

# The Sensation of Sight/Credits

**FINN:** DAVID STRATHAIRN  
**DRIFTER:** IAN SOMERHALDER  
**DYLAN:** DANIEL GILLIES  
**ALICE:** JANE ADAMS  
**DEANNA:** ANN CUSACK  
**DAISY:** ELISABETH WATERSTON  
**TRIPP:** JOE MAZZELLO  
**TUCKER:** SCOTT WILSON

**Director:** AARON J. WIEDERSPAHN  
**EXECUTIVE PRODUCER:** BUZZ McLAUGHLIN  
**PRODUCERS:** DARREN MOORMAN, BUZZ McLAUGHLIN, AARON J. WIEDERSPAHN,  
DAVID STRATHAIRN, MADELINE RYAN, MARK CONSTANCE  
**DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY:** CHRISTOPHE LANZENBERG  
**PRODUCTION DESIGN:** SHAWN CARROLL  
**COSTUME DESIGN:** DAPHNE JAVITCH  
**EDITOR:** MARIO ONTAL  
**CASTING DIRECTOR:** MICHELE ORTLIP  
**MUSIC WRITTEN & PERFORMED BY:** RUPERT A. THOMPSON  
**FORMAT:** 35 MM & DIGITAL



When life becomes  
a second language...

## THE SENSATION OF SIGHT

A FILM BY AARON J. WIEDERSPAHN

# The Sensation of Sight/synopsis

## Log Line

Upon witnessing a tragedy for which he counts himself responsible, an introspective English teacher sets out selling encyclopedias hoping to find an answer to why.

## Long synopsis

In an awe-inspiring fusion of dream/reality, this offbeat drama about man's search for meaning amidst the ache of despair chronicles Finn (David Strathairn), a middle-aged English teacher, as he enters a midlife crisis impelled by a recent tragedy.

Finn sets afoot selling encyclopedias to the town locals, however, his anxieties begin to consume him as he finds himself pursued by an unrelenting ghost. Circling through sleepless nights and desperate days, The Sensation of Sight intertwines lives of loneliness and disconnection, fatefully leading Finn toward an unexpected and sublime awakening.

## Short synopsis

A poetic exploration wherein an introspective English teacher, upon witnessing a recent tragedy for which he counts himself responsible, abandons his normal life's routine and begins selling encyclopedias to the town locals, in hope of finding an answer to why and the redemption he needs.

# The Sensation of Sight/production notes

When life becomes a second language...

*The Sensation of Sight*, written and directed by Aaron J. Wiederspahn, was filmed over eighteen days in October/November 2005. The entire filming took place on location in Peterborough, New Hampshire, with key cast and crew coming from Los Angeles and New York. The supporting crew was brought in from the local New Hampshire and Boston, Massachusetts areas.

After forming a limited liability company in the summer/fall of 2004, either/or films co-founders Buzz McLaughlin and Aaron J. Wiederspahn set out to raise the necessary monies for the production of their first feature film. In hope of having creative freedom with their project, they sought the monies door-to-door, so to speak, without the aid of any third party involvement—often a far more difficult road. Needless to say, being complete newbies in the film industry—Buzz having spent the wealth of his career as a playwright, professor of playwriting, and producing artistic director of a professional theatre in New Jersey; Aaron having spent the majority of his days in the independent music world based out of Orlando, Florida—they soon discovered themselves on board the ride of their lives and that, indeed, the learning curve in the road was sharp. However, embracing tenacity like a brother and with strong support from the New Hampshire film office, they pressed onward with several meetings with a great many individuals and the budget was at last secured entirely from sources of private equity.

Why the reason for such tenacity? Why the choosing of the difficult road? Why do many independent filmmakers endure this struggle? When actor David Strathairn signed on to do the film, saying of the story, “I loved it immediately ... it’s about the big and small banana peels we all slip on,” Buzz and Aaron knew that there must be others who would understand why one embraces such a journey. It comes down to the passion for the story. *The Sensation of Sight* is a discovery of hope amidst the wounded hearts of human beings coping with grief and despair. And in a world overwrought with cynicism, stories imbued with hope are simply in need of being told. It seems there is a lack of creation of cinema given over to the quiet places of one's heart. Yet these are the stories wanting to be told, where there is room for the audience to stand before a work of art in contemplation of how we should live and why—that which truly brings us together.

Buzz and Aaron’s journey began with high aspirations. They ask, “Haven’t common human threads always been birth, life, and death, and how we manage to traverse through the grind of it all?” And then go on to say, “We must create cinema where there is room for us to explore the beauty that is man, and the world in which he lives. It's who and where we are, after all.” So, to tell stories in original ways, with room for the audience to breathe, not infringing upon another's moral imagination, respecting the journey of human life, reminding us of who we are as a people, who we have been, and who we can become, these are the stories, the cinema that Buzz and Aaron long to create. And their reason for choosing the difficult road is clear to them, “When life becomes a second language, somebody has to search for the hope.

# The Sensation of Sight/director's statement

AARON WIEDERSPAHN:

It all began with a dream: *a man selling encyclopedias*. Three times, in fact, the dream occurred, always leaving me with the same questions. Who was this man? Why was he selling encyclopedias? Why did he appear desperate, yet curiously not without hope? Why? Why?

Feeling left with no alternative, as a veritable “divine madness” takes hold, I set out in pursuit of the answers to these questions, but ultimately, as I have now realized, ultimately set out in effort to discover, to delve into the fabric of an intricate human tapestry. This man selling encyclopedias, for example, I soon learned was named Finn. Finn, through means seemingly absurd, was in search of an answer to a tragedy. While searching for an answer he soon encountered various other lives, lives also in search of answers to their own tragedies of sorts. He encountered characters such as Tripp and Drifter, Dylan and Alice and Ruthie, Tucker and Daisy, his wife Deanna, and Josh, his son, a whispered voice asking him to, “Wake up. Please, wake up.” Yes, these lives, these people were most definitely, as my days post-dream made obvious, colored so much like you and me: *a human tapestry*. These were human beings upon the stage of life, looking for hope, looking for redemption, looking for a break, looking for life, living their lives, always trying, always searching for light. And so I knew without reservation that I must make this film, explore their story, our story, and that I, like them, must too search for light, light which is certainly responsible for *The Sensation of Sight*.

For me, my vision is clear, at least as clear as may be for one who but sees through a glass dimly: *I exist to create cinema that provokes the audience to engage with the providential mystery of grace. I exist to create cinema that cultivates the discovery of truth. I exist to create cinema that celebrates the wonder of mystery. I exist to create cinema that dives into the mire of man surfacing with a pearl of hope.*”

# The Sensation of Sight/cast biographies

**DAVID STRATHAIRN** — One of America's most respected stage and screen actors, David plays the central role in *The Sensation of Sight*, and also serves as one of the film's producers. He has appeared in more than 70 films to date, including most recently *The Bourne Ultimatum* with Matt Damon and Julia Stiles, *The Spiderwick Chronicles* with Nick Nolte and Mary-Louise Parker, *Fracture* with Sir Anthony Hopkins and Ryan Gosling, Chinese Director Kar Wai Wong's *My Blueberry Nights* with Jude Law, Rachel Weisz and Natalie Portman, and *We Are Marshall* with Matthew McConaughey and Matthew Fox. He has also appeared in *Sneakers* with Robert Redford, *The River Wild* with Meryl Streep and Kevin Bacon, *L.A. Confidential* with Russell Crowe, *The Firm* with Tom Cruise, *Lost in Yonkers* with Richard Dreyfuss, *A Map of the World* with Sigourney Weaver and Julianne Moore, as well as a wide and diverse mix of characters in several of maverick filmmaker John Sayles' films. On September 10th, 2005 David was awarded the Coppa Volpi for Best Actor at the 62nd Venice Film Festival for his outstanding performance in George Clooney's *Good Night, and Good Luck*. David's performance went on to earn him an Academy Award nomination for best actor, as well as nominations from the Golden Globes, the Independent Spirit Awards, the Broadcast Film Critics Association, and the Screen Actors Guild.

**IAN SOMERHALDER** — A strikingly handsome player who has proven his versatility with forays into both acting and modeling, Ian spent many years in the fashion world before making the transition to stage and screen. Some of his most noted modeling work was with top agents Click, Next, Ford NY, and Arlene Wilson, to name a few, and he also appeared in print ad campaigns for the likes of *Guess*, *Dolce Gabana*, *American Eagle Outfitters*, *Mossimo*, and *Esprit*, as well as many others. This rising young star scored a major industry coup portraying the popular character Boone on the hit television series *Lost*, and played the lead role in the television production of *Marco Polo*. Having made his mark as a serious actor to be on the look out for, his film credits of note include playing the gay socialite Paul in the sex and drugs filled dark comedy *The Rules of Attraction* with James Van Der Beek, *Life as a House* with Kevin Kline, and Hayden Christensen, *Changing Hearts* with Faye Dunaway and Lauren Holly, and stars opposite Kristen Bell (TV's *Veronica Mars*) in the Weinstein Company's horror/thriller *Pulse*.

**DANIEL GILLIES** — Originally hailing from New Zealand, Daniel made his way into the public's consciousness with the popular New Zealand television drama series *Street Legal*. Soon after, this prolific actor of the stage and screen made his way to the states. He played the lead role in the Roland Joffe film *Captivity* co-starring Elisha Cuthbert, had a featured role in *Spiderman 2* as Kirsten Dunst's love interest, astronaut John Jameson, and a leading role in Gurinder Chadha's Bollywood hit *Bride and Prejudice*. Daniel can also be seen tackling the rugged frontiers of the American West in Stephen Spielberg's television mini-series, *Into the West*.

**JANE ADAMS** — Winner of a Tony Award for Best Actress for her role on Broadway in *An Inspector Calls*, Jane has well established herself as a respected player on the stage and screen. Some of her most noted work in the independent film world has come through her roles in Todd Field's acclaimed drama *Little Children* with Kate Winslet, Patrick Wilson, and Jennifer Connelly, *The Brave One* with Jodie Foster and Terrence Howard, Todd Solondz's daring festival hit *Happiness*, Sundance 2000 special jury winner *Songcatcher* with Janet McTeer and Aidan Quinn, and *The Anniversary Party* with Alan Cumming, Jennifer Jason Leigh, John C. Reilly, Kevin Kline, and Phoebe Cates. Other film credits include *Wonder Boys* with Michael Douglas, *Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind* with Jim Carrey and Kate Winslet, *Orange County* with Jack Black, *Lemony Snicket's A Series of Unfortunate Events* with Jim Carrey, and *Last Holiday* with Queen Latifah.

# The Sensation of Sight/cast biographies

**ANN CUSACK** — Born into an entertainment family, daughter of actor Dick, and sister to popular actors John and Joan Cusack, Ann has lived a wealth of experience on the stage, the big and the small screens, as well as singing the blues with various bands. Some of Ann's credits include *Accepted* with Justin Long, *Stigmata* with Patricia Arquette, *Midnight in the Garden of Good and Evil* with Kevin Spacey, *America's Sweethearts* with Julia Roberts and John Cusack, *Grosse Pointe Blank* with John Cusack and Minnie Driver, *Multiplicity* with Michael Keaton and Andie MacDowell, and *The Birdcage* with Robin Williams, Gene Hackman, and Nathan Lane.

**JOE MAZZELLO** — A recent grad of the University of Southern California's School of Film and Television, Joe has already managed to have a reputable career as an actor throughout his childhood years. He has established himself with such work as in Stephen Spielberg's *Jurassic Park* and *The Lost World: Jurassic Park*. His other significant credits include Richard Donner's *Radio Flyer* with Elijah Wood and John Heard, *The River Wild* with David Strathairn, Meryl Streep, and Kevin Bacon, *Shadowlands* with Sir Anthony Hopkins and Debra Winger, and *Simon Birch* with Ashley Judd. On television Joe can be seen in the much anticipated HBO miniseries *The Pacific*, produced by Stephen Spielberg. His directorial work includes a short film titled *Matters of Life and Death*, featuring David Strathairn, who played his father in both *The River Wild* and *Simon Birch*.

**ELISABETH WATERSTON** — Daughter of actor Sam Waterston, Yale University graduate, and talented new coming actress, Elisabeth is fast making a name for herself in the pages of the New York City theatre world. As well as a variety of guest starring appearances on popular American television shows *Law and Order*, *The Practice*, and *The District*, she can be seen in Paramount Picture's *The Prince and Me* with Julia Stiles and *The Girl in the Park* with Sigourney Weaver.

**SCOTT WILSON** — A veteran film actor of more than 40 years, Scott has earned wide acclaim as a character actor of the highest order, having most recently been honored by Roger Ebert on Ebert's Floating Film Festival. He fast gained notoriety when he emerged in the Hollywood scene in 1967 with a lead role in Richard Brook's critically acclaimed *In Cold Blood*. Scott has gone on to appear in *In the Heat of the Night* with Sidney Portier, *The Great Gatsby* with Robert Redford, *The Ninth Configuration*, multi-academy award nominated *The Right Stuff*, and Polish cinema master Krzysztof Zanussi's *Year of the Quiet Sun*. More recent films include *Dead Man Walking* with Sean Penn and Susan Sarandon, *Pearl Harbor* with Ben Affleck, *The Last Samurai* with Tom Cruise, *Monster* with Charlize Theron, Sundance festival hit *Junebug* with academy award nominated best supporting actress Amy Adams, and *The Heartbreak Kid* with Ben Stiller.

# The Sensation of Sight/crew biographies

**AARON WIEDERSPAHN** (Writer/ Director/ Producer) -- Raised in Wyoming, Aaron grew up knowing only of the wind and its companions. Although at a very early age he developed a strong proclivity for verse and could be sighted upon the open plains reciting poetry to a collective of sheep, his knowledge of the wind was all he would confirm. Upon graduating high school, he left his formative pastures in pursuit of a life on the stage, enduring the endless prod of cattle calls. But, wanting to leave the days of Wyoming behind, he soon thereafter left the stage. While struggling to find his place of purpose, he aimlessly began to sing songs in dilapidated bars, drink dollar beers, and slumber on many a person's sofa, quietly slinking into despair. It was at this time, sofa surfing in Orlando, Florida, that he had a strange and mysterious dream, a life changing event. A wise looking man of more than a thousand years, riding upon a great white buffalo, summoned him, a video cassette in his hand, saying, "Go! You, Aaron of the sheep people, take this video and watch, study and prepare, show yourself approved, make buoyant your heart and mind, create art for the everyman, beautiful and wondrous, remembering always to exercise vigilance. And, of course, don't forget to thank me should you ever win any awards." With that being that, Aaron swiftly ran to the nearest VCR, placed Andrei Rublev inside; and quietly began to watch, to gaze, to see, the lids of his eyes gently waking. Finally, he had found a life worthy of pursuit. So, he packed his bags and moved to New Hampshire. *The Sensation of Sight* is Aaron's first feature film.

**BUZZ MCLAUGHLIN** (Executive Producer/ Producer) -- Co-founder of either/or films, Buzz has spent the last four decades in the arts and entertainment industry. A playwright and screenwriter, he has also written for television and is the author of the best-selling book *The Playwright's Process*. The recipient of numerous playwriting awards, including the National Play Award, he is founder and former Artistic Director of Playwrights Theatre of New Jersey, holds an MA and PhD in theatre and dramatic literature, and has been a professor and playwright-in-residence at Drew University.

**DARREN MOORMAN** (Producer) -- Mentored by the acclaimed producer Howard Kazanjian (*Raiders of the Lost Ark, Star Wars, Return of the Jedi*), Darren has worked for industry leaders such as MGM, National Geographic, Ogilvy and Mather, Shoreline Entertainment, and DIRECTV. The first feature he produced, *All Over Again* starring Craig T. Nelson and Robert Loggia, won best feature at the Santa Clarita International Film Festival in 2001. He has also produced Marilyn Hotchkiss *Ballroom Dancing and Charm School*, an official selection of the 2005 Sundance Film Festival, and *The Fifth Patient*, which is currently in post-production. He recently line produced a comedy show for Hunt Lowry and Ralph Winter, and is currently in development on several film projects.

**MADELINE RYAN** (Producer) -- Born in New Zealand, and educated both there and in the United Kingdom, Madeline moved to Los Angeles 15 years ago to start her career in Hollywood. She was a successful talent agent at one of the top agencies for almost a decade before starting her own management company, Ryan Entertainment. She continues to manage a prestigious list of actors, writers, and directors, including David Strathairn. Her next producing project is titled *Hereafter*, written and directed by Michael Patwin, produced by Bender Spink, and starring David Strathairn.

**MARK CONSTANCE** (Producer) -- A member of the Director's Guild of America since 1993, Mark is a partner in the production company a713production. He has worked as an Assistant Director on such films as *Red-Eye, Terminator 3, Bad Boys II, Charlie's Angels, Being John Malkovich*, and *The Last Castle* (to name a few), and has produced and directed music videos for the bands Leaving Eden and The Charms. He has signed with Gravity, a Boston-based production company, as one of their commercial and music video directors, and is currently in discussion with major record labels in Los Angeles and Nashville about bringing his musical visions to life. Next up on his producing slate is *Losing Jerry*, a film that has Mark partnered with executive producer Tracey Becker (*Finding Neverland*). *Losing Jerry* is in currently in preproduction; principal photography will commence in May of 2007.



# The Sensation of Sight/quotes

“The Sensation of Sight has visual pizzazz to spare.” – The New York Times

“3 1/2 Stars. Exemplary American filmmaking... superb performances. Strathairn is both charming and empathetic; he is as much a delight to watch as Bill Murray in *Lost in Translation* or *Broken Flowers*.”  
- boxoffice.com

“An instant American Classic... achingly lyrical... beautifully written and delicately shot...”  
--Nashen Moodley, Director, Durban International Film Festival, South Africa

“Astonishing... First-time writer/director Aaron J. Wiederspahn is surely a new hope in American independent cinema. We will concentrate our hope on him as we did some years ago on Tarantino.”  
--Leon Cakoff, Artistic Director, Sao Paulo International Film Festival

“A very original film... Sensitive script... Excellent cast... Exudes an elegance that makes us think Aaron J. Wiederspahn will become a great director.”  
--Mikel Olacirequi, Artistic Director, San Sebastian International Film Festival

“Deeply impressive... a major discovery.”  
--Edvina Puksta, Artistic Director, Vilnius International Film Festival

“Compelling, engrossing, beautifully shot. Strathairn is marvelous.”  
--Ron Henderson, Artistic Director, Denver Film Festival

“Absolutely absorbing.” --Michael Rabehl, Programming Director, Cinequest Film Festival

“Wiederspahn’s episodic character study might have been inspired by a lost short story by John Cheever... Several standouts in the effective ensemble...” [Film Pick of the Week] --Mark Griffin, The Boston Globe

“Savory American indie fare... impressive... ambitiously ruminative.” --Lisa Kennedy, The Denver Post

“The movie is hauntingly real in its portrayal of the human condition in all its depressed yet redeemable glory. David Strathairn pulls off another Oscar-worthy performance and the film’s ensemble stays with you long after the closing credits... this film is truly an eye-opener.”  
--Yaniv Rokah, MovingPicturesMagazine.com

“Graceful, intelligent filmmaking... Strathairn is remarkable.”  
--Warren Etheredge, The Warren Report, Seattle

“The Sensation of Sight is brutally hypnotic.” --Emmas Gluck, film critic, Diario Vasco (Spain)

“Completely different from what we see in current American movies... A modern Jim Jarmusch.”  
--Carlos Fernandes, film critic, CINEol (Spain)

“Delightfully smart independent fare... carried thoughtfully forward with intellect, poetry, and pithy insight... You can walk away touched by feelings, motivated toward compassion, engaged to face fears... a tall order, but well within range of this film... The Sensation of Sight carries tremendous audience appeal.”  
--W. Fred Crow, film critic, Cineblog, San Jose

# The Sensation of Sight/quotes

“The Sensation of Sight is a beautifully made film. The acting is a tour de force for everyone involved. Characters are totally believable and disturbingly familiar.” -Cynthia Nicolosi, film critic, Parable Magazine

“If the Independent Spirit Awards truly stood for what they pretend to stand for they would have given a whole bunch of awards to the greatest independent picture of the year THE SENSATION OF SIGHT. A thing of rare beauty, the film is stylistically evocative of Russian filmmaker Andrei Tarkovsky. It has the look of a foreign film, but is 100 percent American and 100 percent independent.”

-Edward X. Young, hollywoodgoldcontest.com

“It’s about very real human conditions, presented patiently, gently, smilingly, with no judgment. It’s affirmative and hopeful. What could be better? --David Strathairn, Actor

“The Sensation of Sight is an Independent film with a huge heart, a real gem in cinema rarely found today... Go see it; it is a fantastic piece of film-making...Do not miss this film.”

- [www.angelfire.com/pq/moviereviews](http://www.angelfire.com/pq/moviereviews)

“Terrific performances and really good writing highlight this impressive indie that found excellent reviews. Strathairn and Sommerhalder bring some stardom and the simple but effective box-art will catch some attention.” – Videoretailer.com

“A very beautiful film...informed by a transcendent sensibility.” --Aaron B. Smith, film critic, Spout.com

“Boasting a strong cast and solid production values, The Sensation of Sight is a hypnotizing tale... proves to be emotionally satisfying and provocative at the same time... engaging from start to finish. The film's hypnotic atmosphere, strong performances, beautiful cinematography and striking music blend together quite well.” - DVDtalk

“The Sensation of Sight is an enthusiastically recommended addition to personal and community library DVD collections.” – The Midwest Book Review

“This poignant, beautifully shot film is sure to touch viewers’ hearts.” – ALA Booklist

# The Sensation of Sight/film festivals

**DURBAN INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL (SOUTH AFRICA)**

**WINNER- BEST CINEMATOGRAPHY**

**NEW HAMPSHIRE FILM FESTIVAL**

**WINNER – BEST FEATURE FILM**

SAN SEBASTIAN INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL

SAO PAULO INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL

DENVER FILM FESTIVAL

DISTINGUISHING FEATURES PROGRAM OF THE WARREN REPORT

CINEQUEST SAN JOSE FILM FESTIVAL

VILNIUS INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL “KINO PAVASARIS” (LITHUANIA)

INDEPENDENT FILM FESTIVAL OF BOSTON

SHANGHAI INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL (CHINA)

STONY BROOK FILM FESTIVAL

LONESTAR INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL

SANTA FE FILM FESTIVAL

TALLIN BLACK NIGHTS FILM FESTIVAL (ESTORIA)

INTERNATIONAL PHILOSOPHICAL FILM FESTIVAL (KRAKOW, POLAND)

ASHLAND INDEPENDENT FILM FESTIVAL

MENDOCINO FILM FESTIVAL

# The Sensation of Sight/the warren report interview

Ease equals Elegance. Great actors are often undervalued, for their performances appear deceptively simple. Nowadays, **Spencer Tracy** rarely receives the accolades his more iconic contemporaries do, though he may be more richly deserving of critical praise. Tracy's brilliance was his on-screen grace; a "naturalness" that could be misread as a lack of technique, due to and despite the fact his portrayals always registered as real. **David Strathairn** is our generation's Tracy, an actor whose seemingly effortless work reminds us of our own flawed selves, for worse, better and best.

For *GOOD NIGHT, AND GOOD LUCK*, Mr. Strathairn, finally, garnered an Academy Award® nomination, though prior roles were equally worthy. His shocking turn in *BLUE CAR*, sterling support in *IN THE GLOAMING* and his varied appearances in John Sayles' films (*EIGHT MEN OUT*, *LIMBO*, *PASSION FISH*, etc) are all indelible, the impression they leave that of an understated, under-rated genius passing as the common man.

Rather than barter his Oscar® for questionable, commercial castings, Mr. Strathairn has remained loyal to his independent roots. His post-Murrow work includes the prize-winning short, *THE SHOVEL*; your-own-adventure-choosing computer tale, *THE ONYX PROJECT* and **Aaron J. Wiederspahn's** lovely, literate debut feature, *THE SENSATION OF SIGHT*. *SIGHT* is a delight, a tribute to Film's remarkable and oft-neglected ability to convey character with wit, warmth and wisdom. *SIGHT* is as engaging and enraging as a Russian novel and as cinematically compelling as the distinctly American artistry of **David Lynch**... by way **Kenneth Lonergan**. Obviously, Mr. Strathairn shares a similar assessment of the movie as it marks the first for which he has served as producer as well as star.

In this interview with **Warren Etheredge of The Warren Report**, living legend David Strathairn poetically proffers why Alan Arkin ought love his life, why actors ought love their work and why audiences ought love *THE SENSATION OF SIGHT*.

*WARREN: Love at first SIGHT? What drew you to this acting SENSATION?*

DAVID: Yes, this script was most definitely one of those that one 'picks up and puts in your pocket, takes home, runs it under the faucet, and puts on the window sill in the sun and watch it catch the light. Any light. Because it had so many facets to catch the light: whimsy, compassion and forgiveness for all the characters, a wonderful balance of all the story lines, both a poetical lilt and a very grounded insight, and most of all a gentleness and delight. And then I met Aaron Wiederspahn, and re-met **Buzz McLaughlin** (we'd worked together in the past) and recognized a kindred spirit whose ideas about "film" dovetailed a lot with mine. And, of course, the character of Finn. **Alan Arkin** has long been a benchmark for me, high water mark really, and in my mind was the only person I thought should play this part, and when I offered to help get the script to people on Aaron's "first-choices" list, which is really the only peg I can hang my 'producer' credit upon, we contacted him. But he passed on it and it fell to me. My gift.

*WARREN: But what I really want to do is... produce? Many actors make the jump to helming a feature, but instead you've racked up your first producing credit on THE SENSATION OF SIGHT. What compelled you to step so far behind the scenes on this project?*

DAVID: A word about producing. I guess since I was so passionate about this film, and Aaron was so receptive, we just fell into the process of finding the best fit for each character as the limited budget could support. Being a producer was never discussed. That was the generosity of Buzz and Aaron, who offered such a credit long after we had been talking about how to put together Aaron's dream cast. It just seemed easier for me to slipstream some scripts through the often times burning hoops of agencies and managers, since Buzz and Aaron were "new on the street" so to speak.



# The Sensation of Sight/the warren report interview

*WARREN: You've worked with some of the greatest directors and some of the least experienced. Do you ever fear teaming with first-timers or tangling with old pros? Do you have a preference for how directors handle you on set? How do you evaluate Aaron J. Wiederspahn as an up-and-coming cinematic storyteller?*

DAVID: "Newness / schmoones" I say. First-timers? Old pros? Often the only thing that distinguishes one from the other is one has spent more time in the hardware store than the other and simply knows where the best tool for the task is located. Accessibility to the nuts and bolts. But time spent around the tricks and tools doesn't necessarily preclude ability to use them. The learning curve is a slippery thing. That's why in the "making of" anything collaborative, the "team" is all. Well, the vision is foremost, really, and particularly the ability to articulate one's vision crucial. Aaron could do that, and that gave each and every collaborator confidence to do their thing. So, to answer your question, no I never fear teaming with "first-timers." Nor, "tangling with old pros". So far I've learned something invaluable each time whether teaming and/or tangling.

*WARREN: If a fledgling filmmaker could serve an apprenticeship with any auteur, alive or "re-mastered," who would you recommend and why?*

DAVID: Apprenticeships? I can only say follow those who have "spoken" to you. If you are moved, inspired, surprised by, or sense a kindred vision, or even vehemently disagree with, a filmmaker(s), dog their heels however you can. Their footprint is there for the seeing.

*WARREN: It's the shoes... it's got to be the shoes. Well, at least, so suggest **Michael Jordan** and **Robert DeNiro**. Do your portrayals start from the footwear up? Does costuming equal grounding? Seems many of your performances feature characters with very particular gaits. Am I on to something? (Or, is this as absurd a query as the audience member who suggested you wore varying prosthetic noses in GOOD NIGHT AND GOOD LUCK?)*

DAVID: Speaking of shoes, yeah, anything that can "walk you a mile in the shoes" of your character is precious. I pretty much scatter my preparation across a wide range. Anything from the food they eat to the books they read. From where they lived to the weather they lived with. What they said and what was said about them, and who said it. And if I'm fortunate, fielding ideas from fellow actors, the director, the designers, because, being in it together, they all have a say in who this person might be.

*WARREN: Actors often proclaim the joy of their job is in preparation and rehearsal, not simply in showtime or screen time. Do you find greater pleasure in the process or the end product?*

DAVID: All in all, it's a great privilege to be paid to roam around in someone else's world, imagined or otherwise and have people receive your efforts, "On" stage, or "In" film. And in many ways *SENSATION OF SIGHT* felt like both. The ensemble work in this film is a testament of the magic that can happen when a group of brave and trusting people all convene for the same reason. In this case, Aaron's vision. It's hard to adequately describe this film, to put it into a simple sound-bite that could possibly capture everything about the realization of this story. I love that it is about very real human conditions, presented patiently, gently, with no judgment, smilingly. It's affirmative and hopeful. What could be better? And it introduces several actors, and a director, to be watched, who herein prove to be deft and beautiful messengers.

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# monterey media/about the company

## monterey media inc., a uniquely independent studio

monterey media inc., incorporated in 1979, it is a privately owned entertainment industry company specializing in the creation, acquisition, distribution and sale of motion pictures and other programming. monterey media is actively engaged in all areas of domestic media, including theatrical distribution to theatres, film festivals, and other distinctive venues, and is presently increasing its release slate with a continued measured growth strategy.

The Company creates unique and distinctive release strategies tailored to each project. By way of example, in 2005, the Company established a joint venture for the creation of a special theatrical event in conjunction with AMC Theatres to launch the motion picture *Indigo: A one day, 603 North America* venue showing grossed over \$1,190,000 box office. Early theatrical releases included the enchanting *The Blue Butterfly* starring Academy Award® Winner William Hurt; *Nobelity*, from Award-winning writer/director Turk Pipkin (which Esquire Magazine called “remarkable”), with a Gala Premiere benefiting Amnesty Int’l. on Earth Day; and the lauded tri-coastal release of, *PEEL: The Peru Project* (heralded as “reminiscent of Bruce Brown’s *Endless Summer*”).

Award-winning feature films included in the theatrical 2007 (and DVD) release slate were the poignant and compelling *Steel Toes* starring Academy Award® nominated David Strathairn, the family film *Eye of the Dolphin*, the true crime story of *Karla*, based upon the infamous and notorious “Ken and Barbie killer” murders; and the critically acclaimed *10 Questions for the Dalai Lama* premiering with Landmark Theatres in San Francisco, Houston, Chicago and Berkeley.

2008 releases will begin with *The Secrets* from Israel’s premiere director Avi Nesher; *The Cry* a suspenseful tale which has terrified Latinos for centuries; a family treat in *When I Find the Ocean* and the spiritual but dark *Ripple Effect* starring Forest Whitaker and Minnie Driver.

monterey is known for its creatively coordinated marketing strategies incorporating promotional alliances with such strategic partners as Wal-Mart, Fisher Price, Pepsi Cola, American Express, Amnesty International USA, Make-A-Wish Foundation® of America, Children’s Cancer Research Fund, KIDS FIRST!®, Days Inns, the International Motorcycle Shows, Healthy World Healthy Child, and Wahoo’s Fish Taco Restaurants.

## monterey video

The monterey video division is the 2nd oldest independent video manufacturer and distributor in the United States, acquiring the exclusive rights for all video markets to completed motion pictures or other programming. monterey is well known for its broad marketing to all key retail, mail order and internet sites, schools and libraries, and specialty markets.

The versatile monterey video library encompasses unique feature films and documentaries as well as Multi-Platinum RIAA and ITA Award-winning Grateful Dead concerts; prestigious films such as *The Exonerated* starring Susan Sarandon, Brian Dennehy, Danny Glover and Aidan Quinn; celebrated sports programming including the Bruce Brown Films franchise of motorcycle films (*On Any Sunday*) and surf films (*The Endless Summer II*); the most prestigious educational yet entertaining library of films adapted from literature’s renowned authors combined with acclaimed performances from many of Hollywood’s greatest actors; and note-worthy children’s programming. In addition, monterey has the honor of being the first video market licensee of the American Film Institute.

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