

HanWay presents

DON'T COME KNOCKING

A Wim Wenders Film
Presented by Peter Schwartzkopff

With
Sam Shepard, Jessica Lange, Tim Roth,
Gabriel Mann, Sarah Polley, Fairuza Balk and Eva Marie Saint

Screenplay by Sam Shepard
Story by Sam Shepard and Wim Wenders

**Official Selection
In Competition
Cannes Film Festival 2005**

A SONY PICTURES CLASSICS RELEASE

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Cast

Howard Spence.....Sam Shepard
Doreen.....Jessica Lange
Sutter.....Tim Roth
Earl.....Gabriel Mann
Sky.....Sarah Polley
Amber.....Fairuza Balk
Howard's mother.....Eva Marie Saint
Cliff Ormsby.....Tom F. Farrell
Old Ranch Hand.....James Gammon
Wild-Eye.....Rodney A. Grant
Film Director.....George Kennedy
Film Producers.....Tim Matheson, Julia Sweeney

Crew

Directed by.....Wim Wenders
Screenplay by.....Sam Shepard
Story by.....Sam Shepard & Wim Wenders
Produced by.....Peter Schwartzkopff
Executive Producer.....Jeremy Thomas
Producers.....Karsten Bruenig, In-Ah Lee
Co-Producer.....Carsten Lorenz
Director of Photography.....Franz Lustig
MusicT Bone Burnett
Editor.....Peter Przygodda, Oli Weiss
Art Director.....Nathan Amondson
Set Decorator.....David Storm
Costume Designer.....Caroline Eselin-Schaeffer
Sound Mixer.....Matthew Nicolay
Casting Director.....Heidi Levitt
Unit Production Manager.....Samson Mucke
Production Supervisor.....Haley Sweet
Production Coordinators.....Shawn McNally, Tobin
Adams, Traceigh Scottel
Script Supervisor.....Sylvie Michel-Casey
1st Assistant Director.....Josef Lieck
2nd Assistant Director.....Edward McGurn
Camera Operator.....Bengt Jonsson
Asst. Art Directors.....William Budge, Nicole Lobart
Construction Coordinator.....Mike Kelly
Costume Supervisor.....Jennifer Day Young
Key Hair.....Garen Tolkin
Key Make-up Artist.....Barbara Lamelza
Prop Master.....Jeffrey O'Brien
Still Photographer.....Donata Wenders

SYNOPSIS

Howard Spence (Sam Shepard) has seen better days. When he was younger he was a movie star, mostly in Westerns. At the age of sixty, Howard uses drugs, alcohol and young girls to avoid the painful truth that there are only supporting roles left for him to play. After yet another night of debauchery in his trailer, Howard awakens in disgust to find that he is still alive, but that nobody in the world would have missed him if he had died.

Howard gallops away on his movie horse in full cowboy regalia; fleeing from the film and his life.

At an old train station, Howard trades in his costume for the shabby clothes of an old ranch hand (James Gammon) and travels to Elko, Nevada, the place that he ran away from years before and where his 80 year-old mother (Eva Marie Saint) still lives.

Mom takes him in and treats him as if he were still a boy. Perhaps Mom realizes that Howard is on the verge of a nervous breakdown.

Meanwhile, the film shoot that Howard has abandoned is in chaos over his absence. The insurance company hires a private detective, Sutter (Tim Roth), to find Howard.

Mom tells Howard that more than twenty years ago a young woman called her up trying to locate Howard. Mom figured that the girl was pregnant. Howard is shocked at the thought that he has a grown child somewhere. This child could be a ray of hope, a possible salvation from his narcissistic and meaningless life. When Sutter appears in Elko, reminding Howard of the reality he has escaped from, he flees again, this time to find his child

His destination is Butte, Montana, the location twenty five years earlier where Howard shot the movie that made him a star. It was also where he had an affair with Doreen (Jessica Lange) who then, and now, is the waitress at the local coffee shop. She has a son, Earl (Gabriel Mann), a rock musician and singer living in Butte with his girlfriend Amber (Fairuza Balk). Howard's meeting with Earl is violent and unsettling. Earl completely rejects this unknown father who appears too late in his life. Saddened by this encounter, Howard is ready to give up and leave Butte again, when out of nowhere a young woman named Sky (Sarah Polley) appears. She is exactly the same age as Earl. She is, in fact, Howard's child, the product of another short fling that happened during the filming of the same movie. She is Earl's half-sister. These siblings do not know about each other. That's when the real complications of this American family reunion begin...

ABOUT THE PRODUCTION

An old scrapbook. A vintage Packard. An urn filled with ashes. A couch in the middle of a sidewalk.

Everyday objects such as these might be overlooked in many films, or perhaps briefly considered as reflecting a plot point or symbolizing a character's emotional state. But in the films of Wim Wenders, director of *DON'T COME KNOCKING*, these elements help construct the landscape of the story. Memories, relationships, images, emotions and objects flow into each other, and come alive through the sensitive and vivid renderings of very human characters experiencing remarkably frightening and honest moments of enlightenment.

The hero of *DON'T COME KNOCKING* is such a character. Once upon a time, Howard Spence (played by Sam Shepherd, who also wrote the screenplay) was one of Hollywood's hottest movie stars, his rugged good looks and quiet charm landing him All-American roles in westerns. Now approaching 60, Howard is on the set of his latest film when he decides he's had enough and simply leaves. A short stay with a mother he hasn't seen in thirty years (Eva Marie Saint) leads to the revelation that Howard might have a son in Butte, Montana, where thirty years before he made his first film and had a short affair with a local waitress named Doreen (Jessica Lange). Arriving in Butte – just ahead of the “bounty hunter” that has been hired to bring Howard back to the movie set (Tim Roth) – Howard tries to reckon with his past while dealing with the very present problem of speaking to a family that he's never known. “The story is about so many things,” says Shepherd of the script that he and Wenders developed over the course of four years. “It's about estrangement more than anything. It's about this strange, American sadness that I find, the alone-ness they feel. We don't know each other in America, we don't even know who we are, we just don't. I'm haunted by that American character, and that strange, strange lack of identity.”

Imagining Shepherd – one of his generation's finest and most respected playwrights, as well as a noted actor – as Howard Spence was an early decision by both Shepherd and Wenders, who worked together as screenwriter and director two decades ago on the critically acclaimed “Paris, Texas.” “That was an ideal filmmaking experience,” says Wenders, “so much so that we both shied away from repeating it, it was so perfect. Then, after about twenty years, we felt it was long enough and we should try again.”

“Back then, I kept begging Sam to play the lead in ‘Paris, Texas,’” Wenders recalls today with a smile, “but he didn't want to. This time, it was Sam himself who said that he thought he could play it.” “Playing Howard was in the back of my mind when we started,” Shepherd admits, “and the more I worked on it, the more I wanted to do it. With our first film, I didn't feel confident enough as an actor to pull that off, and I thought Harry Dean Stanton was far better for the role. But in this case, I thought maybe I should try it.”

As Wenders and Shepard discussed the story and the character together, they changed Howard's occupation from being a banker to being an aging actor. "It's not a story about a film star," says Wenders, "he just happens to be a film star. Although perhaps it's easy to imagine that a movie star like Howard has a useless life, and would be seeking some meaning." Another crucial element for Wenders became the location of Butte, Montana. "I thought of the story in terms of one character and the idea of the place, of Butte," Wenders says. He'd visited the city before and admits to secretly hoping that no other filmmaker would put it in a film: "No one's been here to make a film in years," Wenders exclaims with incredulity. It was Sam Shepard who suggested that the scenes with Howard's mother be set in Elko, Nevada, a town that retains its western heritage while still trying to be modern. Finally, the desolate flats outside of Moab, Utah provided the ideal location as the setting for the film that Howard is starring in as the story begins.

"Growing up in Germany, westerns were my favorite films," says Wenders. "Everything was so narrow and civilized in Central Europe, but the idea of these empty spaces out west was so thrilling. These movies proved that places like that really existed." Wenders has made several films in America, but even his early work in Germany seems to reflect the wide-open spaces and possibilities of an "American" landscape: from the short "Three American LP's" (where Wenders and playwright Peter Handke discuss their favorite rock and roll albums while on a road trip on a German expressway) to his landmark "Kings of the Road" (about two truckers), Wenders has always had a sense of the epic wonder of the outdoors that seems particularly endemic to the American west.

Finding the ensemble to fill out this landscape resulted in what Wenders now considers an ideal cast – "I've never had a better ensemble in my life." Wenders knew early on that Shepard's real-life spouse Jessica Lange would be great for the role of Doreen, but her schedule forced them to look elsewhere. After different financial arrangements forced Wenders to delay shooting, Lange's schedule opened up and she quickly agreed to take on the part. "Wim and Sam seem to share this tremendous sensitivity to loneliness," Lange says of working with the two men. "Sam is the storyteller in words, Wim is the storyteller in images, and they have almost this psychic connection which you wouldn't expect, with Sam being from the American West and Wim from Europe." As for getting to play Doreen, Lange was thrilled to have a chance to bring one of Shepherd's characters to life: "His dialogue is almost like jazz," she says, which offers the performers a tremendous amount of room for interpretation and nuance. "There's a humor that doesn't always come across on the page, but it's there when you play it," she explains. "What's wonderful about Doreen is she's actually a really happy woman. She has a son she adores, and she doesn't harbor any resentment until this guy shows up and won't leave her alone. That makes her a very interesting character to play."

It was also obvious to Wenders that Eva Marie Saint was the ideal choice to play Mrs. Spence, the mother Howard hasn't seen in thirty years. Watching them read together, Wenders was convinced they were believable as mother and son, although one other factor weighed into Wender's casting decision. "Eva Marie Saint drove herself to the meeting," he remembers, "and I saw her driving away and she had a bumper sticker that said 'Get off the phone or get off the road.' When I found out that she had been the one

who designed and marketed the bumper sticker, then I knew she was the one to play Howard's mother."

A film veteran for nearly sixty years, Saint was delighted to get the chance to work with both Shepard and Wenders. "I have, as most people do, a 'thing' about Sam Shepard," she admits coyly. "It's that crooked tooth, you know, and the blue eyes. But he's one of those people that lives up to his image and beyond when you meet him." A admirer of Wenders' films, Saint found Wenders' relationship with his actors to be productive and liberating: "He says very little, but when he does, he's right on the mark – and it's *interesting*. Actors need that. You think you have it all worked out and then he'll say a few very specific words, and you think why didn't I think of that? He's just wonderful to work with."

Three younger performers – although each of them hardly new to filmmaking – expressed similar enthusiasm at the possibility of working with Sam Shepard and Wim Wenders. "I'm not sure how many people who have become legends manage to be so generous and curious," says actress Sarah Polley. "Wim Wenders is one of my favorite filmmakers, probably one of three people I have been really desperate to work with. I grew up with 'Paris, Texas' and 'Wings of Desire' is a film that my family watches together all the time." Polley plays Sky, another "outsider" in Butte who arrives in town carrying the ashes of her recently deceased mother in an urn, and hoping to connect with her own missing past. "I think a lot of the other characters are looking inward and exploring themselves," Polley says, "whereas Sky's exploration is in the form of asking questions and noticing things on the outside." In earlier drafts, Shepard and Wenders had toyed with the idea of making Sky part-Native American, but Polley forced them to reconsider: "I was so impressed with her performance in a film called 'My Life Without Me.' From the moment I found out she was available," says Wenders, "I knew Sarah was it."

It also helped that Polley got along so well with Gabriel Mann, who plays Howard's estranged son, Earl. As Sky insinuates herself in the reunion between Earl, Howard and Doreen, the characters discover unexpected connections and affinities. "Sarah and Gabriel worked together so well from the beginning," remarks Wenders, "it felt so natural and true." Like Polley, Mann was thrilled to get the chance to work with two of his artistic heroes. "In fact," Mann remembers, "at my audition, I brought one of Wim's books with me so he could autograph it. I didn't care if I got the part or not, I was more excited that he signed that book for me!" Mann's ability to sing helped cement him in the part. Wenders and composer T-Bone Burnett had planned on dubbing Earl's singing voice in two scenes at a local bar where Earl is performing, but Mann surprised them with an impressive musical ear. "I really grew to understand this character through the music, it gave me a way in to the rest of the story. Earl's a guy who has resigned himself to his fate, and then in the space of a couple of days his world is turned completely upside down and suddenly he has to take action." Echoing Lange's comments about Shepard's gift for dialogue, Mann points out that Shepard himself is a lifelong musician and drummer. "His writing is a lot like percussion," Mann explains, tapping out a rhythm with his fingers.

The supporting role of Amber was given to actress Fairuza Balk. It's hard to believe that it has been twenty years since Balk made her big screen debut, but the seasoned veteran was relieved to finally get a part with some comic potential. "When I met Sam, he said 'I'm glad you're here because you are filling it in for me ... because I didn't know how to write Amber.' So we got to flesh it out together and it got sillier and sillier. It's so much fun to do comedy and make people laugh. I've never had the opportunity to do that because almost all of my parts have been dramatic." Playing the flighty Amber ("I try real hard not to call her an 'airhead'" Balk admits) also afforded the actress the opportunity to work with the same team who had made one of her favorite movies growing up. "It's just about as brilliant of a combination as any actress could ask for," she says of working with Shephard and Wenders. "I literally jumped up and down when I found out I got the part, because when I was young and living in London I was obsessed with 'Paris, Texas,' I must have seen it twenty times. Gabe and Sarah and I were talking together the other day and saying 'Is this actually happening to us?' That's such a great feeling, and it makes you want to do great work every day."

Rounding out the cast is Tim Roth, who plays the role of Sutter, the no-nonsense representative from the bond company who has been retained to bring Howard Spence back to the set. Because of the film's complex pre-production history, several actors were at one time considered for the part. "Wim came to me, I was his last option," recalls Roth dryly. "It had fallen apart with various other actors, so he probably found my number in his book somewhere so he gave me a call and said 'Read this really quickly.'" In fact, Wenders had cast Roth in a cameo in "Million Dollar Hotel" and instantly warmed to the idea of making Sutter a foreigner, way out of place in the dusty American west. Roth was also thrilled about finally getting to collaborate with Sam Shepard. "Sam is really heroic, especially in England, where he debuted a lot of his early work with actors like Stephen Rea and Bob Hoskins," says Roth. The two had met briefly years ago, but a possible collaboration in a Shepard stage play was scuttled when Roth was cast in "Reservoir Dogs." "I was nervous at first about working with Sam," admits Roth, "but he's very welcoming, a very talkative guy with good stories. And he shoots good pool."

With the cast in place – including brief appearances by talent as diverse as Tim Matheson, George Kennedy and Julia Sweeney as the filmmakers left in limbo by Howard Spence's unexpected absence – Wenders and his international cast and crew shot for several weeks in Butte, Moab and Elko. Like Wenders, the cast and crew fell in love with the primary location in Butte, which provided a unique and poignant canvas for cinematographer Franz Lustig and lots of "great wardrobe buys" for costume designer Caroline Eselin, who raided as many thrift stores as she could to outfit the characters in the most genuine way possible. "The crew is great," says Tim Roth. "It reminds me of the crews we had when we used to shoot independent film in New York, those crazy, dedicated people. There are lots of film buffs, people who are just mad about films, and then you throw this Germanic thing into the middle of the mix. And it's all in cow country and it's brilliant and really fun." "This is the best crew I've ever worked with,"

says Fairuza Balk. “As far as having a good time on a film shoot, this experience has definitely been number one.”

Eva Marie Saint agrees: “On some movies, there is a feeling, an aura,” she explains. “I came onto this set after they had been shooting for 4 or 5 weeks, and I could feel it. It’s the most beautiful cast and that starts with the director. The nights have been long a few times, but nobody’s cranky, you have the feeling that it is the first time every day. You’re blessed if it happens, and I am very fortunate that this is one of the movies that I’ve felt that way about.” Asked to recall other films that offered a similar feeling, she cites “On the Waterfront” and “North by Northwest.” “When it happens, you don’t want it to end. I can’t imagine not playing the part of Mrs. Spence.”

For his part, Wenders credits the script that he and Shepard developed slowly over the course of several years for creating such a positive production experience for everyone involved. “When we were shooting, I didn’t have to question very much,” says Wenders. “We had lived that story for so long, I was able to completely trust the characters and the actors. We could all see and know the truth about the characters, and the story that grew out of them, and we just had to stick to it.”

What made this creative, collaborative journey so unique, according to Wenders, is that it forced two highly disciplined artists into taking on new challenges, which he thinks will make the film surprisingly refreshing to audiences. “As we were writing,” says Wenders, “we realized that Howard would be unbearable if he took himself too seriously. So slowly, the script became...not quite a comedy, but a farce, it became very farcical. I’ve seen most of Sam’s films and I don’t think he’s ever done comedy...he’s a funny man in his private life, and now here he was writing these scenes that were sort of funny. I think as much as the film is deep and personal and moving, it has that lightness to it because Howard is wise enough not to take himself too seriously.”

AN INTERVIEW WITH WIM WENDERS

1) To you what is the crux of this film, what is this film about?

WW: DON'T COME KNOCKING (DCK) is a film about love and family relations. Most of all it is a film about missed chances, and the regret that comes with realizing those. The tragic-comedy of recognizing the love of your life too late.

With Howard and Earl, we watch a father/son relationship that never happened. With Howard and Doreen, two old lovers come back together, but have come to terms with the fact that their passion burned out long ago. And with Sky and Earl, a brother and a sister discover each other when they're almost 30 years old and have lived their entire lives as single children. All these emotions get mixed up and overwhelm everybody and produce a few days of joy and pain and confusion in the life of this dysfunctional family.

2) How did this project evolve?

WW: It started with the sheer desire to work with Sam again, as far as I'm concerned. Our collaboration on PARIS, TEXAS was such a highlight for both of us that we avoided repeating it for almost 20 years. I guess we were afraid, or superstitious, to destroy something good by trying to replicate the experience. Anyway, 20 years were enough of self-restraint. So I went to see Sam and suggested a treatment to him I had written on my own. He read it and related to some of it, but altogether felt it wasn't down his alley. But the more we talked about it, the more we also realized the principal interests that were driving us, and soon we had left my treatment behind and started to shape a new story. And then we worked on that, on and off, for three years altogether.

3) Could you have done the film earlier?

WW: Oh yeah. We were close to doing the film in 2002, but then had to postpone it, after all, to 2003. And in the summer of 2003, we got very close again, but had to pull the plug in the last second, due to financing problems in Europe. (Many movies underwent the same fate that year.) I made LAND OF PLENTY instead, a low-budget film. Which gave Sam and me another chance to look at the script of DON'T COME KNOCKING, and I think that additional breather did it a lot of good. Like a good wine, it just aged a bit longer. We were able to let go off a few things, and to add a few other colors.

4) As ever, if you could talk about your choice of music for the film and how it evolved. Did you always have T. Bone Burnett in mind?

WW: I never thought of anybody else for the music of this film. I love T-Bone's own music, and I think he had buried his talents for too long by just producing other people. His last record "The Criminal Under My Own Hat" goes back to 1992! I still consider it one of my all-time favorites. T-Bone has gathered a lot of experience over the years in

film scores and soundtracks. Just remember his extraordinary work for OH BROTHER, WHERE ART THOU! So I spoke to T-Bone already in the very beginning of our project. Actually he accompanied me on my first trip to Sam. The two of them go back together for a long time. They met on the “Rolling Thunder Tour” in the mid-Seventies already, when T-Bone played lead guitar for Dylan, and Sam was the chronicler of that historic event in Rock’n Roll.

5) The film is beautiful and you've established a relationship with a relatively new DoP in Franz Lustig. What were your visual references for the look of the film?

WW: I had initially planned to do DCK with Phedon Papamichael with whom I had done MILLION DOLLAR HOTEL. But then, with all the postponements, Phedon was not available when we were finally ready. He was shooting “Walk the Line”, the film about Johnny Cash, at about the same time we were planning on doing DCK. With LAND OF PLENTY, Franz Lustig had made his very first feature film with me, and the two of us had gotten along marvelously. So Franz was not just a replacement, he was the most natural choice. It is so important that you’re totally at ease with your DoP, that you have the same taste, that you can almost communicate without talking. And Franz, not unlike Phedon, is always good-spirited, positive and funny. Movies are such hard work, in between, that you want that relationship to your director of photography to be very brotherly. You need total solidarity and commitment. That was the case with Franz, and you’re right: The look of this film is amazing, and Franz will certainly make a name for himself with DCK.

6) Tell us about the casting process.

WW: When we wrote PARIS, TEXAS, I repeatedly asked Sam to play Travis himself. But at the time he was very adamant about not being able to PLAY the part that we had WRITTEN. I asked Sam on my knees, but he remained stubborn. And luckily, we found Harry Dean who made me forget my regrets about not being able to cast Sam. But when we started to write DON’T COME KNOCKING, it was Sam, very early on, who said he’d like to play the part of Howard. I didn’t have to twist his arm. So Sam was a given from the beginning. And when the character of Doreen came into the story, I immediately knew I wanted Jessica for it. The two of them hadn’t played together since COUNTRY, but part from that working with Jessica Lange must be any director’s dream, anyway. The two “kids” - well, they’re too old to be called that, but as they are Howard’s son and daughter, we kept referring to them as that – I found in the casting sessions. Heidi Levitt, my casting director, had shown me every young actor and actress in the book. Gabriel Mann was sort of a discovery for me, and convinced me early on, but I had him come back repeatedly, until I was totally sure that he was my best possible Earl. And then, of course, he surprised my (and himself, probably) when we went into the recording studio with him and when T-Bone recorded the three songs that Earl is playing in the movie. He was a natural Rock’n Roll talent. Sarah Polley I had seen in Atom Egoyan’s “Sweet Hereafter” and in “My Life Without Me”, and she had convinced me in both. So none of the other actresses I kept seeing for the part could endanger her. For Howard’s Mom I saw a lot of actresses in that “motherly age”. After all, Howard is about sixty

years old, so his Mom had to be a bit older. I DID see some great ladies, and I enjoyed that part of the casting the most, because they were all so pleasant and funny. But from the moment Eva Marie Saint stepped out of her Mercedes - she had driven herself to our meeting – and when I saw her bumpersticker: “Get off the phone or get off the road!” I knew I had found the ideal “mom”. Like everybody else I was totally in love with her when I discovered her in “North by Northwest”, and her Oscar-winning performance in “On the Waterfront” is still way up there with the best ever. And then there is Tim Roth. I love Tim both as a gutsy director and as an actor. As such we have worked together once, ever so briefly, when he helped me out for one day on MILLION DOLLAR HOTEL where he played “Izzy”, the junkie poet. The part of the bounty hunter and detective “Sutter” was wide open, and could have been filled by younger or older actors. It could have been more action-oriented, but with the cast of Tim I went for more of a character part, which altogether payed off in this ensemble piece. And last but not least we found Fairuza Balk for “Amber”, which was a much smaller part, but in Sam’s very last rewrite, just before we went into the shoot, had expanded enough for me to look for an actress that could handle this slightly crazed girlfriend of Earl’s. And, boy, did she handle it!

7) Why did you decide on Butte, Elko and Moab for DCK?

I knew Butte and Elko long before Sam Shepard and I started to write the script for DON’T COME KNOCKING. I suggested Butte for the main location of the film at the very outset of our adventure. I’ve always wanted to tell a story there, ever since I discovered the place in 1978, when I went there for the first time. I had read in an old interview with Dashiell Hammett that the mythical town of “Poisonville” in his first novel RED HARVEST was based on the city of Butte in Montana, where he had spent some time in the early Twenties as a Pinkerton detective. I drove to Butte to check it out. It knocked me out! I had never seen any place like it! Huge brownstone buildings like on Broadway in New York, 12 stories high, wide Avenues, but altogether abandoned. A ghost town of fantastic proportions! A city with a very rich history, in mining as well as in politics...

I revisited Butte several times in the Eighties and Nineties, always hoping that it hadn’t been discovered as a movie set. And Butte grew on me. It is much less grim now as when I first encountered it, but still entirely unique.

Elko was a suggestion by Sam. The principal character of our film, Howard, returns to his mother in the beginning of the story, and we wanted to place Mom in a small town in Nevada. My own suggestion was the town of Ely. But I knew Elko as well, I had stopped there several times. I revisited both towns and then Elko won, in comparison. It has a cowboy tradition that is not yet wiped away entirely by the gambling and casino culture that has taken hold of every other Nevada town. It also has a huge Basque tradition, because there was a lot of sheepherding. It still has great Basque food, for instance. Altogether a very interesting mixture and great for our story.

Moab was a late edition. Sam and I had written the opening and ending scenes for Monument Valley which we both knew and loved. But scouting Monument Valley was a

big disappointment. It felt as if the place had lost its soul and had turned forever into some sort of “Marlboro Country”. The spirit of John Ford had altogether vanished, I felt, and had been replaced by a crude “tourist adventure ride” culture. So I came up with Moab as an alternative. It has similar landscapes as Monument Valley, and John Ford had shot many of his great films here as well. Altogether it felt less exploited and less of a cliché. Plus the town itself was pleasant.

8) *How was the writing process with Sam Shepard?*

Writing with Sam is a very special procedure. Sam doesn't think in terms of “plot”, at least not at the outset. He is strictly concerned with “character”. It took us a while to come up with Howard. And when we saw Howard in front of us, Sam started to write the first scenes. And then our procedure would be: I would have to read the pages, we would go through them and discuss them, make adjustments, and only then we could think about the next scene. Not the rest of the story, oh no!, only what would happen next. And then Sam would have to write that, I would have to read it, and then we would move on to the next scene afterwards. The script writing process took place in total continuity! Scene after scene, without ever breaking out and thinking ahead. That is an extraordinary process, and quite demanding for the director. You really learn to be patient, I tell you! But you also learn to rely on your characters, and on nothing else. This way you can be sure your story is entirely character-driven, all the way to the end. We only made it all the way through after almost 3 years, and after two scripts we abandoned halfway through, because we felt we had come to some sort of dead-end situation. Only when we were happy with our first complete “story”, we then sat down and discussed it as a whole. And then, of course, we could jump inside the script and improve stuff here or there. Only then we both thought in terms of “plot”.

It was a great pleasure to discover again how closely our minds operated. We even tried to stretch that pleasure and worked on this script for a good three years. Not all the time, obviously, but in many instalments, in various places all over the United States.

9) What importance does the script have for you in general, when you are making a film?

If you shoot with a script that you trust entirely, you have a lot of security and you can sleep in peace the night before each scene. Which means again that you can concentrate so much more on your characters. You don't have to worry about any other issue than what you expect from your actors the next day. It is a very soothing feeling to know that you have a great story and good dialogue to rely upon. I made DON'T COME KNOCKING without any anxiety or stress. And we managed to shoot it pretty fast this way, in a mere 36 days.

10) How would you describe the rhythm of “Don't Come Knocking”?

I would describe the rhythm of DON'T COME KNOCKING as cool, calm and collected, with sudden outbursts of frenzy...

ABOUT THE CAST

SAM SHEPARD (Howard Spence/screenplay) is regarded as one of the most brilliant and imaginative playwrights in the contemporary American theatre, and is well-known to film audiences with a career's worth of memorable screen roles on his resume. As a young man, Shepard worked as a stable hand, herdsman, orange picker, sheep shearer, bus boy, waiter and musician before turning his attention to playwriting in 1964, winning an Obie Award in 1965. His more well-known plays include "The Curse of the Starving Class," "Buried Child" (for which Shepard won the Pulitzer Prize), "True West," "A Lie of the Mind," and "Simpatico," and are among the most produced works of contemporary American drama in the last twenty years. Although he is well-known for his avant-garde renderings of the American landscape, his grotesquely realistic characters offer performers some of the most memorable and challenging roles on both stage and screen. His screenplay for Wim Wenders' "Paris, Texas" won the Golden Palm Award at the Cannes Film Festival in 1984, and he also penned the screenplay for memorable films such as Antonioni's "Zabriskie Point"; "Far North" and "Silent Tongue", both of which he directed; and the adaptations for filmed versions of his own "True West" and "Fool for Love."

As an actor, Shepard made his debut in a film he wrote – the Bob Dylan-directed "Reynaldo and Clara" in 1978. He later played the lead in "Fool for Love," but otherwise Shepard has largely avoided performing in his own work. His numerous credits include Terence Malick's acclaimed "Days of Heaven," "Resurrection," "Raggedy Man," "Baby Boom," "Steel Magnolias," "Thunderheart," "The Pelican Brief," "Snow Falling on Cedars," "All the Pretty Horses," "Blackhawk Down" and "The Notebook." Shepard met his longtime companion Jessica Lange when the two appeared together in "Frances" in 1982. The two also co-starred in "Country" and "Crimes of the Heart," and Shepard directed Lange in "Far North." Shepard was nominated for an Academy Award for his performance as Chuck Yeager in "The Right Stuff" in 1983. He has also made numerous appearances in made-for-television films, including Larry McMurtry's "The Streets of Laredo" and as Dashiell Hammett in A&E's award-winning "Dash and Lily," which earned Shepard an Emmy and a Golden Globe nomination. Shepard will also appear in the upcoming thriller "Stealth" with Jessica Biel and Jamie Foxx, the action-comedy "Bandidas" with Salma Hayak and Penelope Cruz, and the horror film "Revolver" with Sarah Michelle Gellar.

FILMOGRAPHY:

DON'T COME KNOCKING	2004
BANDIDAS	2004
STEALTH	2004
THE NOTEBOOK	2002
BLIND HORIZON	2002
BLACK HAWK DOWN	2001
WILD GESE	2001

SWORDFISH	2001
ALL THE PRETTY HORSES	2000
THE PLEDGE	2000
HAMLET	1999
SNOW FALLING ON CEDARS	1999
ONE KILL	1999
DASH AND LILLY	1998
PURGATORY	1998
THE ONLY THRILL	1996
CURTAIN CALL	1996
LILY DALE	1995
STREETS OF LAREDO	1995
GOOD OLD BOYS	1994
SAFE PASSAGE	1994
THE PELICAN BRIEF	1993
THUNDERHEART	1992
VOYAGER	1991
DEFENSELESS	1991
BRIGHT ANGEL	1990
HOT SPOT	1990
STEEL MAGNOLIAS	1989
BABY BOOM	1987
CRIMES OF THE HEART	1986
FOOL FOR LOVE	1985
COUNTRY	1984
THE RIGHT STUFF	1983
FRANCES	1982
RAGGEDY MAN	1981
RESURRECTION	1980
DAYS OF HEAVEN	1978

FILMOGRAPHY, WRITER:

PARIS, TEXAS	1984
Oh CALCUTTA! (contributor)	
ZABRISKIE POINT (co-writer)	
ME AND MY BROTHER (co-writer)	1967

JESSICA LANGE (Doreen) grew up in Minnesota and studied dramatic art in France. She was discovered by director Dino de Laurentis after she moved back to New York, and cast as the lead in de Laurentis' big-budget remake of "King Kong" in 1976. Her second role was as the mysterious Angelique in Bob Fosse's masterpiece "All That Jazz," but Lange became a movie star with her steamy portrayal opposite Jack Nicholson in Bob Rafelson's "The Postman Always Rings Twice." In 1982, Lange scored a rare feat by scoring two Oscar nominations: one as lead actress for her searing rendering of

actress Frances Farmer in “Frances” (which co-starred Sam Shepard, who would become Lange’s companion), and earning the statuette for her role opposite Dustin Hoffman in the blockbuster comedy “Tootsie.” She subsequently scored nominations for her work in “Country,” “Sweet Dreams” and “The Music Box,” and took home the Oscar for lead actress in 1995 for “Blue Sky.” She is also a two-time Emmy nominee, and her resume for television includes “Cat on a Hot Tin Roof,” “O Pioneers,” “A Streetcar Named Desire” and HBO’s “Normal.” Other film roles include “Crimes of the Heart,” “Cape Fear,” “A Thousand Acres,” “Rob Roy,” “Losing Isaiah,” “Cousin Bette,” “Big Fish” and as the cruel Tamora in Julie Taymor’s “Titus” opposite Anthony Hopkins. She will next appear with Bill Murray in Jim Jarmusch’s new untitled film, with Ian McKellen and Nick Nolte in “Neverwas,” and with Maria Bello in “Aftershock.”

FILMOGRAPHY:

The Mermaids Singing (<i>pre-production</i>)	2006
Aftershock (<i>filming</i>)	2005
Neverwas (<i>post-production</i>)	2005
Untitled Jim Jarmusch Project (<i>post-production</i>)	2005
Don’t Come Knocking	2004
Big Fish	2003
Masked and Anonymous	2003
Prozac Nation	2001
Titus	1999
Cousin Bette	1998
Hush	1998
A Thousand Acres	1997
Rob Roy	1995
Losing Isaiah	1995
Blue Sky	1994
Night and the City	1992
Cape Fear	1991
Men Don't Leave	1990
Music Box	1989
Everybody's All-American	1988
Far North	1988
Crimes of the Heart	1986
Sweet Dreams	1985
Country	1984
Frances	1982
Tootsie	1982
The Postman Always Rings Twice	1981
How to Beat the High Co\$t of Living	1980
All That Jazz	1979
King Kong	1976

TIM ROTH (Mr. Sutter) first came to the attention of the British public with his searing portrayal of a skinhead in the 1982 television film “Made in Britain.” After appearing in Mike Leigh’s “Meantime” and Stephen Frears’ “The Hit,” Roth continued to work on stage, screen and television, creating such memorable roles as Gregor Samsa in a stage and television production of Kafka’s “Metamorphosis,” Vincent Van Gogh in Robert Altman’s “Vincent and Theo,” and as Guildenstern opposite Gary Oldman in the film version of “Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead.” Relocating to the states, Roth found a fan in director Quentin Tarantino, who cast him as Mr. Orange in “Reservoir Dogs” (the two later worked together on “Pulp Fiction” and “Four Rooms.”) Suddenly in demand as one of the industry’s most versatile and effective performers, Roth subsequent roles include “Rob Roy” (for which he received an Academy Award nomination), “Everyone Says I Love You,” “Deceiver,” “The Legend of 1900,” “The Planet of the Apes” and “Silver City.” He will soon appear in the Walter Salles thriller “Dark Water” with Jennifer Connelly, Mark Rydell’s “Jump Shot,” and Liv Ullman’s “A Doll’s House” with Kate Winslet and John Cusack. In 1999, Roth made his directorial debut with the critically acclaimed “The War Zone,” which won awards in film festivals all around the world.

FILMOGRAPHY:

A Doll's House	2005
Triomf	2005
Dark Water	2005
Don't Come Knocking	2004
The Last Sign	2004
Nouvelle-France	2004
Silver City	2004
With It	2004
The Beautiful Country	2004
To Kill a King	2003
Whatever We Do	2003
Emmett's Mark	2002
The Musketeer	2001
Invincible	2001
Planet of the Apes	2001
Lucky Numbers	2000
Vatel	2000
The Million Dollar Hotel	2000
La leggenda del pianista sull'oceano,	1998
Animals and the Tollkeeper	1998
Deceiver	1997
Hoodlum	1997
Gridlock'd	1997
Mocking the Cosmos	1996
Everyone Says I Love You	1996
No Way Home	1996

Four Rooms	1995
Rob Roy	1995
Pulp Fiction	1994
Little Odessa	1994
Captives	1994
Heart of Darkness	1994
Marido perfecto, El	1993
Murder in the Heartland	1993
Bodies, Rest & Motion	1993
Jumpin' at the Boneyard	1992
Reservoir Dogs	1992
Common Pursuit	1992
Backsliding	1991
Rosencrantz & Guildenstern Are Dead	1990
Farendj	1990
Vincent & Theo	1990
The Cook the Thief His Wife & Her Lover	1989
Twice Upon a Time	1988
To Kill a Priest	1988
A World Apart	1988
Return to Waterloo	1985
The Hit	1984

SARAH POLLEY (Sky) began acting as a child, earning a Gemini (Canadian Emmy) nomination at the age of nine for her work as the title character in the popular children's series "Ramona" (based on the books by Beverly Cleary). This led to her being cast as Sally Salt, the heroine of Terry Gilliam's "The Adventures of Baron Munchausen," as well as Sara Stanley, the main character in the long-running series "The Road to Avonlea." She won a Gemini in 1992 at the age of 14 for her work in the Canadian series "Lantern Hill" and won another one the following year, but the death of her mother and a desire to get an education led Polley to leave acting for a few years. She returned in Atom Egoyan's "Exotica," but then earned international acclaim for her mature and sophisticated performance in Egoyan's "The Sweet Hereafter." The film catapulted Polley to critical stardom and earned her a Genie (Canadian Academy Award) nomination for best actress at the age of 17. She has continued to solidify her reputation as one of the independent film world's most versatile and talented performers, appearing in both Canadian and American productions such as David Cronenberg's "eXistenZ," Audrey Wells' "Guenevere," Doug Liman's "Go," and Katherine Bigelow's "The Weight of Water." In 2004, Polley won the Genie Award for Best Actress for her performance as a dying young woman in "My Life Without Me." The year before, Polley's first effort as a director, the short "I Shout Love," also won a Genie Award for Best Live Action Short Film. Polley will soon appear in Isabel Coixet's "The Secret Life of Words" with Tim Robbins, the epic "Beowulf and Grendel," and the independent drama "Three Needles."

FILMOGRAPHY:

Cock & Bull (<i>pre-production</i>)	2006
Beowulf & Grendel (<i>post-production</i>)	2005
The Secret Life of Words (<i>post-production</i>)	2005
Don't Come Knocking	2004
Siblings	2004
Sugar	2004
Dawn of the Dead	2004
The I Inside	2003
Luck	2003
My Life Without Me	2003
The Event	2003
No Such Thing	2001
The Claim	2000
The Law of Enclosures	2000
Love Come Down	2000
The Weight of Water	2000
The Life Before This	1999
Go	1999
eXistenZ	1999
Guinevere	1999
Last Night	1998
The Planet of Junior Brown	1997
The Hanging Garden	1997
The Sweet Hereafter	1997
Joe's So Mean to Josephine	1996
Exotica	1994
The Adventures of Baron Munchausen	1988
One Magic Christmas	1985

GABRIEL MANN (Earl) began his film career with small roles in independent films such as "Stonewall" and "I Shot Andy Warhol" before co-starring with Radha Mitchell and Ally Sheedy in the critically acclaimed "High Art." This was followed by roles in Alfonso Cuarón's "Great Expectations," the Farrelly Brothers' "Outside Providence," "Summer Catch," "Josie and the Pussycats," "Buffalo Soldiers," "The Life of David Gale," "Drum" and "Paul Schrader's Exorcist." He also appeared in both "The Bourne Identity" and "The Bourne Supremacy." He most recently co-starred with Ashton Kutcher and Amanda Peet in the romantic comedy "A Lot Like Love."

FILMOGRAPHY:

Don't Come Knocking	2004
Piggy Banks	2004

Drum	2004
The Bourne Supremacy	2004
The Life of David Gale	2003
Abandon	2002
The Bourne Identity	2002
Buffalo Soldiers	2001
New Port South	2001
Summer Catch	2001
Josie and the Pussycats	2001
Things Behind the Sun	2001
Sleep Easy, Hutch Rimes	2000
Cherry Falls	2000
American Virgin	2000
Outside Providence	1999
No Vacancy	1999
Claudine's Return	1998
Great Expectations	1998
High Art	1998
How to Make the Cruellest Month	1998
I Shot Andy Warhol	1996
Stonewall	1995
Parallel Sons	1995

EVA MARIE SAINT’S distinguished film career began opposite Marlon Brando in “On the Waterfront,” for which she was honored with an Academy Award. She went on to star in several other memorable movies, including “A Hatful Of Rain,” “That Certain Feeling,” “Raintree County,” “Exodus,” “North By Northwest,” “All Fall Down,” “The Russians Are Coming! The Russians Are Coming!” “Grand Prix,” “The Stalking Moon,” “Loving,” “Nothing In Common,” “I Dreamed Of Africa” and “Because of Winn-Dixie.”

The actress grew up in Delmar, New York and attended Bowling Green State University in Ohio, planning to become a school teacher. Trying out for a school play on a dare, she won the leading role and changed the direction of her life. The University has honored her with an honorary Doctor of Fine Arts degree and renamed its main campus theatre The Eva Marie Saint Theatre.

Upon graduation from Bowling Green, she went to New York City and studied at The American Theatre Wing and with Lee Strasberg at The Actors Studio. Launching her career during the golden age of live television, Ms. Saint was Emmy-nominated for several memorable TV presentations and moved to Broadway in “The Trip To Bountiful,” receiving the Drama Critics Award and Outer-Circle Critics Award for her performance. Director Elia Kazan saw her in the play and cast her in “On The Waterfront.”

In television, Ms. Saint's first Emmy nomination was for Philco Playhouse. She sang the role of Emily in the live TV musical adaptation of Thornton Wilder's "Our Town" with Frank Sinatra and Paul Newman, winning another Emmy nomination. Her third Emmy nod came for the Hallmark Hall Of Fame presentation of "Taxi," and a fourth nomination came for the mini-series "How the West Was Won." In 1990, on her fifth Emmy nomination, she won the coveted award for the mini-series "People Like Us."

Her many other TV appearances include playing Cybill Shepard's mother on the "Moonlighting" series, "The Titanic" mini-series, "Time To Say Goodbye? The Klooster Family Story," "Jackie's Back," "Fatal Vision," "When Hell Was In Session," "The Last Days Of Patton," "The Achille-Lauro Affair," "Best Little Girl In The World," "Where's Jimmy," "My Antonia" and "Open House." She also starred in four memorable holiday specials, "A Christmas to Remember," "I'll Be Home For Christmas," "Breaking Home Ties" and "Papa's Angels."

In addition to "The Trip to Bountiful," she starred on the New York stage in "The Lincoln Mask" and "Duet for One," and on major stages across America.

Ms. Saint and her husband, Director Jeffrey Hayden, produced the PBS television documentaries "Primary Colors: The Story of Corita," which she narrated, and "Children in America's Schools" with Bill Moyers.

Saint recently co-starred in Wayne Wang's family film "Because of Winn-Dixie" based on the award-winning book. She co-stars as Martha Kent in Warner Bros. highly anticipated action adventure "Superman Returns" directed by Bryan Singer and scheduled for release on June 30, 2006.

FILMOGRAPHY:

Superman Returns (filming)	2006
Because of Winn-Dixie	2005
Don't Come Knocking	2004
I Dreamed of Africa	2000
Time to Say Goodbye?	1997
Mariette in Ecstasy	1996
Nothing in Common	1986
Cancel My Reservation	1972
Loving	1970
The Stalking Moon	1969
Grand Prix	1966
The Russians Are Coming, the Russians Are Coming	1966
The Sandpiper	1965
36 Hours	1965
All Fall Down	1962
Exodus	1960
North by Northwest	1959

Raintree County	1957
A Hatful of Rain	1957
That Certain Feeling	1956
On the Waterfront	1954

FAIRUZA BALK (Amber) grew up in California and Vancouver before being cast as Dorothy in the fantasy epic “Return to Oz” at the age of 11. Relocating to England for several years, Balk appeared in numerous films while finishing her education, including the telefilm “Poor Little Rich Girl: The Barbara Hutton Story” and Milos Forman’s “Valmont.” She established herself as one of the industry’s most talented young performers when she played the lead in Allison Anders’ “Gas, Food, Lodging,” for which she won the IFP Spirit Award for Best Actress. Her subsequent roles include “Things to Do in Denver When You’re Dead,” “The Craft,” “American History X,” “The Waterboy” and “Almost Famous.” Computer gaming aficionados also recognize Balk’s as character voices in games such as “Grand Theft Auto” and “The Lords of Everquest.”

FILMOGRAPHY:

Don’t Come Knocking	2004
A Year and a Day	2004
Deuces Wild	2002
Personal Velocity: Three Portraits	2002
Almost Famous	2000
Red Letters	2000
The Waterboy	1998
American History X	1998
There's No Fish Food In Heaven	1998
American Perfekt	1997
The Maker	1997
The Island of Dr. Moreau	1996
The Craft	1996
Things to Do in Denver When You're Dead	1995
Tollbooth	1994
Imaginary Crimes	1994
Gas Food Lodging	1992
Valmont	1989
The Outside Chance of Maximilian Glick	1988
Discovery	1986
Return to Oz	1985

ABOUT THE FILMMAKERS

WIM WENDERS (director/co-screenplay) was born in Germany weeks after the end of World War II, and helped to re-define the German cinema and produce some of the most impressive creative work every captured on film. Part of the same broad cultural trend in post-war Germany that also included fellow filmmakers Fassbinder and Herzog and playwright Peter Handke, Wenders early short films reflected both his own native German roots and a deep appreciation for American cinematic and cultural traditions. His first feature “Summer in the City” was followed by the screen adaptation of Handke’s short story, “The Goalie’s Anxiety at the Penalty Kick,” an existential mystery that is considered one of his most influential films. The films he made in Germany in the 1970s include “The Scarlet Letter,” “Alice in the Cities,” “The Wrong Move,” “Kings of the Road,” and “The American Friend” which starred Dennis Hopper. Wenders is equally adept at the documentary tradition as he is with dramatic works, making his first feature documentary in 1980 with “Lightning Over Water,” a portrait of American filmmaker Nicholas Ray; later, Wenders’ “Tokyo-Ga” would be a meditation on Japan as seen through the films of Yasujiro Ozu, another of Wenders’ cinematic heroes; while “Buena Vista Social Club,” about a reunion of retired Cuban musicians, earned an Oscar nomination for Best Documentary Feature.

Working in America for the first time in 1982, Wenders made “Hammett” starring Frederic Forrest and the cleverly self-reflexive “The State of Things” before scoring his biggest critical success to date with “Paris, Texas,” written by Sam Shepard. The film swept the major awards at the Cannes Film Festival and earned Wenders a BAFTA Award for Best Director. His next major feature, “Der Himmel uber Berlin (Wings of Desire),” written by Wenders and Peter Handke, was equally successful and is regarded by many film critics as one of the most influential and creative films ever made. The epic “Until the End of the World” followed before Wenders made a sequel to “Wings” with “Faraway, So Close!” His lifelong love for music is evident by his numerous recent concert projects with Willie Nelson and U2 and his direction of “The Soul of a Man” for the PBS series “The Blues”; and his recent feature film credits include “The End of Violence,” “The Million Dollar Hotel” and “Land of Plenty.”

Feature Films (extract)

1971	Die Angst des Tormanns beim Elfmeter – Prize of the Film Crititcs, Venice <i>The Goalkeeper’s Fear of the Penalty Kick/ L’Angoisse du Gardien de But</i>
1973	Alice in den Städten <i>Alice in the Cities/ Alice dans les Villes</i>
1976	Im Laufe der Zeit <i>Kings of the Road/ Au Fil du Temps</i>
1977	Der Amerikanische Freund – German Film Prize/ Gold (director) & Silver (production) <i>The American Friend/ L’Ami Américain</i>
1982 (production)	Der Stand der Dinge – Golden Lion/ Fipresci Prize, Venice & German Film Prize Silver

- The State of Things/ L'Etat des Choses*
 1984 Paris, Texas –Golden Palm, Cannes & British Academy Award & Prize of the French Film Critics....
 1987 Der Himmel über Berlin – Prize for Best Director, Cannes & European Film Prize....
Wings of Desire/ Les Ailes du Désir
 1989 Aufzeichnungen zu Kleidern und Städten
Notebook on Cities and Clothes/ Carnet de Notes sur Vêtements et Villes
 1991 Bis ans Ende der Welt – Guild Prize in Gold (Best German Film)
Until the End of the World/ Jusqu'au Bout du Monde
 1993 In weiter Ferne, so nah! – Grand Jury Prize, Cannes & Bavarian Film Prize (Director)
Faraway, so Close!! Si Loin, Si Proche!
 1994 Lisbon Story *Lisbonne Story*
 1997 The End of Violence *Am Ende der Gewalt*
 1998 The Buena Vista Social Club –
 Award for Best Documentary, N.Y. & L.A. & Academy Award Nom..
 2000 The Million Dollar Hotel – Silver Bear, Berlin Film Festival
 2003 The Blues Series: The Soul of a Man
 2004 Land of Plenty
 2005 Don't Come Knocking

Short Films

- 1967 Schauplätze
 1967 Same Player Shoots Again
 1968 Silver City
 1968 Polizeifilm
 1969 Alabama: 2000 Light Years From Home
 1969 3 Amerikanische LP's
 1974 Aus der Familie der Panzerechsen / Die Insel
 1982 Reverse Angle
 1982 Chambre 666
 1992 Arisha, the Bear and Stone Ring
 2002 Ten Minutes Older: Twelve Miles to Trona

FRANZ LUSTIG (Cinematographer) was one of the first students to attend the Filmakademie Baden-Württemberg, graduating with a master's degree in 1995. He has since become one of the world's busiest lensers of commercials and music videos, best known perhaps for the Nike "Running with the Bulls" ads. He made his feature film debut on the psychological drama "Fragile" before being hired by Wim Wenders to shoot "Land of Plenty."

FILMOGRAPHY

2005	Don't Come Knocking
2004	Land of Plenty
2003	Fragile
2003	Poem: I Set My Foot Upon the Air and It Carried Me (USA)
2002	La Mer
1996	Hommage à Noir