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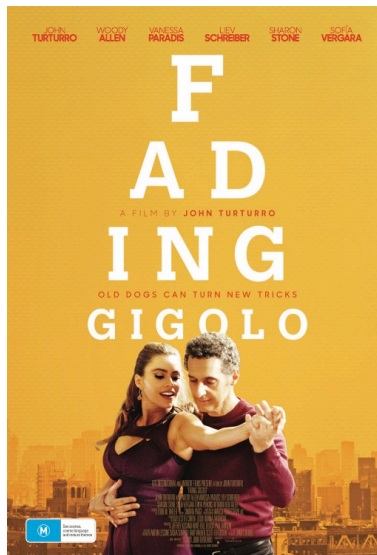
# FADING GIGOLO

Written and Directed by John Turturro

STARRING:

JOHN TURTURRO, WOODY ALLEN, VANESSA PARADIS,

LIEV SCHREIBER, SHARON STONE and SOFIA VERGARA



**Opens in cinemas across Australia MAY 1, 2014**

**Running time:** 90 minutes | **Classification:** M

**PUBLICITY REQUESTS:**

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**Distributed in Australia by Transmission Films**

## **FADING GIGOLO**

### **The Cast**

Fioravante	JOHN TURTURRO
Murray	WOODY ALLEN
Avigal	VANESSA PARADIS
Dovi	LIEV SCHREIBER
Dr. Parker	SHARON STONE
Selima	SOFIA VERGARA
Sol	BOB BALABAN
Mimou	M'BARKA BEN TALEB
Othella	TONYA PINKINS
Cefus	AUBREY JOSEPH
Coco	DANTE HOAGLAND
Cee Cee	JADE DIXON
Shimshon	DIEGO TURTURRO
Little Devorah	NESS KRELL
Shmuel	TED SUTHERLAND
Malky	RUSSELL POSNER
Rhuki	DELPHINA PINTO ENGELSTEIN
Yossi	TEDDY BERGMAN
Burly Driver	MICHAEL BADALUCCO
Burly Driver's Wife	AIDA TURTURRO
Chasidic Driver	ALLEN LEWIS RICKMAN
Chief Rebbe	DAVID MARGULIES
1 <sup>st</sup> Rabbi	ABE ALTMAN
Ancient Rabbi	SOL FRIEDER
Guy at Counter	MAX CASELLA
Waitress	SALIMATOU SILLAH
Loan	LOAN CHABANOL
English Lady Newscaster	KATHERINE BOROWITZ
Lady on the Street	EUGENIA KUZMINA
Lunching Lady	HILMA FALKOWSKI

## **FADING GIGOLO**

### **The Filmmakers**

Directed by	JOHN TURTURRO
Written by	JOHN TURTURRO
Produced by	JEFFREY KUSAMA-HINTE BILL BLOCK PAUL HANSON
Executive Producers	SASHA SHAPIRO ANTON LESSINE SCOTT FERGUSON BART WALKER
Co-Producer	JAMES DEBBS
Director of Photography	MARCO PONTECORVO
Production Designer	LESTER COHEN
Costume Designer	DONNA ZAKOWSKA
Editor	SIMONA PAGGI
Music Supervisor	CHRIS ROBERTSON
Casting by	TODD THALER
Stunt Coordinator	VICTOR PAGUIA

## **FADING GIGOLO**

### **Synopsis**

Fioravante (John Turturro), at his friend Murray's (Woody Allen) suggestion, enters into the world's oldest profession, and ends up finding something he didn't know he was looking for.

The seed of this scheme is planted when Murray's beautiful dermatologist Dr. Parker (Sharon Stone) mentions she's looking for a man to participate in a ménage à trois with her and her equally gorgeous friend Selima (Sofia Vergara). Contending with the recent closure of his bookshop, Murray recognizes the financial potential of this proposal and sets about convincing Fioravante to consummate the deal. While Fioravante is at first hesitant at the prospect of being Murray's "ho," he also needs the cash and comes to realize that there are worse ways to make a living than making two attention starved women happy. A partnership is born and Fioravante is soon on his way to Dr. Parker's bedroom for a pre-ménage tryout.

Meanwhile Murray has come across an unusual second client for Fioravante: Avigal (Vanessa Paradis), the widow of a revered Chasidic Rabbi, whom she married when she was very young. Twenty years later, Avigal now finds herself with six children, memories of a life lived only within the cloistered world of the Chasidic community, and a desperate yearning to experience something new. When Murray proposes that she visit Fioravante, she grasps this opportunity, curious as to where it might lead her. Fioravante's tender touch on her back awakens something inside her Avigal has never felt before, as well as stirring up an unexpected reaction in Fioravante.

Meanwhile, Avigal's every move is tracked by Dovi (Liev Schreiber), a Chasidic man who has pined for her since boyhood. Constricted both by religion and insecurity, his passion takes the form of watchfulness over Avigal and her children. Seeing Avigal with Fioravante arouses Dovi's suspicion, and before long, his jealousy.

As Fioravante makes his rounds through the bedrooms of Dr. Parker and Selima, as well as his more chaste meetings with Avigal, Murray discovers it's not so easy to be a pimp and finds out that the secular and the Orthodox must come to a head sooner or later.

As moving as it is funny, John Turturro's fifth film (after MAC, ILLUMINATA, ROMANCE & CIGARETTES, and PASSIONE) is about people's endless and never fully satisfying quest to find happiness through sex and love.

# # #

## **FADING GIGOLO**

### **About the Production**

The idea for John Turturro's new comedy FADING GIGOLO first surfaced in a playful improvisation he did for a friend's amusement over lunch. "I was just riffing, and then he kept laughing and I kept going more with it," says Turturro. It was only afterwards that he started to think this concept might be something worth exploring further. He talked about it to a few friends, including his barber. The barber mentioned it to another of his customers who happened to be Woody Allen. Allen loved the idea so much he, in turn, reached out to John. At this point Turturro didn't have much more than the basic story. "I went over to Woody's place and I talked him through it," says Turturro. "He'd say 'that's funny' or 'that's not funny' or 'that could be funny.'" As Allen remembers: "I thought John had come up with an unusual and amusing notion; it had a group of entertaining characters, it had a little taste of romance to it, and there were moments of real human interest." When Turturro started to write the script, Allen agreed to continue offering feedback. "He was very generous with his time," says Turturro, "but he was also merciless, and if someone like Woody Allen takes the time to do that, I felt that there must be something there." Turturro adds: "I think Woody encouraged me in his own way to go deep, and by the end there was a lot more of me in the movie. He encouraged me on how to do that in my own way. I wound up with much more of a nuanced film than a silly comedy."

Turturro has had a long-time fascination with the topic of prostitution. While there are so many people today who are forced into this way of life, there have always been those who have chosen it as a trade. "It's a profession, and like any profession there are people who do it well," says Turturro. "There can be a true transaction that happens; it might not be an emotional one, but it's a real one. Sex is a big part of life, and not just for 22 year olds. It's a longing that people have, even those who are in relationships. I don't think that longing ever ends and that desire is what has made people seek out prostitutes throughout time."

While portraits of male prostitutes in movies, whether gay or straight, tend to feature exceptionally attractive men, Fioravante (Turturro) in FADING GIGOLO wasn't conceived of as a pretty boy. "In movies it's always the most perfectly symmetrical people, but in real life sexy

people come in all packages,” says Turturro, adding, “once you take your clothes off, whether you have a good body or a bad body, you’re on an equal footing.” Fioravante’s appeal doesn’t emanate from his looks but rather from his extraordinary gift for understanding women—his ability to hold their attention. “There are guys who like sex, but don’t necessarily like women,” says Turturro. “Fioravante’s willing to listen to them, to be a human being with them, and to be very tender with them.” While Fioravante, a modest man who works in a floral shop, might himself be unaware of this ability, his close friend Murray (Woody Allen) recognizes it. When Murray is asked by his dermatologist Dr. Parker (Sharon Stone) to recommend a man whom she would be willing to pay to share a ménage à trois with herself and her friend Selima (Sofia Vergara), he immediately thinks of Fioravante. The only challenge is persuading Fioravante to go along with his plan.

“Murray is a nervous hustler,” says Allen. “Not stupid, but trying to promote a fast buck. A guy with a foolish idea that works a little bit, but in the end is probably doomed to failure because it’s preposterous.” Allen continues: “Murray isn’t a calculating or exploiting guy. He sees it as an opportunity, and his logic is ‘why not?’ Fioravante’s always been someone who’s enjoyed the company of women, and as Murray reasons, ‘athletes get paid for what they do and why shouldn’t you?’ When Fioravante shows some reluctance, he does talk him into it, but he talks him into it in good faith, as he thinks it would be silly to pass up this goldmine that seems to be out there.” Turturro adds: “Murray isn’t being completely altruistic *or* exploitative—it’s something in between.”

Fioravante leads a modest and unambitious life working in a New York City floral shop; a sensitive and solitary man with an old soul who values qualitative things like the books in Murray’s shop or wise maxims from the past. He doesn’t have many friends aside from Murray, who has acted as a sort of a father figure to him since Fioravante broke into his bookshop as a boy. Fioravante’s life seems to revolve around the women who pass through it, as he’s never able to find one he can hold on to. His latest paramour, a voluptuous Tunisian singer named Mimou (M’Barka Ben Taleb) lives in Italy and doesn’t speak English; Fioravante can only communicate with her in Italian, a language he only dimly understands. He can be attuned to her and even love her without knowing exactly what she’s saying. Fioravante is essentially a romantic which is

why Murray's proposal makes him feel uncomfortable. He doesn't like the idea of combining sexuality and money: "it dilutes it," as he tells Murray. Still, after reviewing the poor state of his finances, Fioravante reluctantly agrees to the dubious partnership with Murray.

When Fioravante meets his first client, Dr. Parker (Sharon Stone), she is at a crossroads in her life. Although wealthy and successful, she has always made choices in life according to what she was supposed to do rather than seeking out what she actually wanted. This way of life has left her confused about her own sexuality, despite a picture perfect marriage. "Dr. Parker is like a flower which hasn't bloomed," says Stone. "She's like a bud, a very tightly closed bud. She knows she's kind of shut down, so she asks Murray to bring this guy into her life because she needs someone to help her open her heart. And she hopes that her friend Selima, who knows how to be sexy and effervescent, will be able to help her too." Stone continues: "That beginning of her flowering self-opening is such a wonder to her that all kinds of other feelings come with it: feelings of attraction, feelings of jealousy, feelings of wonder, feelings of hopefulness, that delicious feeling of 'ooh I might know how to get to be sexy.' It's all delightful because she's fifty, not twenty, and it's so touching to see that at any age we can discover ourselves anew."

Avigal (Vanessa Paradis), the third client that Murray finds for Fioravante, is an Orthodox Chasidic widow from Williamsburg, Brooklyn. Avigal has lived her entire life in a religious community that severely restricts women's behavior. In terms of dress they must cover their hair, wear skirts, and their bodies must be covered from their necks to their knees. They are also forbidden to sing or read "forbidden" book, outside of the Orthodox canon. Contact between men and women is so limited that even after a twenty year long marriage to a much older Rebbe, and after bearing him six children, Avigal has never been kissed. "Avigal is religious, but there's a curiosity in her character," says Paradis. "She's not supposed to read, but she reads. She is lonely and miserable and wants to have a little taste of life, something different. She has something in her that needs to come alive." It's not surprising that she is very receptive to Murray's intriguing offer of a massage. Says Paradis: "She's at a point in her life when she's completely fading away, and Murray comes along to tell her she doesn't have to. She trusts him."

While what Fioravante offers Avigal might seem modest and chaste, she has never encountered anybody like him in her entire life. “He pays sincere attention to her, what’s in her head and what’s in her heart,” says Paradis. Says Stone: “What Fioravante offers women is that he’s *present*. There isn’t anything more attractive in another human being than someone who’s present with you, and willing to see and experience you, be vulnerable, be available, be loving, be present.” Stone continues: “Fioravante does that for Dr. Parker, but also for every woman that he allows to unfurl in his presence. And in doing that he takes each of them from where they are to the next phase of understanding of what love can be. He shows everyone, and himself, that simply by being present, the heart opens.”

While outwardly Avigal and Dr. Parker seem polar opposites, internally they are actually going through something quite similar. “Avigal is oppressed by her religion and her society and you might think that Dr. Parker has everything,” says Turturro, “but she is in her own cage too—they’re like different ends of the spectrum.” Both feel the need to free themselves by journeying outside their comfort zones. While Fioravante arouses an excitement and a girlish possessiveness in Dr. Parker, a deeper and mutual bond materializes with Avigal. “You feel that Avigal and Fioravante could be together, but they are from different worlds,” says Turturro. “I think he opens her up to experience life and I think she opens him up too.”

Another person on a romantic quest in the movie is Dovi (Liev Schreiber), a brawny Chasidic man working in the Shomrim (the Orthodox community police) in Avigal’s neighborhood. Dovi has loved Avigal since they both were children. Although he has rarely spoken to her, and his attempts at doing so have been awkward and clumsy, he has waited twenty years for Avigal. “One of the things I love about Dovi is his loyalty and his patience,” says Schreiber. “It wasn’t appropriate within the Orthodox community to have any interaction with her, but he hung in there.” Schreiber adds: “I don’t know if Avigal knew he was doing that, but I would imagine, with him hanging around looking dopey at her all the time she would have figured it out, but I don’t know that she knew.” Now that it is two years after her husband has died, Dovi is suspicious when he sees Avigal with Murray and Fioravante and starts tracking their every step. Given his background and shy nature, Dovi is bewildered by the ease with which they are able to interact with Avigal, and increasingly anxious about whether, after all his years of waiting, he’s

losing her to someone completely alien to his culture. “There’s a physical and emotional clumsiness to Dovi,” says Schreiber. “I think he’s trying to understand things that are a little bit outside his range of experience.” Says Turturro: “Fioravante knows how to have emotional intimacy with Avigal, but can’t stay; Dovi doesn’t know how to act around her, but very much wants to stay.”

Dr. Parker’s vivacious friend Selima (Sofia Vergara) has a much more light-hearted attitude towards her extramarital adventures with Fioravante. “Selima is fearless,” says Vergara. “She is ready in her life to take some risks and she wants to have fun. Even though she’s married, I don’t think anything’s going to stop her from that.” Says Turturro: “She’s the freest character in the movie. Her belief is: ‘I’ll try this, I’ll try that—I’m going to enjoy life while I’m alive.’” Selima is more confident than Dr. Parker, and enjoys playing around with Fioravante and being generally outrageous. “She’s a little cuckoo,” says Vergara. “She’s not afraid of screaming, crying, saying and doing whatever she wants. She’s a fun character, she brings a bit of humor to the movie, and I think that’s why John wanted me to do the role.”

Turturro has created several highly diverse portraits of women for *FADING GIGOLO*. As he explains: “I wanted the women to be very different: small, big, black, white, Spanish; women that are evocative of different things. In an early draft I had much older women too.” Turturro continues: “I’ve worked very closely with the women in the movies I’ve directed. They interest me more. If I could make five movies in a row I would never make an all male movie. I don’t even want to see an all male movie. Some of my favorite directors are Ingmar Bergman, Jean Renoir, Truffaut, and Louis Malle, because they created such vivid female characters.”

While Turturro had put a lot of himself into writing the character of Fioravante, this didn’t mean it was an easy roll to play. “Fioravante is a lovely role, but a hard one, because I could skew it too light or I could skew it to heavy, so it had to be tender in the middle of it,” says Turturro. “It’s a tightrope of a part.” Turturro also had to contend with directing the film at the same time. Whenever he had questions about his own performance, he would have watch playback of particular scenes or else turn to his director of photography, Marco Pontecorvo (whom he has

collaborated with before). Occasionally he would ask Woody Allen. “It’s a little schizophrenic to keep changing roles,” says Turturro.

FADING GIGOLO marks one of the rare occasions in which Woody Allen acts in a film by another director. “I have great respect for John’s work as a director and an actor, and I felt this was a role that was within my range,” says Allen. “If John had given me a script where I had to play a policeman or something, I wouldn’t have been able to do it, because I’m not really an actor, but this was something I could handle.” Turturro and the rest of the cast do not share Allen’s modesty about his talents. “When you’re acting opposite him, you see how fantastic he can be,” says Turturro. “He did some really delicate things. He liked to improvise and it was fun to try things a couple of different ways. He’s a very underrated actor... and he was always on time, ready to work.” Says Allen: “Knowing what it’s like being a director myself, I tried to be as accommodating as humanly possible and do every single thing John wanted me to do, because I come from a director’s point of view. I tried to completely abandon any directorial impulses of mine, or writer impulses or anything, and do as many takes as he wanted, and do them the way he wanted them, as this is strictly his baby.”

Allen had some trepidations about acting opposite Liev Schreiber. “I was a little nervous before I did a scene with Liev because I’d seen him on stage and I find him to be such a tremendous actor, and I thought, ‘Is he going to roll his eyes the minute I start to speak and think, ‘who did they stick me with here?’” Says Schreiber: “Getting to watch him up close was really stunning for me to see what a brilliant physical comedian he is. If you want to see something, just watch the way he moves his hands, like a magician, and his timing.” Schreiber adds: “I watched him throw a baseball too and who would’ve known that Woody Allen’s a pretty good baseball player?”

Liev Schreiber brought an imposing physicality to the role of Dovi, as well as an equally formidable resume in theatre and film. “I’ve always admired Liev’s work,” says Turturro. “He is very grounded, with great range, and can play all kinds of parts, which he’s certainly been able to show onstage. The idea of putting him in a romantic position was something that intrigued me. He’s got his own kind of sex appeal and edge.”

Award-winning French actress and international singing star Vanessa Paradis (GIRL ON THE BRIDGE) makes her debut in an English-speaking role with FADING GIGOLO. “It’s a wonderful role, but for her I think it was much more than that—it connected deeply with her,” says Turturro. “She gave one of those performances where people give a part of themselves away. It’s happened to me occasionally. Sometimes a role just resonates with somebody, because of whatever they’re going through, or their age, or anything at all, and you can’t separate the performance from the reality. There wasn’t a person on set that didn’t feel that.” Turturro continues: “I think when you work in the right way, the imaginary world becomes very real, when you’re giving to each other and you just dig in without intellectualizing.”

Sharon Stone and Turturro had worked with before on the film GODS BEHAVING BADLY, although they had no scenes together. “Sharon has a vulnerability to her,” says Turturro. “She’s the right age for the part, she’s very smart, she looks great—there’s something very athletic about her—I needed somebody you could imagine lived on Park Avenue. I think that we had a nice chemistry together. There’s kind of a bravery about her that makes her willing to try things. She’d be like ‘Alright, I want to do that.’ She actually pushed me to do stuff.”

Turturro considers Sofia Vergara to be a natural comedienne, something that fans of “Modern Family” would readily attest to. “When we did the scene with the threesome,” says Turturro, “I told her, ‘I’m like there, and then I disappear, kind of. You get it? And we have to read that on your face.’ She did it brilliantly.” Turturro continues: “She really has a lot of potential as an actress, if she wants to do it. She can be very expressive. She told me that she thinks in Spanish. If I had known that I would have put in more stuff in Spanish for her and I would just have subtitled it.”

Turturro spent several years researching the Jewish Orthodox community, reading books and meeting with many people. Vanessa spent a great deal of time with a young Chasidic woman who had left the community. “She’s a very strong, young, beautiful woman, who was 25, but who seems to have the life of someone who’s 105,” says Paradis. “She helped me to understand all the rules. Also she comes from Israel, and only learned to speak English three years ago, so

she still had an accent which I stole a little bit from. I also used my French accent which I pushed a little bit more. John didn't really want to show where Avigal comes from." Paradis was also helped by her costume. "My head is strapped under the wig and I have tight stockings on. I found that the physical sensation of wearing those clothes gave me an identity. It really did a lot for me." Says Schreiber: "I think all too often people have a narrow perspective on communities like the Satmar and Chasidim. They can be insular and so people don't bother to ask questions, and they don't bother to offer answers. It's a fertile environment for misunderstanding and miscommunication. When you go into that community and meet those people, and you get to know them on their terms, you realize that there is a lot more going on than that. They are as complex, complicated and as varied as anyone else."

One attribute that unites all the characters in *FADING GIGOLO*—Fioravante, Murray, Avigal, Dr. Parker, Dovi, and Selima—is a longing to connect with other people. It's a very big dynamic in life," says Turturro. "I think some people have obstacles that are very distinct, and others seem to have everything but they still feel that they need something else." Murray and Fioravante's idiosyncratic partnership causes ripples affecting all the characters in the film: Murray and Avigal's children start socializing; Avigal's and Dr. Parker's yearnings and searches are satisfied, as is Selima's simple quest for fun; Dovi learns how to express his love to Avigal by following Fioravante; and Fioravante himself learns to follow his heart wherever it leads him. They are all trying to take advantage of the opportunities life offers them while they can. Says Paradis: "There's a line my character says in the movie that goes 'We're alive for just a little while.' That means live life while you can. When there's beauty, when there's a chance that passes in front of you—don't watch it, grab it!" Everybody deserves a little happiness... if not a lot."

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## **FADING GIGOLO**

### **About the Cast**

**JOHN TURTURRO (Writer/Director/Fioravante)** studied at the Yale School of Drama and for his theatrical debut played the title role in John Patrick Shanley's "Danny and the Deep Blue Sea," for which he won an Obie Award and a Theater World Award. He has since starred in the Off-Broadway plays "La Puta Vida Trilogy," "Italian American Reconciliation," Samuel Beckett's "Endgame," the title role in Bertolt Brecht's "The Resistible Rise of Arturo Ui," "Souls of Naples," Samuel Beckett's "Endgame," and the Broadway production of Yasmina Reza's "Life (x) 3." In 2011, Turturro appeared as Lopakhin in the highly acclaimed CSC production of "The Cherry Orchard." He will be appearing in the title role of Henrik Ibsen's "The Master Builder" at BAM for the spring 2013 season. Turturro has also directed plays, including the Off-Broadway production of the US premiere of Yasmina Reza's "A Spanish Play" in 2007, and the 2011 Broadway production of "Relatively Speaking," three one-act comedies by Ethan Coen, Elaine May, and Woody Allen.

Turturro was nominated for a SAG Award® for his portrayal of Howard Cosell in the television movie MONDAY NIGHT MAYHEM and won an Emmy® Award for his guest appearance on the series "Monk." In 2007 he appeared in the miniseries "The Bronx is Burning" as notorious Yankee skipper Billy Martin, which garnered him a SAG Award® nomination.

Turturro has performed in over 60 films, including Spike Lee's DO THE RIGHT THING, MO' BETTER BLUES and JUNGLE FEVER, Robert Redford's QUIZ SHOW, Francesco Rosi's LA TREGUA, and Joel and Ethan Coen's MILLER'S CROSSING, THE BIG LEBOWSKI and O BROTHER WHERE ART THOU? For his lead role in the Coen Brothers' BARTON FINK. Turturro won the Best Actor Award at the Cannes Film Festival. He also received Cannes' Camera d'Or Award for his directorial debut, MAC, in 1991. Turturro has also directed ILLUMINATA, ROMANCE & CIGARETTES, and PASSIONE: A MUSICAL ADVENTURE.

**WOODY ALLEN's (Murray)** films as writer/director includes TAKE THE MONEY AND RUN, BANANAS, EVERYTHING YOU ALWAYS WANTED TO KNOW ABOUT SEX BUT WERE AFRAID TO ASK, SLEEPER, LOVE AND DEATH, ANNIE HALL, INTERIORS, MANHATTAN, STARDUST MEMORIES, A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S SEX COMEDY, ZELIG, BROADWAY DANNY ROSE, THE PURPLE ROSE OF CAIRO, HANNAH AND HER SISTERS, RADIO DAYS, SEPTEMBER, ANOTHER WOMAN, NEW YORK STORIES ("Oedipus Wrecks"), CRIMES AND MISDEMEANORS, ALICE, SHADOWS AND FOG, HUSBANDS AND WIVES, MANHATTAN MURDER MYSTERY, BULLETS OVER BROADWAY, DON'T DRINK THE WATER (TV), MIGHTY APHRODITE, EVERYONE SAYS I LOVE YOU, DECONSTRUCTING HARRY, CELEBRITY, SWEET AND LOWDOWN, SMALL TIME CROOKS, THE CURSE OF THE JADE SCORPION, HOLLYWOOD ENDING, ANYTHING ELSE, MELINDA AND MELINDA, MATCH POINT, SCOOP, CASSANDRA'S DREAM, VICKY CRISTINA BARCELONA, WHATEVER WORKS, YOU WILL MEET A TALL DARK STRANGER, MIDNIGHT IN PARIS, TO ROME WITH LOVE, and BLUE JASMINE.

He has also acted in WHAT'S NEW PUSSYCAT?, WHAT'S UP, TIGER LILY (voice, also co-screenwriter), CASINO ROYALE, PLAY IT AGAIN SAM (also screenwriter), THE FRONT, SCENES FROM A MALL, THE SUNSHINE BOYS, ANTZ (voice), and PICKING UP THE PIECES.

Allen has had three films nominated for an Academy Award for Best Picture, and won for ANNIE HALL. He was nominated seven times for a Best Director, and won for ANNIE HALL. Allen was nominated 16 times for Best Original Screenplay, and won for ANNIE HALL, HANNAH AND HER SISTERS and MIDNIGHT IN PARIS. He was also nominated as Best Actor for ANNIE HALL.

**VANESSA PARADIS (Avigal)** is a celebrated French singer, model and actress. Born in Saint-Maur-des Fosses, Paradis started her singing career appearing on TV when she was 8, recorded her first single at 11, and had an international hit record, "Joe le taxi," successful in fifteen countries, at the age of 14. Paradis has continued to release albums every few years up until the present day. She has modeled frequently, notably in Jean-Paul Goude's famous "Bird in a Cage" video as the Face of Chanel.

Paradis made her film debut at 17 in NOCE BLANCHE (1989), for which she won the César Award for Most Promising Actress. She followed this success with ELISA, PLEASURE (AND ITS LITTLE INCONVENIENCES, voice), UN AMOUR DE SORCIÈRE, with Jeanne Moreau and Jean Reno, UNE CHANCE SUR DEUX, with Alain Delon and Jean-Paul Belmondo, and Patrice LeConte's GIRL ON THE BRIDGE, for which she was nominated for the Best Actress César, and which was successfully released in the United States by Paramount Classics. Her subsequent films include LOST IN LA MANCHA, ATOMIK CIRCUS and MON ANGE. After appearing in this last film in 1999, Paradis took five years off from acting, coming back with THE RETURN OF JAMES BATTLE, MY ANGEL, SPRUNG! THE MAGIC ROUNDABOUT (animated, voice), LE SOLDAT ROSE (TV), THE KEY, HEARTBREAKER, A MONSTER IN PARIS, CAFÉ DE FLORE (Genie Award, Jutra Award, and Vancouver Film Critics Awards for Best Actress), DUBAÏ FLAMINGO, JE ME SUIS FAIT TOUT PETIT, and CORNOUILLE.

Paradis' role in FADING GIGOLO marks her first appearance in an English language film.

**LIEV SCHREIBER (Dovi)** is heralded as "the finest American theater actor of his generation" by the New York Times. Schreiber's repertoire of resonant, humanistic and oftentimes gritty portrayals have garnered him praise in film, theatre and television.

In the fall of 2012, Schreiber completed production on CLEAR HISTORY, directed by Larry David and also starring Kate Hudson and Jon Hamm, as well as Lee Daniels' THE BUTLER, in which he portrays Lyndon B. Johnson. Schreiber also stars in Mira Nair's THE RELUCTANT FUNDAMENTALIST opposite Kate Hudson and Kiefer Sutherland. On the small screen, Schreiber stars in the title role in Showtime Network's "Ray Donovan," alongside Jon Voight and Elliott Gould, which will debut this summer.

Schreiber's many feature credits include GOON with Jay Baruchel and Seann William Scott, SALT with Angelina Jolie, X-MEN ORIGINS: WOLVERINE, DEFIANCE with Daniel Craig, REPO MEN, THE PAINTED VEIL, THE MANCHURIAN CANDIDATE opposite Meryl Streep and Denzel Washington, THE SUM OF ALL FEARS, Ang Lee's TAKING WOODSTOCK, KATE & LEOPOLD, EVERY DAY, Michael Almereyda's HAMLET, SPRING FORWARD, THE HURRICANE, A WALK ON THE MOON with Diane Lane, THE DAYTRIPPERS, Nora Ephron's MIXED NUTS, and Wes Craven's SCREAM trilogy.

His portrayal of Orson Welles in Benjamin Ross' television film RKO 281 brought Schreiber Emmy® and Golden Globe® Award nominations. His other TV films include George C. Wolfe's LACKAWANNA BLUES and John Erman's THE SUNSHINE BOYS, opposite Woody Allen and Peter Falk.

In 2005, Schreiber made his feature directorial debut with EVERYTHING IS ILLUMINATED, which he adapted from Jonathan Safran Foer's best-selling novel of the same name. The film, starring Elijah Wood and Eugene Hutz, was named one of the Year's Ten Best by the National Board of Review.

Actor, producer, director, activist and humanitarian, **SHARON STONE (Dr. Parker)** is a recognized citizen of the world. She has appeared in over 40 films under the direction of legendary talents Woody Allen, Paul Verhoeven, Mark Rydell, Sam Raimi and Martin Scorsese under whose direction she was nominated for an Academy Award® for her work in CASINO. Sharon is also the recipient of the Golden Globe® and Emmy® awards. She most recently wrapped production on LOVELACE, directed by Jeffrey Friedman and Merritt Johnson which will premiere later this year and she completed work on the feature film GODS BEHAVING BADLY, directed by Marc Turtletaub.

In addition to her performance career, Sharon has raised hundreds of millions for charities such as AMFAR, Planet Hope, Cinema Against Aids, and the Elton John Aids Foundation. Instrumentally involved in political causes, Sharon was a fundraiser of the Obama presidential campaign. Sharon hosted the Nobel Peace Prize Concert in Norway and offered two lectures at the Karolinska Institute. She is the recipient of The World Charity Award presented by Mikhail Gorbachev. Stone was presented with the Citizen Of The Year award in her home city of Los Angeles and holds the degree of Doctor of Public Service from both Edinboro University and the University of Maryland Eastern Shore.

Stone is a single mother of her three beautiful sons, Roan (12), Laird (7), and Quinn (6).

One of the funniest and sexiest stars today, **SOFIA VERGARA (Selima)** is the only Hispanic actress who started her career on a U.S. Hispanic Network and successfully crossed over to the mainstream market. The Emmy®, Golden Globe® and SAG Award® nominated actress can currently be seen as Gloria Pritchett-Delgado in the popular television series MODERN FAMILY. After the success of Columbia Pictures' SMURFS, Vergara will reprise her role as the

voice of Odile in SMURFS 2. The film is slated for release in 2013. Additionally, Vergara is in production for Robert Rodriguez' MACHETE KILLS, a sequel to the 2012 film, MACHETE acting opposite Mel Gibson, Zoe Saldana, Jessica Alba and Amber Heard.

Vergara was most recently seen in the hit comedy THE THREE STOOGES, NEW YEAR'S EVE and voiced the role of Carmen in HAPPY FEET 2.

On the big screen Vergara got her break in Disney's comedy BIG TROUBLE and since then has starred in films such as THE 24TH DAY, FOUR BROTHERS, LORDS OF DOGTOWN and Tyler Perry's box office sensations MEET THE BROWNS and MADEA GOES TO JAIL. Her past appearances on primetime TV include shows such as DIRTY SEXY MONEY, ENTOURAGE, HOT PROPERTIES, THE KNIGHTS OF PROSPERITY, among many others. On stage, Vergara earned rave reviews when she debuted on Broadway's "Chicago" as Mama Morton. The Hollywood Reporter and Billboard have named her one of the most talented and powerful women in the Hispanic entertainment industry.

**BOB BALABAN (Sol)** made a memorable appearance recently as the Narrator in Wes Anderson's acclaimed MOONRISE KINGDOM. He has directed several episodes of the television series NURSE JACKIE and the telefilm GEORGIA O'KEEFE, starring Joan Allen and Jeremy Irons, which was nominated for three Golden Globe® and nine Emmy® Awards. He was first nominated for his film BERNARD AND DORIS starring Susan Sarandon and Ralph Fiennes. Balaban has also been nominated for an Academy Award® as well as a Golden Globe® as producer of Robert Altman's Best Picture nominee GOSFORD PARK.

As actor, he has appeared in over fifty movies, including such classics as John Schlesinger's MIDNIGHT COWBOY, Mike Nichols' CATCH-22, Steven Spielberg's CLOSE ENCOUNTERS OF THE THIRD KIND, and Bennett Miller's CAPOTE. He starred in his friend Christopher Guest's films WAITING FOR GUFFMAN, BEST IN SHOW, A MIGHTY WIND, and FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION. His many other movies as actor include Woody Allen's ALICE and DECONSTRUCTING HARRY, Tim Robbins' BOB ROBERTS and CRADLE WILL ROCK, and Jill and Karen Sprecher's CLOCKWATCHERS and THIN ICE.

A Chicago native, his roots are in the entertainment world, his uncle was a longtime president of Paramount Pictures and his grandfather headed production at MGM for many years.

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## FADING GIGOLO

### About the Filmmakers

**JOHN TURTURRO (Writer/Director)** See *“About the Cast”*

**JEFFREY KUSAMA-HINTE (Producer)** is an Academy Award® and Emmy® Award nominated, Golden Globe® winning Producer working under the banner of Antidote Films, the company he founded in 2000. He also is Director of two documentaries, and is Board Chair for the IFP (Independent Filmmaker Project) in New York.

Kusama-Hinte most recently produced Lisa Cholodenko’s *THE KIDS ARE ALL RIGHT*, starring Annette Bening, Julianne Moore, and Mark Ruffalo. The film received four Academy Award® nominations, including Best Picture, and four Golden Globe® nominations, winning two Golden Globes® for Best Actress (Annette Bening) and Best Motion Picture (Musical or Comedy). Kusama-Hinte directed and produced the documentaries *CHARLOTTE: A WOODEN BOAT STORY*, and *SOUL POWER*, which played at both the Toronto and Berlin International Film Festivals, going on to win the 2009 Los Angeles Film Festival Audience Award. Kusama-Hinte has also recently produced the documentary *THE DUNGEON MASTERS*, directed by Keven McAlester, which premiered at the 2008 Toronto International Film Festival, and Marina Zenovich’s *ROMAN POLANSKI: WANTED AND DESIRED*, which received five Primetime Emmy® Awards nominations, winning two Emmys® for Outstanding Writing and Outstanding Directing for Nonfiction Programming.

Kusama-Hinte’s other productions include the critically acclaimed eco-horror thriller *THE LAST WINTER* directed by Larry Fessenden, the Jon Reiss-directed graffiti documentary *BOMB IT*, Julian Goldberger’s *THE HAWK IS DYING*, Gregg Araki’s *MYSTERIOUS SKIN*, Catherine Hardwicke’s *THIRTEEN*, Lisa Cholodenko’s *LAUREL CANYON*, Larry Fessenden’s *WENDIGO*, Joseph Castello’s *AMERICAN SAINT*, and *LIMON*, a documentary directed by Malachi Roth.

**BILL BLOCK (Producer)** is the founder and CEO of QED International, a leading independent motion picture production, finance and sales distribution company. The company is known for such films as: Oliver Stone’s *W.*; Neill Blomkamp’s acclaimed *DISTRICT 9* and *ELYSIUM*, with Matt Damon and Jodie Foster, which will be released later this year; and David Ayer’s action thriller *TEN*, starring Arnold Schwarzeneger, which will be released in 2014.

Block has produced, financed, acquired, or distributed dozens of theatrical feature films, and has worked with some of the world’s most distinguished filmmakers, including Peter Jackson, Oliver Stone, Steve Soderbergh, Jon Favreau, David Koepp, Darren Aronofsky, Christopher McQuarrie and Woody Allen.

Prior to QED, Block was President of Artisan Entertainment. Here Block supervised all divisions – international, home entertainment, and television syndication. Among the projects that he produced or acquired are: *THE BLAIR WITCH PROJECT*, *THE BUENA VISTA SOCIAL*

CLUB, Darren Aronofsky's PI and REQUIEM FOR A DREAM, Steven Soderbergh's THE LIMEY, Roman Polanski's THE NINTH GATE starring Johnny Depp, and MADE starring Jon Favreau and Vince Vaughn. Block also bought the Spanish-language film OPEN YOUR EYES, sub-licensed the remake rights to Paramount, and Executive Produced the remake, VANILLA SKY, starring Tom Cruise.

Before working at Artisan Entertainment, Block was one of the industry's leading talent agents whose clients included Kim Basinger, Samuel L. Jackson, Steven Seagal, Charlie Sheen, John Travolta, and Forest Whitaker; as well as filmmakers Sam Raimi, Roland Emmerich, Billy Friedkin, George Armitage, Stephen Hopkins, Peter Hyams, and Herbert Ross.

Block attended Columbia University and lives in Los Angeles with his wife, two sons and daughter.

**PAUL HANSON (Producer)** was previously the President of Production at QED International overseeing all aspects of the company, including the company's financing and production activities, sales and delivery infrastructure, and administration. Hanson's film credits include DISTRICT 9, Oliver Stone's W., ALEX CROSS, THE LUCKY ONES, SMART PEOPLE, and THE HUNTING PARTY.

Prior to QED, Hanson was CFO of Key Creatives, a literary management and production company, and held several management roles with Artisan Entertainment, where his responsibilities included the company's M&A activity, oversight of the greenlight process, preparing the company's financial forecast, and providing strategic consulting and operational support to the company's various business units. Hanson began his career as an investment banker at Broadview International where he worked on technology and media M&A transactions totaling over \$1 billion in value.

**SCOTT FERGUSON (Executive Producer)** has been privileged to work as a Producer and Unit Production Manager with such highly celebrated filmmakers as Jim Jarmusch, Stephen Frears, Jay Roach, Michel Gondry, David Mamet, Steve Zaillian, Mick Jackson, James Mangold, and Lisa Cholodenko as well as Academy Award winners Barry Levinson, Milos Forman, Sydney Pollack, Robert Benton, and Ang Lee.

Ferguson received the 2010 Emmy Award® for Outstanding Movie for Television for producing the HBO's TEMPLE GRANDIN, which received a total of seven Emmys®. He was also nominated as the producer of the telefilm YOU DON'T KNOW JACK, which received two Emmys®. Scott has been honored to receive the Directors Guild Awards for his services as the Unit Production Manager on BROKEBACK MOUNTAIN, RECOUNT as well as TEMPLE GRANDIN.

**BART WALKER (Executive Producer)** is a Harvard College and Harvard Law School graduate who is currently a Partner at ICM Partners, active in film sales, film financing,

consulting, and talent and literary management. Bart has been an industry leader in blending artist representation with expertise in sources of independent film finance and distribution. Prior to this, Walker was a partner at Cinetic Media, specializing in the management of writers and directors and the financing and sales of independent films.

During his career, Walker has been closely associated with Academy Award® winning films such as DEAD MAN WALKING, LOST IN TRANSLATION, PRECIOUS, BROKEN FLOWERS and THE DIVING BELL AND THE BUTTERFLY, as well as the Venice Film Festival Golden Lion winners MONSOON WEDDING and SOMEWHERE. In 2010, Bart cofounded Producers Distribution Agency which successfully released Banksy's EXIT THROUGH THE GIFT SHOP in North America.

FADING GIGOLO marks the third John Turturro film that Bart has worked on, after working on the finance and distribution of ILLUMINATA and ROMANCE AND CIGARETTES.

**SASHA (ALEKSANDR) SHAPIRO (Executive Producer)** has more than twenty years of experience in the global entertainment industry specializing in film and television finance, development and worldwide distribution. For 14 years he worked in various senior management positions at Warner Bros. Studios.

After leaving Warner Bros., Shapiro served as Executive Vice President of Culver Studios and as International President for Pacifica Ventures, a specialty real estate developer and operator of film and television studio facilities. Currently, Shapiro is the Managing Director of Media Content Capital (MCC), a media-focused private equity fund based in Los Angeles.

Shapiro is also currently a producer and executive producer on a number of feature films including David Ayer's action thriller TEN, starring Arnold Schwarzenegger, which is scheduled for release in 2014. Shapiro has served as an Independent Director on the Boards of several international cinema chains. Currently, Shapiro is a Board Member of Digiboo ([www.digiboo.com](http://www.digiboo.com)) and QED International ([www.qedintl.com](http://www.qedintl.com)). Shapiro is also a member of the Advisory Board of the St. Petersburg University of Film and TV Engineers and a Chairman of the Advisory Committee of the Russian Film/TV Studio Lenfilm. Shapiro holds an MBA from the Anderson School of Management at UCLA and a Ph.D from the Moscow Aviation Technology University in Russia.

**ANTON LESSINE (Executive Producer)** is a Los Angeles-based film producer who is currently executive producing David Ayer's action thriller SABOTAGE, starring Arnold Schwarzenegger, and Mac Carter's supernatural thriller HAUNT, starring Oscar nominated actress Jacki Weaver.

**MARCO PONTECORVO (Director of Photography)** A native of Italy, has achieved film and television success in the U.S. His feature credits include Richard Loncraine's FIREWALL starring Harrison Ford, Paul Bettany and Alan Arkin, Doug Lefler's THE LAST LEGION

starring Colin Firth and Ben Kingsley, and Gary Winick's LETTERS TO JULIET starring Amanda Seyfried. Pontecorvo was the 2nd Unit/Stunt photographer on Martin Scorsese's GANGS OF NEW YORK starring Leonardo DiCaprio, Daniel Day-Lewis, and Cameron Diaz. He is the son of famed director Gillo Pontecorvo (THE BATTLE OF ALGIERS).

Pontecorvo's work as a cinematographer for television includes shows such as the critically acclaimed series "Game of Thrones" and "Rome." FADING GIGOLO is Pontecorvo's second collaboration with director John Turturro, having previously worked with him on PASSIONE.

**LESTER COHEN (Production Design)** attended the Rhode Island School of Design for Fine Arts and transferred to New York University to study Filmmaking. While at NYU Cohen discovered his love for Production Design and began working professionally on music videos and television commercials.

In the mid-1980's, Cohen began designing independent features in New York. Some of his early films were Nancy Savoca's TRUE LOVE, ANNA starring Sally Kirkland, JUICE starring Tupac Shakur and Omar Epps. Along the way, he has had the good fortune of working with a wide variety of talented directors such as Jim Mangold, Alan Arkin, Jim Sheridan, Janusz Kaminski, David Duchovny, Zach Braff, Richard Shepard. Susan Seidelman, Nick Gomez, Wai-Kung Lau, Marcos Siega, Bronwen Hughes, Derek Cianfrance, and Errol Morris.

His feature work includes the comedies FORCES OF NATURE, THE NIGHT WE NEVER MET, HOUSE OF D, the children's films HARRIET THE SPY and ICE PRINCESS, Errol Morris' classic documentary THE THIN BLUE LINE (as art director) and finally the dramatic films COP LAND, GEORGIA, STANDER, THE ASSASSINATION OF RICHARD NIXON.

Cohen is also active in the commercial world working on a multitude of campaigns for the likes of American Express, Mercedes, Target, Verizon, E-Bay, Fed Ex, Coke, Bacardi and many others. He has designed numerous television pilots and the first season of WHITE COLLAR and the boxing drama LIGHTS OUT.

**DONNA ZAKOWSKA (Costume Designer)** studied dance and painting at Columbia University and the Ecole des Beaux Arts in Paris, and is a graduate of the Yale School of Drama. She has designed for film, theatre, circus, opera, music and puppet theatre, including nine seasons for the Big Apple Circus and a concert tour for Mick Jagger. Her theatre work has included projects with Fernando Arrabal, Martha Clarke, Eve Ensler, Richard Foreman, John Kelly, Harry Kondoleon, William H. Macy, Tom O'Horgan, Roman Paska, Carey Perloff, Steve Reich and Julie Taymor.

Her designs have been seen at theatres throughout the world, including the Hebbel Theater (Berlin), the Barbizon and Royal Festival Hall (London), Bobigny, Châtelet and the Théâtre du Rond-Point (Paris), the Teatro Argentina (Rome), Teatro Mercadante (Naples), BAM, Lincoln Center and the Public Theater (New York). Her most recent projects include Martha Clarke's "Angel Reapers" at the Joyce, Roman Paska's "Schoolboy Play" at the National Theatre of

Portugal, and “Relatively Speaking” (3 plays by Woody Allen, Ethan Coen and Elaine May, directed by John Turturro) on Broadway.

FADING GIGOLO will be Zakowska’s fourth film with John Turturro having previously worked with him on MAC, ILLUMINATA and ROMANCE AND CIGARETTES. Her other credits include David Salle’s SEARCH AND DESTROY, HARRIET THE SPY, THE PALLBEARER, POLISH WEDDING, FORCES OF NATURE, ONE TRUE THING, INVISIBLE CIRCUS, ORIGINAL SIN, KATE AND LEOPOLD, the HBO television movie EMPIRE FALLS, THEN SHE FOUND ME, HBO’s mini-series “John Adams,” SICILIAN TRAGEDY, SOMEDAY THIS PAIN WILL BE USEFUL TO YOU, THE ICEMAN and most recently BLESS ME ULTIMA. In 2009 Zakowska was honored by New York Women in Film and Television.

**SIMONA PAGGI (Editor)** is one of Italy’s leading film editors, and has been nominated for both an Academy Award® and multiple David di Donatello Awards. In 1992, the Academy of Italian Cinema awarded Paggi the David di Donatello Award for Best Editing for her work on THE STOLEN CHILDREN, directed by Gianni Amelio with whom she has collaborated with on several films, beginning with 1989’s OPEN DOORS. In 1998, she was nominated for the Academy Award® for Film Editing for her work on Roberto Benigni’s LIFE IS BEAUTIFUL. In 2005, the Italian National Syndicate of Film Journalists nominated Paggi for a Silver Ribbon Award for Best Editing for her work on THE KEYS TO THE HOUSE, again directed by Gianni Amelio.

FADING GIGOLO is Paggi’s second collaboration with director John Turturro after PASSIONE, for which she was awarded a Special Award for Editing by the Italian National Syndicate of Film Journalists.

**TODD THALER’S (Casting Director)** credits as a Casting Director date back to 1986, but he started as a Production Assistant for Jack Rollins & Charles H. Joffe Productions, Woody Allen’s personal managers and producers. Soon after, he was assigned the position of Extras Casting, something he did on fourteen of Woody Allen’s films starting with THE PURPLE ROSE OF CAIRO.

Before FADING GIGOLO, Thaler has previously worked with John Turturro on his films MAC, ILLUMINATA, and ROMANCE & CIGARETTES. His other credits as a Casting Director include Luc Besson’s THE PROFESSIONAL, Todd Field’s LITTLE CHILDREN, Sidney Lumet’s RUNNING ON EMPTY, Ed Harris’ directorial debut POLLOCK, Barbra Streisand’s THE MIRROR HAS TWO FACES, James Foley’s PERFECT STRANGER, Stacy Cochran’s MY NEW GUN and BOYS, Irwin Winkler’s NIGHT AND THE CITY, John McNaughton’s MAD DOG AND GLORY, Gavin O’Connor’s TUMBLEWEEDS, James Mangold’s HEAVY and COP LAND, Wayne Wang’s BECAUSE OF WINN-DIXIE and MAID IN MANHATTAN.

Over the years he has also cast many projects for television including Peter Berg’s WONDERLAND and the NBC comedy ED, for which he was nominated for an Emmy®

Award. Todd Thaler also teaches at Columbia, NYU, Brooklyn College, and the Atlantic Theatre Acting School.

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