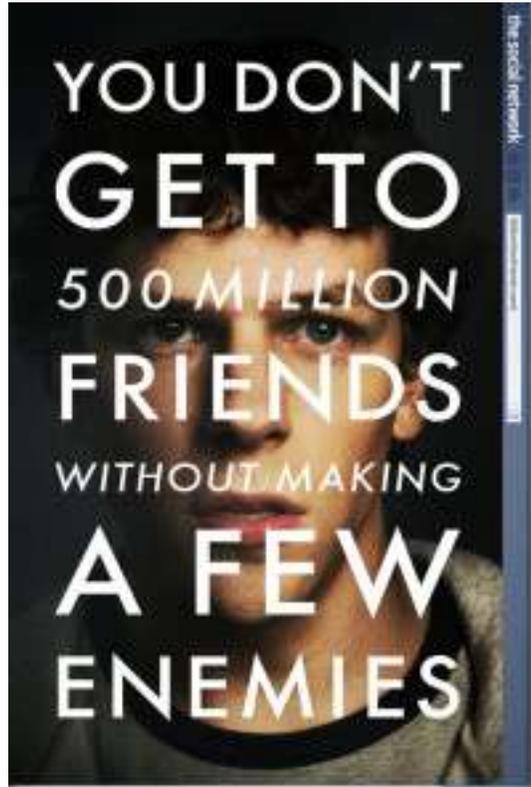


# The Social Network

## Production Notes



**In 2003, Harvard undergrad and computer genius Mark Zuckerberg (Jesse Eisenberg) begins work on a new concept that eventually turns into the global social network known as Facebook. Six years later, he is one of the youngest billionaires ever, but he finds that his unprecedented success leads to both personal and legal complications.**

## THE SOCIAL NETWORK

### Production information

#### Introduction

Every age has its visionaries who leave, in the wake of their genius, a changed world - but rarely without a battle over exactly what happened and who was there at the moment of creation. In *The Social Network*, director David Fincher and screenwriter Aaron Sorkin explore the moment at which Facebook, the most revolutionary social phenomenon of the new century, was invented -- through the warring perspectives of the super-smart young men who each claimed to be there at its inception. The result is a drama rife with both creation and destruction; one that purposefully avoids a singular POV, but instead, by tracking dueling narratives, mirrors the clashing truths and constantly morphing social relationships that define our time.

Drawn from multiple sources, the film moves from the halls of Harvard to the cubicles of Palo Alto as it captures the visceral thrill of the heady early days of a culture-changing phenomenon in the making -- and the way it both pulled a group of young revolutionaries together and then split them apart. In the midst of the chaos are Mark Zuckerberg (JESSE EISENBERG), the brilliant Harvard student who conceived a website that seemed to redefine our social fabric overnight; Eduardo Saverin (ANDREW GARFIELD), once Zuckerberg's close friend, who provided the seed money for the fledgling company; Napster founder Sean Parker (JUSTIN TIMBERLAKE) who brought Facebook to Silicon Valley's venture capitalists; and the Winklevoss twins (ARMIE HAMMER and JOSH PENCE), the Harvard classmates who asserted that Zuckerberg stole their idea and then sued him for ownership of it.

Each has his own narrative, his own version of the Facebook story - but they add up to more than the sum of their parts in what becomes a multi-level portrait of 21st Century success - both the youthful fantasy of it and its finite realities as well.

One drunken night in October of 2003, having just broken up with his girlfriend, Mark hacks into the university's computers to create a site that forms a database of all the women on campus, then lines up two pictures next to each other and asks the user to choose which is ``hotter. He calls the site Facemash, and it instantly goes viral, crashing the entire Harvard system and generating campus-wide controversy over the site's purported misogyny, and charges that Mark, in creating Facemash, intentionally breached security, violated copyrights and violated individual privacy. Yet in that moment, the underlying framework for Facebook is born. Shortly after, Mark launches thefacebook.com, which will spread like wildfire from one screen to the next across Harvard, through the Ivy League to Silicon Valley, and then literally to the entire world.

But in the chaos of creation comes passionate conflict -- about how it all went down, and who deserves recognition for what is clearly developing into one of the century's signal ideas -conflict that will divide friends and spur legal action.

To forge a palpable sense of that fog of creation, of history still being written, Sorkin and Fincher collaborated on a carefully constructed, non-aligned storytelling style that intentionally

does not choose sides. Instead, the film presents a consortium of equally tricky narrators - each of whom believes he is in the right and that his particular memories are the truth of the matter - while leaving the larger questions of what really happened entirely open for the audience.

Columbia Pictures presents in association with Relativity Media a Scott Rudin / Michael De Luca / Trigger Street production of a David Fincher film, The Social Network. Directed by David Fincher. Screenplay by Aaron Sorkin. Based upon the book ``The Accidental Billionaires by Ben Mezrich. Produced by Scott Rudin, Dana Brunetti, Michael De Luca, and Ceán Chaffin. Executive producer is Kevin Spacey. Director of Photography is Jeff Cronenweth, ASC. Production Designer is Donald Graham Burt. Editors are Angus Wall, A.C.E. and Kirk Baxter. Costume Designer is Jacqueline West. Music by Trent Reznor & Atticus Ross.

The Social Network has been rated PG-13 by the Motion Picture Association of America for Sexual Content, Drug and Alcohol Use and Language. The film will be released in theaters nationwide on October 1, 2010.

### **THE FILMMAKERS' APPROACH**

Screenwriter Aaron Sorkin (The West Wing, Charlie Wilson's War) never said "yes" faster to any project than he did to The Social Network. It began when he received the initial proposal for Ben Mezrich's book The Accidental Billionaire, a 14-page précis that would instantly spark Sorkin's own intensive investigation into the history of Facebook. Sorkin was taken with the accelerated trajectory of the characters – primarily that of Facebook co-founder Mark Zuckerberg, who turned from anarchistic hacker to era-defining webpreneur and CEO practically overnight. Sorkin was equally engaged by the definitively American theme of invention – and the chance to dissect the friendships, rivalries and social maneuverings of the young iconoclasts who seem to come along in every era to create some astonishing new device that fundamentally alters everyday life.

In previous generations it has been the radio, the telephone, the car, the television, the computer. Today, it is the social network. Says Sorkin: "The themes of the movie are as old as storytelling itself: loyalty, friendship, power, money, envy, social status, jealousy. It's a story that if Aeschylus were alive today, he'd have written; Shakespeare would have written; Paddy Chayefsky would have written. Fortunately for me, none of those people were available, so I got to write it."

The more he learned about Facebook's highly disputed origins, the more Sorkin was intrigued by how it seemed to serve as a crisp, close-up snapshot of this very specific time in American life – and equally of such enduring human subjects as genius, power and emptiness. For as technologically brilliant and keyed-in to digital lifestyles as these young upstarts are, they are also, in Sorkin's portrait, brash, angry and never quite emotionally fulfilled.

"I think there's a construct in the movie, which is that you can look at all the multi-faceted aspects of Mark Zuckerberg that made him successful and perceive them completely differently depending on who you relate to in the story," comments Sorkin. "Mark is driven either by

strength or weakness, fear or courage, vision or expedience – and the movie is constantly trafficking in the fine line between those things.”

He goes on: “Mark is an anti-hero who becomes a tragic hero by the end of the movie because he pays a price along the way. He is fundamentally a hacker, and hackers are, by nature, anarchists. It’s about thumbing your nose at the establishment, it’s about tearing down what you believe is in your way. And who is Mark revolting against? It’s the people who are somehow making the world a place that makes him unhappy. In Mark’s case, the idea of self-worth has alchemized itself into anger, very sharp-edged anger. But anger is fuel to him, it’s rocket fuel and then he has this Eureka idea, and his life seems made. But the very last thing he wants to do – and this is a huge part of the movie – is to kill Facebook by commoditizing it, by having it make money and not be anarchistic. That’s the story of the movie – the journey from hacker to CEO. The journey of the film is nothing less than a Horatio Alger story, but our version is this lonely kid in a dorm room who in a very short time becomes a very important figure in the world we live in right now.”

The story of Facebook begins in February of 2004, when the social rubric of everyday life was altered with the launch of what was then known as “thefacebook.com” at Harvard University, a site programmed by Zuckerberg, just 19 years old at the time. Within its first month, more than half of Harvard was registered to use it, and by December of 2005, the site had 5.5 million student users, who posted their most intimate personal details – everything from their favorite songs to who they were dating and more – for any and all to view.

As it spread beyond schools to the rest of the world, Facebook emerged as the globe’s digital public commons – a massive, radiating mesh of connections and relationships representing the social interactions of more than 500 million users (if Facebook were a country, it would now be more than 1.5 times as populous as the United States, and would be the third largest country in the world.)

In just six years, Facebook became a cultural force unto itself – a new mechanism for making friends in an increasingly isolated world and a heavy influence on a generation that has overturned old definitions of privacy. Facebook has helped to forge a brave new world of on-line lives in which everybody knows everyone else’s business, in which people construct their identities for public consumption, and in which many use Facebook as an archive for the entire breadth of their existence. Like other major technological revolutions before it, Facebook has already been both celebrated and excoriated for its impact – the full consequences of which even the savviest social analysts can’t quantify so early in the game. Growing at a break-neck pace and with its potential still fundamentally un-charted, the company, though privately held, was recently valued north of \$25 billion, and some estimates from Wall Street put its value considerably higher.

But even as it grew, major lawsuits embroiled the company, and its founders, in conflict -- and the early provenance of Facebook became a fascinating series of battles for ownership and recognition. A group of Zuckerberg’s former Harvard classmates, including the Winklevoss brothers, alleged that Zuckerberg had stolen their idea for a social network; while Zuckerberg’s

one-time business partner and Facebook co-founder, Eduardo Saverin, alleged he had been frozen out of the company by Zuckerberg after financing its early growth.

To learn more about all these facts and about our popular understanding of (and response to) Facebook, Sorkin set up his own web page asking for people's input and received some 10,000 visitors before he shut the page down. He pored through the reporting notes of Ben Mezrich (though not his book, which was written simultaneous to the screenplay, and which was not completed until Sorkin was nearly done with his script) and conducted his own research, making his way through numerous legal filings and interviews with many of the people depicted in the movie (and many who were present at the events described, although in some cases not depicted in the movie) that made clear the starkly contrasting views of Facebook's early days.

All of these sources, integrated in a panoramic way, formed the structural backbone of the screenplay. Sorkin was refused access to Zuckerberg, which did not surprise him, but used many public sources, including reportage and legal filings, to incorporate his perspective. "Facebook is very protective of Mark, and they have good reason to be," Sorkin says, adding, "I'm sure Facebook would have preferred that we told the story entirely from Mark's point-of-view, but that wasn't the movie we wanted to make."

It became clear to Sorkin as he began to write, that as carefully sourced as the screenplay was, he would be juggling a series of equally "unreliable narrators," each with a differing version of events, none of which, years later, anyone involved directly can come close to agreeing upon – and each of which needed to be integrated into the story in order to forge the broader picture.

"Because there were conflicting narratives, rather than decide on one 'true' one, I thought the more exciting thing to do would be to literally dramatize all of them – and to dramatize the fact that there are conflicting narratives," explains Sorkin. "I was so much more interested in shades of gray than I was in black-and-white. Also, the idea of a series of possible scenarios, possible realities even, seemed immediately to have so much more to do with Facebook itself -- what Facebook actually is -- than just a straight-ahead plot. One of the most compelling things to me about Facebook is the limitless possibilities it offers for reinvention and fabrication and putting forward a very subjective idea of the 'truth' about yourself - so it felt exciting and provocative to me that I could mirror that in building a story of how the thing itself was incepted."

It was Sorkin's way in to revealing all the friction and burgeoning enmity that led to the creation of the world's most powerful social network. He made it work by putting his emphasis on uncovering the individual intentions and warring objectives of each of the characters.

"This is a movie that, whenever it can, turns the prism to show you another side of the story," he says. "I think the sign of a good movie is that you can argue for more than one side, but the basis of my ability to coherently make those arguments was an incredible amount of research. Without the research, without being steeped in facts, it's all fiction – and this isn't fiction."

Sorkin found himself particularly intrigued by Mark Zuckerberg's internal contradictions as a young man who demonstrates a certain amount of social awkwardness, and yet comes up with a brilliant way to transform the basics of the human social urge into pioneering computer code.

Even at a time when he was an outsider at Harvard, Zuckerberg's initial concept was to mathematically model what he has referred to as the "social graph," the radiating, sustaining links every person has to all the other people they know.

"The fact that someone with enormous and almost inchoate social awkwardness creates a vision for this network of social interaction, a public commons, essentially, in which people never have to be in the same room to communicate – well, that was pretty irresistible," says Sorkin. "Also, there's a hugely dramatic idea, to me, in what makes Mark not only a creator but also a destroyer – and it's a fantastic subject to write about, since most of our greatest creators are in some very basic way also destroyers. Our visionary builders are often equally adept at tearing down what came before them and what is in front of them as they start to understand what it takes to realize their vision. You can look at endless examples of this – it's a great trope in what people mean when they describe 'the American character'. Mark is like a 21st century iteration of a Fitzgerald character or a Dreiser character. Where was I ever going to find that again?"

For Sorkin, the opening scene to the film was key to setting the tone. "I knew I wanted it to open up on a girl and a guy in a bar," he says, "no pyrotechnics, just two people, Mark and his girlfriend, and she is going to break up with him by the end of the scene. Then he would go back to his dorm room, start drinking, blogging and create the website Facemash. Facemash would go viral and we would cut right to the deposition where the first words out of Mark's mouth are 'That's not what happened.' That moment, that one cut, essentially hands you the key to the structure of the movie."

That structure purposefully keeps bumping up against the nature of the truth as a subjective construct, something that has only been magnified in the internet era, as instant, indelible communication can turn rumors and innuendo into globally accepted fact. As one of the characters in the film says to Zuckerberg, "The internet isn't written in pencil, Mark. It's written in ink."

"There's a certain ease with which an assertion now becomes known as truth," says Sorkin. "Early in the film, Mark, perhaps cavalierly, uses this when he creates Facemash, the precursor to Facebook that rated female students' photos -- but by the end, he has also fallen victim to it himself." Ultimately, Sorkin's screenplay defies the notion that there can be a single truth and he fully intends for this to provoke debate. Sums up the screenwriter: "I'll be delighted if people have arguments in the theatre parking lot over it. With *The Social Network*, we took a set of facts, and we made a truth. In fact, more specifically, we made three truths. If you think of the facts that aren't in dispute as dots that you have to connect, we connected those dots and we made a picture. But in between those dots are a) character, and b) the fact that you get to decide what the truth is. We don't tell you 'this is the only truth there is,' we posit a handful of truths in pursuit of a larger true thing: the conditions that made all this possible."

### **The Director**

Bringing Sorkin's screenplay to life is a director making a departure: David Fincher, perhaps best known as the dazzling visual stylist who forged the atmospheric worlds of *Benjamin Button*, *Zodiac*, *Seven* and *Fight Club*, but who in *The Social Network* focuses the camera more

intimately on the human nature of the real-life young anarchists who came together – and flew apart – as they set in motion the Facebook phenomenon. Fincher wasn't certain at first he would be drawn to the story, but when he read the script, that instantly changed. "Scott Rudin and Amy Pascal kept saying to me 'you have to read this, it's an amazing story and a brilliant script,'" he recalls. "When I did read it, what I really liked is that it was tearing into the fabric of a myth that's only a few years old – that was very intriguing to me."

He goes on: "In some ways, *The Social Network* is an age-old story – a classic battle over whose contributions to an invention should be valued. But what makes it so interesting is that it avoids siding with anyone at all costs. You don't do that by trying to recreate every detail. You do it by looking at events from different points of view – from the point of view of the person who was wrong and the point of view of the person who won. That's the magic of doing anything that is based on real events in the world – and the whole *Rashomon* thing of it was very interesting to me. The important thing is that the movie is about how a group of people set off to do the right thing by each other, and the right thing by an idea, and how they eventually decide they can't, and that they won't, complete this journey together. Our job was to take those facts and make a truth from it, or rather, three truths from it."

Fincher, like Sorkin, perceived the film as operating in a gray zone, where heroes and anti-heroes switch places with each other as these youthful, barely formed college students turn, almost overnight, into the innovators the whole world is watching. He says that "truth" is a slippery concept when you're dealing with so many diverging memories, tricky motivations and strong personalities.

"I don't know that the truth is knowable," says Fincher, "but what I do know is that a lot of people have gone out of their way to explain their version of it – and that the behavior and reactions of the people in Sorkin's script felt true to me."

He came at it knowing the consequences of treading into disputed territory. "I knew that if we did our job, if we did the story justice, everyone involved in the story would likely disown it," the director comments.

Fincher's approach to the film was grounded in crafting the worlds of Ivy League life and Silicon Valley start-ups in which Zuckerberg, Saverin, Parker and the Winklevoss twins moved as Facebook was launched and began growing algorithmically into the giant it is today.

"The time and the place had to be palpable," he says. This was especially true of the Harvard dorms where Zuckerberg wrote the original code for Facebook and where it first went viral. "It's a fascinating world where a kid could go into a room with a case of Red Bull and come out a few days later with something that would instantly be on 500 computers and then a few years later, on 500 million. I knew that I needed to make the surroundings of everything – where these people are, what they're wearing, all those details – feel right for Harvard, and right for these kids and their expertise. The fun of it was not only to find a handful of really bright, incredibly watchable actors, but also to forge a world around them that makes them look like the kind of kids that would be saying this stuff. It builds the drama – the inevitability of the fact that these kids are one day going to have to divide the spoils – by seeing this place that they all come from,

with its bad prefab furniture and scratchy sheets and fire alarms in the middle of the wall and fireplaces that don't work.”

Though he does not come from that world, Fincher could clearly see elements of himself in the characters' dissident attitudes and youthful ambition. "I could relate to these sort of creative cliques and the way they are couched in intimate moments between friends and soon-to-be ex-friends. I could relate to being 20 or 21 and trying to sell yourself and your vision to the people you need to get money from in order to make your thing as grand as you know it can be, and that whole condescending thing of having to ask adults for permission because you're too young to do it for yourself and all that frustration," he explains. "In some ways, what Mark does is no different than directing a movie: you grow something, and your job is to grow it well and to make sure it gets enhanced and to take care of it. That's the subject of the movie. And if you have to hurt people's feelings in order to protect that thing, then that's what you have to do. It's a responsibility. I also related to how Zuckerberg never pandered to anyone's idea of who he should be – and I related to the irreverence of these characters and their disdain for authority, because without that, we wouldn't be telling this story at all.”

He goes on: "I've been Mark Zuckerberg – there are times in my life where I've acted that way. There are times in my life where I've been Eduardo Saverin – where I've gone and made a scene and regretted it and where I've been emotional and felt silly and stupid. And there are times when I've felt self-righteous and I've acted out in that way.”

Fincher knew that creating these moments on screen would require assembling a tightly matched ensemble cast capable of collaborating and clashing in engaging and revealing ways. "The hope in putting together this cast was that you have people who can show both sides of the characters and who can make the relationships completely real," he says. "Everyone had to be equally part of the collision of billiard balls for this to happen. They had to be very distinct from each other but also work well together. I wanted to find something human about everybody, and I never saw Mark or Sean or the Winklevosses as the villain. I don't see Eduardo's lack of imagination as villainy. I look at them all and think, they're kids, they're going to make mistakes, they're going to fall into the right things for the right reasons, they're going to fall out of the right things for the wrong reasons. So the thing was to find a bunch of people who were willing to experiment, and not know what they were going to do. I wanted to be able to take them right to the edge and push them over so they would find this other thing that's not the preconceived notion of who they are.”

His audition process was intensive. "First we put the word out and asked people to send us auditions on their phones or on tape," he says. "Then we began bringing people in to talk about their backgrounds. Every person we cast had to come in and read several times. We were looking to form an ensemble, and every facet had to work in support of the others.”

Before production began, Fincher started rehearsing with the cast in small groups for several weeks, allowing them to get into the rhythms of the character's unique speech patterns and to inhabit their relationships with a relaxed naturalism. Fincher would also ask for unusual flexibility from the actors, shoot as many as 200 different takes of a single scene, in order to

shake things up and to later have a multiplicity of options in the editing room. He worked through Sorkin's razor-sharp dialogue until it was completely organic to the actors.

Says Sorkin of Fincher's directorial style: "That kind of repetition takes the edge off the instinct towards operatic acting. It made the dialogue feel more casual and effortless. By using a lot of takes, David harvested great results. He completely embraced that the script was wall-to-wall language -- and he added a haunting visual style to it that really puts it head and shoulders above what it could have been had a less talented director been doing it. David also really understood how to get the best out of each actor. I loved the number of takes that he got -- sometimes 70, 80, 90 takes -- simply in an effort to knock the acting out of them and to get them to casualize this language. For example, for the scene between Mark and Eduardo in the Palo Alto house, when Eduardo has come out in the middle of the night to San Francisco and they're shouting at each other, we started around 7pm, but David wasn't really happy with it until well after midnight when Jesse and Andrew were exhausted, and suddenly the scene really came alive."

Fincher adds: "I wanted to get the actors to that point where they are talking with the speed and casualness of real life, where things overlap and people talk over one another. I also think the kind of hyper, righteous indignation of the characters in a lot of scenes necessitates a pace and rhythm. The first scene in the movie is a girl saying to Mark, 'I'm really having a hard time keeping up with what you're talking about.' So he better be going pretty quick; otherwise, we're not going to have any respect for her, and we do have a lot of respect for her -- because she's the one who comes back in and sets our stuff straight."

To keep constant tension in the scenes, Fincher also would often wreak intentional havoc by taking each actor aside privately before shooting and telling him "you are the one who is right here." Fincher elucidates: "For example, in directing the scenes at the deposition, I would literally say to one side of the table, 'This little weasel ripped you off and he's sitting in the chair that you should be sitting in, and without you, he's nothing.' And then I would walk to the other side of the table and go, 'Do you really think that there'd be 15 billion dollars worth of Facebook if you had made the Harvard Connection? Look at those douche bags. There's nothing, there are no spoils to divide if not for the hard work and brilliance of Mark Zuckerberg. So look at them standing over there in their Brooks Brothers suits all smug trying to get a place at your table.'"

While the actors were keenly aware they were portraying real-life people who are their contemporaries, Fincher did not want the performances to attempt mimicry. "I always felt that would be too constricting," he says. "Each performance needed to be an impression without being an impersonation. It would have been easy to go onto Youtube and watch clips of Mark Zuckerberg talking, but that didn't reconcile with the best way to dramatize what happened between these people and to capture the spirit of their inventiveness and relationships. If you want a movie to have character, you can't force it. You have to allow for the rough edges."

Those raw, sometimes jagged edges become a part of the film's intricate humanity. "Multiple perspectives were essential to telling this story," Fincher concludes. "There was no other way to

do it. There's this idea that Aaron and I talked a lot about that 'no person is only one thing.' And the whole structure of the film became a way of saying that."

### DAVID FINCHER Q&A

This movie, at least on the surface, is a departure for you. Dealing with characters whose primary means of expression is verbal is not something you've had in your other movies – did you like that?

DAVID FINCHER: It was fine, but I think it's more like this – I don't know what directors are supposed to do except what the script wants. That's what the script was, and that's what it needed. Are you supposed to hoard your little corner of the Monopoly board? Are you supposed to say, I'm Park Place and this is what I do. That seems kind of dull.

The language is what's up front, but the thing that supports the language is the mouths out of which the language comes, the clothes on the bodies that carry the mouths from which the language comes, the houses and the rooms that the bodies inhabit. To me, the Chinese checkers of it is this: you get a couple of Aeron chairs and some computers, and the guys rattle off their dialogue in the way that they're supposed to. But the three dimensional chess of it is to try and steep the viewer in the world of the movie, and to do so in a way that's effortless for him. I knew that I needed to make the surroundings of everything – where these people are, what they're wearing, all those details – feel right for Harvard, and right for these kids and their expertise. The fun of it is not only to find a handful of really bright, incredibly watchable kids to say these lines, but also to forge a world around them that makes them look like the kind of kids that would be saying this stuff.

A world in which the events of the story are possible.

DAVID FINCHER: Yes – but also a world in which they're essential. Inevitable. You want to build the drama -- the inevitability of the fact that these kids can't be friends or the fact that they're going to have to divide the spoils – by seeing this place that they all come from, with its bad prefab furniture and scratchy sheets and fire alarms in the middle of the wall and fireplaces that don't work. A lot of people think of Harvard as being like Camelot, or Hogwarts – but it's not. Of course Harvard is old and it's stately, but physically it's really this odd, colonial, kind of re-fabbed and refurbished place where every 10 or 15 years more conduit gets put on the walls and it falls apart a little bit more. Visually, these kids do sort of come from nothing. Whatever their family life was like – and I'm sure the Winklevosses lived well – you're trying to find this level playing field where they all meet. Everybody is peering into what each other's personal strengths or deficits are but you're not really privy to that. You're not seeing the Winklevosses in a Grey Poupon commercial. And that was great, I thought.

When you read the script, did you know right away that this would be your approach? Did you immediately know how to do it?

DAVID FINCHER: No. Again, it's not that you "know" how to do it -- I don't have a map for how to get there, I don't necessarily know how to get through the woods -- but I know where

there is. You know what I mean? It's not like you look at the thing and say, I've got to head east for a while and then I can cut back -- that's the reality of what you're presented with on a daily basis -- but you can see Mt. Kilimanjaro in the distance and you can know where that is. I can look at that and feel like I know these kids -- part of me is this guy, part of me is that guy. I know people like that, and I know what it's like to be that pissed off at somebody that you've known for so long, and I know what it's like to have that conversation where you go, This is where it ends. But any director that says they see the whole movie in their head is a liar.

Unlike other movies that you've done, you came into this one with what was very close to a finished script -- and yet it's very obviously a David Fincher film. How did you achieve that?

DAVID FINCHER: I look at my job first and foremost as an interpreter. You're taking the written word and you're trying to have it make sense in terms of where people are in space, where they are in the frame, where they are in focus. I don't look at it as, Oh my God, I have to find a script where the lead character is from Marin County and grew up in the 70s. It would be just as boring for actors to do only what they know. I think you go into something like this and you say, Here's a situation and here's a group of people -- what do I know and what do I understand about this? What can I bring to this given situation? I've been Mark Zuckerberg -- there are times in my life where I've acted that way. There are times in my life where I've been Eduardo Saverin -- where I've gone and made a scene and regretted it and where I've been emotional and felt silly and stupid. And there are times when I've felt self-righteous and I've acted out in this other way. You look at the whole of it and you make a patchwork quilt of what you relate to -- what something looked like, what something felt like at a certain time -- and that's what you draw on. And then you go in, and you get really good people to bring their trip to it and you sort it out. I don't think there's any way not to put your stamp on a movie because you're basically editing behavior. That's your job. You're basically responding to a behavior and saying, I believe that or I don't believe that -- and so you're going to, in some pretty basic way, inform how the people behave.

As a director, is that what makes every movie personal to you -- or is it something unique to this one?

DAVID FINCHER: Look, what Mark does is no different than directing a movie -- it's what I do for a living every day. You grow something, and your job is to grow it well and to make sure it gets enhanced and to take care of it. That's the subject of the movie. And if you have to hurt people's feelings in order to protect that thing, that's what you have to do. It's a responsibility.

You want to love every character in the movie. You want to be able to understand them. You want to be able to see what's there. You want to be able to see their humanity. You want to be able to relate to them. But, as a director, the characters' behaviors are inevitably related to facets of moments in your own life. You look at the work and say, Maybe I do know what that is.

I've been the angry young man. I've been Elvis Costello. I know what that's like. The anger is certainly something I felt that I could relate to -- the notion of being twenty-one and having a fairly clear notion of what it is you want to do or what it is you want to say and having all these people go, Well, we'd love to, we'd love you to try. Show us what it is that you want to do. It's

that whole condescending thing of having to ask adults for permission because the perception is that you're too young to do it for yourself. And that's why I understood Mark's frustration. You have a vision of what this thing should be. And everyone wants to tell you, Oh, well, you're young. You'll see soon enough.

And the movie, on some level, is a testament to Mark's work ethic -- his relentless ability to execute that vision.

DAVID FINCHER: Right. Mark does what no one else in the movie does and he's the guy who reaps the rewards -- but he also pays a price. He was the one saying, Advertising? I don't know -- that's a way to go about it but I don't know if it's the only way. And I totally concur with that.

What is the movie saying about success? Is it something about the moment at which your fantasy of success collides with actual success?

DAVID FINCHER: It's hard for me to even imagine the kind of success that the movie is talking about.

But you had some significant degree of success when you were young.

DAVID FINCHER: I do liken it, in a way, to the fraternity of the outsider that existed at a point in time with a commercial company that I started when I was 25 or whatever. And that was very much a bunch of people getting together because they couldn't find representation, because they couldn't make the jump from being music video directors to being commercial directors with this Catch-22: You can't do it until you've done it. But you can't have done it until you do it. Nobody was going to give us our shot. It was a point in time when we were with Propaganda, during the whole movement of music videos becoming mainstream, and advertisers were looking for the MTV look. There was definitely a point where we were like, Nobody at Pepsi is going to tell us that what we're doing is not going to sell records or sell soft drinks or sell sneakers. We're going to continue to do what we do until the world revolves and turns around and they beg us to come make television commercials for them. Even though the impetus for us to be at MTV was that no one would hire us for television commercials. So I do understand what it is to stake your claim in the margins, to wait for the sun to illuminate your part of the world. And I think there's a little bit of that in Mark -- he saw that if he could link all these things then people could have this sort of immediate connection in the same way as cellular phones. That's what it is -- it's a cellular phone immediacy in the remaking of your image of yourself. This is not who I am. This is who I want you to see that I am. It's Narcissus.

Is it your experience with Propaganda that made you want to do this?

DAVID FINCHER: That certainly helped form my understanding of Mark and those guys -- but it was before that. I graduated high school in 1980 -- and for three years, everybody just hung out on the weekends looking at BetaMax and VHS tapes of movies. You have those little fraternities of people who are all movie makers or future movie makers or movie maker wannabes, all watching movies on technology that exists at the time and going, He shouldn't have done that, he should've done this. This is where he went wrong and this is what's wrong with the narrative and

here's why this lighting sucks and this is why this notion of being something could've been great but isn't. You go and you do all that stuff as a young man. And then finally you get your opportunity. You get your "at bat." So I related to the notion of that, but I didn't go to college. I didn't have the dorm experience. I didn't have the fraternity experience. But I had my own dorm and my own fraternity.

In my life, I've been part of a lot of different little creative cliques – of young men who had ideas about technology or ideas about filmmaking or storytelling. I knew that world, and I felt like this tapped into it. It also seemed like it was talking a lot about where technology in the information age has taken us as far as innovation is concerned. You're talking about a world that no longer requires you to build a workforce and a factory to get a product out. Someone can disappear into his dorm room with a couple cases of Red Bull and, a few weeks later, come out with a beta of something that can be on six hundred desktops within nine days, and six hundred million within six years.

Mark, for example, goes from being in the cracks to becoming completely mainstream.

DAVID FINCHER: He owns the mainstream. He is the mainstream. He's the portal to the mainstream.

Right. You can't get to the mainstream without him. Is that a good thing for him? What do you want us to feel about that?

DAVID FINCHER: I don't want to feel anything about it. I don't think it's necessary to the story. I think it's ironic. I think it's ironic that creativity has to happen on the fringe. It has to. Creative change happens on the fringe of everything. It's always on the edge, it's in the margins, and then it's adopted by the herd. And I think it's ironic that a guy who seems to have issues with being able to communicate with other people has invented one of the greatest tools for communicating with people.

Is it that failure to communicate that drives Mark? Mark says, I built this thing and I'm going to hang onto it – and it's never going to be finished. What is underneath that?

DAVID FINCHER: I think that there's an anger or this sense of not being appreciated -- or rather there's anger for not being appreciated, at least for the right reasons or as completely or as much as Mark feels he should be. And I think that's human across the board. Everybody goes, You know, I'm not so sure my parents appreciated me enough. I'm not so sure my siblings appreciated me enough. I'm not sure my friends appreciated me enough. This story frames a slightly more exaggerated view of that feeling, but -- as it relates to the notion of Mark never wanting to finish something -- I think that's just the reality of invention in the information age. Nothing is ever going to roll off an assembly line and be somebody else's responsibility. It's going to reside on a desktop computer and provide a continuing relationship with that user and that user base, and I think Mark brilliantly understood that in a way that few people do. In the information age, Steve Jobs has a relationship with not only his product designers, but with the people who are buying his product for more money than competing versions of it. That's because of the relationship that he has to the design -- the relationship that he has to the message of it all,

the relationship that he has to the empowerment of owning these things. Steve Jobs is an example of this in a way that Bill Gates isn't. And I believe that's what Zuckerberg wants to be, and I think that's what Zuckerberg has become.

Is there a price that Mark pays for what he becomes?

DAVID FINCHER: I think the price Mark pays is that, with every mounting hill he's able to climb -- from 500 early adopters to 500 million later adopters -- he's forced to realize the awesome responsibility of having your dreams come true. He learns that -- if you want to be great at something -- the next lap of the marathon you're supposed to shave a few seconds off, you're supposed to get a little leaner, you're supposed to get a little stronger. And Mark will do that -- in the end, you see a guy who has a million users, but that means he has to stay late while everyone else can go celebrate. He's alone. He got what he wanted - but he's as alone as he is at the end of the first scene in the movie.

What are the 'seconds' that Mark shaves off -- Eduardo and Sean and the Winklevosses?

DAVID FINCHER: I think that Sean is as close to a kind of soul mate to what Mark is trying to accomplish as anyone else that he meets, but I don't think that any of those people you mention are willing to work as hard or as long, or think as deeply or completely or as uninterruptedly, as Mark is -- and that's why he is Mark Zuckerberg.

Because you have the vision, does that excuse the behavior?

DAVID FINCHER: Only if you're right. One of the things that I always found very moving in this material is that it's about someone who's pursuing his own idea of excellence or his own idea of meaning. It's Galileo, but Mark is the only guy who sees that. Maybe it's because his social deficits make it so that he, in some way, has to believe that there's a future where you can connect in this other way -- but I also think that there's this way in which life frequently tells you that the thing that you think is going to kill you is actually the thing that makes you what you are.

That's what I'm asking -- does brilliance come with a level of entitlement?

DAVID FINCHER: Yes, in some ways -- but it also comes with that awesome responsibility, which Mark discovers.

Mark takes very seriously his responsibility to his creation, but he also takes very seriously his responsibility to himself -- some will say he didn't take seriously enough his responsibility to those around him. But we have as many articles that say, It's ludicrous to think that Eduardo and I were best friends, as we have to the contrary.

The movie is very clearly not saying that Mark thinks Eduardo is his best friend. The movie is saying that Eduardo thinks that's what Mark feels about him. It's never clear that this is reciprocal. If Eduardo were to forget what people say and just look at what they do, he would realize that it doesn't really matter what either of them is saying about their friendship. The fact of the matter is that they were young men trying to accomplish the same goal at the same time in

the same room and, whatever their responsibilities were to each other, at some point there was a fork in the road. It's traumatic because one of them gets left in the dust.

Who betrays whom in the movie? Does Mark betray Eduardo or does Eduardo betray Mark?

DAVID FINCHER: I think that they both betray each other - I never saw it as cut and dried as Mark pulling the rug out from under Eduardo. I believe that Eduardo has a failure of imagination. He can't imagine that this thing could ever be worth anything or become profitable if he doesn't sell advertising, and I think that was the crux of their fork in the road. That's Eduardo's failure of imagination. And the Winklevosses, they never got out of the merge lane.

There is an entire trope of American movies in which the Winklevosses would be the heroes and Mark would be the villain - and yet this is a movie in which Mark is the hero and the Winklevosses are the villains.

DAVID FINCHER: The only thing I can relate it to is this: in directing those scenes at the deposition, I would literally say to one side of the table, This little weasel ripped you off and he's sitting in the chair that you should be sitting in, and without you, he's nothing.

And then I would walk to the other side of the table and go, Do you really think that there would be 15 billion dollars worth of Facebook if you had made the Harvard Connection? Look at those douche bags. There's nothing -- there are no spoils to divide -- if not for the hard work and brilliance of Mark Zuckerberg. So look at them standing over there in their Brooks Brothers suits all smug trying to get a place at your table.

But you go to great lengths to say that Mark isn't in it for the money -- so what's he in it for?

DAVID FINCHER: I believe that Mark is in it to fully realize his dream, which is to build an apparatus that allows him to connect to the world in a way that he's unable to do in his own life. People talk about Mark's borderline Asperger's, his horrific PR style, but I think that Facebook required someone with those kind of limited social skills. If you're going to create an apparatus like Facebook, you have to start with somebody who's going to be able to understand how difficult it is to communicate. That's the progression.

What do you feel about somebody who would say that it's not fair to make a movie about this guy who did all this stuff when he was nineteen and didn't know any better?

DAVID FINCHER: I don't know. Look, I don't think anybody involved ever thought we were sharpening our knives for Mark Zuckerberg. I think we thought of him as a compelling, interesting character for a movie - in the same way that Travis Bickle is. The same way that Rupert Pupkin is. The same way that the narrator in Fight Club is.

You could also say Charles Foster Kane.

DAVID FINCHER: Yeah, exactly. And I would. I think the two are correlative. What we were able to glean from YouTube videos and 60 Minutes interviews is that Mark Zuckerberg is a

young man, and a very young man at a time when this thing really caught fire. But there's no doubt that this is not a guy who goes to great lengths to ingratiate himself. So, I don't know how much of it is him. I don't know how much of it is youth and I don't know how much of it is lack of socialization.

Is it the perfect storm, then? This cultural need for Facebook, the business need for it, and the vision of a nineteen year-old kid who somehow found himself typifying the experience of an incipient Facebook user all colliding at the same time?

DAVID FINCHER: I wasn't aware of Facebook as it was groundswelling, as it was a rumor, as it was furtive whispers. I was only aware of it as it became an inevitability. So I can't really speak to it as an early adopter. By the time I knew about it, it was K-Mart.

But you now have many portals into your life -- you have doors and windows that allow you to walk out of your room and look out, and the facility of this technology has progressed to a point where you have a new window, you have a new door, and it doesn't allow you to just see your backyard, it allows you to see a backyard in Uzbekistan. It allows you to see the sunrise in Egypt, and it's amazing, the fact that you can so effortlessly and instantly take a picture with your phone, which is with you constantly, and, moments later, send it to somebody halfway around the world and say, This is my experience right now. Without that spark, you don't have the fire that is Facebook. But how that relates to people saying, My God I almost forgot about you, we were neighbors in 2nd grade, I still don't know.

With all of this coming to in the maelstrom of those forces colliding, I do think Mark figured out something -- and there's no doubt that it's in some way connected to American narcissism: the need to be on the cover of one's own Rolling Stone.

Do you think there's a value to Facebook?

DAVID FINCHER: Do I think it's worth 25 billion dollars?

No, do you think Facebook is fundamentally a good or bad thing?

DAVID FINCHER: I think that, like anything that is so flexible and so powerful, it's obviously both -- it's alternating current, sixty times a second. It's like cell phones. Are cell phones a good or bad? No -- thank God we have them but do we spend too much time on them? Do they create the impression in minds that don't want to delve too deeply that we're somehow connected everywhere, when really all we are is riding around in a car filling our empty lives with, "Hey what happened?" "Nothing." "OK, call you later." You know, "What are you doing?" "Nothing, what are you doing?" "Nothing." I had a friend with one of the great quotes -- I said, "So do you have an email address yet?" And he goes, "Nah, I'm not really into the Internet." And I said, "Why?" And he goes, "I don't like CB radio that you type." And I thought, that's kind of an interesting way of looking at it: CB radio you type.

But isn't Mark using the computer in a way that goes beyond that? Is this hacking element something you could relate to?

DAVID FINCHER: I didn't necessarily relate to it, to be honest -- I don't really know any hackers -- but I saw Mark as kind of like Banksy. I saw him as this outsider graffiti artist. Somebody who saw himself as a threat to society, in almost a fun way. I understand that there's this world of people who look at intrusion and dissemination and other ideas of this sort, but I didn't really relate to that as much as I related to the idea of a graffiti artist.

A lot of people have made movies about the Internet. There are a lot of bad movies about being sucked into a computer and having your life turned upside down -- there's all kinds of nonsense like that. I think that the only way to talk about this notion of web-preneurship is to be able to speak cogently about the Molotov cocktail of the hacker. The first act of our story is this guy who hacks a facebook at Harvard and decides, Wait a minute, people are drawn to this -- it kicks off and sparks a whole different crop top that becomes something as ubiquitous as the Big Mac. Now, I think hacking is integral to the story, but I don't think it's essential -- it's essential when you're discussing Mark Zuckerberg, I think it's essential when you're discussing Sean Parker. But I certainly don't think it has anything to do with what the Winklevosses were about.

Or Eduardo?

DAVID FINCHER: Right. I think Eduardo said, Let's give the people what they want. And I think that Mark is the other guy saying, I'm interested in doing something like this, and he stumbled onto something people would want, and he was able to see it as a next step. Meanwhile, the guy who was just thinking about giving the people what they want fundamentally couldn't.

As an outgrowth of that, Mark reinvents himself in the same way that Sean Parker did -- so what's the difference between Mark and Sean?

DAVID FINCHER: I saw Sean Parker as a guy who's a veteran of the whole VC world -- he's a veteran of having your ass handed to you by the people who would finance your dreams. He's the older brother who's been through it. I saw him way more as Wally than I did Eddie Haskell. I saw him as the guy who -- when you're a kid -- is the older brother of your friend, the one you look up to because he says, Don't worry about that, worry about this. This is what's important.

Is part of Sean Parker a cautionary tale to Mark? In other words, all the things in Sean that lead him to continually attempt to destroy himself, we watch Mark not do.

DAVID FINCHER: It's the birth of the CEO gene in Mark. But I saw Sean as a guy who -- maybe it's not a chemical dependency -- but certainly Sean's weakness is that he likes a good meal, he likes a good drink, he likes a good friend. I saw him as Jedediah Leland. I saw him as the guy you need to have around you who says, No, be true to yourself. And in his being true to himself, he becomes a bit of an albatross.

One of the things in the movie that makes Mark sympathetic is that the world around him is moving so fast. He can't keep up with what he created. How did you achieve that visceral feeling of everything moving at such a relentless clip?

DAVID FINCHER: I don't know that I ever consciously took what was happening in front of the camera behaviorally and superimposed it onto the accelerated world that we live in. I can't say that I knowingly used it as the graph paper against which to draw.

To me, it's how fast can you go and still have the audience understand what you're talking about. That's Frank Capra. The whole idea is, Let's not be boring. If you have to do this Parent Trap twins thing – which we did with the Winklevosses -- part of what creates the impression that they're two different people is the degree to which they finish each other's sentences and cut each other off. It's not even so much the proximity of one to the other, but rather the way in which their speech dovetails into the next guy's idea because they're so familiar with each other's patois. They very quickly realize where that sentence is going and they can move on to the next thing, right over the top of their brother. To me, that was part of the speed -- the effect of the text, and this hyper kind of righteous indignation, necessitated a pace and rhythm. The first scene in the movie is a girl saying, I'm really having a hard time keeping up with what you're talking about. Mark better be talking pretty quickly otherwise we're not going to have any respect for Erica, and we have a lot of respect for her -- she's the one who comes back in and sets our stuff straight.

How is directing kids of this age different from directing Cate Blanchett or Brad Pitt or Ed Norton?

DAVID FINCHER: It's a lot of fun. Of course there's a lot to be said for having the right resources and skill sets from having made 15 or 20 movies and having Hollywood revolve around you. There's a lot to be said for somebody who brings that to bear, but it's also a much different and more pressurized situation for that person, when you have someone in your movie who makes the movie go. It's a different thing for an actor like that, on a daily basis, than it is for somebody who has to be considered part of an ensemble. It's like American Graffiti -- you look at that movie and say, I don't think Richard Dreyfuss has ever been better, but at that time and place, Susanne Somers had never been better. Ron Howard had never been better. It's great to be able to find people who are at this crossroads where they're no longer kids, and they're trying to find their way and define themselves. I will say another thing that I think is really interesting, which is that I went into this saying, whatever happens, I'm not casting any of those Disney kids, and they're all Disney kids, and they're all great! Thank God for the Disney kids, because they're awesome. Thank God for the Justin Timberlake and Brenda Songs of the world, and Joe Mazello, who grew up on movie sets. And Jesse! And Andrew. Andrew acted in his first movie when he was nine or something. I sort of said to myself, I'm not going to go for movie brats, or television brats – but now I have to say that they were so prepared. They were awesome. They knew how to work, and that was it. You want people who are going to come to this thing going, I know what to do with this, and then you want them to fall down a hill. You want to take them right to the edge and push them over so they find this other thing in it that's not the preconceived notion of who they are. And yet, the reason we cast Andrew, for example, aside from his incredible skill set, is because he is human. He is that guy who can be hurt, he is that guy who cares that much -- so wherever and however we're going to lose our way, that is the guy who will feel it. And the same thing was true with Justin. My biggest problem with everybody that we looked at was, I need somebody who understands the world like an agent does, or like a record producer does -- what it is to seat two people together and know that there's going to be annuity.

You can tell an actor over and over and over what that is, but if he doesn't understand it, if he doesn't have that little twinkle in the eye of knowing there's money to be made here, that those two are getting along and there's the fruits of my labor – he's never going to get it.

I usually try not to get too bogged down with physical types, but we wanted to stay kind of true to the real people -- but mostly to me it was the vibe. As far as directing 25 year olds, God, it was a ball.

It seems like everyone is playing, to some degree, at least some aspect of themselves.

DAVID FINCHER: I wanted to find something human about everybody, and I never saw Mark as the villain. I don't see Sean as the villain. I don't see the Winklevosses as the villain. I don't see Eduardo's lack of imagination as villainy. I look at them all and go, They're kids, they're going to make mistakes, they're going to fall into the right things for the right reasons, they're going to fall out of the right things for the wrong reasons. It just happens, and so the thing was to find a bunch of people who wanted to do the work, have the fun, experiment, and not know what they were going to do. Once we'd blocked the thing that they were going to do – we knew they were going to have no choice but to go out on a limb so I could hand them a chainsaw.

Was it like that with Trent? Can you talk about how that collaboration came about?

DAVID FINCHER: Well, I knew Trent for a long time and we'd talked about the idea of working together. Now, I know how this sounds and I say this in jest, but all jokes have a little bit of truth to them -- I really saw this movie as the Citizen Kane of John Hughes movies, and I heard the music in my head as being something from a John Hughes movie. I heard it as being this kind of cheeseball synthesizer stuff, and I thought that the synthesizer would be the perfect instrument for the world of the Internet -- the hum of it, the drone of it, the pneumatics and the booting up, all this stuff with these weird sounds. And then I started thinking about the crush of that interfacing with something for that many hours a day -- what your eyes feel like and what your skin feels like if you've been sitting in front of your computer. It's that kind of dead irradiating feeling that you have, and I thought that the only guy I knew who would get that and understand how to take synthesizers and make them operatic – and also understand the horniness of being the dweeb outsider – was Trent Reznor. And so I called him up, and he said no – but I kept calling him, and finally just said, I don't have a reputation of being a pain in the ass for no reason. I told him, You need to come and let me show you some of this movie so that you can understand what it is, because it's one thing to read the script and it's one thing to talk about it and it's another thing to see. And so he came by and we showed him some scenes and at the end of it he said, I'm in -- I get what you're talking about. I also think that he was a little exhausted at that moment in time and I think that he felt that he was going to have to drive the thing somehow – and I think when he saw the sequences he sort of thought, Wow, I just need to interpret what the envelope is for this sonically. I need to help. I don't need to provide the cake -- I can just provide the icing.

But on another level it's a completely unexpected score. It would be very easy to imagine this movie with a Phil Glass kind of modal pulse score and you didn't do that.

DAVID FINCHER: Right. Tangerine Dream. We talked about that whole thing, but in the end I honestly don't know anybody more talented than Trent. People don't realize that he has an awesome sense of humor and that he's incredibly ironic, and I thought that he'd understand the irony of his involvement.

Almost the biggest and most striking thing he does in the movie is his first cue. To take that journey from the breakup to Facemash and to make that a journey that's basically describing loneliness as opposed to energy is an enormously bold and brave choice.

DAVID FINCHER: Yes – and it's both of those things. It has that sort of screeching sound underneath it where you know somebody is just welling up with hatred and vitriol and at the same time it comes from this other place. That cue wasn't written for that moment -- he basically wrote fifteen or sixteen different eight or nine minute fugues and we took them and started moving them around and said, Well, this sort of fits here and this sort of fits there. He had seen the movie and he knew what the vibe of the movie was and he knew what we were talking about -- and so he would just go and write. He just responded to it. It was gestural, it was empathetic. He and Atticus Ross would start sending us stuff and we would just try it over there, and try sticking it under here, and put this under there. And that piano piece that he sent -- I remember when it came in an email – was just like boom. You played it and you just went, Oh my God, what is this? This has to be up front and this has to be the Zuckerberg cue -- this is him. Of course we were trying to avoid putting it under the title sequence because I had this Elvis Costello piece that I wanted to put there, but it just became so apparent that the piece was exactly what the sequence needed. It had this incredible riptide kind of anger and revenge and darkness and then this intense childlike simple lonely piano over the top of it.

I think that's the moment when you're watching and you say, Oh, great movie – I wonder if they can go all the way with it.

DAVID FINCHER: And it's only nine minutes in. One scene with those two shots is nine minutes. It's the feeling you get with the driving cue at the beginning of *The Shining*, and the choice of using Ligeti there – it tells you immediately that there is more to it than a guy driving on a highway travelling to a hotel. There's something larger at work.

The major question that remains is the one, which has sort of permeated the conversation about the film: Is the movie true?

DAVID FINCHER: I think you can try to recreate every detail, you can make sure that people are wearing the exact same shoes that Lee Harvey Oswald wore, you can do all that stuff, but in the end, the thing that everyone will take umbrage with is, But that's not the right point of view. You're looking at it from the wrong way. You have to be looking at it from the point of view of the person who was wrong. Or you have to be looking at it from the point of view of the person who won. That's the whole magilla of doing anything that is based on the real world – the *Rashomon* of it is the thing that ultimately was interesting to me. We weren't here to sort out something. We're not making JFK. We're making a movie where the point is that these people don't get along -- the point is that these kids were friends, to whatever extent, and they were there in the basement in the beginning for the foundation of this thing. Whatever happened by

the time they got to the mezzanine happened. The movie is about how people set off to do the right thing by each other, and the right thing by an idea, and how they eventually decide they can't -- that they won't complete this journey together. That's what is important.

Would this movie have been interesting had we made the exact same movie and called the thing "Mugbook?" And had the character be Mark Birkenstock? If we changed it all, would that have alleviated everyone's concerns? I think that would be fundamentally worthless because the job here is to basically say, Here's an agreed-upon set of facts. And our job is to take those facts and make a truth from it. Or three truths.

Did you enjoy the multiple perspectives? Was that liberating for you?

DAVID FINCHER: No, I thought it was essential to telling the story. I didn't think there was any other way to do it. I wouldn't have done it had it been a lynch mob going after somebody. I'm not interested in taking the successful down a few pegs -- I just thought he was an interesting, compelling force. I thought that considering all the stories -- to have the Rashomon effect -- was necessary to make a good movie. Otherwise I think people would be bored. There's also the idea, which Aaron and I have talked about, that one of the things we're trying to say in this movie is, "No person is only one thing." And the structure is a way of saying it. Otherwise it's just a biopic.

There are big areas in the movie where you and Aaron are, in some ways, at opposite sides of the spectrum. Does it matter?

DAVID FINCHER: No.

Why?

DAVID FINCHER: Because he has his view of youth and he has his view of invention. To Aaron, invention is somebody sitting alone in a room and literally hitting his head against a wall until he comes up with something, and then his fingers move and it appears on a screen and he hits send. That, for Aaron, is invention -- and, for me, invention is swindling the right people, and saying things a certain way, and saying it near a window in the right way, and somebody takes a picture of that, and then you take that and put it with this other thing. So invention is a very different thing for me than it is for Aaron, and I would think invention is a very different thing for Mark Zuckerberg and the rest of the people in the movie. Everybody has his own take -- you know you can spin anything in a lot of different ways, and thankfully that's what the movie is about.

Is it the multi-fold perspective on these events that allows you and Aaron to not necessarily agree on what the movie is saying about the characters? Is that why the movie holds both your points of view?

DAVID FINCHER: Yes, I think that is the case but I also think that it's a dramatist's job to essentially be reductive. Aaron is supposed to distill this whole breadth of events for us. And so even if Aaron is writing a story about this nerd -- which may not necessarily be a subject I'm

naturally drawn to -- he described a character that I could totally relate to. We had these discussions about why the whole movie can't be about getting revenge against girls -- it can't be that. It has to be about a moment in time and about an opportunity that presents itself that is so far beyond even the most delicious possible revenge. That was the scale of it -- you're talking about a kid who's doing something that will literally set the world on fire and make him a billionaire. So the two things encompass one another: one of them is driven by the groin and the other is driven by immortality, and there's room for both. I think both of our ideas for the movie can be intertwined while retaining the dramatic core that runs through the whole thing. One of the things that makes Aaron great is that he can say, Here's something that's really dramatic and really simple. It's a guy who feels slighted -- this is the reason that he does it. Otherwise, how do you explain his blog entries? So rooted in this character is very primitive hurt, and Aaron uses that as a jumping off point.

The bottom line is that from everything I've seen of Zuckerberg, he seems like a pretty smart cat who's in it for the long haul. It seems that, if he didn't have the world vision and the perspective that he has now, he still had a lot more than most nineteen-year-olds. He certainly had more than I did when I was nineteen.

## AARON SORKIN Q & A

### Aaron Sorkin Q & A

Let's start at the beginning. Why a series of conflicting narratives?

AARON SORKIN: Well, because there were conflicting narratives, and rather than choose only one of the narratives and decide that it was the "true" one, or the most interesting one, I thought the most exciting thing to do would be to dramatize all of them. The conflicting narratives are the story. 'And then this happened' kind of narrative is more the province of the conventional biopic than what I wanted to write.

What research did you do?

AARON SORKIN: As much as I could. I had a number of direct and first-person conversations with many of the characters depicted in the film -- and also with many others who were present at the time of Facebook's inception. I can't reveal sources, but these conversations were extensive and detailed; they were also fascinating because everyone's perception of the events was different. A great deal of the movie recounts incidents that occurred between two people in a room seven years ago. Even now, those two people still don't agree on what happened between them, after lawsuits and depositions and settlements -- and I did everything possible to accurately characterize those disagreements. The disagreements are what drive the story.

A person obviously isn't going to act the same in the midst of a lawsuit as they would in a dorm room or at a tropical-themed party or when their girlfriend is dumping them, and so the first-person interviews remained invaluable. Mark's college blog was invaluable. The Harvard Crimson was invaluable. Ben Mezrich very, very generously shared with me his own research. I never saw the book until the screenplay was just about completed because he was writing it at the same time I was writing the screenplay, but Ben's research was invaluable.

There is an ecology at the center of this story - and it's the ecology I needed to make the audience understand. That was my goal: to know enough about the facts, to be so conversant with the array of information in all its conflicting assertions, so that I could be detailed and specific and anthropological about the people and the place and the events - because the emotional breadth of what these kids did, beginning in Suite H33 in the Kirkland House, is what drew me to the story in the first place. And I wanted to do it justice.

Did you realize immediately that the structural decision you made would open up the writing to you?

AARON SORKIN: At first I was lost because I thought Holy cow, no two people are telling the same story -- but then I realized, Wait, this is great -- no two people are telling the same story. That's what I'm going to do. So I came up with the device of the parallel depositions. Not only could the different versions of the truth be dramatized, but I was able to put everyone in one room and have Mark be sitting face-to-face with his accusers.

Once you found that structural device – what was powering the drama – did you know you were also finding a thematic device?

AARON SORKIN: I didn't, and this is normal for me – the theme didn't make itself apparent to me until writing was underway. When I begin writing, I'm not thinking about themes immediately, I'm thinking about the driveshaft of the car -- what's the plot of this, what is the intention and obstacle, where do we begin and where do we end and what is the trip that we take in between. Later in the process, the themes make themselves apparent and then you work on refining the script, you bring those themes into relief, and they become part of the movie. As I think I said earlier, when I realized that the structure of the script was, in itself, a way to dramatize thematically what the movie is describing – which is, in a way, that no person is only one thing – that was exciting. I realized that with a structural device - with a practical, technical way to tell the story – I had also found a way into the themes of the movie and its characters. But it was the math of the thing that captivated me initially, and of course the research was fantastically provocative, but truthfully the scale of the idea didn't reveal itself until I began to write scenes. As I started to generate pages, it became clear pretty quickly that the structure was the spine of the movie thematically too...

What was your way into Mark?

AARON SORKIN: Anytime I'm writing an antagonist, I want to write the character as if he's making his case to God as to why he should be allowed into heaven. People aren't all good or all bad and certainly Mark isn't all either one. But there's only one person on earth who could've done the thing that he did. Mark is a guy with both a utopian social vision and a gigantic amount of pure imaginative technical ability, and who is very driven to do what he's about to do. He has the vision and the brains – but people and things get destroyed along the way. The failure of Mark's utopian ideal – that success will solve all of his problems (when of course it doesn't), that a social networking site will bring us all closer together when it's actually done the opposite – is what I wanted to write about. The contradictions in this material were thrilling to me. The fact that someone with enormous and almost inchoate social awkwardness creates a vision for this

network of social interaction, a public commons, essentially, in which people never have to be in the same room to communicate – well, that was pretty irresistible. Also, there’s a hugely dramatic idea, to me, in what makes Mark not only a creator but also a destroyer – and it’s a fantastic subject to write about, since most of our greatest creators are in some very basic way also destroyers. Our visionary builders are often equally adept at tearing down what came before them and what is in front of them as they start to understand what it takes to realize their vision. You can look at endless examples of this – it’s a great trope in what people mean when they describe ‘the American character’. Mark is like a 21st century iteration of a Fitzgerald character or a Dreiser character. Where was I ever going to find that again?

Do creation and destruction generally go hand in hand?

AARON SORKIN: One thing I can tell you for sure is that creation and destruction are part and parcel of telling a story. And for it to be a story, a guy has to have paid some sort of price for enormous success, which Mark does. This is why I was able to make him the central character of a movie.

The other side of the question that I hope some people will ask is how much of the destroyer part is real, and how much of it is being projected onto Mark by people who believed they were destroyed by him. I wanted to leave room for people to make up their own minds here. I do, however, think that despite what destroys the relationship, and how central Mark is to how that happens, Mark cares about Eduardo. There are moments in the movie that clearly demonstrate that and that are hugely important to me -- particularly when they’re talking about Eduardo’s father and when Mark tries to get Eduardo to leave New York and come to Palo Alto -- but I think that what Mark also understood in the movie was that Eduardo didn’t have the chops to do the job, that Eduardo wasn’t going to be able to keep up with what this company had suddenly become. That Eduardo was a good dorm room CFO, but that he wouldn’t be able to move beyond that. And then very impressive Sean came along with some very impressive lawyers and said, Hey Mark, it’s for the good of your friend more than anything -- would you rather Eduardo have 30 percent of nothing, or a fraction of a percent of something that will be worth a billion dollars? These characters put it to Mark in a way that would take the knife out of his hands when he had to kill Eduardo. They made it so Mark could say to himself, I’m doing a good thing, not just for Eduardo, but for the company -- the company is important - and also for the world because Facebook is going to be important to the world. I think smart people made the decision easy for Mark.

The way I conceived those three central characters is this: Sean and Eduardo are parental figures for Mark. For most of the movie, Eduardo is Mark’s moral compass -- you can’t do this, you must do that, the farm animals was a bad idea, the Winklevosses are serious. Sean comes along, and he’s going to be the person who gets rid of Eduardo. This is a guy who wants to start a party but who first wants to make sure that Mark’s parents are gone before he brings the keg over. By taking over as Mark’s conscience, Sean is able to guide things to where he needs them to go. This is a movie that tries to - whenever it can - turn the prism and show you different sides of the story. It both suggests that Mark may have orchestrated Sean’s downfall and absolutely denies that Mark could have orchestrated Sean’s downfall.

What is it that Mark is chasing?

AARON SORKIN: Reinvention, projection, inventing your idealized self - these ideas are a huge part of what Facebook means to our current cultural moment, and they're a huge part of what, I think, the movie is about. Mark wants to reinvent himself. For most of the movie, he wants to reinvent himself as Sean Parker, who also reinvented himself. Sean was a nerdy guy in high school who completely remade himself into a very smooth adult who's comfortable at nightclubs, comfortable in meetings with flashy businessmen, he's good with women. Mark wants to be able to reinvent himself too, but anybody who uses social networking sites, anybody who uses the internet, knows that you can sit in your room on the computer and not be the person who you don't like in real life. So if you see a post as simple as, Had a girls' night last night. Ate too much calamari! Better hit the gym this morning! -- that's a person who wants to be Ally McBeal, who wants to be reinvented with a sort of sitcom dialogue as the girl next-door, as the girl's girl. They're using that kind of language.

The very thing that attracts people to the Internet - that attracted Mark to it - is relative anonymity and the ability to reinvent yourself. As a writer I'd like everyone to think I'm as fast and clever as the characters I write - I'm not - and so it's not hard for me to understand why people are drawn to social networking sites. They want to do a re-write and a polish on themselves before they hit "send".

A primary way your characters position and project themselves is verbal, through what they say - can you talk about the use of language here?

AARON SORKIN: I envy visual writers who are able to tell stories through the pictures they are describing, but that's not something I'm able to do. I write people talking in rooms. As a matter of fact, I thought it was going to be a real challenge for me to write this movie because these characters are much younger than the characters that I usually write about. I thought I needed to be writing, literally, in a different language, in a language of youth -- and after stopping and starting a couple of times on page one, I just decided 'this isn't going to work'. First of all, not all 19-year-olds speak the same and this is going to sound ridiculous if I try to imitate the sound of youngness and hipness. I thought, I'm going to write the way I write and I'm going to put as much of myself into this as I can. I know who this guy is, he's a version of me, and I will make this script better if I own up to it and get it as close to me as I can. Different characters have different language skills. For Mark, socially, speaking out loud is a particular kind of challenge because on some level he knows he doesn't come off the way he wants to with other people, especially women -- so I always put that challenge smack in front of him beginning with the first scene with Erica. But language is also a weapon in the script that Mark is using, that the lawyers are using, that the Winklevosses are using, that Eduardo and Sean are using. It holds the whole story - the parsing of information, who tells what to whom, the way the characters can answer interrogatories with partial truths or shaded truths - it's all in the cracks of how they talk.

Mark seems much more comfortable verbally in the deposition rooms than he is in the Harvard portion of the movie.

AARON SORKIN: Much more. That was a big deal to David and me, because when we go to the deposition it's five years later -- we wanted Mark to be a stronger, more confident, more comfortable person who's kind of walked through fire to get where he is right now. And he isn't about to have that taken from him. He is in a room of terribly smart people, but he is the smartest person there. One of the things that makes Mark the protagonist is it's in the deposition rooms that he's the underdog. He's being beaten up by a team of high-priced lawyers who are being paid to destroy him and he's more than holding his own.

Can you talk more about David Fincher? There are many bedrock thematic and character issues in this movie that you and David don't see in the same way -- does it matter?

AARON SORKIN: No, it doesn't. There are many bedrock issues that you and the person sitting next to you in the theater aren't going to see the same way. David and I agreed on what every scene should look and sound like -- we were in complete agreement on what we wanted the movie to be -- but we would certainly disagree from time to time on who was right and what exactly their motivations were.

Is part of that tension in the movie?

AARON SORKIN: I think so. I hope so. For instance, I honestly believe that at the end of the movie Mark feels remorse -- and David isn't so sure. I think that's great because I would love for that argument to happen in the parking lot.

What did David bring to the movie, do you think?

AARON SORKIN: Boy, I could talk forever about that. First of all, it was a counterintuitive marriage of material and director. Like I said, I write people talking in rooms, and David is peerless as a visual director -- so you wouldn't immediately think of him for a script of mine. But David embraced all the language in the movie, and he added a haunting visual style to it that really puts it head and shoulders above what it could have been had a less talented director been doing it. David also really understood how to get the best out of each actor. One of the things that I loved that he did was the number of takes that he got. Sometimes 70, 80, 90 takes simply in an effort to tire the actors out, to knock the acting out of them and to get them to casualize the language. The scene between Mark and Eduardo in the Palo Alto house, when Eduardo has come out in the middle of the night to San Francisco and they're shouting at each other -- we started shooting that scene at around 7pm, but David wasn't really happy with it until well after midnight when Jesse and Andrew were exhausted, and suddenly the scene really came alive.

There are also great choices he made on his own. In the script, I had indicated after the opening scene in the bar with Erica that we would watch Mark walk back to his dorm room, passing other people and other students who are very much alive and happy while Mark is very focused and in his own world. In the script I'd called for music that was a driving hard loud in your face song with a lot of energy to underscore the walk. David didn't just do something slightly different there -- he did something 180 degrees different. The sound gets very quiet and almost introverted. Trent Reznor has a very low sort of industrial score in there, and we hear for the first time the beginning of Mark's musical theme -- but it's in semi-M.O.S so we're hearing a little bit

of ambient sound, we're hearing some footsteps, we're hearing a little bit of the violin player over there. He's describing loneliness and alienation, and it's so much better and more original than anything I had in my head. I wrote anger, and David gave it anger and additionally he gave it extraordinary sadness. I believe that it's actually that moment, the title sequence that says to the audience 'this isn't your father's college movie'. That's only one of the countless great things that David brought to the movie.

What about you? What is the aspect of yourself that you're writing in this material?

AARON SORKIN: We all get called losers when we're growing up. Some of us are able to shake it off better than others. We all feel like we have our nose pressed up against the window of social life. We all feel like we're not sitting at the cool kids' table. That part of myself was pretty easy to put in the movie. Another aspect of myself - a more adult aspect - is that when you write a movie or a television show or a play that has any kind of profile at all, you can count on people coming out of the woodwork saying they wrote it ten years ago and you stole it from them. That's a big, ugly thing to be confronted by. So it was very easy for me to empathize with Mark, in that sense - I've certainly felt marginalized at different points in my life, and I've also had the veracity of my work questioned. These are common experiences - we all know what it's like to be questioned, to be challenged - and they're very meaningful to me as a writer. Both certainly informed my approach to the script. And then there are the deeper things, which I'm not going to talk to you about.

So, then, the itch that Mark can't scratch is anger? What is it, do you think?

AARON SORKIN: I think it's loneliness and a sense of self worth - that, for some reason, a guy who went to Exeter, who goes to Harvard, who's got an IQ that's clearly off the charts and who is clearly capable at the thing he loves so much, isn't feeling known. He's certain that he's a loser, that no one does or can understand him -- and the world that he's looking at, that he's using as a mirror, is reflecting this back to him. Now, in Mark's case, that idea of self worth has alchemized itself into anger. Real anger. Very sharp-edged anger. But anger is fuel to him - it's rocket fuel.

There are going to be people who will say that the Winklevosses - who live in the imagined world that Mark wants to be a part of - are the villains in this movie and that Mark is the hero. But Mark also thinks that world is beneath him. He built this astonishing something out of absolute nothing and he did it while people were pecking at his ankles, and he did it in a place where someone like him can't possibly operate as smoothly as someone like Tyler or Cameron, or even Sean.

Would you agree with them? That Mark is a hero?

AARON SORKIN: I've been saying that Mark is an anti-hero who becomes a tragic hero by the end of the movie because he pays a price along the way and, I believe, he's experiencing tremendous remorse. He's lost his best, perhaps only friend. He is presented to the world now -- not just by this movie, but by every article that you read about him, by every Diane Sawyer or Leslie Stahl interview - as someone who is specifically not a hero. As a deeply awkward guy

who is looking too far into the future to be present in the now. I was moved by this. Nobody likes a 26-year-old billionaire. So Mark pays that price. He pays the price of losing his best friend, and I believe at the end of the movie, particularly when we see him try to friend Erica, he is feeling remorse and trying, if he can, to put the pieces back together again. And, on some level, even if he's not conscious of it, he knows he can't.

Talk about that ending. In the way that Erica says the Internet isn't written in pencil, is Mark a victim of that?

AARON SORKIN: Absolutely. When I was writing the script, I couldn't wait to write the end. When you're writing something - when you're doing the first draft - there are things that you know about, but most of it you don't know. You're walking in the dark and hoping that when you get there, you'll know what to write - but, then, sometimes you know there's this really nice place to take pictures fifty miles down the road. You know exactly what you're going to write. I always knew that in the end, in a very quiet scene, what Mark would get hung by was the farm animals blog post - this thing on a Tuesday night, when Mark was drunk, angry, hurt, and with his friends, where all he did was suggest the possibility that he might do this thing. Now, in comes this young lawyer played by Rashida Jones who is our voice of reason, a substitute for the audience, and she says, Listen, it really doesn't matter what the facts of the case are, because a jury - a jury of humans - will decide this, and they're going to look at you and they're going to hear about the farm animal testimony and they're going to say, 'I don't care who it's to, but I want that guy to write a check. I want him to be punished.' Yes, Mark gets hanged by the fact that the Internet is written in ink - and that's the thing that as a screenwriter you're so grateful for.

This all also, fundamentally, has to do with the nature of the Internet and what it's done to us as people. The very thing that's drawn everybody to the Internet is also allowing us to be rude, to be mean, and racist, angry, stupid, bitter - and all in the cloak of darkness. It's the same as if you were sitting at a New York Giants game - it's something that a drunk person would shout at a player, the most offensively personal and rude stuff, something that they would never say to that player an hour later if they were standing next to him in the parking lot. But they can shout it from the crowd. From where I sit, that's what the Internet is. It is a giant anonymous crowd.

Do you care if we like Mark by that point? Is that part of the battleground Rashida's character is describing?

AARON SORKIN: It is a battle, to be sure. We even shine a spotlight on that word at the end -- likeability. In movies, the word like is generally meant in the sense that you 'like' George Clooney in a movie, you 'like' Spencer Tracy in a movie - from the moment they enter we know we like this guy, we're with that guy. It's harder to like Mark, and I want it to be hard to like Mark. It can't be a story if we don't care if he lives or dies - so I want it to be hard to like Mark, but I also want us to like him, even if we're not certain if we should.

Back to Rashida at the end of the movie, I think her character says what I feel, You're not a bad guy, but you're trying hard to be one because you think that's what you have to be in order to bust down this glass wall that stands between you and a world that you think exists. When I say a

world that you think exists, I mean this: At the beginning of the movie, we see a party that Mark's not at -- the punch party for the Phoenix. It's a great party. It's the party we all wish we could go to. Everybody is having a great time. Guys, girls, drugs, sex, rock and roll. Everything. We don't know if the party is real or if the party exists in Mark's head as the place where he can't be while he's doing all this, but I think that - like all of us - Mark would like to feel the way other people look. Mark wants to feel the way people look in a Coca-Cola commercial. That's where he's trying to get.

How much of what Mark did is a function of his age?

AARON SORKIN: That's a really good question. I think it's a function of his age for two reasons. One, when you're 19, that's the age when social acceptance becomes the most important to you. But he was also 19 at a time when anything was possible on the Internet. I just read something that knocked me out, that when Neil Armstrong walked on the moon in 1969, the average age of the guys in mission control was 26 years old. Which means that when Kennedy said we were going to the moon, those guys were 18 years old -- that was a time when anything was possible. It was the same for Mark being 19 in 2004. Facebook was originally about putting college life on the Internet. It was going to be a college thing. That's all - it was about a guy who felt himself on the outside wanting to find a way to not only be on the inside but to own the inside. As I have him say 'Like a Final Club where we're the president'. I think, more than anything, Mark wanted to feel empowered - he wanted to become the uber-version of himself, probably without realizing what he might well have to pay for that.

Look, I don't know exactly what Mark was thinking when he created Facebook -- I can't get inside his mind -- but what I believe, despite all the people rightly concerned with privacy issues now who are asserting various nefarious motivations for what he did - what I believe is that at the moment of inception, he wasn't thinking of the global phenomenon that Facebook would become -- he was thinking of something that would capture the attention of Harvard students. That was it. And when it did capture the attention of Harvard students, the cells just kept dividing, and it kept getting bigger, and he kept using his brilliant imagination. But in the beginning, his first idea wasn't that he was going to build something that, if it were a country, would now be the third largest country in the world. He didn't think he was going to build a company that, in terms of assets, was the size of General Motors. He was just doing something that would get him enough juice on campus to get into a final club.

Is the truth important in this movie?

AARON SORKIN: Of course. In this case, though, the truth is subjective. Facts are not subjective, but at the water coolers, in the parking lot, there will be people who say, Come on, don't be crazy. He stole the idea from Cameron and Tyler. Without Cameron and Tyler, there would be no Facebook. Plain and simple. Other people will say, You're out of your mind. First of all, Cameron and Tyler's thing wasn't Facebook - it was a dating site. Second of all, here's all the proof you need - Mark didn't use a single piece of code from Cameron and Tyler. He didn't use a single word that was in the novel they wrote to write the novel that he wrote. I can easily argue both sides, and I loved making both arguments in the screenplay. But the basis for my own

ability to make both arguments credibly was research. Without that research, without being steeped in the facts, it would be fiction – and this isn't fiction.

All the parties in the two litigations walked into a room, swore on a bible that what they were telling was the truth, and then told three disparate stories. So I had to somehow braid together all those various skeins that the participants warranted were accurate, and organize them into one large ball of wool so we could describe a larger truth, which frankly to me is the difference between a plot and a story – not only how it all happened but why it happened.

Are there precedents in this for you? Obviously Rashomon is sort of the template for this - a structure in which we are never told for certain what actually occurred and the truth is clouded by varying perspectives on the specific events of the story.

AARON SORKIN: Rashomon is certainly a template, and one that David and I spoke about often. All About Eve is also a great example – a brilliant script – but listen, I grew up loving all courtroom dramas and so that's kind of in my bloodstream. The first thing that I wrote was a courtroom drama. In any good courtroom drama, you have several different versions of a story, and you're constantly changing your mind as to who is right. Coincidentally, I recently watched 12 Angry Men -- which I hadn't seen in a long time -- and I thought, this is the movie we just made. 'Five angry men.'

You begin that movie thinking what everybody in that room except Henry Fonda thinks – this is open and shut, this kid knifed his father. But then little things start coming out – wait a second, the witness didn't have her glasses on, she was across the street, this could have happened, that could have happened. It's not open and shut, and one by one, the jury goes from being an 11-1 vote to being 12-0 the other way.

With The Social Network, we took a set of facts, and we made a truth. In fact, more specifically - we made three truths. It's not just one true story, it's three true stories, woven around and inside of each other. If you think of the facts that aren't in dispute as dots that you know you will have to connect, we connected those dots and we made a picture -- but in between those dots are a) character, and b) the fact that you get to decide what the truth is. We don't tell you 'this is the only truth there is'. We posit a handful of truths — three, in fact, all of them sworn under oath by three sets of litigants, each with a threat of perjury hanging over himself -- in pursuit of a larger true thing, which is the set of conditions that caused this all to happen and that made it possible.

I think it's a great question, a great thing to talk about, because there is so much discussion about it and because Facebook and Mark are saying that this movie is fiction. But I don't want to answer the question by saying, Well, who can really say what the truth is? Because we can say what the truth is. There is nothing in this movie that we state as fact that isn't fact. The things that we say are facts are simply facts.

You can look at every movie we think of as a great movie based on truth - whether it's All The President's Men or Schindler's List or Dog Day Afternoon or The Insider or The Queen - and there are buoys in the water that are those events which people agree happened, and you have to, as a writer, swim from each one to the next. Peter Morgan has no idea what conversation took

place between the Queen and her husband -- nobody does, but he has a set of facts he knows happened and then he became a writer. I just read the New York Times article, this morning actually, about Tony Blair's memoir, where Blair describes a private moment with the Queen that's almost identical to a scene from the movie. In Blair's memoir, the Queen says to Tony: "You are my 10th prime minister. The first was Winston. That was before you were born." And in the film, the Queen says to Blair, "You are my 10th prime minister, Mr. Blair. My first was Winston Churchill." Peter Morgan wrote the scene for the movie from his imagination - he made it up, it's entirely fictional - and yet Blair maintains he's never seen the film. The funny thing, of course, is that, at the time, Blair went to great lengths to call the movie fictional.

Did you set out to write that kind of movie?

AARON SORKIN: I revere those movies, and I very much wanted *The Social Network* to continue in their tradition. Certainly those are the benchmarks I was aiming for. But I really only realized the scale of the opportunity once I became enmeshed in the subject -- in the research and the writing -- and discovered, in the most basic sense, that this was a very unique chance to write a hyper-modern version of the classic American movie. This story was about all of the American themes that I could ever hope to write about - justice, power, class, money, greed, loneliness, betrayal, comeuppance, the American dream, forgiveness. And that was it for me, this chance to traffic in all the themes of classic American cinema, but in a super-contemporary and authentic context. The journey of the film is nothing more or less than a modern version of a Horatio Alger rags to riches story, but our version of the Alger character is a baby hacker, and his journey is from hacker to CEO. He's this lonely kid in a dorm room, with an anarchist instinct and all of these other motivations we've been talking about, and in a very short time he becomes a very important figure in the world. And it's, by nature, the modern world -- the world in which we live right now. That's a dream subject for a writer, and I'm not sure I even realized what it was until I was actually doing it.

What does it mean to be a hacker, and what does it mean for this movie to be about one?

AARON SORKIN: Look, I wouldn't have been able to tell you anything about the hacker world before I started writing this movie, but it is - I can tell you now - fundamentally about anarchy. Hackers are, by nature, anarchists. It's about thumbing your nose at the establishment, about tearing down what you believe is in your way. Let's take Facemash, which Mark creates at the beginning of the movie, as an example. Facemash was a spree of dazzlingly virtuoso hacking - in the movie, we see that Mark is completely brilliant at this, but he's hacking nonetheless, make no mistake about it. The point I'm making is that Mark doesn't believe there is anything wrong with what he's doing. In other words, the hacker's credo is: Listen, if I can break into your bank's computer and steal a million dollars, I did that legitimately. I beat your system. We were playing a game and I beat your system and I won. Which is the same logic that says that if I can figure out a way to break into your car, it's mine. And who is Mark revolting against? It's the people who somehow are making the world a place that makes him unhappy.

The vernacular that these hackers use is surprisingly immature. You wouldn't expect it from people with these kinds of IQs, but it's: "Those people are idiots." "Those people are stupid." "This thing is such a stupid system." That kind of vocabulary all comes through in Mark's early

posts on his blog. He gives us a play-by-play on his hacking as he's doing it. It's a very immature kind of language - and then he stumbles on this Eureka idea of Facebook. And his life is made.

For the rest of us, being creative is incredibly important but we also need to live, and that means we have to figure out how to make money from it. We want to make a living from what we create. Mark was never interested in the money. The very last thing he wanted to do - and this is a huge part of the movie - was kill Facebook by commoditizing it. By kill it, I mean making Facebook suddenly uncool by having it make money, by having it not be anarchistic. Although it's very difficult to call a company that's worth 25 billion dollars anarchistic. But that's what makes Mark a visionary - and that's really the story of the movie, the journey from hacker to CEO.

So the movie is ultimately saying that having the idea - the vision - trumps everything?

AARON SORKIN: I think it's the opposite of that. I believe that execution trumps everything else. People have ideas or what they think are ideas all the time. You can say, for instance, I'm going to write a movie about Facebook. That's not the same as doing it.

The following background articles relating to Facebook are reprinted with permission from Conde Nast and Time Magazine.

From The New Yorker Letter from Palo Alto The Face of Facebook Mark Zuckerberg opens up.  
by Jose Antonio Vargas September 20, 2010

Mark Zuckerberg founded Facebook in his college dorm room six years ago. Five hundred million people have joined since, and eight hundred and seventy-nine of them are his friends. The site is a directory of the world's people, and a place for private citizens to create public identities. You sign up and start posting information about yourself: photographs, employment history, why you are peeved right now with the gummy-bear selection at Rite Aid or bullish about prospects for peace in the Middle East. Some of the information can be seen only by your friends; some is available to friends of friends; some is available to anyone. Facebook's privacy policies are confusing to many people, and the company has changed them frequently, almost always allowing more information to be exposed in more ways.

According to his Facebook profile, Zuckerberg has three sisters (Randi, Donna, and Arielle), all of whom he's friends with. He's friends with his parents, Karen and Edward Zuckerberg. He graduated from Phillips Exeter Academy and attended Harvard University. He's a fan of the comedian Andy Samberg and counts among his favorite musicians Green Day, Jay-Z, Taylor Swift, and Shakira. He is twenty-six years old. Zuckerberg cites "Minimalism," "Revolutions," and "Eliminating Desire" as interests. He likes "Ender's Game," a coming-of-age science-fiction saga by Orson Scott Card, which tells the story of Andrew (Ender) Wiggin, a gifted child who masters computer war games and later realizes that he's involved in a real war. He lists no other books on his profile.

Zuckerberg's Facebook friends have access to his e-mail address and his cell-phone number. They can browse his photograph albums, like one titled "The Great Goat Roast of 2009," a record of an event held in his back yard. They know that, in early July, upon returning from the annual Allen & Company retreat for Hollywood moguls, Wall Street tycoons, and tech titans, he became Facebook friends with Barry Diller. Soon afterward, Zuckerberg wrote on his Facebook page, "Is there a site that streams the World Cup final online? (I don't own a TV.)"

Since late August, it's also been pretty easy to track Zuckerberg through a new Facebook feature called Places, which allows users to mark their location at any time. At 2:45 A.M., E.S.T., on August 29th, he was at the Ace Hotel, in New York's garment district. He was back at Facebook's headquarters, in Palo Alto, by 7:08 P.M. On August 31st at 10:38 P.M., he and his girlfriend were eating dinner at Taqueria La Bamba, in Mountain View.

Zuckerberg may seem like an over-sharer in the age of over-sharing. But that's kind of the point. Zuckerberg's business model depends on our shifting notions of privacy, revelation, and sheer self-display. The more that people are willing to put online, the more money his site can make from advertisers. Happily for him, and the prospects of his eventual fortune, his business interests align perfectly with his personal philosophy. In the bio section of his page, Zuckerberg writes simply, "I'm trying to make the world a more open place."

The world, it seems, is responding. The site is now the biggest social network in countries ranging from Indonesia to Colombia. Today, at least one out of every fourteen people in the world has a Facebook account. Zuckerberg, meanwhile, is becoming the boy king of Silicon Valley. If and when Facebook decides to go public, Zuckerberg will become one of the richest men on the planet, and one of the youngest billionaires. In the October issue of *Vanity Fair*, Zuckerberg is named No. 1 in the magazine's power ranking of the New Establishment, just ahead of Steve Jobs, the leadership of Google, and Rupert Murdoch. The magazine declared him "our new Caesar."

Despite his goal of global openness, however, Zuckerberg remains a wary and private person. He doesn't like to speak to the press, and he does so rarely. He also doesn't seem to enjoy the public appearances that are increasingly requested of him. Backstage at an event at the Computer History Museum, in Silicon Valley, this summer, one of his interlocutors turned to Zuckerberg, minutes before they were to appear onstage, and said, "You don't like doing these kinds of events very much, do you?" Zuckerberg replied with a terse "No," then took a sip from his water bottle and looked off into the distance.

This makes the current moment a particularly awkward one. Zuckerberg, or at least Hollywood's unauthorized version of him, will soon be starring in a film titled "The Social Network," directed by David Fincher and written by Aaron Sorkin. The movie, which opens the New York Film Festival and will be released on October 1st, will be the introduction that much of the world gets to Zuckerberg. Facebook profiles are always something of a performance: you choose the details you want to share and you choose whom you want to share with. Now Zuckerberg, who met with me for several in-person interviews this summer, is confronting something of the opposite: a public exposition of details that he didn't choose. He does not plan to see the film.

Zuckerberg—or Zuck, as he is known to nearly everyone of his acquaintance—is pale and of medium build, with short, curly brown hair and blue eyes. He’s only around five feet eight, but he seems taller, because he stands with his chest out and his back straight, as if held up by a string. His standard attire is a gray T-shirt, bluejeans, and sneakers. His affect can be distant and disorienting, a strange mixture of shy and cocky. When he’s not interested in what someone is talking about, he’ll just look away and say, “Yeah, yeah.” Sometimes he pauses so long before he answers it’s as if he were ignoring the question altogether. The typical complaint about Zuckerberg is that he’s “a robot.” One of his closest friends told me, “He’s been overprogrammed.” Indeed, he sometimes talks like an Instant Message—brusque, flat as a dial tone—and he can come off as flip and condescending, as if he always knew something that you didn’t. But face to face he is often charming, and he’s becoming more comfortable onstage. At the Computer History Museum, he was uncommonly energetic, thoughtful, and introspective—relaxed, even. He addressed concerns about Facebook’s privacy settings by relaying a personal anecdote of the sort that his answers generally lack. (“If I could choose to share my mobile-phone number only with everyone on Facebook, I wouldn’t do it. But because I can do it with only my friends I do it.”) He was self-deprecating, too. Asked if he’s the same person in front of a crowd as he is with friends, Zuckerberg responded, “Yeah, same awkward person.”

Zuckerberg grew up in a hilltop house in Dobbs Ferry, New York. Attached to the basement is the dental office of his father, Edward Zuckerberg, known to his patients as “painless Dr. Z.” (“We cater to cowards,” his Web site reads.) There’s a hundred-and-sixty-gallon fish tank in the operating room, and the place is packed with marine-oriented tchotchkes that Dr. Zuckerberg’s patients have brought him. Mark’s mother, Karen, is a psychiatrist who stopped practicing to take care of the children and to work as her husband’s office manager.

Edward was an early user of digital radiography, and he introduced Atari BASIC computer programming to his son. The house and the dental office were full of computers. One afternoon in 1996, Edward declared that he wanted a better way of announcing a patient’s arrival than the receptionist yelling, “Patient here!” Mark built a software program that allowed the computers in the house and the office to send messages to one another. He called it ZuckNet, and it was basically a primitive version of AOL Instant Messenger, which came out the following year. The receptionist used it to ping Edward, and the kids used it to ping each other. One evening while Donna was working in her room, downstairs, a screen popped up: the computer contained a deadly virus and would blow up in thirty seconds. As the machine counted down, Donna ran up the stairs shouting, “Mark!”

Some kids played computer games. Mark created them. In all of our talks, the most animated Zuckerberg ever got—speaking with a big smile, almost tripping on his words, his eyes alert—was when he described his youthful adventures in coding. “I had a bunch of friends who were artists,” he said. “They’d come over, draw stuff, and I’d build a game out of it.” When he was about eleven, his parents hired a computer tutor, a software developer named David Newman, who came to the house once a week to work with Mark. “He was a prodigy,” Newman told me. “Sometimes it was tough to stay ahead of him.” (Newman lost track of Zuckerberg and was stunned when he learned during our interview that his former pupil had built Facebook.) Soon thereafter, Mark started taking a graduate computer course every Thursday night at nearby Mercy College. When his father dropped him off at the first class, the instructor looked at

Edward and said, pointing to Mark, “You can’t bring him to the classroom with you.” Edward told the instructor that his son was the student.

Mark was not a stereotypical geek-klutz. At Exeter, he became captain of the fencing team. He earned a diploma in classics. But computers were always central. For his senior project at Exeter, he wrote software that he called Synapse. Created with a friend, Synapse was like an early version of Pandora—a program that used artificial intelligence to learn users’ listening habits. News of the software’s existence spread on technology blogs. Soon AOL and Microsoft made it known that they wanted to buy Synapse and recruit the teen-ager who’d invented it. He turned them down.

Zuckerberg decided, instead, to enter Harvard, in the fall of 2002. He arrived in Cambridge with a reputation as a programming prodigy. He sometimes wore a T-shirt with a little ape on it and the words “Code Monkey.” He joined the Jewish fraternity Alpha Epsilon Pi, and, at a Friday-night party there, Zuckerberg, then a sophomore, met his current girlfriend, Priscilla Chan, a Chinese-American from the Boston suburbs. They struck up a conversation while waiting in line for the bathroom. “He was this nerdy guy who was just a little bit out there,” Chan told me. “I remember he had these beer glasses that said ‘pound include beer dot H.’ It’s a tag for C++. It’s like college humor but with a nerdy, computer-science appeal.”

Zuckerberg had a knack for creating simple, addictive software. In his first week as a sophomore, he built CourseMatch, a program that enabled users to figure out which classes to take based on the choices of other students. Soon afterward, he came up with Facemash, where users looked at photographs of two people and clicked a button to note who they thought was hotter, a kind of sexual-playoff system. It was quickly shut down by the school’s administration. Afterward, three upperclassmen—an applied-math major from Queens, Divya Narendra, and twins from Greenwich, Connecticut, Cameron and Tyler Winklevoss—approached Zuckerberg for assistance with a site that they had been working on, called Harvard Connection.

Zuckerberg helped Narendra and the Winklevoss twins, but he soon abandoned their project in order to build his own site, which he eventually labelled Facebook. The site was an immediate hit, and, at the end of his sophomore year, Zuckerberg dropped out of Harvard to run it. As he tells the story, the ideas behind the two social networks were totally different. Their site, he says, emphasized dating, while his emphasized networking. The way the Winklevoss twins tell it, Zuckerberg stole their idea and deliberately kept them from launching their site. Tall, wide-shouldered, and gregarious, the twins were champion rowers who competed in the Beijing Olympics; they recently earned M.B.A.s from Oxford. “He stole the moment, he stole the idea, and he stole the execution,” Cameron told me recently. The dispute has been in court almost since Facebook was launched, six years ago. Facebook eventually reached a settlement, reportedly worth sixty-five million dollars, with the Winklevosses and Narendra, but they are now appealing for more, claiming that Facebook misled them about the value of the stock they would receive.

To prepare for litigation against the Winklevosses and Narendra, Facebook’s legal team searched Zuckerberg’s computer and came across Instant Messages he sent while he was at Harvard. Although the IMs did not offer any evidence to support the claim of theft, according to sources

who have seen many of the messages, the IMs portray Zuckerberg as backstabbing, conniving, and insensitive. A small group of lawyers and Facebook executives reviewed the messages, in a two-hour meeting in January, 2006, at the offices of Jim Breyer, the managing partner at the venture-capital firm Accel Partners, Facebook's largest outside investor.

The technology site Silicon Alley Insider got hold of some of the messages and, this past spring, posted the transcript of a conversation between Zuckerberg and a friend, outlining how he was planning to deal with Harvard Connect:

FRIEND: so have you decided what you are going to do about the websites?

ZUCK: yea i'm going to fuck them

ZUCK: probably in the year

ZUCK: \*ear

In another exchange leaked to Silicon Alley Insider, Zuckerberg explained to a friend that his control of Facebook gave him access to any information he wanted on any Harvard student:

ZUCK: yea so if you ever need info about anyone at harvard

ZUCK: just ask

ZUCK: i have over 4000 emails, pictures, addresses, sns

FRIEND: what!?! how'd you manage that one?

ZUCK: people just submitted it

ZUCK: i don't know why

ZUCK: they "trust me"

ZUCK: dumb fucks

According to two knowledgeable sources, there are more unpublished IMs that are just as embarrassing and damaging to Zuckerberg. But, in an interview, Breyer told me, "Based on everything I saw in 2006, and after having a great deal of time with Mark, my confidence in him as C.E.O. of Facebook was in no way shaken." Breyer, who sits on Facebook's board, added, "He is a brilliant individual who, like all of us, has made mistakes." When I asked Zuckerberg about the IMs that have already been published online, and that I have also obtained and confirmed, he said that he "absolutely" regretted them. "If you're going to go on to build a service that is influential and that a lot of people rely on, then you need to be mature, right?" he said. "I think I've grown and learned a lot."

Zuckerberg's sophomoric former self, he insists, shouldn't define who he is now. But he knows that it does, and that, because of the upcoming release of "The Social Network," it will surely continue to do so. The movie is a scathing portrait, and the image of an unsmiling, insecure, and sexed-up young man will be hard to overcome. Zuckerberg said, "I think a lot people will look at that stuff, you know, when I was nineteen, and say, 'Oh, well, he was like that. . . . He must still be like that, right?'"

In Hollywood's version, the early founding of Facebook is, as Sorkin said in an interview, "a classical story of friendship, loyalty, betrayal, and jealousy." Sorkin described Zuckerberg as a "brilliant guy who's socially awkward and who's got his nose up against the window of social

life. It would seem he badly wanted to get into one of these final clubs”—one of the exclusive, élite-within-élite party clubs at Harvard. The Winklevoss twins were members of the Porcellian Club, the most prestigious.

In the movie’s opening scene, according to a script that was leaked online, Zuckerberg and his girlfriend, Erica, a student at Boston University, sit in a campus bar, exchanging disparaging zingers. (“You don’t have to study,” he tells her. “How do you know I don’t have to study?” she asks. “Because you go to B.U.!”) Erica takes his hand, stares at him and says, “Listen. You’re going to be successful and rich. But you’re going to go through life thinking that girls don’t like you because you’re a tech geek. And I want you to know, from the bottom of my heart, that that won’t be true. It’ll be because you’re an asshole.”

The movie is based on “The Accidental Billionaires,” by Ben Mezrich, a book about the founding of Facebook. Mezrich is also the author of a best-seller, published in 2003, about college students striking it rich. The book, titled “Bringing Down the House,” used invented scenes, composite characters, and re-created dialogue. The new book has been criticized for using similar methods. Mezrich says that the book is not “an encyclopedic” description of Facebook’s founding but is nevertheless “a true story that Zuckerberg would rather not be told,” written in what he called a “thriller-esque style.” The book draws heavily on interviews that Mezrich conducted with Eduardo Saverin, Facebook’s initial business manager, who had a falling out with Zuckerberg and sued him. Mezrich did not talk to Zuckerberg. (The producer of “The Social Network,” Scott Rudin, tried to talk to Zuckerberg and other Facebook executives, but he was rebuffed.) Mezrich sold the movie rights to the book even before it was completed. He called Sorkin his “first reader,” and handed over chapters as soon as he finished them.

Sorkin said that creating Zuckerberg’s character was a challenge. He added that the college students were “the youngest people I’ve ever written about.” Sorkin, who is forty-nine, says that he knew very little about social networking, and he professes extreme dislike of the blogosphere and social media. “I’ve heard of Facebook, in the same way I’ve heard of a carburetor,” he told me. “But if I opened the hood of my car I wouldn’t know how to find it.” He called the film “The Social Network” ironically. Referring to Facebook’s creators, Sorkin said, “It’s a group of, in one way or another, socially dysfunctional people who created the world’s great social-networking site.”

Sorkin insisted that “the movie is not meant as an attack” on Zuckerberg. As he described it, however, Zuckerberg “spends the first one hour and fifty-five minutes as an antihero and the last five minutes as a tragic hero.” He added, “I don’t want to be unfair to this young man whom I don’t know, who’s never done anything to me, who doesn’t deserve a punch in the face. I honestly believe that I have not done that.”

As it happens, Sorkin’s “The West Wing” is one of Zuckerberg’s favorite television shows. He discovered it while on a trip to Spain with Chan, whom he has been dating, with a brief interruption, since 2003. In Madrid, they both got sick, and ended up watching the first season of the show in bed. In a Spanish department store, they bought DVDs of the six other seasons and eventually watched them all. Zuckerberg said that he liked the authenticity of the series—the way it captured the truth, at least as friends of his described it, of working in Washington.

I told Sorkin that his TV series was one of Zuckerberg's favorites. He paused. "I wish you hadn't told me that," he said finally. When I asked Sorkin to guess the episode that Zuckerberg liked best, he said, "The Lemon-Lyman episode"—the one in Season Three where Josh Lyman, the deputy chief of staff, played by Bradley Whitford, discovers that he has a following on an online message board and unwisely interacts with its members.

Actually, Zuckerberg's favorite episode, he told me, was "Two Cathedrals," at the end of Season Two, in which Martin Sheen, who plays President Josiah Bartlet, grieves at the death of his longtime secretary and, after disclosing that he has multiple sclerosis, ponders whether he should seek reelection. He is inside the National Cathedral and orders that it be temporarily sealed. He curses God in Latin and lights a cigarette. "It's, like, even in journeys like Facebook, we've had some very serious ups and downs," Zuckerberg said.

Zuckerberg says that many of the details he has read about the film are just wrong. (He had, for example, no interest in joining any of the final clubs.) When pressed about the movie and what it means for his public persona, he responded coolly: "I know the real story."

A few days after we spoke, Zuckerberg changed his Facebook profile, removing "The West Wing" from his list of favorite TV shows. On a recent Thursday afternoon, Zuckerberg took me for a stroll around the neighborhood in Palo Alto where he both lives and works. As he stepped out of the office and onto a street of expensive houses, he told me about his first trip to Silicon Valley. It was during winter break in January, 2004, a month before Facebook's launch. He was nineteen. "I remember flying in, driving down 101 in a cab, and passing by all these tech companies like Yahoo!," he said. His gray T-shirt was emblazoned with the word "hacker." "I remember thinking, Maybe someday we'll build a company. This probably isn't it, but one day we will."

We arrived at his house. Parked outside was a black Acura TSX, which he bought a couple of years ago, after asking a friend to suggest a car that would be "safe, comfortable, not ostentatious." He drives a lot to relax and unwind, his friends say, and usually ends up at Chan's apartment. She lives not far from Golden Gate Park and is a third-year medical student at the University of California, San Francisco. They spend most weekends together; they walk in the park, go rowing (he insists that they go in separate boats and race), play bocce or the board game the Settlers of Catan. Sundays are reserved for Asian cuisine. They usually take a two-week trip abroad in December. This year, they're planning to visit China.

Zuckerberg has found all his homes on Craigslist. His first place was a sparse one-bedroom apartment that a friend described as something like a "crack den." The next apartment was a two-bedroom, followed by his current place, a two-story, four-bedroom house that he told me is "too big." He rents. ("He's the poorest rich person I've ever seen in my life," Tyler Winklevoss said.) As we crossed the driveway, we spotted Chan, sitting on a chair in the back yard, a yellow highlighter in her hand, reading a textbook; she plans to be a pediatrician. There was a hammock and a barbecue grill nearby. Surprised, Zuckerberg approached her and rubbed her right shoulder. "I didn't know you were going to be here," he said. She touched his right hand and smiled.

He walked into the house, which is painted in various shades of blue and beige, except for the kitchen, which is a vibrant yellow. Colors don't matter much to Zuckerberg; a few years ago, he took an online test and realized that he was red-green color-blind. Blue is Facebook's dominant color, because, as he said, "blue is the richest color for me—I can see all of blue." Standing in his kitchen, leaning over the sink, he offered me a glass of water.

He returned the conversation to the winter of 2004, describing how he and his friends "would hang out and go together to Pinocchio's, the local pizza place, and talk about trends in technology. We'd say, 'Isn't it obvious that everyone was going to be on the Internet? Isn't it, like, inevitable that there would be a huge social network of people?' It was something that we expected to happen. The thing that's been really surprising about the evolution of Facebook is—I think then and I think now—that if we didn't do this someone else would have done it."

Zuckerberg, of course, did do it, and one of the reasons that he has held on to it is that money has never seemed to be his top priority. In 2005, MTV Networks considered buying Facebook for seventy-five million dollars. Yahoo! and Microsoft soon offered much more. Zuckerberg turned them all down. Terry Semel, the former C.E.O. of Yahoo!, who sought to buy Facebook for a billion dollars in 2006, told me, "I'd never met anyone—forget his age, twenty-two then or twenty-six now—I'd never met anyone who would walk away from a billion dollars. But he said, 'It's not about the price. This is my baby, and I want to keep running it, I want to keep growing it.' I couldn't believe it."

Looking back, Chan said she thought that the time of the Yahoo! proposal was the most stressful of Zuckerberg's life. "I remember we had a huge conversation over the Yahoo! deal," she said. "We try to stick pretty close to what our goals are and what we believe and what we enjoy doing in life—just simple things," she said.

Friends expect Chan and Zuckerberg to marry. In early September, Zuckerberg wrote on his Facebook page, "Priscilla Chan is moving in this weekend. Now we have 2x everything, so if you need any household appliances, dishes, glasses, etc please come by and take them before we give them away."

Facebook's headquarters is a two-story building at the end of a quiet, tree-lined street. Zuckerberg nicknamed it the Bunker. Facebook has grown so fast that this is the company's fifth home in six years—the third in Palo Alto. There is virtually no indication outside of the Bunker's tenant. Upon walking in, however, you are immediately greeted by what's called the Facebook Wall, playing off the virtual chalkboards users have on their profiles. One day in early August, the Wall was covered with self-referential posts. An employee, addressing the constant criticism of the site's privacy settings, had written, "How do I delete my post??? Why don't you care about my privacy? Why is the default for this app everyone??" Inside is a giant sea of desks—no cubicles, no partitions, just open space with small conference rooms named after bands (Run-DMC, New Edition, ZZ Top) and bad ideas (Knife at a Gunfight, Subprime Mortgage, Beacon—a controversial advertising system that Facebook introduced in 2007 and then scrapped).

Zuckerberg's desk is near the middle of the office, just a few steps away from his glass-walled conference room and within arm's length of his most senior employees. Before arriving each

morning, he works out with a personal trainer or studies Mandarin, which he is learning in preparation for the trip to China. Zuckerberg is involved in almost every new product and feature. His daily schedule is typically free from 2 P.M. to 6 P.M., and he spends that block of time meeting with engineers who are working on new projects. Debate is a hallmark of the meetings; at least a dozen of his employees pointed out, unprompted, what an “intense listener” Zuckerberg is. He is often one of the last people to leave the office. A photograph posted by a Facebook employee over Labor Day weekend showed Zuckerberg sitting at a long table in a conference room surrounded by other workers—all staring at their computers, coding away.

In the early years, Facebook tore through a series of senior executives. “A revolving door would be an understatement—it was very unstable,” Breyer said. Within ten days of hiring an executive, Breyer told me, Zuckerberg would e-mail or call him and say that the new hire needed to get the boot. Things calmed down in March, 2008, when Zuckerberg hired Sheryl Sandberg, a veteran of Google who was the chief of staff for Lawrence Summers when he was Secretary of the Treasury. She joined Facebook as the company’s chief operating officer, and executives followed her from companies like eBay, Genentech, and Mozilla. A flood of former Google employees soon arrived, too.

Meanwhile, however, most of Zuckerberg’s close friends, who worked for Facebook at the start, have left. Adam D’Angelo, who has been friends with Zuckerberg since their hacking and programming days at Exeter, teamed up with another former Facebook employee, Charlie Cheever, to start Quora.com, a social network that aggregates questions and answers on various topics. Chris Hughes, Zuckerberg’s Harvard roommate, left to join the Obama campaign and later founded the philanthropic site Jumo.com.

In part, the exodus reflects the status that former Facebook employees have in the tech world. But the departures also point to the difficulty some people have working for Zuckerberg. It’s hard to have a friend for a boss, especially someone who saw the site, from its inception, as “A Mark Zuckerberg production”—the tag line was posted on every page during Facebook’s early days. “Ultimately, it’s ‘the Mark show,’ ” one of his closest friends told me.

In late July, Facebook launched the beta version of Questions, a question-and-answer product that seems to be a direct competitor of Quora. To many people, the move seemed a vindictive attack on friends and former employees. In an interview, Cheever declined to comment, as did Matt Cohler, another friend who left the company, and who invested in Quora.

Chris Cox, Facebook’s vice-president of product, said that Facebook Questions is not an attack on Quora. “We’ve been talking about questions being the future of the way people search for stuff, so it was a matter of time before we built it,” Cox told me. “Getting there first is not what it’s all about.” He added, “What matters always is execution. Always.”

Zuckerberg’s ultimate goal is to create, and dominate, a different kind of Internet. Google and other search engines may index the Web, but, he says, “most of the information that we care about is things that are in our heads, right? And that’s not out there to be indexed, right?” Zuckerberg was in middle school when Google launched, and he seems to have a deep desire to

build something that moves beyond it. “It’s like hardwired into us in a deeper way: you really want to know what’s going on with the people around you,” he said.

In 2007, Zuckerberg announced that Facebook would become a “platform,” meaning that outside developers could start creating applications that would run inside the site. It worked. The social-game company Zynga—the maker of FarmVille and Mafia Wars—is expected to earn more than five hundred million dollars this year, most of it generated from people playing on Facebook. In 2008, Zuckerberg unveiled Facebook Connect, allowing users to sign onto other Web sites, gaming systems, and mobile devices with their Facebook account, which serves as a digital passport of sorts. This past spring, Facebook introduced what Zuckerberg called the Open Graph. Users reading articles on CNN.com, for example, can see which articles their Facebook friends have read, shared, and liked. Eventually, the company hopes that users will read articles, visit restaurants, and watch movies based on what their Facebook friends have recommended, not, say, based on a page that Google’s algorithm sends them to. Zuckerberg imagines Facebook as, eventually, a layer underneath almost every electronic device. You’ll turn on your TV, and you’ll see that fourteen of your Facebook friends are watching “Entourage,” and that your parents taped “60 Minutes” for you. You’ll buy a brand-new phone, and you’ll just enter your credentials. All your friends—and perhaps directions to all the places you and they have visited recently—will be right there.

For this plan to work optimally, people have to be willing to give up more and more personal information to Facebook and its partners. Perhaps to accelerate the process, in December, 2009, Facebook made changes to its privacy policies. Unless you wrestled with a set of complicated settings, vastly more of your information—possibly including your name, your gender, your photograph, your list of friends—would be made public by default. The following month, Zuckerberg declared that privacy was an evolving “social norm.”

The backlash came swiftly. The American Civil Liberties Union and the Electronic Privacy Information Center cried foul. Users revolted, claiming that Facebook had violated the social compact upon which the company is based. What followed was a tug-of-war about what it means to be a private person with a public identity. In the spring, Zuckerberg announced a simplified version of the privacy settings.

I asked Zuckerberg about this during our walk in Palo Alto. Privacy, he told me, is the “third-rail issue” online. “A lot of people who are worried about privacy and those kinds of issues will take any minor misstep that we make and turn it into as big a deal as possible,” he said. He then excused himself as he typed on his iPhone 4, answering a text from his mother. “We realize that people will probably criticize us for this for a long time, but we just believe that this is the right thing to do.”

Zuckerberg’s critics argue that his interpretation and understanding of transparency and openness are simplistic, if not downright naïve. “If you are twenty-six years old, you’ve been a golden child, you’ve been wealthy all your life, you’ve been privileged all your life, you’ve been successful your whole life, of course you don’t think anybody would ever have anything to hide,” Anil Dash, a blogging pioneer who was the first employee of Six Apart, the maker of Movable Type, said. Danah Boyd, a social-media researcher at Microsoft Research New

England, added, “This is a philosophical battle. Zuckerberg thinks the world would be a better place—and more honest, you’ll hear that word over and over again—if people were more open and transparent. My feeling is, it’s not worth the cost for a lot of individuals.”

Zuckerberg and I talked about this the first time I signed up for Facebook, in September, 2006. Users are asked to check a box to indicate whether they’re interested in men or in women. I told Zuckerberg that it took me a few hours to decide which box to check. If I said on Facebook that I’m a man interested in men, all my Facebook friends, including relatives, co-workers, sources—some of whom might not approve of homosexuality—would see it.

“So what did you end up doing?” Zuckerberg asked.

“I put men.”

“That’s interesting. No one has done a study on this, as far as I can tell, but I think Facebook might be the first place where a large number of people have come out,” he said. “We didn’t create that—society was generally ready for that.” He went on, “I think this is just part of the general trend that we talked about, about society being more open, and I think that’s good.”

Then I told Zuckerberg that, two weeks later, I removed the check, and left the boxes blank. A couple of relatives who were Facebook friends had asked about my sexuality and, at that time, at least, I didn’t want all my professional sources to know that I am gay.

“Is it still out?” Zuckerberg asked.

“Yeah, it’s still out.”

He responded with a flat “Huh,” dropped his shoulders, and stared at me, looking genuinely concerned and somewhat puzzled. Facebook had asked me to publish a personal detail that I was not ready to share.

In our last interview—this one over the phone—I asked Zuckerberg about “Ender’s Game,” the sci-fi book whose hero is a young computer wizard.

“Oh, it’s not a favorite book or anything like that,” Zuckerberg told me, sounding surprised. “I just added it because I liked it. I don’t think there’s any real significance to the fact that it’s listed there and other books aren’t. But there are definitely books—like the Aeneid—that I enjoyed reading a lot more.”

He first read the Aeneid while he was studying Latin in high school, and he recounted the story of Aeneas’s quest and his desire to build a city that, he said, quoting the text in English, “knows no boundaries in time and greatness.” Zuckerberg has always had a classical streak, his friends and family told me. (Sean Parker, a close friend of Zuckerberg, who served as Facebook’s president when the company was incorporated, said, “There’s a part of him that—it was present even when he was twenty, twenty-one—this kind of imperial tendency. He was really into Greek

odysseys and all that stuff.”) At a product meeting a couple of years ago, Zuckerberg quoted some lines from the Aeneid.

On the phone, Zuckerberg tried to remember the Latin of particular verses. Later that night, he IM'd to tell me two phrases he remembered, giving me the Latin and then the English: “fortune favors the bold” and “a nation/empire without bound.”

Before I could point out how oddly applicable those lines might be to his current ambitions, he typed back: again though these are the most famous quotes in the aeneid not anything particular that i found.

### **From Wired**

#### **How Mark Zuckerberg Turned Facebook Into the Web's Hottest Platform By Fred Vogelstein 09.06.07**

He didn't have much choice but to sell. It was summer 2006, a little more than two years after Mark Zuckerberg had created Facebook in his Harvard dorm room as a way for him and his friends to better connect with schoolmates. In the intervening years, he'd raised \$37.7 million from venture capitalists and transformed his modest Web site into a certified social phenomenon. College kids across the nation clamored for access, which Zuckerberg doled out, school by school. By mid-2006, about 7 million users, most of them college students, had a Facebook account. But for all of Facebook's success, there were also signs of trouble. Zuckerberg wanted the site to be more than a campus thing. He wanted to supplant and surpass MySpace and make Facebook the largest social network on the planet. He wanted it to become the next Google, a site that people of all ages would find useful in their daily lives. But that hadn't happened. Facebook had cornered the market for college students, but its 11-month-old effort to capture the attention of high school students — and take users away from MySpace — was going nowhere. Indeed, Facebook's growth was leveling off, inching its way toward 8 million members, while MySpace's continued to surge, with 100 million members in August of 2006.

At the same time, suitors like Viacom and Microsoft had begun to take a serious look at Facebook, and they were tossing out numbers with lots of zeroes. Some investors and executives began wondering if it was time for Zuckerberg to sell. It was starting to look like Facebook had peaked.

Zuckerberg disagreed, but when Yahoo came calling with a bid of \$1 billion in cash, the pressure became too much. He relented in July, verbally agreeing to sell Facebook to Yahoo. Strategically, it seemed like a good match. Yahoo had hundreds of millions of users, but its foray into social networking was struggling. Facebook had cool tools and was looking for a mass audience.

The timing, however, couldn't have been worse. In the days after Zuckerberg agreed to sell, Yahoo announced it was projecting slower sales and earnings growth, and that the launch of its

new advertising platform would be delayed. Its stock price plunged 22 percent overnight. Terry Semel, Yahoo's CEO at the time, reacted by cutting his offer from \$1 billion to \$800 million. Zuckerberg, who had been warned about Semel's reputation for last-minute renegotiations, walked away. Two months later, Semel reissued the original \$1 billion bid, but by then Zuckerberg had convinced his board and executive team that Yahoo wasn't a serious partner and that Facebook would be worth more on its own. He rejected the offer and became famous as the cocky youngster who turned down \$1 billion.

Today, Zuckerberg, 23, is famous for other reasons. For one thing, analysts think he could be the nation's richest man under 25, with a net worth estimated at \$1.5 billion. But more important, he has transformed his company from second-tier social network to full-fledged platform that organizes the entire Internet. As a result, Facebook is the now most buzzed-about company in Silicon Valley, and Zuckerberg is constantly compared to visionaries like Steve Jobs and Bill Gates. Even some of the tech industry's most legendary figures are genuflecting before Zuckerberg. In an entry on his blog, Netscape cofounder Marc Andreessen called Facebook's transformation "an amazing achievement — one of the most significant milestones in the technology industry in this decade." Says Marc Benioff, CEO of Salesforce.com, "I'm in awe." (So am I. I have known one of Facebook's executives since childhood.)

As for those concerns that Facebook's membership had peaked? Well, now it's signing up nearly 1 million new users a week. By the end of August there were 36 million of them. And these aren't just the tweens or college kids you might suspect; the fastest-growing segment of Facebook users is over 35, a group that represents 11 percent of all site users. Total registrations have more than quadrupled over the previous year. The number of employees has tripled, as has revenue. And venture capitalists say that if Facebook were to go public today, investors would value it at more than \$5 billion — five times what Yahoo had been prepared to pay.

But Zuckerberg's greatest contribution goes beyond Facebook's success. His company suggests a new model for how connection, communication, and commerce can work online — a radical and ambitious rethinking of the Internet's potential.

Zuckerberg's journey from snot-faced upstart to dotcom deity began in the summer of 2006, just after the demise of the first Yahoo bid. Zuckerberg won't speak directly about this time period, but associates and friends say that, for the first time in his career, the curly-haired tyro found himself facing immense external pressure. Sure, he'd retained control of his company for the time being, but he hadn't solved any of the problems that led him to consider a sale in the first place. Critics were accusing him of hubris and foolhardiness. He had something to prove.

Zuckerberg designed Facebook to re-create online what he calls the "social graph" — the web of people's real-world relationships. That was different than most social networks. Sites like MySpace practically encouraged users to create new identities and meet and link to people they barely knew. Zuckerberg didn't care about using the Internet to make new friends. "People already have their friends, acquaintances, and business connections," he explains. "So rather than building new connections, what we are doing is just mapping them out."

To that end, Facebook has always emphasized two qualities that tend to be undervalued online: authenticity and identity. Users are encouraged to post personal information — colleges attended, workplaces, email addresses. Facebook also emphasizes honesty: Because users typically can view profiles only of people they're linked to, and they can't link to them unless both partners confirm the relationship, there's little point in creating a fake identity.

Zuckerberg saw that if he could successfully map the social graph, he'd create a powerful new model of communication — a giant word-of-mouth engine. Imagine if, every time you logged on, you weren't greeted by NYTimes.com or even a Google News like aggregator, but a collection of headlines and blog postings, written or handpicked by your closest friends and relatives. Instead of information spreading hub-and-spoke like from major media outlets, it would flow to consumers the way it does at a dinner party, through people they know and trust. The result, Zuckerberg says, is that "it may no longer be optimal to have a few big media companies in the center controlling the flow of information."

When Zuckerberg walked away from Yahoo in July 2006, his grand vision had yet to be realized. He had a network of 7 million students, not an alternative media empire. To transform his company he would have to accomplish three things: First, make it easier for friends to communicate with one another; then extend Facebook's membership to the entire world; and finally, open the site to developers and encourage them to build Facebook applications that would keep people signing up and coming back to the site.

Zuckerberg's first step was almost his last. Previously, Facebook users had to visit one another's pages or send an email to see what they were up to — what features they'd added, announcements they'd posted, new friends they'd linked to. Zuckerberg wanted to streamline that process. His solution: News Feed, a feature that automatically broadcasts users' most important activities to everyone in their networks. Add a friend, post a photo, install a feature — almost anything you did was filtered through Facebook's computers, which then sent bulletins to all of your friends, notifying them every time they logged on to the site.

News Feed was announced on September 5, 2006 — about a month before Zuckerberg turned down Yahoo's second bid — and launched the same day. The freak-out began almost immediately. The new service didn't look like a means of easing communication between friends; it looked like Facebook was manipulating and spreading their information without permission. Hundreds of thousands of Facebook users emailed to protest. A student at the University of Florida organized a boycott, calling it A Day Without Facebook. "The New Facebook is too... well, creepy," wrote Carlos Maycotte in *The Cornell Daily Sun*. "It just makes too much information visible."

The easiest thing for Zuckerberg to do was simply dismantle News Feed. But he refused. News Feed was not just any feature. It was the infrastructure to undergird the social graph. So, three days after the feature launched, he posted a 485-word open letter to his users, apologizing for the surprise and explaining how they could opt out of News Feed if they wished. The tactic worked; the controversy ended as quickly as it began, with no real impact on user growth.

With the News Feed engine in place, the next step was obvious, if terrifying. So far Zuckerberg had tightly controlled Facebook's user base, opening membership slowly to colleges, high schools, and a few businesses. Now it was time to let anyone in the world join.

The notion was risky. When Facebook opened registration to high school students, the tepid response helped spur talk of a sale. A similar showing would make it even harder for Zuckerberg to keep prospective buyers at bay. But this time, open registration turned out to be a huge success. Adults, many of whom had yet to sign up on a social network, were drawn to Facebook's relatively staid and conservative structure. By January 2007, Facebook's user base had grown to nearly 14 million, up from almost 9 million in September.

Fully engaging those new users proved to be more difficult. They were happy to log on, share photos, and send quick messages, but when they wanted to do something a bit more complicated, like keep track of their eBay auctions, for instance, they had to leave Facebook to do it. Zuckerberg knew the site needed more applications, but he also knew that his development team wouldn't be able to satisfy every whim of his user base. "We said, 'This is a problem,'" says Dustin Moskovitz, one of Facebook's cofounders. "What people really want is one online identity to do all these different things. What users wanted was the long tail of applications." It was time for Facebook's third, and most audacious, step. On May 24 of this year, when Zuckerberg announced he was opening Facebook to independent developers, it was clear to Jonathan Sposato that the company had done something revolutionary. He knew how to develop and successfully distribute software: In 2005, Sposato, a former group manager at Microsoft, started a company that made it easy to create software widgets, and he sold it to Google later that year. In mid-2006, he and two fellow Microsoft alumni created Picnik, a slick online photo-editing site.

But even Sposato was surprised at the response from Facebook users when Picnik was included as one of the 85 initial applications in Facebook Platform, the new development tool. Within three days, more than 100,000 users downloaded his program — about 10 times more than he'd anticipated. Because News Feed instantly and automatically notified friends whenever someone downloaded Picnik, word of the application spread exponentially. Sposato called colleagues in a desperate — and ultimately successful — hunt for extra server capacity and bandwidth to avoid outages. Currently almost 250,000 Facebook users have installed Picnik on their pages, making it the network's top photo-editing tool. Sposato's experience shows the power of Facebook Platform as a new model for disseminating software. The plummeting costs of bandwidth, processing power, and storage had driven down the price of application development. But unless you could figure out a way onto the Google homepage, it was still tricky to tell the world what you'd created. Facebook now gave even the most modest developer the opportunity to win instant and mammoth distribution through its word-of-mouth engine. Users no longer need to search for applications that they may not even know they want; instead, the applications find them.

Since then, more than 3,200 new applications have sprung up on the site, a number that is growing by about 180 a week. Those offerings have made Facebook a fully functioning social hub, where users can keep track of one another's favorite music and videos, share and compare movie reviews, and hit one another up for contributions to pet causes. Facebook promises to become an online identity for recruiters, bosses, and colleagues looking to hire and promote; a

souped-up business card for job hunters; and a dossier of people's likes and dislikes that vendors can use to provide targeted products and services. Salesforce's Benioff even imagines Facebook pages serving as universal health records.

And by turning itself into a platform for new applications, Facebook has launched a whole new branch of the software development industry, just like Bill Gates did with MS-DOS in the 1980s. By allowing developers to charge for their wares or collect the advertising revenue they generate, Zuckerberg set up a system for every programmer to get paid for their efforts. Now venture capitalists like Bay Partners are scrambling to fund almost anyone who has an idea for a Facebook application.

Skeptics may argue that we've seen this movie before — in 1999, say, when anyone with a vague concept for a Web site could get VC backing. And, they point out, nobody actually does pay for Facebook applications. Still, the startup costs for developers are extremely low, and the potential is high. For the Internet, email was the killer app — a program so useful that it transformed the platform into a massive communications tool. There's no killer app for Facebook yet. But if someone can develop one, they will be sitting on a gold mine.

For all the excitement, one sobering fact remains: Facebook has yet to prove itself as a business. The site's nearly 40 million active users generate more than a billion pageviews a day, but ad clickthrough rates are low. An estimated half of its \$150 million in revenue comes from an advertising deal with Microsoft. Independent developers are drawn to Facebook because Zuckerberg lets them keep any advertising revenue their applications generate; if Facebook can't prove itself as an advertising venue, the deluge of new applications will slow to a trickle.

Nevertheless, Zuckerberg's notion of the social graph has proven so powerful that almost every other company in the Valley is trying to replicate it. Jeff Weiner, one of Yahoo's top executives, refers to users of Yahoo Mail as a Facebook-esque "dormant social network" that his company "needs to activate." And MySpace is expected to respond to Facebook's challenge; CEO Chris DeWolfe has made vague statements about the site's "evolution."

Whatever ultimately becomes of Facebook, Zuckerberg has already had an impact. A year ago, the Valley wondered if this cocky youngster had turned down his only shot at \$1 billion. Now it's wondering if he has defined the future of the Internet.

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Thursday, May. 20, 2010

### **How Facebook Is Redefining Privacy** **By Dan Fletcher**

Sometime in the next few weeks, Facebook will officially log its 500 millionth active citizen. If the website were granted terra firma, it would be the world's third largest country by population,

two-thirds bigger than the U.S. More than 1 in 4 people who browse the Internet not only have a Facebook account but have returned to the site within the past 30 days.

Just six years after Harvard undergraduate Mark Zuckerberg helped found Facebook in his dorm room as a way for Ivy League students to keep tabs on one another, the company has joined the ranks of the Web's great superpowers. Microsoft made computers easy for everyone to use. Google helps us search out data. YouTube keeps us entertained. But Facebook has a huge advantage over those other sites: the emotional investment of its users. Facebook makes us smile, shudder, squeeze into photographs so we can see ourselves online later, fret when no one responds to our witty remarks, snicker over who got fat after high school, pause during weddings to update our relationship status to Married or codify a breakup by setting our status back to Single. (I'm glad we can still be friends, Elise.)

Getting to the point where so many of us are comfortable living so much of our life on Facebook represents a tremendous cultural shift, particularly since 28% of the site's users are older than 34, Facebook's fastest-growing demographic. Facebook has changed our social DNA, making us more accustomed to openness. But the site is premised on a contradiction: Facebook is rich in intimate opportunities — you can celebrate your niece's first steps there and mourn the death of a close friend — but the company is making money because you are, on some level, broadcasting those moments online. The feelings you experience on Facebook are heartfelt; the data you're providing feeds a bottom line. The willingness of Facebook's users to share and overshare — from descriptions of our bouts of food poisoning (gross) to our uncensored feelings about our bosses (not advisable) — is critical to its success. Thus far, the company's m.o. has been to press users to share more, then let up if too many of them complain. Because of this, Facebook keeps finding itself in the crosshairs of intense debates about privacy. It happened in 2007, when the default settings in an initiative called Facebook Beacon sent all your Facebook friends updates about purchases you made on certain third-party sites. Beacon caused an uproar among users — who were automatically enrolled — and occasioned a public apology from Zuckerberg.

And it is happening again. To quell the latest concerns of users — and of elected officials in the U.S. and abroad — Facebook is getting ready to unveil enhanced privacy controls. The changes are coming on the heels of a complaint filed with the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) on May 5 by the Electronic Privacy Information Center, which takes issue with Facebook's frequent policy changes and tendency to design privacy controls that are, if not deceptive, less than intuitive. (Even a company spokesman got tripped up trying to explain to me why my co-worker has a shorter privacy-controls menu than I do.) The 38-page complaint asks the FTC to compel Facebook to clarify the privacy settings attached to each piece of information we post as well as what happens to that data after we share it.

Facebook is readjusting its privacy policy at a time when its stake in mining our personal preferences has never been greater. In April, it launched a major initiative called Open Graph, which lets Facebook users weigh in on what they like on the Web, from a story on TIME.com to a pair of jeans from Levi's. The logic is that if my friends recommend something, I'll be more inclined to like it too. And because Facebook has so many users — and because so many companies want to attract those users' eyeballs — Facebook is well positioned to display its members' preferences on any website, anywhere. Less than a month after Open Graph's rollout,

more than 100,000 sites had integrated the technology. "The mission of the company is to make the world more open and connected," Zuckerberg told me in early May. To him, expanding Facebook's function from enabling us to interact with people we like on the site to interacting with stuff our friends like on other sites is "a natural extension" of what the company has been doing.

In his keynote announcing Open Graph, Zuckerberg said, "We're building a Web where the default is social." But default settings are part of the reason Facebook is in the hot seat now. In the past, when Facebook changed its privacy controls, it tended to automatically set users' preferences to maximum exposure and then put the onus on us to go in and dial them back. In December, the company set the defaults for a lot of user information so that everyone — even non-Facebook members — could see such details as status updates and lists of friends and interests. Many of us scrambled for cover, restricting who gets to see what on our profile pages. But it's still nearly impossible to tease out how our data might be used in other places, such as Facebook applications or elsewhere on the Web.

There's something unsettling about granting the world a front-row seat to all of our interests. But Zuckerberg is betting that it's not unsettling enough to enough people that we'll stop sharing all the big and small moments of our lives with the site. On the contrary, he's betting that there's almost no limit to what people will share and to how his company can benefit from it.

Since the site expanded membership to high schoolers in 2005 and to anyone over the age of 13 in 2006, Facebook has become a kind of virtual pacemaker, setting the rhythms of our online lives, letting us ramp up both the silly socializing and the serious career networking. Zuckerberg's next goal is even more ambitious: to make Facebook a kind of second nervous system that's rapid-firing more of our thoughts and feelings over the Web. Or, to change the metaphor, Facebook wants to be not just a destination but the vehicle too. "I'm CEO ... Bitch"

Facebook's world headquarters in Palo Alto, Calif., looks like an afterthought, a drab office building at the end of a sleepy stretch of California Avenue. Lacking the scale of Microsoft's sprawling campus or the gleaming grandeur of Google HQ, Facebook's home base is unpretentious and underwhelming. The sign in front (colored red, not the company's trademark cobalt blue) features a large, boldface address with a tiny Facebook logo nestled above.

Inside the building, Facebook crams in hundreds of employees, who work in big, open-air bullpens. Without cubicles or walls, there isn't much privacy, so each desk seems like, well, a Facebook profile — small, visible-to-all spaces decorated with photos and personal sundries. Zuckerberg spent the past year in a dimly lit bullpen on the ground floor. But perhaps in a concession to the fact that the CEO needs some privacy, the 26-year-old billionaire recently moved upstairs to a small office, albeit one with a glass wall so everyone can see what he's doing in there.

Steve Jobs has his signature black turtlenecks; Zuckerberg usually sports a hoodie. In Facebook's early years, he was the cocky coder kid with business cards that read, "I'm CEO ... Bitch." (Zuckerberg has said publicly they were a joke from a friend.) And elements of the Palo Alto

headquarters — snack tables, Ping-Pong — still impart some semblance of that hacker-in-a-dorm-room feel.

The office's design reflects Facebook's business model too. Openness is fundamental to everything the company does, from generating revenue to its latest plans to weave itself into the fabric of the Web. "Our core belief is that one of the most transformational things in this generation is that there will be more information available," Zuckerberg says. That idea has always been key to Facebook's growth. The company wants to expand the range of information you're sharing and get you to share a lot more of it.

For this to happen, the 1,400 Facebook employees in Palo Alto and around the world (Dublin, Sydney, Tokyo, etc.) work toward two goals. The first is expansion, something the company has gotten prodigiously good at. The site had 117 million unique visitors in the U.S. in March, and the company says some 70% of its users are in other countries. In cellular-connected Japan, the company is focusing on the mobile app. In cricket-crazed India, Facebook snared fans by helping the Indian Premier League build a fan page on Facebook's site.

There's a technical aspect too. The slightest fraction of a second in how long it takes to load a Facebook page can make the difference between someone's logging in again or not, so the company keeps shaving down milliseconds to make sure you stay. It also mobilized Facebook users to volunteer to help translate the site into 70 languages, from Afrikaans to Zulu, to make each moment on Facebook feel local.

### **The Aha! Moment**

Facebook did not invent social networking, but the company has fine-tuned it into a science. When a newcomer logs in, the experience is designed to generate something Facebook calls the aha! moment. This is an observable emotional connection, gleaned by videotaping the expressions of test users navigating the site for the first time. My mom, a Facebook holdout whose friends finally persuaded her to join last summer, probably had her aha! moment within a few minutes of signing up. Facebook sprang into action. First it asked to look through her e-mail address book to quickly find fellow Facebook users she knew. Then it let her choose which of these people she wanted to start getting short status updates from: Details about what a long-lost friend from high school just cooked for dinner. Photos of a co-worker's new baby. Or of me carousing on a Friday night. (No need to lecture, Mom.)

Facebook has developed a formula for the precise number of aha! moments a user must have before he or she is hooked. Company officials won't say exactly what that magic number is, but everything about the site is geared to reach it as quickly as possible. And if you ever try to leave Facebook, you get what I like to call the aha! moment's nasty sibling, the oh-no! moment, when Facebook tries to guilt-trip you with pictures of your friends who, the site warns, will "miss you" if you deactivate your account.

So far, at least, the site has avoided the digital exoduses that beset its predecessors, MySpace and Friendster. This is partly because Facebook is so good at making itself indispensable. Losing Facebook hurts. In 2008 my original Facebook account was shut down because I had created

multiple Dan Fletchers using variants of the same e-mail address, a Facebook no-no but an ingenious way to expand my power in the Mob Wars game on Facebook's site. When Facebook cracked down and gave me and my fictional mafia the kiss of death, I lost all my photos, all my messages and all my status updates from my senior year of high school through the first two years of college. I still miss those digital mementos, and it's both comforting and maddening to know they likely still exist somewhere, sealed off in Facebook's archives.

Being excommunicated from Facebook today would be even more painful. For many people, it's a second home. Users share more than 25 billion pieces of information with Facebook each month. They're adding photos — perhaps the most intimate information Facebook collects — at a rate of nearly 1 billion unique images a week. These pics range from cherished Christmas mornings to nights of partying we, uh, struggle to remember. And we're posting pictures not just of ourselves but also of our friends, and naming, or tagging, them in captions embedded in the images. Not happy someone posted an unflattering shot of you from junior high? Unless the photo is obscene or otherwise violates the site's terms of use, the most you can do is untag your name so people will have a harder time finding the picture (and making fun of you).

With 48 billion unique images, Facebook houses the world's largest photo collection. All that sharing happens on the site. But in two giant leaps, the company has made it so that users can register their opinions on other sites too. That first happened in 2008, when the company released a platform called Facebook Connect. This allows your profile to follow you around the Internet from site to site, acting as a kind of passport for the Web. Want to post a comment about this article on TIME.com? Instead of having to register specifically with that site, Facebook users just have to click one button. This idea of a single sign-on — a profile that obviates the need for multiple user names and passwords — is something a lot of other companies have attempted. But Facebook had the critical mass to make it work. Targeting Your Likes

Zuckerberg unveiled the second big initiative, Open Graph, this spring. It's a nerdy name for something that's surprisingly simple: letting other websites place a Facebook Like button next to pieces of content. The idea is to let Facebook users flag the content from as many Web pages as possible. For example, if I'm psyched about Iron Man 2, I can click the Like button for that movie on IMDB, and the film will automatically be filed under Movies on my Facebook profile. I can set my privacy controls so that my friends can find out in one of three ways that this is a movie I like. They can go to IMDB, where my charming profile picture will display on the page. They can get a status update about my liking this movie. Or they can see it on my Facebook profile.

Facebook wants you to get into the habit of clicking the Like button anytime you see it next to a piece of content you enjoy. Less than a month after launching Open Graph — which made its debut with some 30 content partners, including TIME.com — Facebook is quickly approaching the point where it will process 100 million unique clicks of a Like button each day.

The company's goal with Open Graph is to give you ways to discover both new content and more common ground with the people you're friends with. That's the social benefit Zuckerberg sees, and it's shared by those in his employ. Sheryl Sandberg, Facebook's chief operating officer, is at her most enthusiastic when she's describing Peace.Facebook.com, part of the website that tracks

the number of friendships made each day between members of groups that have historically disagreed, such as Israelis and Palestinians and Sunnis and Shi'ites. "We don't pretend Facebook's this profound all the time," Sandberg says. "But is it harder to shoot at someone who you've connected to personally? Yeah. Is it harder to hate when you've seen pictures of that person's kids? We think the answer is yes."

Helping bring about world peace would be nice, but Facebook is not a philanthropic organization. It's a business, and there's a tremendous business opportunity around Facebook's member data. And Sandberg knows it. She joined the company in 2008 after helping Google build its ad platform into a multibillion-dollar business. Much like Google, Facebook is free to users but makes a lot of money (some analysts estimate the privately held company will generate \$1 billion in revenues in 2010) from its robust ad system. According to the Web-research firm comScore, Facebook flashed more than 176 billion banner ads at users in the first three months of this year — more than any other site.

The more updates Facebook gets you to share and the more preferences it entreats you to make public, the more data it's able to pool for advertisers. Google spearheaded targeted advertisements, but it knows what you're interested in only on the basis of what you query in its search engine and, if you have a Gmail account, what topics you're e-mailing about. Facebook is amassing a much more well-rounded picture. And having those Like buttons clicked 100 million times a day gives the company 100 million more data points to package and sell.

The result is that advertisers are able to target you on an even more granular level. For example, right now the ads popping up on my Facebook page are for Iron Man 2 games and no-fee apartments in New York City (I'm in a demographic that moves frequently); my mom is getting ads for in-store furniture sales (she's in a demographic that buys sofas).

This advertising platform is even more powerful now that the site can factor in your friends' preferences. If three of your friends click a Like button for, say, Domino's Pizza, you might soon find an ad on your Facebook page that has their names and a suggestion that maybe you should try Domino's too. Peer-pressure advertising! Sandberg and other Facebook execs understand the value of context in selling a product, and few contexts are more powerful than friendship. "Marketers have known this for a really long time. I'm much more likely to do something that's recommended by a friend," Sandberg says.

As powerful as each piece of Facebook's strategy is, the company isn't forcing its users to drink the Kool-Aid. It's just serving up nice cold glasses, and we're gulping it down. The friends, the connections, the likes — those are all produced by us. Facebook is the ultimate enabler. It's enabling us to give it a cornucopia of information about ourselves. It's a brilliant model, and Facebook, through its skill at weaving the site into the fabric of modern life, has made it work better than anyone else. What Voldemort Is to Harry Potter

Zuckerberg believes that most people want to share more about themselves online. He's almost paternalistic in describing the trend. "The way that people think about privacy is changing a bit," he says. "What people want isn't complete privacy. It isn't that they want secrecy. It's that they want control over what they share and what they don't."

Unfortunately, Facebook has a shaky history of granting people that control. In November 2007, when the company tried to make its first foray into the broader Web, it rolled out Facebook Beacon, in which users were automatically signed up for a program that sent a notice to all their friends on Facebook if, say, they made a purchase on a third-party site, like movie tickets on Fandango. Initially, users couldn't opt out of the service altogether — they had to click No Thanks with each individual purchase. And, worse, investigations by security analysts found that even after users hit No Thanks, websites sent purchase details back to Facebook, which the company then deleted. Amid a torrent of complaints, Facebook quickly changed Beacon to be an opt-in system, and by December 2007, the company gave users the option of turning off Beacon completely. Ask Zuckerberg and other executives about the program now, and you'll notice that Beacon has become to Facebook what Voldemort is to Harry Potter's world — the thing that shall not be named.

Facebook isn't the only company to have made a serious social-networking infraction. In February, Google apologized after the rollout of its Twitteresque Buzz application briefly revealed whom its users e-mailed and chatted with most, a move that alarmed, among others, political dissidents and cheating spouses. But at Facebook, the Beacon debacle didn't stop the company from pushing to make more information public. This winter, the company changed its privacy controls and made certain profile details public, including a user's name, profile photo, status updates and any college or professional networks. During the transition, Zuckerberg's private photos were briefly visible to all, including several pictures in which he looks, shall we say, overserved. He quickly altered his settings.

In April, the site started giving third-party applications more access to user data. Apps like my beloved Mob Wars used to be allowed to keep your data for only 24 hours; now they can store your info indefinitely — unless you uninstall them. This spring, Facebook also launched something called Instant Personalization, which lets a few sites piggyback onto Facebook user data to create recommendation engines. Once again, as with Beacon, users were automatically enrolled.

With each set of changes to Facebook's evolving privacy policy, protest groups form and users spread warnings via status messages. In some cases, these outcries have been quite sizable. Zuckerberg points to 2006, when users protested the launch of Facebook's News Feed, a streaming compilation of your friends' status updates. Without much warning, tidbits that you used to have to seek out by going to an individual's profile page were suddenly being broadcast to everyone on that person's list of friends. "We only had 10 million users at the time, and 1 million were complaining," Zuckerberg says. "Now, to think that there wouldn't be a news feed is insane." He's right — protesting the existence of a news feed seems silly in hindsight; Twitter built its entire site around the news-feed concept. So give Zuckerberg some credit for prescience — and perseverance. "That's a big part of what we do, figuring out what the next things are that everyone wants to do and then bringing them along to get them there," he says.

But corralling 500 million people is a lot harder than corralling 10 million. And some users are ready to pull the plug entirely. Searches for "how to delete Facebook" on Google have nearly doubled in volume since the start of this year.

## The Web's Sketchy Big Brother

If Facebook wants to keep up the information revolution, then Zuckerberg needs to start talking more and make his case for an era of openness more transparently. Otherwise, Facebook will continue to be cast in the role of the Web's sketchy Big Brother, sucking up our identities into a massive Borg brain to slice, dice and categorize for advertisers.

But amid all the angst, don't forget that we actually like to share. Yes, Facebook is a moneymaking venture. But after you talk to the company's key people, it's tough to doubt that they truly believe that sharing information is better than keeping secrets, that the world will be a better place if you persuade (or perhaps push) people to be more open. "Even with all the progress that we've made, I think we're much closer to the beginning than the end of the trend," Zuckerberg says.

Want to stop that trend? The onus, as always, is on you to pull your information. Starve the beast dead. None of Facebook's vision, be it for fostering peace and harmony or for generating ad revenue, is possible without our feeding in our thoughts and preferences. "The way that people decide whether they want to use something or not is whether they like the product or not," Zuckerberg says. Facebook is hoping that we're hooked. As for me? Time to see if the ex-girlfriend has added new photos.

## ABOUT THE CAST

Trained in theater and film, **JESSE EISENBERG** (Mark Zuckerberg) made his feature film debut in the 2002 independent film *Rodger Dodger*, in which he starred opposite Campbell Scott and for which he was nominated for a Gotham Award.

For his performance in *The Squid and the Whale* opposite Laura Linney and Jeff Daniels, Eisenberg received nominations for an Independent Spirit Award and a Boston Film Critics Association Award for Best Supporting Actor.

In 2009, he starred in *Adventureland* for director Greg Mottola and in *Zombieland* for director Ruben Fleischer. For these films, he was nominated for a BAFTA Award.

Eisenberg has just reteamed with director Ruben Fleischer this summer to shoot the film *30 Minutes or Less*, opposite Danny McBride.

Eisenberg is also the lead voice of the 20th Century Fox animated film *Rio*, which will open next year.

On stage, Eisenberg most recently appeared in “Scarcity” at the Atlantic Theater Company.

Also a writer, Eisenberg has written several plays to be performed off-Broadway in 2011, and the music and lyrics to “Me Time!,” a musical. Eisenberg has also written for *McSweeney’s*, and his most recent piece was picked up by *The New York Times* and *Harpers*.

**ANDREW GARFIELD** (Eduardo Saverin) is a BAFTA-winning actor. He may currently be seen starring opposite Keira Knightley and Carey Mulligan in Mark Romanek’s *Never Let Me Go*.

Other screen projects include Terry Gilliam’s *The Imaginarium of Dr Parnassus*; Spike Jonze’s robot love story *I’m Here*; Robert Redford’s *Lions For Lambs*; Revolution Films’ “Red Riding Trilogy - 1974” directed by Julian Jarrold; and John Crowley’s *Boy A*, for which he earned the Best Actor BAFTA in 2008.

Garfield’s career began in theatre and in 2006 his performances in “Beautiful Thing” (Sound Space/Kit Productions), “The Overwhelming” and “Burn, Chatroom, and Citizenship” (Royal National Theatre) won him the award for Outstanding Newcomer at the Evening Standard Awards, and the Jack Tinker Award for Most Promising Newcomer at the Critics Circle Awards. Other notable theatre credits include “Romeo and Juliet” (Manchester Royal Exchange) and “Kes” (Manchester Royal Exchange), for which he received the Most Promising Newcomer Award at the Manchester Evening News Awards 2004.

Garfield will next star as Peter Parker in the forthcoming *Spider-Man* film, to be directed by Marc Webb.

In addition to **JUSTIN TIMBERLAKE's (Sean Parker)** multi-platinum album FutureSex/LoveSounds, which produced four consecutive #1 singles, and his critically acclaimed 2007 FutureSex/LoveShow tour, along with multiple Grammy Awards, he has recently garnered acclaim as an actor for a variety of work in both comedy and drama. Timberlake starred in Universal's crime drama Alpha Dog, co-starring Emile Hirsh, Bruce Willis and Sharon Stone. He also starred alongside Christina Ricci and Samuel L. Jackson in Black Snake Moan, for director Craig Brewer. In the summer of 2007, he voiced a lead role in DreamWorks' Shrek the Third. Timberlake also joined Dwayne Johnson, Seann William Scott, Sarah Michelle Gellar and Mandy Moore in Southland Tales.

He most recently appeared in the independent film The Open Road with Jeff Bridges, Mary Steenburgen, Harry Dean Stanton, and Kate Mara, and will be heard in the upcoming animated feature film, Yogi Bear. Timberlake will also star in the Screen Gems film Friends With Benefits and the Columbia Pictures comedy Bad Teacher, both due in 2011.

In addition to movies, he has hosted two memorable episodes of "Saturday Night Live" and several of his sketches have become viral video sensations, including "D\*\*k in a Box," which not only has been viewed over 100 million times on YouTube but earned Timberlake his first Emmy Award. He won a second Emmy Award in 2009 for Outstanding Guest Actor in a Comedy Series for hosting "SNL." Timberlake has also hosted MTV's Europe Music Awards, Nickelodeon's Kid's Choice Awards, and ESPN's ESPY Awards.

## ABOUT THE FILMMAKERS

**DAVID FINCHER (Director)** made his feature film debut in 1992 with *Alien3*. In 1995, he directed *Se7en*, the lauded crime drama starring Brad Pitt and Morgan Freeman. The film grossed more than \$325 million worldwide. In 1997, Fincher directed *The Game*, starring Michael Douglas and Sean Penn.

In 1999, he re-teamed with Brad Pitt on *Fight Club*, based on Chuck Palahniuk's novel. In 2002, he directed *Panic Room*, starring Jodie Foster, Forest Whitaker, Dwight Yoakum and Jared Leto. In 2007, he directed the critically hailed film *Zodiac*. The film was named to over 150 ten-best lists, including those of *Entertainment Weekly*, *USA Today* and *The Washington Post*.

His most recent film is *The Curious Case of Benjamin Button*, which once again re-teamed Fincher with star Brad Pitt. The film also starred Cate Blanchett. The film was nominated for 13 Academy Awards®, including for Best Picture and Best Director, and won three (Art Direction, Makeup, and Visual Effects). The film was also honored with five Golden Globe nominations, including Best Picture - Drama and Best Director and won two awards, including Best Director, from the National Board of Review.

He is currently in production on *The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo*, an adaptation of the bestselling novel by Stieg Larsson, starring Daniel Craig and Rooney Mara.

**AARON SORKIN (Screenplay by)** graduated from Syracuse University with a B.F.A. in Theatre in 1983. He made his Broadway playwriting debut at the age of 28 with the military courtroom drama *A Few Good Men*, for which he received the John Gassner Award as Outstanding New American Playwright. The following year saw his off-Broadway play *Making Movies*, and in 2007 he returned to Broadway with *The Farnsworth Invention*, directed by Des McAnuff.

His film adaptation of *A Few Good Men* was nominated for four Academy Awards(R), including Best Picture, and five Golden Globes, including Best Screenplay. He followed this success with the screenplays for *Malice*, starring Alec Baldwin and Nicole Kidman, and *The American President*, starring Michael Douglas and Annette Bening. Sorkin produced and wrote the television series *Sports Night* for ABC for two years, winning the Humanitas Prize and the Television Critics Association Award. He spent the next four years writing and producing the NBC series *The West Wing*, winning the Emmy Award for Outstanding Drama Series all four years. For his work on *The West Wing*, Sorkin also twice received the Peabody Award and the Humanitas Prize, and three Television Critics Association Awards. He also won a Golden Globe, a Writers Guild Award and three Producers Guild Awards.

In 2006, Sorkin wrote and produced the NBC television series *Studio 60 on the Sunset Strip*. He also wrote the 2007 film *Charlie Wilson's War*, directed by Mike Nichols and starring Tom Hanks, Philip Seymour Hoffman and Julia Roberts.

Sorkin recently adapted *Moneyball*, directed by Bennett Miller and starring Brad Pitt, which is currently in production at Sony Pictures. Sorkin has acquired *The Politician*, the best-selling

book by Andrew Young about the downfall of former Senator John Edwards, which he will adapt and will produce with Scott Rudin.

**SCOTT RUDIN (Producer)** Films include: The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo; True Grit; Moneyball; Greenberg; It's Complicated; Fantastic Mr. Fox; Julie & Julia; Doubt; No Country for Old Men; There Will Be Blood; Reprise; The Queen; Margot at the Wedding; Notes on a Scandal; Venus; Closer; Team America: World Police; I Heart Huckabees; School of Rock; The Hours; Iris; The Royal Tenenbaums; Zoolander; Sleepy Hollow; Wonder Boys; Bringing Out the Dead; South Park: Bigger, Longer & Uncut; The Truman Show; In & Out; Ransom; The First Wives Club; Clueless; Nobody's Fool; The Firm; Searching for Bobby Fischer; Sister Act; The Addams Family.

Theatre includes: Passion; Hamlet; Seven Guitars; A Funny Thing Happened On The Way to The Forum; Skylight; The Chairs; The Blue Room; Closer; Amy's View; Copenhagen; The Designated Mourner; The Goat; Caroline, or Change; The Normal Heart; Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?; Doubt; Faith Healer; The History Boys; Shining City; Stuff Happens; The Vertical Hour; The Year of Magical Thinking; Gypsy; God of Carnage; Fences.

A former production chief for DreamWorks and New Line Cinema, **MICHAEL DE LUCA (Producer)** founded Michael De Luca Productions in March of 2004 and has a development and production agreement with Columbia Pictures.

De Luca is focusing his production company on developing appropriately budgeted, provocative specialized films with visionary filmmakers, and pop culture, mainstream genre films with franchise potential. His projects as a producer for Columbia have included Jon Favreau's science fiction adventure Zathura, adapted from a book by Chris Van Allsburg, Ghost Rider, starring Nicolas Cage and directed by Mark Steven Johnson and 21 based on the book Bringing Down the House by Ben Mezrich. He is in post production on Priest for Screen Gems starring Paul Bettany; Drive Angry, starring Nicolas Cage for Nu Image/Millennium, being released by Summit; and Butter, starring Jennifer Garner for the Weinstein Company. He is currently in production on two films: Moneyball, directed by Bennett Miller and starring Brad Pitt for Columbia Pictures, and Fright Night, which is directed by Craig Gillespie for DreamWorks.

Prior to forming Michael De Luca Productions, De Luca served as DreamWorks' Head of Production. At DreamWorks, he oversaw the day-to-day operations of the live-action division and the production of such films as Todd Phillips' Old School and Adam McKay and Will Ferrell's hit comedy Anchorman, as well as Head of State and Win A Date With Tad Hamilton.

He previously spent 7 years as President and COO of New Line Productions. During his tenure, he created the highly successful Friday, Blade, Austin Powers and Rush Hour franchises. He championed such groundbreaking sleeper hits as Seven, Wag the Dog, Pleasantville, and Boogie Nights, and launched the directing careers of Jay Roach, Brett Ratner, Gary Ross, Alan and Albert Hughes, F. Gary Gray, and the Farrelly brothers, among others.

**DANA BRUNETTI (Producer)** is the president of Trigger Street Productions, a production company founded by Kevin Spacey in 1997. Also an innovator in the realm of social networking,

Brunetti launched TriggerStreet.com in 2002, a platform for feedback and exposure for undiscovered writing and filmmaking talent.

Brunetti collaborated with author Ben Mezrich in 2008, when he produced the film *21*, based off Mezrich's New York Times bestselling book *Bringing Down The House*.

He has produced the films *Fanboys*, *Shrink*, the Emmy-nominated *Bernard and Doris*, *Casino Jack*, *Mini's First Time*, *Columbus Day*, *The Sasquatch Gang*, and the documentaries *Uncle Frank* and *America Rebuilds: A Year at Ground Zero*.

**CEÁN CHAFFIN (Producer)** previously produced five of David Fincher's films since the two became partners after collaborating on a Japanese Coca-Cola ad in 1992, which she produced and he directed: *The Game*, the 1997 adventure drama starring Michael Douglas and Sean Penn about a financier who is given a disturbing birthday gift by his brother that consumes his life; the cult classic *Fight Club* starring Brad Pitt, Edward Norton and Helena Bonham Carter, based on Chuck Palahniuk's novel; *Panic Room*, a thriller co-starring Jodie Foster, Forest Whitaker, Jared Leto and Dwight Yoakum about three men who break into a mansion searching for a missing fortune while a mother and daughter hide in a safe room; *Zodiac*, the story of the elusive San Francisco-based serial killer starring Robert Downey Jr. and Jake Gyllenhaal; and *The Curious Case of Benjamin Button*, the Academy Award(R) nominee for Best Picture, starring Brad Pitt and Cate Blanchett.

Chaffin also produced two Grammy Award winning videos: Mark Romanek's *Scream*, by Michael and Janet Jackson, and David Fincher's *Love Is Strong*, by The Rolling Stones.

**KEVIN SPACEY (Executive Producer)** is Artistic Director of The Old Vic Theatre Company in London. He directed its inaugural production *Cloaca*, before appearing in *National Anthems*, *The Philadelphia Story*, *Richard II*, *A Moon for the Misbegotten*, which subsequently transferred to Broadway, and *Speed-the-Plow* with Jeff Goldblum. Previous theatre includes *The Iceman Cometh* (Evening Standard and Olivier Awards for Best Actor) directed by Howard Davies (Almeida, Old Vic and Broadway); *Lost in Yonkers* (Tony Award, Best Supporting Actor); *Long Day's Journey into Night* with Jack Lemmon, directed by Jonathan Miller (Broadway and West End) and *The Seagull* (Kennedy Center). His most recent stage appearance was in The Old Vic production of *Inherit the Wind*, which marked his second production with Trevor Nunn.

Films include *The Usual Suspects* (Academy Award(R), Best Supporting Actor), *American Beauty* (Academy(R) and BAFTA Awards, Best Actor), *Swimming with Sharks*, *Se7en*, *LA Confidential*, *Glengarry Glen Ross*, *The Negotiator*, *K-Pax*, *The Shipping News*, *Superman Returns*, and *Beyond the Sea*. He was most recently seen in *Shrink* with Robin Williams and *The Men Who Stare at Goats* with George Clooney. This fall he will be seen starring as Jack Abramoff in the feature *Casino Jack*, directed by George Hickenlooper, which will premiere at the Toronto Film Festival. He most recently completed production on the films *Margin Call* with Jeremy Irons, Paul Bettany, Demi Moore, Zach Quinto and Simon Baker; and as Jason Bateman's horrible boss in *Horrible Bosses*, with Jennifer Aniston, Jamie Foxx and Colin Farrell for Warner Brothers, directed by Seth Gordon.

His company Trigger Street Productions has produced the films 21, The United States of Leland, The Big Kahuna, and Fanboys. Trigger Street received 11 Emmy nominations and won Best Picture for the HBO film ``Recount, in which Spacey played Ron Klain, Al Gore's Chief of Staff during the 2000 Presidential Election. In addition, Trigger Street received 10 Emmy nominations for the HBO film ``Bernard & Doris starring Ralph Feinnes and Susan Sarandon, directed by Bob Balaban.

Cinematographer **JEFF CRONENWETH (Director of Photography)** has worked with director David Fincher on the films Seven, Fight Club, and The Game. He was also director of photography on One Hour Photo for director Mark Romanek, as well as K-19: The Widowmaker and Down With Love.

Over the past ten years, Cronenweth has also worked in the commercial and music video industries, collaborating with directors including Spike Jonze, Stephane Sednaoui, Geoff Barish and Phil Joanou. Cronenweth's commercial campaign for Mountain Dew won the 2001 CLIO Award for Best Cinematography. His other commercial clients include Jeep, Adidas, Gatorade, Gap, Master Card, Verizon and Tommy Hilfiger.

A native Los Angeleno, Cronenweth studied filmmaking at the University of Southern California and began his professional career apprenticing to some of the film industry's greatest cinematographers, including; Sven Nykvist, A.S.C., John Toll, A.S.C., Conrad Hall, A.S.C. and his father, the late Jordan Cronenweth, A.S.C.

**DONALD GRAHAM BURT (Production Designer)** marks his third collaboration with director David Fincher with The Social Network. He won the Academy Award(R), BAFTA, and Art Directors Guild Award for his work designing The Curious Case of Benjamin Button. He also designed Zodiac.

He has collaborated with Wayne Wang on several films, starting with The Joy Luck Club, which marked Burt's feature film debut as a production designer. He also worked on Wang's Because of Winn-Dixie, The Center of the World, and Anywhere But Here. He served as production designer on Davis Guggenheim's documentary It Might Get Loud.

Burt designed the sets for two John Smith films, A Cool Dry Place and Dangerous Minds, and Peter Kominsky's White Oleander.

His other credits include Mike Newell's critically acclaimed thriller Donnie Brasco, starring Al Pacino and Johnny Depp.

**ANGUS WALL, A.C.E. (Editor)** is a feature film editor and founder of Rock Paper Scissors (a commercial editorial company), a52 (a VFX boutique), Elastic (a design studio), and Datalab (a data management company for digital film production).

Wall created these Los Angeles service firms for television and film after leaving Propaganda Films in 1992, where he worked for five years. Propaganda was co-founded by director David Fincher.

Wall continued to collaborate with Fincher post-Propaganda on the director's films and commercials. He was nominated for an Academy Award(R), Eddie, and BAFTA for his work editing *The Curious Case of Benjamin Button*. He previously edited Fincher's crime drama about the infamous serial killer, *Zodiac*, and the thriller *Panic Room*. He was an editorial consultant on his film *Fight Club* and main title editor on Fincher's thriller, *Se7en*. He also edited John Woo's *Hostage* and did the trailer and ads for George Lucas' *Star Wars: Episode I - The Phantom Menace* in 1999.

Additionally, he has edited hundreds of ads for international brands including Heineken "Beer Run" with Brad Pitt and Nike "Speedchain", both directed by Fincher. He received an Emmy Award for HBO's "Carnivale" main title sequence, which he designed and directed. Some of his commercial work include: Miller's "Alternative Fuels" commercial, directed by Errol Morris; Nike's "Y2K" directed by Spike Jonze; Timex's "Kung Fu" by director Tim Burton; and Levi's "Second Day" directed by Gus Van Sant.

**KIRK BAXTER (Editor)** was born and raised in Sydney, Australia. At the age of 17, he started his career in the film industry as an assistant editor on TV commercials. By age 23, he was editing commercials in London, New York and Los Angeles, where he currently lives with his wife and daughter. In 2006, he was invited to collaborate on his first feature film, *Zodiac*, with editor Angus Wall for director David Fincher. Baxter and Wall went on to co-edit *The Curious Case of Benjamin Button*, for which they were nominated for an Academy Award(R), Eddie, and BAFTA. Baxter is due to mark his fourth collaboration with Fincher with *The Girl With The Dragon Tattoo*.

**JACQUELINE WEST (Costume Designer)** recently completed work on Terrence Malick's *The Tree of Life*; her work was most recently seen in the Russell Crowe drama *State of Play*. Prior to that, West designed costumes for the David Fincher drama *The Curious Case of Benjamin Button*. For her work on that film, West received nominations for an Academy Award(R), a Costume Designers Guild Award and BAFTA. She is currently designing the costumes for *Water for Elephants* for director Francis Lawrence.

An Academy Award(R) nominee for her designs on *Quills* for director Philip Kaufman, West's other recent credits include Terrence Malick's *The New World*; *The Invasion*, which starred Nicole Kidman and Daniel Craig; *Lonely Hearts*, which starred John Travolta and James Gandolfini; the romance *Down in the Valley*; *The League of Extraordinary Gentlemen*, which starred Sean Connery; and *The Banger Sisters*, which starred Susan Sarandon and Goldie Hawn.