



ACCEPTED

**REJECT
REJECTION**

Production Information

Over the past 25 years, there have been many cinematic heroes who have bucked the system...refusing to play by anyone else's rules. Our favorites just happened to be the ones who were graduating high school. Sean Penn started off the pack as the philosophical king of "tasty waves" and "a cool buzz," Jeff Spicoli of *Fast Times at Ridgemont High*; Tom Cruise introduced us to the hormonal entrepreneur Joel Goodsen of *Risky Business*; Alex Winter as Bill S. Preston and Keanu Reeves as Ted "Theodore" Logan rewrote history in *Bill and Ted's Excellent Adventure*. And, perhaps the master of all cons, Matthew Broderick will forever be synonymous with his title role in *Ferris Bueller's Day Off*. Though from different backgrounds (and IQ scores), these brave young men had one thing in common—they took society's standards and expectations of how they were supposed to act and fit in and resoundingly chucked them out the window.

In 2006, we proudly introduce the most ingenious slacker-turned-entrepreneur to date, Bartleby "B" Gaines (JUSTIN LONG, *Dodgeball*, *The Break-Up*), in a socially subversive comedy for anyone who has ever felt the sting of rejection—*Accepted*. Blockbuster producers TOM SHADYAC (*Bruce Almighty*, *The Nutty Professor*) and MICHAEL BOSTICK (*Bruce Almighty*, *Liar Liar*) join first-time director STEVE PINK (writer of *Grosse Pointe Blank*, *High Fidelity*) in a comedy that discards norms, dismisses the status quo and challenges us to take the road less traveled...even if we have to make it up as we go along.

The filmmakers have culled a talented young cast in *Accepted* to give a wake-up call to a generation trapped within America's stagnant school system, those Gen Y-ers deeply entrenched in unquestioning social standards of excellence. Speaking to the human need to fit in and find our niche, the film begs we ask ourselves one simple question: "What does it mean to become *Accepted*?"

After a lifetime of smooth-talking his way through the system and questioning societal restrictions, one graduating high school senior has found a quandary he can't charm his way out of: college admission. All eight universities to which B applied have rejected him, and dire consequences unfold for an 18-year-old with no foreseeable future. So what can a matriculating hopeful do when the admissions gods just don't have faith in him?

Simple. Open his own university.

B decides the best way into college is to create his own, or at least produce enough of a façade to fool his parents. With the help of his nerve-wracked best pal Schrader (JONAH HILL, *The 40-Year-Old Virgin*) and a collection of his college-exempt friends—including bookworm Rory (MARIA THAYER, *Strangers With Candy*), spaced-out foodie Glen (newcomer ADAM HERSCHMAN) and jock Hands (COLUMBUS SHORT, *Save the Last Dance 2*)—B and his pals found the "illustrious" South Harmon Institute of Technology out of an abandoned psychiatric facility. Under their care, S.H.I.T. becomes a place where they can make their own rules, design curriculum and maintain complete control over their education. And they are not the only new students. The off-the-grid school appeals to scores of college cast-offs who gratefully (and unexpectedly) show up once they learn of the "we accept anyone" mentality of this new university.

To help manage the responsibilities of both running a university and keeping his parents in the dark, B hires Schrader's outspoken and politically disenchanted Uncle Ben (LEWIS BLACK, television's *The Daily Show*) to pose as the dean. To add to his stress, however, B must balance academia while trying to woo the girl next door, Monica (BLAKE LIVELY, *The Sisterhood of the Traveling Pants*), who barely knows he's alive.

Slowly, incredibly, the experiment begins to work. Kids freed from the shackles of locked curriculum blossom under S.H.I.T's "design your destiny" tutelage.

Unfortunately, they are quickly gaining unwanted attention and threats from “sister school” Harmon University, led by Dean Van Horne (ANTHONY HEALD, *The Silence of the Lambs*) and the state school board. Now, B and his fellow freshmen must overturn the classical notion of what a college experience consists of and reassert that it is their right to pursue their own dreams...all while trying to stay out of jail.

The script for *Accepted* is from screenwriters ADAM COOPER (*New York Minute*) & BILL COLLAGE (*New York Minute*) and MARK PEREZ (*Herbie: Fully Loaded*), from a story by Perez. LOUIS G. FRIEDMAN (*American Wedding*) executive produces the project with Perez and BRIAN LUTZ (*Just Your Luck*). The film’s creative team includes MATTHEW F. LEONETTI (*2 Fast 2 Furious*) as the director of photography, production designer RUSTY SMITH (*Meet the Fockers*), film editor SCOTT HILL (*Bruce Almighty*) and costume designer GENEVIEVE TYRRELL (*Freaky Friday*). First-time feature composer DAVID SCHOMMER composes the music for *Accepted*.

ABOUT THE PRODUCTION

The Pursuit of Acceptance:

Getting Into a Fake School

“Let’s start this fake college. Then, we’ll go start a meth lab somewhere.

It’s a gateway crime. That’s how these things start.”

—Schrader

Accepted’s life began at Shady Acres, the Universal Pictures-based production company formed by producer Tom Shadyac and home to producer Michael Bostick. The partners—who have collaborated on such films as *Liar Liar*, *Bruce Almighty* and the upcoming *Evan Almighty*—were given the script by their representatives at United Talent Agency, who also introduced them to the spec screenwriter, Mark Perez. Shadyac and Bostick loved that *Accepted* was a comedy that has so much heart.

Shadyac relates that what spoke to him about the concept was that “the story is all about the flaws in the educational system and how they stifle creativity and, ultimately, learning.”

“I think what Tom and I do best is concept comedy, specifically concept comedy that can speak to the human condition. We responded immediately to the script,” notes Bostick. “We thought it was a great premise. *Accepted* has this sense of optimism, and it’s a comedy with a heart.”

Several well-known filmmakers familiar with the script sought out Team Shady Acres for the chance to direct *Accepted*. The producers interviewed over 30 directors who had expressed interest in the material, but it soon became clear that well-regarded writer/producer Steve Pink was the ideal choice. Pink had served as the screenwriter on two successful John Cusack comedies, 1997’s *Grosse Pointe Blank* and 2000’s *High Fidelity*.

For Shadyac, Pink’s grasp of the story’s underlying message about questioning the status quo and carving your own path assured him he had found the right director for the job. “Steve took us to the roots of why he wanted to do this, believing that you are your best teacher,” the producer commends.

Though this would be Pink’s first time in the director’s chair, the filmmaker had proved his comedic sensibilities as both a writer and producer. “We uniformly felt—the studio and the producers—that Steve was the right guy,” continues Shadyac. “We were huge fans of his writing. Both *Grosse Pointe Blank* and *High Fidelity* are two of our favorites, and we knew he would bring an intelligence and an integrity to it...as well as thematic resonance.”

“Although Pink had not directed a movie, he had previously acted and directed theater,” Shadyac adds. “We knew he could speak the actors’ language and would have confidence directing them, which was key since the cast is largely composed of newcomers.” He laughs, “All those aspects were more important than someone sitting on my couch telling me how they were going to shoot a scene.”

Pink recalls that in his initial meetings with Shadyac and Bostick, he passionately connected to the script’s themes and the characters’ various struggles to deal with

acceptance and rejection...and the comedy that arose from that, rather than just blatant puerile humor.

The director shares the producers' "questioning a system that wrongly insists that the surest way to guarantee success as an individual in society is to adhere to an obligatory college experience—a college experience that, in many ways, has itself become more of an industry than a value, churning out college graduates rather than inspired and imaginative people." He chose the project because he feels "there's always a great deal of comedy to mine in an idea that champions outcasts and misfits—and anyone trying to do something different—while having a bit more fun doing it."

Pink loved that the script told a story of "students who determine their path, their major and their goals. There's no required reading or classes. It's all self-motivating and self-generating."

Already familiar with writing to capture edgy and generation-defining themes in films, Pink comfortably slid into the director's role. With the help of an experienced crew, he looked to resources around him as he transitioned into the role of film director.

His humility was very welcome on set. "Even though he wasn't an experienced director, he had the respect of all the crew immediately," Bostick shares. "The crew was quick to recognize that Steve wasn't afraid to ask for help."

"I'm a first-time director, and I had a very particular vision about how I wanted to do certain things," Pink relates. "Sometimes I was wrong, and the crew would help me out. And sometimes I was right, and they would *still* help me."

Specifically, he found a welcome tutor in producer Shadyac, noting, "Tom's patience, wisdom and advice were key to my success as a director, on virtually every level. He's a brilliant director, and I'm incredibly lucky that he had my back for my first directing gig. Whenever I got knocked off the proverbial bow, Tom—along with Michael Bostick and Amanda Palmer—were always there to haul me back into the boat."

Producers, director and working script at the ready, it was time to enroll a number of freshmen into their first year of a fake college.

Misfits, Outcasts and Trendsetters:

The Cast of *Accepted*

“There are plenty of successful people who didn’t go to college.

Albert Einstein, Pocahontas never went to college. Harriet Beecher Stowe...

Both Lewis and Clark, Suzanne Somers, Bono...” —B

The majority of the film’s cast members were fresh faces to the screen. But what they lacked in acting experience, they made up for in energy and enthusiasm for the project. According to Shadyac, the cast “would have gone through a blizzard, the Arctic, the polar caps. They would have done whatever it took to hit this one. And they did.”

First cast as the ne’er-do-well who is just about to turn a pivotal corner, Justin Long stars as Bartleby “B” Gaines, the smooth-talking high school senior who has found himself stuck between a rock and a hard place. The young actor had proven himself a scene stealer in comedies from *Galaxy Quest* and *Dodgeball* to *Herbie Fully Loaded* and this summer’s comedy, *The Break-Up*. For Pink, Shadyac and Bostick, Long was an obvious choice.

Director Pink offers, “Justin is a genius improvisational actor who first gets into his character, and then has the ability to stay open to whatever comes at him at any given moment. He has a lot of integrity and is a great physical comic—an actor with a ton of dimensions.”

Long accepted the project based on the fact it reminded him “of the movies that he loved growing up—early John Hughes, Matthew Broderick, John Cusack and Michael J. Fox films—where the protagonist was someone who could get things done.” For Long, the script created the right balance of comedy that “wasn’t too full of shtick. I’m wary of when the jokes are too set up.”

When discussing how he mined experiences from his own childhood for the character of B Gaines, the actor teases, “I knew a guy like that growing up. His name rhymed with ‘Lustin Jong.’ He was very much the provocateur himself, but he didn’t get as many women as Bartleby gets.”

Every man heading into trouble needs a best friend to bail him out, and B finds that in Sherman Schrader, played by his real-life pal JONAH HILL. Winning over audiences in *The 40-Year-Old Virgin* and *I Heart Huckabees*, Hill welcomed the chance to play the straight man to Long's comic B. The actor notes of his character, "He's a little by-the-book. He's very anxious and the only person that looks at the full consequences of starting your own school or doing insane things."

Long commends, "This is Jonah's movie. I think Schrader is the funniest character in *Accepted*—and the most important—because he is the audience's perspective on the absurdity of what's happening with this fake college...and the absurdity of going through a fraternity hazing ritual. He gets the worst of both worlds."

Blake Lively, who plays B's dream girl, Monica, could easily draw on her girl-next-door, recent high school graduate status. She finished high school in southern California last year, ironically as both cheerleader and class president. The actor made a mark of her own on the cast and crew. Pink offers, "Blake has a very natural presence and brings great energy and focus into her work."

Bostick also liked that Lively could so closely identify with the role of Bartleby's crush. "Blake was turning 18 when we cast her, and she was able connect to who this character was." Her standout performance in *The Sisterhood of the Traveling Pants* made quite an impression on the producer. "We were taken by her work in that film. She was just a fresh, new talent to watch."

True to *Accepted* form, Lively began bucking the educational system at a young age. Her parents took her to kindergarten when she was three because her older brother was scared to go by himself. "But I wanted to just sleep and not learn," she laughs.

When Adam Herschman walked into the Shady Acres casting room, he had only done a few commercials. The production team wasn't even casting for a character that matched his physical description. By the time he left, however, they were combining two characters to write this newcomer into the script. Bostick reflects, "We saw him in a FedEx commercial, and he just had us on the floor. We obviously fell in love with him, completely axed out those two roles and created a wholly unique character named Glen, based on Adam's unique sensibility."

“The second I saw Adam’s face,” laughs Shadyac, “I said, ‘He’s in the movie.’ You look at his face and you start laughing. It’s a great gift.”

Surrounded by comical upheaval, actor Columbus Short plays the stalwart football-star-turned-sculptor, Hands. A hardcore athlete who recently lost his college scholarship due to a knee injury, Hands has the soul of a poet. Similar to the character he plays, Short was also a high school athlete who turned his talents to another medium because of an injury.

“My stepdad encouraged me to play football, and I did in high school until I got injured. I had always been interested in performing arts. After I got hurt, it gave me the excuse to really delve into that.”

Pink feels Short successfully executed the role as a strong anchor to the craziness that surrounds him. “Where Jonah Hill’s character is the naysayer, Columbus played the part of Hands as the one guy who completely backs B at all times, lending hope to the whole crazy idea. He’s a smart, very talented actor.”

Maria Thayer was cast as the one traditional overachiever who balances out B’s crew of misfits. Thayer plays Rory, a motivated, extracurricularly decorated student whose life is in shambles after she doesn’t gain acceptance to Yale. Shadyac explains, “She was programmed since she was a kid. Everything was toward getting into Yale, and now she has nothing. Consequently, Rory takes that experience and says, ‘I’m gonna do nothing. I’ve been doing stuff my whole life.’”

The subversive dean for this idiosyncratic cast of characters is Schrader’s Uncle Ben—a former academic soured on the politics and policies of education—played with ferocity by Lewis Black. Uncle Ben’s rants about the sorry state of higher education read almost as something out of Black’s signature comedic diatribes on all aspects of society. That did not escape producer Bostick when he read the script and debated actors to fill the role.

“Lewis plays the unconventional Uncle Ben in a way only Lewis is capable of. We had writers on set all day, but you can’t write Uncle Ben for Lewis. He is Uncle Ben,” Bostick says.

The often irascible Black loved the idea that his character would be a brilliant, freethinker who refuses to play by the rules. The actor notes, “Uncle Ben hates

university education, thinks it's a waste of time. He is one of those guys who probably sees conspiracies everywhere. He's deeply paranoid on certain levels, and he doesn't trust the culture at large. Therefore, he doesn't trust the institution of college, which he sees as a factory pumping out brainless nitwits who will join the army of people who are buying and selling crap through the world."

Defining Accepted:

Filmmakers and Cast Ponder the Meaning

"Rejection. That's what makes a college great.

The exclusivity of any university is judged primarily by the amount of students it rejects."

—Dean Van Horne

When beginning the production, cast and crew alike reflected on the concept of the programming they'd all been subjected to that forced them into one box or another. For producer Tom Shadyac, it is blatantly obvious that institutes of higher learning have it all backwards. "College is a service industry. You're not there to serve the teacher. You're not there to fit into their mold. The system should be working for you. Today's youth are raised to conform to one blueprint for success: do well in high school, get into a good college and land a lucrative job—cut and dry."

Shadyac knows as well as anyone what it feels like to be locked into the confines of the system. "Skip a step or miss a beat and you should call it quits," he continues. "Because your life is destined for failure. This clearly is not true and time has shown us that there are many roads to success. I was a government major in college because that's what was given to me. Nobody said, 'what do you wanna do?'" *Accepted* and B's South Harmon Institute of Technology asks just that.

Director Pink reflects of the definition, "Clearly, acceptance must be, first and foremost, acceptance of one's self. After that, it shouldn't matter if who you are—or what you want to be—doesn't conform to the expectations of society or the institutions that govern college education."

He recognizes that this definition of acceptance conflicts with everything mainstream youth are taught about traditional education. “I hope that people will identify most with the idea in this film that you can actually be successful by making college fit your needs rather than the other way around.”

In Bostick’s eyes, *Accepted* is not another fantasy teen comedy padded by simply bacchanalia and impossible schemes. “Acceptance is really about the triumph of underdogs. This story has that optimism. It’s a concept comedy that speaks to the human condition.”

Long feels, “The very simple message of acceptance is addressing what it means to accept others and accept yourself. This is not just another teen comedy. It has a heart, and it’s got something to say.”

Once a student at The Juilliard School studying musical theater, Thayer veered from her mapped-out course and joined Comedy Central’s show *Strangers With Candy*. Like her character, Rory—the academically smartest character in B’s brigade of college rejects in *Accepted*—Thayer has found her niche and is thriving on her altered course to success. She does, however, relate to her character’s predicament. “Nothing in my life has ever worked out the way I thought it would. I am like Rory that way. I thought I knew what I wanted to do.”

Life imitating art, Uncle Ben himself, Lewis Black, applied to seven universities during his senior year of high school and was rejected by all but one. Though self-professing that he did, “stupidly well” throughout high school, he was sunk by average SAT scores and bad advice from a well-meaning guidance counselor. Eventually transferring to UNC Chapel Hill, Black found a home at the then party school, where he would eventually begin to hone his craft.

Building S.H.I.T.

Designing a College of Their Own

“What is learning? It’s paying attention.

It’s opening yourself up to this great big ball of &#\$%^ that we call life.”

—Uncle Ben

While cast and filmmakers pondered what it's all about, Pink's team would need to create an abandoned mental facility to host the misfits. As B and Schrader knew after their discovery that creating a fake web site would attract them new students, there was much reparations and scouring to be done to get a school in working order. Like its sister school to the north, S.H.I.T. was not built in a day.

The production design for *Accepted* called for three principal locations: a high school where B and his gang graduate, a psychiatric ward-turned-university to host the free thinkers and/or rabble-rousers who visit the campus and a classic-looking Ivy League private university to serve as the pretentious Harmon University. Fortunately, all of the above were found within Southern California's San Fernando Valley and Orange County.

While exterior shots for snobby sister school Harmon were shot at Chapman University in Orange County, S.H.I.T. would need a much bigger space for a much longer location shoot. Production designer Rusty Smith explains one of the major challenges in the design for this film was "coming up with a place that would be big enough that we could control for the length of time that we needed it for the film." He knew that his team had to take South Harmon through many stages. He found the perfect location for the school at the VA hospital in Northridge, California. Of particular interest to the designer was "the evolution of the architecture of the building that the kids choose."

"Much like the students in the movie, we transformed a veteran's hospital in Northridge into South Harmon. The location was perfect," notes Bostick. "We just had to let the weeds grow a little longer, put in a pool and then add an insane half pipe to skate in the backyard."

"This is why where we shot South Harmon was such a great location," Smith continues. "It's hard to find a facility like this where they let you take over the entire building...and pretty much destroy it." The production team loved the fact that the building had a grand façade. Smith and his crew had to add "a lobby, all of the doors and...basically create this exterior courtyard and transform it into an interior space."

Some of the film's most humorous moments come as B, Rory, Hands, Schrader and Glen attempt to clean up their new school. Fortunately, the VA hospital—with

additions from the Universal Props Department—allowed the director use of medical exam tables, outfitted with stirrups, as well as a plethora of medical devices (read skeletons) necessary to a comedy that takes place in a loony bin.

Inside S.H.I.T. was only half the story. “What college would be complete without a half pipe?” the team wondered. Fortunately for Pink, some of the crewmembers on *Accepted* also worked on the Heath Ledger skateboarding film *Lords of Dogtown*. They knew that half-pipe design was a very calculated endeavor and opted to rent one rather than construct it for the skate boarders who did the skating and the stunts.

On location, Pink was less than excited with climatic conditions of his “Home for the Mentally Challenged” setting that became S.H.I.T. “It was a blazing hot hell,” he laughs. “And you could put this in the Dictionary of Comedy: ‘Nothing is funny after a certain temperature.’ These kids were the exception. I couldn’t look at the monitor it was so hot, but they were still funny.”

With the building of their new school complete, it was time to decide what music would be ringing through its hallways and blasting in its dorm rooms. “We wanted to find the right balance between what could potentially be Steve’s extremely eclectic tastes in music, and music that will successfully reach the demographic the movie is aiming for,” offers executive music producer Kathy Nelson. “For the filmmakers, that balance was ‘Holiday’ by Green Day. The song embodied the film’s message with a youthful energy. We all fell in love with it,” says Nelson.

Seasoned musician and music producer David Schommer created the score for the film. “David knew how to bridge the gap and make the score and the songs sound organic to each other,” Nelson compliments.

Pink also wanted to include such artists as The Chemical Brothers, Modest Mouse, The Pixies and Citizen Cope as the soundtrack for South Harmon. As homage to John Hughes, the comedy screenwriter and director who inspired much of his work in *Accepted*, Pink opted for a David Schommer club remix of the Simple Minds classic “Don't You (Forget About Me),” with vocals by recording artist Lucy Woodward.

Production wrapped on the set of *Accepted*, the filmmakers knew they had a film that not only provided satire of the expected, but could speak to a new generation of

filmgoers who might be struggling with where to go with questions including “What should I be?” and “Who should I listen to?”

Lewis Black summarizes the instincts of the cast and crew as he notes, “My feeling is that once you get to college, you can listen to your parents as advisors—to a point—but what you hear is much like the Charlie Brown ‘wa-wa-wa-wa-wa’ sound. This is the time that parents should be a background. It’s your time of self-discovery. By the way, I’m saying this in my underwear. Okay?”

Universal Pictures presents A Shady Acres Production: *Accepted*, starring Justin Long, Jonah Hill, Blake Lively, Maria Thayer, Anthony Heald, Adam Herschman, Columbus Short and Lewis Black. Music for the film is by David Schommer. The costume designer is Genevieve Tyrrell; film editor is Scott Hill. *Accepted*’s production designer is Rusty Smith; director of photography is Matthew F. Leonetti, ASC. The executive producers are Louis G. Friedman, Mark Perez and Brian Lutz. *Accepted* is produced by Tom Shadyac and Michael Bostick. The film is from a story by Mark Perez; the screenplay is by Adam Cooper & Bill Collage and Mark Perez. *Accepted* is directed by Steve Pink. © 2006 Universal Studios. www.acceptedmovie.com

ABOUT THE CAST

A potent combination of charm and charisma, **JUSTIN LONG** (Bartleby) is rapidly rising as one of Hollywood’s top young actors. This year alone he undertook seven different, successful film projects. Long was recently seen playing Dean, a four-year waiter, opposite Ryan Reynolds and Anna Farris in the Lions Gate feature *Waiting...* Produced by Chris Moore, *Waiting...* is a slice-of-life comedy that follows a group of young waiters at a family-style restaurant. Last summer, he served as the love interest of Lindsay Lohan in *Herbie Fully Loaded*, Disney’s latest incarnation of its successful Love Bug series. Set to be released this year is the independent feature *Dreamland*, with Long in the starring role of this basketball-themed drama, opposite Agnes Bruckner. Justin will also be seen in *Idiocracy*, starring Luke Wilson, Maya Rudolph and Dax Shepard. Written and directed by Mike Judge, the director of *Office Space*, and accompanied by such a humorous cast, *Idiocracy* is guaranteed to be a hit.

Long is currently co-starring in summer 2006's blockbuster romantic comedy *The Break-Up*, sharing the screen with Jennifer Aniston as her flamboyant office co-worker, and reuniting with his *Dodgeball: A True Underdog Story* co-star Vince Vaughn. He has also completed shooting *The Sasquatch Dumpling Gang*, a comedy produced by Kevin Spacey and Jared Hess, who wrote and directed *Napolean Dynamite*.

Justin recently joined Ben Stiller and Vince Vaughn in the Twentieth Century Fox comedy *Dodgeball*. As the high-school student who dreams of making the cheerleading squad, Justin painfully and comically helps in winning the big dodgeball tournament. Prior to *Dodgeball*, he also provided the voice for Dwayne in Bill Plympton's animated feature *Hair High*. *Hair High* is a gothic high-school comedy with a *Carrie*-like story that also featured the voices of David Carradine, Dermot Mulroney and Martha Plimpton.

Long sent shivers down the spines of audiences with his starring role in the 2001 box-office hit *Jeepers Creepers*. He also shared the screen with Britney Spears in her feature-film debut, *Crossroads*. His other film credits include the Daniel Waters satirical comedy *Happy Campers*; *Galaxy Quest*, with Tim Allen and Sigourney Weaver; and the independent feature *Raising Genius*, with Wendie Malick and Stephen Root.

On the small screen, Long was a favorite of viewers of NBC's critically acclaimed *Ed*, for his portrayal of the lovable and quirky Stuckeyville High School student Warren Cheswick.

Onstage, he has appeared in several New York theater productions, including *The Hot L Baltimore*, starring Sam Rockwell, and *The Shadowbox*. Born in Fairfield, Connecticut, Long attended Vassar College, where he was a two-year member of the acclaimed sketch-comedy group Laughing Stock.

Long currently splits his time between New York City and Los Angeles.

In the short time since he debuted his penchant for dramatic comedy at a gritty open-mike bar in New York City, **JONAH HILL** (Schrader) has already worked alongside many of the most sought-after actors, directors and producers in Hollywood. His first feature film was *I Heart Huckabees* with Dustin Hoffman and Lily Tomlin for director David O. Russell. He then secured a small role in Judd Apatow's summer

comedy hit *The 40-Year-Old Virgin* with Steve Carell and, after a meeting with Adam Sandler, a small part for him was written into the 2005 summer feature *Click*.

Hill is currently in production on several other upcoming feature projects. In the first, *Strange Wilderness* for Happy Madison and Twentieth Century Fox, he co-stars with Steve Zahn, Justin Long, and Ashley Scott. *10 Items or Less* is an independent feature starring Morgan Freeman for director Brad Silberling. In the independent film *One Part Sugar*, Hill stars as a confused teenager who turns to a life of buying and selling drugs when he finds out the father who raised him (Dylan Walsh) is not his biological father.

He is currently in production on *Evan Almighty*, the follow up to *Bruce Almighty*, which has Steve Carell reviving his famed "Evan Baxter" as a newly appointed congressman in Washington, D.C. Hill plays "Eugene," one of Baxter's aides, alongside Wanda Sykes and John Michael Higgins. He will soon begin production on *Knocked Up*, Judd Apatow's next project for Universal Pictures, in which he stars with Katherine Heigl, Paul Rudd and Seth Rogen.

Most recently, Hill was seen in the comedy *Grandma's Boy* for Twentieth Century Fox and Happy Madison Productions. He also has a recurring role in the improvisational television series *Campus Ladies*, a comedy from executive producer Cheryl Hines and the co-executive producers of *Reno 911!*

Hill currently resides in Los Angeles.

BLAKE LIVELY (Monica) is fresh from the success of her screen debut in Warner Bros.' *The Sisterhood of the Traveling Pants*. Lively was nominated for the 2005 *Teen Choice Award* for Breakthrough Performance for her work in that film. She was also honored at the December 2005 *Hollywood Life Breakthrough Awards*.

Lively recently completed production on the independent feature *Elvis and Anabelle*, directed by Will Geiger. She stars opposite Max Minghella and Mary Steenburgen.

Lively currently resides in Los Angeles.

Born on a bee farm in Boring, Oregon, to a family allergic to bees, **MARIA THAYER** (Rory) later studied performing arts at The Juilliard School. Her television credits include, among others, CBS's *Big Apple*, BBC's *12:21* and NBC's *Miss Match*, *Law and Order: Criminal Intent* and the final episode of *Will & Grace*. Her film work includes Todd Solondz's *Storytelling* and *Hitch*, with Will Smith. Thayer also performed in the independent film *Scratch*, for which she won Best Actress at the Columbia Film Festival. The actor originated the character of Tammi Littlenut on *Strangers with Candy* on Comedy Central and reprises her role in the summer 2006 film version of the television show.

ANTHONY HEALD (Dean Van Horne) was born Philip Anthony Mair Heald on August 25, 1944 in New Rochelle, New York. He graduated from Massapequa High School on Long Island, New York, in 1962, and from Michigan State University in 1970. Heald acted in plays throughout high school and college, and spent 15 years working in regional theater repertory companies before settling in New York. He quickly established himself, playing Tom in a 1980 off-Broadway production of *The Glass Menagerie*, and two years later made his Broadway debut alongside Holly Hunter in Beth Henley's *The Wake of Jamey Foster*. Since his debut, Heald's theater work has been both extensive and acclaimed. His performances in *Anything Goes* and *Love! Valour! Compassion!* earned him Tony Award nominations, and he was recognized with an Obie Award for his work in the productions of *The Foreigner*, *Digby*, *Henry V* and *Quartermaine's Terms*. He was a member of the Oregon Shakespeare Festival acting company for the 1997-1999 seasons, and remains active in the Ashland, Oregon, film and theater communities.

Heald first got his foot in the Hollywood door in 1983 when he appeared in the Meryl Streep film *Silkwood*, though his first prominent role was not until 1987's *Outrageous Fortune*, where he appeared as Weldon, the government agent posing as an acting student. Of his more than 20 big-screen performances, Heald is probably best known to film audiences for his portrayal of Dr. Frederick Chilton in the 1991 Academy Award®-winning film *The Silence of the Lambs*. Some of Heald's other film appearances include three film adaptations of John Grisham novels (*The Pelican Brief*,

The Client, and A Time to Kill), as well as the films *Kiss of Death, Searching for Bobby Fischer, Postcards from the Edge* and, most recently, *Proof of Life*.

Heald's television work has included appearances as a guest performer on many of television's top-rated programs, including *The Practice; Frasier; Law & Order; The X-Files; Miami Vice; Murder, She Wrote; and Cheers*. Most recently he was seen on Fox Television's *Boston Public*, as high-school vice principal Scott Guber, a role written specifically for him by series creator David E. Kelley.

In addition to his work onstage, onscreen and in film, Heald is one of the most prolific readers in the field of audiobooks. He has recorded more than 60 titles to date, including works as varied as the classic tale *Where the Red Fern Grows*, *The New York Times* bestsellers such as *The Pelican Brief, Jurassic Park* and *Midnight in the Garden of Good and Evil*, and a sizable number of titles in the *Star Wars* audiobook library.

Heald currently resides in Ashland, Oregon, with his family.

ADAM HERSCHMAN (Glen) makes his feature film debut in *Accepted*. Herschman made such an impression on Team Shady Acres that they created a role completely catered to his unique presence and sense of humor.

Prior to the filming of *Accepted*, Herschman's on-screen experience was limited to commercials.

He loves babies, puppy dogs and kitty cats.

Herschman resides in Los Angeles.

As an actor, choreographer and dancer, **COLUMBUS SHORT** (Hands) is quickly making a name for himself. Short's previous film credits include roles in *War of the Worlds* and *You Got Served*. His television credits include roles on *ER, Judging Amy* and *That's So Raven*.

Born in Kansas City, Short relocated to Los Angeles when he was five years old and immediately began working in youth theater, including a production of *The Wizard of Oz*. He attended the Orange County High School of the Arts before leaving to join the Broadway tour of *Stomp*. Upon completing his stint on the tour, Short returned to Los

Angeles and began working as a choreographer and tour director—before returning to acting—for pop superstars such as Britney Spears, Ashanti and Brandy.

Short will next star in *Save the Last Dance 2*, for Paramount Pictures and MTV Films, in which he plays the male lead opposite Izabella Miko. He is currently in production as the lead of the Sony Screen Gems production *Steppin'*, for director Sylvain White. He will star in this film, co-starring Ne-Yo, Brian J. White and Meagan Good, as a young man who, after the death of his brother, is sent to live in Atlanta, where he is introduced to college and fraternity life.

Short resides in Los Angeles.

LEWIS BLACK (Uncle Ben) is at home on the stage as an actor, playwright and stand-up comedian. He has performed his caustic, cranky, bile-spewing, dead-on social and political comedy throughout Europe, Australia, New Zealand, Canada and the United States...for which he has received critical acclaim and occasional hate mail. As “America’s Foremost Commentator on Everything,” he is a weekly political commentator on Comedy Central’s *The Daily Show with Jon Stewart*.

Black is a graduate of the Yale School of Drama. As a playwright, he has authored over 40 plays that have been produced in theaters across the country. As an actor, Black has appeared in such films as *Jacob’s Ladder*, *The Hard Way*, *The Night We Never Met* and Woody Allen’s *Hannah and Her Sisters*. In 2006, he will co-star with Wilmer Valderrama in this Christmas’ *Unaccompanied Minors* for Warner Bros. and co-stars with Robin Williams in this October’s *Man of the Year*, directed by Barry Levinson for Universal Pictures.

His television acting credits include *The Days and Nights of Molly Dodd*, *Homicide: Life of the Street*, *Mad About You* and *Law and Order*. Black has been featured on CBS Sports’ *NFL Today* and in Final Four coverage. He is also a regular guest on *Late Night with Conan O’Brien*.

Black received the award for “Funniest Male Stand Up Comic” at the American Comedy Awards in 2001. In 2004, he was recognized by the Pollstar Awards for his blockbuster comedy tour *Rules of Enragement*. This year, he received a Grammy

nomination for his comedy CD of the same name. His new CD, “Lewis Black: The Carnegie Hall Performance,” was released in April 2006.

A milestone for Black was starring in a one-hour stand-up special for HBO, *Black on Broadway*, which was also a successful DVD release. His second HBO special from the Warner Theatre, in Washington D.C., *Red, White and Screwed*, aired in June of this year. Black’s first book, *Nothing’s Sacred* (April 2005, Simon and Schuster), debuted on *The New York Times* bestseller list.

ABOUT THE FILMMAKERS

STEVE PINK (Directed by) grew up in Chicago and went on to attend college at Berkeley, where he majored in peace and conflict studies. However, his true interest was in theater and film and he returned to Chicago, where he co-founded with John Cusack the theater company New Crime Productions. Under that aegis, he directed Dario Fo’s *Accidental Death of an Anarchist* and the American stage premiere of *Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas*. He also produced a western entitled *The Jack Bull* for HBO. His screenwriting credits include *Grosse Pointe Blank* and *High Fidelity*.

After graduating college—and during his work with New Crime Productions—Pink worked as a social worker for the homeless mentally ill, where he initiated a theater program for the adult mentally ill. *Accepted* marks Pink’s directorial debut.

ADAM COOPER & BILL COLLAGE (Written by) co-wrote the screenplay for the comedy *New York Minute*. After *Accepted* wrapped, they signed on to write *Get Smart*, which Peter Segal will direct, to star Steve Carell as Maxwell Smart.

MARK PEREZ (Written by / Story by / Executive Producer) started his career in 1999 as an inaugural member of Disney’s Writers in Residence Program. Within a year, he had two movies greenlit at the studio and has since become one of the most sought-after comedy writers in Hollywood.

His spec script *Accepted* sold in one day, following a competitive bidding war. Universal Pictures and Tom Shadyac's Shady Acres snatched up the screenplay, and it was put into production within 18 months.

Perez recently set up *Cellmates*, a high-concept comedy, at Regency Enterprises, where he will make his directorial debut. He also recently wrote *Twist* for the studio, with Raja Gosnell attached to direct. Throughout the course of his career, Perez has worked in features and television with comedic icons such as Steve Martin, Ben Stiller and Diane Keaton.

In addition to *Accepted*, Perez's writing credits include *The Country Bears* and *Herbie Fully Loaded*.

TOM SHADYAC (Produced by) has established himself as one of Hollywood's most successful directors. His most recent production, *Evan Almighty*, starring Steve Carell—which Shadyac is directing and producing—is the follow-up to his 2003 blockbuster comedy *Bruce Almighty*, with Jim Carrey.

Shadyac began his directing career in 1994 with the breakout hit *Ace Ventura: Pet Detective*, starring Jim Carrey. He then segued into the smash hit *The Nutty Professor*, starring Eddie Murphy. In 1997, he re-teamed with Carrey for the box-office sensation *Liar Liar*. Shadyac also directed Robin Williams in the Golden Globe-nominated *Patch Adams* and directed Kevin Costner in the sci-fi thriller *Dragonfly*.

Shadyac's multifaceted career includes producing through his Shady Acres Entertainment banner, based at Universal Pictures. In addition to directing and producing feature films, Shadyac found success in the world of primetime television, producing the comedy series *8 Simple Rules...for Dating My Teenage Daughter* for Touchstone/ABC.

Shadyac attended UCLA film school, working towards his master's degree. At age 23, he became the youngest staff joke writer for Bob Hope.

MICHAEL BOSTICK (Produced by) is currently producing *Evan Almighty*, starring Steve Carell, and *I Now Pronounce You Chuck and Larry*, starring Adam Sandler and Kevin James. Bostick was a producer of *Bruce Almighty*, 2003's summer blockbuster comedy starring Jim Carrey, which grossed more than \$484 million

worldwide. Bostick also served as executive producer on the feature film *Dragonfly*, directed by Shadyac. In television, Bostick was an executive producer on the ABC series *8 Simple Rules...for Dating My Teenage Daughter*, starring John Ritter and winner of a People's Choice Award for "Favorite Television New Comedy Series."

Prior to joining Shady Acres, Bostick was an executive with Ron Howard and Brian Grazer's Imagine Entertainment for nearly 10 years, ultimately serving as president of Imagine Films. Helping manage the slate of feature film projects creatively through development and production, he most notably was responsible for bringing in and supervising two of the most successful films in the company's history: *Apollo 13* (as associate producer), nominated for nine Academy Awards®, including Best Picture; and *Liar Liar* (as executive producer). Both movies were awarded People's Choice Awards.

In 1999, Bostick won an Emmy, a Golden Globe and a Producer's Guild Award for producing the HBO miniseries *From the Earth to the Moon*, with Tom Hanks as executive producer. The show also was honored with best miniseries awards from both the Broadcast Film Critics Association and the Television Critics Association.

Bostick started his film career at Walt Disney and Touchstone Pictures, working as a creative executive for nearly two years. In addition to developing a number of films at Disney, he was instrumental in the creation of the New Writers Fellowship Program aimed at discovering and developing minority talent.

Bostick received a masters degree from the Peter Stark Motion Picture Producing Program at the University of Southern California School of Cinema and Television. Prior to entering the film industry, Bostick worked in advertising and magazine publishing in San Antonio. He is a *cum laude* graduate of Trinity University, with majors in journalism and business administration.

LOUIS G. FRIEDMAN (Executive Producer) served as executive producer on MGM's *Into the Blue*, Universal Pictures' *American Wedding*, *Blue Crush* and *How High*, the studio's first hi-definition feature film. Prior to this, he co-produced the original *American Pie* for Universal Pictures, *Slackers* for Screen Gems and *The Third Wheel* for Miramax Films. A *cum laude* graduate from the University of California at Davis, Friedman is a seasoned assistant director, production manager, production

executive and line producer, having worked on *Titanic*, *Starship Troopers* and television series *JAG*; *Fallen Angels*; *LA Law*; *Murder, She Wrote*; and *Hunter*. As a production executive and production manager for George Lucas' Lucasfilm Ltd., Friedman contributed to *More American Graffiti*, *Star Wars: The Empire Strikes Back*, *Star Wars: Return of the Jedi*, *Raiders of the Lost Ark* and *Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom*.

In addition to his work on *Accepted*, **BRIAN LUTZ** (Executive Producer) served as a producer on a 1997 rock 'n' roll sex comedy about a young girl who will do anything to become a rock star, *Pink as the Day She Was Born*, and the television film *Just Your Luck*, starring Jon Favreau, Virginia Madsen and Vince Vaughn.

MATTHEW F. LEONETTI's ASC (Director of Photography) recent credits include *Fever Pitch*, starring Drew Barrymore and Jimmy Fallon; the hit horror film *Dawn of the Dead*; the science fiction drama *The Butterfly Effect*, starring Ashton Kutcher; and the 2003 summer hit *2 Fast 2 Furious*. Additional credits include *Rush Hour 2*, starring Jackie Chan and Chris Tucker; the thriller *Along Came a Spider*, starring Morgan Freeman and Ashley Judd; *Star Trek: Insurrection*; *Species II*; *Strange Days*; *Star Trek: Generations*; *Dead Again*; *Dragnet*; *Jagged Edge*; *Weird Science*; *Fast Times at Ridgemont High*; *Poltergeist*; and *Breaking Away*. These are among the 40 films he has photographed over the past three decades. A native of California, Leonetti studied finance at Loyola Marymount University but was always interested in motion pictures, having learned the business from his father, who was a gaffer. After college, he worked as an assistant cameraman at a commercial house and, following a stint in the Army, he began working in the camera department on movies. He worked his way to camera operator by 1969 and, three years later, he had become a cinematographer.

RUSTY SMITH (Production Designer) began his career in theater, designing the Broadway and off-Broadway productions of *Blood Knot* by Athol Fugard and *The Good Times Are Killing Me*, by Lynda Barry. One of Smith's first feature film credits was the Roger Corman production *One Night Stand*, starring Ally Sheedy, directed by Talia Shire. Subsequent films include several for director Jay Roach, including *Meet the*

Fockers, Meet the Parents, Austin Powers: The Spy Who Shagged Me, Austin Powers in Goldmember and Mystery, Alaska. Other film credits include *Elf, Camp Nowhere, Serving Sara* and *The Beautician and the Beast*. He also designed the HBO film *61**.

SCOTT HILL (Film Editor) is a talented editor whose most recent motion picture credits include the comedies *Monster-in-Law, Win a Date with Tad Hamilton!* and *Just Married*.

Hill is currently working with Tom Shadyac on the comedy *Evan Almighty* and previously collaborated with the director as an editor on *Bruce Almighty* and as assistant editor on *Liar Liar, Patch Adams* and *Dragonfly*. As an assistant editor, his credits include *The Ladies Man, Galaxy Quest, Brokedown Palace* and *A Walk in the Clouds*.

GENEVIEVE TYRRELL (Costume Designer) recently designed the wardrobe for the hit movie *The Dukes of Hazzard* which, among other things, required her to recreate Daisy Duke's infamously skimpy denim cut-off shorts for Jessica Simpson. She also designed the costumes for the pilot of the Fox series *Kitchen Confidential*, based on Anthony Bourdain's best-selling memoir. She has twice worked with director Doug Liman, on his cult hits *Swingers* and *Go*. Other films include *Freaky Friday*, with Jamie Lee Curtis and Lindsay Lohan; the family comedy *The Country Bears*; the independent feature *The United States of Leland*, starring Kevin Spacey and Don Cheadle; *Suicide Kings; Guinevere; Drive Me Crazy*; and *The Way of the Gun*. Her television credits include *Entourage* and *Cold Case*.

As a songwriter, composer, musician and producer **DAVID SCHOMMER** (Music by) brought a diverse background to *Accepted*. Schommer performed with the critically acclaimed first U.S. cast of *Stomp* in 1993. He has remixed songs for everyone from Bob Marley to DMX, on top of songwriting and producing for such acts as Carole King, The Baha Men, Donna Summers and, for his latest project, Bole 2 Harlem. Prior to *Accepted*, his musical contributions have been featured in *Garfield, Super Size Me, The Lizzie McGuire Movie* and *Thirteen*.

—accepted—