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SOME VELVET MORNING

Written and Directed by Neil LaBute

Select theatrical release begins December 13, 2013

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SYNOPSIS

Fred (Stanley Tucci) arrives at the doorstep of his beautiful young mistress Velvet (Alice Eve) after four years apart, claiming to have finally left his wife. But when she rejects his attempts to rekindle their romance, his persistence evolves into obsession — and a dark history between the former lovers comes into focus. A return to form for writer/director Neil LaBute (*In the Company of Men*, *Your Friends and Neighbors*), *Some Velvet Morning* is an astutely written portrait of a very modern romance.

AN INTERVIEW WITH NEIL LABUTE

How does it make you feel when people say that *Some Velvet Morning* is a return to form for you?

Well, good because I think they're right, in terms of film. If I had done this as a play on the stage, it would probably feel like a piece of the things I've been doing over the last decade or so. I think in terms of film, I went from doing a couple of films that were my own scripts to directing other people's scripts--making a couple things, adapting some things and so on. As a director, I had strayed away from things that I had written myself for the screen, so in those terms this project does feel like a return to things that I'd done earlier in my career. I think that's actually pretty accurate.

There's underlying sense of menace in many of Stanley Tucci's performances, which you tapped into in *Some Velvet Morning*. Were you conscious of this hidden danger when you cast him in this role?

I knew that was there if you wanted it. I've seen him do a lot of work--a lot of really good work--and he could be all the things that the character of Fred needed to be. I knew that he could be charming, he could be funny, he could be sad, he could be sexy, and a little scary. You need all those other things, but you do need to have someone who frightens you a little bit. Stanley was the kind of guy that I wanted. There are certain guys who would not be able to necessarily carry that sense with them. That was something that we talked about. In a piece like this, there is that question of why isn't she just going out the door? Why does she stay? What part of the relationship keeps her there?

To have someone who was a little unnerving was really important to the film. Relatively early on, Fred grabs something and smashes it because we needed to imply his danger, to physicalize it, to show what he was capable of. If you show somebody willing to do that, you create an air of menace, and I think it was really important to up the ante. He's marking that territory by saying I'm willing to go as far as I need to keep you here, to get what I want.

How did Alice Eve come into the project and how did you know she was your Velvet?

It's always lucky when you get someone who turns out to be great, especially if you've worked with them before but in a different context. I had worked with Alice before, but only on stage in New York. In fact, I actually worked with her dad years ago. So I knew her acting ability. When we started talking about making the film, she got in touch, read the script and felt very passionate about it. There was no need to have her audition. We just sat and talked, and she told me her take on the character and the dynamic between these people. I was simply won over by the intelligence of what she was talking about, and of course, I also knew what she could do on stage. I think you're right, in terms of people having not tapped into her full potential as an actress. Career-wise, people seem to be more focused on her as being a star than being an actor.

What was the rehearsal process like?

We sat around a table and really dug into the script and put it to task. It was a very active and involving process, but I like that kind of thing. We were really conscious of how do we keep this thing moving. Our first two days, we probably cut about 24 pages from my original script. It was initially a much longer piece.

Finally, we got into the brownstone, which was the best and safest place for them to act out these varying scenes of emotional and psychical action. It was kind of like a bit of a puzzle. We knew where it started and ended, but finding our way through the rest of the piece was a challenge. The best thing to do is to have a plan but be open if somebody else has a better idea or something changes. Then you have to adapt.

Can you talk about the importance of blocking when you're shooting in one location?

It's a test to try and make the setting compelling. You hope that the characters and what they're saying will sustain interest. You always want the viewers to feel as if they don't need the camera to go anywhere because what is happening is interesting enough. I think it helped even to have the three floors of the brownstone and the small outdoor patio to play with things. That broke things up a little bit, but we definitely felt the need to try to motivate interest in everything that was happening.

The shooting period of *Some Velvet Morning* was only 8 days. With a film like this, is a shorter production period an asset?

Probably not. I mean, it certainly keeps things lively. It keeps you on your toes, which means you push yourself to do good work. It would always be nice to have longer to rehearse, but a lot of this is based on economics, like with all movies. We knew it was physically possible to do it that way and so that's how we set about and did it. If it were up to me, I would always take another day of rehearsal or another day of shooting. To do 8 or 9 or 10 pages of dialogue a day is really a lot. It's asking an actor to do a lot of work. However, Stanley and Alice were really into the challenge and, I felt, performed exceptionally well.

The part that makes it interesting and that also makes it exceptionally hard is that you're working in real time. When the characters went from one floor of the house to the next, we cheated time a little bit, but most of the movie encompasses the 90 minutes when all the interchanges take place. He comes to the door, ultimately everything happens, and he leaves. That's relatively within the time that it takes to watch the movie. So to be shooting that, and then to find a natural place to break, and then try to come back to that very emotion was challenging. Often we shot a couple of scenes each day and then would have to return to scenes that took place later that day or the next day or a week later. We would have to go back every morning and say, "okay, this is where we were, you had tears in your eyes and you looked like this so you need to look exactly like that." That was one of the trickiest parts of shooting.

Did you shoot in in sequence?

Yes, we tried to shoot in sequence as much as possible, except the title sequence. Part of the New York tax credit we received meant that we had to shoot on a stage somewhere. We actually shot the title sequence, which is a little out of focus, of Alice laying on a couch listening to music on a soundstage. That was actually the last thing we shot.

Can you talk about the overall look of the film and working with your DP? The color palette is quite striking. The backgrounds are beige and other neutral colors, so Velvet and her red dress really stand out.

The DP that I work with is a guy named Rogier Stoffers, who I've now done four movies with. Beyond the fact that he is quick and easy to work with, he has an exceptionally good eye. He's also from Holland and has a great sense of light and color. We both really liked the backdrop of the house that we looked at. I had worked with our Production Designer, Neil Patel, in the theater many times, and he was able to jump in and find all the things that helped accentuate the really controlled colors in the house. He also brought in paintings that we liked but kept that kind of very neutral cool look, which included the grey suit that Stanley wears.

We always knew that Alice with her blonde hair and red dress would kind of pop out of the frame. Rogier Stoffers is somebody that I can talk with to think of things through visually. Where I think in words, he tends to think in pictures. He's very good about finding a way to make the scene feel more immediate and about finding a new angle if needed. Rogier was responsible for making the film look more strong, vivid and more expensive than the amount of money that we actually spent.

There's a line that sticks out during an argument between Fred and Velvet: "When has love ever been fair?" How does that statement reflect the wide variety of contemporary relationships you deal with in your work?

I think that's pretty indicative of a lot of power relationships that I've put on stage and screen. I feel a lot of the times that what people are negotiating for is something that just feels relatively fair between them. There can be recklessness to love. The highs and lows that come with the emotional journey that you take with a person sometimes do not feel fair for both.

People always talk about a balance, and they hope that the other person loves them as much as they love the other person. But so often we see that there's imbalance. It's just a measure of what are my feelings towards you versus your feelings towards me on any given day. I think that's part of what he's talking about--how we go about relationships and try to please someone and take care of ourselves at the same time. I think that's certainly the case here. Those are some of the dynamics we set up in rehearsal as we talked about the characters and how their game was played. What rules determined the power dynamics? Even if ultimately he is going to win her over or take her in the direction he does in the film, it's all something she has agreed to. She is able to hold off for as long as she wants to drive him a little crazy and probably herself a little crazy too.

I think that statement probably speaks to love as a currency. The way people sometimes use their affections against another person can feel almost monetary. You know, I'm going to give you this and you give me that. Or I'm going to parcel out my feelings or I'm going to hold back saying something that I know you want to hear because I get something from that. I think that's an interesting dynamic, and a dramatic one, and that's probably why I've examined it as many times as I have.

CAST BIOS

STANLEY TUCCI (Fred)

Award winning actor Stanley Tucci has appeared in over 50 films and countless television shows. He has appeared in over a dozen plays, on and off Broadway and has been behind the camera working as a writer, director, and producer.

Tucci is well known for his role as Julia Child's husband in the 2008 blockbuster hit *Julie and Julia*. He reached his widest audience yet in box office sensation, *The Hunger Games*, playing the role of Caesar Flickerman and can be seen in its sequel – *The Hunger Games: Catching Fire* coming to theatres November 22, 2013. In June of 2014, Stanley will star alongside Mark Wahlberg in *Transformers: Age of Extinction* directed by Michael Bay.

Tucci was nominated for an Academy Award, Golden Globe Award, BAFTA Award, SAG Award and received a Broadcast Film Critics nomination for his performance in Peter Jackson's *THE LOVELY BONES*.

In 2013, Tucci appeared in the Bill Condon directed *THE FIFTH ESTATE*, a film about the relationship between WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange and his early supporter and colleague Daniel Domscheit-Berg.

In addition to his various accomplishments in film, Tucci was also nominated for an Emmy for his guest role on "ER." His appearance on "Monk," received critical praise and an Emmy Award in the category of Outstanding Guest Actor in a Comedy Series.

Furthermore Tucci won an Emmy and a Golden Globe for his role in TV movie *Winchell*. His performance as the fast-talking tattler, who exposed secrets and scandals left audiences and critics alike singing his praises. *Winchell*, directed by Paul Mazursky, provided Tucci with one of the juiciest roles of his diverse career.

Tucci was also awarded a Golden Globe for his role in HBO movie *Conspiracy*. His brilliant portrayal of Lt. Colonel Adolf Eichmann delivered a truly petrifying experience, where he often deceived others with his all but friendly smile.

Tucci additional endeavors include being a writer, director, and producer. He premiered the film *Blind Date* at the Sundance Film Festival -- directing, starring, and co-writing this Van Gogh remake. Another directorial effort was USA Films' *Joe Gould's Secret*, which starred Ian Holm as bohemian writer 'Joe Gould' and Tucci as 'Joseph Mitchell,' the famed writer for *The New Yorker*. The film, set in New York's Greenwich Village in the 1940s, tells the story of the strange meeting and long lasting friendship between Gould and Mitchell, as well as the stories Mitchell wrote about Gould and his life.

Big Night, Tucci's first effort as co-director, co-screenwriter, and actor on the same film, earned him numerous accolades, including the Waldo Salt Screenwriting Award at the 1996 Sundance Film Festival, a recognition of Excellence by the National Board of Review, an Independent Spirit Award, The Critics Prize at the 1996 Deauville Film Festival, and honors from the New York Film Critics and the Boston Society of Film Critics.

Tucci's second project, *The Imposters*, a film which he wrote, directed, co-produced, and starred, was an Official Selection at the 1998 Cannes Film Festival and was acquired by Fox Searchlight Pictures later that year. The 1930's farce starred Tucci and Oliver Platt as a pair of out-of-work actors who find themselves aboard a cruise ship passengered by Steve Buscemi, Alfred Molina, Lili Taylor and Hope Davis.

His work on television includes his appearance as a re-occurring guest star on TNT's "Bull," "Equal Justice," "Wiseguy," "The Equalizer," "thirtysomething" and "The Street." Tucci earned an Emmy nomination for his work in "Murder One."

He has appeared in many plays including Frankie & Johnny in the Claire de Lune, Execution of Hope, The Iceman Cometh, Brighton Beach Memoirs and The Misanthrope. He has also performed in a number of off-Broadway plays, at Yale Repertory Theater and SUNY Purchase, where he first studied acting.

Stanley made his directorial debut on Broadway with a revival of Ken Ludwig's *Lend Me a Tenor* starring Tony Shalhoub. The production received a Tony Award nomination for Best Revival of a Play.

Tucci's additional film credits include *Percy Jackson: Sea of Monsters*, *The Company You Keep*, *Jack the Giant Slayer*, *Captain America: The First Avenger*, *Margin Call*, *Burlesque*, *Easy A*, *The Tale of Despreaux*, *Kit Kittredge: An American Girl*, *Swing Vote*, *What Just Happened*, *The Devil Wears Prada*, *Shall We Dance*, *The Terminal*, *The Life and Death of Peter Sellers*, *Spin*, *Road to Perdition*, *America's Sweethearts*, *Sidewalks of New York*, *A Mid Summer Nights Dream*, *The Alarmist*, *Deconstructing Harry*, *The Daytrippers*, *Big Trouble*, *A Life Less Ordinary*, *Kiss of Death*, *Mrs. Parker and the Vicious Circle*, *It Could Happen to You*, *The Pelican Brief*, *Prelude to a Kiss*, *In the Soup*, *Billy Bathgate*, and *Slaves of New York*.

The Tucci Cookbook was released in October of 2012 where it reached the New York Times Best Sellers List.

Stanley serves on the Board of Directors of The Food Bank for New York City.

Tucci resides in New York.

ALICE EVE (Velvet)

Since graduating from Oxford, Alice Eve has shown her talent in film, television and theatre. She was recently seen in Columbia Pictures' *Men in Black III*, in which she plays a 'young Agent Oh.' Directed by Barry Sonnenfeld, she starred opposite Will Smith and Tommy Lee Jones, who reprised their roles in the third film in the series.

Eve was recently seen in *Cold Comes the Night* directed by Tze Chun. The film follows a struggling motel owner and her daughter as they are taken hostage by a nearly blind career criminal who uses them to be his eyes in order to retrieve a package from a crooked cop. The

film also stars Bryan Cranston and Logan Marshall-Green and was released in the UK on September 20, 2013.

Eve was most recently seen in *Star Trek into Darkness* directed by J.J. Abrams, the sequel to 2009's *Star Trek*. The film also stars Benedict Cumberbatch, Chris Pine, Zoe Saldana and Zachary Quinto and was released by Paramount Pictures on May 17, 2013.

Eve was also seen in Rogue Pictures' *The Raven*, a fictionalized account of the last days of Edgar Allen Poe's life, which the poet is in pursuit of a serial killer whose murders mirror those in his stories. Eve starred as 'Emily,' fiancée of 'Edgar Allen Poe,' played by John Cusack. The film was release by Relativity on March 9, 2012.

Eve will soon begin production on Chris Evans' feature directorial debut film, *1:30 Train*. Eve will star alongside Evans in this film about a young woman in New York City who misses the 1:30 train from New York to Boston and meets a street musician who helps her find her way back home.

She recently wrapped production on *Eye of Winter*, a crime drama about a blind career criminal who takes a struggling motel owner and her daughter hostage to help him retrieve his cash package from a corrupt cop. Directed by Tze Chun, the film will also star Bryan Cranston, Logan Marshall-Green and Ursula Parker.

In 2010, Eve was seen in the Dreamworks/Paramount romantic comedy *She's Out of My League*. The film also starred Jay Baruchel whose character finally gets to date his dream girl played by Eve but allows his fears and insecurities to threaten the relationship. Eve also appeared in Warner Bros. Pictures' summer box office hit *Sex and the City 2*.

In 2008, Eve turned heads on Broadway and in London's West End in the critically acclaimed play *Rock N Roll*. Written by Tom Stoppard and directed by Trevor Nunn, Alice starred alongside Rufus Sewell, Brian Cox and Sinead Cusack.

In 2006, Eve starred in *Starter for Ten*, opposite James McAvoy and Rebecca Hall. The film was produced by Tom Hanks and is based on the bestselling book by David Nicholls. The story follows a group of students negotiating their way through university in 1980's Bristol. *Starter for Ten* screened at the 2006 Toronto Film Festival.

Other film credits include *ATM*, *The Decoy Bride*, *Crossing Over*, *Big Nothing* and *Stage Beauty*. Television credits include *The Rotters Club*, *Losing Gemma* and *Hawking*.

Eve is the daughter of actors Trevor Eve and Sharon Maughn. She went to school in London before going on to study English at Oxford University. At university, Eve took part in many theatre productions, which is where she developed her love of acting. Her roles at University included 'Galactica' in *Scenes from an Execution* and 'Mabel' in *An Ideal Husband*.

Eve currently resides in London.

CREW BIOS

NEIL LABUTE (Writer and Director)

Neil LaBute burst onto the filmmaking scene at the 1997 Sundance Film Festival with his feature debut, *In the Company of Men*. The film went on to win the Filmmaker Trophy at the festival, as well as the New York Film Critics Circle Award for Best First Feature. In addition to Sundance, it screened at the Cannes, Edinburgh, and Deauville Film Festivals and won two Independent Spirit Awards.

Following on the success of *In the Company of Men*, LaBute has continued to push boundaries both on screen and stage and establish himself as one of the world's leading playwrights and film writer/directors. Among his films are *Your Friends and Neighbors*, *Nurse Betty*, *Possession*, *The Shape of Things*, *Lakeview Terrace* and the short films *sexting* and *BFF*. For television he has filmed his play *bash* for Showtime, directed episodes of *Hell On Wheels* for AMC and recently created the series *Full Circle* for Directv.

In addition to his film and television work, LaBute's plays have been Tony and Olivier Award nominated and staged throughout the world. They include *bash*: latter-day plays, *The Shape of Things*, *The Mercy Seat*, *The Distance From Here*, *Autobahn*, *Fat Pig* (Olivier nominated for Best Comedy), *Some Girl(s)*, *This Is How It Goes*, *Wrecks*, *Filthy Talk for Troubled Times*, *In a Dark Dark House*, *reasons to be pretty* (Tony Award nominated for Best Play), *The Break of Noon*, *In A Forest*, *Dark And Deep*, *Reasons to Be Happy* and the forthcoming Broadway premiere *The Money Shot*. LaBute is also the author of *Seconds of Pleasure*, a collection of short fiction which was published by Grove Atlantic.

ROGIER STOFFERS (Cinematographer)

Rogier Stoffers was born in the Netherlands in 1961. After graduating High School he studied French Language and Literature and later Theatre and Film at the University of Utrecht. In 1985 he was admitted to the Cinematography program of The Netherlands Academy for Film and TV. He graduated in 1989 with shooting "Alaska" for director Mike van Diem. This short went on to win the Dutch Golden Calf for best short film and a Student Academy Award for best Foreign Language Student Film.

After 6 years of working on episodic television in the Netherlands he teamed up again with director Mike van Diem for *Character*, their first feature film. *Character* won the Academy Award for Best Foreign Language Film in 1998 and a Golden Frog for Best Cinematography at the Camerimage Festival in Poland in 1997. At the Netherlands Filmfestival 1999, the jury awarded Rogier a Golden Calf for Cinematography for his work from 1994 to 1999.

After a couple of smaller films in The Netherlands, Rogier shot his first international feature, *Quills*, for director Philip Kaufman in 1999. After finishing *John Q* for director Nick Cassavetes in Toronto, Michael Apted asked him to collaborate on *Enough* in Los Angeles, where Rogier has lived and worked since 2001.

School of Rock, *Disturbia*, *Lakeview Terrace*, *The Secret life of Bees*, and *The Vow* are among the films he worked on in the United States. Abroad, he shot part of Sergei Bodrovs *Mongol* (shared

credit with Sergei Trofimov). *Mongol* won an Academy Award Nomination for best Foreign Language Film in 2008, a Nika Award in Russia for best Cinematography and was nominated at the European Film Awards for Best Cinematography.

Hemingway and Gellhorn an HBO movie directed by Philip Kaufman, earned him an Emmy nomination in 2012.

Rogier has been a member of the Netherlands Society of Cinematographers since 1994 and a member of the American Society of Cinematographers since 2009.

NEIL PATEL (Production Designer)

Neil Patel designs for Film, Television, Theater and Opera. Recent credits include HBO's "In Treatment," *Glengarry Glen Ross* at the Gate Theater in Dublin, *Water by the Spoon* at Second Stage in New York City, and *Norma* at the Washington National Opera/Kennedy Center. He started working with Neil LaBute in 2003 when he designed the world premiere of *The Mercy Seat*. Since then he has designed LaBute's *Some Girl(s)*, *The Break of Noon*, *Lovely Head* and *Reasons to be Happy* which opened in 2013 at the MCC Theater.

JOEL PLOTCH (Editor)

Plotch has been editing feature films for the last sixteen years. Included in the 30 films that he has edited is an ongoing collaboration with award-winning director and writer Neil LaBute that includes such films as *In the Company of Men*, *Your Friends and Neighbors*, *Nurse Betty*, *The Shape of Things*, *Wicker Man*, and *Lakeview Terrace*. Additionally, he has continued to edit commercials, music videos, television programming and feature documentaries. He also has directed a short film, "Heavy Put-Away" which was adapted from a Terry Southern short story (*Easy Rider*, *Dr. Strangelove*) starring Gretchen Mol, Dallas Roberts and Mark Boone Jr. He is currently set to direct the feature film *Sullivan Street* which Neil LaBute is Executive Producing.

CREDITS

CREW

Written and Directed by.....Neil LaBute
Producers.....Tim Harms
.....Daryl Freimark
.....David Zander
.....Trent Othick
.....Michael Corrente
Executive Producers.....Forrest E. Crisman Jr.
.....Kevin Sisti Jr.
Line Producer.....Isaac Wilkins
Costume Design.....Katherine Roth
Casting.....Carmen Cuba, CSA
Cinematographer.....Rogier Stoffers, NSC, ACS
Editor.....Joel Plotch
Production Designer.....Neil Patel

CAST

Stanley Tucci.....Fred
Alice Eve.....Velvet