

# JOKER

Forever alone in a crowd, Arthur Fleck seeks connection. Yet, as he trods the sooted Gotham City streets and rides the graffitied mass transit rails of a hostile town teeming with division and dissatisfaction, Arthur wears two masks. One, he paints on for his day job as a clown. The other he can never remove; it's the guise he projects in a futile attempt to feel he's a part of the world around him, and not the misunderstood man whom life is repeatedly beating down. Fatherless, Arthur has a fragile mother, arguably his best friend, who nicknamed him Happy, a moniker that's fostered in Arthur a smile that hides the heartache beneath. But, when bullied by teens on the streets, taunted by suits on the subway, or simply teased by his fellow clowns at work, this social outlier only becomes even more out of sync with everyone around him.

Directed, co-written and produced by Todd Phillips, "Joker" is the filmmaker's original vision of the infamous DC villain, an origin story infused with, but distinctly outside, the character's more traditional mythologies. Phillips' exploration of Arthur Fleck, who is indelibly portrayed by Joaquin Phoenix, is of a man struggling to find his way in Gotham's fractured society. Longing for any light to shine on him, he tries his hand as a stand-up comic, but finds the joke always seems to be on him. Caught in a cyclical existence between apathy and cruelty and, ultimately, betrayal, Arthur makes one bad decision after another that brings about a chain reaction of escalating events in this gritty, allegorical character study.

Three-time Oscar nominee Phoenix ("The Master," "Walk the Line," "Gladiator") stars in the titular role alongside Oscar winner Robert De Niro ("Raging Bull," "The Godfather: Part II"). The film also stars Zazie Beetz (TV's "Atlanta," "Deadpool 2"), Frances Conroy (TV's "American Horror Story," Hulu's "Castle

Rock”), Brett Cullen (“42,” Netflix’s “Narcos”), Glenn Fleshler (TV’s “Billions,” “Barry”), Bill Camp (“Red Sparrow,” “Molly’s Game”), Shea Whigham (“First Man,” “Kong: Skull Island”), Marc Maron (TV’s “Maron,” “GLOW”), Douglas Hodge (“Red Sparrow,” TV’s “Penny Dreadful”), Josh Pais (upcoming “Motherless Brooklyn,” “Going in Style”) and Leigh Gill (HBO’s “Game of Thrones”).

Oscar nominee Phillips (“Borat,” “The Hangover” trilogy) directed from a screenplay he co-wrote with Oscar-nominated writer Scott Silver (“The Fighter”), based on characters from DC. The film was produced by Phillips and Oscar nominee Bradley Cooper (“A Star Is Born,” “American Sniper”) under their Joint Effort banner, and Oscar nominee Emma Tillinger Koskoff (“The Wolf of Wall Street”). It was executive produced by Michael E. Uslan, Walter Hamada, Aaron L. Gilbert, Joseph Garner, Richard Baratta, and Bruce Berman.

Behind the scenes, Phillips was joined by director of photography Lawrence Sher (“Godzilla: King of the Monsters,” “The Hangover” trilogy), production designer Mark Friedberg (“If Beale Street Could Talk,” “Selma”), editor Jeff Groth (“War Dogs,” “The Hangover Part III”), and Oscar-winning costume designer Mark Bridges (“Phantom Thread,” “The Artist”). The music is by Hildur Guðnadóttir (HBO’s “Chernobyl,” “Sicario: Day of the Soldado”).

Warner Bros. Pictures Presents, in Association with Village Roadshow Pictures, in Association with BRON Creative, a Joint Effort Production, a Film by Todd Phillips, “Joker.” It will be distributed worldwide by Warner Bros. Pictures.

For downloadable press information go to <https://mediapass.warnerbros.com>  
[www.joker.movie](http://www.joker.movie)

## **ABOUT THE PRODUCTION**

***“My mother always tells me to smile and put on a happy face...”***

***—Arthur Fleck***

It’s the early 1980s, and Gotham City is in turmoil. But there is no criminal underbelly at work, nor a mob overlord putting all at risk to serve his own interests. It’s a much more palpable concern for anyone living within the dystopian borders of this divided community of haves and havenots growing ever further apart, the tensions only exacerbated by a weeks-long garbage strike. Gotham is teetering on the edge of a

fall; there is only the city and those who oversee it, and as in any municipality short of funding for the fundless, services designed to alleviate the difficulties of the disenfranchised are being cut.

No, this is not the Gotham, nor the Joker, one would recognize from 80 years of established storytelling depicted on the page or screen. Rather, this is an original, standalone origin of this infamous character, the tale of an atmosphere of unrest fostering a man on the brink who, like his city—and likely, because of it—grows closer to the precipice: Arthur Fleck.

Filmmaker Todd Phillips allows, “I love the complexity of Joker and felt his origin would be worth exploring on film, since nobody’s done that and even in the canon he has no formalized beginning. So, Scott Silver and I wrote a version of a complex and complicated character, and how he might evolve...and then devolve. That is what interested me—not a Joker story, but the story of *becoming* Joker.”

The film features just enough Gotham landmarks, deftly woven into its grimy landscape, to situate the audience and allow star Joaquin Phoenix’s hypnotically raw performance to evoke the requisite emotions to take this journey with Arthur through the city’s—and eventually his own—darker side. “One of the themes we wanted to explore with the movie is empathy and, more importantly, the *lack* of empathy that is present in so much of Arthur’s world,” Phillips states.

“For example,” he continues, “in the movie you see the difference in the way little kids and adults react to Arthur, because kids see the world through no lens; they don’t see rich versus poor or understand a marginalized individual the way adults do. They just see Arthur as a guy who’s trying to make them smile. It’s not inherent, we have to learn how to be unaccepting of others and, unfortunately, we usually do.”

Silver says, “He starts out just wanting to make people laugh, trying to put a smile on their faces. That’s why he’s a clown, why he dreams of becoming a stand-up comic. He just wants to bring some joy into the world. But then the toxic environment of Gotham breaks him down—the lack of compassion and empathy, the loss of civility... That’s what creates our Joker.”

The Arthur that Phillips and Silver created is caught in a cyclical existence of misread cues. Even Arthur’s uncontrollable, inappropriate laughter, which gains momentum as he attempts to contain it, garners no sympathy from those he encounters in his daily life, exposing him to further ridicule and alienation from Gotham society. “Nowadays, what he has is a recognized syndrome, but in the time our story is set, it was not really diagnosed, though it was a real condition,” the filmmaker explains.

Phoenix concedes that, even during filming, “There were times when I found myself feeling for him, even feeling like I understood his motivation, and in the next moment I would be repulsed by the decisions

he made. Playing this character was challenging for me as an actor, and I knew he would also challenge the audience and their preconceived ideas about the Joker, because in his fictional world, like in our real world, there are no easy answers.”

“We often talk about the tip of the iceberg, but we rarely speak about what’s underneath—about what gets you there,” Phillips asserts. “Arthur is the guy you see on the street who you walk right past...or over. With this movie we’re hoping to get a peek at what’s below the surface.”

It was those subjects, along with the filmmaker’s passion for his medium, that evoked the notion of not just any Joker movie, but *this* Joker movie. “I was inspired by the character studies that I watched when I was younger. The look, the vibe, the tone of those films made sense for this story.”

To Phillips, that meant the 1970s and ’80s, the era of such great films as “Serpico,” “Taxi Driver” and “Network.” He says, “We included a few elements from the canon and set it in a broken-down Gotham City around 1981, because that harkens back to that era and would remove it from the comic book world we’re so familiar with in film today.

Phillips not only cast Phoenix but wrote the part with him in mind. “Joaquin’s previous work always stuck with me, but what I really like about him is his style and his unpredictability, which we felt would very much fit into this character,” Phillips offers. “While other people are doing math, Joaquin is playing jazz. He’s just one of the greatest, he’s fearless; his work is brave and vulnerable, and I thought if we could get him, we could really do something special.”

Though he’d resisted any sort of genre-inspired projects in the past, the actor was intrigued when he read the script. “I thought it was bold and complex and like nothing I’d ever read before. Todd has a unique way of looking at things that is really perfect, I think, for this movie,” Phoenix observes. “When I work with a director, I want somebody who has a singular take on the material, and nobody could have made this movie but Todd.”

Arthur’s tale is at once rich and spare in details, alternately focused and skewed. Crafted with Silver over the course of, as Phillips recalls, “a year in a little office in New York,” they began by determining a path to which such an ordinary man could become such an evil and notorious character. “In the version of the story we were telling, having a guy fall into a vat of acid didn’t work, while I think it’s interesting, so we tried running everything through a ‘real world’ lens,” he says. “To make sense in the world of our movie, we thought, ‘Well, why would he put this make-up on when he eventually becomes Joker? Where did he get this make-up and why does he have it? What if he’s a clown?’

“Then, of course, we had to ask ourselves why he’d work as a clown,” he continues, “which we determined was because his mother always told him he had to bring laughter and joy to the world. It all came together from there.”

In addition to the visual expectations that come with the character, there’s a distinct personality trait common across nearly 80 years of the comics and in every moving picture iteration, one which Phillips and Silver wanted to utilize in their storytelling: the classic unreliable narrator who can never fully be believed. “You have an intense amount of freedom with an unreliable narrator, and even more so when he’s Joker,” the director says of the famously deceptive reprobate, whose penchant for blending fact and fiction informs every frame of the film. “He even says in the comic book *Batman: The Killing Joke*, ‘If I’m going to have a past, I prefer it to be multiple choice.’ So, what really happened, and what you think he is by the end, just depends on the lens through which you watch the movie. You won’t walk away having all the answers and that’s what I think is intriguing about a character like this.”

To accomplish all that he intended with “Joker,” Phillips and producing partner Bradley Cooper opted to conduct principal photography primarily in practical locations in and around the city that inspired Gotham itself: Phillips’ native New York City as well as neighboring New Jersey. To that end, they enlisted producer Emma Tillinger Koskoff, an expert on filming in the region with connections to the city’s strongest below-the-line talent. “Emma is one of the great New York producers and we were lucky to get her,” Phillips states.

In addition to handily pulling together and managing all aspects of the physical production, Tillinger Koskoff says, “Todd had a unique and inspired vision of how he wanted the film to look and feel. My role was to help facilitate that vision and create a supportive atmosphere for him, so that he could focus on the actors and concentrate on what was happening in any given scene. Todd and I were fortunate to work with a fantastic crew—New York’s very best. There was a level of trust and respect on our set that allowed him to work quickly and creatively. It was a privilege to watch Todd and Joaquin collaborate on this breathtaking film.”

Phillips’ creative team also included director of photography Lawrence Sher, this being their sixth film together; veteran production designer Mark Friedberg; costume designer Mark Bridges, who has worked several times with Phoenix; editor Jeff Groth, a regular collaborator; and composer Hildur Guðnadóttir, who began sending pieces of score to Phillips based on script pages alone, before a frame of the film was even shot.

"It's always incredible to be making a movie when you have such brilliant creative partners," Phillips says, "and we really had the best there is on this film."

Those words could easily be used to describe his onscreen talent as well, beginning with what might literally qualify as dream casting for any filmmaker: Robert De Niro. The legendary actor appears as late-night TV host Murray Franklin, the closest thing Arthur has to a hero and, though a stranger, someone he views as a kindred spirit in comedy. As many aspiring comics would know, being called over to the couch after your set on a show like Murray's is more than a game changer, it's life-altering, and Arthur's greatest wish...

***"...She told me I had a purpose: to bring laughter and joy to the world."***

**—Arthur Fleck**

### **Cast & Characters**

In an early scene in "Joker," Arthur is meeting with a social worker, who asks him if it helps to have someone to talk to. Regardless of what his answer may be, it's clear from the expression on Arthur's face that *she* is not that someone. But it's equally unclear who—if *anyone*—is. "Arthur is always struggling with what it is he wants to say and how he wants to say it," says Phoenix. "His instincts just don't fit with the accepted standard of conversation or interaction...or anything, really."

Why he is the way he is will not always remain a mystery to Arthur, Phillips allows, but when we first meet him, he says, "Arthur is this guy who's very much like, 'I'm going to be the person you want me to be. I'm going to be proper, I'm going to take the bus and sit here quietly and not interact,' and so forth." But, like a dog that's been kicked repeatedly by its owner, sooner or later "this time" will be the last time. "There's always an inner part of him that has to try to be true to himself, to who he is becoming, and over the course of the story we see it coming out, little by little."

The truth of Arthur is complex. He attempts to do stand-up, his dream vocation and one for which he prepares by watching other comics, hoping to catch their tone and timing and adopt it for his own. Hoping that he, like they, will captivate an audience with witty observations and find an even larger form of acceptance in their applause. "Unfortunately, how he sees the world and, frankly, what he thinks is funny don't really work," Phoenix describes. "He doesn't understand their kind of humor and he isn't able to mimic it, either."

Servicing the self-fulfilling prophecy of his mother's "Happy" appellation for him and long before Arthur musters the courage to try his hand on the comedy club stage, we find him at his day job as a clown-for-hire via a service called Ha-Ha's. The job takes him to various parts of the city, but no matter where he goes, the walk home inevitably entails a haul up a lengthy flight of outdoor stairs.

Steps, both physical and metaphorical, factor into Arthur's world with regularity, from the ones he climbs to the steps he takes to apply his Happy make-up. Both are just indicators of the many more steps he will take as he metamorphoses into his true self over the course of the film.

Much of that character building came about through Phoenix's preparations for the role, taking a cerebral preparation and turning it corporal. In the film, on the advice of his social worker, Arthur keeps a journal, which also contains his drawings, prose and imaginings. Throughout pre-production, Phoenix himself made several entries. The actor states, "I was writing in Arthur's journal when Todd sent me a note about the set of steps in the story. That inspired me to write 'step after step after step,' over and over and line by line across the pages, and then it became something we'd text to each other."

In the beginning of the film, we see the wilted way Arthur carries himself as he ascends the stairs, building on another idea Phillips implanted in Phoenix, that Arthur walks with "heavy shoes," carrying the weight of the world with him. When he later descends them, however, we see not only a very different Arthur, but a wholly different carriage.

No matter the preparation, Phillips observes, "All the preparation disappears into the performance. Joaquin is so methodical about it that there's not one moment where you see him switch from Arthur to Joker, it's all done with a very measured pace."

Another part of the actor's dedication to Arthur's presentation was to drop 52 pounds, by consuming little more than an apple a day. Phillips confesses it was his idea, stating, "I wanted the character to look hungry and unhealthy, like a malnourished wolf."

Phoenix and Phillips developed a close relationship during filming as they worked to discover and define the finer points of Arthur's dual nature. With careful consideration over the course of the story and a traditionally unreliable narrator like Joker setting the scene to emerge from within the chrysalis of this socially awkward and increasingly desperate man, they left the very truth of Arthur Fleck's story open to interpretation, like Arthur's own experience.

"There were times when I thought Arthur would enjoy altering his story because of the effect it would have on how someone might feel about him, and there were other times where I thought he'd alter it because it's what he really believes," the actor offers. "Usually with characters that is frustrating, not

understanding their motives; but with this character it became liberating, realizing it could go in any direction. Working with Todd on a scene, if we didn't find a surprising way of exploring it in the moment, we felt like we weren't doing it right."

Those discussions continued throughout production and long after each day's filming wrapped. "After we finished shooting, we would call or text for hours and talk about the next day's scenes, and on weekends we would meet and go over scenes we were shooting that week," Phoenix remembers. "I felt like we were so unified throughout the process; if one of us ever got to the point where we weren't feeling inspired, we trusted the other one to inspire them, and that was really satisfying."

Arthur lives with his frail mother, Penny Fleck, and devotes himself to caring for her. Penny resides in their tiny apartment, but in truth she lives in her own world, despite his company. Her focus is split between the TV and all that is wrong with Gotham, writing letters to Thomas Wayne. Having worked for him 30 years ago, she's certain the wealthy businessman considering a run for mayor would help her out if he only knew of her current circumstances.

Veteran actress Frances Conroy, who plays the rather delicate woman, admired the dedicated Phoenix, noting, "He is quiet, he is at one with his role and with the other actor in the scene." It's almost as if, she adds, "I know Arthur, not Joaquin. He is the character only, he leaves himself behind and lives only in the reality of the scene."

Raised almost solely by his narcissistic mother, Arthur both struggles to be seen and is painfully aware that he's invisible to most, even to his mother, who still calls him Happy though he probably never has been. Arthur longs to relate to someone, anyone, and for acknowledgement, recognition that leads to validation. He and Penny watch "Live with Murray Franklin" together nightly, and he dreams of earning a spot on the program. A nod from the man himself is all a comic needs to make it in Gotham. But a seasoned pro like Murray will go for the laugh every time...at anyone's expense.

Robert De Niro plays the role of Franklin, an amalgam of real-life past hosts from Joe Franklin to Johnny Carson. Phoenix recalls their first day together on the set, during which he and De Niro had a lengthy scene to film. "You have this fantasy that you're going to ask him all these questions because, of course, he's Robert De Niro. You're so excited when that opportunity comes your way, but then you realize you have a nine-page scene and there's no time and no chance you're going to be able to ask him all the things you want to."

Phillips took a very different approach when first meeting the icon. "I had gone to his office before we shot and I said to him very clearly, 'Listen. I've got to spend ten minutes just talking about all these



questions I have for you, and then I swear I will be a professional.’ And we ended up going for at least 20 minutes, and it was great.”

In his quest for an emotional connection, Arthur also dreams of his neighbor Sophie Dumond. He has a crush on her, but it’s the kind of puppy love that has him watching for a glimpse of her.

Zazie Beetz, who plays the single mom of a five-year-old girl, says, “Sophie and her daughter live down the hall from the Flecks, and she encounters Arthur in the elevator, places like that, as you would. She’s raising her child on her own and probably has a tough time. She can see, though, that he has difficulty interacting with people and seems somewhat insecure, so she tolerates him and is nice, and she smiles at Arthur like you do with any neighbor.”

Beetz thoroughly enjoyed working with Phoenix, stating, “I’ve been a really huge fan of Joaquin’s work for a long time and I think he’s one of the best actors of this generation.” With equal praise for Phillips, she adds, “I’d never really had an experience like this one before. It was so incredibly collaborative.”

Brett Cullen also stars as mayoral candidate Thomas Wayne, a lone father figure Arthur attempts to connect with only to be rejected at every turn. And Douglas Hodge is Alfred Pennyworth, Wayne’s hired man who protects the manor interests great and small from the likes of someone like Arthur.

Rounding out the impressive cast are Shea Whigam and Bill Camp as GCPD detectives Burke and Garrity; Glenn Fleshler as Randall and Leigh Gill as Gary, Arthur’s fellow clowns at Ha-Ha’s, where Josh Pais plays his boss, Hoyt Vaughn; Brian Tyree Henry as Arkham Clerk Carl; and Marc Maron as The Murray Franklin Show producer, Gene Umland. Real-life comics Gary Gulman and Sam Morril appear as stand-ups in scenes at a comedy club.

***“Is it just me, or is it getting crazier out there?”***

***—Arthur Fleck***

### **Production Design / Locations / Camera**

In order to enhance Arthur’s internal struggles with his own sense of realism, Phillips sought to counter it by grounding the film itself in as authentic an aesthetic as possible. “As a filmmaker, there are a lot of tools you have to paint with, and locations and set design are big ones in this film. His environment represents quite a lot in Arthur’s life, so we wanted to use that to the fullest effect.”

He worked closely with production designer Mark Friedberg who, like Phillips, grew up in New York City and was very familiar with the palette the director sought. “Mark combed through old photos of New York to find the right level of graffiti, the right amount of trash and the picture cars that we’d want. His attention to detail was amazing,” he remarks.

“What I found poignant about the Gotham Todd and Scott created is that it’s a world I understand, a world that’s hard, a world that’s hard on the people for whom life is hardest,” Friedberg says. “The dysfunction, the disconnection from the powers that be...that’s the New York City of my youth. It was dirty, every city agency was on strike at some point and the ones that weren’t were corrupt. That’s what I thought made this such a striking piece when I first read it and that’s where our conversation started about this world of “Joker”—a Gotham that is not New York but is its own dark, gritty, tough urban city with roots in our collective past.”

Phillips and his creative team talked extensively about what Gotham City meant to them, whether from the lore in the comics or other visual interpretations. To aid in their discussions and later in the physical production in terms of where Arthur’s daily travels took him and how he got there, Friedberg actually drew up a Gotham City transit map much like those posted in New York City subway terminals and, in fact, the designer’s map appeared in just such a manner during filming.

Though they steered clear of incorporating too many elements from the canon, those that they did include were altered slightly to reflect the city they were devising. “Everything is a riff on something,” Friedberg smiles.

Phillips elaborates, “Arkham Asylum in our movie is called Arkham State Hospital, because that seemed to us what they would really call it.”

Harlem’s Metropolitan Hospital stood in for Arkham’s interiors and for scenes inside a children’s hospital ward, while the exteriors were shot in Sunset Park, Brooklyn, at the Brooklyn Army Terminal, a 100-year-old example of industrial style architecture.

Identifying all the practical locations required for a film featuring a 1970s/80s Gotham City was a challenge, Friedberg says, because “the physical world we were trying to depict is not that available as we’ve slowly been turning our cities into glass skyscrapers and malls. To find the version of the city we needed, we actually ended up going to Newark—where we built Gotham Square—and Jersey City, New Jersey, and to the boroughs.”

To help dress Gotham Square in Newark, a young local artist, Malcolm A. Rolling, was hired to paint murals on the sides of buildings along the streets where filmmakers were shooting exteriors. The murals reflected the themes represented in the film, and some were nearly a city block long.

The production also shot sequences in Brooklyn at the fabled Kings Theater. The movie palace originally opened in 1929 but had been recently renovated, and in the film stands in for Wayne Hall. The Highbridge and Kingsbridge working-class districts of the Bronx served as the neighborhood where Arthur lives in a tenement with his mother, Penny, and the neighbor he admires, Sophie.

A nearby Bronx locale that recurs several times in the film is a long set of steps where we find Arthur making the climb home again and again, symbolic of the drudgery he's returning home to. "Todd's idea was to set Arthur in the hilly South Bronx, one where he's trudging up public stairways and through alleys, in non-grid-like streets, which confuses his world in a way that really works for this story," Friedberg states. "People don't think of hills when they think of New York, they think flat, so that gave us an unexpected topography and a specific visual style." That visual style was defined in concert with director of photography Lawrence Sher. "Larry is probably my most trusted creative partner, we've traveled the world together shooting movies," the director says.

Sher relates, "Todd has skills that are really unique in a lot of ways. He cares about the writing, the performances, the visuals and the editing immeasurably, and is able to blend all four of those elements together seamlessly in a way that he's not putting emphasis on one over the other. A lot of times you'll shoot a lot of coverage and wide shots and, in every movie that we've done together, he always allows the performance to shine first and foremost, but also weaves in the coverage in a way that always gives the movie scope, allowing it to be really cinematic. Todd and I challenge each other every single day and it's a really satisfying experience working with him. It's the right kind of push and pull, the kind of pressure that creates diamonds. We never want to feel like we left something on the table after a day of shooting."

That close working relationship has naturally created the kind of shorthand between them that a true partnership provides. "Because this is our sixth movie together, the discussions we have are much more about ideas within individual scenes, which then build and create the bigger picture," says Sher. "On this film, at one point I remember Todd talking to me about the idea of the shadow self, the shadow representing the other side of ourselves, and the transformation of Arthur into Joker. Those two terms—transformation and shadow—really informed me and gave me an early idea of what themes he was going to explore over the course of the movie, so I could determine how to best express that visually through the imagery.

“Much of our approach,” he continues, “was to figure out how you take what is basically a character study and tell it visually in a way that doesn’t have to depend on dialogue. A way that you could even watch the movie silently and get the same emotional impact, because Joaquin’s performance is so measured, and he says so much without saying a word.”

Sher says that the choice to use the 65 Alexa was key in that regard. “A large format camera like that gives you a lot of separation through the shallow depth of field. That allowed us to isolate Arthur in his world, making him the sole character within it and enhancing the idea that he’s an outcast, and sometimes sees himself as not even existing. The camera helped us tell that side of his story, whether in the intimacy of his apartment or in larger scenes, because we could separate him out from his background.”

Many of those larger scenes take place outside. Sher offers, “Todd, Mark and I all grew up in and around Manhattan and were there in the time this movie takes place, so we remember it vividly and were able to draw on that every day. But where do you go in this city that they haven’t come in and put up high rises? From frame one, we wanted people to be instantly transported to our version of Gotham circa 1981, and never think, ‘Oh, he’s in Newark.’ Mark found locations that were nearly untouched and still represented an earlier era. He of course added a lot of trash and changed signage and so on, to give it a sense of place and time that’s not just period, but also tonal. A much grimmer, trash-infested city of Gotham at a breaking point.”

“From wide shots of Gotham Square to a guy sitting in his seat on a bus or walking along Jerome Avenue under the elevated tracks to the tininess of his apartment, Larry was really interested in contrasting this small person in a big world, and then this small world with that person in it,” Friedberg notes. “For me, that meant going from general compositions to specific textures, from an anonymous little flea moving about the big streets of our city to the minute detail of a burning cigarette. For example, if you walk into old tenement buildings in the Bronx, you will see extreme texture, you will smell extreme texture, and photographically that’s beautiful to me. Todd was open to me pushing that extreme contrast with texture in a way that makes it feel very real.”

One such example is a public restroom Arthur flees to at a pivotal moment in the story, which turned out to be a pivotal moment for Sher and his “A” camera /Steadicam operator Geoff Haley as well. Sher explains, “Philosophically as a DP, and paramount to Todd in the way we photograph movies, is that we light the environment and let the actors exist within the whole of that environment, which allows them full freedom of motion. In this movie more than ever before, my team would walk into a scene and not know anything of what Joaquin was going to do. Todd and Joaquin had discussed it, but my operator and I

would set it up in a way that would just let him do whatever he wanted, just let it happen. That started with the bathroom scene—and Todd and I love grimy bathrooms, you’ll find bathroom and elevator scenes in all six films we’ve done together. We set the mixed lights, uncorrected fluorescents, had no rehearsal for camera, and when we rolled, we just stayed with Joaquin.

“Joaquin is extremely present and immensely connected in the moment,” he continues, “so, as the DP or the operator, you want to raise yourself to that level of being present and seeing where it goes. My operator and I were each on a camera and we let things unfold, dancing around JP as he discovered the scene in real time. That approach then became something we did in a lot of scenes, like the one in his apartment when Arthur climbs into the refrigerator. That was completely unplanned and of the moment. It was a thrilling experience to do a movie that way—precision, in terms of shots we knew we wanted to get, and complete improvisation in terms of performance.”

Adhering to their rule of authenticity, Friedberg and Sher worked together to build and light another key set in the film, the “Live with Murray Franklin” show. “Mark’s designs and everything we used to light the set were authentic to the time, none of the modern technology of lights was used,” Sher states.

“I’m a cinema snob and I’ve spent my life trying to avoid doing television, but I’ve ended up several times designing television shows that exist in the movies I’m making,” Friedberg laughs. “One of the more significant sets in this movie is for the Murray Franklin show. We didn’t copy Carson, per se, but we went in with that recipe: a desk, a chair, another chair and a couch, a guy who announces and sits down, seats for a live audience, a band...all those things and a control room, and dressing rooms, too. What was interesting for us was to build this ‘old’ style set that turned out to be the first set ever on a brand-new stage at Steiner Studios.”

Friedberg’s team sourced authentic period television cameras for those scenes as well, from the Museum of Broadcast Technology in Rhode Island. Old-fashioned functional monitors were installed onto the cameras so that there were images on the lenses as they simulated filming.

Period subway cars circa 1970-80 were also used during production, obtained from the New York City Transit Museum and operated by certified Metropolitan Transit Authority (MTA) personnel. Filming took place on lines in Brooklyn and the Bronx, deep inside tunnels, on elevated tracks and on platforms, many of which were open to the public, so the actors were performing as real riders disembarked and boarded the cars.

Scenes where we find Arthur first in the audience, and then performing his first stand-up gig, were shot at the famed comedy club Dangerfield's on Manhattan's Upper East Side. Named for renowned comic Rodney Dangerfield, it opened in 1969 and is the oldest functioning venue of its kind in the city.

**~ *Becoming Joker* ~**  
**Costume Design**

To create Arthur's—and, via stages, Joker's—look, Phillips sought out costume designer Mark Bridges, who had designed for Phoenix in both “The Master” and “Inherent Vice.” Bridges notes, “Those films are also set in periods of transition, one in the 1950s and the other in the 1970s.”

As in the former, Phoenix's physique became quite slim by the time filming began. “I honestly don't know how he does it,” Bridges posits of Phoenix's discipline, “but we started fittings six months before filming, so it became part of my collaboration with him, too—not just tailoring things to fit, but are we hiding his physique in this scene, are we playing it up in that one?”

Phillips had never worked with Bridges before, but greatly admired his designs. “Mark is incredible,” the director comments. “Just going to Robert De Niro's suit fittings with him was an experience. And because he had worked with Joaquin a few times before, they already had a great rapport.”

Bridges was flattered when Phillips reached out. “Todd sent a lovely note that said that he had this project coming up and would I consider working on it. Certainly to get a note like that from someone of Todd's caliber... And of course working with an old friend like Joaquin is truly a joy for me. We have a wonderful back and forth and I trust him. We talk and he's quite open to my suggestions as to how best represent on the outside this person he's working on on the inside. So, all the pieces fell into place based on Todd's personal request.”

For the period in which “Joker” takes place, Bridges observes, “If you're true to, say, 1981, there was a certain range of colors and color combinations available in stores. We used a lot of blue, brown, maroon, mauve, gray, navy, khaki... We moved away from the burnt oranges and greens of the '70s,

though I still threw in a few for the story's sake. But just by adhering to that palette, it automatically feels like some other time because it's not what they're selling in the stores right now."

Insofar as Arthur's fashion sense goes, Bridges says, "He's very much a John Q. Public, so to speak; not much style that isn't very practical. He dresses for comfort and has had his clothes for a while, and there's a vague childlike aspect to it as well as an old man look to it. With Joaquin, I don't ever want to give too much away with the choices I make because his performance is so strong."

In the opening frames of the film, however, we see Arthur at work, which involves an actual costume that would be of Arthur's own design: party clown. "Knowing that some of the character's movements in the film were inspired by some of Charlie Chaplin's moves, I worked a little bit with that silhouette, as well as the knowledge that it would be something Arthur's put together in a very makeshift way." Bridges does acknowledge, however, "One personal conceit of mine is the little derby he wears, because I've always loved that on clowns."

And, of course, Arthur wears the traditional big clown shoes as well, in which Phoenix was required to run several times—no easy feat.

When it came down to the actual Joker costume for the film, Bridges happily reports that its design was, in part, written into the script as "a rust suit Arthur has had for many years." Still, he confesses, "You have a million thoughts running through your mind and there's a little bit of external pressure to serve the fans as well as the piece. But ultimately my work comes down to telling this particular story, where the outfit has to be something very organic to the character: pieces we've seen Arthur wear before, now reassembled to become what Joker wears."

Working backwards, Bridges was able to determine when and how much of the building blocks to the final look would appear throughout the story. "I started from the beginning and then took it on a journey—this piece in the comedy club, how it gets recombined with different items at different beats—to get to the final result. When Joaquin and I had our final fitting for the full suit, it was all put together with the right shirt, the right waistcoat... It was dead-on '70s with a slightly longer line in the jacket, and he took on a strange, slinky confidence that he doesn't have as Arthur, but which was just right for Joker. To me, that was really satisfying."

Phoenix adds, "As Joker, he walks tall. He's confident. Prior to that it's like he was a shell of himself."

Throughout the film, Arthur dons a clown face of varying degrees for various performances. His ultimate Joker look was designed by Phillips and Phoenix as an exaggerated version of Arthur's regular

maquillage and executed to perfection by make-up department head Nicki Lederman and her team, utilizing the basic red and green of Arthur's clown character. Lederman herself created a unique shade for Arthur's tears from various pigments she had on hand, dubbing it antique blue.

***"I used to think that my life was a tragedy, but now I realize it's a comedy."***

***—Joker***

To interpret the many themes explored throughout the film, Phillips very early on turned to composer Hildur Guðnadóttir. "Hildur was writing music as far back as pre-production," Phillips recalls. "I was sending her script pages and she was writing music before we even shot, and what she did for the film is so unique."

Guðnadóttir says, "Todd asked me to write some music based on my feelings from reading the script, which I was inspired to do because it truly resonated with me." She sent him a sample and recalls, "He thought that I had really captured the atmosphere of the movie."

What struck the composer the most, she says, "was Arthur, this character with a kind of multi-dimensional simplicity, so openhearted and childlike, who is just trying so hard to fit in. But his circumstances and how people react to him don't really allow for that to happen. Musically, that translated to melodies that are very simple and monotonous, because that's kind of the way he is seeing things. Then I tried to expand within that simplicity the orchestration around it not with chords or any complicated music, but with texture that I felt resonated with the melancholia of his character."

Her composition features the cello as the centerpiece of the score, leading the very string-based melodies. Guðnadóttir reveals, "There is often a whole symphony orchestra of 90 musicians playing the same thing, but it's hidden behind the cello. I felt that went well with the character, he is seen in this certain way and there are many layers of complication behind him, but he doesn't see it. I thought orchestrating it that way, so that instruments are not always audible, you will think you're just listening to one cello but, like Arthur, there are layers behind it."

Guðnadóttir began work so early that Phillips was able to introduce it during production and brought a piece to Phoenix just a few weeks into filming as a means of inspiring his work in a pivotal scene, one in which the audience will see the first hint of things to come. "Joaquin and I were on the set and at a standstill," the director relates. "We hadn't really figured out the scene, but then I remembered I'd just gotten this great piece of music from Hildur that I'd been listening to the night before. I played it for him, he



loved it, and he just started doing this slow dance to it, and out of nowhere this gracefulness comes out of Arthur, the emergence of his shadow. We started filming him, and that became the beginning of his transformation.”

Phoenix attests, “Todd started playing this cello music, and it was really effective. I said, ‘So, maybe there’s a movement,’ and he said, ‘Well, I would start on your foot—that’s your move.’ That’s all he said and all we had. The preparation was in studying movement and dance during rehearsals, but what came out of that piece of score was a turning point for the character, and for me and Todd working together...and understanding Arthur.”

# # #

## **ABOUT THE CAST**

**JOAQUIN PHOENIX** (Arthur Fleck) is a three-time Academy Award-nominated actor who earned his first Oscar nod in 2000, for Best Supporting Actor opposite Russell Crowe in Ridley Scott's Oscar-winning Best Picture, "Gladiator." In addition to nominations for the Oscar, the Golden Globe and the British Academy (BAFTA) Award for that performance, Phoenix received awards as Best Supporting Actor from the National Board of Review and The Broadcast Films Critics Association.

Phoenix received his second Oscar nomination, for Best Actor, in 2006 for his mesmerizing performance as legendary singer-songwriter Johnny Cash, opposite Oscar-winning actress Reese Witherspoon in James Mangold's riveting biopic "Walk the Line." For his performance, he also won the Golden Globe as Best Actor in a Motion Picture – Comedy or Musical, as well as nominations for BAFTA, SAG, BFCA and Chicago Film Critics awards.

He received his third Oscar nod, for Best Actor, for his work in the Paul Thomas Anderson 2012 film "The Master," opposite the late Philip Seymour Hoffman. Phoenix also earned the Volpi Cup at the Venice Film Festival and was nominated for a Golden Globe and a BAFTA.

In 2014, he starred in the award-winning Spike Jonze film "Her," opposite Scarlett Johansson, and in 2015, he reteamed with director Paul Thomas Anderson for "Inherent Vice," starring opposite Josh Brolin, Benicio Del Toro, Owen Wilson, Katherine Waterston and Eric Roberts. That same year he also starred in Woody Allen's "Irrational Man," opposite Emma Stone.

More recently, Phoenix was awarded Best Actor at the 2017 Cannes Film Festival for his role in the critically acclaimed, Lynne Ramsay-directed feature "You Were Never Really Here," and starred in Van Sant's "Don't Worry, He Won't Get Far on Foot," both for Amazon. And last year he starred with John C. Reilly in "The Sisters Brothers," directed by Jacques Audiard, and co-starred opposite Rooney Mara in "Mary Magdalene" for director Garth Davis.

Phoenix was born in Puerto Rico and began his acting career at the age of eight. During that time, he made numerous episodic television appearances and was a regular on a 1986 CBS series when he made his first feature film appearance, in "Spacecamp." The following year, he starred in "Russkies" with sister Summer and Carole King. Two years later, director Ron Howard cast the teenager as Dianne Wiest's son in his popular family comedy "Parenthood."

In 1996 the young actor turned in a stunning and critically acclaimed performance opposite Nicole Kidman in Gus Van Sant's "To Die For." He next co-starred with Liv Tyler, Billy Crudup and Jennifer

Connelly in "Inventing the Abbotts" in 1997. That same year, he co-starred opposite Claire Danes, Sean Penn and Jennifer Lopez in Oliver Stone's "U-Turn."

In 1998, Phoenix co-starred opposite Vince Vaughn in "Return to Paradise" and "Clay Pigeons," then won acclaim opposite Nicolas Cage in Joel Schumacher's dark thriller "8mm." In 2000, he starred in Philip Kaufman's Oscar-nominated "Quills," opposite Kate Winslet and Geoffrey Rush, a film based on Douglas McGrath's play about the Marquis de Sade, for which Phoenix won the Broadcast Film Critics Award as Best Supporting Actor. Also that year, he starred opposite Mark Wahlberg, James Caan, Faye Dunaway, Ellen Burstyn and Charlize Theron in James Gray's "The Yards." He has worked with Gray three more times, on 2007's "We Own the Night," 2008's "Two Lovers," and 2013's "The Immigrant."

In the early-to-mid 2000s, he starred opposite Mel Gibson in M. Night Shyamalan's film "Signs," and reteamed with Shyamalan two years later on the gothic thriller "The Village." He also provided the voice in the animated film "Brother Bear," and appeared in Thomas Vinterberg's "It's All About Love"; "Buffalo Soldiers"; "Ladder 49"; "Reservation Road"; and "Hotel Rwanda."

On October 27, 2008, Phoenix announced his retirement from film in order to focus on his rap music, but the announcement turned out to be part of his acting role in the mockumentary "I'm Still Here," directed by Casey Affleck. The film debuted at the Venice Film Festival and the Toronto International Film Festival in 2010. When he returned to acting in 2011, it was to star in "The Master."

A social activist, Phoenix has lent his support to a number of charities and humanitarian organizations, notably the River Phoenix Center for Peacebuilding, PETA, Amnesty International, The Art of Elysium, and is on the board of directors for The Lunchbox Fund. He narrated the film "Earthlings" for Nation Earth, a video about the investigation of animal abuse in factory farms, pet mills, in industry and research.

Phoenix has also directed music videos for Ringside, She Wants Revenge, People in Planes, Arckid, Albert Hammond Jr. and the Silversun Pickups.

**ROBERT DE NIRO** (Murray Franklin) launched his prolific motion picture career in Brian De Palma's "The Wedding Party" in 1969. By 1974, he had won the New York Film Critics Award for Best Supporting Actor in recognition of his critically acclaimed performance in "Bang the Drum Slowly" and the National Society of Film Critics Award for Martin Scorsese's "Mean Streets." In 1975, De Niro won the Academy Award for Best Supporting Actor for his portrayal of the young Vito Corleone in "The Godfather: Part II."

In 1981, he won his second Oscar, as Best Actor for his extraordinary portrayal of Jake La Motta in Scorsese's "Raging Bull." De Niro has earned Academy Award nominations for his work in five additional films: as Travis Bickle in Scorsese's acclaimed "Taxi Driver"; as a Vietnam vet in Michael Cimino's "The Deer Hunter"; as a catatonic patient brought to life in Penny Marshall's "Awakenings"; in 1992 as Max Cady, an ex-con looking for revenge in Scorsese's remake of the 1962 classic "Cape Fear"; and as a father to a bi-polar son in David O. Russell's "Silver Linings Playbook."

In 2009, De Niro received the coveted Kennedy Center Honor for his distinguished acting career. He also received the Hollywood Actor Award from the Hollywood Film Festival, which he won again in 2012, and the Stanley Kubrick Award from the BAFTA Britannia Awards. In addition, *AARP The Magazine* gave De Niro the 2010 Movies for Grownups Lifetime Achievement Award. De Niro was honored with the Cecil B. DeMille Award at the 2011 Golden Globe Awards. He also served as the jury president of the 64th Cannes Film Festival.

He was most recently seen in HBO's "Wizard of Lies," starring as Bernie Madoff, for which he received an Emmy Award nomination for Lead Actor in a Limited Series or Movie. An upcoming film will be "The War with Grandpa," and 2019 will see the release of "The Irishman," in which De Niro and Scorsese work together for the first time in 22 years. Al Pacino co-stars in this drama, an epic saga of organized crime in post war America.

De Niro also recently starred in "The Comedian," "Hands of Stone," "Joy," "Dirty Grandpa," "The Intern," "Grudge Match," David O. Russell's "American Hustle," "Last Vegas," and "The Family." His other recent film credits include "The Killing Season," "The Big Wedding," "Being Flynn," "Freelancers," "Red Lights," "New Year's Eve," "Limitless," "Little Fockers"—the third installment of the highly successful "Meet the Parents" franchise—Filmauro's Italian romantic comedy "Manuale d'amore 3," the psychological thriller "Stone," and "Machete."

His distinguished body of work also includes performances in Elia Kazan's "The Last Tycoon"; Bernardo Bertolucci's "1900"; Ulu Grosbard's "True Confessions" and "Falling in Love"; Sergio Leone's "Once Upon a Time in America"; Scorsese's "King of Comedy," "New York, New York," "Goodfellas," and "Casino"; Terry Gilliam's "Brazil"; Roland Joffe's "The Mission"; Brian De Palma's "The Untouchables"; Alan Parker's "Angel Heart"; Martin Brest's "Midnight Run"; David Jones's "Jackknife"; Martin Ritt's "Stanley and Iris"; Neil Jordan's "We're No Angels"; Penny Marshall's "Awakenings"; Ron Howard's "Backdraft"; Michael Caton-Jones's "This Boy's Life"; John McNaughton's "Mad Dog and Glory"; Kenneth Branagh's "Mary Shelley's Frankenstein"; Michael Mann's "Heat"; Barry Levinson's "Sleepers" and "Wag the Dog"; Jerry

Zaks' "Marvin's Room"; Tony Scott's "The Fan"; James Mangold's "Copland"; Alfonso Cuarón's "Great Expectations"; Quentin Tarantino's "Jackie Brown"; John Frankenheimer's "Ronin"; Harold Ramis's "Analyze This" and "Analyze That"; Joel Schumacher's "Flawless"; Des McNuff's "The Adventures of Rocky and Bullwinkle"; George Tillman's "Men of Honor"; John Herzfeld's "Fifteen Minutes"; Frank Oz's "The Score"; Tom Dey's "Showtime"; Michael Caton-Jones's "City By the Sea"; Nick Hamm's "Godsend"; John Polson's "Hide and Seek"; Mary McGuckian's "The Bridge of San Luis Rey"; "Shark Tale"; Jay Roach's "Meet The Parents" and "Meet the Fockers"; Barry Levinson's "What Just Happened"; Jon Avnet's "Righteous Kill"; and Kirk Jones's "Everybody's Fine."

De Niro takes pride in the development of his production company, Tribeca Productions, the Tribeca Film Center, which he founded with Jane Rosenthal in 1988, and in the Tribeca Film Festival, which he founded with Rosenthal and Craig Hatkoff in 2001 as a response to the attacks on the World Trade Center. The festival was conceived to foster the economic and cultural revitalization of Lower Manhattan through an annual celebration of film, music, and culture; the festival's mission is to promote New York City as a major filmmaking center and help filmmakers reach the broadest possible audiences.

Through Tribeca Productions, De Niro develops projects on which he serves in a combination of capacities, including producer, director and actor. Tribeca's "A Bronx Tale" in 1993 marked De Niro's directorial debut. He later directed and co-starred in "The Good Shepherd," with Matt Damon and Angelina Jolie.

Other Tribeca features include "Thunderheart," "Cape Fear," "Mistress," "Night and the City," "The Night We Never Met," "Faithful," "Panther," "Marvin's Room," "Wag the Dog," "Analyze This," "Flawless," "The Adventures of Rocky and Bullwinkle," "Meet the Parents," "Fifteen Minutes," "Showtime," "Analyze That" and "Meet the Fockers."

In 1992, Tribeca TV was launched with the acclaimed series "Tribeca." De Niro was one of the executive producers.

Tribeca Productions is headquartered at De Niro's Tribeca Film Center in the TriBeCa district of New York.

**ZAZIE BEETZ** (Sophie Dumond) is a German-born, Emmy Award-nominated actress best known for her co-leading role as Donald Glover's on-and-off-again girlfriend Vanessa in FX Networks' Golden Globe-winning series "Atlanta," which has been picked up for a third season. She also has a recurring role as Noelle in Joe Swanberg's "Easy," for Netflix.

Recently, Beetz was named one of *Variety*'s 10 Actors to Watch in 2018, for her performance as Domino in "Deadpool 2," opposite Ryan Reynolds and Josh Brolin. In 2019, Beetz can be seen in Steven Soderbergh's "High Flying Bird," Babak Anvari's "Wounds," opposite Armie Hammer and Dakota Johnson, as well as "The Undiscovered Country," "Seberg" and "Lucy in the Sky."

Beetz is a native New Yorker.

**FRANCES CONROY** (Penny Fleck) attended classes at New York City's Neighborhood Playhouse School of the Theatre as a teenager and went on to study at Juilliard, where she was taught by theater greats John Houseman and Marian Seldes. Following dramatic roles in such classical productions as "Mother Courage...and Her Children," "King Lear," "All's Well That Ends Well," "Measure for Measure" and "Othello" (as Desdemona) in the late 1970s, she made her Broadway debut with "The Lady from Dubuque" in 1980.

She went on to Broadway and off-Broadway success throughout the 1980s in such plays as "Our Town," as Mrs. Gibbs; "The Little Foxes," as Birdie; and "In the Summer House." She also appeared with Seldes in "Ring Round the Moon" and "A Bright Room Called Day." She won a Drama Desk Award for "The Secret Rapture" and an Obie Award for "The Last Yankee." In 2000 she received the Outer Critics Circle Award and a Tony Award nomination for "The Ride Down Mt. Morgan." She came out to California in 1985 at the invitation of director Houseman and appeared in more plays, notably "Richard III" at San Diego's Old Globe Theater.

Conroy began a career on camera with parts in Woody Allen's "Manhattan," "Another Woman" and "Crimes and Misdemeanors." She then went on to make an indelible impression with her series turn as the dowdy, emotionally frail undertaker's widow in the cult hit "Six Feet Under." During the five-season run on HBO, she won both Golden Globe and Screen Actors Guild awards and was nominated four times for an Emmy.

She has subsequently been seen in a diverse slate of movies, including "Die, Mommie, Die!," "Catwoman," Martin Scorsese's "The Aviator," and "Shopgirl" alongside Steve Martin. More recently, Conroy has made memorable appearances on a variety of shows, including HBO's dark comedy "Getting On," opposite Laurie Metcalf; Hulu's cult hit comedy *Casual*, ABC's *The Real O'Neals*, multiple seasons of Ryan Murphy's Fox anthology series *American Horror Story*, Fox's *Arrested Development* and CBS's *Young Sheldon*. She most recently can be seen in Stephen King's *Castle Rock* on Hulu, and the current season of *American Horror Story*.

## **ABOUT THE FILMMAKERS**

**TODD PHILLIPS** (Director/Co-Screenwriter/Producer) began his career as a documentary filmmaker while studying at NYU Film School. He began writing and directing features in 2000 with the cult classic comedy “Road Trip.” Phillips was nominated for an Academy Award for Best Adapted Screenplay for his work on “Borat: Cultural Learnings of America for Make Benefit Glorious Nation of Kazakhstan” in 2006.

Phillips was a producer on the Oscar-nominated film “A Star Is Born,” featuring Bradley Cooper and Lady Gaga, which was released in October of last year. The film was nominated for eight Academy Awards and has grossed over \$400 million worldwide.

Phillips wrote, directed and produced the comedic drama “War Dogs,” which was released in 2016 starring Miles Teller and Jonah Hill, who was nominated for a Golden Globe award for his performance.

In 2009, Phillips directed and produced the blockbuster comedy “The Hangover,” starring Cooper, Ed Helms and Zach Galifianakis, which won a Golden Globe Award for Best Motion Picture – Comedy or Musical. He then wrote, directed and produced the sequels, “The Hangover Part II” in 2011, and “The Hangover Part III” in 2013. Collectively, the trilogy grossed over \$1.4 billion globally.

In 2003, Phillips wrote, produced and directed the comedy box office hit “Old School,” starring Luke Wilson, Will Ferrell and Vince Vaughn. Phillips has written, directed and produced such comedic successes as “Starsky & Hutch,” “Road Trip,” and “Due Date,” starring Robert Downey Jr. and Galifianakis. He also served as producer on the outrageous dark teen comedy “Project X.”

Earlier in his career, Phillips’ documentary filmmaking was inspired by humor taken from everyday reality and the belief that the truth is often stranger than fiction. In 1993, while still a student at NYU Film School, Phillips made “Hated: GG Allin and the Murder Junkies,” which portrays the revolting antics of extreme punk rocker GG Allin, and which became an instant underground sensation. It had a theatrical release in 1994 and went on to become the highest grossing student film of its time. Phillips followed that in 1998 with “Frat House,” a documentary that he produced and directed for HBO’s “America Undercover” series. The film premiered at the 1998 Sundance Film Festival and won the Grand Jury Prize for documentary features. The unflinching exposé of life in fraternities created a public controversy that

eventually caused the film to be shelved by HBO. In 1999, Phillips produced and directed his third documentary, “Bittersweet Motel,” which centered on musical cult phenomenon Phish.

Phillips currently resides in California.

**BRADLEY COOPER** (Producer) is a seven-time Oscar nominee who made his directorial debut with 2018’s “A Star Is Born.” The film garnered a total of eight Oscar nods, including Best Picture and Best Actor, and won Best Original Song for “Shallow,” a duet Cooper performs with costar Lady Gaga in the movie. Cooper also received two nominations from the Directors Guild of America, and was awarded both Director of the Year and Directors to Watch Awards from the Palm Springs International Film Festival. He was also nominated for Best Adapted Screenplay by the Writers Guild of America, alongside Eric Roth and Will Fetters. The critically acclaimed film also received numerous accolades from around the globe, including AFI’s Movie of the Year, nine Critics Choice Awards and two wins, five Golden Globe Award nods and one win, seven BAFTA nods and a win, four Screen Actors Guild Awards, and many others. It was also hugely successful at the box office as well, earning more than \$434 million worldwide.

In 2018, Cooper also appeared in Clint Eastwood’s “The Mule,” and was heard lending his voice to the character Rocket Raccoon in the blockbuster “Avengers: Infinity War.”

Five years ago, Cooper took on the iconic role of John Merrick in “The Elephant Man” at the Booth Theater on Broadway, opposite Patricia Clarkson and Alessandro Nivola. The critically acclaimed performance garnered him a Tony nomination for Best Performance by an Actor in a Leading Role, an Outer Critics Circle nomination for Outstanding Actor in a Play, a Drama League award for Outstanding Distinguished Performance and a Drama Desk nomination for Outstanding Actor in a Play. The Broadway production received five Tony nominations, including Best Revival of a play. Following the success of the play in New York, Cooper reprised the role of John Merrick in a six-week limited run of the play in London at the Theatre Royal Haymarket in the West End, directed by Scott Ellis, alongside the original Broadway cast. Cooper originally performed the role on the Nikos Stage at the Williamstown Theatre Festival in the summer of 2012, also directed by Ellis, also alongside Clarkson and Nivola.

In 2014, Cooper produced and starred in Clint Eastwood’s critically acclaimed, Oscar-nominated film “American Sniper,” which became the top grossing film of 2014 distributed by Warner Bros. Pictures. Cooper’s performance as celebrated navy seal Chris Kyle and his role as producer garnered him his third and fourth Oscar nominations and a Producers Guild Award nomination. The film was based on an adaptation of the autobiography of Navy SEAL Chris Kyle, *American Sniper: The Autobiography of The*



*Most Lethal Sniper in U.S. Military History*. Cooper originally optioned the book under his production company, two years prior to making the film.

Also in 2014, Cooper was nominated for an Oscar for Best Supporting Actor for his portrayal as the unhinged FBI Agent Richie DiMaso in the David O. Russell drama “American Hustle,” starring opposite Christian Bale, Amy Adams and Jennifer Lawrence. “American Hustle” was nominated for 10 Academy Awards, including Best Picture. Cooper received nominations for a BAFTA Award for Best Actor in a Supporting Role, a Broadcast Film Critics Association Award, a Satellite Award and a Golden Globe nomination for Best Supporting Actor. The cast received the Screen Actors Guild (SAG) Award for Outstanding Performance by a Cast in a Motion Picture.

That same year, Cooper lent his voice to the character Rocket Raccoon in the surprise smash action-adventure “Guardians of the Galaxy,” directed by James Gunn. He voiced him again in the 2017 sequel, “Guardians of the Galaxy Vol. 2,” also directed by Gunn.

In April 2013, Cooper starred opposite Ryan Gosling in the critically-acclaimed film “The Place Beyond the Pines,” directed by Derek Cianfrance. Cooper portrayed the character of Avery, a rookie cop navigating a department ruled by a corrupt detective. The film was recognized by the National Board of Review as one of their top 10 films of 2013.

Earlier that year, Cooper starred opposite Ed Helms and Zach Galifianakis in “The Hangover Part III,” the third installment of the comedy trilogy. Cooper also starred in the previous installments, all directed by Todd Phillips, which collectively grossed over \$1.4 billion globally. “The Hangover Part II” smashed opening weekend records for an R-rated comedy, and “The Hangover,” which grossed \$469.2 million worldwide, still ranks domestically as the highest grossing R-rated comedy ever.

In 2012, Cooper was nominated for an Oscar for Best Actor for his portrayal of Pat Solatano in the comedic drama “Silver Linings Playbook.” The film, directed by David O. Russell and starring Jennifer Lawrence and Robert De Niro, was nominated for eight Academy Awards, including Best Picture. Cooper was recognized by the National Board of Review for Best Actor and won the Broadcast Film Critics Association Award for Best Actor in a Comedy. Cooper also received a Golden Globe Award nomination for Best Performance by an Actor in a Motion Picture – Comedy or Musical and a SAG Award nomination for Outstanding Performance by a Male Actor in a Leading Role, as well as nominations from the Independent Spirit Awards for Best Male Lead, and the BAFTA Awards for Best Actor in a Lead Role.

In March 2011, Cooper starred opposite Robert De Niro in the box office hit “Limitless,” which marked Cooper's first starring role in a feature film, directed by Neil Burger. Cooper also served as a producer on the film.

Cooper's additional film credits include: Todd Phillips' “War Dogs”; David O. Russell's “Joy”; “Burnt”; “The Words”; “The A-Team”; “New York I Love You”; “He's Just Not That Into You”; “Hit and Run”; “Yes Man”; “All About Steve”; “Wedding Crashes”; “Wet Hot American Summer” “Aloha”; and “Serena.”

Cooper made his Broadway debut in the spring of 2006 in Joe Montello's production of “Three Days of Rain,” opposite Julia Roberts and Paul Rudd. In July 2008, he joined the cast of the critically acclaimed Theresa Rebeck play “The Understudy,” which premiered at the Williamstown Theatre Festival to rave reviews and sold out performances.

On television, Cooper most recently reprised his role as Ben in the Netflix remake “Wet Hot American Summer: First Day of Camp.” His other television credits include: “Alias,” in which Cooper portrayed Will Tippin; the F/X Drama “Nip/Tuck”; Fox's single-camera comedy “Kitchen Confidential,” based on the trials and tribulations of renowned chef Anthony Bourdain; “Jack & Bobby”; and a guest appearance on “Sex and the City.”

In 2012, Cooper entered into a two-year first look deal with Warner Bros. for his production company 22nd & Indiana Pictures, under which “American Sniper” was produced. Three years later, Cooper partnered with longtime friend and collaborator Todd Phillips, and combined their production companies to form Joint Effort under Warner Bros., which has produced “War Dogs,” “Joy” and “A Star Is Born.” Cooper and Phillips are currently developing “Black Flags,” a television series based on the book, *Black Flags: The Rise of ISIS*, which they will executive produce.

Born in Philadelphia, Cooper graduated with honors in the English program at Georgetown University. After moving to New York City, he obtained his Masters in the Fine Arts program at the Actors Studio Drama School.

**EMMA TILLINGER KOSKOFF** (Producer) is President of Production for Sikelia Productions, working alongside Academy Award-winning director Martin Scorsese on all aspects of his film and television projects.

Koskoff began her career in the film industry assisting director/producer Ted Demme. While with Demme, she worked on the critically acclaimed film “Blow,” starring Johnny Depp and Penelope Cruz, and also assisted on the Emmy-nominated documentary “A Decade Under the Influence.”

In 2003, Koskoff became Martin Scorsese's executive assistant, serving in that capacity for three years. During this period, she assisted on "The Blues," "The Aviator" and "No Direction Home: Bob Dylan."

Scorsese named Koskoff President of Production in 2006. She then associate produced, alongside film producers Graham King and Brad Grey, Scorsese's "The Departed." The film, which received four Academy Awards, including the Oscar for Best Director and Best Motion Picture of the Year, stars Leonardo DiCaprio, Matt Damon and Jack Nicholson.

Following the excitement of "The Departed," Koskoff co-produced the Rolling Stones concert film "Shine a Light," starring Mick Jagger, Keith Richards, Charlie Watts and Ronnie Wood and directed by Scorsese. She also associate produced the Oscar-nominated documentary "The Betrayal – Nerakhoon," directed by Ellen Kuras.

In 2008, Koskoff co-produced the psychological thriller "Shutter Island." The film stars Leonardo DiCaprio, Mark Ruffalo, Ben Kingsley, Michelle Williams, Patricia Clarkson and Max von Sydow, and was produced by Mike Medavoy, Brad Fischer and Scorsese.

"A Letter to Elia," the 2010 Scorsese-directed, Koskoff-produced documentary about filmmaker Elia Kazan, triumphed when winning the reputable Peabody Award. Additionally, she was executive producer for Scorsese's other recent documentaries: "Public Speaking," on the writer Fran Lebowitz, and "George Harrison: Living in the Material World," for which she won an Emmy Award in 2011.

Named executive producer on Scorsese's 2011 Oscar-winning film "Hugo," she then went on to produce the highly anticipated "The Wolf of Wall Street." The Scorsese-directed film, which opened to worldwide critical acclaim, stars Leonardo DiCaprio and Jonah Hill. Koskoff was recognized for her contributions by receiving her first Academy Award, Golden Globe, and Producers Guild Award nominations.

She then served as executive producer on "Vinyl," HBO's 1970s rock 'n' roll television series, with Scorsese at the helm, as well as writer/director Ben Wheatley's "Free Fire," which she co-executive produced alongside Scorsese.

2016 saw the release of Scorsese's long-awaited passion project "Silence," which Koskoff produced. The film, starring Andrew Garfield, Adam Driver and Liam Neeson, was named a Movie of the Year by the American Film Institute (AFI). Koskoff also produced the 2016 boxing drama "Bleed for This," by writer/director Ben Younger, which was Executive Produced by Scorsese. Alongside Scorsese, she also Executive Produced the acclaimed Grateful Dead documentary "Long Strange Trip," directed by Amir Bar-Lev, and released by Amazon in 2017.

In 2014, Koskoff and Scorsese partnered with Rodrigo Teixeira of RT Features to launch the Emerging Filmmaker Fund, dedicated to supporting first- or second-time directors around the world. The partnership's first film, Jonas Carpignano's "A Ciambra," premiered to high acclaim in Directors Fortnight at the Cannes Film Festival in 2017 and was released that year. Their latest, Danielle Lessovitz's transgender romance "Port Authority," premiered this year at Cannes in Un Certain Regard. The film's star, Leyna Bloom, was the first transgender woman of color to headline a film premiering at Cannes. Their next film, Croatia filmmaker Antoneta Kusijanovic's "Murina," is set to film summer 2019.

Koskoff and Scorsese serve as executive producers on Josh and Benny Safdie's "Uncut Gems," currently in post-production, and Joanna Hogg's "The Souvenir" (Parts 1 and 2), with Part 1 winning the World Cinema Grand Jury prize at Sundance 2019, and "Part 2" currently in production.

Koskoff is currently producing Scorsese's "The Irishman," starring Robert DeNiro, Al Pacino and Joe Pesci, presently in post-production. Next up for Koskoff is Scorsese's "Killers of the Flower Moon," which will star Leonardo DiCaprio and Robert De Niro.

**SCOTT SILVER** (Co-Screenwriter) was nominated for an Academy Award and a BAFTA Award for his screenplay for David O. Russell's "The Fighter." Silver's other screenplays include "The Mod Squad," which he also directed, Curtis Hansen's "8 Mile," and "The Finest Hours," among others.

**LAWRENCE SHER** (Director of Photography) has been working as a DP for more than 15 years. A New Jersey native and graduate of Wesleyan University, he worked as a camera assistant before breaking out as a cinematographer with "Kissing Jessica Stein" and the Independent Spirit Award winner "Garden State."

Sher began his collaboration with Todd Phillips on "The Hangover" and has worked with him on "The Hangover II," "The Hangover III," "Due Date" and "War Dogs." Among his other credits are "The Dukes of Hazzard," "Dan in Real Life," "Trucker," "I Love You, Man," "The Dictator," "The Secret Life of Walter Mitty," "Godzilla" and "Godzilla: King of the Monsters."

**MARK FRIEDBERG** (Production Designer) has had a long and distinguished career in film and television. Among his film credits are Barry Jenkin's "If Beale Street Could Talk," Todd Haynes' "Wonderstruck" and "Carol," Jim Jarmusch's "Paterson," Ang Lee's "Billy Lynn's Long Half Time Walk," Ava DuVernay's "Selma," and Darren Aronofsky's "Noah."

Friedberg also production designed Charlie Kaufman's "Synecdoche, New York," Marc Webb's "The Amazing Spider-Man 2," Garry Marshall's "New Year's Eve," Jodie Foster's "The Beaver," Roger Michel's "Morning Glory," Julie Taymor's "The Tempest" and "Across the Universe," Kevin McDonald's "State of Play," Wes Anderson's "The Darjeeling Limited" and "The Life Aquatic with Steve Zissou," Susan Stroman's "The Producers," Jarmusch's "Broken Flowers" and "Coffee and Cigarettes," Haynes's "Far From Heaven," James Mangold's "Kate & Lepold," Ed Harris's "Pollack," Joan Chen's "Autumn in New York," Lee's "Ride with the Devil" and "The Ice Storm," Marshall's "Runaway Bride," and Herb Gardner's "I'm Not Rappaport."

Friedberg's television credits include "Mildred Pierce," "Sex and The City," and "Poodle Springs."

**JEFF GROTH** (Editor) has cut such films as Todd Phillips' "War Dogs," "The Hangover Part III" and "Project X," as well as "Office Christmas Party," "Entourage," "The Wedding Ringer," "Man Made," "Religulous," and "So Goes the Nation."

His television credits include Deadly Class, Ballers, Entourage, Community, Tori and Dean. Groth also worked as assistant editor for many years.

**MARK BRIDGES** (Costume Designer) is a two-time Academy Award winner, in 2011 of Michel Hazanavicius' "The Artist" and, more recently, Paul Thomas Anderson's "Phantom Thread" in 2018.

Bridges also collaborated with Anderson on "Hard Eight," "Boogie Nights," "Magnolia," "Punch-Drunk Love," "There Will Be Blood," "The Master" and "Inherent Vice."

His other credits include Paul Greengrass's "Jason Bourne" and "Captain Phillips"; Sam Taylor-Johnson's "Fifty Shades of Grey"; David O. Russell's "Silver Linings Playbook," "The Fighter" and "I Heart Huckabees"; Noah Baumbach's "Greenberg"; Steven Shainberg's "Fur: An Imaginary Portrait of Diane Arbus"; "The Italian Job"; Curtis Hansen's "8 Mile"; "Showboy"; Ted Demme's "Blow"; "Cirque du Soloeil: Journey of Man"; Andrew Davies' "Deep Blue Sea"; "Blast from the Past"; and many other films.

He also worked as assistant costume designer on "Nixon," "Natural Born Killers," "The Hudsucker Proxy," "Dave," and many other films.

Bridges earned a Bachelor of Arts degree from Stonybrook University and a Master of Fine Arts degree from NYU's Tisch School of the Arts.

**HILDUR GUÐNADÓTTIR** (Composer) is an Emmy-Award nominated Icelandic composer, cello player, and singer who has been manifesting herself at the forefront of experimental pop and contemporary music. In her solo works, she draws out a broad spectrum of sounds from her instrumentation, ranging from intimate simplicity to huge soundscapes.

Her work for film and television includes “Sicario: Day of the Soldado,” “Mary Magdalene,” and the critically acclaimed HBO series “Chernobyl,” for which she received a Primetime Emmy Award nomination in the Outstanding Music Composition for a Limited Series, Movie or Special category. In addition, her body of work includes scores for films such “Tom of Finland,” “Journey’s End” and 20 episodes of the Icelandic TV series “Trapped,” streaming on Amazon Prime.

Gudnadóttir began playing cello as a child, entered the Reykjavík Music Academy and then moved on to musical studies/composition and new media at the Iceland Academy of the Arts and Universität der Künste Berlin.

She has released four critically acclaimed solo albums: *Mount A* (2006), *Without Sinking* (2009), *Leyfðu Ljósinu* (2012) and *Saman* (2014). Her records have been nominated a number of times for the Icelandic Music Awards. Her albums are all released on Touch.

She has composed music for theatre, dance performances and films. The Icelandic Symphony Orchestra, Icelandic National Theatre, Tate Modern, The British Film Institute, The Royal Swedish Opera in Stockholm and Gothenburg National Theatre are amongst the institutions that have commissioned new works from her. She was nominated for the Nordic Music Council Prize as composer of the year 2014.

Gudnadóttir has performed live and recorded music with Skúli Sverrisson, Jóhann Jóhannsson, múm, Sunn O))), Pan Sonic, Hauschka, Wildbirds & Peacedrums, Ryuichi Sakamoto, David Sylvian, The Knife, Fever Ray and Throbbing Gristle, among others.

In 2018, Gudnadóttir was nominated for a Discovery of the Year Award at the World Soundtrack Academy in Gent, and received several prestigious awards, including the Asia Pacific Screen Award for Best Score for “Mary Magdalene,” and Best Score at the Beijing International Film Festival for “Journey’s End.”

Gudnadóttir lives in Berlin, Germany.