

**Brainstorm**  
M E D I A

Presents

# T H E G I R L

A Film by David Riker



**Starring:** Abbie Cornish, Will Patton and introducing Maritza Santiago Hernandez

**Directed by:** David Riker

**Running Time:** 94 minutes

**Rating:** Not Yet Rated

**Distributor:** Brainstorm Media

**Release Date:** in select New York and Los Angeles theatres for a one-week awards qualifying engagement on Friday, December 14<sup>th</sup>, followed by a full theatrical release in March 2013.

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*The Girl*

**CREW**

Written and Directed by DAVID RIKER

Produced by PAUL MEZEY

Executive Producers PHILIPP ENGLEHORN

NICK QUESTED

Line Producers BECKY GLUPCZYNSKI

RAFAEL CUERVO

Co-Producers DOUGLAS CUMMINS

CHRISTIAN VALDELIÈVRE

TANIA ZARAK

Director of Photography MARTIN BOEGE A.M.C.

Production Designer SALVADOR PARRA

Costume Designer MARIESTELA FERNANDEZ

Editors MALCOLM JAMIESON

STEPHANIE AHN

Music by JACOBO LIEBERMAN

LEONARDO HEIBLUM

Casting by CINDY TOLAN

VICKY BOONE

ALEJANDRO REZA

HANNE JIMENEZ TURCOTT

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**CAST**

(in order of appearance)

Ashley ABBIE CORNISH  
Manager GEOFFREY RIVAS  
Georgie AUSTIN WAYNE WEST  
Gloria ANNALEE JEFFERIES  
Tommy WILL PATTON  
Enriqueta GIOVANNA ZACARIAS  
Sally LUCI CHRISTIAN  
Isidro HAROLD TORRES  
Felix JAVIER ZARAGOZA  
Pancho ABEL LOPEZ MARROQUIN  
Rosa's Mother ANGELES CRUZ  
Rosa MARITZA SANTIAGO HERNANDEZ  
Border Agent RAUL CASTILLO  
Waitress HANNE JIMENEZ TURCOTT  
Car Wash Man HEBER GARNICA  
Cheko JOAQUIN MALDONADO BOLAÑOS  
Jesus Antonio PALEMÓN OLMEDO  
Migrant Mother MAGDALENA HEREDIA  
Prayer Man ANGEL ALONSO  
Beto LUIS FERNANDO PEÑA  
Paco OCTAVIO MANUEL CORRES POMBO  
Caretaker WAGIVE TURCOTT FIAT  
Edith ISABEL CRUZ DAZA  
Cecilia IVONNE CRUZ DAZA  
Police Official JOSE CARLOS RODRIGUEZ GUTIERREZ  
Ofelia LILIANA ALBERTO  
Grandmother ISABEL SANCHEZ LARA

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### **LOGLINE**

A single mother, struggling with the loss of her son to Social Services, feels trapped in the quicksand of her south Texas life. When her path collides with a young girl from Mexico, she is pulled into a life-changing journey, forcing her to confront the cycle of her past.

### **SYNOPSIS**

For two years Ashley Colton, a rough, ragged beauty in her mid-twenties, has walked a tightrope, trying to prove that she is fit to be a mother and regain custody of her son. She has survived on a series of minimum wage jobs and endured the probing scrutiny of home visits from Social Services. Cynical and embittered, she is convinced her son was taken because she is poor, and she carries a class rage that is difficult to control. But while Ashley sees herself as a victim, we see a woman who has lost her child because she is not ready to be a mother.

A surprise visit from her father, a truck driver living in Mexico, brings Ashley back into a turbulent and unresolved relationship. On a trip to Nuevo Laredo, she discovers that her father is smuggling immigrants across the border. Suddenly, in the vast, unforgiving landscape of south Texas, Ashley glimpses a solution to her problems and is lured by the prospect of easy money into the role of a coyote. Her improvised plan quickly goes awry, and Ashley finds herself stranded with a young girl whose mother disappeared in the late night river crossing. Failing in her attempts to abandon the girl, she begins a journey in search of the girl's missing mother.

Together with the girl, Ashley travels through the borderlands of Nuevo Laredo and along the banks of the Rio Grande, retracing the steps of the immigrant journey. When she finally learns that the girl's mother drowned, Ashley decides to bring the girl back to her village in southern Mexico. Along the way, she discovers something unexpected, something she didn't even know she had – her own mothering instinct.

## DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

Some years ago I traveled to the southwest to research a film about the US-Mexico border, and the uprooted men and women who risk their lives crossing it. While driving in south Texas, I got hopelessly lost in a maze of new housing developments. It was boom times then, and new houses rose up in every direction, giant billboards jutting up behind boundary walls, promising a piece of the American Dream.

On my way back to the highway, I came upon a rundown trailer park, and saw an Anglo woman walking to her rundown car. Behind her, just beyond reach, a wall rose up, and behind that, new houses as far the eye could see. Suddenly it dawned on me: the border was right here – in every billboard, each new subdivision, the endless rows of walls within walls.

I began to think about what it means to live in the very epicenter of the American Dream, and feel – not hope – but trapped. My focus shifted, and I began to imagine a film not simply about the borders of geography, but about human borders – of class, culture, attitudes and ideas. This was the starting point for *The Girl*.

First, the character of Ashley began to stir. Alone, separated from her child, she feels that the world is against her, and blames everyone but herself for her situation. Angry and mistrustful, she believes that all she lacks is money to escape the quicksand of her life. She makes a desperate choice, and the film traces the consequences of her decision.

Next came Ashley's counterpart in Rosa, a young girl who loses her mother while crossing the Rio Grande. At the border their two worlds collide, and the destiny of each is forever altered. Rosa wrestles with Ashley, forcing her for the first time to take responsibility for her actions. When Ashley finally brings the young girl back to her village, she is given the chance to return home herself, but now with the possibility of a different future.

Above all, the film is the story of a woman's awakening – to herself, her past, and to the world around her. It is a journey of redemption, from darkness to light. Ashley, from the north, can only move forward when she breaks the cycle of her past. Rosa, from the south, is the force that makes this possible.

In fits and starts an unlikely relationship develops between them, a relationship that neither expects and neither is looking for. But somehow, in spite of themselves, an Anglo woman from Texas and a young girl from the south of Mexico come together, change each other, and finally discover that they have something profoundly in common – that they are in a way sisters. Their relationship, and the journey they make, turns the central myth of the border upside down – that hope flows north.

Set in south Texas and the borderlands, *The Girl* is rooted in a desolate and hard reality – on both sides of the border. But the inspiration for the film has never been the extreme hardship or violence that flares up at this fault line between two worlds. Rather, the story is inspired by the deeper realities and truths of the border. The tone of the film is lyrical, rather than journalistic. I am not interested in the most sensational or violent aspects of the crossing, and have avoided those stories that grab

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headlines. It is a story of people whose lives are changed by crossing the border in both directions.

There is no doubt that over the past two decades the border has become increasingly dangerous. Thousands have died or been killed in the crossing. And it is just such a tragedy that sets in motion the story of *The Girl*. But the film is as much about a Texas woman's rebirth as it is about the death of a woman from southern Mexico. The heart of the story lies in the fact that these two events are profoundly connected.

When I say that the tone of the film is lyrical realism, I am not trying to soften or romanticize the hard realities that our characters confront. I am instead choosing a language – both in the story and in the way of telling it – that focuses on the humanity of our characters and seeks to express this in universal terms.

- David Riker -

## ABOUT THE PRODUCTION

### Origins

After completing his debut feature film *La Ciudad* (The City), which explored the experience of Latin American immigrants in New York City, filmmaker David Riker traveled to the US-Mexico border to better understand the lives of those who cross it. But rather than tell the familiar story of migrants crossing north in search of a better life, he chose to turn the story upside down, focusing instead on an American woman living in south Texas who crosses the border – south. In her journey from Texas to southern Mexico, against the very current of the migrant stream, *The Girl* offers an original, compelling tale, and one that turns the central myth of the border on its head. At the same time, it is a universal story of a woman’s awakening, and of the struggle to break free from the cycle of the past.

As he did in *La Ciudad*, Riker immersed himself deeply in the world of his characters, crisscrossing the borderlands over a two-year period, and listening to the stories of hundreds of migrants, smugglers, field and factory workers, and families on both sides of the border. In the course of his research, he was continually surprised by what he found, especially on the US side. In towns that represent the promise of prosperity to so many, the people actually living there were often frustrated and deeply disillusioned. “Though I had gone to the border to write a story rooted in the south,” says Riker, “my focus shifted, and I found myself increasingly wanting to understand what was happening in my own country, in the north.”

One reason for the frustration is economic. Even before the financial crisis, Riker sensed a growing feeling of vulnerability as people worked in nickel-and-dime jobs with little or no security. Another reason has to do with the way people live, the sense of isolation and loneliness he encountered. “Many people who visit the United States for the first time are struck by the fact that there are no public spaces to gather,” Riker says. “It is a country of highways, with everyone passing each other in cars. I started to write about a character who feels isolated and alone.”

In 2004, Riker moved to Oaxaca, in southern Mexico, and was struck by the extraordinary richness of cultural life and traditions. Even in the more remote villages, which have seen large numbers migrate to the north, life continues to revolve around the public square, and people’s relationship to their land and traditions remains vital. That the culture and traditions in Oaxaca have survived in spite of economic conditions was in sharp contrast to the US, where pursuit of material wealth is at the heart of the American Dream, but many live solitary and lonely lives. The idea that people north of the border – in the very places migrants risk their lives to reach – might feel not only disillusioned, but trapped, became an animating force behind the story.

Riker recalls an early moment in his research that brought this idea into focus. He had gotten lost in one of the new housing developments in South Texas. There were new homes as far as the eye could see, with billboards promising a piece of the American Dream jutting up behind the boundary walls. As he tried to find his way back to the highway, he came upon a trailer park and saw a young woman walking from her rundown trailer to her rundown car. “There was nothing unusual about the image. In

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many ways it's emblematic of the United States. But seeing her surrounded by endless walls and new developments struck me in an unexpected way, and expanded my conception of the border itself."

Slowly the character of Ashley began to stir. "What interested me was the idea that this woman feels trapped in the quicksand of her life," says Riker. "But because she has the attitude of a victim, blaming everyone but herself for her situation, she is unable to see a way out. This became for me the starting point for the story."

When Riker first began his research, the drug violence that is now endemic on the border was far less extreme, but the sense of danger was always present. However, he made a decision early on not to build his drama around the more sensational stories he encountered. "I knew that I wanted the story to exist below the headlines, and worked to chart a deeper narrative than the ones we see with increased frequency in the news." This was partly because Riker knew that such stories have already been told. But there was another reason: "It's a bit like cooking a soup," says Riker, "you have to be careful with the ingredients you use. Too much cayenne and you overwhelm the other flavors." In the end, Riker's script does deal directly with the subject of death at the border, but not in a sensational way. Says Riker: "The film is as much about a Texas woman's rebirth as it is about the death of a woman from southern Mexico."

Over the course of more than a dozen research trips, Riker made his way back and forth from San Isidro and Tijuana on the Pacific Coast to Brownsville and Matamoros on the Gulf. He eventually chose the Texas landscape – and the Rio Grande – over the desert border further west because of the powerful image that the river crossings evoked. Riker recalls the impact of the first time he observed a group of migrants crossing the river at night. He was invited after meeting the group at a migrant shelter in Nuevo Laredo, and admits that he expected a far more action-driven scene. But what happened at the river forced him to abandon a number of his preconceptions. "What struck me most was the silence," Riker recalls. "The migrants stood at the river's edge, a group of strangers more or less, and silently began to undress. I couldn't help but feel their shared sense of embarrassment, as well as fear." Riker watched the migrants, barebacked, wade into the river. "I knew from my work with immigrants in New York City that crossing the border changes a person, but I had never considered that the crossing itself could have such a deep meaning. There was something baptismal about it."

In Laredo, Riker was struck by the enormous number of tractor-trailers, backed up in line for miles. "The 18-wheelers were everywhere," he recalls, "parked on every corner, their engines idling in the sun." He knew that Laredo is one of the largest points-of-entry into the country, a gateway for goods assembled in Mexico's low-wage assembly plants, known as *maquiladoras*. But he wasn't prepared for the scale of it – nearly five thousand trucks cross a single bridge into Texas each day. For Riker, the image of trucks lined up as if on a conveyor belt was both powerful and surprising. Recalls Riker: "One day my producer Paul Mezey and I traveled a five kilometer stretch of the Rio Grande in a small boat with a fireman from Nuevo Laredo. Shockingly, one of their official responsibilities is to trawl for bodies in the river between the two Laredos. It was overwhelming." Though it was in the middle of the day there were migrants wading into the river all along the way. The fireman they were with had personally pulled more than 600 bodies from the river in the past



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fifteen years. “We turned a bend and the World Trade Bridge came into view, with this enormous line of trucks crossing north, their trailers loaded with goods, while all around us migrants were crossing carrying their clothes above their heads.” The contrast was striking. “I could never have imagined such a scene,” says Riker. “It brought home the fact that there is no real border for the large corporations.”

The character of Ashley’s father, Tommy, emerged from his research into the world of cross-border truck drivers. Spending time with these men in Laredo’s truck stops, he was surprised by how they seemed to embody the very essence of what it means to be an immigrant today – a life uprooted, solitary, and separated from family. Says Riker, “Tommy offered me a way to explore these themes in the context of an American family, set on the shifting fault lines of the borderlands.”

### Casting

Riker knew that the role of Ashley would be challenging for any actress. In addition to the specific demands of the character, he needed an actress willing to learn Spanish and work a grueling schedule far from the comforts of home. “She would literally be in every scene of the movie,” Riker says. Above all, he was looking for a young actress who could disappear into the role, someone who possessed a combination of physical strength, vulnerability, and great sensitivity.

Riker had long been an admirer of Abbie Cornish’s work and was convinced she was right for the part. Says Riker, “I had seen all of Abbie’s films and was astounded by her depth and range. Watching her in films like *Somersault*, *Candy*, and *Bright Star*, I had the sense that Abbie was capable of anything, the outcome was never certain. It’s a testament to the extraordinary interior life that she brings to every role.”

Riker remembers their first meeting at a hotel in New York where Abbie was finishing work on the film *W.E.* The shoot had gone late and their meeting was pushed until late at night. “Abbie was tired, and fighting a cold,” Riker recalls, “but I knew immediately that I had found Ashley. She was so grounded, and spoke about the character with such depth and understanding.” Riker was impressed with the seriousness of her commitment. She told him that she didn’t simply want to learn enough Spanish to deliver her lines, but wanted to learn the language as fully as possible, to really feel the meaning of what she was saying.

Over the next six months, Riker and Abbie continued to discuss the story and the character, as Abbie began work on the two biggest challenges ahead of her: learning Spanish and mastering the south Texas dialect. The challenges were linked as Ashley’s Spanish and English needed to be rooted in the same reality. In his research in south Texas, Riker frequently met Anglos who spoke Spanish and their accents were very specific, learned not in school but from living in the unique cultural world of the borderlands. “Abbie also understood that her character has learned Spanish from the world she lives in, growing up with Mexicans and Chicanos in south Texas, and her accent should reflect this,” says Riker. To help with this, Abbie worked with a Mexican American tutor from Los Angeles, whose accent was very similar to what Ashley’s would be.

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To help with Abbie's Texas English, Riker shared audio recordings of south Texas women he had interviewed during his research. "One of the revelations in my research was the fact that few of the women I spoke with had really strong accents. Almost none spoke with the kind of west-Texas drawl that is so common in films," says Riker. Because of this, Riker and Abbie decided that Ashley's accent should be subtle, reflecting a sense of place, but avoiding what has become almost a cliché in the movies. The recordings were not only valuable for dialect purposes, but on a deeper level too. "All of the women I recorded had experiences similar to Ashley's," says Riker. "Some were teenage mothers, and most of them were struggling just to make ends meet. But there was a strength about them, a feeling that they were survivors."

While Abbie was preparing for the role of Ashley in Los Angeles, Riker was busy casting for her young counterpart, Rosa, in Oaxaca. He knew it would not be easy. To begin with, he wanted a girl whose life was similar to Rosa's, a Oaxacan girl, with indigenous features, who had never left home, but whose mother or father may very well be working as a migrant in the United States. "I never considered looking for a young 'actress' in Mexico City." He also wanted a girl who embodied what he saw as Rosa's three essential qualities: strength, light, and depth. "She had to be tough, strong enough to be the motor force of the film, and able to go up against the formidable Ashley. She also had to be full of life, mischievous, and easily express her feelings. And finally, she needed to have a vivid interior life, we needed to be able to see and feel an ocean of emotions inside her."

As with *La Ciudad*, the casting process was grueling. Riker, working with a local actress, Hanne Jimenez Turcott, reached out to schools in the areas surrounding Oaxaca City, holding endless meetings with school directors, teachers, and parent committees, hoping to win permission to observe girls in class. In all they visited more than 60 schools in as many villages.

Every girl who auditioned seemed to represent a trade-off. Says Riker, "The girls with the most indigenous features were often shy. I would find a girl with light and depth but she wouldn't have the strength. And occasionally I'd find a girl with all three qualities only to find that she was incapable of concentration." The process went on for months. Between winter 2009 and summer 2010, Riker saw more than 3,000 girls and brought nearly 400 in front of the camera.

Then in August, he wrote to producer Paul Mezey, telling him about the girl he had just encountered, Maritza Santiago Hernandez:

...a remarkable girl, full of charisma, light, and life. She is energetic, rebellious, and full of spark. She also has real strength, making her a force to reckon with. It's easy to envision her as the engine of the story, pushing back against Ashley – steering her, manipulating her – to get what she needs. And she does this instinctively, and most of the time believably. She is utterly relaxed, with not a trace of shyness about her... All of these qualities tend toward brightness, and would help to counterpoint the darker aspects of the story. Maritza has the quality of a survivor, rather than a victim.

Finally, Riker had found his Rosa.

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With Maritza cast, Riker began an intensive dramatic workshop, meeting with Maritza regularly over the next three months. “The function of the workshop was extremely broad,” Riker says. “To help encourage Maritza’s natural talents, to help strengthen her concentration skills, and to deepen her understanding of the story.” But it was also to help Maritza and her family prepare for the immense challenges and lifestyle changes on the horizon. Starting with games and exercises, they eventually began to read the script, ending each session by making a drawing of the scene they had explored that day. By the end of the workshop, Maritza had literally drawn the entire story of the film.

The effect of the workshop on Maritza was visible and profound. Not only did she have a command of the screenplay, but she understood the story in a very intimate and visceral way. Riker was astounded when he discovered that Maritza had committed not only her own lines of dialogue to memory, but Ashley’s too. “By the end of the workshop I felt that she was truly ready for anything,” Riker says. All that was left was for Maritza to meet Abbie.

Riker describes the first meeting as deeply emotional for everyone. Though Abbie and Maritza had exchanged photographs, they knew little about one another. Riker admits being nervous about their first encounter. He had arranged for them to meet in the main plaza in Oaxaca City. When Riker and Abbie arrived, Maritza, who was with her mother, ran up and threw her arms around Abbie. “She hugged Abbie with such deep affection,” recalls Riker. “She had been waiting for this moment a long time.”

Abbie’s visit to Oaxaca was above all a chance for her and Maritza to begin exploring their relationship outside of the confines of the screenplay. Says Riker, “The most important thing was to create a space where both felt safe and relaxed, and which allowed them to begin exploring the relationship together.” Riker recalls an especially moving scene when they visited the orphanage where one of the scenes would be filmed. Riker had visited many times and knew the young girls by name, but being there with Abbie and Maritza was completely different. “The girls surrounded them, took them by hand to show them the world of the orphanage. They were excited for the attention, but also curious. Curious about Maritza, with her long braid of hair, since they all have their hair cut short. And drawn to Abbie, with her blond hair and radiant smile, speaking to them in her newly-learned Spanish,” recalls Riker. When one of the girls learned that Abbie was a singer (in fact she is a rapper), they pleaded for a song. “It was an incredible moment, watching Abbie rap to all these young girls.”

Before Abbie returned to Los Angeles, they traveled together to the village of San Juan. Maritza had already visited the village with Riker several times as part of her preparation, and she was able to lead Abbie around, taking her from family to family, “as if it really was her home,” Riker remembers. For Riker it felt like a turning point of sorts: “Watching Abbie and Maritza in the village, I could tell that something special was happening between them. Though we still had a long road ahead, I felt that the most important work was complete.

Riker had first visited the village of San Juan Chicomezuchil in 2005. Situated atop a mountain in Oaxaca’s Sierra Norte region, it has a population of only about 300

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people. Its tiny size, high elevation, and geographic remoteness make it a striking experience for first-time visitors. “It’s a village literally above the clouds,” says Riker. “It’s hard not to feel that you’re entering another world.” After spending a weekend there, Riker knew he wanted to stage the end of the film there. It seemed a perfect place to serve as Rosa’s village.

Obtaining permission from the village was a learning experience in itself. San Juan is one of the many villages in Oaxaca that is run according to old, indigenous practices called *usos y costumbres* (“uses and customs”) in which all decisions governing village life are made by a “popular assembly.” “It is actually the most profound expression of direct democracy I have ever seen,” says Riker. Rather than simply being granted permission to film by the local authorities, the entire village gathers to discuss the proposal and make a collective decision.

Says Riker, “In a very real way, the needs of the village coincided with my own approach to filmmaking. A collaborative relationship between the film and community is the bedrock of my work.” Over time, Riker spent time with many of the families in the village, listening to their stories and building trust. Eventually, he began to tell them the outline of the script, so they could see concretely how their participation could be meaningful and how the film spoke of a reality that was relevant to their lives. When Riker was finally invited to present the project to the assembly, he began by screening his previous film, *La Ciudad*. He then told the story of *The Girl* to the assembled village. It was an unforgettable experience. “Everyone in the village was present, many of them elderly, and almost everyone had some family members who had migrated to Mexico City or to the north. They understood the themes of the film right away, the idea that though the village is poor in some ways, it also has great wealth – in its land, culture and traditions. It was extremely moving to see the community embrace the project and invite us to set our story in their home.”

With his leads cast, Riker turned to the role of Tommy. “In some ways, Ashley’s relationship with her father is at the emotional center of the film,” says Riker. “Though she doesn’t share as much screen time with him as she does with Rosa, her relationship with her father hangs over the film like a dark shadow.” In actor Will Patton Riker found an ideal collaborator. “Tommy is a very challenging character. A free spirit, and immensely charismatic, he has an irresistible, boyish charm. But beneath the surface he’s very complex, and dark. Will is an actor’s actor, with immense experience both on stage and film, and he brought the character to life.”

### Creative Team

Riker next began assembling his creative team. First on his list was the Mexican production designer Salvador Parra. Riker had long admired Parra’s work on such films as *Before Night Falls*, *Herod’s Law*, and *Volver*. In an early trip to the border, Riker and Parra began to define the fundamental design choices for the film. Recalls Riker, “Border cities are by definition chaotic and full of contradictions – they literally reflect the collision of two very different worlds. Both of us felt that our biggest challenge would be trying to simplify the visual landscape, eliminating elements, so that we would have control over the visual design.” Together they described the visual style they were striving for as ‘lyrical realism’ in which the visual

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elements reveal deeper aspects of the story being told.

For his costume designer, Riker turned to Mariestela Fernandez, one of Mexico's leading designers and a frequent collaborator with Parra. Together they reviewed hundreds of research photographs looking for patterns in the clothing of the border, both for the migrants who are trying to cross, as well as the residents who live there. Interestingly, they discovered the same collision and visual clutter that define the landscape, and so the principle of eliminating and simplifying was extended to the costume design and wardrobe.

Finally, Riker invited the young Mexican cinematographer Martin Boege to complete the creative team. Boege's striking, poetic work on the film *El Violin* had caught his eye, and they were able to spend nearly a month working together in developing the visual language for the film. Their goal was to create a visual realism without resorting to the current convention of a constantly moving camera. "We rejected early on the convention of realism today, the so-called 'cinema verité'," Riker says, "and instead sought clarity in the composition and choreography." They wanted, as Riker puts it, "that all the photographic choices would combine to give poetic expression to the emotional and psychological mood of the characters." This approach can be seen in the limited palette and use of closed framing in Texas, which heighten Ashley's sense of being trapped, in the careful use of lenses to subtly express Ashley's awakening to the world around her, and in the deliberate choreography of actors and camera that allows us to feel the gradual change in her relationship with Rosa.

### Losing the Border

By late 2010, the cast and crew had been assembled and the film was ready to go into production. But an upsurge in violence had erupted in the border region, and was now extending throughout the state of Tamaulipas where the film was set to be shot. As a consequence, the border itself, at least on the Mexican side, was no longer viable, both for security and insurance reasons. "There were almost weekly reports," Riker recalls, "of the most gruesome attacks in and around Nuevo Laredo, where almost all of our locations were based. It would have been irresponsible to bring the film there." Even had they wanted to, no insurance company was willing to insure the production.

The team persisted, imploring the insurance companies to consider other areas of Mexico. Finally one of the insurers relented, allowing them to film in Oaxaca, far from the border, but only because Riker had been living there for six years and was able to assure them that it was a world apart from the violence in the north.

Suddenly, the crew was faced with a new challenge: how to recreate the life and feeling of a northern Mexican border town in a place that truly was a world apart. Recreating the borderlands – "creating a border away from the border," in Riker's words – became the central creative challenge for Riker and his team.

Some of the locations created purely geographic challenges, and among these was the task of finding a replacement for the iconic Rio Grande where several critical scenes are set. Riker traveled across the state of Oaxaca scouting rivers and soon discovered that the seasonal changes made scouting almost impossible. "It was the late fall and

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the rivers were all at their highest level, making it extremely difficult to judge what they would look and feel like when we would be filming in the spring, traditionally the driest time of year.” The challenge was to find a river that was big enough to convincingly replace the Rio Grande, but not too big to seem implausible in the story. Eventually, Riker learned that there were several estuaries that fed into the Pacific, whose size and depth remained almost unchanged throughout the year. In the end, the production filmed at two of the estuaries in the Isthmus of Tehuantepec.

Parra had his work cut out for him, starting with Nuevo Laredo’s bustling central plaza. As with so many small towns in Mexico, public life in Nuevo Laredo revolves around its plaza, and it was an important set in the script. Having lost Nuevo Laredo, Parra needed to recreate the plaza, a daunting task, but one that also allowed him to build the elements from scratch.

Riker and Para eventually chose a plaza in a small town in the Isthmus that was virtually abandoned, and Parra transformed it in stages. He created facades for the surrounding restaurants and bars, with the loud signage of the border, and then added dozens of street carts, and shoeshine and newspaper stalls. At the very center of the plaza he took an abandoned kiosk and redesigned it, transforming it into a bus terminal. “By the time he was done,” says Riker, “we had this extraordinary, bustling border plaza that felt authentic to Nuevo Laredo yet was visually controlled.”

Another challenge was the actual checkpoint – the border crossing itself. Even though the production could no longer film on the Mexican side of the border, the team still assumed they would be able shoot on the U.S. side with the support of the Department of Homeland Security and the Immigration and Customs Enforcement. But just ten days before they were scheduled to shoot, they were notified that they no longer had permission to film at the border crossing. “It felt like the final irony,” says Riker, “losing the one piece of the actual border that we knew was solid.”

They were filming in Austin, Texas, at the time – a four-hour drive from the border – and had just a few days to figure out how they were going to shoot a border checkpoint scene without going near the border. Parra demonstrated the creative vision and problem solving that has made him Mexico’s leading production designer. After an afternoon scout with his camera and sketchbook, he offered what seemed like an improbable solution: he would transform the garage across the street from the hotel into one of the busiest border crossings in the world. “I went outside and looked across the street,” remembers Riker, “and saw that he was proposing the garage entrance to the performing arts center. And that’s where we filmed, in a set improvised by Parra, a stone’s throw from the hotel, that might convince even locals in Laredo of its authenticity.”

### Producing Team

The story Riker set out to tell would not have been possible without the special collaboration with his producer, Paul Mezey, of Journeyman Pictures. The two of them first worked together on *La Ciudad* and over the years have developed a number of projects together. “Paul is far more than a producer. He is a creative collaborator in the deepest sense and a tireless champion of the projects he undertakes,” says Riker.

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In fact, Mezey was the first person Riker told the story to before setting out to write *The Girl*, and the two of them made a number of early research trips to the borderlands together.

Given the complexity of filming a production in two countries, and along the border between them, it was essential to find a strong producing team in Mexico. Mezey enlisted the support of line producer Becky Glupczynski, with whom he had worked on *Maria Full of Grace*, because of her considerable production experience in Mexico. Glupczynski in turn brought on board Mexican line producer Rafael Cuervo, with whom she had worked on *Frida*. One of Mexico's most respected line producers, Cuervo brought invaluable experience and support to the project. Having overseen immensely complex productions in Mexico including *Master and Commander: The Far Side of the World* and *Troy*, Cuervo was able to assemble one of the country's finest crews, which proved critical in achieving the ambitious and complex schedule of *The Girl* – nearly 70 locations across two countries in 40 days.

Cinereach Films (headed by Philipp Engelhorn) and Goldcrest Films (headed by Nick Quested) teamed up to provide essential creative and financial support for the project; both were attracted to that rare kind of film where the craftsmanship, the power of storytelling, and a humanistic vision all converged to trigger an emotional and provocative experience. The parties sought to establish a formal co-production with Mexico and found like-minded partners in Christian Valdelievre of Lulu Producciones and Tania Zarak of Bonita Films, both based in Mexico City. Valdelievre and Zarak secured co-financing partners through Article 226, a Mexico tax incentive established to support film production in the country, bringing on the vital backing of Grupo Modelo, Grupo Cuervo, Cablecom, Cinopolis Producciones, and Citelis Espacios Sin Limites.

## CAST BIOGRAPHIES

### **ABBIE CORNISH - Ashley**

Abbie Cornish, a native Australian, is an acclaimed young actress best known for her starring roles in the independent films *Candy* (2006) opposite Heath Ledger and *Somersault* (2004) with Sam Worthington, both Australian productions that garnered her Best Lead Actress awards from the Film Critics Circle of Australia. She was also awarded Best Lead Actress from the Australian Film Institute for *Somersault* and received a nomination for *Candy*. It was these two roles that earned her great notice in the U.S.

Most recently, Cornish wrapped production on the indie drama film, *The Girl*. The film features a mother, played by Cornish, forced into running illegal immigrants across the border in order to protect her son from Child Protective Services.

Cornish was last seen starring in *W.E.*, a romantic drama focusing on the affair between King Edward VIII and American divorcée Wallis Simpson and a contemporary romance between a married woman and a Russian security guard. Cornish leads the cast as Wally Winthrop. The film premiered at the Venice International Film Festival as well as the Toronto International Film Festival. The Weinstein Company distributed the film in the U.S. on December 9, 2011.

In March of 2011, Cornish starred in Warner Brothers' 3D sci-fi and action film *Sucker Punch*, helmed by Zack Snyder and just prior, Cornish was the female lead with Robert De Niro and Bradley Cooper in *Limitless*. Relativity Media released the film nationwide on March 18, 2011. In 2010, Cornish lent her voice to the animated film *Legends of the Guardians: The Owls of Ga'Hoole*, directed by Zack Snyder.

In fall 2009, Cornish starred in Jane Campion's period drama *Bright Star*, which was a true life adaptation of famous poet John Keats' love affair with a young woman named 'Fanny Brawne'. Cornish received a British Independent Film Award nomination for Best Actress and received accolades from some of the most established critics in the US, UK and Australia. *Bright Star* premiered at the 2009 Cannes Film Festival and was nominated for a Golden Palm Award at the Festival.

Cornish's acting debut came at the age of fifteen on the Australian Broadcasting Company's television series *Children's Hospital*. Shortly thereafter, she co-starred on the ABC series *Wildside*, which garnered Cornish her first AFI honor in 1999. In 2003, Cornish earned her second AFI nomination for her guest role on the ABC mini-series *Marking Time*. She also appeared in Ridley Scott's, *A Good Year* opposite Russell Crowe.

In 2007, she starred opposite Cate Blanchett as the Queen's favorite "lady-in-waiting" in Shekhar Kapur's *Elizabeth: The Golden Age* for Universal Pictures. In 2008 Cornish starred as the female lead in the Paramount Pictures drama *Stop Loss* directed by Kimberly Peirce (*Boys Don't Cry*).



**WILL PATTON - Tommy**

Will Patton is an award-winning actor with extensive experience in film, theatre, and television. Patton recently appeared in Kelly Reichardt's critically celebrated *Meek's Cutoff*, alongside Michelle Williams and Paul Dano; Antoine Fuqua's *Brooklyn's Finest*; *The Fourth Kind*, with Milla Jovovich; *American Violet*, with Alfre Woodard; and *Wendy and Lucy*, also with Michelle Williams. His past credits include *The Mothman Prophecies*, *Remember the Titans*, *Armageddon*, *Gone In 60 Seconds*, *Entrapment* and *The Postman*. Patton has worked with directors Martin Scorsese (*After Hours*) and Nicholas Roeg (*Cold Heaven*) and has starred in a number of festival-award-winning independent films, including *The Rapture*, *In the Soup*, *The Paint Job*, *Toll Booth* and *The Spitfire Grill*, which won the Audience Award at the 1996 Sundance Film Festival.

Currently Patton plays Captain Weaver in TNT's mega-hit series, Steven Spielberg's *Falling Skies*, which will premiere its second season in June. Patton also starred in the highly acclaimed CBS series *The Agency* and was seen in CBS's *Numb3rs* and Steven Spielberg's *Into The West* on TNT. Among his many stage performances, Patton played the leading role in Sam Shepard's *A Lie Of The Mind* and twice won the prestigious Obie Award for Best Actor for his performances in Richard Foreman's *What Did He See* and Shepard's *Fool For Love*. Patton has also won multiple awards for his audiobook recordings, which span more than 50 titles and include Jack Kerouac's *On The Road*, James Dickey's *Deliverance*, and Al Gore's *The Assault on Reason*.

**MARITZA SANTIAGO HERNÁNDEZ - Rosa**

Maritza Santiago, resident of Niños Héroes, Santa María de Atzompa, was selected to star in the film after more than 3,000 girls participated in the casting throughout Oaxaca's Central Valleys.

## CREW BIOGRAPHIES

### **DAVID RIKER – Writer/Director**

David Riker is a New York-based filmmaker, born in Boston, and raised in London. His debut feature, *The City (La Ciudad)*, filmed in New York's Latin American immigrant community, premiered at the Toronto International Film Festival and screened at Sundance and numerous festivals internationally. The film won awards at the SXSW, Havana, San Sebastian, and Human Rights Watch International Film Festivals; and the Open Palm at the Gotham Awards.

David received the Waldo Salt Screenwriting Award at the 2008 Sundance Film Festival as co-writer of the feature film *Sleep Dealer* and has won the Sundance/NHK Filmmakers Award for *The Girl*. He is the recipient of Rockefeller, Guggenheim, and Annenberg Fellowships.

### **PAUL MEZEY – Producer**

Paul Mezey is a New York based independent producer and founder of Journeyman Pictures. Mr. Mezey has produced a number of critically acclaimed and award winning films including *Maria Full of Grace* which received a 2005 Academy Award Nomination for Best Actress in a Leading Role and *Half Nelson* starring Ryan Gosling which received a 2007 Academy Award Nomination for Best Actor in a Leading Role.

His current projects include David Riker's *The Girl* starring Abbie Cornish, Benh Zeitlin's *Beasts of the Southern Wild*, which won the Grand Jury Prize at the 2012 Sundance Film Festival, Tom Gilroy's *The Cold Lands* and Joshua Marston's *The Forgiveness of Blood*, which won the Silver Bear for Best Screenplay at the 2011 Berlin Film Festival. In addition to executive producing Mike Cahill's *Another Earth*, other films produced by Mr. Mezey include: Ryan Fleck & Anna Boden's baseball odyssey *Sugar*, Sophie Barthes' feature debut *Cold Souls* starring Paul Giamatti, Emily Watson, and David Strathairn, Azazel Jacobs' *Momma's Man*, Jim McKay's *Angel Rodriguez*, *Everyday People*, and *Our Song*, Tom Gilroy's *Spring Forward* starring Ned Beatty and Liev Schreiber, David Riker's *The City (La Ciudad)*, Mandy Stein's Mississippi Blues documentary *You See Me Laughin'* and *The Ballad of Ramblin' Jack* directed by Aiyana Elliott, winner of the Artistic Achievement Award for documentary film at the 2000 Sundance Film Festival.

### **PHILIPP ENGELHORN – Executive Producer**

Philipp Engelhorn founded and currently directs the film foundation and not-for-profit production company, Cinereach, which supports and produces vital stories, artfully told. Since 2006 Cinereach has funded over 100 projects by independent filmmakers with a total of over \$5m in grants. One of the latest Cinereach produced films, *Beasts of the Southern Wild*, premiered and won the grand jury prize at the 2012 Sundance Film Festival and was picked up by Fox Searchlight. David Riker's *The Girl* is the

## *The Girl*

first production of Cinereach Films, a private film financier and investment advisor Philipp also founded and directs. He is a member of the Board of Directors of Synergos, a non-profit dedicated to eliminating global poverty and social injustice by changing the systems that keep people in poverty. He also serves on the Founders Board of the Patrons of the Pinakothek in Munich as well as on the board of Cinema Conservancy. His executive producing credits also include Cameron Yates' *The Canal Street Madam*.

### **NICK QUESTED – Executive Producer**

Nick Quested has been Executive Director of Goldcrest since 2005, and has overseen the development and growth of the Goldcrest integrated companies developing the film finance, sales and production lines of business in the company. His most recent credits as producer include *Elvis & Anabelle* (2007), directed by Will Geiger and starring *Gossip Girl's* Blake Lively and Max Minghella. Executive Producer of *The Winning Season* (2009), starring Sam Rockwell and Emma Roberts, the Sundance Grand Jury documentary winner *Restrepo* (2010), *Homework* (2010) Sundance Narrative Selection of 2011, starring Emma Roberts and Freddie Highmore, *The Girl* (2011), starring Abbie Cornish, and *Dark Horse* (2011) starring Christopher Walken and Mia Farrow.

Born in London, Nick began his film career as an apprentice editor. He attended NYU's The Tisch School of the Arts. Nick is an award winning director (MTV: Most Ass Kicking Video, The Source: Best Video, MVPA: runner up Best Hip Hop Video) having directed over 100 music videos and commercials for world renowned artists such as Sting, Dr. Dre, P.Diddy, Shaq, Master P, Trick Daddy, T.I. and Brandy, and brands such as Sprite, And1, Nike, Lexus and Landrover. Nick also wrote and directed the feature documentary, *Voice of a Nation* starring Ice Cube, Public Enemy and KRS One which is showcased at the Rock 'n Roll Hall of Fame.

### **DOUGLAS CUMMINS – Co-Producer**

Established in 1997 by Douglas Cummins and Rocio Freire-Bernat, Axiom Films is a leading London based producer / distributor.

Over the past decade as a producer, Axiom has steadily built a reputation for taking creative risks, working with the new talent and original ideas in producing films from all parts of the world including the Australian cult classic *The Boys* by Rowan Woods, Pascal Bonitzer's *Small Cuts* with Kristen Scott Thomas, Ivan Sen's Berlin Film Festival award-winning *Beneath Clouds*, from Argentina, Pablo Trapero's acclaimed films *Familia Rodante* and *Born & Bred* and, most recently *Broken Lines*, the UK's sole entry at the 2008 Venice Film Festival.

As a distributor, Axiom directly exploits all right in films acquired and is widely respected for its innovative and bespoke marketing that includes distinctive campaigns for a range of acclaimed independent films such as the Academy Award nominated *Half Nelson* and *Frozen River* and Jun Ichikawa's adaptation of *Tony Takitani* by Haruki Murakami.

## *The Girl*

Consistently adding to what is an already significant catalogue that includes important films from American directors John Sayles, David O. Russell, Ryan Fleck, Courtney Hunt and Ramin Bahrani as well as established auteur filmmakers like Tsai Min-Liang, Pablo Trapero and Jose Luis Guerin, the company also owns a major part of German filmmaker Wim Wender's body of work including all the director's defining early films as well as enduring classics such as *Alice in the Cities*, *Paris, Texas*, *Wings of Desire*, *Buena Vista Social Club*.

### **CHRISTIAN VALDELIÈVRE – Co-Producer**

Christian Valdelièvre is an independent movie producer and was previously an investment banker for 18 years. He started producing movies in 1999 with *Sexo, Pudor, y Lágrimas*, which became one of the highest grossing films in the history of Mexican cinema. He then produced several other movies including the award-winning *Temporada de Patos* (directed by Fernando Eimbcke) participant in Cannes, and co-produced *La Zona* (directed by Rodrigo Pla), winner of the Golden Lion for best new director at the Venice Film Festival 2007.

That same year he produced *Lake Tahoe*, Fernando Eimbcke's second feature, that was in the Official Competition of the 58th Berlinale, where it won the Alfred Bauer Prize and the FIPRESCI prize. Invited to the 47th Semaine de la Critique in Cannes as Revelation of the Year. Winner of the Ariel for Best Movie and Best Director. Winner of best movie in the festivals of Cartagena, Pune, Quebec and Quito. Invited to more than 80 festivals worldwide and sold to more than 30 countries.

In 2009, produced two of the short features of the movie *Revolución* that had its world Premiere at the 60th Berlinale and was released in Mexico during the fall of 2010. He produced *Vete mas lejos, Alicia*, the first feature film of Elisa Miller (winner of the Palme d'Or for her short in 2007), which competed at the Rotterdam, Toulouse, Morelia and Sarajevo film festivals.

Recently he produced *La Demora* (directed by Rodrigo Plá), which participated at the 2012 Berlin Film Festival where it received two awards.

### **TANIA ZARAK – Co-Producer**

Tania Zarak was born in Mexico City. In 2004 she moved to New York City and began her career at Robert De Niro and Jane Rosenthal's production company, Tribeca Films. Since then she has worked in the development and production of films such as *Pan's Labyrinth*, *The Departed*, *Backyard* and an adaptation of Gabriel García Márquez' *News of a Kidnapping*, amongst others. In 2007 she returned to Mexico to preside over Argos Cine, the largest independent film studio in Latin America. Two years later she left the position and created Bonita Films.

Bonita Films is based both in Mexico and New York and focuses on projects of international character. Bonita's first feature film is *The Girl*, directed by David Riker and co-produced alongside Journeyman Pictures and Lulú Producciones. Another Bonita credit is the Uruguayan-Mexican film *Tanta Agua*, directed by Ana Guevara

## *The Girl*

and Leticia Jorge, and recipient of the Hubert Bals and Ibermedia Funds, which is currently in post-production. Bonita's equally successful short film slate includes *Tierra y Pan*, winner of the Golden Lion at the 2008 Venice Film Festival, and *The Second Bakery Attack*, directed by Carlos Cuarón, based on a short story by Haruki Murakami, starring Kirsten Dunst and Brian Geraghty.

### **BECKY GLUPCZYNSKI – Line Producer**

Becky Glupczynski is a New York-based Line Producer. She began working in film and television working as a production assistant on the long-running educational television program *Mr. Rogers' Neighbourhood*. She returned to New York and started working with independent filmmakers on projects such as *The American Astronaut* written and directed by Cory McAbee, which premiered at the 2001 Sundance Film Festival, and *World Traveler*, which premiered at Sundance in 2002.

In 2001, she traveled to Mexico City for the film *Frida*, and she began working on international co-productions in Latin America. She worked in Ecuador and Colombia on *Maria Full of Grace*, which won the Audience Award at Sundance in 2004 and led to an Oscar nomination for its lead actress Catalina Sandino. In 2008, she teamed up with writer/director Cory McAbee again to produce *Stingray Sam*, which premiered at the 2009 Sundance Film Festival.

Most recently, she worked in Oaxaca, Mexico with Writer/Director David Riker on *The Girl*, starring Abbie Cornish to be released in 2012, as well as the upcoming Michel Gondry film, *The We and the I*. Other feature credits include *Angel Rodriguez* and *Everyday People*, written and directed by Jim McKay, *Purple Violets*, written and directed by Edward Burns, and *Uncertainty*, written and directed by Scott McGehee and David Siegel.

### **RAFAEL CUERVO – Line Producer**

Rafael Cuervo began his career in cinema in the 1990's in a number of Mexican films such as *Bandidos* by Luis Estrada and *Dos Crimenos* by Roberto Sneider. Recently he has produced *La Zona* by Rodrigo Plá, *Arráncame la Vida* by Roberto Sneider and *Abel* by Diego Luna.

He has been a key part of international productions shot in Mexico, working in films like *Titanic* by James Cameron, *Jarhead* by Sam Mendes, *Frida* by Julie Taymor, *Master and Commander* by Peter Weir and *Troy* by Wolfgang Petersen. Recently he has finished work in *The Girl* by David Riker and the upcoming *Elysium* by Neil Blomkamp.

In 2010 starts his own production company: Sin Sentido Films. Along with his team he has produced titles like *Mariachi Gringo* by Tom Gustafson, recently winning the award for Best Feature and Best Actress for Martha Higareda at the 2012 Guadalajara Film Festival; and *Espacio Interior* by Kai Parlange, which won the Audience Award and Best Actor Award for Kuno Becker at the same festival.

### **MARTÍN BOEGE A.M.C. – Director of Photography**

Martín Boege Paré was born in Mexico City in 1977 and is a graduate from the Centro de Capacitación Cinematográfica (CCC) and The Film Academy in Budapest, Hungary. His documentary *La Requisa*, funded by a grant of the FONCA, won the jury prize at the Las Americas Film Festival in Austin Texas. His first feature as D.O.P. was *Noticias Lejanas*, directed by Ricardo Benet, winning the Mayahuel prize for best cinematography at the Guadalajara Film Festival and earning a nomination to the Ariel award. He was also nominated for the film *El Violín*, directed by Francisco Vargas which won him a number of awards for cinematography at various international film festivals.

He started a collaboration with Carlos Carrera on the HBO series *Capadocia*, later filming with him *Backyard-El Traspatio*, which won him the Ariel for best cinematography, and *De la Infancia*. His work has been published on the Kodak World Cinematographers Calendar and Kodak's Incamera magazine. His documentary work includes *Ladrones Viejos*, *El Informe Toledo* and *Su Mercé*. He has collaborated with his father Eckart Boege on several documentaries on eco-development in indigenous communities. His television work includes *Mujeres Asesinas* and *Gritos de Muerte y Libertad*.

*Nómadas*, *La Cebra*, *La Sargento Matacho* and *The Girl* are his most recent works. He's currently collaborating with director Felipe Cazals.

### **SALVADOR PARRA – Production Designer**

Salvador Parra is one of the most sought after production designers in Mexico. His credits include: *Before Night Falls*, *Volver*, *Herod's Law*, *The Shanghai Spell*, *Soldiers of Salamina*, and *Manolete*. Salvador has twice won the Ariel for Best Production Design, most recently for *Arráncanme La Vida (Tear This Heart Out)*, and has received another three nominations. He also won the Goya Award for Best Production Design for *The Shanghai Spell* and received a nomination for *Volver*.

### **MARIESTELA FERNÁNDEZ – Costume Designer**

Mariestela Fernández started out as an actress in 1977, getting her dramatic education in Mexico, London & Madrid, starting out in Costume Design soon after that. In 1984 she finished her studies of Fashion Design in the Modart School in Madrid, Spain. She came back to Mexico City and started designing in theatre plays and commercial campaigns for Mexico, U.S.A., Europe & Japan. In 1988 she began designing for feature films, which started getting her recognitions & nominations for the Ariel (The Mexican Academy Award), which she finally won in 1994 for her work in *Bride to Be*, a film about the history of the Jewish community in Mexico.

In 1996 she won the Best Costume Design in a Theatre Play award, given by the Mexican Association of Drama Critics for the play *Mary, Queen of Scots*. After that, she was nominated for Best Costume Design by the Spanish Academy of Cinematographic Arts & Sciences (The Goya Award) for her work in *Perdita*

## *The Girl*

*Durango*, directed by Alex de la Iglesia in 1997. In 1999 she was awarded the Ariel for her work in Carlos Carrera's *Under a Spell*. In 2000, she was awarded the Ariel for best costume design in the feature film *Herod's Law*, directed by Luis Estrada, and won the Ariel (2003) for best costume design for her work in *The Crime of Padre Amaro*, (Nominated for Best Foreign Film at the Golden Globes and Oscar ceremonies), directed by Carlos Carrera. As well as in 2008 the Ariel Award for best costume design for the horror film *KM 31*, directed by Rigoberto Castañeda.

Since then she has also been nominated for her work in *Backyard-El Traspatio* and *El Infierno* for the Ariel Awards, and won best Costume design Coral Award at the Havana Film Festival for her work in that same film.

### **LEONARDO HEIBLUM & JACOBO LIEBERMAN – Composers**

Leonardo Heiblum and Jacobo Lieberman work together at their music studio Audioflot, writing, performing and producing music for all kinds of visual arts, mainly film. Their most notable credits include: *Desierto Adentro*, *Trade*, *Maria Full of Grace*, *The Forgiveness of Blood*, *The Maldonado Miracle*, *Francisca*, and *Frida*. Their most notable documentary credits include: *Kassim the Dream*, *One Minute to Nine*, *Cocalero*, *En El Hoyo*, *Carriere* and *The Devil's Miner*. Heiblum studied piano and music theory at university. Subsequently, he studied the *jarana* in Veracruz and music in India. He has worked as a recording engineer for Philip Glass for over five years. Lieberman studied guitar, piano, and drums and co-founded Santa Sabina, one of Mexico's legendary rock bands. He is also an actor.

### **MALCOLM JAMIESON – Editor**

Malcolm Jamieson has worked as an editor in film, television, and the visual arts since graduating from Glasgow School of Art in 1991. He is currently on his third season of the acclaimed HBO series *Treme* which is his second project with the network, having previously cut the pilot for *Bored to Death*. Prior to *Treme*, Malcolm cut the pilot and three seasons of the AMC series *Mad Men* with show creator Matt Weiner (writer/producer on the Sopranos). In those three seasons Malcolm was part of the collaborative team honored with dozens of Emmy and Golden Globe awards.

Malcolm has over eleven feature film and documentaries to his name. Most notably *The Forgiveness of Blood* the critically acclaimed second feature by Joshua Marston, *Diggers* for HDNet, *The War Within*, a political drama which premiered at the 2005 Toronto Film Festival, and *Down to the Bone* by Debra Granik. The latter won Best Director and Special Jury Prize for actress Vera Farmiga at Sundance 2004 and was also honored by the LA Critics Circle Awards. In addition to being an Adjunct Professor at Columbia University he has enjoyed teaching at The Edit Center, The Bolton Institute in the UK, and has been a regular at the Sundance Institute's Directors Lab, working as part of the editing crew.

**STEPHANIE AHN – Editor**

Stephanie Ahn began her career in the film industry as a writer and worked in development for several years before moving into post production. Since then, she's been a part of the editorial team on award-winning films as *Between Earth and Sky*, *HappyThankYouMorePlease*, *Winter's Bone* and *The Forgiveness of Blood*. Her most recent project, *The Girl*, is the latest feature film by David Riker. She is a graduate of film department at New York University's Tisch School of the Arts.

**CINDY TOLAN – Casting**

Cindy Tolan is a casting director for film, TV and theatre. Film credits include, *Beasts of the Southern Wild* (Casting Consultant), *Blue Valentine*, *It's kind of a funny story*, *Letters to Juliet*, *Sugar*, *The Private Lives of Pippa Lee*, *The Darjeeling Limited*, *The Namesake*, *Sherrybaby*, *Kinsey*, *Starting Out in the Evening*, *The Ballad of Jack and Rose*, *Personal Velocity*, *Loggerheads*, *Casa de los Babys*, *Angela*. Some of her upcoming films are *Go for Sisters*, *The Place Beyond the Pines*, *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*, *Gods Behaving Badly*. Broadway credits include *Lysistrata Jones*, *Relatively Speaking*, *That Championship Season*, *A View from the Bridge*, *All My Sons* (also Associate Producer), *Xanadu*, *Avenue Q*, *Medea*, *A Year with Frog and Toad*. Television credits, *Curb your Enthusiasm*, *Flight of the Conchords*, *Fringe*, *The Return of Jezebel James*.

**VICKY BOONE – Casting**

Vicky Boone's casting credits include Terrence Malick's *The Tree of Life*, *Scenes from The Suburbs* directed by Spike Jonze in collaboration with Arcade Fire, *Fourplay: Tampa* from director Kyle Henry and *The Latino Americans* for PBS. Other favorite projects include *Abel's Field* with director Gordie Haakstad, *The Fickle* and *Lover's of Hate* with Bryan Poyser and Steve Collin's *Gretchen*, with producers Jay Van Hoy, Lars Knudsen and Anish Savjani. She lives in Austin, Texas.

**ALEJANDRO REZA – Casting (Mexico)**

Alejandro Reza was born in Michoacán, Mexico. His first studies include architecture and design. He then studied Acting at the Centro Universitario de Teatro de la UNAM., and later on Stage Directing. Mr. Reza has had credits in theater, television and film as an actor, and has also directed four plays, two of which he is the author.

From 1996 he has worked as casting director in mexican films such as *Un Embrujo* by Carlos Carrera, *De la Calle* by Gerardo Tort, *Voces Inocentes* by Luis Mandoki, *Kilómetro 31* by Rigoberto Castañeda, *Drama/Mex* by Gerardo Naranjo, *Déficit* by Gael Garcia Bernal, *La Zona* and *Desierto Adentro*, both by Rodrigo Plá and the recent *Espacio Interior* by Kai Parlange and *Mariachi Gringo* by Tom Gustafson.

Among his international credits are the Mexican castings for *Frida* by Julie Taymor, *Spanglish* by James L. Brooks, *Apocalypto* by Mel Gibson, *Colombiana* by Oliver



## *The Girl*

Megaton, *The Girl* by David Riker and the upcoming *Elysium* by Neil Blomkamp.

### **HANNE JIMÉNEZ TURCOTT – Casting (Mexico)**

Hanne Jiménez Turcott won the Manuel Barbachano award at the 6th Geografías Suaves film and video festival in Mérida, Yucatán in 2004 for the project *Que tan lejos está Ciudad Juárez*. In 2007 she directed the short documentary *Niños del Conflicto* about the impact of the 2006 teacher's demonstrations in Oaxaca on the youth of the state; and has been shown at national and international film festivals. She was a part of the Guadalajara Talent Campus in 2010. Her short film *Esta Trompada o Quiere Beso* was shown at the Images Festival in Toronto in 2010 and is part of the collection of the (Ready) Media archive at the Museo Laboratorio Arte Alameda in Mexico City.

Along with director David Riker she started the search of a native girl from Oaxaca for the leading role on the film *The Girl*, interviewing more than a thousand girls. When finally selecting Maritza Santiago Hernández, Miss Jiménez Turcott became her acting coach during rehearsals. In 2011 she continued her work casting the supporting roles and extras for this same film, in the city of Oaxaca.

*The Girl*

*Praise for*

**LA CIUDAD  
(THE CITY)**

WRITTEN AND DIRECTED BY DAVID RIKER

What the Critics Are Saying:

*“ A movie to treasure. One is reminded of ‘The Bicycle Thief.’ ”*  
Roger Ebert, CHICAGO SUN-TIMES

*“ Reminiscent of the post-war Italian neo-realistic work of Roberto Rossellini.*  
”Bernard Weinraub, THE NEW YORK TIMES

*“ A heartfelt examination of a city that is a long way from Pleasantville.”*  
Kenneth Turan, THE LOS ANGELES TIMES

*“ Can take its place beside such postwar neo-realist classics as Rossellini’s ‘Paisan’  
and Buñuel’s ‘Los Olvidados.’ ”*  
Glen Lovell, VARIETY

*“ It is very simply a great film.”*  
Harlan Jacobson, THE WASHINGTON POST