

BIG FAN

Written and Directed by Robert Siegel

Starring

PATTON OSWALT
KEVIN CORRIGAN
MICHAEL RAPAPORT
MARCIA JEAN KURTZ
MATT SERVITTO
SERAFINA FIORE
GINO CAFARELLI
JONATHAN HAMM
POLLY HUMPRHEYS
SCOTT FERRALL

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BIG FAN

SYNOPSIS

Paul Aufiero (PATTON OSWALT), a 35-year-old parking garage attendant from Staten Island, is the self-described "world's biggest New York Giants fan." He lives at home with his mother (MARCIA JEAN KURTZ), spending his off hours calling in to local sports-radio station 760 The Zone, where he rants in support of his beloved team, often against his mysterious on-air rival, Eagles fan Philadelphia Phil (MICHAEL RAPAPORT). His family berates him for doing nothing with his life, but they don't understand the depth of his love of the Giants or the responsibility his fandom carries.

One night, Paul and his best friend Sal (KEVIN CORRIGAN) spot Giants star linebacker Quantrell Bishop (JONATHAN HAMM) at a gas station in their neighborhood. They impulsively follow his limo into Manhattan, to a strip club, where they hang in the background, agog at their hero. Paul cautiously decides to approach him, stepping into the rarefied air of football stardom -- and things do not go as planned.

The fallout of this chance encounter brings Paul's world crashing down around him as his family, the team, the media and the authorities engage in a tug of war over Paul, testing his allegiances and calling into question everything he believes in. Meanwhile, the Giants march toward a late-season showdown with the Eagles, unaware that sometimes the most brutal struggles take place far from the field of play.

Following up his first filmed screenplay ("The Wrestler"), writer-director Robert Siegel once again demonstrates a unique and potent vision of the human experience, in all of its harsh truths and hopeful humanity.

BIG FAN

Director's Statement

As a kid growing up on Long Island, every night, I would crawl into bed, turn out the lights and turn on WFAN, the local sports-radio station. There in the dark, I would listen in on the lives and obsessions of an exotic cast of characters... Massapequa Mark, Frank from Flushing, Doris from Piscataway. I loved hearing them rant about the Jets' inexcusable loss to the Dolphins, or Davey Johnson's idiotic decision to pull Doc Gooden after the walk to Van Slyke. I was captivated by their strange accents, native to far-flung corners of the New York area like Yonkers or Kew Gardens. I wondered who they were, what their lives were like.

Years later, when I got interested in movies, I gravitated toward films that were about people like the ones I heard on that little alarm-clock radio in my childhood bedroom. "Midnight Cowboy." "Saturday Night Fever." "Mean Streets." Stories of scruffy, outerborough strivers with strange obsessions. To my mind, there's no real difference between Massapequa Mark and Ratso Rizzo, or Frank from Flushing and Tony Manero. To me, they're all just Big Fans.

— Robert Siegel

BIG FAN

About the Production

Everybody knows someone like Paul Aufiero, the central character in Robert Siegel's unique drama "Big Fan". Most Americans might confess to being a fan of a particular sport or a particular team, but superfans like Paul live their life with a religious devotion to sport. For Paul, it's football and the New York Giants. For a 35-year-old parking garage attendant living with his mother, the Giants give Paul's life meaning. Every home game, he and his buddy Sal bundle up and journey across the river to Giants Stadium – where they watch the game in the parking lot on a small TV set plugged into the car's cigarette lighter.

Such characters might inspire a chuckle or make for a good sketch comedy bit, but screenwriter and first-time director Robert Siegel, who grew up among the rabid sports fans of the tri-state area, saw a bit more. Siegel, who had demonstrated his ability with unconventional dramatic heroes in last year's sleeper hit "The Wrestler" with Mickey Rourke and Marisa Tomei, first started thinking about people like Paul listening to the passionate fans who liked to argue with each other via the sports talk shows on New York's WFAN, a pioneer in the now-ubiquitous realm of sports chatter.

Finding a feature film story meant that Siegel would have to take an unconventional approach to the character. "Maybe I'm not a strong enough writer yet," he says half-jokingly, "but I find it's difficult enough in 90 minutes just to get inside one person's head. In that sense, the movie is a character study, and this one happens to have a character who is lonely, and really only connects to the world through his fanaticism for the Giants." Indeed, aside from the excursions with Sal, Paul doesn't seem to have much

social interaction, except for the energy and effort he puts into regularly calling a local sports-radio show. Since the Giants are locked into a race to the playoffs with the hated Philadelphia Eagles, Paul (as “Paul from Staten Island”) often mixes it up on the air with brash “Philadelphia Phil,” who seems to take extra delight in rubbing salt in the wounds of Giants fans.

In earlier drafts of the story, Siegel admits, he tried to follow a more traditional narrative form. “When I first wrote the script there was a girl that could have developed into a love interest for Paul,” he says today. “But it never really rang true. Taking that element out really opened up the story for me and allowed me to really consider the character. A lot of people don’t have love interests in their lives, and Paul is one of them.”

Which is not to say that Paul is unhappy or unfulfilled. As played by Patton Oswalt, Paul is affable, fun-loving, and reasonably content, even though his family (including his brother Jeff, a lawyer) urge him to find something more meaningful to do with his life. “In this way he’s a lot like Randy in ‘The Wrestler,’” says Siegel. “Everyone else wants him to change, but he’s happy with his life. He wants to be left alone in his weird little corner of the world. The rule in most movies is that the hero has to pursue change or want to change, but with both Randy and Paul, the drama comes out of their resistance to change.”

However, the fates aren’t so kind to Paul. When he and Sal spot Paul’s favorite player, Giants All-Pro defender Quantrell Bishop, filling up his SUV at a Staten Island gas station, Paul’s fandom kicks in and changes his life forever. Following Bishop and his entourage through Staten Island, and then into Manhattan and an upscale strip club,

Paul and Sal hover on the fringes of celebrity power. After several false starts, they finally approach Bishop and his friends, all drunk from a long night of partying, and not immediately amenable to two out-of-place fans. A misunderstanding grows out of control, and before anyone realizes it, Quantrell has taken Paul down to the floor. Beaten senseless, Paul awakens nearly 72 hours later to discover that the incident is a huge public scandal and the Giants' star defender has been suspended indefinitely.

The rest of the film finds Paul trying to retreat into his previous life of solitude, only to find that the rest of the world won't let him. "Paul ends up resisting the world around him – which is a very weird way of taking action," says Patton Oswalt. As Paul's family sees an opportunity for him to sue for millions and better his life, Paul can't imagine doing something that would hurt his team by pressing charges against Bishop. He avoids the media and plays dumb with the legal investigation, hoping that Bishop will be allowed to return to the field of play in time to hold off Philadelphia for a spot in the playoffs. "He's got to get out of the situation with his dignity intact," explains Robert Siegel, "but he has no idea what to do. This thing he loves has literally and figuratively just punched him in the face." Though the situation is unusual and life-changing to say the least, the story allows Paul's inner character to develop and emerge in a way that is surprisingly universal. "We all resist facing the things we don't want to face," Siegel concludes. "It's hard to come down on him too hard, because I think most of us might end up doing exactly the same thing – just try to get back to normal and hope it all blows over."

Telling Paul's story meant taking a leap of faith with Patton Oswalt. Most fans know Oswalt from his years on television and his off-the-wall stand-up comedy, but he

had revealed great depth in bringing to life the character of Remy the Mouse in the Academy Award-winning “Ratatouille”. After meeting Oswalt and discussing the script with him, Siegel knew that Oswalt would be able to bring the same soulful care to the decidedly ordinary Paul Auffero. “I never had any concerns about Patton’s acting ability,” says Siegel today. “A lot of his stand-up comedy is very dark. I didn’t think it’d take too much for him to unleash his inner, angry nerd.” That meant channeling Patton Oswalt’s energy towards football – a sport about which he admits to knowing nothing. “I have no idea about football,” Oswalt confesses. “But I just imagined I was cheering and talking about things I’m a little nerdy about.” But dressed in Giants gear from head to toe and wandering among real Giants fans before a game, Oswalt and Kevin Corrigan both fit right in, as both Paul and Sal are much more ruled by their passions than by any deep understanding of the game itself.

For the scenes unrelated to football, Oswalt was confident enough in the script and Siegel’s abilities so as to not worry too much about his acting style. “I figured if he had confidence in me to do the part, I’d have confidence in him to get what he needed. The script was so well-written, and having done a lot of writing myself, I didn’t feel like I needed to get my big peanut-butter fingerprints all over it.” Siegel admits that part of the process was finding the more subtle possibilities in each scene after a series of takes. “In early takes, Patton was usually a little too big, but by the fifth take or so, he was really nailing it. Most of the film is made up of fifth and sixth takes.” Oswalt wasn’t the only one a bit out of his element: a number of supporting roles were filled by non-professionals making their first screen appearance, though others are filled with seasoned veterans like Marcia Jean Kurtz (as Paul’s mother), Michael Rapaport, and Kevin

Corrigan. “It was very satisfying to get those performances, to help the actors build them and perfect their roles, something a lot of them had never done before,” admits Siegel.

“That was probably the nicest surprise of production.”

With a limited budget and a scant 23 days of location shooting in and around Staten Island, much of the production process was not quite as pleasing. In addition to helming his first movie with a very small crew, Siegel was also facing the additional stress of the final weeks of his wife’s first pregnancy. “I made a promise to myself that I would finish the movie before the baby came, because afterwards I knew I’d have absolutely no time or energy,” Siegel says – a promise he kept, but just barely. “Overall, I’d say it was probably one of the greatest experiences of my life, but also one of the most painful and stressful; once I was done with the movie and the baby was here, everything else seemed very easy.”

In the tradition of great films about “loser” characters like “Taxi Driver”, “The King of Comedy” and “Punch Drunk Love”, “Big Fan” uses an unexpectedly rich central performance of a surprisingly complex everyman to explore one person’s connection to a world of heroes and glamour that lies just beyond his reach. Though his path is unpredictable – and unlikely to result in a traditional happy ending – Paul still manages to remain exactly what he is from the start: a big fan.

BIG FAN

CAST

PAUL AUFIERO	PATTON OSWALT
SAL	KEVIN CORRIGAN
THERESA AUFIERO	MARCIA JEAN KURTZ
PHILADELPHIA PHIL	MICHAEL RAPAPORT
GINA AUFIERO	SERAFINA FIORE
JEFF AUFIERO	GINO CAFARELLI
QUANTRELL BISHOP	JONATHAN HAMM
DETECTIVE VELARDI	MATT SERVITTO
DENNIS	JOE GARDEN
CHRISTINE	POLLY HUMPHREYS
SPORTS DOGG	SCOTT FERRALL
HOSPITAL DOCTOR	SIDNE ANDERSON
BIRTHDAY BOY	JULIAN LANE
GINA AND JEFF DAUGHTER	CAROLINE GALLO
CHRISTINE/DENNIS DAUGHTER	MAYA LOUISE DISPENZA
LAW-OFFICE AD WOMAN	COOKIE BRADSHAW
SHADY HOUSE GUY	MALIK JACOBS
QUANTRELL BUDDY #1	JASON HARDEE
QUANTRELL BUDDY #2	RONNIE AMADI
QUANTRELL BUDDY #3	ANGEL ESTRADA
QUANTRELL BUDDY #4	BILLY PARKER
QUANTRELL BUDDY #5	FAROUK ADELEKAN
STRIP CLUB VALET	MIFIT HODZIC
DOORMAN	MICHAEL MEDERRICK
CASHIER	MIRANDA RHYNE
BARTENDER	NICOLE MCGEE
WAITRESS	LATAWNYA HAYNES
BOUNCER #1	DAN DINENBERG
BOUNCER #2	SEBASTIAN ELLIOTT
PAUL AND SAL'S STRIPPER	CHRISTIANE FIGUEIREDO
PLAY-BY-PLAY ANNOUNCER	NICK STEVENS
COLOR COMMENTATOR	WILSON HALL
ZONE REPORTER ED ROSEN	ALAN CROSS
RADIO CALLER	NICK GALLO
PARKING GARAGE DRIVER #1	GINNY SISTI
PASSENGER #1	PAUL SISTI
PARKING GARAGE DRIVER #2	JORDAN COHN
PASSENGER #2	DANIELLA TINEO-COHN
PARKING GARAGE DRIVER #3	JOE CANIANO
PARKING GARAGE DRIVER #4	DEBBIE SUTIN
FRONT-LAWN REPORTER #1	ROBERT SIEGEL
FRONT-LAWN REPORTER #2	YORI TONDROWSKI
PARKING GARAGE REPORTER	TOM EPSTEIN

WRONG PHIL
WRONG PHIL'S BUDDY

CABBIE
JOSHUA TRANK

CREW

WRITER / DIRECTOR
PRODUCERS

EXECUTIVE PRODUCER
DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY
EDITOR / CO-PRODUCER
PRODUCTION DESIGNER
ASSISTANT DIRECTOR
COSTUME DESIGNER
COMPOSER / SOUND DESIGNER
ASSOCIATE PRODUCERS
STUNT COORDINATOR
ASSISTANT CAMERA
GAFFERS

KEY GRIP
GRIP
SOUND MIXER
BOOM OPERATOR
KEY HAIR / MAKEUP ARTIST
ADDITIONAL HAIR STYLIST
LOCATION MANAGER
ASSISTANT LOCATION MANAGER
CASTING
KEY PA
ART DEPARTMENT PA
CAMERA DEPARTMENT PA
ADDITIONAL LIGHTING
ADDITIONAL ELECTRIC
ADDITIONAL BOOM OPERATOR
ADDITIONAL GRIP
TRANSPORTATION CAPTAIN
STORYBOARD ARTIST
STILL PHOTOGRAPHER
ASSISTANT PHOTOGRAPHER
SET PHOTOGRAPHER
MAIN TITLES
END TITLES
VISUAL EFFECTS
ASSISTANT SOUND EDITING
MUSIC CLEARANCES

ROBERT SIEGEL
JEAN KOUREMETIS
ELAN BOGARIN
JEN COHN
MICHAEL SIMMONDS
JOSHUA TRANK
SHARAZ MAKARECHI
YORI TONDROWSKI
VERA CHOW
PHILIP WATTS
NICK GALLO, MIKE LOEW
DOUGLAS CROSBY
LIBBY CASINELLI
SEBASTIEN CROS
ARIC JACOBSON
BRIAN MACLEAN
LANDON PALLIAN
ERIC WALENDZINSKI
SHIHO MIYAZAWA
RONDI SCOTT
ZAK COLDICUTT
MIKE LOEW
NICK GALLO
ROBERT SIEGEL
ANNETTE SANTRELLO
MIRANDA RHYNE
NICK MORR
SHELLY SABEL
MICHAEL O'BRIEN
ADAM FEDOCK
NICK D'AGOSTINO
ANTHONY "SEEK" MORRIS
GREG THRAN
GLENN GLASSER
DAVID STEELE
SEBASTIEN CROS
AARON POLLOCK
JEAN-MARC JOSEPH
ADAM SCHWARTZ
JIM MACKIL
GABE HILFER, JIM BLACK

BIG FAN

ABOUT THE CAST

PATTON OSWALT (Paul Aufiero)

A stand-up comedian, voiceover artist and actor, Patton Oswalt takes on his first lead dramatic role with BIG FAN.

Oswalt has appeared in more than 20 films, including MAGNOLIA, STARSKY & HUTCH, and RENO 911! MIAMI. He provided the voice for Remy in Pixar's Oscar-winning RATATOUILLE, appeared in this year's comedy OBSERVE AND REPORT with Seth Rogen, and will soon be seen in the Steven Soderbergh-directed THE INFORMANT.

On television, Oswalt played Spence on CBS's THE KING OF QUEENS for nine seasons. Other credits include SEINFELD, AQUA TEEN HUNGER FORCE, FLIGHT OF THE CONCHORDS, and TIM AND ERIC AWESOME SHOW, GREAT JOB! He's also a regular contributor to COUNTDOWN WITH KEITH OLBERMANN, REAL TIME WITH BILL MAHER and Lewis Black's ROOT OF ALL EVIL. Oswalt currently appears on the Showtime series UNITED STATES OF TARA and will soon appear as a guest star on THE SARAH SILVERMAN PROGRAM.

As a comedian, Oswalt tours regularly and extensively, headlining in the United States and the UK. He has released three TV specials and two critically acclaimed albums. In February 2009, he will record a new one-hour special for Comedy Central and a companion CD/DVD titled MY WEAKNESS IS STRONG. He has a regular, bi-monthly show at the new Largo at the Coronet Theater in Los Angeles and is a regular fill-in host for Steve Jones on the nationally syndicated "Jonesey's Jukebox" on Indie 103.1.

KEVIN CORRIGAN (Sal)

One of the most in-demand character actors working today, Kevin Corrigan has appeared in dozens of films since making his debut in 1989's LOST ANGELS. The Bronx-born, Actor's Studio-trained Corrigan has built a career playing quirky, unconventional characters, appearing in such films as TRUE ROMANCE, LIVING IN OBLIVION, WALKING AND TALKING, SLUMS OF BEVERLY HILLS, and BUFFALO 66. He has had major supporting roles in two Martin Scorsese films, GOODFELLAS and THE DEPARTED. Other recent credits include SUPERBAD, AMERICAN GANGSTER and PINEAPPLE EXPRESS.

Upcoming projects include TRANSBEMAN, 7 TO THE PALACE, HARMONY AND ME, and DON'T LOOK UP. He will also appear in a recurring role on the upcoming season of the FX television series DAMAGES, starring Glenn Close.

MICHAEL RAPAPORT (Philadelphia Phil)

A New York City native, Michael Rapaport made his film debut in 1993's ZEBRAHEAD. The performance earned him an Independent Spirit Award nomination, and the film won the Sundance Film Festival's Filmmaker's Trophy that year.

Since then, Rapaport has portrayed an array of characters in almost 60 films, ranging from dramatic roles in John Singleton's HIGHER LEARNING and Barbet Schroeder's KISS OF DEATH to comedic turns in Woody Allen's MIGHTY APHRODITE and Ted Demme's BEAUTIFUL GIRLS. Other credits include TRUE ROMANCE, THE BASKETBALL DIARIES, COP LAND, and Spike Lee's BAMBOOZLED.

From 2005 to 2007, Rapaport starred in the Fox sitcom THE WAR AT HOME. Rapaport can currently be seen on Fox's PRISON BREAK, and recently finished a recurring role on the Emmy-winning NBC comedy MY NAME IS EARL.

MARCIA JEAN KURTZ (Theresa Aufiero)

Bronx-born actress Marcia Jean Kurtz made her film debut in Jerry Schatzberg's 1971 PANIC IN NEEDLE PARK (starring Al Pacino). In 1975, she landed a role in another Pacino classic, playing the bank hostage Miriam in the Sidney Lumet-directed DOG DAY AFTERNOON. She has been working with Lumet ever since, appearing in RUNNING ON EMPTY, NIGHT FALLS ON MANHATTAN, FIND ME GUILTY, BEFORE THE DEVIL KNOWS YOU'RE DEAD, and his television show 100 CENTRE STREET. She recently reprised her bank hostage role as another Miriam, who refuses to take her clothes off, even under threat of death by Clive Owen, in Spike Lee's INSIDE MAN. (She has never figured out if Lee gave her this name as homage to Lumet.)

Kurtz has appeared in dozens of other films, including Sergio Leone's ONCE UPON A TIME IN AMERICA, DEATH WISH, REQUIEM FOR A DREAM, IN HER SHOES, MIRACLE AT ST. ANNA, THE WRESTLER, and the award-winning, Jay Roach-directed HBO film RECOUNT. Her performance in the LAW & ORDER episode "Indifference", based on the Hedda Nussbaum/Joel Steinberg case, has become something of a classic.

Kurtz has also enjoyed a long and accomplished stage career, winning an Obie for her lead role in Donald Margulies' THE LOMAN FAMILY PICNIC at the Manhattan Theatre Club, and a Obie and Drama Desk Nomination for Martin Sherman's WHEN SHE DANCED at Playwrights Horizons. She has also directed several stage productions, including the HB Playwrights Theatre production of BETWEEN TWO WORLDS, and Evan Handler's solo show TIME ON FIRE at Second Stage. She is a member of the Ensemble Studio Theatre and the Lincoln Center Director's Lab and was a company

member of Peter Brook's C.I.R.T., Joseph Chaikin's Open Theatre, and Jerome Robbins' American Laboratory Theatre. She holds a B.S. in Dance from The Juilliard School.

MATT SERVITTO (Detective Velardi)

From 1999 to 2007, Matt Servitto played FBI Agent Dwight Harris on HBO's THE SOPRANOS, a role for which he won two SAG Awards as a member of the Best Dramatic Ensemble.

Servitto recently finished shooting his third season as Don-Don on the Peabody Award-winning show BROTHERHOOD on Showtime. He has appeared in such films as Disney's ENCHANTED, NO RESERVATIONS, HITCH and Woody Allen's MELINDA & MELINDA. Servitto is a graduate of The Juilliard School, where he won the Princess Grace Award for Excellence in Theater.

GINO CAFARELLI (Jeff Aufiero)

Queens native Gino Cafarelli began his professional career in 2002 as co-producer and actor in the film CHOOCH. Soon after, Cafarelli was cast as Vinny Pitts in THE SOPRANOS, and appeared on Showtime's DEXTER. He attended Michael Imperioli's "Studio Dante" in New York City.

Among his wide-ranging media experience, Cafarelli has worked as an on-air personality on New York radio station WKTU, written and produced a comedy album, and sung the Italian national anthem for the World Cup in 2006. That same year, he was cast in Robert De Niro's THE GOOD SHEPHERD, Artie Lange's BEER LEAGUE, and THE MARCONI BROS with Dan Fogler.

SERAFINA FIORE (Gina Aufiero)

A host and manager at Headquarters Gentlemen's Club in Manhattan, Brooklyn-born Serafina Fiore makes her acting debut in BIG FAN. Fiore served as a consultant to Darren Aronofsky and Robert Siegel in developing the stripper character of Cassidy (played by Marisa Tomei) in the Siegel-scripted THE WRESTLER, and in doing so made Siegel's acquaintance.

POLLY HUMPHREYS (Christine)

A New Yorker currently living in Los Angeles, Polly Humphreys has worked on stage, film and television. Stage credits include DON JUAN, JACK OR THE SUBMISSION, and THE RATS ARE GETTING BIGGER. Television credits include guest appearances

on MY NAME IS EARL and JONNY ZERO. Films include OUR ITALIAN HUSBAND, 24 NIGHTS and HBO Films' EVERYDAY PEOPLE.

JONATHAN HAMM (Quantrell Bishop)

Atlanta native Jonathan Hamm plays defensive end for the New York Dragons of the Arena Football League. In 2007, he was signed as a free agent by the New Orleans Saints, for whom he played one season. A graduate of Clark Atlanta University, in 2006 he was named to the Southern Intercollegiate Athletic Conference (SIAC) All-Conference Team. He makes his acting debut with BIG FAN.

SCOTT FERRALL (Sports Dogg)

Scott Ferrall is a sports talk radio host who currently broadcasts for Sirius Satellite Radio on Howard 101. His radio career has included stints on New York's WFAN, KLSX-FM Los Angeles, KNBR-AM San Francisco, and WCNN-AM 680 The Fan in Atlanta, as well as the nationally syndicated Mancow's Morning Madhouse.

Ferrall was the original radio play-by-play voice of the Atlanta Thrashers NHL hockey team. Along with Steve Albert, he co-hosted the syndicated television program BATTLE DOME. He is currently featured as a sports analyst on THE WHEELHOUSE on SNY. In 2008, Ferrall appeared in the David Mamet film REDBELT as an announcer.

BIG FAN

ABOUT THE CREW

ROBERT SIEGEL (Writer/Director)

Robert Siegel makes his directorial debut with BIG FAN. A native of Merrick, Long Island, Siegel graduated from the University of Michigan in 1993 with a B.A. in history and no thoughts of becoming a filmmaker. In 1994, he moved to Madison, Wisconsin to be with his then-girlfriend, who was pursuing a PhD at the University of Wisconsin. It was in Madison in the fall of 1994 that Siegel came across an obscure local humor publication called The Onion. He immediately began writing for the paper, rising to editor-in-chief by the summer of 1996. Over the next eight years, Siegel presided over The Onion's rise to national prominence, spearheading its transition to the Internet and overseeing the publication of several Onion-branded books, Our Dumb Century, a New York Times number-one bestseller and winner of the 1999 Thurber Prize For American Humor.

In 2001, Siegel and the editorial staff of The Onion relocated from Madison to New York City. In 2003, Siegel, ready for a new challenge, left The Onion to pursue a career in screenwriting. Over the next four years, he worked on numerous studio projects, including the Judd Apatow-produced THE RECRUITER at Universal and Warner Brothers' BALLAD OF THE WHISKEY ROBBER, with Johnny Depp attached to star.

In 2003, Siegel met with director Darren Aronofsky (PI, REQUIEM FOR A DREAM), who was interested in a script Siegel wrote called PAUL AUFIERO (later retitled BIG FAN). Though Aronofsky did not wind up directing the script, he contacted Siegel a short time later to ask if he was interested in writing a film set in the world of professional wrestling. Siegel accepted the offer, which eventually resulted in the critically acclaimed THE WRESTLER, starring Mickey Rourke and Marisa Tomei. The Fox Searchlight film earned Academy Award Nominations, won the Golden Lion statue at the 2008 Venice Film Festival, and was the closing night selection at the New York Film Festival.

Siegel lives near Union Square in New York City with his wife and son.

JEAN KOUREMETIS (Producer)

Jean Kouremetis is a New York resident who recently left the corporate world, where she held management positions in private equity and insurance brokerage firms. She now applies her business background as a producer at her own creative/post-production firm, The Happy Dagger, and as a production manager at the music house Expansion Team.

ELAN BOGARIN (Producer)

Elan Bogarin is a New York City-based filmmaker and graduate of NYU's Tisch School of the Arts. Her most recent projects include INVISIBLE MURALS (in post-production), a documentary about the origin myths of oil from a Venezuelan oil boomtown; GOD'S HOUSE, a feature-length documentary about Muslims who saved Jews during the Holocaust for JWM Productions; and a short documentary for the National Gallery of Art for Oscar-winning director Aviva Slesin. In 2008, she co-founded The Wassaic Project, an annual multidisciplinary arts festival in historic Wassaic, NY. In addition, Bogarin has exhibited her photographic work at Rhonda Schaller Gallery in New York's Chelsea art district.

JEN COHN (Executive Producer)

A voiceover artist, Jen Cohn can be heard on countless TV and radio commercials, cartoons, books on tape, and promos. Her television credits include such animated shows as AVATAR (Nickelodeon), WORD GIRL (PBS), CELEBRITY DEATHMATCH (MTV), and ASSY MCGEE (Cartoon Network). She has also lent her vocal talents to numerous video games, including GRAND THEFT AUTO: VICE CITY STORIES, I AM ALIVE, and the upcoming LucasArts STAR WARS multiplayer online role-playing game.

A graduate of Boston's Emerson College, she lives in New York City with her husband and son. This is Cohn's first foray into executive producing.

NICK GALLO (Associate Producer)

Staten Island native Nick Gallo received his B.A. from the New York Institute of Technology and studied at the Art Institute of San Francisco. He is currently Graphics Editor for the satirical publication The Onion and was a contributor to The Onion's best-selling book OUR DUMB WORLD: ATLAS OF THE PLANET EARTH.

MIKE LOEW (Associate Producer)

Mike Loew was a writer and graphics editor for The Onion from 1993-2007, working on The Onion's number-one New York Times bestseller OUR DUMB CENTURY, as well as OUR DUMB WORLD: ATLAS OF THE PLANET EARTH. Mike has also written his own comedy books, including TOUGH CALL: HARD-HITTING PHONE PRANKS (2000) and the political satire CITIZEN YOU! HELPING YOUR GOVERNMENT HELP ITSELF (2004). He is currently at work on a screenplay for the animated movie BIG FOOT AND GIL with producer Albie Hecht as well as illustrations for WHAT TO EXPECT WHEN YOU'RE EXPECTED, a book by DAILY SHOW executive producer

David Javerbaum. His latest political humor book, THANKS FOR THE MEMORIES, GEORGE, will be published by Random House in 2009.

MICHAEL SIMMONDS (Director of Photography)

Michael Simmonds studied cinematography at New York's School of Visual Arts, where he received his B.F.A. After graduating, he shot two films for world-renowned filmmaker Amir Naderi, *MARATHON* (2002) and *SOUND BARRIER* (2005).

Simmonds went on to collaborate with award-winning writer-director Ramin Bahrani, lensing *MAN PUSH CART* (2005) and *CHOP SHOP*, which premiered at the 2007 Cannes Film Festival. Both films earned him Independent Spirit Award nominations for Best Cinematography (2007, 2009). *GOODBYE SOLO*, his third film shot for Bahrani, screened at the Venice and Toronto Film Festivals.

In addition to narrative films, Simmonds has shot numerous notable documentaries, serving as DP on Margaret Brown's critically acclaimed *THE ORDER OF MYTHS*, which premiered at the 2007 Sundance Film Festival and was nominated for two Independent Spirit Awards.

JOSHUA TRANK (Editor/Co-Producer)

A 23-year-old filmmaker who has written, directed, and edited countless short projects, Joshua Trank makes his first foray into feature filmmaking with *BIG FAN*. After high school, Trank attended photography school and dropped out after a year. He soon began to establish himself in the world of new media, most notably with his clever 2007 viral hoax *STABBING AT LEIA'S 22ND BIRTHDAY PARTY*, which has earned millions of views online. Since that time, Trank has been loading up his reel without rest, directing music videos, experimenting with style, and developing various commercial projects with Fox Television, Spike TV, and other networks.

SHAROZ MAKARECHI (Production Designer)

Sharoz Makarechi is originally from Tehran, Iran. In 1994, she graduated from New York's School of Visual Arts and began writing and art directing for major advertising agencies. In 2002, after years as a creative director, she struck out on her own and founded Think Tank 3, a new model for a creative agency.

Makarechi has taken an active role in international media through the French-based non-governmental organization Aïna. In 2004-05, she committed six months to working with Aïna in Afghanistan, becoming the first creative director in the country since before the Taliban. Aïna's numerous projects include a women's film group that yielded professional Afghan camerawomen and the first feature-film shot by the Afghan women

in their own country. The film, AFGHANISTAN UNVEILED, was nominated for an Emmy in 2005.

PHILIP WATTS (Composer/Sound Designer)

Cleveland native Philip Watts has written, performed and recorded music for ad campaigns for American Express, Cadillac, and Coors Light, among others. A veteran of many rock bands, the multi-instrumentalist Watts owns a recording studio in New Jersey, where he does post-production work and creates music for television and film.

YORI TONDROWSKI (Assistant Director)

Yori Tondrowski has been assistant directing feature films, commercials, and music videos for the past five years in New York and around the country. His credits include CAPERS, COURTING CONDI, and DIVERGENCE. Most recently, he worked on the Paola Mendoza drama ENTRE NOS (2009).

RONDI SCOTT (Key Makeup Artist)

Rondi Scott's foundation for her creative eye comes from a B.F.A. in drawing and painting. She has since adapted her artistic talent from the canvas to the face. Her career began under makeup artists Naomi Donne (SYNECDOCHE, NEW YORK) and Judy Chin (SEX AND THE CITY), mastering both beauty and special-effects makeup. She continues to paint in both mediums in her home in Williamsburg, New York.

VERA CHOW (Costume Designer)

Vera Chow has designed costume and fashion for film, television, music videos, and commercials. She received her education from the Parsons School of Design and Istituto Europeo di Design. Before entering the film industry, Chow spent time in the fashion world, working for such brands as Luca Luca, Liberty London, and Azzure Denim.

ERIC WALENDZINSKI (Sound Mixer)

Eric Walendzinski has been working in production sound for film and television for five years, finding a niche in the New York independent film scene. Recent sound-mixing projects include a documentary for the Jacob's Cure Foundation and webisodes for Nikon. He has also done booming and utility work on PRE, COACH, and PAPER MAN, all currently filming or in post-production. He resides in Brooklyn.