



STRANGERLAND



Production Notes

Directed by KIM FARRANT

STARRING: NICOLE KIDMAN, JOSEPH FIENNES, HUGO WEAIVING

Running time: 111 mins Classification: CTC

PUBLICITY REQUESTS:

Tracey Mair

Email: traceym@tmpublicity.com / Phone: 0419 221 493

Transmission Films - 3 Little Collins St, Surry Hills 2010 NSW Australia
Tel: 61 2 8333 9000

Distributed in Australia by Transmission Films

Screen Australia Worldview Entertainment In association with Screen NSW and
Bord Scannán na hÉireann / The Irish Film Board and Wild Bunch

Present

A Dragonfly Pictures and Fastnet Films production

STRANGERLAND

Directed by

Kim Farrant

Produced by

Naomi Wenck and Macdara Kelleher

Story by

Fiona Seres

Written by

Fiona Seres and Michael Kinirons

World Sales

Wild Bunch

Contact: Alya Belgaroui

Email: abelgaroui@wildbunch.eu PHONE: +33 1 53 01 50 28

Australasian Distributor

Transmission Films 3 Little Collins St Surry Hills 2010 NSW Australia

Tel: 61 2 8333 9000 Fax: 61 2 9212 5540

Publicist: Tracey Mair

Email: traceym@tmpublicity.com Phone: 0419 221 493

Running Time	111mins 24 seconds (24fps)
Rating	tbc
Shoot Gauge	Alexa Digital 2K
Language	English
Screen Ratio	2:39
Sound	5.1
Year of Production	2014

CREDIT BLOCK

SCREEN AUSTRALIA WORLDVIEW ENTERTAINMENT in association with SCREEN NSW and BORD SCANNÁN NA
HÉIREANN /THE IRISH FILM BOARD and WILD BUNCH present

a DRAGONFLY PICTURES and FASTNET FILMS production NICOLE KIDMAN JOSEPH FIENNES HUGO WEAVING
“STRANGERLAND”

LISA FLANAGAN MEYNE WYATT MADDISON BROWN and NICHOLAS HAMILTON Casting NIKKI BARRETT CSA
Costume Designer EMILY SERESIN Sound Designer LIAM EGAN

Music by KEEFUS CIANCIA Production Designer MELINDA DORING Film Editor VERONIKA JENET ASE Director of
Photography PJ DILLON ISC Co-Producers AMANDA BOWERS and KIM FARRANT

Line Producer CATHERINE BISHOP Executive Producers ANDREW MACKIE and RICHARD PAYTEN Executive
Producer BRYCE MENZIES Executive Producers SARAH E JOHNSON and ADRIANA L RANDALL Executive Producers
MOLLY CONNERS and MARIA CESTONE Produced by NAOMI WENCK and MACDARA KELLEHER Story by FIONA
SERES

Written by FIONA SERES and MICHAEL KINIRONS Directed by KIM FARRANT



SHORT SYNOPSIS

When Catherine and Matthew Parker's two teenage children disappear into the remote Australian desert, their relationship is pushed to the brink as they confront the mystery of their children's fate.

SYNOPSIS

Newcomers to the remote Australian desert town of Nathgari, Catherine and Matthew Parker's lives are flung into crisis when they discover their two teenage kids, Tommy and Lily, have mysteriously disappeared just before a massive dust storm hits. With Nathgari eerily smothered in red dust and darkness, the townsfolk join the search led by local cop, David Rae. It soon becomes apparent that something terrible may have happened to Children. Suspicion is cast, rumours spread and the town begins to turn against the Parkers. With temperatures rising and the chances of survival plummeting with each passing day, Catherine and Matthew find themselves pushed to the brink as they struggle to survive the mystery of their children's fate.

DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

STRANGERLAND examines how people react in times of crisis and how our deep fear of the unknown and our abhorrence of feeling pain can push us over the edge emotionally, psychologically and physically... especially sexually.

When I was twenty-two, my father died. Even though I knew he was dying, I was still not prepared for the overwhelming grief and surprising primal desires I experienced in the face of his actual death. I found myself wanting to connect, to feel fully alive, to make love, to fuck, to feel something... anything... other than the dark cloud of grief shrouding my heart. The loss left me feeling powerless with nothing to hold onto. Sex conjured the illusion that I could regain control... but it was momentary... and then the despair, the uncertainty of life came flooding back in. This pivotal time in my life was a major inspiration for making STRANGERLAND.

I found a writer - Fiona Seres - who understood life's tragedies, and together we sat in a room for two weeks and told war stories and shared crazy moments of our youth and brainstormed characters and story strands and created an eerie world for these people to be strangers in. A land far unknown to us city girls - the Australian desert. Then Fiona embarked on writing the script which was later infused with additional writing by Michael Kinirons.

Nathgari is a remote and unruly world where nature is cruel, the climate unbearably hot and the locals are hardened by life; a rural town like any other with severe weather conditions. The disappearance of their kids in this hostile environment plunges Catherine and Matthew into states of denial, blame, violence and addiction. While not all of us have experienced our children going missing, most of us have experienced the terror of uncertainty in a crisis. STRANGERLAND spotlights the tragic flaws, high-pressure situations can bring out in people and the lengths we go to, to maintain our public personas and suppress our most untenable feelings.

At the core of Catherine and Matthew Parker's terror is the fear of that which they cannot control, both externally and internally. Externally: the land/nature is an all- powerful force (the endless desert and the uncontrollable dust storm) and on a human level, the constant threat of men desiring their daughter. Internally: like the wildness of "mother-nature", female sexuality is another all-

powerful force that people fear in the story, a force that has been suppressed for centuries – by men in particular because of the unfathomable need it can bring out in them. Many men find that through their relationships with women, they can ‘feel’ their feelings. Sex is often a portal to this. Matthew fell in love with his wife because of her oceanic emotional life and her hypnotic sexuality. At the same time, it’s the thing he most despises in her and tries to shut down because making love moves blocked and buried emotions within the body, feelings which like many of us, he is running from.

Nathgari’s inhabitants represent a subset of Australians that still live within a culture of post war stoicism - an archaic paradigm that views emotions as weak, particularly grief and or vulnerability. With no safe outlet for these feelings, Catherine, Matthew and David Rae, act out in a variety of dysfunctional ways. I want the audience to see a reflection of their own addictions. Be it drinking, smoking, taking drugs, gambling, violence, workaholism, TV, porn, and some would say, the most taboo of all, especially in women, sexualizing... which mostly happens behind closed doors. Bringing these behaviors to the fore, I hope the film helps reduce the shame we carry about ourselves and foster greater compassion and understanding of others.

The vanishing of the Parker children in this mysterious landscape echoes centuries of unresolved white anxiety about the outback and an abiding paranoia that the land was somehow punishing them for taking it from the Aboriginal people - by taking their children. There is a long history of children going missing in the Australian bush. Jarrah, Rose’s grandson, tells the story of The Rainbow Serpent, Ngatyi, who swallowed up two women. This story taps into Catherine’s colonial guilt and can be interpreted in many ways: key amongst these is that the land itself took Lily and/or that a sexual figure (a man) metaphorically represented by the snake, has consumed her.

This eerie outback landscape becomes a key character in the film, joining a long line of Australian classics such as Nicholas Roeg’s *Walkabout* (1970), Ted Kotcheff’s *Wake in Fright* (1971) and Peter Weir’s *Picnic at Hanging Rock* (1975), where nature overwhelms strangers struggling to navigate their way through grueling landscapes with very little understanding or appreciation of the spirit of place.

In life, hysteria and suspicion is cast upon parents dealing with missing children... from police, community and loved ones. I want the audience to know what these parents go through and to look at how we judge others, often too quickly and harshly.

Lily was like the dust storm, upending her parents’ relationship and the ordered little town. She affected everyone leaving them with a residue that they can’t wipe clean – the residue of guilt. Lily expressed the repressed sexuality of her parents. I want people to see how sexual repression triangulates within families. Once Lily is gone, the valve has to be released somewhere else.

STRANGERLAND is an expression of compassion and understanding for all of those who have touched the depths of despair. After an experience of such magnitude, people tend to either find a newfound gratitude for life or they shut down, fearful of ever feeling that much pain again. But also from this harrowing place, true intimacy can be found... seeing the truth in others completely uncensored, stripped back, whatever it is can be very healing. I love to uncover the dark and the light in people... these are the parts we fall in love with in another because it gives us permission to fully be ourselves and that’s what I fell deeply in love with about this script... its exquisite portraits of the mysterious and unpredictable shades of grey within us all. **Kim Farrant – December 2014**

PRODUCTION STORY

Set against the iconic backdrop of the unnerving, remote Australian desert, STRANGERLAND brings together an outstanding ensemble of established and emerging filmmaking talent from Australia and across the globe. Such is the calibre of the script and the passion of director Kim Farrant, that Oscar® winning Best Actress, Nicole Kidman, chose STRANGERLAND as her first lead role in an independent Australian film in more than two decades.

THE SCRIPT

This sophisticated contemporary mystery drama comes to the screen after a long gestation, beginning with director Kim Farrant's original idea of exploring what happens within a family when they are pushed to the edge psychologically and emotionally. From there Kim and screenwriter Fiona Seres devised the story of a family who move to the desert where their teenage kids go missing before a dust storm.

"Fiona and I had both experienced tragedies in our lives in different ways, and so we were really curious to look at those times when life kind of just blindsides you and how you deal with it," says Kim. "I wanted people to be emotionally moved so that they questioned themselves, where they are in their life, and their ability to deal with tragedies and to forgive."

"Most of us want to be in control all the time. I think for most parents the most frightening thing that could ever happen is that you lose your children or they go missing and you have no control. What if they're out there in a ditch? What if they're starving? What if they're being raped? What if they've been abducted? What if they're in a cell somewhere underground? What if they're calling for me? What if they're dying? All that uncertainty can make the mind-go crazy."

"Catherine, played by Nicole Kidman, is turning to others to try to get comfort to take her pain away for a moment. And her husband is turning away from her because he can't deal with the starkness of her raw emotion. It's too confronting for him because he can't deal with his own feelings. So for us it was exciting to put these characters in a situation where they were under the most extreme pressure."

"Add to that the hysteria of a town judging them in their crisis, and people do tend to judge the parents when kids go missing. That's the first place they look, especially the police. They have to be potential suspects in where these kids have gone. So that adds more pressure. Then we threw in a dust storm, even more pressure. You can't see shit out there, you can't see a thing. Your kids are gone and you can't see and, symbolically, the dust storm is like the parents' relationship at the beginning. They can't see who is telling the truth. They can't see anything."

Producer Macdara Kelleher connected with the script after a chance meeting with Kim Farrant whilst at the Cork Film Festival. It was the personal connection to the story that drew him to the project. "As a father, when you read a story about two children who go missing in the outback, even if you don't have children, you can identify with that. It's a pretty frightening prospect, especially when you're out here and you see the vastness of the landscape. "

"It reminded me of great filmmaking of the '70s in America, and they don't really make films like that anymore, films with a really strong narrative and visual style."

Producer Naomi Wenck was equally drawn to the enigmatic themes of the film. "It was incredibly powerful screenplay from the time I first read it. There's a spatial quality to STRANGERLAND, thematically and visually, that lends the story an unusual beauty. The atmosphere resulting from the disappearances is a key element of the film - the intrusion of a frightening "otherness" into everyday life, whether represented by encroaching nature or the weather, or fates beyond the control of man."

"I loved the way the script dealt with the subject of missing children in our day and age. We're so exposed to stories in the media about families that have to deal with the horror of this situation and as a parent, I suppose, I really related to that. I also felt that the character of Catherine was a really strongly and truthfully drawn female character being in her 40s and being usurped by her beautiful daughter Lily and facing her own ageing and what that does to a woman. It's something that all women face as they approach middle age. I thought that was a very universal theme."

After some years of development Irish screenwriter Michael Kinirons was brought on board to collaborate on the script, having worked previously with producer Macdara Kelleher. "As soon as I read the script I said, "Of course". It's rare enough to get a chance to delve into this kind of world in cinema, with really meaty adult themes where it's all about subtexts and relationships that we all deal with, how we deal with crisis, what does it mean to trust your partner and be supported by them?"

Nicole Kidman was so drawn to the script that for her, it wasn't a big leap of faith to commit to working with a first time director or to spending weeks in the heat of the Australian outback "That maybe is just the way in which I approach everything. I read the script and I met with Kim and I really responded to her and the material, it was that simple," she says.

"The film has a strong sense of its femininity and I think Kim's a staunch believer in the strength of the female psyche and the power of the female. The sexuality of this film is very palpable and Kim fought strongly for all of those things."

Hugo Weaving, who stars as the detective Rae in the film, had been familiar with and loved the project for many years. "Kim and Fiona Seres approached me, I read the script with them and loved it. We talked about it a lot and I was very keen to be involved."

"The thing that interested me in the script, and still does, is what's hidden and what's not revealed and so there's a great underlying tension between all the characters because of that. Also the way in which two parents can parent very differently which can cause a terrible rift in their own family but not talk about it; and then how, when they need help, they go to the local cops, but they can't divulge certain things about their own lives because they're feeling guilty or they're feeling ashamed."

British actor Joseph Fiennes was so drawn by the story he travelled across the globe to play the role of Matthew. "I think when a script is that good no land is too far to travel to realise that story, and that was the case with STRANGERLAND. Also the combination of script and director, and Kim's vision of an incredible taught drama, multi-layered in every sense, really detailed and hugely emotional. It is an actor's piece as much as a director's or a writer's, led by the central performances. So that was the major attraction and of course Australia. I've worked here before maybe 15 years ago and so any chance to come back was warmly received."

FINANCING PARTNERS AND CO-PRODUCTION

STRANGERLAND is a co-production between Australia and Ireland. Initially the script was developed through the Australian Film Commission's Spark initiative, and the financing eventually developed into a co-production with Screen Australia, Screen NSW, the Irish Film Board and US Financier Worldview as major investors. France's Wild Bunch is handling international sales, Transmission Films is Australian/NZ distributor, and CAA is handling North American sales.

For producer Naomi Wenck, working with Irish producer Macdara Kelleher was an enriching experience. "I hadn't worked with a foreign producer before and I found it really rewarding. His experience with international finance brought a lot to the project. It was great to have a producer from another country with a different perspective and we could really share a lot of knowledge about our different audiences and cultures."

The co-production status brought the need to have a combined Australian and Irish crew. As producer Macdara Kelleher explains, "Kim had heads of department that she had worked with already or had wanted to work with including the production designer and the costume designer. So I asked her what about a cinematographer? I'd worked before with PJ Dillon and he'd done some great work so I introduced them and they got on well and we thought okay, that's a good start. And then other departments happened organically."

THE CAST

STRANGERLAND features an ensemble cast of accomplished actors including Australia's Academy Award winning actress Nicole Kidman. Remarkably, STRANGERLAND is Nicole's first lead role in an independent Australian film since *Dead Calm* in 1989. Her casting was a pivotal and exciting moment for the filmmakers.

For director Kim Farrant it wasn't just the case of finding a star but finding the right actor for the role. "Nicole's Australian agent had the script and I got a call suddenly saying Nicole wants to meet with you. I was in the States so I flew to Nashville and met her and she loved it. She loved the rawness of the writing and of the characters unravelling. I think it was an opportunity for her to explore her incredible vulnerability. We spent a lot of time on the phone telling stories to each other and building trust and opening up. She's the most hardworking actor I've ever met. She knew the script back to front. She would really interrogate me, which I loved, and she was very open to trying stuff."

"It means a great deal for Nicole to come back to Australia and do a film like this," says producer Macdara Kelleher. "A film that is really Australian, set in the outback and has all of the iconic elements of great Australian films that have come before it."

Nicole Kidman says: "I'm very much a supporter of the Australian film industry because it's what I come from and to be able to go back and make films there with people that are just starting out is a huge honour, it really is. And particularly with somebody like Kim who hasn't made a film before and was kind of thrown in the deep end – I love people who just jump in."

"Also I loved working with an Australian crew, most of the Australians working on it I either know or are sons or daughters of people that I've worked with! There's such a power to Australian crews, they're very willing, they're very able and they're very passionate, and I love making movies there. It's my home; it's where I came from. It's my base."

Producer Naomi Wenck says: "It was such a privilege to work with Nicole, she's a consummate professional and her powerful performance speaks for itself. She really lives and breathes the character of Catherine."

Starring opposite Nicole are Joseph Fiennes, in the role of husband Matthew, and Hugo Weaving as the town detective Rae. "You can only ever dream of having this kind of cast in an independent film. It elevates the material so much," says screenwriter Michael Kinirons.

For Director Kim Farrant, the casting of these two roles was integral to the film. "I'd worked with Hugo on the very first bit of cinema that I ever directed in 1995. In casting him I wanted someone who really inhabited their sexuality, like a man who was owning it, in contrast to the character of Matthew, played by Joe (Joseph) Fiennes, who is disowning his sexuality. When you met Hugo he's so sensual. And that was really fantastic for this character of Rae, who's got a girlfriend, got an active sex life, and then meets this woman and gets transfixed by her emotional life. So that was the kind of journey for him of opening him up emotionally."

Nicole Kidman and Hugo last starred together in Kennedy Miller's *Bangkok Hilton* back in 1989. For her it was a treat to work with him again. "I love Hugo. He's one of the great, great Australian actors and you just learn being in a room with him. He is very particular about what he does and is very particular about the performances he gives."

The character of Matthew was a source of much discussion and debate in the script writing process. "Because people judged this man so much and that's what we wanted," explains Kim. "He's both proud and deeply ashamed that he hasn't been a good enough parent. It's frightening to play a man who's isolating and judgmental and angry and withholding. But Joseph was so willing to explore the dark side of this character and he gave that to me the entire way. He came to the project last. I had 11 years on it at that point; he had 11 days before we started filming. And he just showed up with so much passion and humanity for this character."

For producer Macdara Kelleher having Joseph play the role was ideal. "Because Joseph's character is an outsider in the town, but also a little bit of an outsider even in his own family, it works really nicely that he's not an Australian."

In her feature film debut, Maddison Brown shines as the daughter Lily, a highly sexualised teenager, on the cusp of womanhood: "Casting Lily was crucial, because we had this fine balance of this character who you want people to have an imprint of so that they care that she's missing and, at the same time, she's not in it for very long," says Kim.

"We had to find a girl who was like that, but with that amazing burgeoning sexuality - as she's a child and a woman at the same time. Maddison was the first actor I saw for the part. I saw over a hundred girls from Australia, America, Paris and London, and she just kept sticking with me. She was so effervescent and sexy and powerful and yet, at the same time, very innocent." After seven call backs, Maddison got the role.

Producer Naomi Wenck explains: "We had a wonderful casting agent, Nikki Barrett, who was absolutely key in helping us pull together all of the supporting cast. We've got such a strong team with Lisa Flanagan, Meyne Wyatt, the lovely Nicholas Hamilton as Tommy, and of course Maddison Brown as the stunning Lily. It was an amazing process and Nikki was a great collaborator."

ON SET – THE LOOK OF THE FILM AND CREATIVE CHALLENGES

The vast, arid setting of *STRANGERLAND* plays a major character, offering a deep sense of isolation as the backdrop for the drama to unfold upon. As producer Naomi Wenck describes, “One of the ideas in the film is that question of ‘did the land take these children’? It’s ever-present in the family’s existence in this town and it’s an ever-present threat to the family, a concept harking back to *Picnic at Hanging Rock* and beyond.”

The talented crew had the considerable task of bringing the landscape and setting to life across various locations in NSW.

As Producer Macdara Kelleher explains, “We shot the film in three different places, in Sydney, Canowindra and Broken Hill, so any time you move the unit that many times it can be a bit tricky. And then even though we were shooting in the desert, the weather had been unusually rainy at times.”

For star Nicole Kidman, the outback setting was fundamental to the story. “It probably could have been made in Texas, I always say Australia’s very like Texas, but I do think the spirituality of the Aboriginal culture was a vital added dimension because that’s running through this film as well. And you need huge expanses of land because that represents the unknown and mystery and the lure and the danger of that. So I would like to think the only place you could make it was the Australian outback. I probably wouldn’t have done it unless it was set there.”

The key filming location of Canowindra in western NSW welcomed the cast and crew of *STRANGERLAND* with open arms, despite the inconvenience of a major film crew shutting down the main street for several days. “It’s a town of 2,000 people and everybody knew we were there. They were really welcoming and a lot of them were involved in the film, either working on it or as extras,” says producer Macdara Kelleher.

For production designer Melinda Doring, her challenge was to try to make it feel like it was more like the fictional desert town of Nathgari, as opposed to the actual country town of Canowindra, which is set amongst green rolling hills. “It’s quite a lot prettier than we needed and the businesses there are a lot more gentrified. So it was more about bringing the town down but inspiration came from places that we’d been to on recces.”

Recreating a dust storm brought its own challenges too. “It was a matter trying to create that kind of dusty town look. There are so many different dusts in this film,” she explains. “Because we had to film a dust storm we had truckloads of dirt that we brought in, but you can’t have dust floating around the air that’s not safe to breathe, so there was a special dust that was mixed up for that. There were big wind machines, a big mess and a lot of street sweeping. And there was a lot of rain, which didn’t help!”

STRANGERLAND was shot by Irish director of photography PJ Dillon (*Game of Thrones*). It was his first shoot in Australia, and he had some iconic Australian films as reference “I’ve seen all the obvious ones - *Rabbit Proof Fence*, *Walkabout*, *Picnic at Hanging Rock* and all the seminal Australian films. But actually a lot of the more recent films as well. *Snowtown* I think is a superb film and I really liked the visual style of that. That definitely was an influence.”

“The idea of doing a desert film was really appealing. I’d never been to Australia and sometimes it’s great to go to what is an alien environment because you can bring a really fresh eye to it.”

Director Kim Farrant agrees: “He saw our country in a different way, which was part of the excitement of having a foreigner shoot the film. It was a strange land for him, it was a weird place, and it was a weird lens through which he viewed things.

“He had these filters made, so that we could distort the view of the world of this place. As the characters unravelled more and more the lenses got a bit weird and a bit stranger to see the world through their eyes.”

PJ Dillon elaborates on his custom made technique: “I had some custom-made diffusion filters that produce very particular effects, they’re effects filters really. I use those occasionally in a subtle way, not to have the visuals over-burden the narrative but to complement the narrative or reflect it.”

The soundscape is hugely important to the film, as producer Naomi Wenck explains: “We had a wonderful Irish sound crew during the shoot, and an Australian sound team for post production. Our American composer Keefus Ciancia (*True Detective*) brought so much to the film. His music is just sublime! Kim and Keefus worked in an intense, hothouse period of a few months on the score, to bring a sense of the looming and ever-present danger of the land. His instrumentation is fascinating and really supercharges the sense of mystery and intrigue and fear and threat.”

The producers and Kim Farrant praise the professionalism and creativity of the entire crew; including key team members costume designer Emily Seresin, hair and makeup designer Noriko Watanabe and editor Veronika Jenet (*The Piano*).

CAST

NICOLE KIDMAN as CATHERINE

Academy Award winning actress Nicole Kidman OA first came to the attention of international audiences with her critically acclaimed performance in Phillip Noyce’s thriller *Dead Calm*. Kidman won an Academy Award, a Golden Globe Award, a BAFTA Award and a Berlin Silver Bear in 2003 for her portrayal of Virginia Woolf in *The Hours*. In 2002 Nicole received her first Oscar nomination for Baz Luhrmann’s *Moulin Rouge!* For that role, and her performance in Alejandro Amenabar’s *The Others*, she received dual 2002 Golden Globe nominations, winning for Best Actress in a Musical.

In 2010, Kidman starred opposite Aaron Eckhart in *Rabbit Hole*, for which she received Academy Award, Golden Globe, Screen Actors Guild and Independent Spirit Award nominations. Additional film credits include *Before I Go To Sleep*, *Margot at the Wedding*, *The Golden Compass*, *Happy Feet*; *Just Go with It*, *Nine* with Daniel Day Lewis, *Australia*, *Fur: An Imaginary Portrait of Diane Arbus*, *The Interpreter*, *Bewitched*, *The Human Stain*, *Dogville*, *Cold Mountain*, *Birth*, *Eyes Wide Shut*, *Birthday Girl*, *The Peacemaker*, *The Portrait of a Lady*, *To Die For*, *Batman Forever*, *Billy Bathgate*, *Malice* and *Far and Away*. In 2012 Kidman starred in Lee Daniel’s *The Paperboy* with Matthew McConaughey. Her performance earned her an AACTA, Screen Actors Guild and Golden Globe nomination. The following year she starred in Chan-wook Park’s *Stoker* with Mia Wasikowska. In 2013 she starred in Jonathan Teplitzky’s war drama *The Railway Man* alongside Colin Firth. Kidman recently finished filming *Queen of the Desert* alongside Robert Pattinson and James Franco, and Michael Grandage’s *Genius* with Jude Law and Guy Pearce. And her latest film *Paddington* was released recently.

JOSEPH FIENNES as MATTHEW

Joseph was born in Salisbury, Wiltshire and brought up in West Cork, Ireland. After leaving art school he worked with the Young Vic Youth Theatre and trained at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama. He made his professional debut in the West End in *The Woman in Black*. His distinguished theatre career includes performances in productions such as Dennis Potter's *Son of Man*, *A View From the Bridge*, *A Month in the Country* opposite Helen Mirren, *Edward II* at the Crucible Theatre, *Cyrano de Bergerac* directed by Trevor Nunn and *Love's Labour's Lost* for the Royal National Theatre, also directed by Trevor Nunn.

In 1996 Fiennes starred in Bernardo Bertolucci's romantic drama *Stealing Beauty*, *Troilus and Cressida* and *As You Like It*. In 1998 he played Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester in *Elizabeth* opposite Cate Blanchett, and was launched to international stardom with his performance as the lovesick William Shakespeare in *Shakespeare in Love* with Gwyneth Paltrow. The film won the Academy Award for Best Picture. His extensive list of film credits include *Enemy at the Gates*, *Dust*, *The Great Raid*, *The Merchant of Venice* opposite Al Pacino and *Running With Scissors* with Annette Bening and Brian Cox. Most recent roles include Brett Ratner's *Hercules*, *The Games Maker* and he is currently in production on Kevin Reynolds's *Clavius*.

Fiennes has starred in the primetime TV series *Flashforward*, *Camelot* and *American Horror Story* with Jessica Lange.

HUGO WEAVING as RAE

Hugo Weaving is one of Australia's most acclaimed screen and theatre actors. His impressive list of credits includes the Australian and international feature films *Proof* directed by Jocelyn Moorhouse, *Little Fish* opposite Cate Blanchett, international blockbuster *The Matrix*, *V for Vendetta*, Peter Jackson's *The Lord of the Rings Trilogy* and *The Hobbit Trilogy*, *The Adventures of Pricilla*, *Queen of the Desert*, *Cloud Atlas* with Tom Hanks, acclaimed drama *Oranges and Sunshine* and George Miller's *Happy Feet*.

He has won four AFI/ACCTA Awards for his performances and received another four nominations. Hugo has also been named an IF Award Living Legend and, with fellow cast members, won the Screen Actors Guild Award for Outstanding Performance by a Cast in a Motion Picture for *The Lord of the Rings: The Return of the King* (2003).

MADDISON BROWN as LILY

Actress and model Maddison Brown grew up in Sydney. She started acting in TVCs from the age of 10 and not long after secured a role featuring in the Foxtel telemovie *Go Big* directed by Tony Tilse and starring Justine Clarke and Tom Long. Maddison has made her feature film debut with *STRANGERLAND*.

As a model Maddison featured on the cover of *Vogue Portugal* in January 2014, and has walked for globally recognised designers. Off-screen Maddison dedicates herself to developing her craft working with vocal coach, Gabrielle Rogers and renowned acting teacher Anthony Wong.

NICHOLAS HAMILTON as TOMMY

With wisdom beyond his years, Nicholas Hamilton's standout performance in the short film *Time* saw him awarded Best Male Actor at the 2013 Tropfest Short Film Festival. He has just completed the US indie feature film *Captain Fantastic*, playing Viggo Mortensen's son. Other credits include a guest lead in television series *Mako Mermaids* and several short films including *Letter to Annabelle*, *Jack Rabbit*, *The Boy Who Stole the Belltower* and *Gifted*.

LISA FLANAGAN as COREEN

Lisa has starred in a number of renowned Australian films including Sarah Watt's acclaimed *Look Both Ways*, Paul Goldman's *Australian Rules*, *Queen of Hearts*, *Opal Dream* and *September*. Lisa has also appeared in a number of television series and feature length television movies, including *All Saints*, *Hush*, *East West 101*, *Double Trouble*, *Dirt Game*, *City Homicide* and the award-winning ABC series *Redfern Now*.

MEYNE WYATT as BURTIE

Graduating from NIDA in 2010, Meyne Wyatt has enjoyed a prolific stage and screen career. His theatre appearances include *The Brother's Size*, *Silent Disco* - for which he was named Best Newcomer in the 2011 Sydney Theatre Awards, Stephen Page's *Bloodland* and Bell Shakespeare's *The School for Wives*.

Film appearances include the notable *The Sapphires* directed by Wayne Blair and *The Turning* based on Tim Winton's short story collection. Meyne also appeared in a lead role in the ABC Logie winning series *Redfern Now* (series 2), for which he was nominated for an AACTA Award for Best Actor, The Graham Kennedy Award for Best Newcomer at the 2014 TV Week Logie Awards and a 2014 Equity Ensemble Nomination. Most recently he completed filming the upcoming ABC TV Sketch show *Black Comedy*.

SEAN KEENAN as STEVE

Sean Keenan made his-screen-debut in *Lockie Leonard*, playing the title role of the 26 part children's series based on Tim Winton's novels. He starred in the award winning Australian drama series *Puberty Blues* (Season 1 and 2) opposite Dan Wyllie and Claudia Karvan. He also features in *Cloud Street* and *Dance Academy*.

Sean's film credits include *Drift* with Sam Worthington and Xavier Samuel, the lead in *Is This The Real World*, which is due for theatrical release in 2014, and *Nim's Island* with Jodie Foster.

THE FILMMAKERS

DIRECTOR – KIM FARRANT

Kim Farrant is a director with a dramatic feature, numerous shorts and episodic network television as well as documentaries to her credit.

Kim's directing work includes the action procedural *Rush* (Endemol/Ten), short films *Between Me and Bombshell*, and the television documentary series *The Secret Side of Me* (SBS). Kim's documentary feature *Naked on the Inside* was a finalist at the Sydney Film Festival and was nominated for the Film Critics Circle of Australia award for Best Documentary. The film follows six extraordinary people from around the world who expose their bodies and reveal their secrets in a unique experiment in search for their inner selves.

Kim began her career as an actor completing *The Journey* at the Actors Centre in Sydney before training at the American New Theatre with acting coach Eric Morris. She then went on to study screenwriting at the University of New South Wales before graduating from the Australian Film, Television and Radio School (whose alumni include Jane Campion and Gillian Armstrong) with a Master of Arts (Honours) in Directing.

Kim's has written and/or directed a number of short films that have screened worldwide at festivals including Cannes; London; Cork; Bilbao; NYU International Student Film Festival; Destination Film Festival; St. Kilda Film Festival; and both Sydney and Melbourne Fringe Film Festivals. Her short film *Sammy Blue* was a finalist at the IF Awards in 2000. Kim has given master classes at AFTRS and in Directing Actors for Sydney Film School and was a regular tutor at the 16th Street Actors Studio.

PRODUCER - NAOMI WENCK

Naomi formed independent development and production company Dragonfly Pictures in 2005. Prior to STRANGERLAND, Dragonfly produced the feature films, *Ten Empty* (written by Brendan Cowell and Anthony Hayes, directed by Anthony Hayes) and *Newcastle* (written and directed by Dan Castle).

Over the past decade Naomi has worked extensively in various senior production roles in the television industry and on numerous Australian feature films. She has worked with several film industry bodies including most recently the Australian Film Television and Radio School (AFTRS) where she convened the Post Graduate Diploma. Prior to her career in Film and Television, Naomi worked in advertising, marketing and publicity.

Dragonfly's current development slate includes the feature film *Cartagena*, an adaptation from award-winning writer Nam Le's best selling collection of short stories *The Boat*.

PRODUCER - MACDARA KELLEHER

Macdara Kelleher is the Managing Director of Fastnet Films, one of Ireland's leading film companies. Fastnet's collection of film and television productions has received over twenty-five Irish Film and

Television Awards. Previous films have premiered at the Cannes, Toronto, Sundance, Berlin, Locarno, Edinburgh and Telluride festivals as well as being nominated for the European Film Awards. In 2013 Fastnet Films launched its distribution arm Wildcard.

Upcoming films include *The F Word* starring Daniel Radcliffe and Zoe Kazan and *Mammal*, starring Rachel Griffiths.

Other recent credits include *Kisses*, nominated for the Independent Spirit Awards in 2011 alongside *The King's Speech*. Sold by Focus Features, it became the highest grossing Irish film of the year; *Anton Corbijn Inside Out*, which screened in Official Selection at the Berlinale in 2012. *The Other Side of Sleep*, which premiered in Cannes Directors Fortnight 2011 and *Nothing Personal*, which received two European Film Award Nominations in 2010.

SCREENWRITER - FIONA SERES

Fiona Seres has worked extensively within the Australian and UK television industry and in recent times, has expanded her work to include film. She created and wrote *The Silence* for the BBC which aired to a record audience and critical acclaim. Fiona co-created and was the Head Writer for the Australian series *Tangle* for Showtime, she wrote multiple episodes of the award-winning series *Love My Way* (series 1, 2 and 3), the first series of *Puberty Blues* for Network Ten and Endemol, and was Head Writer on *Dangerous* starring Joel Edgerton for Endemol.

She has several projects in development in the UK with the BBC and BBC Films and the USA with HBO and Sundance TV.

SCREENWRITER - MICHAEL KINIRONS

Michael Kinirons is an Irish screenwriter and director. He studied English and Philosophy at Trinity College Dublin, earned a Masters Degree in Film from University College Dublin, and went on to study directing at the prestigious National Film and Television School (NFTS) London. He furthered his training through 'Script & Pitch' at the Torino Film Lab and was selected for the 2009 Berlinale Talent Campus.

Michael has written/co-written five feature scripts to date. STRANGERLAND is his first produced feature film. His original work includes *The Lake*, a dark coming of age drama; *Perkin Warbeck*, an historical epic, *Lucas*, an adaptation of an acclaimed young adult novel, and *Come Monday, We Kill Them All*, a noir thriller set against the backdrop of the Irish revolution. Michael is currently writing *We Watched the Sun Disappear*, a psychological mystery drama/survival movie set in Greenland in 1909.

As a director, Michael's five short films have each had successful runs on the international festival circuit with *Lowland Fell* winning the Special Jury Prize at the Seattle International Film Festival in 2009 among other awards. Michael is currently developing a unique feature project with the Irish Film Board and Fastnet Films that will see James Joyce's acclaimed short story collection *Dubliners* brought to the screen, while also prepping to direct his first feature film.

DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY – PJ DILLON

Kerry-born PJ Dillon won the IFTA for Best Director of Photography in both 2009 for 32A and 2011 for *The Runway*. He has worked as the DOP for a variety of TV series and films, including *Vikings*, *Ripper Street*, *Game of Thrones*, *My Brothers*, *Kings* and *Timbuktu*. Feature film credits include *Kings*, *If these Walls Could Talk*, *My Brothers*, *The Runway*, *The Rafter*s and *Shem The Penman Sings Again*. In 2010 he released *Rewind*, his feature directorial debut.

PRODUCTION DESIGNER – MELINDA DORING

Melinda Doring is constantly in demand as both a Production Designer and Costume Designer. Her impressive body of work includes, as Production Designer, the feature films *Oranges & Sunshine*, *Eye of the Storm*, *Somersault* and *Home Song Stories* and the recent television series *The Slap* as well as Gillian Armstrong's feature documentary *Unfolding Florence: The Many Lives of Florence Broadhurst*.

As a Costume Designer, her credits include *Suburban Mayhem*, *Walking on Water*, *Little Fish* and *Mullet* and the television series *Marking Time*. Melinda has won three AFI Awards (renamed AACTA Awards in 2012) for Best Production Design and was nominated twice for Best Costume Design. She has also won two IF Awards. Melinda graduated from the AFTRS with an MA in Design in 1998, winning the Fox Studios Australia Award for Design Excellence.

EDITOR - VERONIKA JENET A.S.E.

Veronika is a highly regarded and awarded feature film editor having worked with many of Australia's leading directors including Jane Campion (with whom she collaborated on five films) and Phil Noyce. She has also contributed to the careers of a number of emerging feature directors including Jan Sardi with *Love's Brother*, Elissa Down with *The Black Balloon*, Rachel Ward with *Beautiful Kate*, Claire McCarthy with *The Waiting City* and *Snowtown* for Justin Kurzel for which she won the inaugural AACTA (AFI) award for Best Editing in 2012.

Veronika is the editor of *The Piano*, directed by Jane Campion, for which she received Oscar, Bafta and ACE nominations. In her decorated career, Veronika has been nominated for six AFI awards and has won four times for *The Piano*, the documentary *Hepzibah*, *The Black Balloon* and *Snowtown*. Veronika has also been nominated for four IF awards and has won three times for *Rabbit Proof Fence*, *The Waiting City* and *Snowtown*.

Veronika Jenet is a member of the US Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences and is an inaugural recipient of the Australian Screen Editors ASE accreditation. In 2007, she was awarded an ASE award for the mini-series *Bastard Boys*. She has also been both an advisor and participant in the Screen NSW Aurora script workshop. Veronika is a co-director and producer with the Sydney based production company Decade Films.

COSTUME DESIGNER - EMILY SERESIN

Emily Seresin was born in New-Zealand and has been working in Australia as a costume designer since 1995 with directors including John Curran, Cate Shortland, Scott Hicks and Jane Campion. Emily has been nominated six times for an AFI award for Best Costume Design for *Praise, Two Hands, Clubland, The Night We Called It A Day, The Hunter* and winning in 2004 for *Somersault*.

Other credits include Costume Supervisor on *Priscilla Queen of the Desert* and *Vacant Possession* and Costume Designer on *Monkey's Mask, Strange Planet, Danny Deckchair, The Oyster Farmer, 48 Shades, The Boys Are Back, The Hunter* and *Top Of The Lake*.

HAIR AND MAKE UP DESIGNER –NORIKO WATANABE

Hailed as one of the international film industry's top image-makers, Noriko Watanabe has spent years behind the camera creating some of the most memorable screen looks of contemporary cinema. During that time she has collaborated with some of cinema's most talented directors, including Rob Marshall for *Memoirs Of A Geisha*, which earned her a BAFTA® nomination.

Watanabe also does personal hair and make-up design for some of Hollywood's biggest stars including Liam Neeson, Cameron Diaz, Nicole Kidman and Kate Winslet.

The talented designer has a long history with the award-winning director Jane Campion. She first collaborated with her on *The Piano* and went on to design *Holy Smoke, Portrait Of A Lady* and *In The Cut*. Other prominent director's include Robert Redford (*The Horse Whisperer*), Martin Scorsese (*Gangs Of New York*), Quentin Tarantino (*Kill Bill Vol. 1*) and Michel Gondry (*Eternal Sunshine Of The Spotless Mind*).

Watanabe was trained at the Yamano University Beauty in Cosmetology in her native Japan. She developed her skills in Tokyo working in the fashion industry before relocating to California at 21 where she designed make-up for fashion and advertising. When Phillip Noyce appointed her as make-up designer for *Dead Calm*, Watanabe's screen career was launched internationally.

COMPOSER – KEEFUS CIANCIA

Keefus Ciancia's film composing began working with TBone Burnett. Early work with Burnett included *The Ladykillers* (Coen Brothers), *Don't Come Knockin'* (Wim Wenders), and *Walk The Line*. More recently, Keefus was the co-composer with Burnett for *Nashville* (ABC Season 1), and *True Detective* (HBO).

Since 2010 collaborations with David Holmes include *The Motel Life, The Fall* (BBC Series), *Good Vibrations, Diana* and with their newly formed band *Unloved, The Random Adventures of Brandon Generator*, an Edgar Wright production.

Keefus Ciancia has produced albums for Nikka Costa, Cassandra Wilson, Benji Hughes, Everlast, Kimbra, MeShell Ndegeocello, A Fine Frenzy, and Priscilla Ahn.

STRANGERLAND

PRINCIPAL CAST

Catherine

Nicole Kidman

Matthew

Joseph Fiennes

Rae

Hugo Weaving

Coreen

Lisa Flanagan

Burtie

Meyne Wyatt

Lily

Maddison Brown

Tommy

Nicholas Hamilton

Alan Robertson

Jim Russell

Steve Robertson

Sean Keenan

Rose

Bronwyn Penrith

Jarrah (6 Yrs)

Trangi Speedy-Coe

PRINCIPAL CREW

Director	Kim Farrant
Producers	Naomi Wenck Macdara Kelleher
Screenplay	Fiona Seres Michael Kinirons
Executive Producers	Molly Conners Maria Cestone Sarah E. Johnson Adriana L Randall Bryce Menzies Andrew Mackie Richard Payten
Line Producer	Tatts Bishop
Co-Producers	Amanda Bowers Kim Farrant
Director of Photography	PJ Dillon ISC

Film Editor	Veronika Jenet ASE
Production Designer	Melinda Doring
Music by	Keefus Cancia
Sound Designer	Liam Egan
Costume Designer	Emily Seresin
Hair and Make Up Designer	Noriko Neill
Casting	Nikki Barrett CSA