed by a Co-Editing credit on James Gray's *The Immigrant* which was in competition at the 2013 Cannes Film Festival. And most recently, the two collaborated on Don Cheadle's Miles Davis biopic, *Miles Ahead*.

Emter has cut several solo features including the Anchor Bay crime thriller *7 Minutes* and is currently cutting the Susan Sarandon, JK Simmons, Rose Byrne dramedy *The Meddler*, directed by Lorene Scafaria.

JONATHAN SADOFF (Music Score)

Jonathan Sadoff moved from Chicago to Los Angeles to attend the University of Southern California's Thornton School of Music Studio/Jazz Guitar program. He soon widened his studies to embrace composition, orchestration, piano, conducting, voice, and film studies. While in school, he began scoring student films, working in recording studios, producing records, and playing in bands in and around Los Angeles.

After graduating from USC, he scored James Franco's feature directorial debut *Good Time Max*; and wrote music for Michael Keaton's feature directorial debut *The Merry Gentleman*. In late 2009, Mr. Sadoff was featured on the cover of *Keyboard Player Magazine*; and named by *The Hollywood Reporter* as one of "15 Composers Primed to Take Their Place on the A-List." Sadoff has composed scores for feature films such as *Beautiful Creatures* and *Seeking a Friend for the End of the World*, the former of which featured a 60-piece orchestra recorded at Abbey Road. Sadoff's television credits include the 2014 AMC-produced drama series *The Divide*, and ABC pilots *An American Education*, *Middle Age Rage* and *Dangerous Liaisons*. Aside from scoring films, he has produced for and collaborated with a number of recording artists and bands. In 2013 Sadoff produced and arranged for Rufus Wainwright on the *Merry Friggin Christmas OST*. He also arranged Ed Sheeran's song "I See Fire" for performance at the premiere of *The Hobbit: Desolation of Smaug*. Sadoff was a member of the musical collective *Thenewno2*. Together with bandmates Dhani Harrison and Paul Hicks they wrote and produced their sophomore record *Thefearofmissingout* and *EP002*, which features Regina Spektor, The RZA and Ben Harper. They've toured all over the US, including performances at *Coachella* and *Lollapalooza*, and on national television on shows like *Late Night with Conan O'Brien*. Sadoff also plays guitar/bass and produces *The Shortcoats* with Lorene Scafaria and actor Adam Brody. Sadoff's classical training combined with his background of playing in rock bands and producing/programming records has created a hybrid sound that blurs the lines between traditional big Hollywood score and modern "needle-drop" source.

CHRIS L. SPELLMAN (Production Designer)

Soon after graduating from Louisiana State University, Chris Spellman moved to Los Angeles to work on films. He started as a Set Decorator on notable comedies and cult classics such as *HEAVY WEIGHTS*, *THE BIG LEBOWSKI*, *ORANGE COUNTY*, and *KNOCKED UP* in addition to critically acclaimed movies including *FORREST GUMP*, *OCTOBER SKY*, *THE INSIDER* and *MAGNOLIA*. Through these prominent projects, Chris gained experience and went on to land roles as a Production Designer. His resume involves a varied slate of films, but Chris continued to work on major comedies. Collaborating with renowned directors/producers like David Gordon Green, Judd Apatow, Seth Rogen, and Evan Goldberg, Chris designed heavy hitters such as *SUPERBAD*, *PINEAPPLE EXPRESS*, and *THIS IS THE END*. More recently, Chris worked on *JOE*, which premiered at the 2013 Toronto International Film Festival (TIFF), the HBO series *TOGETHERNESS*, and *PAPER TOWNS* was just released this summer. His most current project, *THE MEDDLER*, will premier in the fall of 2015 at TIFF.

KARUNA KARMARKAR (Set Designer)

Karuna is a Los Angeles based set decorator and a native of Santa Cruz, California. She is a graduate of UCLA's prestigious School of Theater, Film & Television. Karuna works frequently as a decorator for commercials and features - including the films *WHIPLASH* (nominated for five Academy Awards including Best Picture) *THE PURGE*, *HELLO MY NAME IS DORIS*, *LOWRIDERS* and *THE LAZARUS EFFECT*. In addition to being a decorator, Karuna is also a photographer. Her understanding of composition and color developed over 10 years of

experience has informed her design sensibility. Her favorite photographers include Nobuyoshi Araki, Larry Sultan, Lee Miller, Herb Ritts, Helmut Newton and William Eggleston. Karuna is a member of the Set Decorator's Society of America.