



THE ILLUSIONIST

Running Time: 109 minutes

MPAA Rating: PG-13 Rating SOME SEXUAL AND VIOLENT CONTENT

www.IllusionistTheFilm.com

Screenplay By/Directed By: Neil Burger

Based on the short story "Eisenheim The Illusionist" by Steven Millhauser.

Cast: Edward Norton

Paul Giamatti

Jessica Biel

Rufus Sewell

Eddie Marsan

Jake Wood

Tom Fisher

Karl Johnson

Producers: Michael London, Brian Koppelman, David Levien, Bob Yari & Cathy Schulman

Executive Producers: Jane Garnett, Tom Nunan, Ted Liebowitz, Joey Horvitz

Co-Producers: Tom Karnowski, Matthew Stillman,
David Minkowski

Director of Photography: Dick Pope BSC

Production Designer: Ondrej Nekvasil

Editor: Naomi Geraghty

Costume Designer: Ngila Dickson

Composer: Philip Glass

Casting: Deborah Aquila, CSA, Tricia Wood, CSA,
Nina Gold

The Illusionist

—Production Information—

In a world where nothing is as it appears, an illusionist and a police inspector face off in a challenge of wills that attempts to determine where reality ends and magic begins ... all the while blurring the line between power and corruption, love and devotion, vigilance and mania and ultimately, life and death.

A supernatural mystery that combines romance, politics and magic, **The Illusionist** is the latest film from the producers of the Oscar winners *Crash* and *Sideways*. The film stars Academy Award nominees Edward Norton (*Fight Club*, *American History X*) and Paul Giamatti (*Cinderella Man*, *Sideways*) as two men pitted against each other in a battle of wits. Norton plays a mysterious stage magician, Eisenheim, who bends nature's laws to his will in front of awestruck crowds. Giamatti co-stars as Vienna's shrewd Chief Inspector Uhl, a man committed to uphold the law and for whom magic holds no place in his ordered world. Jessica Biel (*Elizabethtown*) shares the screen as the beautiful and enigmatic Sophie von Teschen, who finds her future inexorably altered when she encounters the man called Eisenheim, and Eisenheim comes dangerously close to unlocking the dark secret of the monarchy that she holds.

When Eisenheim begins to perform his astounding illusions in Vienna, word quickly spreads of his otherworldly powers ... even reaching the ears of one of Europe's most powerful and pragmatic men, Crown Prince Leopold (Rufus Sewell, *Dark City*). Certain that the illusionist is nothing more than an accomplished fraud, Leopold attends one of Eisenheim's shows, convinced that he can debunk him during the performance. But when the Prince's beautiful fiancé and companion, Sophie von Teschen, assists the magician onstage, Eisenheim and Sophie recognize each other from their childhoods -- and a dormant love affair is rekindled. With Eisenheim and Leopold vying for Sophie's affection, it quickly becomes apparent that both will go to any length to claim and keep her love.

As the clandestine romance continues, Uhl is charged by Leopold to intensify his efforts to expose Eisenheim, even while the magician gains a devoted and vocal public following. With Uhl doggedly searching for the reasons and the man behind the trickery, Eisenheim prepares to execute his greatest illusion yet.

The Yari Film Group presents a Koppelman Levien/ Michael London Production, In Association with Contagious Entertainment of A Film by Neil Burger: **The Illusionist**. The film is written and directed by Neil Burger—who received acclaim and award recognition for his debut feature, 2002's *Interview with the Assassin*—and is based on Pulitzer Prize-winning author Steven Millhauser's short story "Eisenheim the Illusionist." It stars Edward Norton, Paul Giamatti, Jessica Biel and Rufus Sewell.

The Illusionist is produced by Michael London (*Sideways*), Brian Koppelman (*Interview with the Assassin*), David Levien (*Interview with the Assassin*), Cathy Schulman and Bob Yari (*Crash*), and features top-notch production values from a team of superlative artisans, including: director of photography Dick Pope BSC (*Topsy-Turvy*); editor Naomi Geraghty (*Hotel Rwanda*); production designer Ondrej Nekvasil (Emmy winner for TV's *Anne Frank: The Whole Story*); costume designer Ngila Dickson (Oscar®-winner for *The Lord of the Rings: The Return of the King*); and composer Philip Glass (Academy Award®-nominated for *The Hours*). Casting is by Deborah

Aquila ASC, Tricia Wood ASC and Nina Gold. The executive producer is Jane Garnett, Tom Nunan, Ted Liebowitz, Joey Horvitz with Tom Karnowski, Matthew Stillman and David Minkowski serving as co-producers.

About the Production

Transforming Word Into Film

According to an ages-old chemical philosophy known as alchemy, one can transform one element into another, such as a base metal into gold. Yet alchemic processes can and do happen in our day.... When Neil Burger first read Pulitzer Prize-winner Steven Millhauser's short story "Eisenheim the Illusionist" (published in the collection *The Barnum Museum*), he was duly impressed with the story, but wasn't quite certain how to go about instigating his alchemic transformation from story into film. He remembers, "It's a beautiful gem of a story, lyrical and transcendent. The images and tone of it are quite cinematic, but the story itself is more of a fragment and somehow, not a film. I loved the story, but it wasn't immediately clear how to solve the narrative puzzle and transform it into a full-blown movie."

While Burger was in the process of editing his debut (and later to be award-winning) feature, *Interview with the Assassin*, he happened to be talking with the film's producers, Brian Koppelman and David Levien, about the difficulty of depicting magic on-screen. "I mentioned there was a short story I had always wanted to make into a film, and they both finished my sentence by asking, 'Is it "Eisenheim the Illusionist"?' They knew the story well, but admitted to being unsure about how to make it into a film. Bluffing somewhat, I assured them that I knew exactly how."

Koppelman and Levien then set out to acquire the rights to the short story. David Levien says, "We were delighted to find the rights were available, but there was no time to lose. We called Neil and told him there was good news and bad news: the good news was we had the rights; and the bad news was that we had a short option period...and the script had to be written in six months."

For Burger, the challenge was to preserve what was beautiful and mysterious about the story, but also create a dramatic context for it all. He invented new characters for the story—Crown Prince Leopold and his fiancé, Sophie von Teschen—and greatly expanded the role of Inspector Uhl, who receives just a few mentions in the original story. Burger continues: "The question was, how do you tell the story of Eisenheim, a man who is an enigma, a mystery? How do you get inside his head without giving away his secrets? I decided to tell his story from Inspector Uhl's point-of-view. Everything we see is something Uhl has witnessed or one of his agents has told him. At other times, his story becomes conjecture, what he imagines might have happened, and not necessarily true at all...but still loosely from his point-of-view. He's creating the legend even as he tries to figure it all out. It's a subtle but fairly rigorous organizing principle for the storytelling."

Additionally, Burger conducted extensive research into magic, as well as the setting of the story: fin-de-siècle Vienna. "I read everything I could about the Hapsburgs, about the Secessionist movement, and about the magic from that time—both the illusions themselves and the social world of the magicians. Most of the tricks that ended up in the film are based on real illusions done at the time, and the characters I invented are also based on real people. I wanted it all to be as believable and honest as possible, all the more so since the story examines the idea of how we perceive truth and illusion...and blurs the boundary between those two concepts. If

you're going to exaggerate certain elements, to have it be dreamlike or surreal or uncanny, you have to make sure that the rest of it has a rock solid foundation in the period."

Eisenheim the Illusionist's performances call into question everything the audience (and ultimately, moviegoers) take for granted—his illusions challenge the laws of nature and the universe. As Neil Burger explains, "I'm interested in that moment when you come face to face with something unexplainable, incomprehensible, and how that event changes your perceptions about everything. To that end, the magic in **The Illusionist** is *not* about 'How does he do it?', but rather about the uncanny sense that nothing is what it seems.

Burger continues, "There's a quote in the story that says, 'Stories, like conjuring tricks, are invented because history is inadequate to our dreams.' That goes for the art of cinema in general and **The Illusionist** in particular. My goal was to have the film completely inhabit that realm of dream and mystery."

With the script in place, Koppelman and Levien approached producer Michael London. "Because of our filmmaking career and our commitments, we realized we needed a producer who had a real artistic sensibility," explains Koppelman. "We didn't just want to be partnered with somebody who would merely treat this as business, but somebody who was really in tune with how to make a film with integrity. As producers, our main mandate is to make sure the director gets to make the film he wants to make, so it was very important that we partnered with someone who shared that ethic, and we knew that Michael would bring that to the table."

"I was already a fan of Neil Burger," begins London. "I had seen his film [*Interview with the Assassin*] and I very much liked the script for **The Illusionist**. I got involved in the middle of the development process. We did a few more drafts of the screenplay until we were all happy with what we had, and then we began to approach financiers." (The Yari Film Group soon stepped up with funding.)

Producer Michael London admits that he usually responds more to contemporary stories, "but there was something really timeless and universal about this one, that it made it feel very contemporary," says London.

Part of that is due to filmmaker Burger's intent to make the setting period, but the themes timeless. He explains, "I wanted to be true to the time period, but not a slave to it. It's not a story about the morals or manners of the time. Instead, it seeks to explore larger themes about power, perception, truth and illusion."

Prolific and award-winning filmmaker Bob Yari was enthusiastic to step up as producer for **The Illusionist** and comments, "Neil has an amazing way with a story, and it's exciting to be working with someone who can tell such an intriguing tale in such a cinematic way. Neil really *thinks* in terms of film, and has real talent in being able to take something in one form and transform it for the screen."

*A Magician, A Policeman, A Countess And A Prince:
Conjuring A Cast*

“I don’t tend to write with actors in mind for some reason,” says writer/director Burger, “but I knew I needed someone who could embody the mystery, as well as the romantic side, of Eisenheim. Edward Norton, of course, is a powerful presence, extremely intelligent and passionate about his craft, as well as life in general...just like Eisenheim. And I hadn’t seen Edward in too many romantic roles, and certainly not in period. I liked the idea of seeing him in a new role and I knew he’d bring a fresh perspective to the part. In general, it was a pretty easy choice. I knew he’d be great—he always is.”

Koppelman and Levien, also writing partners, have enjoyed a long relationship with Edward Norton, and wrote the film *Rounders* (in which Norton starred alongside Matt Damon and John Malkovich). “We showed Edward an early draft of the script,” explains Levien, “and we always felt that he would be the perfect choice to play Eisenheim.”

“Edward’s presence is always magical. On-screen, he always looks like he is holding something back, that he knows something special. For us, our biggest contributions were involving Edward in the casting and developing the story with Neil,” adds Koppelman.

Michael London explains, “When it really clicked for Edward that this was not going to be just another period movie, he got really obsessed—Edward is great in that way. The moment he commits, you get this insane level of attention and focus, and that is pretty extraordinary.”

“He completely inhabits the role,” continues Burger. “He threw himself into learning the magic, and conducted himself as those magicians did, in such a perfect way. We tried to do all the magic in the movie as closely as possible to how the tricks were done at the time, so Edward is actually ‘performing’ the tricks that you see him do. He’s so dedicated, he learned how to do them all.”

Edward Norton admits to not having been familiar with the story upon which **The Illusionist** is based. “I became aware of the story through this project, and I was attracted to it because I thought it was a compelling, romantic story” Norton begins. “There were also a number of different elements that appealed to me.

“Eisenheim is darkly romantic, an enigma,” he continues. “He is mysterious and withholding, but at the same time, he is an incredible showman. As a person, he is highly impenetrable, but onstage, he really comes to life and has this amazing presence—that’s an interesting dynamic. I am really also a big fan of magic and it was fun to contemplate the idea of learning all that. Also, the story is a love story, and I hadn’t done anything that was directly a romance before.”

Adding to the lure of playing Eisenheim was the slow revelation of who the character is and exactly what he is trying to achieve: “Eisenheim is kind of like the prodigal son, or the dark return. He is a guy who has gone away from his home for a long, long time, looking for secrets and knowledge. When he returns, he seemingly possesses these incredible powers or skills. For much of the movie, the viewer does not know who he is, where he has been, or what he has been doing, and one of the things I liked about the way the script evolved was that it eventually came

around—he reveals himself.”

The Illusionist has four main characters, all inter-related and each in possession of his or her own version of power. Yet, the relationship between Eisenheim and Inspector Uhl is a particularly dynamic one, which Norton describes: “Inspector Uhl is a great character. He is the point-of-view for the audience, through whose eyes we see all the events unfold. He prides himself on not becoming involved in his cases, but by the end, the opposite has occurred, and Eisenheim has brought him around to his point-of-view. They have a mutual respect for each other, and also relate because they are from the same class. They are trying not to become adversaries, but in a way, they have to, ultimately. There is a very strong thematic line between Uhl and Eisenheim that I like.”

“For the role of Inspector Uhl,” says Burger, “I wanted someone a bit different, unexpected. The investigating detective is a pretty common role in movies and I thought Paul Giamatti could put a different spin on it. We haven’t seen Paul in this kind of role before, and yet he has a quiet power that was perfect. Inspector Uhl is the eyes, ears and heart of the story. He has a good soul—even if not much is left of it after years of decadence and corruption. In the movie, there are not a lot of expository scenes about Uhl’s character, and yet, we understand all of his inner conflict and turmoil just by looking in Paul’s eyes.”

Norton, who was a year behind Giamatti at Yale, offers, “He has been one of my favorite actors for a long time, and even back in those college days, Paul was tackling roles way beyond his years. He is intellectually intense, and he has a really volcanic energy. I remember seeing him perform in *One Flew Over the Cuckoo’s Nest* a long time ago, and he was just staggering. I think this role has more of that edge, and it is really cool to see him exercise it a little.”

Giamatti was cast in **The Illusionist** just as *Sideways* was heading into the awards season. Michael London, who produced the hit film, says, “It was a great thing, because when I first started working on **The Illusionist**, Paul Giamatti didn’t mean enough to financiers to get him cast. By the time we were ready to cast the role of Inspector Uhl, there was this huge excitement in America about his work in *Sideways*. The moment Paul read the script, he was in. It is an unusual role because it is not a very glamorous one, and in typical Paul fashion, those are the things that he looks for. He looks for parts that other people would not be attracted to where he can give a lot of humanity to someone who seems an unlikely character. The combination of Edward and Paul is something that you wait around for, and maybe do once in your life: intense actors of that calibre, who know each other, who challenge each other, working opposite each other—it’s a great thing.”

“The script came to me in the normal way, through my agent,” remembers Giamatti, “and then I met Neil Burger. I thought the script was great—an interesting period, and the setting is fascinating. I was very excited about doing this and although I have played Americans on the stage during this period, I have never done anything as European as this before.”

Chief Inspector Uhl is put on Eisenheim’s trail to expose him as a fraud, but the more he discovers about him, the more interested he becomes. “At a certain point in the movie,” explains the actor, “he does become fascinated by Eisenheim, and as an amateur conjurer himself, he is also fascinated by the magic. Throughout the movie, there are a lot of class issues, and Uhl and Eisenheim are the same sort of working class guys. Eisenheim has to debase himself somewhat to the aristocrats quite a bit, and Uhl has sympathy with that. Also, he admires what the illusionist is able to achieve—the inspector lives in this incredibly secretive, bound-up world, and Eisenheim is free.”

“Watching Norton and Giamatti face off is about as good as it gets in a film,” notes producer Yari. “They’re both amazingly gifted actors, intense and cerebral, and playing Eisenheim and Uhl, they’re just great to watch. Norton is a chameleon, and becomes this mysterious man driven into action. And we’ve seen Giamatti in some great American roles, and now he has a chance to inhabit a very different type of police inspector. It’s a chess match between two masters.”

When Neil Burger met British actor Rufus Sewell, he immediately knew he was the one to play Crown Prince Leopold—the representative of that aristocratic world in which both Eisenheim and Uhl must function. The writer/director remarks, “The movie is really a battle of wills between the three male characters, with Eisenheim and the Crown Prince each trying to leverage Uhl for their own ends. The actor playing the Prince had to be a formidable foe for Norton’s Eisenheim. Leopold is a strict rationalist and has no patience for superstition or talk of ‘magic.’ It was vitally important that he be played as fiercely intelligent and truly powerful, even as he is flawed or ruthless. Rufus has an amazing intensity, a fierce cerebral quality, and he certainly doesn’t suffer fools...just like the character.”

As the story unfolds, Eisenheim becomes a two-fold threat to the Prince—he pursues a relationship with Sophie, and he is able to (seemingly) conjure powers that Leopold cannot obtain. Norton observes, “I think what is interesting about this period, the turn-of-the-century in that part of the world, is there were so many opposing forces working within it. You had the last gasps of aristocracy, the imperial class, and the growing movements of what would become socialism and Republicanism. You also had rationality and modern scientific thought competing with this whole resurgence of spiritualism—so there are many big forces competing with each other. I think that Leopold is frustrated that his father never dies. He is not getting his chance to rule, and yet he has all these progressive ideas and wants to make the empire more modern. And then along comes this guy who in some ways is captivating people’s sense of wonder, and the idea that maybe he has supernatural powers, or spiritual powers, or that he is a mystic—and this causes unbelievable tension between them. One of the questions the movie raises is ‘Does Eisenheim really possess these powers or is he just really very clever?’”

Sewell considers the Crown Prince to be a very complex character. He says, “I have to say that I don’t see Leopold as a villain. When I first read the script, I realized the function he serves in the story is to be the ‘villain.’ But the more I read it, the more I didn’t believe that to be true. Although I hate the term, it is about his *journey* and he changes quite a bit during the course of the story, and it was a very interesting and worthwhile role to play.”

In addition to the conflict between Eisenheim and Leopold is the ongoing power struggle between the Prince and his Chief Inspector. Giamatti describes it this way: “There is an interesting dynamic between Uhl and Leopold. In a way, Uhl has gotten ahead by doing the dirty work of the Crown Prince—yet even in his corruption, he does have a good heart, and he is astonished and amazed at what Eisenheim does. In a way, Uhl loves what Eisenheim represents. So really, Uhl is between a rock and a hard place when Eisenheim and the Prince come into conflict. His duty is to the Crown Prince, and yet, his true allegiance, his heart and soul are with Eisenheim.”

Norton admits to having long been a fan of Sewell’s, and found working with him to be truly enjoyable. He says, “I saw Rufus years ago when he was appearing in one of my favorite plays, an Irish play by Brian Friel called *Translations*, in the company that came to Broadway. He was so fantastic in that play. I always love working with Brits; they are all such studied professionals. They are blasé about their professionalism in some ways. Eddie Marsan [who plays Eisenheim’s manager, Josef Fischer] was the same way. It was a great cast and it was fun

for me working with people who are peers. Rufus, Eddie, Paul and I had all been through a lot of years in theater and worked our ways into film, so there was a lot of common ground.”

Sewell states his own take on Prince Leopold: “To Leopold, I think Eisenheim represents everything he thinks the world must leave behind in order to move forward. The world is changing, and if the royal family doesn’t move with it, they are in danger of becoming the dinosaurs of their age, and will soon be extinct. What Leopold is trying to do is to move away from superstition, and as far as he is concerned, Eisenheim represents everything that is old-fashioned and outdated. As the illusionist becomes more popular, he sees that Eisenheim is striking a chord in his country, and the more that happens, the further Leopold gets from actually gaining power.”

The British actor greatly enjoyed working with the ensemble of actors, and says, “Edward is an actor I have always admired very much indeed, and I found him very easy to work with. Jessica is fantastic, a real natural, a good actress and a very nice person. Paul Giamatti is also a fabulous actor as everyone knows, but he is also a very nice, very funny guy, and I really enjoyed myself.”

“In expanding the short story, Neil added two great characters – Leopold and Sophie,” explains Bob Yari. “In casting Rufus, we found that great mix of charm and malevolence – he can turn on a dime. That kind of danger is mesmerizing to watch. And Jessica couldn’t be closer to a Viennese noblewoman...she has the looks and manners but also, she has this inner life that’s just underneath. There’s a strength to her that makes Sophie more than the classic romantic heroine.”

Jessica Biel was the last leading member of the cast to join and admits the role of Sophie is, “so very different from anything I have done before or anything I have ever had the opportunity of doing.”

Director Burger was looking for someone with a classic beauty who would be believable for the time period. He also wanted a relative newcomer, someone with whom the audience wouldn’t have clearly formed associations. He says, “Jessie has a timeless beauty, but more importantly, she has a fearless sense of adventure. I saw Sophie as someone who had been raised in a very strict and refined world, but who also had the boldness to break out of it if given the opportunity.”

Producer Michael London recalls, “I remember we did a reading with her and Edward, and it was late on a Saturday night in Los Angeles. Everyone was exhausted and we were concerned that she might not be able to hold her own with Edward, just based on our preconceptions. When she walked in the door, she had on this amazing, cream-colored period gown. Now, it was Saturday night in the middle of Los Angeles, and she just looked like she had stepped off the streets of Vienna a hundred years ago. I remember thinking, ‘What a lot of nerve she has to come in transformed like that!’...and we never really thought of her as Jessica Biel for the rest of the evening. It was apparent, when she started to work with Edward, that she could indeed pull it off. She was passionate and persistent, and eventually we decided she was the best actress for the role.”

Norton remarks, “She came into the process really late, and stepped up to that challenge admirably. She is an incredibly hard worker and really put in the hours with the dialect coaches. Jessica also looks very much of that period—you can see her as a country girl or as a Slavic princess. When I first saw her dressed as Sophie, she looked like she had stepped out of an old painting. She didn’t look like a modern girl at all.”

Biel welcomed the role departure that Sophie represented, and went after the part with zeal: “One day, out of the blue, I was asked to audition, and soon I found myself reading with Edward and it was a bit of a whirlwind actually! Suddenly, I found myself in Prague...it was all last-minute and very, very exciting.

“Playing someone like Sophie is completely new for me,” Biel continues. “She is very different, very fresh, and I felt like every day I was discovering a little bit more about her. Neil urged me to read Alma Mahler’s diaries—a composer herself, she was a young woman in her twenties in 1900 in Vienna. I read her diaries to really get a sense of what it was like to exist at that time; what women thought about and what in particular this woman thought about. She was very modern and very different from most of the women from that time. That is how I think of Sophie, in a way. She is a modern woman stuck in the past.”

So determined was Biel to inhabit her challenging new role that she also immersed herself in books such as *The Unbearable Lightness of Being* and films like *Amadeus* and *Age of Innocence*. She even went so far as to keep a journal as her character, Sophie, to achieve what she called, “the calm, still layer on the surface and a bubbling brook of emotion underneath. That is how it felt like for me, to try and be a woman who lived during this time in history.”

Also joining the cast of Norton, Giamatti, Biel and Sewell were such talented actors as Eddie Marsan (*Vera Drake, 21 Grams, Gangs of New York*), Jake Wood (*Vera Drake, Flesh & Blood*), Tom Fisher (*Van Helsing, The Mummy Returns, Enigma*), and 15-year-old British actor Aaron Johnson, who plays the young Eisenheim.

Turning Back The Clock: Shooting In Prague

To re-create the world of **The Illusionist**—Vienna at the turn of the 19th Century—filmmakers turned to Prague to provide a period-appropriate setting, with principal photography beginning in and around that European capital in March 2005. Burger comments, “Prague is a perfect stand-in for 1900 Vienna—most of the streets are still paved in cobblestones and lined with gas lamps. The locations in and around the city are incredible. For example, we were able to use Archduke Ferdinand’s home for the Crown Prince’s hunting lodge. Ferdinand was an obsessive hunter, shooting something like 15,000 animals in his life, and the character I had written was the same kind of killer. The place is covered in trophy heads, dead animals everywhere. It’s an unbelievably strange and opulent place—it couldn’t have been more perfect.” (Filmmakers were also able to magically find two theatres to use as practical locations for filming—one in Prague and one in the nearby rural town of Tabor.)

Yari observes, “Filming on location in Prague was challenging, but well worth all of the effort. You’re surrounded, literally, by centuries of European history – and we were able to achieve our turn-of-the-century setting with several well-chosen locations. Our film is about magic and believability, and I think that extends to the setting as well. There’s a bit of a fairy-tale feeling to the city, but what makes it even more interesting is a hint of darkness that lies just beneath the surface. So like our magician, nothing is really as it seems at first glance.”

All of Prague’s atmosphere physically represented the mental look Burger was after: “I wanted the film to have an almost ‘hand-cranked’ feel to it, not that we were actually going to use a hand-cranked camera...although for a time I did consider it. I wanted that look, not to make it seem old, but rather to take it out of time, beyond the world of rationality and into the realm of mystery and dream. Everything you see is real, recognizable, but somehow heightened.

I wanted it to have a kind of sinister beauty—lovely on the surface, but with a disturbing, unnerving undertone.

“My other main reference for the look of the film,” continues Burger, “is an early color photography process called autochrome. It was invented by the Lumiere brothers, who, in the late 19th Century, were instrumental in creating all sorts of early cinematic effects. And they were also magicians! Autochromes have a very different kind of color and contrast palette. Some people think they’re hand-tinted, but they’re not. They are indeed photographic color, but what I like is that they have the emotional impact of black and white. I showed these references to [director of photography] Dick Pope and then together we translated it into the particular look for this story.”

Autochrome photography flourished from 1903 to the 1930’s and is unique in that each autochrome is a singular transparency image—there is no negative. Each image is captured on a specially-prepared glass plate that has been coated with tiny, colored starch grains (of red, green and blue), which is then covered in a layer of carbon black, filling in the spaces between the grains. Finally, a silver gelatine emulsion is applied over the color screen. When the plate is exposed, the base side is turned towards the subject being photographed, and the color screen acts as a filter over the emulsion. The developed plate renders a positive image with delicate color qualities.

Award-winning cinematographer Dick Pope (*Topsy-Turvy*, *Nicholas Nickleby*, *Vera Drake*) tells of the book that Burger showed him that contained color photography from the early 1900’s: “Neil had obviously been carrying this book around with him for some time that explained the autochrome process, which very simply consisted of glass negative slides with a primitive kind of emulsion. The book contained really wonderful images and he had a very strong desire to make **The Illusionist** look like that.”

The look Burger was trying to achieve was also reflected in the costumes and makeup: “Often, the photography can only be as beautiful as what you’re pointing the camera at. In this case, the look we were after depended on a very strict color palette, primarily golds and greens that would interact with our particular camera filtration. The production and costume design would follow that look.”

Academy Award®-winning costume designer Ngila Dickson explains: “I have to admit that when Neil and Dick started talking about autochrome, it put the fear of God in me! I was nervous because I was aware that whenever you start a film without knowing what the end result is going to be, you can find that the palette you set as a designer can go horribly wrong. However, Dick Pope and I had long discussions about it, and so we have ranged from very light colors to the very rich mid-tone colors that we knew would be lifted [lightened] in the final process.”

Neil Burger comments, “Ngila is incredible—she knew I wanted to be true to 1900 Vienna, but not be a slave to it. The movie isn’t about 1900, it isn’t about Vienna—it’s about this uncanny mystery and this magical experience. She, of course, got all this and took it much further. I had done a lot of research, but then Ngila added her own influences, and it just made the process incredibly inventive and fun.”

In addition to the principal actors, there were hundreds of extras to dress on the days when scenes were shot in the street or in a large theater. Burger adds, “Everyone was dressed brilliantly for the time period and the scenes looked incredibly beautiful and unique because of her.”—

Head makeup artist Julie Pearce also played a large part in creating the right look for the film. She says, “I read the script at least three times, trying to get a feel for the makeup and the look. I did a lot of research into the period and also looked at research that Neil and Ngila had put together—the main thing about 1900 in Vienna is that there was so much facial hair, and I ended up coming over from the States with probably 300 pieces of moustaches and beards. Also, we kept the ladies’ makeup very light, because in that period there was no makeup as such.”

For Sophie’s makeup, the image of a porcelain doll was also kept at the forefront of the artist’s mind—minimal, enhancing the lips and eyes. (In her more romantic scenes with Eisenheim, that look would be altered slightly, making her appear more earthy.)

“It is a dark, complicated little story,” offers costumer Dickson. “I am a huge fan of Edward Norton and Paul Giamatti. So I already had the visual images needed for the characters. The period, 1900, was a very complicated time in history, particularly in this part of the world, where you had a very militaristic society...but at the same time, you also had this very modern bohemian thinking going on. So there was a bit of a clash of ideas.

“The first thing I did,” continues the designer, “was read a lot about the royal family of the empire, Emperor Franz Joseph, and get a sense of that very rigid society. Rufus’ character Leopold is a classic, and I made him militaristic, even though he was quite a modern thinker. That was one of the things that fascinated me with this time—people were caught up in this very rigid world even though they were trying to change things. In a way, I feel that Leopold and Sophie are the same. Both want to change something: she wants a different kind of life, and he wants a different version of their society. Sophie would rather be hanging out with the interesting thinkers, artists and writers of her time instead of her own class of aristocrats. I always felt that about her, that she was resisting the world that was part of her family, her tradition, her history, and Eisenheim was the key for her to be able to break out of that world.”

Dickson had spoken at length to Norton prior to embarking on finalizing Eisenheim’s costume designs, and found that both were after the same character delineation for the illusionist: “Neither of us wanted the stereotypical ‘magician’ costume, with a top hat or a swishy satin cloak. I thought of him as an inventor and an artist more than a magician, and we both knew the character was going to work best if we could make him quite cerebral, as if he wasn’t actually interested in clothes.”

That kind of forethought and preparation also extended into Norton’s makeup design, executed by head makeup artist Julie Pearce (whose ongoing working relationship with Norton began when the two collaborated on *Fight Club*). “Edward had a very specific idea, which we developed during the makeup tests, giving him a more period look,” explains Pearce. “He knew he wanted his hair darker, with a dark goatee beard, but we didn’t want it to look contemporary, so we gave it added hair and I filled the beard up to his lips. At the beginning of the film he looks very healthy, and as we move through the story, he starts to look more intense.”

Overall, fabrics were kept natural and there was a lot of lace. “I have an aversion to polyester,” laughs Ngila, “and I am interested in texture and layers. With Jessica, we started to break down the rigidity of the costumes once her character meets Eisenheim. She starts to do things which are very anarchic to her upbringing, so we started to make her clothes much looser, like an unbuttoned collar, which then, of course, was not proper at all. Also, Eisenheim is more interested in the science of illusion than in appearances, and therefore we kept his wardrobe very simple. There is no flamboyance to it, which I think makes the tricks so much more evident and interesting. There is certainly no swish of the red cloak to this piece!”

Biel's beautiful costumes were handpicked by Dickson to reflect the time. "My costumes were so incredible," says Jessica. "They were stunning, all of them, and it made me feel like a princess to be on those sets in those gorgeous clothes. The only downside was that I had to wear a corset everyday...having said that, although it is tight and horrible actually, for some strange reason, it makes you feel really sexy and feminine. You can't breathe or eat lunch, but it's a small price to pay!"

Illusion Versus Reality

"The role of any magician is to remind us of the mystery of existence and inspire awe and wonder at that mystery. Seeing a great magic trick or illusion gives you a kind of chill and makes you think that perhaps there are powers greater than those of man, regardless of whether the magician possesses them or not," offers filmmaker Neil Burger.

But what if a magician could actually do **real** magic...could really return us to the dark and troubled heart of magic?

"The question throughout the movie is, does Eisenheim truly possess supernatural powers or is it all a trick?" continues Burger. "We never really know for sure. That was a challenge in creating the magic for the movie, to walk the fine line of that question."

Burger wanted the illusions to appear to be the result of a supernatural phenomenon but, at the same time, to seem to have a practical method behind them. "You should be able to read them either way. All the performances are based on real stage illusions of the time—then I pushed them to a slightly more fantastic level.

"The first person I thought of when I was writing the movie," continues Neil Burger, "was Ricky Jay. He is not only an incredible magician, but also an amazing scholar and historian of magic, especially magic of that time. I had met him quite casually some time before when he had done a simple, sleight of hand trick with a playing card two feet from my eyes. As I stared at the card in his hand, it changed into a different card. I'm sure it was a basic trick for him, but it sent a chill through me that was completely unnerving...in a way, mind-blowing. It's the reaction I described when I would tell people how I wanted **The Illusionist** to feel."

The writer/director met with the magician/historian, gleaning all he could about the mechanics of the tricks, the stage practices of the time and the old illusions popular during the 'Golden Age of Magic'—all the while, mindful of pushing the illusions to make them scale-appropriate for filming. "I worked with him closely for several weeks, during which time we worked everything out and fine-tuned things that were in the script; he was an invaluable resource."

Prior to filming, Norton also studied with Jay, immersing himself in the technique and performing style of magicians of that time. "He learned all the sleight of hand tricks and became an expert. All of those tricks you see, Edward did himself. As in all his roles, his ability to completely transform himself, to fully inhabit the character, is impressive. In this case, you absolutely believe that he has these sleight of hand skills, but more importantly, that he could possess supernatural powers or that he could bring down an empire. He's completely convincing," says Burger.

Once on the set in Prague, British magician James Freedman (a member of the exclusive Magic Circle and a stage 'pickpocket' by profession) acted as magic consultant to continue

coaching Norton and Aaron Johnson, who plays young Eisenheim, in mastering the art of sleight of hand for their roles. “We did a lot of research to make sure the methods and the effects to the magic that we use in the film are authentic to the period,” explains Freedman. “Actually, when you have been involved with magic for nearly a lifetime as I have, you tend to know a lot of the secrets and methods already. One of the tricks we perform in the film is based on an established trick by a man called Jean Paul Robert-Houdin. He has been called the ‘Father of Modern Magic,’ and he did an illusion where he borrowed a handkerchief from a lady in the audience. He made it disappear and then an orange tree blossomed, and two butterflies rose from the tree carrying the handkerchief. It was an amazing trick, but we have taken it a stage further in the film so that what you see on-screen is just bordering on the impossible. That is what good magic should be.”

Norton was enthusiastic to work with the remarkable magicians and also drew knowledge and research from several sources of literature. “One of my favorite things I read was the memoirs of Robert Houdin. Although he was a French magician who performed more in the middle of the 19th century, he was peerless in that period. He was the person who took magic from a kind of travelling minstrel show to the high stage, and to the high society of Paris. In a way, a lot of what we do with Eisenheim is based on some of Robert Houdin’s particular illusions. For me, there was a certain amount of historical research, and then the practical work with Ricky, and I felt relatively well-prepared. Having James around was incredible and really helpful. It was the best part of the job, working with these men, people who are the ultimate all-stars in their field today.”

In what could only be termed an amazing coincidence, Norton had met magician Ricky Jay when Norton was a student. He recounts, “I had just left college and was doing some theater ushering. Ricky had designed a stage show of his own that he did in New York, and I started ushering those shows, which I must have seen around twenty times. Once or twice, Ricky would invite me to the stage to help with a trick, and many years later, when I met him, he said he was a fan of mine, and I said, ‘Well, actually, I used to come up on your stage and help you with your illusions.’ And he couldn’t believe it. So it was funny the way the circle came back round. He was one of my heroes in that world. I thought he was the greatest ever, and it was really fun to trade insights with him, because there are a lot of things about magic that have to do with acting, and vice versa.”

James Freedman—known professionally as ‘The Man of Steal,’ who has appeared before royalty, heads of state and celebrities throughout the world—takes up the story: “I started magic lessons with Aaron in London, before we came out to Prague. I taught him some sleight of hand, and also the psychology behind the tricks he would be performing, which actually are all classic tricks: the rising card, the ball vase, that sort of thing—things I learned as a boy. He loves magic and would sit up all night practicing...just like I did. I started at about four-years-of-age like most boys, when I was given a magic set for my birthday.”

But more than just filmic tricks, some of the illusions executed during principal photography proved magical to even the cast and crew. Burger closes, “The first week of filming, we were in a theater with about 350 extras in period dress for the stage performance scenes, and Edward performed a trick he had learned—and he fooled everyone in the theater, and all of us behind the camera. And it wasn’t a fluke, because later, during a different scene, where he had to produce something out of thin air, he got genuine reactions. Even Jessica and Rufus came up to him afterwards and asked, ‘How did you do that?!?’ There is still that little core in all of us that wants to genuinely believe in magic, which is a testament to the power and lure of it all.”

About the Cast

Two-time Academy Award® nominee **Edward Norton** heads the stellar cast of **The Illusionist** in the lead role of Eisenheim. Norton rose to prominence starring opposite Richard Gere in *Primal Fear*, for which he gained his first Academy Award® nomination, and he has gone on to star in numerous Hollywood blockbusters. Norton has headlined in the films *Primal Fear*; *Everyone Says I Love You*; *The People vs. Larry Flynt*; *American History X*; *Rounders*; *Fight Club*; *Keeping the Faith*; *The Score*; *Death to Smoochy*; *Frida*; *Red Dragon* and *The 25th Hour*.

Norton was nominated for his second Academy Award® for his performance in *American History X*. He won a Golden Globe for that performance, and has won numerous other awards for other performances. The film *Frida*, for which he wrote an uncredited screenplay, was nominated for six Academy Awards® and won two. He also won the Obie Award for his performance off-Broadway in a revival of *Burn This* by Lanford Wilson.

Norton produced and directed the film *Keeping the Faith* and is currently producing five other films, including adaptations of Mark Helprin's *A Soldier of the Great War*; Somerset Maugham's *The Painted Veil*; and Jonathan Lethem's *Motherless Brooklyn*, for which he is currently writing the screenplay. *Down in the Valley*, which he produced, edited and performs in, was recently released.

Norton also recently created Class 5 Films in partnership with his brother Jim Norton, writer Stuart Blumberg and producer Bill Migliore. Class 5's feature division will produce films through a first-look deal with Universal Pictures and the documentary division will produce nature and science films. Class 5's first documentary production is a film for the Outdoor Life Network, *The Great Rivers Expedition*, about a historic white-water adventure that took place in China last winter. Class 5 is also collaborating with the Sea Studios Foundation on their multi-million-dollar series about earth system sciences for National Geographic, *Strange Days on the Planet Earth*, which Norton hosts and narrates.

Norton is also a committed social and environmental activist.

With a diverse roster of finely etched, award-winning and critically acclaimed performances, **Paul Giamatti** has established himself as one of the most versatile actors of his generation. Giamatti was last seen in Ron Howard's *Cinderella Man*, opposite Russell Crowe and Renee Zellweger. His performance earned him a SAG Award and Broadcast Film Critics' Award for Best Supporting Actor as well as Academy Award and Golden Globe nominations in the same category.

This summer Giamatti also appears in M. Night Shyamalan's highly anticipated *Lady in the Water* alongside co-star Bryce Dallas Howard. He also lent his voice talents to the upcoming animated family adventure feature *Ant Bully*, in theatres August 4, 2006. Giamatti is currently in production on the Weinstein Company's *The Nanny Diaries*, playing the elusive "Mr. X" opposite Laura Linney and Scarlett Johansson. Later this year, Giamatti will begin production on the David Dobkin holiday film "Joe Claus" with Vince Vaughn and Kevin Spacey for Warner Bros. He recently wrapped production on the New Line action film *Shoot 'Em Up*. Next year, he will headline the voice cast of *Rob Zombie Presents the Haunted World of El Superbeasto*.

Giamatti starred in Alexander Payne's critically-lauded *Sideways*, for which he earned several accolades for his performance including Best Actor from the Independent Spirit Awards, New York Film Critics Circle and a Golden Globe nomination. In 2004, Giamatti garnered outstanding reviews and commendations (Independent Spirit Award nomination for Best Actor,

National Board of Review Breakthrough performance of the Year) for his portrayal of Harvey Pekar in Shari Springer Berman and Robert Pulcini's *American Splendor*.

Giamatti first captured the eyes of America in Betty Thomas' hit comedy *Private Parts*. His extensive list of film credits also includes Milos Forman's *Man on the Moon*; Julian Goldberger's *The Hawk is Dying*, Tim Robbins' *The Cradle Will Rock*; F. Gary Gray's *The Negotiator*; Steven Spielberg's *Saving Private Ryan*; Peter Weir's *The Truman Show*; Mike Newell's *Donnie Brasco*; Todd Solondz' *Storytelling*; Tim Burton's *Planet of the Apes*; *Duets*, opposite Gwyneth Paltrow, the animated film *Robots* and *Big Momma's House*, co-starring Martin Lawrence. Giamatti also appeared in James Foley's *Confidence*; and John Woo's *Paycheck*.

As an accomplished stage actor, Giamatti received a Drama Desk nomination for Best Supporting Actor as "Jimmy Tomorrow" in Kevin Spacey's Broadway revival of *The Iceman Cometh*. His other Broadway credits include *The Three Sisters* directed by Scott Elliot; *Racing Demon* directed by Richard Eyre; and *Arcadia* directed by Trevor Nunn. He was also seen Off-Broadway in the ensemble cast of *The Resistible Rise of Arturo Ui* with Al Pacino.

For television, Giamatti appeared in *The Pentagon Papers* with James Spader, HBO's *Winchell* opposite Stanley Tucci and Jane Anderson's *If These Walls Could Talk II*.

Jessica Biel, fast becoming one of Hollywood's most sought after actresses following starring roles in *Blade: Trinity*, *Stealth* and most recently *Elizabethtown*, stars opposite Norton as Sophie, the beautiful noblewoman with whom Eisenheim falls in love.

With a wide range of talent, Biel has become a notable emerging actress to watch. Her television series-acting debut on the WB's number one rated show, *7th Heaven*, helped her emerge as a breakout star.

Biel was recently seen in Cameron Crowe's *Elizabethtown*, starring opposite Orlando Bloom, Kirsten Dunst and Susan Sarandon. Biel portrays Ellen, the girlfriend of Drew Baylor (Bloom), in the film that takes place during an outrageous memorial for a Southern patriarch, where an unexpected romance blooms. Jessica was also seen in the film *London*, co-starring Jason Statham, Chris Evans and Kelli Garner. *London* is a drama that follows the warped relationship of two young adults.

Jessica Biel starred in Sony Pictures' *Stealth* alongside Josh Lucas and Jamie Foxx. This drama is about three pilots in a top-secret military program struggle to bring an artificial intelligence program under control before it initiates the next world war. Jessica was also seen in New Line Cinema's *Blade: Trinity*, in which she co-stars with Wesley Snipes, Kris Kristofferson and Ryan Reynolds. Biel's other film credits include New Line Cinema's Blockbuster hit remake of *Texas Chainsaw Massacre*; New Line Cinema's *Cellular* co-starring Kim Basinger and Chris Evans; Lions Gate Films' *The Rules of Attraction* for director Roger Avary; the Warner Bros.' romantic comedy *Summer Catch*, co-starring Freddie Prinze Jr.; and the Disney holiday film, *I'll Be Home For Christmas* with Jonathan Taylor Thomas. In an impressive display of versatility, Jessica garnered rave notices for her portrayal as the rebellious daughter in Victor Nunez's critically acclaimed film *Ulee's Gold*, with Peter Fonda. The film was selected as the Centerpiece Premiere for the '97 Sundance Film Festival and presented at Cannes.

She will soon be seen in several upcoming projects, including Irwin Winkler's *Home of the Brave* and Lee Tamahori's *Next*.

Rufus Sewell will this year be seen in Wes Craven's segment of *Paris Je T'aime*, Michael Apted's *Amazing Grace* and Nancy Meyer's *The Holiday*. He recently starred in the critically acclaimed BBC production of *The Taming of The Shrew* for which he was nominated as Best Actor for a Bafta Television Award. He was previously seen in *Charles II: The Last King*.

Other recent films include Martin Campbell's *The Legend Of Zorro* and Kevin Reynolds' *Tristan & Isolde*, Brian Helgeland's *A Knight's Tale*, Alex Proyas' futuristic thriller *Dark City*, *Dangerous Beauty* with Catherine McCormack, *Illuminata* directed by and co-starring John Turturro, Susan Sarandon and Christopher Walken, and Paramount Pictures' *Bless The Child* co-starring Kim Basinger and Jimmy Smits.

Sewell first gained attention with his television debut in 1994 as 'Will Ladislav' in the

BBC adaptation of *Middlemarch*. He gained further acclaim in Christopher Hampton's feature film *Carrington*, opposite Emma Thompson and Jonathan Pryce, as well as John Schlesinger's *Cold Comfort Farm*.

On stage, Sewell made his West End theatrical debut in 1993 as the Czechoslovakian hustler in *Making It Better*, which won him the London Critics Circles' Best Newcomer Award. Other notable roles include the original production of Tom Stoppard's *Arcadia* at the National Theatre, *Pride And Prejudice* at the Royal Exchange in Manchester, as well as *As You Like It*, *The Seagull*, and *The Government Inspector*, all at the Crucible Theatre in Sheffield. Sewell made his Broadway debut in 1995, opening to rave reviews in the revival of Brian Friel's *Translations*, opposite Brian Dennehy. Other theatre credits include *Rat In the Skull*, a Royal Court Production directed by Stephen Daldry. Sewell also starred in the title role of *Macbeth* on London's West End, and John Osborne's *Luther* at the Royal National Theatre. This year Sewell will be seen onstage at The Royal Court Theatre and London's West End in Tom Stoppard's *Rock n' Roll*.

About the Filmmakers

Neil Burger (Writer / Director) is the writer and director of **The Illusionist**, starring Edward Norton and Paul Giamatti. His screenplay is based on "Eisenheim the Illusionist" by Pulitzer Prize-winning author Steven Millhauser.

Burger also wrote and directed *Interview with the Assassin* (2002), winner of Best Feature Film at both the Woodstock Film Festival and the Avignon Film Festival and nominated for three Independent Spirit Awards, including Best First Film and Best First Screenplay. Before that, he directed commercials for the likes of Mastercard, IB, and ESPN. Burger was also chosen to create a series of television spots for Amnesty International and their campaign for 'prisoners of conscience.' He began his film career by creating and directing the award-winning "Books: Feed Your Head" campaign for MTV, promoting language and literature.

Academy Award-nominated producer **Michael London** (*Sideways*, *The Family Stone*, *The Illusionist*) is the principal and founder of the newly formed independent financing and production company, Groundswell Productions, which was established in February 2006 with a mission to create a thriving home for filmmakers with original voices that reach broad audiences.

Backed by two new equity-based film funds, Groundswell has an initial capitalization of \$55 million and will have the flexibility to seek foreign pre-sales for projects as well as to make pure equity investments in filmmaker-driven projects. The company's slate will mix films from established directors and emerging talent alongside comedies and genre films with an original bent. The independent financing and production company plans to make five films annually in the under-\$20 million range.

London aims to launch Groundswell's production slate with *The Mysteries of Pittsburgh*, writer/director Rawson Thurber's (*Dodgeball*) adaptation of Pulitzer Prize-winner Michael Chabon's debut novel, which will star Peter Sarsgaard and Sienna Miller; and *Trust*, Robert Edward's original espionage thriller set in Los Angeles at the height of the Cold War.

Prior to founding Groundswell, London produced the Alexander Payne film *Sideways*, which won a Golden Globe for Best Picture (comedy or musical), an Independent Spirit Award, and a Best Picture nominee at the 2005 Academy

Awards, where it won the Oscar for Best Adapted Screenplay. London also produced *The Family Stone*, written and directed by Thomas Bezucha, and starring Diane Keaton, Sarah Jessica Parker, Dermot Mulroney, Luke Wilson, Claire Danes, Rachel McAdams and Craig T. Nelson.

In 2003 London produced *House of Sand and Fog* starring Jennifer Connelly and Ben Kingsley for Dreamworks and *Thirteen* starring Holly Hunter and Evan Rachel Wood. Both received Academy Award nominations and 2004 Independent Spirit awards. *Thirteen* also won Best Director honors at the 2003 Sundance Film Festival where Fox Searchlight acquired worldwide distribution rights to the independently-financed production.

The writing/producing/directing partnership of **Brian Koppelman** (Producer) and **David Levien** (Producer) has been quite a productive one. Since 1997, the duo has written the films *Rounders*, *Runaway Jury*, *Walking Tall* and *Knockaround Guys*, which they also directed. Last year, the duo created the critically acclaimed television series *Tilt* for ESPN, writing and directing the pilot episode.

The Illusionist marks a continuation of their producing career. Koppelman and Levien also produced Neil Burger's first feature film, *Interview with the Assassin*. Separately, each has distinguished himself—Levien as a novelist, whose *Wormwood and Swagbelly*, *A Novel for Today's Gentleman*, garnered strong critical response; and Koppelman in his previous career as an A&R man for various record labels and as an essayist.

Bob Yari (Producer) is President and founder of the Yari Film Group (YFG), dedicated to film financing and production. With over 18 films produced over the last 2 years and over 22 projects currently in development, YFG has emerged as one of the most successful independent film companies in Hollywood, with a creative output that varies in both genre and budget, but always attains mass commercial appeal.

The Yari Film Group's most recent films include the Oscar®-winning Best Picture *Crash*, the acclaimed ensemble drama directed by Paul Haggis and released by Lions Gate Films; *House of D*, David Duchovny's recent directorial debut, also released by Lions Gate; last year's *A Love Song for Bobby Long*, starring John Travolta and Scarlett Johansson; and the Miramax action thriller *Hostage*, starring Bruce Willis. Other films include *The Matador*, starring Pierce Brosnan and Greg Kinnear, which was acquired by Miramax upon premiering at the 2005 Sundance Film Festival; Sony Pictures Classics' *Thumbsucker*, starring Lou Pucci, Tilda Swinton, Vince Vaughn and Keanu Reeves; and Focus Features' *Winter Passing*, starring Ed Harris, Will Ferrell and Zooey Deschanel.

Additional BYP productions include: *Prime*, starring Meryl Streep and Uma Thurman; *Find Me Guilty*, a dramatic comedy starring Vin Diesel and directed by Sidney Lumet; *Jump Shot*, starring Danny DeVito and Kim Basinger, and directed by Mark Rydell; and *First Snow*, starring Guy Pearce.

Yari began his career with Edgar J. Scherick Associates in Hollywood after receiving a degree in cinematography, and has served in a variety of positions including as director of *Mind Games*; as executive producer of *Agent Cody Banks*, starring Frankie Muniz and Hilary Duff; and of *Laws of Attraction*, starring Pierce Brosnan and Julianne Moore.

Yari is also a well-versed real estate executive, with projects spanning syndication, construction, development and redevelopment of commercial and residential assets throughout the United States.

Steven Millhauser (Based on the Story by), novelist and short story writer, won the 1997 Pulitzer Prize for his most well-known novel, *Martin Dressler: The Tale of an American Dreamer* (1996), which chronicles the life of an entrepreneur whose career peaks when he builds a fabulous hotel in turn-of-the-century Manhattan. *Time* magazine described *Martin Dressler* as "an urban fable about civilization and its discontents," and praised Millhauser for "lowering the barrier between realism and myth."

Millhauser impressed both critics and readers with his fresh approach to childhood and adolescence in his first two novels, *Edwin Mullhouse: The Life and Death of an American Writer, 1943-1954*, by Jeffrey Cartwright (1972), which won the Prix Médicis Étranger Award in France for the best foreign novel, and *Portrait of a Romantic* (1977). In a *Washington Post* review of *Portrait of a Romantic*, William Kennedy described the book as “written in immaculate prose. . .a prodigious feat of memory, with an enormous density of felt and observed life.”

In addition, Millhauser has published a fourth novel, *From the Realm of Morpheus* (1986), and three collections of short stories, *The Barnum Museum* (1990), *In the Penny Arcade* (1986) and *Little Kingdoms* (1993).

Millhauser received the Lannan Literary Award for Fiction in 1994 and an Award in Literature from the American Academy and Institute of Arts and Letters in 1987. He is a Professor of English at Skidmore College in Saratoga Springs, New York.

Cathy Schulman (Producer), was also one of the producers of the feature film CRASH, directed by Paul Haggis and starring Sandra Bullock, Don Cheadle, Matt Dillon, Jennifer Esposito, William Fichtner, Brendan Fraser, Terrence Howard, Chris "Ludacris" Bridges, Thandie Newton, Ryan Phillippe and Larenz Tate, was released in May 2005 by Lions Gate Films. Other films produced by Schulman were THUMBSUCKER, EMPLOYEE OF THE MONTH and SIDEWAYS OF NEW YORK.