THE LUCKY ONE
HOW A NOVEL SET IN NORTH CAROLINA BROUGHT ZAC EFRON TO LOUISIANA

Production Update inside

HOW'S REVVING YOUR ENGINE?

HIT THE ROAD WITH W HOTELS OF NEW ORLEANS
EDITOR’S PICKS
COMPOSER YANN TIERSEN
AT REPUBLIC NEW ORLEANS

His music is instantly recognizable, a unique sound familiar to many who have never heard his name. French songwriter and composer Yann Tiersen’s music is both heartbreaking and inspiring.

The best-selling soundtrack to the whimsical film Amélie feels instantly familiar. If you are unfamiliar with Tiersen, take a minute to go to YouTube and listen to “La Noyée.” The popular video website is well known for being a repository of ridiculous comments, but Tiersen’s instrumental song earns these:

“This is the reason why addicts give up drugs, criminals walk straight paths, and why life is beautiful.”

“This song makes me want to be a better person.”

Yann Tiersen plays Saturday, February 5 at Republic.

THE WAY BACK AT THE RFC

From director Peter Weir comes this tale of escape from the oppressive Russian prison system, named the Gulag Archipelago by author and prisoner Alexander Solzhenitsyn. The film’s talented cast includes Ed Harris, Jim Sturgess, Colin Farrell, Saoirse Ronan, led out of imprisonment by the six-time Academy Award nominee from Australia.

The Way Back plays this weekend at the Robinson Film Center in Shreveport. For tickets go to www.robinsonfilmcenter.org.

LET ME IN ON DVD

The American remake of one of last year’s best films, Let Me In is all about letting the right one in. A young boy, who finds himself frequently bullied, makes friends with a little girl named Abby. Abby’s a sweetheart. Oh, right and she’s an immortal. The kind of immortal that needs blood to stay immortal.

From Cloverfield director Matt Reeves, Let Me In walks the line between horror flick and coming of age romance, equal parts scare and sentiment. A remake of the Swedish film Let the Right One In, Reeves’ retake takes its place among the great remakes.
One of the strangest (read: most awesome) projects ever to shoot in Louisiana might be Joaquin Phoenix’s first project after a long, strange hiatus from his perch atop the film industry. Deadline’s Mike Fleming reported yesterday that the Academy Award nominated actor is circling Abraham Lincoln: Vampire Hunter, which is now in pre-production in New Orleans.

The role, reportedly Phoenix’s for the taking, is that of Henry, a man of myth who appears never to age. It is he who instructs a young Abraham Lincoln in the ways of vampire hunting and something even more crucial: vampire killing. Phoenix would join the previously cast Benjamin Walker, who plays the titular president with an undead vendetta. Shooting is scheduled to start in late February.
The writer responsible for the source material behind *The Notebook, A Walk to Remember, Nights in Rodanthe, Dear John* and *The Last Song*, novelist Nicholas Sparks famously sets all of his novels in North Carolina. It was there that screenwriters Douglas McGrath and Will Fetters set their screen adaptation of Spark’s latest novel-turned-film, *The Lucky One*, starring Zac Efron. But after closely investigating North Carolina as a destination for filming, producers and the film’s creative team decided not only to shoot the film in Louisiana, but to rewrite it, changing the story’s location to the Pelican State.

Warner Bros’ senior vice president of production Ravi Mehta, who previously worked to bring both *Dukes of Hazzard* and the Josh Brolin comic book movie *Jonah Hex* to Louisiana, spoke to *Scene* about how the decision was made to base the film in New Orleans.

Q: How did your experiences on *Jonah Hex* lead to *The Lucky One* coming to Louisiana?

A: For the whole opening and the middle of the script, there were these western towns in *Jonah Hex*, because the movie started with a bounty hunter being pulled back to his “demons” in the South? New Mexico had these standing Western sets, so the production value was already there and [they have] an incentive. We ran scenarios, tried to mount the movie in New Mexico, but the more we put pen to paper and kept looking at it, we thought, “Well maybe we can do a split.” [Begin filming in] New Mexico and then take the other half of the movie once he’s reunited on the trail to face his mortal enemy. Then, it becomes more Southern and it perfectly works for Louisiana and they have a great incentive, so we’ll go there. As we got further and further into the process, I said, “Let’s get really creative and save all the double-prep, double-wrap, travel of two crews and create the variety of worlds that we need all in Louisiana. Which, by the way, isn’t the easiest thing to do because when you’re based out of New Orleans, there’s no elevation. It’s a delta. It’s pretty much green. The time we were here, it had the same sort of flat green look and we needed a movie that showed like you are starting more in the west with caves and red sand, more western looking. Anyways, I took the two million dollars of travel and double prep, and said, let’s just create what we need. So, we got really smart and went to St. Francisville and were able to go into this rock quarry, which leaves this huge area of sand. We built the whole opening of the movie like it’s a Western town and it’s brilliant. People still ask, “How’d you get that look in Louisiana??”

Then, there were these scenes in caves and mountains that didn’t make the final movie but we actually just built giant sets, carved them out of foam and created the caves, which worked great. Everywhere you look [in Louisiana], there’s history. There’s things from the 1700s, so we didn’t have to build everything. You can turn the camera and find huge production value.
It was very cool to see, other than dressing the streets in the French Quarter with hay, how much of that was still true to period and didn’t need to be set-dressed. Exactly. Well, that’s how it worked on Jonah and I had a great, positive experience. Then, for The Lucky One, Nicholas Sparks, as you know, sets all of his books in North Carolina. He’s from North Carolina and that’s what he writes. And all the initial budgets were for North Carolina, and we [Warner Bros executives] met with Governor Perdue of North Carolina and she said, “I want to make North Carolina the filming destination. I don’t want to hear one of our movies is set up somewhere else, what do I have to do?” And we consulted and laid out what she’d have to do to compete with Georgia and Louisiana. They went back and enriched their incentives, which was a big step in the right direction but, honestly, in the end, it works. Their incentive works, but when you get [to a certain budget size], there’s a cutoff. There’s a limit on what’s incentivized per individual.

And the cap was $7.5 million per project?

Well, they lifted the per-project $7.5 to $15 million, and that was one of their bragging points, but they left the $1 million per individual or item, so my point was like, “How do you get beyond $7.5 if any single item beyond a million is not going to be allowed? You know what I mean? You’re really not, you gave us one thing that’s not really gonna apply because you’ve got a star or a producer or a director, you’re only gonna get that million. And of course, the bigger the movie the bigger the above the line, usually. A big movie that might get to the $15 million spend in North Carolina is not going to have a million dollar star. If you’re going to spend that kind of money, you’re probably going to get somebody that’s a big name. So, it’s not going to help you, really. When we started putting the movie together - pencil to paper - it made sense budget-wise to make the movie here. Then, the challenge was to convince the creative team that something so clearly written for North Carolina can be achieved in New Orleans.

And though the film was originally set in Nicholas Spark’s home state of North Carolina, it was then rewritten for a town in Louisiana? That was one of the first things that changed. We came here and we did an initial creative scout and thought, “Why fight it? Let’s embrace it. Let’s just set it in Louisiana.” It’s a romance story, right? So, it doesn’t have to be in the Carolinas. So we re-set it and now it plays for a small town in Louisiana.
Is it scripted for any town in particular?

It’s scripted for Hamden. I don’t know if there really is a Hamden or if it’s a fictitious name. But it’s supposed to be a little piece of Americana, y’know? The challenge, since it’s rural America, is that we still wanted to base out of New Orleans. And a huge compliment to and a huge benefit of New Orleans is that it doesn’t look like most areas. If you travel to the other forty-nine states and turn the corner, you get a strip mall and Starbucks and you’re like, “There’s no difference, everything looks the same.”

But this is like a culture in and of itself. It’s like being in another country right here in the United States. Though that is a positive, it made it a challenge in this movie, because basing out of New Orleans but having this rural Americana look required us to travel. We were traveling almost an hour per day as a city. We based out of Second Line Stages and we don’t have [a lot of] stage work, so we’ve been trekking to get away from the very distinct New Orleans look. Which is a compliment to the city, but it just makes it challenging in this particular movie. We didn’t want to play it as New Orleans, because part of the magic of the characters is the female lead is, not really isolated, but she’s not in the hubbub of the big city. So when the lead character comes into town, it all makes sense that it’s small town America.

So not only was it cost-effective for you to shoot in Louisiana but the creative team found what they needed as well.

Basically with the good, positive experience that I had on Jonah Hex, I was able to at least force a scout, they started wrapping their heads around it creatively, I took them out to town [in New Orleans] for a nice meal and I think that’s what sold it. They were like “Oh yeah, as long as we can base out of New Orleans, we’re done! We’re here!” You know what I mean?

Definitely. Do you have any more films that you’ll be bringing to Louisiana soon and when are you going to buy a house here?

[laughs] It’s crossed my mind a few times. I should have taken that living allowance and gotten myself something! I just got assigned another movie with Warner and we’re gonna look at Louisiana. I could be back here next year with a film called Survival.
DUNGEONS & DRAGONS 3  
Feature Film – Independent (Unlimited Prod. Services)  
Starring Jack Derges, Eleanor Gecks and Barry Aird  
**Director:** Gerry Lively  
**Resumes:** dnd3movie@gmail.com  
**Phone:** 225.456.5964  
**Fax:** 225.757.6258  
**Status:** Start shooting January 17 for 4 weeks  
**Location:** Baton Rouge

TAP THE HEAT  
Feature Film – Independent  
**Director:** Joey Travolta  
**Resumes:** taptheheat@gmail.com  
**Phone:** 225.456.5964  
**Fax:** 225.757.6258  
**Status:** Looking for an October start  
**Location:** Baton Rouge

THE TWILIGHT SAGA: BREAKING DAWN  
Feature Film – Summit Entertainment  
Starring Kristen Stewart, Robert Pattinson, Taylor Lautner, Kellen Lutz, Elizabeth Reaser, Nikki Reed, Jackson Rathbone, Ashley Greene, Lee Pace, Rami Malek  
**Director:** Bill Condon  
**Crew Resumes:** louisianafilm@gmail.com  
**Status:** Now shooting through February 17  
**Location:** Raleigh Studios Baton Rouge, Vancouver  
**Line Producer:** Bill Banner   
**UPM:** David Price  
**Production Coordinator:** Steve Cainas  
Security is a very serious concern for this production. Scene Magazine is withholding the physical address and production offices numbers, and local casting information at the request of the producers.

UNIVERSAL SOLDIER 4  
Feature Film – Independent (Unlimited Production Services)  
Starring Jean-Claude Van Damme & Dolph Lundgren  
**Director:** John Hyams  
**Status:** February 2011  
**Location:** Baton Rouge
NEW ORLEANS

21 Jump Street
Feature Film – Sony
Starring Channing Tatum, Jonah Hill
Director: Phil Lord & Chris Miller
Status: Starts shooting April 18
Location: New Orleans
UPM: Todd Lewis
Based on the 1980s television series of the same name.

ABRAHAM LINCOLN: VAMPIRE HUNTER
Feature Film – 20th Century Fox
Director: Timur Bekmambetov
Phone: 504.355.1787 Fax: 504.304.8517
Resumes: alvh2011@gmail.com
Status: Starts shooting February 28 for 75 days
Location: New Orleans
PM: John Kelly POC: Kathy Chambless Oliver

COGAN’S TRADE
Feature Film
Starring Brad Pitt, Sam Rockwell, Bella Heathcote
Director: Andrew Dominik
Phone: 504.224.2272 Fax: 504.224.2272
Resumes: coganstrade@gmail.com
Status: Starts shooting February 21
Location: New Orleans
UPM: Anthony Katagas Prod. Supervisor: John Fedynich

CONTRABAND
Feature Film - NBC Universal / Relativity Media
Starring Mark Wahlberg, Kate Beckinsale, Ben Foster, Giovanni Ribisi, Caleb Landry Jones, Lukas Haas, Diego Luna
Director: Baltasar K. Baltasarsson
Phone: 504.708.2400 Resumes: contrabandresumes@gmail.com
Status: Now shooting until March
Location: New Orleans
PM: Bill Johnson Prod. Supervisor: Peter Novak

HOUND DOGS
MOW/Pilot - TBS
Location: New Orleans
Status: Shoots February 17 for 12 days
Location: New Orleans
UPM: Chris Morgan

JUSTICE FOR NATALEE
MOW - Sony Television
Phone: 504.558.9191 Fax: 504.588.9181
Status: Shoots January 31 for three weeks
Location: New Orleans

LOOPER
Feature Film - Independent (Endgame Entertainment)
Starring Bruce Willis, Joseph Gordon-Levitt, Emily Blunt, Paul Dano
Director: Rian Johnson
Phone: 504. 335.2515 Fax: 504.525.1857
Resumes: looperllc@gmail.com
Status: Shoots January 24 through April 1
Location: New Orleans
UPM: Dave Pomier Prod Supervisor: Tony Rossi

MEDALLION
Feature Film – Nu Image/Millenium Films
Starring Nicholas Cage
Director: Simon West
Resumes: medallionresumes@gmail.com
Status: Starts shooting March 28
Location: New Orleans
UPM: Rob Ortiz Asst UPM: Matt Hirsch

MEAN CUISINE
Feature Film – Independent
Starring Billy Crystal, Dana Carvey, Alec Mapa, Martin Short
Status: Starts shooting March 28 for 2 weeks in NOLA, then moves to Shreveport
Location: New Orleans & Shreveport
UPM: Danelle Hand

MEETING EVIL
Feature Film – MPCA
Starring Luke Wilson, Samuel L. Jackson, Leslie Bibb
Director: Chris Fisher
Resumes: meetingevilcrew@gmail.com
Casting: Caballero Casting (www.caballerocasting.com)
Status: Starts shooting January 8 for 18 days
Location: New Orleans

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Location: New Orleans
Status: Shoots February 17 for 12 days
Location: New Orleans
UPM: Chris Morgan
NEW ORLEANS

**MEMPHIS BEAT - Season 2**
TV Series - TNT  
**Location:** New Orleans  
Looking to start up in early Spring.

**SO UNDERCOVER**
Feature Film – Independent  
Starring Miley Cyrus  
**Director:** Tom Vaughan  
**Resumes:** soundercovermovie@gmail.com  
**Casting:** Glorioso Casting (www.gloriosocasting.com)  
**Status:** Currently shooting  
**Location:** New Orleans  
A Nancy Drew inspired story that has Cyrus going undercover at a sorority house.

**TAP THE HEAT**
Feature Film – Independent  
**Director:** Joey Travolta  
**Resumes:** taptheheat@gmail.com  
**Status:** Shoots March 1 for 8 weeks  
**Location:** New Orleans

**TARANTULA**
Feature Film – Independent  
Starring Danny Trejo  
**Director:** Oley Sassone  
**Resumes:** jenibluel@yahoo.com **Phone:** 985.649.6161  
**Status:** Early 2011  
**Location:** Louisiana

**TREME - SEASON 2**
TV Series – HBO  
Starring Wendell Pierce, Melissa Leo, Khandi Alexander, Steve Zahn  
**Resumes:** blowndeadlineprod@gmail.com  
**Casting:** RPM Casting (www.rpmcasting.com), tremeextras@gmail.com  
**Status:** Now shooting  
**Location:** New Orleans  
**Line Producer/UPM:** Joe Incaprera

SHREVEPORT

**KANE & LYNCH**
Feature Film – Nu Image/Millenium Films  
Starring Bruce Willis & Jamie Foxx  
**Phone:** 318.841.3599  
**Status:** Spring  
**Location:** Shreveport  
**UPM:** Ed Cathell  
Based on the popular video game of the same name.

**MEAN CUISINE**
Feature Film – Independent  
Starring Billy Crystal, Dana Carvey, Alec Mapa, Martin Short  
**Status:** Starts shooting March 28 for 2 weeks in NOLA, then moves to Shreveport  
**Location:** New Orleans & Shreveport  
**UPM:** Danelle Hand

LAFAYETTE

**DIRT ROAD TO LAFAYETTE**
Feature Film – Independent (Bullet Films)  
**Phone:** 337.706.8957  
**Fax:** 337.706.8971  
**Resumes:** jobs@bulletfilms.net  
**Location:** Lafayette
**PRODUCTION UPDATES**

**LOUISIANA**

**THE APOSTLES OF INFINITE LOVE**
Feature Film – Anonymous Content/Red Hour Films  
**Director:** Richard Ayoade  
**Status:** S  
**Location:** Louisiana  
**Line Producer:** R  
**UPM:** B  
**Production Coordinator:** J

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**THE DARK KNIGHT RISES**
Feature Film – Warner Bros / Legendary Pictures  
**Starring:** Christian Bale, Morgan Freeman, Tom Hardy  
**Director:** Christopher Nolan  
**Phone:** 818.954.3007 (Warner Bros/Legendary)  
**Status:** Slated for a May 2011 start  
**Location:** U.K., L.A. and possibly Louisiana  
This production is heavily rumored to be doing some filming in New Orleans, but there has been no official confirmation yet.

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**DOWNERS GROVE**
Feature Film – Independent  
**Starring:** Hayden Panettiere, Nikki Reed & Rebecca De Mornay  
**Status:** Early 2011  
**Location:** Louisiana

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**HICK**
Feature Film – Independent  
**Starring:** Chloe Moretz  
**Director:** Derick Martini  
**Resumes:** ctaylor@taylorlane Productions.com  
**Status:** February 2011  
**Location:** Louisiana

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**NAGASAKI DEADLINE**
Feature Film – Independent  
**Director:** Spike Lee  
**Phone:** 5  
**Fax:** 5  
**Status:** Slated to start shooting in April  
**Location:** Louisiana

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**PURE LIFE**
Feature Film – Independent  
**Starring:** Elle Fanning and Omari Hardwick  
**Director:** Van Fischer  
**Status:** April 30  
**Location:** Louisiana

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**PIRANHA 3DD**
Feature Film - Dimension Films  
**Director:** John Gulager  
**Phone:** 323.549.4350  
**Status:** Now slated for March 2011  
**Location:** Louisiana  
**Line Producer:** Louis Friedman  
Sequel to last summer’s remake of the killer fish-focused classic.

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**TRUE LOVE WAITS**
Feature Film – Independent  
**Director:** Patrick Phillips  
**Resumes:** enquiries@antaresglobal.com  
**Location:** Canada or Louisiana  
**Status:** January 26

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**RUMORED**

**NOTHING TO FEAR**
**ARABIAN NIGHTS**
**I-59 SOUTH**
**BAD LUCK (2011 DAVID R. ELLIS PROJECT)**
**SEVEN BELOW ZERO**
**THE BIG VALLEY**
**UNTIL PROVEN INNOCENT (DUKE LACROSS RAPE INCIDENT PROJECT)**

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If you are in the film industry and have information or corrections for Production Updates, we welcome your emails at: info@scenelouisiana.com