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--Allan Mandelbaum, producer



PRODUCTION INFORMATION

Cast:	Austin Abrams, Josh Brolin, Elisabeth Shue, John Ortiz, Jane Levy, Emily Rudd
Directed by:	Brian Duffield
Screenplay by:	Brian Duffield & Daniel Kraus
Based on the book by:	Daniel Kraus
Produced by:	Brian Grazer, p.g.a., Brian Duffield, p.g.a., Jeb Brody, Allan Mandelbaum, p.g.a.
Executive Producers:	Doug Merrifield, Richard Abate, Will Rowbotham
Director of Photography:	Aaron Morton, NZCS
Production Designer:	Ramsey Avery
Film Editor:	Pietro Scalia, ACE
Costume Designer:	Natalie O'Brien
Visual Effects Supervisor:	Guillaume Rocheron
Music by:	Joseph Trapanese
Wētā On-Set Supervisor:	Ben Milsom
Special Effects Supervisor:	Mark Hawker

~ The Story ~

It's been one year since his father passed away, and Jay Gardiner (Austin Abrams) is returning home to Monterey, Calif., from college for the first time. Their relationship was a troubled one, and Jay is grappling with mixed feelings of grief and release. Mitt Gardiner (Josh Brolin) took his own life as he was nearing death from mesothelioma, near the edge of the canyon at Monastery Beach off the Central Coast of California, and Jay goes diving, hoping to find his remains and, in his own words, "fix things."

This particular beach is known for its incredibly deep drop-off, and when Jay begins to scale the side of the trench, he encounters a giant squid fleeing from a massive sperm whale and, in a freak accident, is swallowed by the whale. While trapped inside its belly with only one hour of oxygen left, Jay comes to realise that the hard-earned lessons his father imparted may be the key to his escape.

~ Diving In ~

Director/co-writer/producer Brian Duffield had just wrapped production on “No One Will Save You,” his critically acclaimed horror/sci-fi film, which premiered on Hulu in September 2023, when he first learned about the book Whalefall. Pulitzer Prize-winning author Daniel Kraus, who had previously written the sci-fi/horror novel Bent Heavens and co-authored (with Guillermo del Toro) a novel that expanded on the story from the film “The Shape of Water,” was actually still in the process of writing the book when he took to social media to talk about his next project.

“He [Daniel] tweeted that he had a book coming out about a teenage scuba diver who inadvertently gets swallowed by a sperm whale and has an hour of air left to figure out how to get out,” Duffield continues, “and when I reached out to him, he told me I could read it when he was done,” Duffield says.

Kraus’ original inspiration for the story came from a viral video of two kayakers who nearly ended up in the mouth of a humpback whale. The author immediately became fascinated with the idea, wondering if it was indeed possible. “We’ve obviously seen it in religious stories, and have seen it done abstractly in things like ‘Pinocchio,’ but I wasn’t interested in that kind of approach because it has been done before,” explains Kraus. “I am a research fiend, and I became obsessed with the possibility of crafting a story in a realistic way that was 100% scientifically accurate.”

The author spent weeks researching sperm whales. He consulted with a number of different scientists and marine life experts, including Lara Horstmann, the associate dean for research and the director of Marine Science at the University of Alaska, and Dr. Joy Reidenberg, a professor of medical education and comparative anatomy at the Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai in New York. He found out that, generally speaking, a person could not be swallowed by a whale...unless it was a sperm whale. “Most whale throats are not that big, so they are not swallowing anything huge,” says Kraus. “But sperm whales gobble up giant squids all day long, so they have huge throats.”

It was during a conversation Kraus had with Dr. Phil Clapham from the Alaska Fisheries Science Centre in Seattle, one of the world’s foremost experts on whale behaviour, that Kraus learned that while it has never happened, it *could* happen, which Kraus quickly confirmed with two other whale experts, and, within 24 hours, he was writing the book.

“I’ve never written a survival story before, but I’ve always been really enamored of that genre...stories like ‘127 Hours’ or ‘The Martian’ I really admire, predominantly because I like research so much,” says Kraus. “Any movie that has that kind of element where it’s four people in

a room and that's the whole movie has always really impressed me, and this story one-ups it in the sense that we are in a room smaller than your average room and most of the action is going to take place a few feet around you.”

Kraus continues, “I've always been interested in that conservation of elements, where you have so few materials to work with, so there's a kind of a ‘MacGyver’ element to it as well...where you have to survive with the materials that you have on you, or that already exist inside the whale.”

“The setting was such an unusual setting that I wanted people to be able to hang on to something solid and something identifiable,” Kraus continues. “And because the main character was going to be young, I thought that his strongest, most problematic relationship was probably going to still be with one of his parents, so I thought, father, son: what could that relationship be? Maybe the father taught the son about whales and about the ocean, but he didn't listen. And from there, things came together really quickly.”

It was the Fall of 2023 when the book was finished, and Kraus, as promised, slipped a copy of the manuscript to Duffield. “He probably had the same reaction a lot of people have when they read it, which is they go in expecting this white-knuckle thrill ride, which it is, but they are not expecting the other half of it, which is this extremely moving story about a father and a son,” Kraus explains.

And Duffield agreed. “I had just had a son of my own, so there I was reading this story with this baby boy, and it became very personal,” Duffield says. “And I knew I wanted it to be my next project.”

At the same time, producer Allan Mandelbaum, who is co-president of films for Imagine Entertainment, the prolific, award-winning production company founded and run by filmmakers Brian Grazer and Ron Howard, heard about the story. And as luck would have it, Mandelbaum had produced “No One Will Save You.” “It was still a manuscript at the time,” he explains. “A book scout of ours told me she thought it would be great for Imagine, but I’ll admit, when I heard the concept, it sounded kind of crazy, and it wasn't until I actually sat down and read it that I realised how emotional it was and fell in love with it. “

Mandelbaum continues, “The story was equal parts riveting, ticking-clock survival thriller adventure and a heart-wrenching father-son story, and it was the two halves that really sold it for me. The survival story is crazy, but without the emotion and heart of the father-son story, I don't know that it would work as well as it does.”

Oscar®- and Emmy Award®-winning producer Brian Grazer (“A Beautiful Mind,” “8 Mile”) agrees. ‘It is a life-or-death survival story, which I love. To me, ‘Apollo 13’ (which Grazer produced) is a life-or-death survival story, as is ‘A Beautiful Mind,’ John Nash's story, which is about mental disability and life or death, because you're wondering, will he die? Will he survive? And if you're as involved in the characters as you are in this story, it becomes a real, palpable emotional experience.’

Since Mandelbaum was already familiar with Duffield's work, he knew he was the only filmmaker he wanted to tackle the project. "Brian has this incredible ability to take an outrageous concept and turn it into a movie," says Mandelbaum. "Our first film ["No One Will Save You"] was a 90minute genre exercise with no dialogue, but at the same time was incredibly character-driven and heartfelt in the way it told a story of a person dealing with the trauma of her past and mistakes that she's made, but in the real time of the movie, dealing with an alien invasion. And the way that he was able to convey emotion and character without any words was proof that he was the perfect filmmaker to bring 'Whalefall' to the screen."

Once the book was published in August 2023, Imagine Entertainment acquired the rights, and Duffield and Kraus began work on a screenplay. At the time, Duffield was in Los Angeles, and Kraus was in Chicago. "I would wake up, and there would be 4 or 5 great pages in my inbox, and then I would send him 4 or 5 pages, and it went really smoothly and really fast," Duffield says. "He was, and is, a great collaborator."

"Working with Daniel was great," Duffield continues. "The book is already so cinematic, and the story takes place in real time, so a lot of our work together on it was just figuring out how to make it a movie, especially in terms of taking out the inner monologue throughout the story and centring it. In the book, Jay is a quiet and angsty young man, and you are always inside his head, so taking out that narrative device and really streamlining things to reduce the 60 or 70 flashbacks in the book and streamline them to really make them count."

"Straight up, the collaboration with Brian Duffield was the best collaboration I've ever had, period, by a country mile," says Kraus. "We were just in sync from the very, very beginning, and, as far as I can tell, he is an egoless person, or as close to an egoless person as I've ever met. And that is a beautiful thing when you're collaborating on something, because you both have the freedom to be happily honest with each other. Like, 'I don't think that idea works,' or 'nice scene, but I think we can do it better like this.' It was just completely free, and a real joy from start to finish. And I know that sounds like a cliché, but it really, truly was."

~ What is a Whale Fall? ~

The title "Whalefall" isn't just the name of the film. It is an actual scientific term. Renowned comparative anatomist Dr. Joy Reidenberg, PH.D., breaks down the process of the ocean miracle. "A whale fall is when a whale dies, and its carcass actually falls to the bottom of the ocean. What happens biologically is very interesting because when a whale dies, initially it's heavy and it sinks. If it sinks in greater than 200 feet of water, it will stay sunk because the pressure is so great that the bacteria can't make all the gases of fermentation that would raise that carcass back up."

Reidenberg continues, "As you get deeper in the ocean, the life that's there is not dependent on sunlight anymore. It starts to be dependent on other things because it is very sparse. So, when a whale carcass falls, suddenly there's a tremendous amount of nutrients gathered in one place. You'll see octopuses, all kinds of rays, interesting fish, deep-water sharks, and lots of other

animals come and live off the whale carcass for a long time until there's nothing left to eat anymore.”

“When a whale dies, and it goes to the bottom of the ocean, and as it decomposes, it creates this like shockwave of life,” says author/co-writer Daniel Kraus. “It creates generations upon generations of life forms from its decomposing body. I took that as the central metaphor for the book and film in that, when someone dies, their death is just the beginning. While they may die in the physical sense, they continue to spread their life outward to everyone who knew them.”

“One of the most incredible things Daniel [Kraus] did in the book is take the title of Whalefall and the concept of a whale fall and marry that thematically into the story, which is this idea of a whale, when it dies, it sinks to the bottom of the ocean, and essentially creates an entire ecosystem of new life for an entire generation,” says producer Allan Mandelbaum. “And so, in death, it creates life, which is an important theme in Jay and Mitt's relationship. And through this gauntlet of needing to figure out how to escape and survive, we find Jay reborn essentially by the end of this movie, and in some ways also accepting the difficult relationship that he thought he had with his father, but looking at it through a new lens now.”

~ Who's Who in “Whalefall” ~

Jay Gardiner, a young man who has spent the majority of his life seeking his father's approval, is struggling with guilt and looking for closure following his father's death. The character at the centre of this emotional survival thriller is on screen for the majority of the film, so the filmmakers realised how important it was to find the best actor to bring Jay to life and quickly set off on an exhaustive search.

“We pretty much considered every young actor in town between the ages of 18 and 27...anyone who felt creatively right came in and auditioned, which was literally hundreds of young men,” says producer Allan Mandelbaum. “We ultimately ended up testing a small number of them, and it was pretty clear once we narrowed our list down to our top three or so that Austin Abrams was the guy. From an acting standpoint, he was truly unmatched. He just had this incredible intensity from day one.”

Abrams has appeared in a number of hit television shows, including “The Walking Dead,” “This Is Us,” and “Euphoria,” and went on to star in the wildly successful “Weapons,” directed by Zach Cregger, and in Cregger's subsequent film, “Resident Evil.”

“Brian [Grazer] and I both got to spend some time with him before he was officially cast,” says Mandelbaum, “where we had the opportunity to really talk to him, and it was clear immediately that there was a real deep connection for him with the story and the character. He was very deeply committed to the character all throughout the audition process, and he really wanted to understand everything about who Jay was.”

“We find Jay about one year after his dad died, and they had a very tumultuous relationship that ended on bad terms,” says Abrams. “He is angry and frustrated and wouldn’t talk to him leading up to his dad’s death, so there is a tremendous amount of guilt surrounding the relationship with his dad, because he feels like there could have been something more. It’s like the love is so strong, but there’s something else that could be there. It’s like they were not fully connecting, which he was trying to fix, but eventually just gave up. His relationship with his mom and sisters is equally as frustrating, which makes him start to wonder if there is something wrong with him, so now he is on a quest to try to fix everything.”

The actor and director/co-writer/producer Brian Duffield agreed that the strained relationship was the heart of the story. “We both immediately connected on the depth of the story, and he really seemed to understand the pain that can result from the disconnection between father and son,” Abrams says.

Jay’s father is Mitt Gardiner. “Our story actually starts with Mitt,” explains Mandelbaum. “He is the catalyst for Jay’s adventure.” While demanding and emotionally abusive, Mitt is a hero and a local diving legend, a member of the Monterey Dive Club, and someone who is passionate about the sea (and has a hard time relating to those who aren’t). Academy Award® nominee Josh Brolin was cast in the role. “Josh is the perfect guy to bring the essence of the character to life,” says Mandelbaum. “Josh is someone who rides motorcycles; he goes out on boats. He feels like an everyman in a way that really felt like the perfect fit for Mitt.”

The actor, who first leapt to fame starring in “The Goonies” and “The Young Riders,” and went on to appear in such hit films as “No Country for Old Men,” “Avengers: Infinity War,” and “Dune,” recalls the day he read the script for the first time, saying, “I slowed down when I was reading it because I didn’t want it to end. I finished it, I put it on my chest, I wrapped my arms around my chest, and I sobbed. I didn’t just cry; I sobbed, because it resonated with me so deeply, and it was poetic and visceral, and emotional.”

“Mitt is pretty tough as a father,” says Brolin. “I think of him as this seafaring, nautical-obsessed, Steinbeck-obsessed character, and I don’t know if I’ve ever been so willing and happy to dive into something. He is such a great character, and what I love about him is that he has a presence throughout the entire film, and he’s really driving the narrative.”

According to producer Brian Grazer, “What is so tremendous about this story is that it’s also a father and son story, and for me, and a few others that were involved, that father was exactly my dad. The role that Josh Brolin plays is a father from another generation. And that was, you know, a generation where you don’t touch your kid, you know, or put your arm around them. You don’t. You don’t say, ‘I love you.’ And so it was like, how does this kid come to terms with a dad like that now in this life-or-death situation? I was thrilled that was in the book, and that it was so central to the book.”

“We lucked out, and got the two best actors for the roles,” says Grazer. “Austin is a young, cool guy. He’s cool, not by affectation, but cool because he’s done such extraordinary work with a

tremendous amount of commitment to the roles. He's mentally tough, and being mentally tough and having real depth really makes this story work. Then his father, of course, is played by Josh Brolin, who I love. And what a great voice...just tremendous. I first worked with him on 'American Gangster,' and was so impressed that he was able to stand up to both Russell Crowe AND Denzel Washington, two powerful, Oscar®-winning actors."

Grazer continues, "Josh has a force, a presence, and a tremendous sense of confidence to be able to deal with stuff like that, and to be able to rise to that occasion, as he does in this film. I don't want to give too much of the story away, but we see a very powerful man who is both physically fit and powerful, but he's not warm. We see his evolution and deterioration, and Josh does it so well. Even as we see his character beginning to deteriorate, he is still strong, and you don't really feel sorry for him. You don't pity him."

Elisabeth Shue is Zara Gardiner, Jay's mom. The seasoned actress's credits include "Adventures in Babysitting," "The Karate Kid," and "Cocktail," and she signed on the moment she finished the script. "It was a total page-turner," Shue says. "I couldn't wait to find out how it ended. I was very emotionally invested in the story, which is pretty much the only reason for me to want to work these days: when you have a very intense, sometimes personal, or emotional connection to a story, that's what reeled me in."

Shue continues, "I loved that it wasn't written in a traditional script form. It read more like a novel, and it had the sort of bursts of action, the kind of staccato way that it was expressed, really helped you as an audience member to stay invested in the story in a really intense way. I really loved the way it was written. Zara is definitely the bedrock of the family in a lot of ways, because Josh's character is so complicated and his relationship with his kids is so complicated. I feel like she is the force that holds everything together, but not without complication."

Rounding out the cast are John Ortiz ("American Gangster," "Kong: Skull Island") as Hewey, a diver and fisherman and a long-time friend of the Gardiner family, Jane Levy ("Don't Breathe," "Zooey's Extraordinary Playlist") as Eva Gardiner, one of Jay's older sisters, and Emily Rudd ("One Piece," "Hunters") as Nan Gardiner, Jay's other sister.

~ Swimming with Whales ~

For Austin Abrams, one of the keys to unlocking his character in "Whalefall" was getting to see sperm whales in person. Prior to the start of principal photography, he had an opportunity to visit a sperm whale sanctuary near the island of Dominica in the Caribbean with Patrick Dykstra, an acclaimed whale documentarian, where they were able to scuba dive and view sperm whales in their natural habitat.

Dykstra's award-winning PBS documentary, "Patrick and the Whale," explored the remarkable intelligence and social lives of sperm whales, so the actor couldn't have asked for a better partner and guide. "Austin approached me about introducing him to sperm whales in the real world and coaching him through that process of getting underwater to dive with them," Dykstra explains. "He

said, 'Look, I'm going to be inside the belly of a sperm whale, so I want to do it as authentically as possible.' We both decided the best way to do that was to spend some time underwater with real sperm whales—to see how they react, to feel their vibe and their energy, and let that experience inform the character.”

While Dominica is home to a resident population of sperm whales, actually finding them was never guaranteed. “It was a roll of the dice,” explains Dykstra. “People come down to dive with the sperm whales, but they're wild animals, so you don't find them every day.”

Fortunately, Abrams and Dykstra were able to find them and had numerous positive encounters. One instance was particularly memorable. “The sperm whales really took to him right off the bat,” says Dykstra. “One day, three females approached him, and just kind of lay in the water with him. Austin was able to float quietly while the whales bobbed in front of him. You could see this incredible exchange of energy. Austin loved it, the crew loved it, and everybody had a great time. I think it had a profound impact on him and helped him unlock part of his character.”

For Abrams, it was a one-of-a-kind experience. “I was surprised at how much time I actually got to spend with them. They hadn't seen any sperm whales in the previous nine days, so I was lucky that both days I was there, they showed up and let me observe them. It was almost like being with an alien...very surreal.”

Dykstra believes the whales responded to Abrams' genuine curiosity. “When you get someone like Austin, who doesn't have a ton of experience at this, but has a pure heart about it and good intentions, the whales show up, and they're curious, and they come over, and they hang out,” says Dykstra. “I have hosted people who are just there for a photograph or a video clip and to check a box on Instagram, and the whales almost sense that sometimes. With people like Austin, who come with a genuine interest and curiosity, I really believe the whales sense it.”

For the filmmakers, however, watching their lead actor free dive with wild sperm whales before production was both exciting and a little terrifying. “As soon as Austin was cast, he got advanced certified in scuba diving,” says director/co-screenwriter/producer Brian Duffield, “So, he was fully committed to the character from the get-go. Austin wanted real experiences to draw upon for the character. He always goes above and beyond, even at times when we get a little bit nervous about what he's doing. What's great about that is he cares so deeply and completely immerses himself into it.”

For Abrams, preparations for “Whalefall” meant more than just learning how to scuba dive. To build the endurance needed for the film's demanding underwater sequences, the actor took his training into everyday life—walking the streets of his neighborhood wearing full scuba gear. The extra weight and resistance helped prepare him for the long, physically demanding days of diving in the Pacific Ocean.

According to producer Allan Mandelbaum, “Austin really wanted the performance to be all him, and to be uniform throughout. He was truly the biggest asset we had, because we never had to

worry about him. He was always there, and he was always willing to do whatever we needed. And he really worked his ass off on this film. He was put through the wringer and never once complained, never once complained about being tired or exhausted, and he was always excited for new challenges. Every time we moved into a new set or a new environment, you could sense his enthusiasm.”

“Austin’s commitment and dedication were off the chart,” confirms executive producer Doug Merrifield. “He gave the proverbial 110% from the day he was cast in everything he did, but when we heard that he was walking through his neighborhood with his BCD (Buoyancy Control Device) and a full scuba tank just to get acclimatised, everyone knew we made the right choice.”

~ Understanding the Sperm Whale ~

Before “Whalefall” could bring audiences inside a sperm whale, the filmmakers first had to figure out exactly what that world would look and feel like. Director/co-writer/producer Brian Duffield and author/co-writer Daniel Kraus wanted the film’s most extraordinary moments to be grounded in real whale anatomy and behaviour, so they turned to renowned comparative anatomist Dr. Joy Reidenberg, PH.D.

Reidenberg, who specialises in the vocal and breathing apparatus of mammals, particularly whales, dolphins, and porpoises, was an invaluable asset to the production, providing guidance and direction on the anatomy of the sperm whale. She had already been part of Kraus’s research for the novel, essentially giving him an accelerated education in the anatomy and biology of whales. “Dr. Joy Reidenberg was one of the whale experts that I worked with on the book from the very beginning to teach me about whales,” says Kraus. “It was like taking a basic whale 101 class.”

But the lessons quickly became much more advanced. Reidenberg walked Kraus through whale anatomy, behaviour, and vocalization, using diagrams and even preserved anatomical specimens to help him understand what was happening beneath the surface. “I had to move very quickly through the ranks of what I understood,” Kraus recalls. “Joy would lead me through long Zoom calls when things got much more complicated.”

When the novel made the transition to the screen, Reidenberg’s expertise became even more important. The filmmakers had to determine which species could plausibly support the extraordinary premise at the centre of the story. “We discussed quite a bit about which whale it should be, because originally we didn’t know what kind of whale it should be,” says Reidenberg. “There were no documented cases of a whale swallowing a human.”

The sperm whale ultimately made the most biological sense because of its natural diet. “The only whale that seemed reasonable was a sperm whale because they do eat rather large prey like giant squids or colossal squids,” Reidenberg explains.

From there, the filmmakers explored everything from the whale’s anatomy to the conditions Jay might encounter inside it—including the multiple chambers of a sperm whale’s digestive system,

the effects of stomach acids, and whether scuba equipment could continue functioning. “If a person was in a whale, what would happen? What would they encounter? How would they survive?” Reidenberg continues. “We went through all the different permutations.”

Her research helped give the filmmakers a scientific foundation for a story that, on the surface, sounds completely impossible. “I happen to have cut open a lot of sperm whales,” Reidenberg says. “I know what they look like on the inside. I can describe that anatomy.”

For “Whalefall,” that meant the filmmakers weren't simply imagining what might be inside a whale—they were building their version of that world from actual science. According to producer Allan Mandelbaum, “We were always very adamant about having things be as anatomically correct as possible, so most – if not all – of the whale parts we built were built to scale.”

~ Behind the Scenes ~

Principal photography on “Whalefall” took place from June to September 2025, on locations in California, including Monterey, San Pedro, and Catalina Island, and on soundstages at CBS Radford Studios in Studio City. Director/co-writer/producer Brian Duffield was committed to keeping the film as realistic and faithful to the book as possible, which meant filming at the same locations featured in the book, whenever possible.

Monastery Beach & Cove, which is just south of Monterey and Carmel-by-the-Sea, was used to film scenes of the rocky beach where Jay first walks into the ocean and gets tossed around by the crashing waves. Monastery Beach gets its name from the historic Carmelite Monastery of Our Lady and Saint Therese, built in 1931 along Highway 1 overlooking the dramatic coastline near Point Lobos. Although the beach is officially part of Carmel River State Beach, locals, divers, and visitors have long referred to it as Monastery Beach because of the monastery's commanding presence above the shoreline.

While Monastery Beach is celebrated for its crystal-clear water and extraordinary marine life, it is also one of California's most challenging shore dives. The production chose the iconic dive site for its immediate access to the spectacular Carmel Submarine Canyon, one of the deepest underwater canyons along the Pacific Coast. Powerful shore breaks, strong rip currents, and a steep underwater drop-off have earned it the local nickname “Mortuary Beach.”

For the open-water and underwater units on location in the Pacific Ocean off Monterey Bay, San Pedro, and Catalina Island, the production used up to ten boats and numerous cranes. Operating miles offshore every day required extraordinary coordination between the cast, crew, camera teams, dive teams, and safety personnel. It was a massive logistical undertaking, with everyone working together to bring Duffield's vision to life as authentically as possible.

“Having that Armada of boats out on the water in Monterey was wild,” recalls Duffield. “Using a crane in the middle of the ocean was ridiculous as well. I think it's one of those things in hindsight,

some of us laughed about how crazy and ambitious the plans we came up with were. After we got all the shots and had a little time to process, the crazier the plans seemed looking back on them.”

Duffield was assisted by a tremendously talented team behind the camera, including many department heads he’s worked with in the past, including: director of photography Aaron Morton, NZCS (“The First Omen,” 2013’s “Evil Dead” and “No One Will Save You”), production designer Ramsey Avery (“No One Will Save You”), two-time Oscar®-winning film editor Pietro Scalia, ACE (“Black Hawk Down,” “JFK”), costume designer Natalie O’Brien (“Freakier Friday,” “No One Will Save You”), two-time Oscar®-winning visual effects supervisor Guillaume Rocheron (“1917,” “Life of Pi”), and composer Joseph Trapanese (“Mike + Nick + Nick + Alice,” “No One Will Save You”).

But it was Morton, Avery, and Rocheron who were with Duffield the entire time. “Those were three of the critical pieces of the puzzle that we had to bring together,” explains producer Allan Mandelbaum. “They became a sort of production brain trust, with whom we would have weekly meetings and Zooms where we would discuss how we were going to make the film.”

“I remember when I first read the book, one of my immediate thoughts was, this has got to be a production designer’s dream, because you get to actually create the inside of a whale,” says Duffield, “and from day one, Ramsey really stepped up. He became our resident expert on whales.”

Morton was thrilled when Duffield first told him about the project, and immediately ran out to read the book for himself. As for the subject matter, it wasn’t anything he could have ever imagined, but he wasn’t surprised either. “Part of what I love about Brian’s writing is that he’ll often take a character who is going through something interesting or terrible and then put that character inside of another, even more interesting idea,” he says. “Whether that’s a young woman who accidentally kills her friend and then is ostracised by her community, or a young man dealing with his dysfunctional relationship with his dad who gets swallowed by a whale, it’s what I love about Brian’s writing and his directing.”

Wētā Workshop came on board early as well, and they were immediately excited about the possibilities and the challenges involved. Their input and research and development in regard to what materials would work to create the whale’s anatomy was invaluable. “We made a lot of mistakes early on, which helped us to make better informed decisions later on,” says Mandelbaum. “Once we honed in on the material and the look, it then became about building it.”

Rocheron came to the project with some first-hand experience of creating larger-than-life creatures with the art of visual effects, as he was responsible for the flying alien creature from Jordan Peele’s “Nope,” whose biology he based on deep-sea marine creatures. He was also integral in the creation of the tiger on the lifeboat in “Life of Pi.”

“We wanted to make the whale in a way that feels alive and very tactile, which was really important to Brian,” says Rocheron. “It was important to him that we put Austin into an environment where

he could really interact with the whale, because we have always viewed the whale as its own character, so it was really important that we treat it as such.”

Says Rocheron, “We did a few months of R&D with Wētā Workshop, DNEG, and ILM, where we really worked hand in hand with Ramsey, Aaron, and the special effects team, to figure out we could combine things...how we could bring all of our crafts together to create something that, first, hasn't been done before, and second, is totally unique. Something that plays to the strengths of all of our specialties.”

“During this time, we discussed what the stomach looks like and how it moved, and what we could actually make for real and what would be digital, and how we combine those two things,” Rocheron continues. “And artistically, the door was wide open, so it was a really fun experiment to, not only come up with the look, but then to work together to come up with the recipe to make what you see in the movie.”

What they decided to do was to build practical sets, and have visual effects add all the muscle movement and the translucency and the gelatinous feeling to the whale’s stomach. “We created a photorealistic environment that could move in a practical way, but there are things in nature, things like organs and muscles, that are very difficult to recreate, so we learned how to do those in the computer,” explains Rocheron. “And there we learned how to simulate the translucency of the skin and the gelatinous materials that are semi-translucent, and which would be impossible to manufacture with materials that were durable enough for shooting.”

“Shooting the film practically was extremely important for a concept like this, because it is so extreme,” says producer Brian Grazer. “In ‘Apollo 13’ we actually created weightlessness by filming in the Boeing KC-135, when prior to then weightlessness had only been created by using wires and digitally removing them. We felt that using science and cinema together would help keep it authentic. Audiences feel the intangible...they experience the intangible, and in a movie that's designed to be emotional, you have to make sure everything is as naturalistic and real as possible, which I think we’ve accomplished on ‘Whalefall.’”

~ Creating a Sperm Whale on Screen ~

In order to realistically capture Austin Abrams’ character Jay inside the stomach of a sperm whale on screen, the filmmakers created a number of different sets to allow for multiple angles from which to film the actor. These sets were built on soundstages at CBS Radford Studios in Studio City, and included: an end-cap set, a side-entrance set, a second stomach set, a side stomach set, an esophagus set, and a larynx set.

In addition, they created a massive underwater tank set, which held 175,000 gallons of water and featured a 6-inch cement base. The set was 80-100 feet in length, weighed over 60 tons, and was used to film underwater sequences with the giant sperm whale, as well as the ocean ledge and floor. At 45 feet in diameter and 16 feet deep, the tank was built from scratch by special effects supervisor Mark Hawker (“Stranger Things”) and his team, who decided early on to construct the

enormous structure themselves as opposed to bringing in an outside company, and it took less than a month to construct.

The primary use of the tank was to film the terrifying scene when Jay Gardiner, searching for his father's remains, swims up the side of the massive underwater canyon and encounters the giant squid being chased by the sperm whale. Because the water tank was only 16 feet deep (and it was too dark in the actual ocean to film that deep), Hawker needed to find a way to create that sequence on camera, and came up with what he refers to as the rock elevator.

"The rock elevator is a portion of a wall in the tank all the way up about five feet, where we would film Austin swimming up (and down) very slowly," explains Hawker. "It had about 50 bags of 50pound concrete built into it, and a massive structure to hold it in place, and was on a track with hydraulics that could push it up and down."

Adds director of photography Aaron Morton, "In the story, Jay climbs a rock face that is around 23 feet tall, so by having him swim in one spot, but lowering the set into the pool, it made it look like he was going up. This was just another great example of our filmmaking team being so inventive and clever, and how when you have the right people coming together, you can find the best solution."

The tank also featured a gimbal that constantly moves the water, and key to effectively conveying the movement inside the sperm whale was the barrel roll set. The set was used to film several scenes where Jay is thrown around from side to side, all while water is pouring in. The filmmakers liked to joke that they were actually shooting three movies: one on location, one inside the stomachs, and one in the water tank.

When it came time to create the whale stomachs themselves, visual effects supervisor Guillaume Rocheron reached out to the world-renowned special effects studio Wētā Workshop, which has helped transform modern filmmaking, earning multiple Academy Awards® for its groundbreaking artistry and craftsmanship.

Because so much of the film takes place inside the whale's stomach after Jay is swallowed, the team at Wētā knew they needed to create practical sets that felt believable, immersive, and alive. No human has ever experienced the inside of a living sperm whale and survived to describe it, leaving the filmmakers with virtually no real-world reference. Through months of research, development, and collaboration, Wētā Workshop and the filmmaking team brought one of nature's most mysterious environments to life on screen.

"The early prep work at Wētā was all about building the stomachs and understanding how they might work, and what kind of camera access we would need," says Morton. "I live in Auckland, which is just a short plane ride away, and it was a great experience working with other New Zealanders, and they were so accommodating with everything, from integrating into the overall design, letting us know what we needed from the sets, whether that be camera access for certain sequences where, or, literally, a little door that could zip on and off to allow crane access."

For Rocheron, another hurdle was figuring out how to create a whale stomach and make it cinematic and compelling, without it looking too dark and repulsive. What followed were months of discussions and experimentation, during which time he worked closely with Morton and production designer Ramsey Avery. “Bottom line, if you’re going to be in a whale’s stomach, it’s going to be gross, no matter what, so one of our biggest fears from day one was not immersing the audience in absolute grotesquerie for two hours,” says Avery.

Avery’s research began with a lot of historical referencing in terms of the looks and sizes of different whales. “Some had very clearly defined hollows in their faces, some of them were more bulbous, some of them had much more scarring on them, and as a sperm whale gets older, it gets wider,” says Avery. “So there were a lot of questions of trying to figure out what all of that represented while creating something that was more or less healthy, but showed a general amount of damage and evidence of the wear of life.”

“We started with a digital model, moving into a foam mock-up, then from the foam mock-up, moving back into a digital model that was more accurate,” explains Avery. “And then from that more accurate digital model, building it again in foam and going back and testing that with an actor and with camera and with lighting to see how that all interacted. That was the whole process all the way through: design something in a digital model, execute it in a mock-up kind of way, put a person inside of it, put a camera inside of it, and then make whatever we learned from that. And every time we learned something, make those adjustments for the next iteration of it.”

WĒTĀ’s on-set supervisor Ben Milsom (“Blade Runner 209,” “Alien: Earth”) oversaw the manufacture and filming of the whale stomachs and the giant squid. His first job was to create a prototype of the stomach, as the filmmaking team needed to ensure the design worked for all parties involved. “Once we were confident with the development, we began to start building them,” says Milsom.

“The whale is a character in the movie,” says Milsom. “It has to move, it has to have personality, and we spent months and months of research and development trying to figure out how we were going to move this thing, and how we were going to go through the different stages of the whale’s expressions. We learned very early on that we needed a lot of hands to make this thing come to life.”

The inside of the stomach has a fleshy, skin-like texture, which was created with a platinum-based silicone that was hard-wearing, and with a slight tint of colour and texture. The shell of the stomach was made out of mattress foam, which was sprayed with silicone via a popcorn gun, which gave it the appropriate texture. “The outside of the stomachs was then layered in a canvas material,” says Milsom, “and then we had D-rings put on the whole stomach that would sit inside a speed rail frame with bungee cords attached to the D-rings that we could pull to stretch out the stomach.”

There are two stomachs in the story. “Stomach One is the one that Jay first arrives in when he gets swallowed by the whale,” Milsom explains. “It is quite small, and it has the esophagus sphincter

coming into it and the stomach two sphincter going out of it. It kind of looks like a heart when you see it from the outside.”

Executive producer Doug Merrifield breaks down all the stomachs used on production. “We had four versions of stomach one on two different hydraulic motion bases, stomach two on another motion base, a smaller stomach rigged to a 360-degree barrel roll motion base, and a clamshell-like insert stomach that matched stomach number one that was the easiest to access for pickups, close-ups, and hand work. So, it was a bit of a three-ring circus whenever there were multiple stomachs working at the same time. Every Friday, the stomachs would be rotated to go into recovery and repair mode over the weekend.”

“The four versions were built at WĒTĀ in New Zealand and shipped to Los Angeles for principal photography,” Milsom continues. “There were two matching stomachs, which had removable ends and a removable side panel, and they were essentially our workhorses in terms of coverage. We needed two copies because they would get such a workout, and they got so hammered when filming with them, so we would swap them out so that one was being repaired while the other one stayed on the three-point rig with the two motion bases.”

“The food stomach was anatomically the same, but it was what we referred to as the tenderiser, and that was used for closeups,” Milsom says. “It had a whole side, which just opened right up so you could just shoot it like a curved wall. The top of it came off as well, so it was more or less a multi-use close-up set and a good B camera setup. We had it on a frame and a cradle, which allowed us to put water in them and for them to be watertight on the lower half.

The fourth version of the stomach was the barrel roll, which was essentially the same kind of stomach skin inside a circular truss on a wheeled frame, and it was able to turn 360 degrees. “There are several moments in the story where the whale does a full breach in 360 degrees, so we were able to have Jay in a stomach and turn him 360 degrees on camera.”

Stomach two, which is essentially the second stomach that Jay goes through, which contains all the whale’s stomach acid, was much longer and bigger. “We made it a lot more red and visually unpleasant,” says Milsom. “It is shaped like an intestine, and has a high entrance way, which is connected to stomach one. We built it in two halves, but again, we had to build a big cradle because we had to fill half of the cradle with slimy methimazole, so it wasn’t just water, but more like a soup, which was very difficult to film in because it was slippery as hell.”

While the whale stomach sets created a one-of-a-kind cinematic landscape on screen, their behind-the-scenes co-stars were the massive platforms, gimbals, and motion-control systems that supplemented the manual manipulation used to bring the stomachs to life.

Stomach number one had four different rigs: three rigs that would actually move it, and a fourpoint rig which was mainly used for the flashback sequences. And then we had our large gimbal that was used for very quick, extreme motions, so when the whale is diving down or swimming back up to

the surface, it got the water to slosh around. All the rigs were motion controlled, which allowed us to create precise movements inside the stomach.

The stomach sets were mounted on different platforms designed to recreate everything from the subtle movement of a sperm whale swimming through the ocean to the extreme forces Jay would experience as the whale dove, rolled, and moved through the deep.

Together, these platforms became an essential part of the filmmaking, allowing the practical stomach sets to move, contract, tilt, and roll around Austin Abrams. Combined with the manual manipulation of the stomachs, they created the physical sensation that Jay was truly trapped inside a living, moving whale.

Throughout the entire process, the filmmakers had one guiding principle: that none of the effects, whether practical or completed in post-production, looked like they belonged in a sci-fi or fantasy film. “Everything always needed to feel grounded,” says Morton. “Not that anyone actually knows what it feels like to be inside the stomach of an 80-foot whale, but Rasmey and his team became such experts on whale anatomy that we were able to really focus on what was scientifically accurate and real.”

~ Filming Inside a Sperm Whale ~

Before director of photography Aaron Morton and his camera team could even begin thinking about cameras, they needed to figure out a way to light the inside of the stomachs, knowing that the most traditional filmmaking techniques would not work on this film. While motion capture and robotics are used all the time in feature films, they, unfortunately, would not afford filmmakers the necessary flexibility on these sets.

“The remarkable thing about this project is that there were limited visual references,” says production designer Ramsey Avery. “It’s not like people have gone and stuck cameras down sperm whale mouths before.”

Morton, too, was concerned about lighting, but once he read the book, it made sense, as Jay is able to see via the bioluminescent lighting and the jellyfish in the stomach. “Some of the lighting issues were touched on and solved already, either in the book or in the script, or both,” he says. “That said, it was very challenging, actualizing that bioluminescent look inside the sets, but I think we came up with a pretty cool system working in tandem with Guillaume [Rocheron] and our amazing VFX artists.”

The team devised a plan which involved the creation of tubes of LED lights that lined the side of the stomach sets. “We needed to make sure the audience would never fully understand how the light was constructed,” explains visual effects supervisor Guillaume Rocheron. “Aaron and his team created these tubes of light that we folded in the stomach sets, which were connected to a computer that would then project patterns through them, which gave us an organic moving light. And then we replaced that with bioluminescence. So we removed the tube of light, but we kept the

lighting on Austin, and we kept the lighting in the water and on the walls of the stomach. We're basically creating that illusion that light is created from an organic material."

The lighting strips, which were referred to as "noodles" on set, were actually a double-sided LED ribbon inside a waterproofed tube. Filmmakers proceeded to put 20 or 30 of them into various nooks and crannies of the whale's stomach, which provided a constant ebb and flow of light. "The key to it is the way the ILM team erases the lights themselves," says Morton, "so our philosophy became, let's put something in front of the camera and then enhance it with visual effects."

While Abrams was by himself in the whale stomachs on set, there were a number of crew members immediately outside the practical whale builds. "The stomach was on a motion base with a big speed rail frame around it with a truss," explains Milsom. "We usually had two cameras, one on a bungee rig down through the roof of the stomach controlled by a camera operator, and one on a crane coming through the side of the whale. And we had up to 12 manipulators who were all positioned around the stomach, moving in a concentric kind of way that was aligned with whatever stage the stomach was at, whether it was ambient movement or a muscle spasm, etc."

Milsom continues, "So, by the time you had all the camera, grips, and manipulators, you were looking at 14 to 16 people on this platform that was moving, everyone working together to make it work, and make it look as real as possible on camera. There was this hive of activity going on outside to make this thing move and breathe on the inside with wires running everywhere."

"We mounted our infrared cameras on our film cameras and synchronised them with our main camera for every take," says Rocheron, "so every shot in the stomach was captured in volume in 3D space, and we just processed it in the computer with the algorithms, and the result is basically the space being completely reproduced in three dimensions."

Morton's team employed a variety of different camera lenses throughout the production. "Arri has these amazing lens sets that they call the hero lenses, which have quite a pronounced pitch file, look and distortion," he says. "We were able to sort of dial the strength of that in and out, relative to whichever shot we were doing, and it was relatively subtle, but gave a sort of subliminal twist to the images through that third act."

"We were able to use short crane arms via ports in the stomach, and we had a bungee rig for the close-up work inside the stomach," says Morton. "We would drop a bungee through a hole in the top of the stomach, and we had a gyro-stabilised head and a very small version where we could control/stabilise the horizon. That gave us a lot of freedom to follow Austin around the interior of the set while keeping a level horizon and to be able to get the camera into hard-to-reach places." All the scenes depicting Jay trapped inside the whale's stomach—and his journey to escape—were shot in sequence. The decision benefited both the filmmakers and Abrams, allowing them to track Jay's physical and emotional journey as he moved through the different parts of the whale and was forced to confront his own feelings about his relationship with his father.

Shooting in sequence gave Abrams the opportunity to experience Jay's journey as it unfolded, allowing his performance and emotional state to naturally build from one scene to the next. As Jay fights to survive inside the whale, he is also confronting the unresolved emotions he carries about his father, making the physical journey through the whale mirror his own emotional journey. "For me, it was really helpful to understand where I was emotionally day to day in the story because otherwise, especially in that environment, it would have been extremely difficult and confusing to shoot it out of sequence," says Abrams.

Once the rest of the cast wrapped principal photography, Abrams became the sole cast member for the remaining nine weeks of the production schedule. The actor endured 35 consecutive shooting days inside the claustrophobic and physically demanding confines of the whale's stomach, throat, larynx, and esophagus.

"Think of the stomach as a two-man tent made of meat that's collapsing on you all the time, which is pretty much how it felt," says Morton. "It was pretty gross, having this slab of meat constantly pushing you around, but that's one of the things I love about filmmaking."

One thing that surprised production designer Ramsey Avery was that when you actually crawled into the stomach, it was remarkably comfortable. "There was this kind of sensory deprivation environment that was warm and really a nice place to be, which actually helped Austin for all those weeks of filming," Avery says.

It was a remarkable test of both mental and physical endurance—one that Abrams passed with flying colours, to the amazement of the filmmakers and crew. The cast and crew were continually impressed by his dedication, focus, and calming demeanor, even while spending seven straight weeks performing in a heightened state of fear.

One of Abrams' routines became a quiet moment of reflection and gratitude. Whenever the actor emerged from the whale's stomach set, he would pause for a moment to take in the experience and express his gratitude. It became an inspiring ritual that was noticed, appreciated, and respected by the tight-knit crew surrounding him every day.

It was a completely collaborative experience," says Abrams. "You have the people that are puppeteering the stomach, who need to do certain things at certain times, while I'm trying to figure out where to move, and it's a really condensed space. And there were people making sure all the lights were correct, because the timing of my movements between the different stomachs needed to be lit correctly. So what you're seeing is the culmination of a lot of people coming together and bringing their A-game to make cinema magic."

~ Manufacturing the Head of a Sperm Whale ~

Studio Art & Technology (SAT) and the company's founder Louis Doty were tasked with a unique job: building a giant 30-foot sperm whale head and mouth for use in the terrifying sequence when

Jay is chased and inadvertently swallowed. The resulting build was then attached to an internal steel mechanical framework inside the water tank built by the special effects team.

Since WĒTĀ Workshop had their hands full building multiple stomachs, SAT worked closely with special effects supervisor Mark Hawker and production designer Ramsey Avery on the task, which they miraculously completed in 12 weeks, and which also included fabrication of the whale's esophagus, larynx, and tongue.

"We created it so Austin (as Jay) could interact with it," explains visual effects supervisor Guillaume Rocheron. "The whale's head is mounted on a six-rig axis that moves, and it is an enormous set piece moving in a very large volume of water. It basically starts with a whale head in the tank, and then visual effects create all the underwater environment around it. But every time Austin is touching the whale, he is touching a real set piece that we created."

They began by constructing the exterior of the massive sperm whale's head made of foam (based on the digital version created by WĒTĀ). Then it was up to Hawker and his team to make the whale's head move. To accomplish this, they created a skull that fit inside the fabricated head, which featured hydraulics to control the movements, which SAT then mounted to the whale's head.

"We had a big goalpost frame that the whale head was on," explains Hawker, "And the whale head had several different movements that we would create on camera, like panning, tilting, and rotating. We were also able to open and close its mouth."

Hawker continues, "One of the things that we learned right off the bat was the relationship of a sperm whale's head to its mouth. The mouth is tiny compared to the whale's head itself, and we knew that the mouth was big enough to swallow a person, but the actual jaw itself was so narrow that we couldn't get a human to fit into it. So, the question became how we could expand the overall size of the jaw, but not make it look weird. That's what Louis and his team tested for us in foam, and the results showed us it worked, so they built it for us."

"After we put the teeth and jaw together, we got the sense of the vastness of it all, which was very gratifying," says Hawker. "In the end, we had one-half of a whale's head built to scale."

~ A Whale of a Score ~

Director/co-writer/producer Brian Duffield reached out to composer Joseph Trapanese, who worked on his previous film "No One Will Save You," to help score the gripping, emotional story of "Whalefall."

"I'm very fortunate to call Brian a friend," says Trapanese. "Whenever he has something ready for me to look at, he loops me in. We were actually finishing 'No One Will Save You' when he slipped me an advance copy of the book. This was about six months before it came out, so I was able to read it way in advance and start thinking about the story, and it's a good thing I did, because this was the most difficult film I've ever had to work on."

Trapanese continues, “Brian is my favourite kind of collaborator. He never comes in to say, ‘Oh, it should be violas and synthesisers and cellos,’ but instead says, ‘This is the story that I’m trying to tell. This is the journey, this is the character, this is where they are, this is what they’re experiencing, this is their emotional journey.’ And that’s where the conversation starts. I love working with filmmakers to create something very subjective, and something that tells the story of that character in that moment.”

“And for this film, we had to throw a lot of that out because it is so visceral,” Trapanese continues. “It’s so horrifying what this character is going through, and you get so much of that from the look, the feel, and the performance. If you add music on top that is equally disturbing and terrifying, it would be too much. The flashbacks are where we really found the heart of the film.”

The score for “Whalefall” was recorded in Los Angeles at Fox Studios, and included more than 100 musicians: 50 strings, 21 brass, four percussionists, and a 24-person choir.

According to Trapanese, “With a film like this, some composers might approach it with a very highconcept idea like, ‘I’m going to drop a microphone into the water and record an instrument underwater.’ If I had tried something like that, it wouldn’t have worked, because this film is so intense and visceral. We found the music had to come from a place with universal emotion: solo instruments, acoustic instruments, and orchestra. The heartbeat of the movie was a solo instrument playing something incredibly detailed and difficult, juxtaposed with an orchestra that envelops the solo.”

Trapanese continues, “We found some really cool instruments that represented certain parts of the film. I worked with my friend Johnny Rogers, who plays tuneless instruments. That became a special colour when we also added some vibraphones and bells. It became a really interesting source of beauty for the ocean and nature.”

~ Working With Visionary Filmmaker Brian Duffield ~

“Brian [Duffield] has this childlike enthusiasm, which is infectious, but he is also the kind of person who enjoys the process of trying to figure out how to film things, and to do it in a way that is hopefully very captivating, and ultimately, entertaining,” says Austin Abrams. “I don’t know how he did it, but he found ways to film everything, which on paper seemed impossible, and to do it in a way that made it feel like it wasn’t locked, but was dynamic, and could be changed if someone came up with a better idea.”

“There is an innocence to Brian that reminds me of Jay,” says Josh Brolin. “Brian is, obviously, a really smart guy, but this film required someone extra special to be able to pull it off. He had a sensitivity that I really responded to, and he was super affected by the story. And I love that he was so committed to authenticity, because to me, this film has to feel authentic.”

“He's very hands off in a lovely way,” says Elisabeth Shue. “He's very excited and encouraging, and he creates an environment where everyone feels free and supported. I love directors like that, because, as an actor, you come into a film and everyone is a little bit on edge, and if your leader is joyful and kind and welcoming on the first day and he provides a calm set, then you just feel free.” Shue continues, “And it was amazing because he is both the director and a writer, which is so important for this movie in particular, because he's seeing which moments he wants to see on screen that will tell the story the best. He's creating them with his co-writer, so he's much more invested than someone who was just given a script and was just going to direct it.”

“Brian has a great presence on set,” says producer Brian Grazer. “He is fun and buoyant and full of good energy, and is always enthusiastic with an undying amount of commitment and energy for the film. He is that rare director who is brilliantly creative, and has the ability to inspire others around him and get the absolute best out of every department head.”

“Personally, as a fan of movies, I'm most interested in watching movies that are original stories,” says Abrams. “So I am very thankful that I am able to be a part of something that is so daring and original, and that is so timeless with these almost mythical elements. I realise that it is taking a big swing, but for me, that is one of the most exciting things about filmmaking.”

~ About the Cast ~

AUSTIN ABRAMS (Jay Gardiner) has quickly established himself as one of Hollywood's most compelling young actors and continues to showcase his range and depth as an actor.

Most recently, Abrams can be seen captivating audiences in Zach Cregger's mystery thriller “Weapons.” Abrams stars alongside Amy Madigan, Josh Brolin, Julia Garner, and Alden Ehrenreich in the Warner Bros. film, which was released on August 8, 2025, and surpassed \$148 million at the global box office within the first two weeks of release.

Next, Abrams will reunite with Zach Cregger for a reimagining of “Resident Evil,” based on the iconic horror video game franchise. The film is set for release on 18 September, 2026. Abrams will also headline Brian Duffield's “Whalefall” for 20th Century Studios. The project became a top priority for the studio after it won distribution rights in a competitive bidding war, with Abrams landing the lead following an extensive audition process. Based on the acclaimed novel of the same name, “Whalefall” is slated for release on 16 October, 2026.

Previously, Abrams starred opposite George Clooney and Brad Pitt in Jon Watts' feature “Wolfs.” The film premiered at the 2024 Venice Film Festival and debuted on Apple TV+. Abrams was also seen in Ethan Berger's drama “The Line,” alongside John Malkovich, Halle Bailey, Alex Wolff, and Angus Cloud, which premiered at the 2023 Tribeca Film Festival.

Abrams won fans and critical acclaim for his role as the beloved Ethan in HBO's wildly successful series “Euphoria.” He also starred in Jennifer Kaytin Robinson's “Do Revenge,” which quickly became the most-watched program on Netflix when it debuted. Additionally, Abrams starred as

Dash in Netflix's popular series "Dash & Lily." The series, which amassed a cult following, was produced by Shawn Levy under his 21 Laps banner and based on the popular book Dash & Lily's Book of Dares by Rachel Cohn and David Levithan. Abrams also starred in the lead role and opposite Ben Stiller in Mike White's "Brad's Status," which premiered at the 2017 Toronto International Film Festival.

Additional film and television credits include "Paper Towns"; "This Is Us"; "Penelope"; "The Walking Dead"; "Silicon Valley"; "Shameless"; "Scary Stories to Tell in the Dark"; "Gangster Squad"; "Chemical Hearts"; "The Starling Girl"; "The Americans"; "SMILF"; and "The Inbetweeners."

Academy Award®-nominated actor **JOSH BROLIN (Mitt Gardiner)** is one of Hollywood's top leading men who continues to balance challenging roles in both mainstream studio productions as well as thought-provoking independents.

Brolin most recently starred in Rian Johnson's Netflix murder mystery "Wake Up Dead Man: A Knives Out Mystery," and in Warner Bros.' hit horror film "Weapons," which he also executive produced. Next, he will appear in Ridley Scott's "The Dog Stars" and 20th Century's "Whalefall."

In 2024, Brolin released his debut memoir, From Under the Truck, with HarperCollins, reprised his role as Gurney Halleck in Denis Villeneuve's "Dune: Part Two," the sequel to the six-time Academy Award®-winning film "Dune," and starred in the second season of Prime Video's sci-fi western series "Outer Range," on which he also served as an executive producer and director.

As an integral part of the Marvel Cinematic Universe, Brolin starred as supervillain Thanos in the blockbusters "Avengers: Infinity War" and its sequel, "Avengers: Endgame," the finale of all three phases of the MCU, which opened to rave reviews and became the second-highest-grossing movie of all time.

In 2009, Brolin was nominated for an Academy Award®, a Screen Actors Guild Award®, and received awards from the New York Film Critics Circle and the National Board of Review for his portrayal of Dan White in Gus Van Sant's acclaimed biopic, "Milk." His additional best picture Oscar®-nominated films include Denis Villeneuve's "Dune," the Coen Brothers' "True Grit," which was nominated for 10 Academy Awards in 2011, and 2007's "No Country for Old Men," also from the Coen Brothers, which won four Academy Awards, including best picture and best director. Other highly acclaimed performances include his portrayal of George W. Bush in Oliver Stone's biopic, "W," Ridley Scott's blockbuster, "American Gangster," for which he was nominated for a Screen Actors Guild Award as part of the ensemble, Denis Villeneuve's "Sicario," which was nominated for three Academy Awards, and his feature film debut in the action-comedy classic "Goonies," directed by Richard Donner for producer Steven Spielberg.

ELISABETH SHUE (Zara Gardiner) is an Academy Award®-nominated American actress known for her versatile performances across film and television. She rose to prominence with breakout roles in "The Karate Kid," "Adventures in Babysitting," "Cocktail," "Soap Dish," and "The Saint" with Val

Kilmer. Her critically acclaimed performance as a troubled Las Vegas prostitute opposite Nicolas Cage in “Leaving Las Vegas” (1995) earned her an Oscar® nomination for best actress, along with BAFTA, SAG®, and Golden Globe® nominations.

More recently, Shue starred as Madelyn Stillwell in the Amazon Prime series “The Boys,” and opposite Tom Hanks in the 2020 World War II naval thriller “Greyhound.” She also appeared in the family dramedy “The Good Half” (2024), playing the mother of Nick Jonas's character alongside Brittany Snow, David Arquette, and Alexandra Shipp.

JOHN ORTIZ (Hewey) most recently starred in Stephen Adly Guirgis’ “Dog Day Afternoon” on Broadway, opposite Jon Bernthal and Ebon Moss-Bachrach. He can next be seen in season 2 of the Apple TV+ series “Bad Monkey,” for which his season 1 performance earned him an Imagen Award nomination for best supporting actor – comedy.

Ortiz can currently be seen in season four of ABC’s “Will Trent” and the Universal film “Nobody 2,” opposite Bob Odenkirk. His previous credits include the Academy Award®-nominated MGM feature film “American Fiction,” the Netflix limited series “The Madness,” opposite Colman Domingo, and the leading role on the ABC series “Promised Land.” Other films include “The Mothership,” opposite Halle Berry, and the feature film “The Fallout,” which premiered at SXSW.

He also starred in the Netflix series “Messiah,” opposite Michelle Monaghan, and in the Netflix feature “Horse Girl,” with Allison Brie. Previous credits include “Bumble Bee,” opposite Hailee Steinfeld and John Cena, James Gray’s film “Ad Astra,” starring Brad Pitt, “Nostalgia,” opposite John Hamm and Catherine Keener, directed by Mark Pellington, “Replicas,” opposite Keanu Reeves, “Kong: Skull Island” (Legendary), “Going in Style”. (Warner Bros), “A Dog’s Purpose” (DreamWorks), and “The Cloverfield Paradox” (Netflix), produced by JJ Abrams, opposite David Oyelowo. He received rave reviews for his performance in “A Woman Apart,” opposite Maggie Siff, and “Ms. White Light.”

On television, he played Melanie Lynskey’s love interest in the Duplass Brothers’ HBO series “Togetherness.” Before that, he starred opposite Greg Kinnear on “Rake” for Fox, and HBO’s “Luck,” opposite Dustin Hoffman. Ortiz can also be seen playing Ann Dowd’s love interest in the third season of “The Handmaid’s Tale” on Amazon. He is extremely proud to be one of the cofounders of The LAByrnth Theater with Phillip Seymour Hoffman, and recently directed “Halfway Bitches Go To Heaven” at The Atlantic Theater, for which he received multiple nominations.

JANE LEVY (Eva Gardiner) is a Los Angeles-based actress and Golden Globe® nominee for best performance by an actress in a television series – musical or comedy for “Zoey’s Extraordinary Playlist.” Levy is set to star in NBCUniversal’s “Sunset P.I.” Her upcoming and recent projects include “River,” a suspenseful slasher from writer/director Joshua Giuliano, which recently had its world premiere at the Toronto International Film Festival; the short film “Smoked,” directed by Alice Gu; and the television series “Recap,” alongside Julia Stiles. She can also be seen in the 2025 political thriller “Atropia,” and provided voiceover work for the R-rated comedy “The Toxic Avenger,” starring Peter Dinklage and Elijah Wood.

In 2024, Levy starred in the dramedy “The Problem with People” and the romantic comedy “Melody of Love.” Her 2023 film, “A Little Prayer,” directed by Angus MacLachlan, premiered at the Sundance Film Festival to critical acclaim and was acquired by Sony Pictures Classics.

Levy made her series lead debut portraying Tessa Altman in ABC’s comedy “Suburgatory,” alongside Alan Tudyk, Jeremy Sisto, and Ana Gasteyer. She starred as drug addict Mia Allen in Fede Álvarez’s “Evil Dead” remake and reunited with Álvarez as the lead in the acclaimed thriller “Don’t Breathe,” alongside Stephen Lang and Dylan Minnette. Her television credits also include Netflix’s neo-noir series “What/If,” alongside Renée Zellweger, and Hulu’s “Castle Rock,” alongside Bill Skarsgård and Melanie Lynskey.

EMILY RUDD (Nan Gardiner) is the female lead of Netflix’s record-breaking live-action adaptation of “One Piece,” which premiered to critical acclaim and broke streaming records worldwide for viewership, beating out both “Stranger Things” and “Wednesday.” She will next star in Brian Duffield’s “Whalefall,” for 20th Century Studios, opposite Austin Abrams and Josh Brolin, out later this year.

She can also be seen in a one-season role on “Hunters” for Amazon, playing Logan Lerman’s love interest. Other credits include Netflix’s “Fear Street” franchise (the lead in the second feature) and “Moonshot” for New Line Cinema. Rudd was seen in Matt Weiner’s “The Romanoff’s” and Bryan Cranston’s “Electric Dreams,” both for Amazon. She also booked the lead of the USA pilot “Olive Forever.”

~ About the Filmmakers ~

BRIAN DUFFIELD, p.g.a. (Director/Co-Screenwriter/Producer) is an acclaimed writer, director and producer known for blending bold genre concepts with emotionally grounded, character-driven storytelling. His latest film, “Whalefall,” is an epic survival thriller from 20th Century Studios and Imagine Entertainment, based on Daniel Kraus’ bestselling novel. Duffield directs, produces and co-wrote the screenplay with Kraus. Starring Austin Abrams, Josh Brolin, Elisabeth Shue, John Ortiz, Jane Levy and Emily Rudd, the film opens exclusively in cinemas 16 October, 2026.

Duffield previously wrote, directed, and produced “No One Will Save You,” the critically acclaimed sci-fi thriller starring Kaitlyn Dever. Told with almost no dialogue, the film earned Duffield a Writers Guild of America Award nomination for his screenplay and received a Critics’ Choice Award nomination for best movie made for television, with Dever also nominated for best actress. The film was widely praised for its inventive approach to genre filmmaking and its intimate exploration of grief, isolation, and forgiveness.

Duffield made his feature directorial debut with “Spontaneous,” the acclaimed genre-bending coming-of-age film starring Katherine Langford and Charlie Plummer. Adapted by Duffield from

Aaron Starmer's novel, the film blends romance, comedy, and horror and earned widespread critical praise, including a 96% score on Rotten Tomatoes.

Prior to directing, Duffield established himself as one of the industry's most distinctive genre screenwriters, with credits including "The Divergent Series: Insurgent," "The Babysitter," "Underwater," and "Love and Monsters." His producing credits include "Cocaine Bear" and "Borderline," and he created and executive produced the animated series "Skull Island."

Duffield's upcoming projects include "Siren Head," which he is set to direct from a screenplay cowritten with filmmaker Zach Cregger, and "Crumble," which he will write and direct for Laika, with Phil Lord & Chris Miller producing. He also wrote the screenplay for the upcoming creature feature "Skeletons," directed by J.T. Mollner, on which Duffield serves as an executive producer.

DANIEL KRAUS (Co-Screenwriter/Based on the Book by) is a New York Times bestselling writer of novels, TV, and film. His novel Angel Down was the 2026 Pulitzer Prize for Fiction winner, a New York Times Top 10 Book of 2025, and a national bestseller. His novel Whalefall received a frontcover review in the New York Times Book Review, won the Alex Award, was an L.A. Times Book Prize Finalist, and was a Best Book of 2023 from NPR, the New York Times, Amazon, Chicago Tribune, and more.

Kraus's work has been translated into over 25 languages. He lives with his partner in Chicago.

BRIAN GRAZER, p.g.a. (Producer) is founder and chairman of Imagine Entertainment. He is an Oscar®, Golden Globe®, Emmy®, and GRAMMY® Award-winning producer. His work has been nominated for 47 Oscars and over 300 Emmys. He won the best picture Oscar for "A Beautiful Mind" and is the #1 New York Times bestselling author of A Curious Mind: The Secret to a Bigger Life, Face to Face: The Art of Human Connection, and the recent A Curious Mind Expanded Edition.

Grazer's feature film productions include "Candy Cane Lane," "The Beanie Bubble," "Thirteen Lives," "tick, tick...Boom!," "Apollo 13," "American Gangster," "8 Mile," "Frost/Nixon," "Liar Liar," as well as the television series "Parenthood," "Under the Banner of Heaven" from Dustin Lance Black, "Genius: Aretha," "Wu-Tang: An American Saga," "Swagger," "Empire," "24," "Arrested Development," and "Friday Night Lights."

Grazer has also produced numerous documentaries, including the feature documentaries "Personality Crisis: One Night Only," directed by Martin Scorsese, Emmy®-nominated and Peabody Award winner "Judy Blume Forever"; the critically acclaimed Carlos Santana documentary, "Carlos"; the NAACP Award-nominated "Louis Armstrong's Black and Blues," from Sacha Jenkins; the Emmy-winning "Lucy and Desi," directed by Amy Poehler; the Emmynominated "We Feed People," profiling renowned chef José Andrés and World Central Kitchen; the GRAMMY® Award-winning best music film, "The Beatles: 8 Days A Week"; the GRAMMY Award-winning best music film, "Music by John Williams"; "The Day Sports Stood Still"; "Rebuilding Paradise"; "The Volcano: Rescue from Whakaari"; "The Super Models" on Apple TV+, and the docuseries "Light &

Magic,” about George Lucas’ pioneer visual effects house Industrial Light and Magic, among many others.

Recent and upcoming projects include “After the Hunt” for Amazon MGM starring Julia Roberts and Andrew Garfield, “The ‘Burbs” for Peacock, “Wild Things” for Apple TV+, among other feature films including “How To Rob a Bank,” directed by David Leitch starring Nicholas Hoult, Zoë Kravitz, Anna Sawai, Pete Davidson, “Whalefall,” starring Austin Abrams and Josh Brolin, “The Mosquito Bowl,” from director Pete Berg, and “Spaceballs: The New One.”

Profiled by Time Magazine as one of the “100 Most Influential People in the World,” Grazer believes that curiosity is the superpower that has helped him create his best life, and is passionate about turning that curiosity towards doing good in the world. He has been honored for his global humanitarian work by organisations including the Simon Wiesenthal Foundation, the Alfred Mann Foundation, the Alzheimer’s Association, World of Children, and the Atlantic Council. He serves on the Board of the USC School of Cinematic Arts, where he also teaches a course on “Starting from Zero.”

Grazer and his longtime friend Ron Howard founded Imagine Entertainment in the early ‘80s, embarking on what is now one of the longest-running partnerships in Hollywood. They continue to run the company together as executive chairmen.

JEB BRODY (Producer) is the president of film and television at Imagine Entertainment, where he oversees the company’s development and production slates across features and series. Since joining Imagine in 2024, Brody’s producing credits include Luca Guadagnino’s “After the Hunt,” David Leitch’s “How to Rob a Bank,” “Whalefall,” starring Josh Brolin and Austin Abrams, and Peter Berg’s “The Mosquito Bowl.” Additionally, his roster includes Ron Howard’s upcoming film “Alone at Dawn” and the highly anticipated “Spaceballs: The New One.”

Prior to joining Imagine, Brody served as president of production at Amblin Partners, where he developed and produced a slate of films that included the Academy Award®-winning, Sam Mendes-directed “1917.” In 2011, he joined Focus Features as the president of production, where he oversaw films including the adaptation of the massive bestseller “Fifty Shades of Grey,” and the acquisition of titles like Academy Award winner “Dallas Buyers Club” and “The Place Beyond the Pines.”

Brody began his career as an independent producer, making numerous films and documentaries including the Academy Award®-winning Sundance sensation “Little Miss Sunshine.”

Brody is on the board of several film-related organisations, including the Gotham Film and Media Institute; is a member of The Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences and The British Academy of Film and Television Arts; and is an adjunct professor at the University of Southern California’s Peter Stark Producing Program in the School of Cinematic Arts.

ALLAN MANDELBAUM, p.g.a. (Producer) is the co-president of film at Imagine Entertainment, where he recently produced a trio of upcoming films, including David Leitch's "How To Rob a Bank" for Amazon MGM, Ron Howard's "Alone At Dawn," also for Amazon MGM, and Brian Duffield's "Whalefall" for 20th Century Studios. Previously, he produced Luca Guadagnino's "After the Hunt" for Imagine and Amazon MGM.

Prior to joining Imagine, he was head of production at independent production company Star Thrower Entertainment for nearly a decade. While there, Mandelbaum produced several films, including Chloe Domont's Sundance hit "Fair Play," which Netflix acquired out of the festival, and Brian Duffield's critically acclaimed "No One Will Save You" for 20th Century Studios/Hulu. Additional credits include the Oscar®-winning film "King Richard" for Warner Bros., New Line's "8Bit Christmas," for which he was PGA-nominated, Neon's Indie Spirit Award-winning "Ingrid Goes West," and several others.

Before Star Thrower, he was vice president of production at Hugh Jackman's SEED Productions and an assistant at Fox 2000 and Gavin Polone's Pariah Productions. He got his start working in the mailroom and talent department of the Endeavor Talent Agency.

AARON MORTON, NZCS (Director of Photography) is an accomplished film and television director of photography. He started his career working in the camera department as a 2nd assistant camera, where he got an early break on Sam Raimi's "Xena: Warrior Princess." Over the 6-season run of the show, he worked his way up to 2nd unit director of photography and shot one episode as main unit director of photography. In the following years, he worked as 2nd unit director of photography on many international productions that came to New Zealand, including "30 Days of Night" and "Underworld 3: Rise of the Lycans."

He is a frequent collaborator of showrunner Steven S. DeKnight, starting with his work on "Spartacus: Blood and Sand." Morton is also known for his work on "The Evil Dead," with director Fede Alvarez. He garnered four consecutive Canadian Screen Awards for his work on "Orphan Black." Other notable credits include "Black Mirror" (Episodes: "Bandersnatch," "Metalhead," and "Playtest"), "American Gods," "The Lord of the Rings: Rings of Power" for Amazon, "The First Omen," with director Arkasha Stevenson, as well as 2nd unit for the live-action remake "Mulan." In "Abigail," directed by Matt Bettinelli-Olpin and Tyler Gillett, starring Alisha Weir and Melissa Barrera, he created a visually rich and thrilling underworld for the vampire horror-crime comedy for Universal. Other recent collaborators include director Brian Duffield, starting with "No One Will Save You," and more recently on "Whalefall" for 20th Century Studios, as well as director Patrick Hughes, for whom he shot "War Machine" for Lionsgate, and most recently "Untitled Mike Thornton Project" for Amazon.

RAMSEY AVERY (Production Designer) is a world-builder. He began by studying the cosmos as an astrophysics major at the University of Wyoming, drawn to the mechanics of how worlds come into being. By day, he worked through differential equations; by night, he stepped onto the University's theater stages as an actor and director. Somewhere between numbers and narrative, he realised that the urge to understand worlds could become the craft of creating them.

That impulse has carried him across the full spectrum of entertainment design—from Super Bowl commercials to sitcoms, from theme parks to intimate indie films and sweeping tentpole features. His recent work includes designing the scientifically accurate exterior - and insides!! - of a giant sperm whale for 20th Century’s “Whalefall.” He was the supervising production designer on an epic retelling of “Ramayana” for DNEG, filmed in Mumbai. He also just completed recreating 1972 Vietnam for Amazon/MGM’s upcoming “Untitled Navy SEAL Mike Thornton Project.”

In addition to Marvel’s “Captain America: Brave New World,” his recent credits include 20th Century’s “No One Will Save You” and the Amazon/MGM pilot, “The Consultant.”

Ramsey received an Art Directors Guild Award for his production design on “The Lord of the Rings: The Rings of Power,” a project that demanded worlds both vast and intimate. That same sensibility defines earlier films like “Waitress” and “10 Cloverfield Lane,” where carefully built environments carry the emotional weight of the story.

His work extends beyond the screen into spaces audiences can inhabit. He designed “Avengers Campus” at Disney California Adventure, including the “WEB-SLINGERS: A Spider-Man Adventure” attraction, and earlier created the Animation Pavilion at the same park, which earned a Thea Award—the themed entertainment industry’s highest honor. Around the world, his designs have taken many forms, among others: a theme park in the U.A.E., “Marvel Dubailand,” a Don Quixote kids’ attraction in Japan, the original “Winterlit Holiday Streetscape” for the City of Santa Monica, and a Royal Wedding in Riyadh.

In all these endeavors, the best part may be the people Ramsey has collaborated with all around the world, from directors, writers, and creative directors to the nuts and bolts of producers, engineers, carpenters, decorators, and painters. It takes that shared teamwork to bring a world to life, and in that collaboration lives the joy of creating.

NATALIE O’BRIEN (Costume Designer) is a Los Angeles- and New York-based costume designer known for her grounded, visually layered approach to character. Her work moves between realism and stylised worlds, building complex characters that feel lived-in, story-driven, and emotionally specific. Whether she’s designing 14th-century nun habits in Jeff Baena’s “The Little Hours” (with John C. Reilly and Aubrey Plaza) or capturing the quiet vulnerability of “Honey Boy” (directed by Alma Har’el, starring Shia LaBeouf and Lucas Hedges).

Her breakout came through an early collaboration with Ana Lily Amirpour on “A Girl Walks Home Alone at Night,” a black-and-white Iranian vampire western whose chador-cloaked costume is now part of the Academy Museum’s permanent collection. She continued working with Amirpour on “The Bad Batch” and “Mona Lisa and the Blood Moon,” and has brought her textured, character-first style to films like “Ingrid Goes West” (directed by Matt Spicer, starring Aubrey Plaza and Elizabeth Olsen), the 1970s noir-inspired “I’m Your Woman” (directed by Julia Hart, with Rachel Brosnahan), and the video game adaptation “Five Nights at Freddy’s.”

Born in England and raised between California and her Iranian roots, O'Brien brings a crosscultural sensibility and an instinctive feel for tone to everything she works on. Recent projects include Disney's "Freakier Friday" (in theaters August 8th), directed by Nisha Ganatra and starring Jamie Lee Curtis and Lindsay Lohan.

GUILLAUME ROCHERON (Visual Effects Supervisor) is a two-time Academy Award®-winning VFX Supervisor, whose work has helped redefine what visual effects can achieve in modern cinema. Over more than 20 years, he has collaborated with some of the world's most acclaimed filmmakers, including Ang Lee, Sam Mendes, Jordan Peele, and Alejandro González Iñárritu, creating ambitious and highly distinctive visual worlds across a remarkable range of genres.

His latest project is 20th Century Studios' highly anticipated thriller "Whalefall. Based on Daniel Kraus' bestselling novel, the film follows a diver who is swallowed by a giant sperm whale and must find a way to survive from within. The project presents a distinctive visual effects challenge, requiring the main actor to be inside a living and breathing creature, where audiences have never been before.

Rocheron won his first Academy Award® for best achievement in visual effects for Ang Lee's "*Life of Pi*" (2012), an extraordinary feat of visual storytelling that brought a digitally created Bengal tiger to life and transformed the open ocean into a vast, believable world. His work on the film also earned him a BAFTA and a VES Award.

He won his second Academy Award® for Sam Mendes' "*1917*," along with a second BAFTA for best achievement in special visual effects. Working closely with Mendes and the film's creative team, he helped create the illusion of one continuous shot, integrating visual effects so seamlessly into the cinematography that the technology disappears into the filmmaking.

His credits span an extraordinary range of visual challenges, from the spectacle of "Godzilla," "Godzilla: King of the Monsters" and "Man of Steel," to the stylised worlds of "The Secret Life of Walter Mitty," "Ghost in the Shell," and "Ad Astra." On "Ghost in the Shell," Rocheron oversaw the creation of an entire futuristic world, while his work on the "Godzilla" films and "Man of Steel" saw him bring some of cinema's most iconic creatures and characters to life on a vast scale.

He has also collaborated with filmmakers such as Jordan Peele on "*Nope*" and Alejandro González Iñárritu on "*Bardo: False Chronicle of a Handful of Truths*," continuing a career defined by technically ambitious projects and a close partnership between visual effects and filmmaking.

JOSEPH TRAPANESE (Music by) is an award-winning Hollywood composer, producer, arranger, and conductor who has scored over 100 projects spanning film, television, and interactive media.

Trapanese, known for his inventive hybrid sound, has collaborated on film scores with Daft Punk for "Tron: Legacy," Anthony Gonzalez (of M83) for "Oblivion," and Mike Shinoda (of Linkin Park) for "The Raid: Redemption." His acclaimed solo film soundtracks include "Straight Outta Compton,"

“No One Will Save You,” “Arctic,” two installments of the “Divergent” series, “G20,” and the animated musical “David,” for which he composed the score and produced all original songs.

He co-composed the score for the musical drama “The Greatest Showman” with John Debney and produced several chart-topping songs written by Academy Award®-winning songwriters Benj Pasek and Justin Paul for the film’s multi-platinum, GRAMMY Award-winning soundtrack.

Recent film projects include “Animal Friends,” “Time of the Nice Aunties,” “The Helpers,” “Mike & Nick & Nick & Alice,” “The Witcher: Sirens of the Deep,” and “The Machine.”

Trapanese’s television credits include Netflix’s “The Witcher,” “Shadow and Bone,” “Skull Island,” and “Scott Pilgrim Takes Off”; NBC’s “Brilliant Minds”; USA Network’s “Unsolved: The Murders of Tupac and the Notorious B.I.G.”; the Disney+ NatGeo series “America the Beautiful”; and ABC’s “Quantico,” among others. His work in interactive media includes projects for Disney Animation, EA, Lucasfilm, and Ubisoft. Recent commissions include original music for NASA and arrangements for the Super Bowl National Anthem.

His accolades include World Soundtrack Award nominations for his score for “Oblivion” (cocomposed with M83), and for co-writing, with Sohn, the original song *Carry Me Home* from “The Divergent Series: Insurgent.” He won the 2015 Black Reel Award for his “Straight Outta Compton” score and received a Saturn Award nomination with John Debney for “The Greatest Showman.” Trapanese received a nomination for Breakthrough Film Composer of the Year from the IFMCA. Daft Punk’s platinum-selling “Tron: Legacy” soundtrack album, which Trapanese arranged and orchestrated, received a GRAMMY® nomination, while the score was awarded Best Original Score for a Fantasy/Science Fiction/Horror Film by the IFMCA.

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