WHY NOT PRODUCTIONS and WILD BUNCH present

BLOOD FATHER

Directed by JEAN-FRANCOIS RICHET

Starring MEL GIBSON, ERIN MORIARTY, DIEGO LUNA, MICHAEL PARKS and WILLIAM H. MACY

Based upon the novel by PETER CRAIG

Screenplay by PETER CRAIG and ANDREA BERLOFF

US – Running time : 88mm – Image 2.39 – Sound 5.1 - Color

**SYNOPSIS**

After her drug kingpin boyfriend frames her for stealing a fortune in cartel cash, 17 year old LYDIA goes on the run, with only one ally in this whole wide world: her perennial screw-up of a dad, JOHN LINK, who's been a motorcycle outlaw, and a convict in his time, and now is determined to keep his little girl from harm and, for once in his life, do the right thing...

***Q&A with* Jean-François Richet**

Nicole Brenez: With your eighth movie *Blood Father*, you've once again worked in the US – ten years after your 2005 *Assault on Precinct 13*. In this new film, there's no longer a confrontation between lawmen and criminals as in *Crack 6-T* (1997), the two-part biopic *Mesrine* (2008) or the remake of John Carpenter's movie. This time, all the characters belong to the underworld. They include Hell's Angels, alcoholics, junkies, drug dealers, criminals, cartel members, prisoners, neo-Nazis, illegal immigrants – you name it. More than a study of conflict and power struggles, would you say *Blood Father* is an exploration of violence and of survival in a world in which it is impossible to live?

**Jean-François Richet: It's always tricky to analyze your choices when you're in the process of making them. That comes next – I can relate this film to my previous work and naturally you can see some connections between all my films. It's my belief that I pick a story based on the narrative, the drama and the story arc – rather than on some carefully mapped out process. I'm aware that my characters find themselves when they're struggling, that they're the rebellious kind and that in the final count their struggle will not make them any happier.**

***Blood Father* is still about a power struggle but with a different approach. When he's released from prison, John Link (Mel Gibson) decides to redeem himself and to work for a living. He lives in a trailer park where he interacts with other working-class people. It's a city in itself, exclusively made up of blue-collar workers who became dropouts because of the economic downturn. All the positive characters of the film are working-class people, including John, his AAA officer, the trailer park community, the young guy from the motel, and the Mexican illegal immigrants who don't speak any English but earn their bread by the sweat of their brow.**

**So it's true that power struggles are alienating and that violence may be liberating – even though history shows that it comes at a price.**

**N. B.:** Just like the book of the same title by Peter Craig, who adapted it into the script, and despite the savagery and overall selfishness, the film is about mad love – a father's love for his daughter. John Link seems to be the only character able to love, a figure of sacrifice and faithfulness – for his daughter but also for a Mexican big shot. On a wild, instinctive, old-fashioned note, do you think he somehow embodies a world on the wane – a world that stands for human values, unconditional love, self-sacrifice? A world attacked on all sides and outmoded by the empire of vested interest, trafficking and greed?

**J.F.R.: I read the novel before I read the script. I'd found it amazing as it portrayed a shaken America, wealthy kids indulging in drugs, orgies and the glamorization of gangster rule – as opposed to working-class America, to people who work their asses off to feed their kids, to immigrant workers picking oranges, to the Link character who finds redemption through work. This was social material I'm fond of. The dramatic conflict between father and daughter was already in place because of the different backgrounds to which they belong.**

**The character portrayed by Mel is iconic. He actually has values and his life is actually all about sacrifice. All his life he's been taking blows – he even goes to jail to protect his "adoptive father". What does he get from it? Nothing! To save his daughter, to make up for his absence, to give her the joy of living, he frees himself through violence. So violence becomes liberating.**

**N. B.:** The book focuses on the girl and is a coming-of-age story – Lydia learns how to become her true self after going through some tough experiences. Here, the film focuses on the father – isn't it meant as a paternal nightmare? The best father in the world tries to rescue his daughter from the worst son-in-law ever. That would explain the return of the latter, who is the ultimate embodiment of anxiety, just as a bad dream comes back to haunt you.

**J.F.R.: The script only deals with the last part of the book. By doing this, Peter Craig was able to capture the gist of it – whatever works in a book can seem more contrived in a film. In a film, you don't necessarily have to explain the whole evolution of a character. The minute the character is introduced, he exists – he comes into being! And the audience embraces him immediately, which gives you the opportunity to explore various issues, conflicts, etc.**

**The main character isn't the same in the book as in the film. It's relevant to say that the book is a coming-of-age story. The film is all about transmission. The transmission of survival, emancipation, love and self-sacrifice.**

N.B.: I suspect that, as a movie buff, you must be quite familiar with Mel Gibson's work, both as an actor and as a director. How did you work with him? How did you manage to totally disconnect his Hell's Angel character from the *Mad Max* mythology?

**J.F.R.: *Mad Max* never, ever, crossed my mind during the making of the film. I agree that there must in fact be similarities. The film takes place in the desert, you can see bikes and cars but had it not been for Mel, no one would have linked the two. What makes you think about it is the fact that most of us have grown up watching *Mad Max* and *Lethal Weapon.***

**I've rarely worked with someone so humble and self-composed. To me, Mel is one of the greatest living filmmakers – he's up there on my list of top directors along with Michael Mann. And yet he never interfered with my work.**

**As far as I'm concerned, I always try to be on talking terms with cast members. I would be stupid not to embrace what actors have to say – whenever it's relevant. I hate the idea that a director only has to press a button or that he’s directing traffic.**

**Mel is only interested in one thing and in the end it’s the most important thing – what drives the character in each and every scene. That's why he is a great actor and that's why he is a great director. He can't be bothered with trifles – all he thinks about is the character's deep motivations. Mel has such an acute sense of drama. We changed the whole ending an hour before we shot it when Mel got the impression it didn't feel right. We sat down with Mel and Peter Craig. Mel churned out a hundred ideas a minute. Incidentally, he's like Vincent Cassel – he's the same kind of animal. They bring everything down to the character's motivations. That's the key to good drama.**

N.B.: The novel portrayed a major journey through drugland – focusing on old vs. new drugs – and established a drug map in L.A. and Southern California – Calipatria, the Chocolate Mountains, Imperial Valley, the Mexican border… In the film we embark instead on a great journey through American landscapes where all kinds of dropouts and disadvantaged people take refuge –poles apart from John Ford and Anthony Mann's heroic deserts. Did you shoot on location? How did you establish the beautiful ochre palette that defines the film?

**J.F.R.: Whereas I wasn’t aware of *Mad Max* on the shoot, I was aware of John Ford. And yet we were not shooting in Monument Valley but around Albuquerque, New Mexico. On more than one occasion, as I was holding the camera, I kept in mind the principle, "one-third land, two-thirds sky, man and God almighty."**

**Ever since *Assault on Precinct 13,* I've worked with the same DP, Robert Gantz, whose work I really like. In all those years we've come to know each other and we're on the same page in no time. I could already envision the visual atmosphere of the movie when I read the script, and the scouting process only bore out my intuition – you shouldn't fight what the topography has to offer. You need to adapt locations, pick the right timing based on the lighting and try to control all this as best you can.**

**On the other hand, when you build the interiors, you’re working in a controlled environment. I went for the same dominant colors nature came up with – black, copper-colored, wooden hues. I wanted the actors' skin to bear traces – I wanted their creases to relate to the earth's furrows. It's a movie where earth and dust are dominant.**

**Jean-François Richet - filmographie**

1995 : ETATS DES LIEUX (Inner City), *feature film - fiction*

1997: MA 6-T VA CRACK-ER (Crack 6-T), *feature film - fiction*

2001: DE L’AMOUR (All about Love), *feature film - fiction*

2005: ASSAUT SUR LE CENTRAL 13 (Assault on Precinct 13), *feature film - fiction*

2008: MESRINE: L’INSTINCT (Mesrine: Killer Instinct), *feature film - fiction*

2008: MESRINE: L’ENNEMI PUBLIC (Mesrine: Public Enemy Number One), *feature film - fiction*

2014 : UN MOMENT D’EGAREMENT (One Wild Moment), *feature film - fiction*

**MEL GIBSON\_ Biography\_**

Mel Gibson was born in upstate New York and moved with his family to Australia when he was 12 years old. Gibson attended the National Institute of Dramatic Arts at the University of New South Wales in Sydney. His stage appearances include "Death of a Salesman." Gibson was eventually brought to the attention of director George Miller who cast him in *Mad Max*, the film that first brought him worldwide recognition. This was followed by the title role in *Tim*. Gibson's portrayal of a handicapped young man won him an Australian Film Institute Best Actor Award. He was further established as an international star by the two hit sequels to *Mad Max*--*The Road Warrior* and *Mad Max Beyond Thunderdome*--along with Peter Weir's *Gallipoli*, which brought Gibson a second Australian Best Actor Award. A few years later, Weir and Gibson again collaborated on *The Year of Living Dangerously*.

Gibson made his American film debut in *The River*. Also, he starred in the worldwide record breaking *Lethal Weapon* (1, 2, 3, and 4) franchise. Gibson's other films include *The Bounty*, *Mrs. Soffel*, *Tequila Sunrise*, *Bird on a Wire*, *Air America*, and *Hamlet*. *Hamlet*, directed by Franco Zeffirelli, was the first film produced by Gibson's production company, Icon Productions. Also, he starred in the Icon produced *Forever Young* and *Maverick*. Gibson made his directorial debut and starred in *The Man Without A Face*, another Icon production. The company has also produced *Immortal Beloved* and *Airborne*, among others.

In 1995, Gibson produced, directed and starred in the critical and box office success *Braveheart*, which was the recipient of five Academy Awards including Best Picture and Best Director, after receiving a leading 10 nominations. Gibson received a Golden Globe Award for Best Director as well. Also, he received a Special Achievement in Filmmaking Award given by the National Board of Review and was honored as the 1996 NATO/ShoWest Director of the Year, as well as being the recipient of the Best Director Award given by the Broadcast Film Critics Association. In 1996, Gibson starred in *Ransom*, directed by Ron Howard for Disney’s Touchstone Pictures. He received a Golden Globe nomination for Best Actor in a Motion Picture (Drama), as well as winning the People’s Choice Award for Favorite Motion Picture Actor.

In August of 1997, Gibson starred in the romantic-thriller *Conspiracy Theory*, co-starring Julia Roberts and directed by Richard Donner. In July of 1998, Gibson starred in *Lethal Weapon 4*. In February of 1999, he starred in the hard-edge thriller *Payback*, an Icon Production. Gibson starred in the emotionally charged adventure *The Patriot*. Mel lent his voice as the all-American rooster named Rocky; in the DreamWorks SKG animated adventure comedy, *Chicken Run*. Later that year, he starred as Nick Marshall, the chauvinistic advertising executive who gets in touch with his feminine side in the Paramount Pictures/Icon Productions, smash hit *What Women Want*. The romantic comedy, directed by Nancy Meyers and co-starring Helen Hunt opened at $33.6 million, that December. For his portrayal, he was nominated for a Golden Globe as “Best Actor, Motion Picture Comedy.”

In 2002, Gibson starred in *We Were Soldiers.* It was directed and written by Randall Wallace, who was nominated for an Academy Award for writing *Braveheart*. Later that year, he starred in M. Night Shyamalan’s thriller, *Signs,* for Disney, setting Gibson’s opening weekend box office record of $60 million and grossed an all-time individual record of over $400 million. In 2004, Gibson produced, co-wrote and directed *The Passion of The Christ*. The film was nominated for three Academy Awards. In 2006, Gibson brought to life the epic, visceral action thriller, *Apocalypto*. Gibson produced, co-wrote and directed the thriller. *Apocalypto* garnered three Academy Award nominations. Gibson returned to acting in 2009 with GK Films’ *Edge of Darkness*, where he starred as Thomas Craven. Gibson was in *The Beaver*, directed by Jodie Foster and recently produced, co-wrote and starred in the Icon Production *Get The Gringo*. Gibson recently starred in *Machete Kills*, directed by Robert Rodriguez, and *The Expendables 3*, directed by Patrick Hughes. He has recently completed production on *Hacksaw Ridge* and can next be seen in *Blood Father*, directed by Jean-François Richet and co-starring William H. Macy.

**ERIN MORIARTY - BIOGRAPHY**

Erin Moriarty, native to New York City, is quickly becoming one of Hollywood’s most promising young talents.

Erin gained critical acclaim recurring as Woody Harrelson’s troubled teenage daughter on the award-winning HBO drama TRUE DETECTIVE. Prior to that Erin landed a coveted role opposite Vince Vaughn in 20th Century Fox's comedy THE WATCH. She then starred in the Sundance Film Festival indie feature THE KINGS OF SUMMER, directed by Jordan Vogt-Roberts, opposite an up and coming cast including Gabriel Basso, Moises Arias and Nick Robinson, and comedy veterans Nick Offerman and Megan Mullally.

Currently Erin can be seen in new hit show JESSICA JONES for Netflix and Marvel Studios. She will next be seen as the lead in Lionsgate feature film BLOOD FATHER opposite Mel Gibson as well as upcoming Sundance film CAPTAIN FANTASTIC alongside Viggo Mortensen.

**DIEGO LUNA - Filmography**

2016 ROGUE ONE : A STAR WARS STORY (post-production)

THE BAD BATCH

BLOOD FATHER

2014 ME QUEDO CONTIGO

THE BOOK OF LIFE (Voice)

2013 ELYSIUM

2012 LA CASA DE MI PADRE

CONTRABAND

2008 RUDO Y CURSI

VENGANZA

HARVEY MILK

2007 MISTER LONELY

EL BÚFALO DE LA NOCHE

2006 FADE TO BLACK

UN MUNDO MARAVILLOSO

SÓLO DIOS SABES

2004 CRIMINAL

LE TERMINAL

DIRTY DANCING 2

2003 NICOTINA

OPEN RANGE

CARAMBOLA

SOLDADOS DE SALAMINA

2002 VAMPIRES : LOS MUERTOS

FRIDA

2001 ATLÉTICO SAN PANCHO

Y TU MAMÁ TAMBIÉN - Venice Film Festival - Marcello Mastroianni Award

Shared with: Gael García Bernal

2000 TODO EL PODER

**William H. Macy – biography**

William H. Macy is an Oscar and Golden Globe nominee, an Emmy and SAG Award winning actor, and a writer in theater, film and television. He currently stars in the Showtime series “Shameless,” for which he was nominated twice for a Best Actor Emmy Award. Macy's film credits include Seabiscuit, The Cooler, Magnolia, Boogie Nights, Jurassic Park III, Fargo, TNT's Door to Door, Wild Hogs, and Room. William H. Macy made his feature directorial debut with Rudderless, the closing film at the 2014 Sundance Film Festival. His next film, The Layover is set for release in 2016. In addition, Macy is a founding member of the Atlantic Theater Company.

**PETER CRAIG - FILMOGRAPHIE**

Writer

2016 BLOOD FATHER (novel and screenplay)

IT’S WHAT I DO (screenplay)

TOP GUN 2

2015 HUNGER GAMES: Mockingjay - Part 2 (screenplay)

2014 HUNGER GAMES: Mockingjay - Part 1 (screenplay)

2010 THE TOWN (screenplay)

**Cast list**

Link Mel GIBSON

Lydia Erin MORIARTY

Jonah Diego LUNA

Preacher Michael PARKS

Kirby William H. MACY

Jason Motel Clerk Thomas Mann

**Crew list**

A film by Jean-François RICHET

Screenplay by PETER CRAIG and ANDREA BERLOFF

Based upon the novel by PETER CRAIG

Director of Photography Robert GANTZ, A.S.C.

Production designer Robb WILSON KING

Editor Steven ROSENBLUM, A.C.E.

Music by Sven FAULCONER

Costumes designer Terry ANDERSON

Casting Carmen CUBA, C.S.A.

Art Director Billy W. Ray

Set Decorator Susan Magestro

Producers Chris BRIGGS, Peter CRAIG, Pascal CAUCHETEUX, Sébastien K. LEMERCIER

Executive producer Jennifer ROTH

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