

OLD JOY

A film by Kelly Reichardt

Based on the short story **OLD JOY** by Jonathan Raymond

Starring Will Oldham and Daniel London



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"I most regret [OLD JOY] is not in Competition. For me it is a strong story, very minimalist and very powerful, formal and delicate." Geoff Gilmore – Director of the Sundance Film Festival as quoted in an interview with the *Hollywood Reporter*

"...The joy referred to in the title is the pleasure of male bonding in a world unfettered by anything but youthful idealism. Of course we know we can't go back, but what takes its place? What makes OLD JOY so moving is that we discover joy can still exist; it just looks and feels different." John Cooper – Director of Programming - Sundance Film Festival

"This quiet meditation on the fragility of friendship brings Jonathan Raymond's acute, melancholy story vividly to life, drenching the screen with the lush greenery of the Pacific Northwest. The film combines Kelly Reichardt's keenly observant storytelling with her mesmerizing visual skills, resulting in an individual work that is stunningly unique in today's market. Needless to say, I'm proud to have played any part in the creation of this gorgeous and uniquely powerful film." Todd Haynes – Executive Producer

SYNOPSIS

OLD JOY is the story of two old friends, Kurt (Will Oldham) and Mark (Daniel London), who reunite for a weekend camping trip in the Cascade mountain range east of Portland, Oregon. OLD JOY is a minimalist story of friendship, loss and alienation in the Bush era. For Mark, the weekend outing offers a respite from the pressure of his imminent fatherhood; for Kurt, it is part of a long series of carefree adventures. As the hours progress and the landscape evolves, the twin seekers move through a range of subtle emotions, enacting a pilgrimage of mutual confusion, sudden insight, and recurring intimations of spiritual battle. When they arrive at their final destination, a hot spring in an old growth forest, they must either confront the divergent paths they have taken, or somehow transcend their growing tensions in an act of forgiveness and mourning.

THE CREATION

OLD JOY is in some ways the story of collaboration between three artists: photographer Justine Kurland, writer Jon Raymond, and filmmaker Kelly Reichardt.

The short story was originally conceived as a collaboration between Jon Raymond and Justine Kurland for Artspace Books, a forum for partnerships between visual artists and writers. (Previous Artspace books have included authors such as Joyce Carol Oates, Dennis Cooper, and Rick Moody, and visual artists such as Nan Goldin, Gregory Crewdson, and Matthew Ritchie.) Kurland, having read Raymond's novel, THE HALF-LIFE, and sympathizing with its lyrical depiction of the American landscape, and its treatment of the legacy of 60s utopian communities, both themes of her own well-recognized work, invited him to participate in the collaboration.

Raymond produced a story inspired by Kurland's most recent body of images, featuring burned forests and naked men and women in natural tableaux. "One thing I've always responded to in her work," Raymond says, "is the peculiarly American spirituality it participates in--this vaguely Biblical quality mixed with a pronounced animism. Her landscapes could be a Garden of Eden or a Romantic 'wilderness of the soul.' Her naked figures could be Old Testament heroes, or transcendentalists, or hippies... I figured a good accompaniment should have these kinds of resonances. I ended up doing what I think of as a kind of contemporary Cain and Abel story. Or a Cain and Abel story in reverse. Two estranged brothers traveling back into a primeval garden and reuniting."

Kelly Reichardt, another artist interested in depictions of the American landscape and narratives of the road, read the story in the summer of 2004, and saw in it the template for a meditative, naturalist cinematic project. Also, she recognized a starring role for her dog, Lucy. Reichardt and Raymond proceeded to adapt the story, adding a character and a few scenes, but largely retaining the piece's subtle emotional pivots, forest setting, and much of the original dialogue.

DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

In the summer of 2004 the presidential campaign was in full swing. The war in Iraq still seemed like a good idea to at least half of America, and the US government's attempts to squelch dissent included incidents as far reaching as arresting an Albany resident for refusing to take off his PEACE ON EARTH t-shirt while shopping in a mall. I was driving cross-country with my dog Lucy, listening to Christian radio and clocking the MY MOMMY CHOSE LIFE billboards on my speedometer, when I received a short story from my friend Jon Raymond called OLD JOY, a minimalist story of friendship that captured all the feeling of loss and alienation that everyone in my world seemed to be grappling with. Mark and Kurt's relationship was, among other things, a great metaphor for the self-satisfied, ineffectualness of the Left.

When I got back to New York, I showed the script to Pete Sillen, who jumped right in and agreed to shoot the film. Soon after, I went to hear Jon do a reading of Old Joy (his short story had just been published as a book with photographs by Justine Kurland) and all through the reading I kept picturing Will Oldham in the scenes. I sent Will the book and we spent the next couple of months deciding which character he should play – it's hard to imagine now but he felt drawn equally to both roles. Will tried to hook me up with some of his very Kurt-like friends to play that part, but they were all either living in vans or didn't have phones and were ultimately too Kurt-like to nail down.

That winter Pete and I visited Bagby Hot Springs in Oregon's Cascade mountains and did a test shoot. On that trip I met Tanya Smith, who I cast as Mark's wife. Then, finally, we found Daniel London, clearly Mark. And that was that, the movie was cast. In May I moved out to Oregon to start setting up the film. By June we had our crew of six. Daniel and Will met for the first time the day before shooting began. We shot for ten days in and around the Portland and Mount Hood areas of Oregon. With a fifty page script there was room to expand, so if the spirit moved them, Daniel and Will were free to improvise. We used Pete's little A-minama camera with 200 foot loads and since most of the story takes place outside in the daylight we were able to avoid getting bogged down with a ton of equipment. Our producer found a church retreat up in the mountains and we rented a couple of cabins. I kept imaging the making of Exile on Main Street, in the sense of a small group going off and holing up together in a beautiful setting, all focused on this one project. I think the intimate approach we took to making the film comes through in the film itself. The challenge with this kind of filmmaking is turning all the limitations into something that works in your favor, something that adds to the frailty of the story itself.

CAST

Kurt Will Oldham
Mark Daniel London
Tanya Tanya Smith

FILMMAKERS

Executive Producers Todd Haynes, Joshua Blum, Rajen Savjani, Mike Ryan
Director Kelly Reichardt
Co-Writers Jonathan Raymond and Kelly Reichardt
Producers Neil Kopp, Lars Knudsen, Jay Van Hoy, Anish Savjani
Director of Photography Peter Sillen
Film Editor Kelly Reichardt
Sound Editor Eric Offin
Music by Yo La Tengo, performed with Smokey Hormel

CAST BIOS

Will Oldham – Kurt

Will Oldham was born in Louisville, Kentucky and began his artistic career as a young actor, delivering a memorable performance as a teen preacher in director John Sayles' classic 1987 film about an Appalachian mining community, *MATEWAN*. Since then, he has appeared in a few more independent features, such as *JUNEBUG* and *ELYSIAN FIELDS*, but his primary focus has been music. At age 20, Will left Brown University and bought a cheap guitar for his first recordings with friends in Brooklyn. He then returned to Kentucky and began playing with more pals, including brother Ned from the influential indie-rock band Slint, building a loose-knit group that eventually became the first Palace Brothers release in 1993. A prolific and influential musician, Went on to perform under numerous names: Palace, Palace Music, Palace Brothers, Palace Songs, Bonnie Prince Billy and others. He has also been involved in musical projects and bands such as The Amalgamated Sons of Rest, The Anomoanon and The Boxhead Ensemble. The ghostlike musical intimacy created by Oldham's quiet singing and the spacey, unobtrusive acoustic accompaniment has garnered Oldham fans worldwide (his shows sell out in Ireland and Australia) and inspired some impressive artists to cover his songs. These include Johnny Cash, whose wife, June Carter Cash, demanded he record Oldham's "I See a Darkness" after hearing it on a mix tape and the musically brilliant Icelandic pop star Björk, who covered him and admits a passion for his songs.

Daniel London – Mark

Daniel London grew up in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania and attended Oberlin College in Ohio. For the last ten years, he has lived in New York City and worked as an actor in film, television, and theater. His first major movie role came starring opposite Robin Williams in *PATCH ADAMS*, and he has since worked with director Steven Spielberg playing the Pre-Cog caretaker, Wally, in *MINORITY REPORT*, with Barry Sonnenfeld as the Russian arms dealer, Ivan, in *BIG TROUBLE*, with Griffin Dunne as the obsessively supportive Boyfriend in *LISA PICARD IS FAMOUS*, and as Paul, the leader of the HIV support group in the movie version of *RENT*, among others. Daniel appeared on television as the down-on-his-luck Eddie in two *SOPRANOS* episodes and on *LAW & ORDER: CRIMINAL INTENT* as the down-on-his-luck perpetual graduate student, Mark. He has performed in numerous theater productions in New York including the world premiere of Beth Henley's *IMPOSSIBLE MARRIAGE* opposite Holly Hunter. This spring, he will appear in the world premiere of a new Beth Henley play, *RIDICULOUS FRAUD*. Daniel is married to singer/songwriter Megan Reilly.

FILMMAKER BIOS

Kelly Reichardt – Co-Writer, Director, Editor

Kelly Reichardt was born and raised in Miami, Florida where her father worked as a detective and her mother as a narcotics agent. Kelly discovered photography through the lens of her father's crime scene camera and her first marijuana cigarette from an unattended evidence bag. After a short stint at Mass Art and graduating from the Museum school, Kelly made some of the first super 8mm music videos to air on MTV. In 1988 she moved to New York City and worked in the art department on several first features including Todd Hayne's *POISON*, Hal Hartley's *THE UNBELIEVABLE TRUTH* and Norman René's *LONGTIME COMPANION*. Since that time, Kelly's own work has screened in festivals and art houses around the world.

Kelly's first feature, *RIVER OF GRASS*, a sun-drenched noir / droll inversion of the road movie was shot in her hometown of Dade County. *RIVER OF GRASS* was cited as "one of the best films of 1995" by the *Boston Globe*, *Village Voice*, *Film Comment*, the *New York Daily News*, *Paper Magazine* and the *San Francisco Guardian*.

Her follow-up 50-minute narrative, *ODE* is a self-shot, Super8mm reinterpretation of the Herman Raucher novel *ODE TO BILLY JOE* and features music by Yo La Tengo and an original soundtrack by Will Oldham.

Kelly's Super 8mm experimental short *THEN A YEAR* was filmed in Portland, Oregon and includes a voice-over collaged from TV true crime shows, while *TRAVIS* is appropriated from a re-organized NPR radio interview with a Portland mother whose son Travis was killed in Iraq.

In the summer of 2004 Kelly began her collaboration with Jon Raymond on the screenplay for her new feature *OLD JOY* which premieres at the 2006 Sundance Film Festival and is playing in competition at the International Film Festival Rotterdam.

Reichardt lives in New York City where she has taught film at New York University, Columbia University, and the School for the Visual Arts. Raymond and Reichardt are currently at work on their still untitled "gutter punk" script.

Jonathan Raymond – Co-Writer

Jonathan Raymond is a writer living in Portland, Oregon. His first novel, *The Half-Life*, was published by Bloomsbury in May 2004. He works as an associate editor at *Tin House* magazine, editor of *Plazm* magazine, and teacher through New School University. His writing has appeared in *Tin House*, *Bookforum*, *Artforum*, and many other publications. He is also the screenwriter of *BAD BLOOD*, an interactive video installation by artist Marlene McCarty, and *SPRUNG*, with Steve Doughton, a feature script.

Todd Haynes – Executive Producer

Oscar-nominated writer-director Todd Haynes' short film, *SUPERSTAR: THE KAREN CARPENTER STORY*, used Barbie dolls as actors to trace the demise from anorexia of the singer, and has gone on to become an underground cult classic. Haynes' first feature, *POISON* (1991), was awarded the Grand Jury Prize at Sundance in 1991. Haynes' next film was *DOTTIE GETS SPANKED*, a short film which *The Village Voice* hailed as "A Pop Art vision of '50s suburbia." His second feature, *SAFE* (1994), was named Best Film of the Year by leading critics at *The Boston Globe*, *Film Comment*, and *Interview Magazine*, among others. *The Village Voice* went even further, naming it the best film of the 90s. *SAFE* also marked the first of Haynes' collaborations with widely celebrated actress Julianne Moore.

Haynes' third feature was the potent rock drama *VELVET GOLDMINE* (1997), starring Ewan McGregor, Jonathan Rhys-Meyers, Christian Bale and Toni Collette. *The New York Times* described *GOLDMINE* as "dazzlingly surreal," and the Cannes Film Festival honored the film with an award for Best Artistic Contribution. *FAR FROM HEAVEN* (2002) Haynes' fourth feature was the single best-reviewed film of 2002. Starring Julianne Moore, Dennis Quaid and Dennis Haysbert, it swept critics awards across the country, including the New York Film Critics circle. *FAR FROM HEAVEN* was recognized with four Academy Award nominations, including a Best Actress nod for Moore and a screenwriting nomination for Haynes. He is currently at work on *I'M NOT THERE*, his fifth feature, which is set to star Christian Bale, Cate Blanchett, Colin Farrell, Charlotte Gainsbourg, Richard Gere, and Julianne Moore.

Joshua Blum – Executive Producer

Joshua Blum is a film producer and the founder and President of Washington Square Films/Washington Square Arts. He is also the co-director of the non-profit Bowery Arts and Science.

WSF/WSA is a production/management /booking company with offices in New York and Los Angeles. The production division produces television commercials, feature films and long form television projects.

Current film and television projects being produced by Mr. Blum include; *LIFE INTERRUPTED* the story of Spalding Gray, directed by Steven Soderbergh; *1/9*, a narrative drama starring Heather Graham, Victor Rasuk and Billy Baldwin and *LUSH LIFE – THE BILLY STRAYHORN STORY* directed by Robert Levi. Recent projects include *NO JOKING* a half-hour special for The Sundance Channel celebrating the posthumous pardon of Lenny Bruce, directed by Bob Balaban, and *LOVE, LUDLOW* a narrative feature that premiered at the 2005 Sundance Film Festival. Other credits include the PBS series *THE UNITED STATES OF POETRY* and *WORDS IN YOUR FACE* also for PBS.

The management division manages actors including Dulé Hill (*WEST WING*), Kerry Washington (*RAY, SAVE THE LAST DANCE*), Victor Rasuk (*RAISING VICTOR VARGAS, THE LORDS OF DOGTOWN*), Jennifer Esposito (*CRASH, RELATED*), and Sarita Choudhary (*KAMA SUTRA, SHE HATE ME*). The division also manages writers and directors including Nicole Kassel (*THE WOODSMAN*).

WSF/WSA Booking produces and/or books live theatrical productions around the country. Current projects include new work by solo performers Eric Bogosian, Julia Sweeney, Danny Hoch and Reno, and readings and performances by David Sedaris, Dave Eggers & Sarah Vowell.

Blum is the co-director, with Bob Holman of Bowery Arts and Science a not-for-profit organization dedicated to promoting poetry and the spoken word. BAS programs and maintains the Bowery Poetry Club, where it presents and produces readings, performances and film screenings. BAS also produces films and TV programs relating to and about the arts.

Before being involved with his current organizations Joshua Blum was an independent producer, working on projects for HBO, MTV, ABC, and theatrical projects for The New York Shakespeare Festival.

Mike S. Ryan – Executive Producer

Mr. Ryan has been involved in New York City independent film production for over 10 years, having location-managed films for Ang Lee and Todd Haynes, among others. He recently line produced for Ira Sachs's, *FORTY SHADES OF BLUE*, as well as produced Todd Solondz's film *PALINDROMES* and Phil Morrison's *JUNEBUG*. Mike currently owns several

book and script options, all of which are in various stages of development. Mike is a 1992 graduate of NYU's Masters program in film production. He is presently producing the new Hal Hartley film for HDNET which will start shooting this January.

Neil Kopp – Producer

Neil Kopp was born and raised in Portland, Oregon. He attended Vancouver Film School in British Columbia where he focused on production. For the next five years Neil lived in Texas and Oregon, production managing for high end commercial and music video production companies including Big Fish Films in Dallas and Food Chain Films in Portland. Neil is currently based in Portland and in addition to freelance producing, he is a partner in Your Mom Films. Recent projects include music videos for the Shins, Dandy Warhol's, and the Decemberists. He also recently produced Kelly Reichardt's feature film, OLD JOY.

Lars Knudsen and Jay Van Hoy – Producers

Lars Knudsen and Jay Van Hoy formed van hoy / knudsen productions in 2004, a company dedicated to director-driven, collaborative filmmaking; singular films made by talented, uncompromising filmmakers.

Graduating in 2001 with a degree in Business Administration and Finance from Aarhus University, Lars decided to make the move to New York from Denmark in the hopes of landing a job for Scott Rudin. Starting as an intern in August 2001, Lars quickly rose in the ranks from assistant to executive assistant in just three months. During his stint at Scott Rudin Productions Lars worked on such films as THE HOURS, THE ROYAL TENENBAUMS, IRIS, CHANGING LANES and ORANGE COUNTY. In the summer of 2002 Scott Rudin and Paramount Pictures hired Lars to coordinate the marketing and Oscar campaign for THE HOURS. Following an intense campaign, Lars started as Assistant Production Coordinator on Jonathan Demme's THE MANCHURIAN CANDIDATE in order to get much needed production experience.

Jay got his comeuppance working for the most prolific film companies and producers in the industry: from a start at The Shooting Gallery, he went on to assist Scott Rudin, Christine Vachon at Killer Films, and later Kevin Misher and Tim Bevan on the set of THE INTERPRETER. Along the way Jay freelanced as a post-supervisor. He coordinated Post Production on STORYTELLING, directed by Todd Solondz; and supervised Post Production on ASSISTED LIVING (2003 Slamdance winner), as well as FORTY SHADES OF BLUE (2005 Sundance winner). He also co-produced the big-wave surf feature film, THE BILLABONG ODYSSEY.

In addition to producing Kelly Reichardt's second feature, OLD JOY, in 2005 Jay and Lars also produced Steve Collins' feature directorial debut, GRETCHEN; and they were associate producers on Cam Archer's feature directorial debut WILD TIGERS I HAVE KNOWN which will make it's debut at Sundance. TIGERS is executive produced by Gus Van Sant and Scott Rudin.

Up next for van hoy / knudsen productions are films by some of the most promising up-and-coming filmmakers in the US (Cruz Angels, Spencer Parsons, Mitko Panov and Steve Doughton) and some of Scandinavia's most acclaimed and prominent directors (Kjell Sundvall).

Lars and Jay continue to work for Scott Rudin as consultants.

Anish Savjani – Producer

Originally from Houston, TX, Anish Savjani moved to New York in the fall of 1999. While earning a B.F.A. he was accepted into the Directors Guild of America's Assistant Director Program, where he worked on numerous productions, including THE SOPRANOS, *The*

MANCHURIAN CANDIDATE, BARBERSHOP 2, and LAW & ORDER SVU. After completing the training program, Anish was hired as an assistant to producer Scott Rudin. CLOSER, THE LIFE AQUATIC, and I HEART HUCKABEES are among the films Anish was involved in at Scott Rudin Productions. After leaving Scott Rudin Productions, Anish started Film Science, a production company based in Austin, TX. Film Science co-produced the feature film *Gretchen* in early 2005.

Peter Sillen - Director of Photography

Peter Sillen is a New York-based filmmaker. Sillen creates portraits of an array of individuals who live and work outside stereotypical 9-to-5 situations. With sensitivity to his subjects and their environments, Sillen's work gives an unobstructed view into the lives of a number of uniquely talented artists and workers.

Career highlights include BENJAMIN SMOKE a feature-length documentary collaboration with fellow filmmaker Jem Cohen. A portrait of the lead singer of the underground Atlanta band Smoke, the film premiered at the 2000 Berlin International Film Festival. BENJAMIN SMOKE was nominated for an IFP Independent Spirit Award as well as a Distinguished Achievement Award from the International Documentary Association.

Sillen's documentary SPEED RACER: WELCOME TO THE WORLD OF VIC CHESTNUTT premiered at the Sundance Film Festival in 1994. SPEED RACER is a half-hour portrait of the singer-songwriter from Athens, Georgia. It was nominated for the International Documentary Association Award and screened in festivals throughout the world, including Berlin, Munich, Rotterdam, Edinburgh, Seattle, London, Melbourne and San Francisco. Juror's Choice Award from the Charlotte Film and Video Fest. Best Short Documentary from the Olympia Film Festival. The film aired extensively on the Sundance Channel and PBS.

In 2003 Sillen returned to Sundance for the premiere of BRANSON: MUSICLAND USA, a collaboration with former NPR producer Dan Collison on the migrant workers who come to this country music theme town in Missouri, people looking for work and faced with the realities of low paying jobs and little affordable housing.

In 2004 Sillen premiered his new film, ALICE'S HOUSE at The Black Maria Film Festival. ALICE'S HOUSE is a portrait of 90 year old Alice Bullis and her everyday struggle to maintain her independence.

Eric Offin- Sound Designer

Eric Offin runs Tandem Sound Studios in New York City. Eric was the supervising sound editor on Todd Solondz's PALINDROMES and Phil Morrison's JUNEBUG. His most recent projects include Kelly Reichardt's OLD JOY set to premier at the 2006 Sundance Film Festival and Todd Rohal's GUATEMALA HANDSHAKE premiering at the 2006 Slamdance Film Festival. Tandem is in the midst of expanding - their new studios are set to open in April 2006.

Yo La Tengo – Composer

Yo La Tengo's place in rock history is unique. The personal and musical partnership of Ira Kaplan (guitars/vocals/keyboards) and Georgia Hubley (drums/vocals), with the addition of James McNew (bass & more) in the early 90s, has been one of the most intimate and secure musical alliances in history. Few bands in memory dare to experiment quite so widely with such casual audacity. From screeching art-rock and jangling pop songs to electronic soundscapes and hushed lullabies, Yo La Tengo's music explores the range of musical history without ever sounding less than modern. Last year Yo La Tengo wrote two soundtracks for the Sundance-selected films GAME 6 (directed by Michael Hoffman, written by Don DeLillo) and JUNEBUG (directed by Phil Morrison).

