



MOVIE HOUSE ENTERTAINMENT present
An NWR ApS/FEARX LTD. COPRODUCTION

A film by NICOLAS WINDING REFN

FEAR X

Starring
JOHN TURTURRO
DEBORAH KARA UNGER
And
JAMES REMAR

Written by NICOLAS WINDING REFN AND HUBERT SELBY JR.

Music by BRIAN ENO and J. PETER SCHWALM

Directed by NICOLAS WINDING REFN

Running time: 91 mins

Certificate: 12A

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Julia Short
Verve Pictures Ltd
tel: 020 7287 2750
email: julia@vervepics.com

'FEAR X' will open in March 2004

FEAR X

When his wife is killed in a seemingly random incident Harry (John Turturro), prompted by mysterious visions, journeys to discover the true circumstances surrounding her murder.

SHORT SYNOPSIS

Fear X is the story of Mall security guard, Harry Cain, who's wife is mysteriously murdered in Wisconsin. Harry must find out why his wife was killed but he will soon learn that things are seldom what they appear to be. He begins his bizarre investigation, obtaining certain information that leads him to Montana, in search of the supposed murderer.

LONG SYNOPSIS

FEAR X tells the story of Harry Cain, a security guard from Wisconsin, whose wife is murdered in a shopping mall where he works.

The police have no leads on the murderer and are baffled by the presence of an additional victim, a police officer, also shot at the same time.

Harry's life is destroyed and his obsession in discovering why increases until he can think of nothing else – he keeps on reminding himself that he is not after revenge, he just wants to know “Why”.

Harry starts investigating, but with little success. However when the police discover new evidence, Harry realises he is much closer to the truth than he could possibly imagine. Prompted by visions and paranoia – he begins to believe that the house across the street is somehow connected.

Discovering that the house is leased to a corporate account rather than individually owned and therefore has no name attached to it, he decides to break in and search for clues. The house is deserted, but he finds a photo of a woman and a child in front of a restaurant. He becomes increasingly obsessed with the photo, believing that the woman is somehow involved in the murder. On closer inspection he discovers that the restaurant in the picture is in a town in Montana.

Determined and with only his abstract lead, he sets out to find the mysterious woman.

Once he reaches the small town in Montana, he begins to ask around about the woman on the photo.

Whilst Lieutenant Peter Northrup is being decorated for his outstanding police work, he is tipped off that a mysterious man from Wisconsin is inquiring about his wife Kate. Peter is filled with dread, becoming nervous and paranoid - obviously struggling with a dark secret. Fearing the worst he sends his wife and their young son to his sister's house for safety.

It is revealed that Peter is a member of a secret group within the Police, whose goal is to clean up corruption and crime within the Force. Though their intentions are good, they are forced to take actions that are not always within the law.

He meets up with two of the group's leaders and breaks down, overwhelmed by guilt of having shot an innocent woman on his last mission to Wisconsin. The leaders, not willing to take any chances, order Peter to eliminate *the* stranger.

Peter contacts Harry, promising information on the woman in the photo, but when both men's destiny finally cross, they are forced to act out their darkest fears...

THE CAST

JOHN TURTURRO

John Turturro trained at Yale Drama School and has shown the diversity of his acting talent in a wide and varied career. He has played many different roles, including a performance in *Raging Bull* and further broadening his talent throughout the decade in *Exterminator II*, *The Flamingo Kid*, *Desperately Seeking Susan*, *To Live and Die in LA*, *The Color of Money*, *Hannah and Her Sisters*, *Off Beat*, and *The Sicilian*. It was his outstanding performance in *Five Corners*, 1987, that caught the attention of critics, and has since seen him star in many of director, Spike Lee's, films.

The latter part of the decade saw Turturro star in *Do The Right Thing* and Spike Lee's *Mo' Better Blues*. Furthermore, he became a regular star in several of Joel and Ethan Coen's movies including *Miller's Crossing* and *Barton Fink*.

Turturro has also starred in *Fearless*, 1993, *Quiz Show*, 1994, *Grace of My Heart*, 1996, *The Big Lebowski*, 1998, *Illuminata*, 1998, *Rounders*, 1998, *The Source*, 1999 and as Harvey the Black Dog in *Summer of Sam*, 1999.

Displaying his talent for comedy, his hilarious performance in the Coen brother's smash hit *O Brother, Where Art Thou?*, 2000 was a triumph. He then moved on to portray the title role in *The Luzhin Defense* and as Dante Dominio in *The Man Who Cried*.

How do you prepare for a role like Harry Cain?

For this role, rather than building up a character from scratch, someone completely removed from who I really am, I have searched for elements within myself. It's not a part that is very far removed from myself, in the sense of dialect, looks, behaviour, even though I am not him or try to be.

I see him as a guy who has spent most of his life as a passive observer; a guy who has never had any dreams or ambitions about changing his life, until the day that his wife is murdered and someone pulls the rug from under him. He is not extroverted or a man to take initiative, like myself, so that was something I had to work on and form. But basically what it is to lose someone you love and that has made it easier to get into the part. On the other hand, the material is also pretty heavy and uncomfortable to pull these elements from, emotional wise and just the thought of having to go through what Harry is going through is frightening. That made the part tough... and there were days when it

was impossible not to speculate what I would have done had I been in his shoes – which could make it pretty edgy on the set, especially because I am reliving and re-enacting those feelings so close to the camera, surrounded by a lot of people.

The film's subject matter is tough and when you try to relate to it from your own life, you start to become very sensitive and fragile towards it. But I think everyone is familiar to the fear of losing someone close, to lose control over one's life or destiny – I think some people would just freeze; their lives would stand still and just lie in bed all day, but Harry tries to regain that control and tries to get some understanding to the loss he has experienced. That I can identify with.

Nicolas understood my sensitivity and the fact that, as an actor, I have to protect myself when dealing with such tense and traumatic emotions in front of the camera. On a film like this, I can't just rely on my acting techniques and there were many nights after the days' shoot that I couldn't sleep. I was in desperate need for someone to put their arms around me and hold me – I was a nervous wreck... Sometimes I felt a little too close to Harry Cain, but of course I could use that energy on the set because I too had difficulties sleeping. I too missed people who weren't around and I felt lonely and fragile, right?

Is "FEAR X" a drama, a thriller or love story?

I would say it's a psychological thriller, but then again I would say that it is very different from the genre.

There is a great deal of fear and guilt in the film, but these elements were not necessarily what I related to as an actor. I actually approached it as a kind of a love story, because it is more about love lost than vengeance and atonement. It's about a man who tries to move on with his life, to obtain some form of explanation and relieve his mourning. If he had not loved Claire so much, he would not have pushed himself so far out on thin ice. He is overwhelmed by circumstances; he is powerless, yet manic, when he watches the surveillance tapes from the mall where Claire was killed, over and over again. Powerless but also angry and is sickened by what he sees.

These are strong emotions to dig into and sometimes, just before shooting a scene, I had to stick a finger down my throat until I nearly threw up, to get that emotion up inside me the strongest possible way...

This has definitely not been like working on any other film and I have made a lot films, man!

JAMES REMAR

Remar has acted in numerous films following a twenty year career. Gaining recognition for his role as a punk in *The Warrior*, Remar also received critical acclaim on Broadway in the musical *Bent*, starring as

Richard Gere's lover. Other roles have seen Remar in *The Cotton Club*, *Renaissance Man*, *Tales From the Darkside: The Movie* and later in *Drugstore Cowboy*, *Fatal Instinct* and *What Lies Beneath*. Remar is also well known for his role in TV hit *Sex and The City*.

DEBORAH KARA UNGER

The first Canadian actress to be accepted into the Australian National Institute of Dramatic Art, Unger made her debut in *Prisoners of the Sun*. Other roles include *Whispers in the Dark*, *Till There Was You*, *Highlander III: The Sorcerer* and *Crash*.

THE CREW

DIRECTOR/WRITER, NICOLAS WINDING REFN

After living in New York for a decade up to the age of 18, Nicolas returned to Denmark where he was born, where he started directing short films and commercials in his early 20's, eventually making his feature debut at the age of 25 with *PUSHER*, which received its world premiere at the San Sebastian Film Festival in 1997.

This was followed up by the critically acclaimed *BLEEDER*, which was selected for the Venice Film Festival 1999. After starting his own production company NWR ApS with his business partner Henrik Danstrup, he went on to develop the TV series *DE UDVALGTE* ("The Chosen 7") for the Danish television.

FEAR X is his first English speaking feature based on his idea which he co-wrote with cult writer Hubert Selby Jr.

How did the idea for "FEAR X" come about?

Well, it came about after I had been to the Venice Film Festival with my second film "Bleeder" back in 1999, I decided that my next film was going to be in English... I only knew three things - I wanted to make a thriller, work with Hubert Selby Jr. and Brian Eno. At that point I hadn't met either of them.

I went to Brazil to work on the concept to the kind of thriller I wanted to make and what I came up with was that I wanted to make a thriller about a security guard whose wife had been mysteriously murdered in the shopping mall where he works that sends him on a journey to find out why.

With that story line I contacted Mr. Selby, who liked the idea and we began our collaboration.

What made you want to work with Selby? He is after all a novelist and not a scriptwriter...

Having worked with Mr. Selby has been the greatest creative collaboration that I have ever experienced. Besides being my favourite author and my earlier film "Bleeder" was basically my interpretation of "Last Exit To Brooklyn", I felt that he would bring a sense of humanity to the story. I basically just thought it would be an interesting concept and see what would come out of it.

It took 2 years to write the script and all the time I spent, getting to know him has been worth it.

What attracted you to Brian Eno?

I felt Eno's music would fit well with the dreamlike journey that Harry Cain goes through. When we had a first draft I contacted Mr. Eno and after having read the script, he liked the story and agreed.

I remember him asking me, after having read it, that he was not sure on whether who was the good guy or the bad guy and I said that was exactly the point! He came up with a concept on how to score the film, which was basically "painting" the film with music; he would send me CDs whilst we were writing to inspire us and then we would send a script back to him, so the script and music constantly evolved together.

Making FEAR X must have been quite a different experience to your earlier films PUSHER and BLEEDER...

First of all I would like to say that it is very important for me to own my own films - to have complete control in every aspect. Me and my business partner Henrik Danstrup, who produces my films, set up a company that would handle the movie. It was a very, very tough experience, as the previous films we had done had been low budget Danish films and this was really quite different in both scale and ambition. You can say we learned international financing the hard way.

Could you give me an example?

When we were in pre-production, we kept running into cash flow problems, and sometimes I would go down each morning to the hotel cash machine, take out money from my personal account and pay people on the spot to make sure they would return the next day!

But what I discovered was you basically have the same problems as you do on small films, just bigger headaches! What was most stressful was when we finally got into production I had so little damn time for the actual shoot - every morning I had to look myself in the mirror and repeat "You better know what you are doing, 'cause you are not redoing it"!

Like your two previous films, this was shot chronologically. This is not a very orthodox way to shoot a film.

I have shot all my films chronologically because for me it is more interesting - I can see the story and film unfold before me and I believe the actors can be more true to their characters, it also makes it easier to change things. I like to think of this process as discovering the movie and basically that is what "FEAR X" is all about.

What was it like working with John Turturro?

When it came to casting the movie, I was nervous about the usual problem that European filmmakers have of not having access to the good actors and not having any knowledge of the Hollywood mechanics.

You must remember that this film began with just me, Henrik Danstrup and a secretary in a one-room office in Copenhagen. We started going to the different agencies, but without much luck, as we never heard anything back. But fortunately through our co-producer in Canada, Kim Johnson, we got in contact with a casting agent, Penny Perry, in LA. When she came on board, things started to move very quickly and we got an offer out on John Turturro who I felt would be perfect as the role of Harry Cain.

I must confess, I was a little nervous as he is known to take a long time before committing to a project and I had a start date approaching rapidly. But luckily, he quickly agreed to make the movie and we made a deal. I must say, working with him was exhilarating, because he is the type of actor who is just good in every single take. He really bought a lot to the role. With the way I work, he is the type of actor who really takes advantage of the luxury of shooting chronologically.

I remember the first time he came on the set, I told him that I had already made the whole film in mind with me in the lead, but added "But this time, we are gonna do it again and you will be the lead".

What about Larry Smith?

I really liked the photography on "Eyes Wide Shut". I think it is one of the few films that really portray reality in an abstract state and I believe that had a lot to do with the photography.

Again, it was one of those situations where I got his phone number and called him and he quickly agreed to do the movie. When I was younger, I remember seeing "The Shining" with my mother and she was very impressed by the lighting, telling me so and that was basically the first time I really took notice of such details... and funny enough, on meeting Larry, he told me that he had designed the lights to that film.

Also when I told him that it would be a tight schedule (only 5½ weeks), he said, no a problem, he had just done a film that took 2 years and that was demanding!

“FEAR X” does not have your usual Hollywood structure... it is more introverted driven in the sense that the characters don’t lead the story...

I believe cinema is far more enjoyable if it is a two way experience – a film should challenge the audience’s imagination and by doing so making it more exiting and enjoyable. Like reading a book or looking at a painting, everyone has different perceptions of what they see or feel. A problem nowadays is that film structure has become so mechanical that the audience can basically “read” the film’s outcome without involving themselves, thus making the experience one way. With Fear X, I wanted a film that deconstructs itself as it goes along! I like films that provoke me, whether they are good or bad – the point is that someone has created something that forces me to have an opinion and that is what art is all about.

Are you happy with the final result?

Yes, I am extremely satisfied. What makes it even more satisfying is that we have managed to sell the film to most major territories like US, UK, France, Italy, Canada, Australia and so on.

WRITER, HUBERT SELBY JR.

Most famous for his first novel, Last Exit To Brooklyn, which was subsequently filmed in 1989, Selby Jr. has also penned, among others, Requiem For A Dream brought to the screen by Darren Aronofsky, The Daemon, The Willow Tree, and The Waiting Period published in 2002. *Fear X* is his first original screenplay.

How does your collaboration with Nicolas work?

Nicolas normally stays at a Hotel just down Sunset Boulevard, so in the morning he can take a stroll over here and we chat, drink a little juice until we seriously get to work. Usually he stays for a month, 3-4 weeks at a time... and when he is back in Denmark, we communicate by email, which is so easy these days.

Every day, when he is here, Nicolas places his index cards all over the floor and we stand bent over them, discussing how it all looks. We discuss ideas back and forth and sometimes I go over to the computer and write down the best and most important ideas down, even though I know that we are going to change everything in a couple of months!

Our roles have been defined from the very beginning. Nicolas is in charge of the story, its structure and most of the ideas, whilst I try to formulate them so they get some form of continuity - as well as writing all the dialogue. I’ve also had input with ideas on how the story and the characters can develop, but they have been based on his concepts. We

have fed each other impulsive ideas and I have then tried to put them together so they work as a complete story.

I have never collaborated with someone before. That was quite a challenge for me, as well as the age gap. But I think it went very well and I enjoyed working with Nicolas. I have learned a great deal on directing films from him. We have made a script that we are both very satisfied with and that is both a worthy and given experience to accomplish.

Refn says "FEAR X" is a morality tale. This is similar to your books, which are often about the consequences that follow your characters' existential choice...

Yes. Around the third draft, the story began to take on a moral form; an ethical question surrounding man's right to take another life, the price of doing so and ruining another man's life – these elements I find to be very welcome. In my opinion, as a moral story, it is quite a dark and sinister film that keeps to serious subject matters; has no sex, there is no blood or gore, and there is not even a real bad guy! It's simply about a man and his moral dilemma in a difficult and extreme situation - where because of the circumstances he has crossed his own line and is probably willing to do just about anything. But is he going to? That is the question.

Comparing it to my own books, "FEAR X" is similar in the way that it breaks down the barriers of the inner and the outer, the real and the unreal. We are never sure what is happening inside Harry's head or what is happening around him; everything is just as fucked up around him as it is in Harry's head – this is important for that's how the world is today and it's scary, man.

As a moral piece, "FEAR X" is certainly about people trying to justify their actions, however terrible they might be. We are constantly trying to figure out what is right and what is wrong and when our boundaries break down, as they so often do in our western society and in our media these days, you begin to make your own distinctions between these two.

Harry is in a dilemma. He is a normal working Joe, a security guard for the system and all of its consumerism, without ever questioning what it actually is. When his wife is murdered, he sees this as an act of injustice, a personal violation, almost a punishment from God that he does not deserve. The system that he has so obediently served has duped him, in the sense that the police can't solve the murder on his wife and bring the perpetrator to justice. His dilemma is so that now he is in a situation where everything he believes in has changed with one tragic punch – if God and the system fucks with me, why should I keep to their rules? And even though he is a decent human being, he bends the rules to suit his mission. He believes he has a right to act as God, a right to punish, a right to kill, if this can give him back some existence. But whilst he contemplates these things, he also contemplates doing wrong. The decent, law abiding security guard from the province becomes a vigilante, a criminal in the truest sense of the law.

X on the other hand, has long been a vigilante... to God, even though he is a policeman and shares many of Harry's bourgeois ideals. He is in a black zone between right and wrong, in the name of good... that's his dilemma; how immoral can one be to preserve moral itself? Is it justifiable to accept casualties, like Clair in movie?

Both Characters become overwhelmed by life's complexities, because until now they have only thought in black and white. They become obsessed with creating some form of connexion with the lives they lead, that they have absolute no control over, which is one of modern man's biggest dilemmas and curses. It's like cancer spreading in our collective subconscious. We can't live with the fact that we have no control over our own destiny.

When Harry and X enter the grey zone, between the black and the white, right and wrong, they can no longer handle it and that would be the case for most people, unless they are completely cold-hearted psychopaths. Both could have avoided these problems if they had accepted the punches that fate had dealt them. In that sense, they are both their own worst enemy, meaning they both try to make sense of something that is meaningless and therefore signing their own death sentence, because they try to understand a truth that doesn't exist. They fall from grace because they didn't listen to Buddha when he said, "Ask not why"...

PRODUCER, HENRIK DANSTRUP

After graduating from the Danish Film School, Henrik co-founded Balboa 2 with Peter Aalbaek Jensen (Partner with Lars Von Trier at Zentropa). The company produced a slate of successful films including Refn's PUSHER 1997. Henrik Danstrup also produced Refn's second film BLEEDER and in 1999 he joined forces with Nicolas Winding Refn and established their co-owned company NWR ApS, which main priority is to produce Refn's future projects.

DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY, LARRY J. SMITH

Cinematographer Larry J. Smith has collaborated with Stanley Kubrick for over 20 years including BARRY LINDON, THE SHINING and EYES WIDE SHUT where he served as Director of Photography.

How would you compare working with Nicolas to working with Stanley Kubrick?

To a certain extent one can't really compare them. Stanley had total freedom to make what he wanted and more or less total access from the

studios. Nicolas however, is forced to deal with more basal problems and limitations: will the film ever be finished? If the film loses money, he loses money. Will it ever get distributed? Will he be able to maintain complete control over the final product etc? Stanley didn't have these problems.

But their temperaments are very similar, they work hard at creating a very personal and original film... at what they have in their heads. Nicolas punishes himself in the same way as Stanley did. There are no compromises and even though you wouldn't believe it, they both have a good sense of humour, which is probably the way they deal with stress.

But Nicolas is forced to be more flexible. He can't walk around and sulk if things don't go his way and I admire him for that. At his age, he doesn't snap under pressure, but just perceives on and on. If Stanley had to change a single line in the script, he could spend a week doing so, but Nicolas can't do that. He is forced to take quick decisions and make totally new scenes in one day - and he is very capable of doing so!

MUSIC - BRIAN ENO

One of the most famous music producers and musicians in rock history, Eno started his career in 1971 with the band Roxy Music. In 1973 Eno moved onto a solo career to produce and collaborate with other many well-known artists, creating albums with John Cale, Robert Fripp and Daniel Lanois. Eno is best known for producing and working with David Bowie, Devo, James and U2.

Eno began composing feature film scores in 1976 and has since created music for *Dune*, *Castaway*, *Heat*, *Buddy Boy* and *The Million Dollar Hotel*.

How would you describe your collaboration with Nicolas Winding Refn?

Nicolas contacted me and asked if I would be interested in make music for his next film. I had just completed a score for a Japanese cartoon together with Peter Schwalm, it seemed like a natural progression. I suggested to Nicolas that we should try and do it in an alternative way, where we would make the music before the shoot and therefore "paint" the music on afterwards, so to speak.

This meant that we had to create a series of musical numbers that were related, or you could say "inspired by" the story, but in reverse order. We made most of the music without having seen the film and only after having done so, did we adjust the music to fit the scenes. We used certain processes that we had experiment with earlier on the Japanese cartoon, where we, with the help of sound manipulation equipment

designed for DJ's, would go in and change or form the original score, live and in real time, to the actual film.

What attracted you to Refn and "FEAR X"?

He sent me his two previous films, "Pusher" and "Bleeder" and I liked their freshness, boldness, speed and spontaneity. It was interesting, for they seemed inspired by American cinema without being American dominated, without being copies. They were European films. I am always positive to an alternative to Hollywood.

Also, Nicolas seemed instantly up for our alternative way of working on a film score. It is a process I have developed together with Peter and it was an experiment we wanted to continue with...

Did you use a lot of archival material on the "FEAR X" score?

In the final piece? Not really. Sometimes we would start with an older piece, but soon it would develop so it had very little bearing to the original work. What was more common was that sometimes we would work on something completely different that would suddenly develop into something much more suitable for this film. Peter and I are good and improvising together; to establish a closed, self referenced world of sonic and musical possibilities that together we can explore on our own terms. Sometimes during the making of the film and working on other projects, we would look at each other in the studio and spontaneously shout "FEAR X!" and then that piece would go over in the "FEAR X" pile and be included in the next CD we sent Nicolas.

MUSIC- J. PETER SCHWALM

J. Peter Schwalm trained as a drummer, producer and composer. His music woven from two unusual threads - a passion for fusion and particularly the music of Miles Davis, and his live work as musical director with the Slop Shop collective.

Brian Eno says, 'Sometimes you hear something and think: "Now this is how the modern world feels to me". Peter's music is like that, capturing excitement and speed and ambiguity and even wistfulness and melancholy.....a complex emotional palette which feels to me like real life.'

Brian Eno and J. Peter Schwalm met in Bonn in 1998 and have since enjoyed a fruitful musical collaboration on a stream of projects taking them through live performance, japanese manga soundtracks and ballet music. 'Drawn From Life' album sees this collaboration at its finest.

CAST

John Turturro..... Harry
Deborah Unger..... Kate
Stephen McIntyre Phil
William Allen Young Agent Lawrence
Gene Davis Ed
Mark Houghton Diner Cop
Jacqueline Ramel..... Claire
James Remar.....Peter
Liv Corfixen.....Hotel Waitress
Nadia Litz.....Ellen
Amanda Ooms.....Prostitute

CREW

Nicolas Winding Refn.....Director
Hubert Selby Jr. Writer
Nicolas Winding Refn..... Writer
Johnny Andersen Line Producer
Donald C. Archbold.....Executive producer
Joseph Newton Cohen..... Executive Producer
Henrik Danstrup..... ..Producer
Aaron Kim Johnston..... Co-Producer
Gary Phillips.....Executive producer
Kenneth D. Plummer..... Executive producer
Rupert Preston Co-producer
Nadia Redler..... Executive producer
Mark Vennis..... Executive producer
Brian Eno..... Music
J. Peter Schwalm.....Music
Larry Smith..... Cinematography
Anne Østerud..... Film Editor
Carrie Hilton..... Casting
Penny Perry..... Casting
Peter De Neergaard..... Production Design
Stephen Arndt..... Set Decoration
Darena Snowe..... Costume
Doug Morrow.....Key Make Up Artist
Jennifer Machnee Assistant Make Up Artist
Dave Mahoney..... Unit production manager
Megan Basaraba Third assistant director

Ronaldo Nacioales First assistant director
Larry Spittle Property master
Søren Bjerregaard-Ryan Dialogue editor
Søren Bjerregaard-Ryan Sound re-recording mixer
Jens Bønding Production sound mixer
Stan Mak Boom operator
Sedsel Andersen Continuity
Sedsel Andersen Script supervisor
Dave Brown Firearms safety coordinator
Neil Cervin Camera operator
David Giesbrecht Still photographer
Joao Holowka Best boy electric
Joao Holowka Gaffer
Rolf Konow Still photographer: Denmark
Michael Frank Nielsen Color timer
David Porter Chef
Daniel Quesnel Assistant camera
Kaspar Astrup Schröder Assistant editor