

INVINCIBLE

ABOUT THE PRODUCTION

*"I just was a guy with a dream -- and it never dawned on me that I would
have the chance to impact so many people."*

-- Vince Papale, the real-life inspiration for INVINCIBLE

It's every sports fan's wildest, craziest fantasy – the chance to play on the field and go toe-to-toe with the larger-than-life heroes they idolize. Yet, in 1976, this seemingly fairy tale scenario happened in real life. It was then that Vince Papale, a 30 year-old teacher and part-time bartender with little football experience other than being a season ticket-holder, entered the unprecedented public try-outs for his NFL favorites, the Philadelphia Eagles, and defied all expectations. Not only did Papale make the team – he *remade* the team, helping to inspire them to break through their 11-season losing streak and rediscover their winning spirit. In the bicentennial year of 1976, Papale lived out the dreams of a city and a nation by taking on the impossible with an unsinkable attitude and becoming the NFL's most unlikely rookie ever.

Now, 30 years later, Papale's story of triumph against outrageous odds and his gritty, never-say-die outlook serve once again as inspiration – this time for Walt Disney Picture's stirring sports drama, INVINCIBLE.

In the tradition of such Disney sports classics as "The Rookie" and "Remember the Titans," INVINCIBLE recounts a true-life story of human achievement in the face of adversity. The film stars Mark Wahlberg as the down-and-out Papale who is handed a once-in-a-lifetime shot at turning from anonymous football fan to football star by legendary coach Dick Vermeil (Greg Kinnear),-- after he sees in Papale the kind of guts and heart he hopes to build in his team. Now, up against bone-crushing training session, the intense pressure of make-or-break games and thrust into a pro sports world he had only ever imagined, Vince must find a way to transform from watching the games from the cheap seats to playing them for real stakes.

The first film in over a decade to receive full support from and access to the NFL, INVINCIBLE not only features a moving human drama and riveting lead performances, but also includes some of the most authentic recreations of NFL action yet seen on screen. So rare is NFL support for a feature film that the league has lent it only three previous times in Hollywood history - the last time was for "Jerry Maguire" in 1996. The other films were "Brian's Song" and "Black Sunday."

INVINCIBLE captures the essence of the American Dream and the values of the NFL: heart, perseverance and a passion for football," says Tracy Perlman, Director of Entertainment Marketing and

Promotion for the NFL, of their rare decision to become a full partner in the production. “It’s an inspirational story that’s as much about football as it is about overcoming obstacles and not giving up.”

INVINCIBLE is produced by Mark Ciardi and Gordon Gray, the team behind “The Rookie” and “Miracle,” along with Ken Mok, and executive produced by Victor H. Constantino, Nicole Reed and Ezra Swerdlow. Marking his feature film debut, the film is directed by Ericson Core, an accomplished director of photography who also serves as the film’s cinematographer, from a script by newcomer Brad Gann. The film stars Mark Wahlberg, Greg Kinnear, Elizabeth Banks, Michael Rispoli and Kevin Conway as well as featuring an ensemble of real football players who take real hits in their vivid re-creations of 1976 games.

A REAL LIFE ROCKY: VINCE PAPALE INSPIRES INVINCIBLE

As INVINCIBLE completed production, the man who inspired the film’s story, Vince Papale was in awe of all that had happened to him. In addition to being the most unlikely rookie to ever play in the NFL, Papale has gone on to be a cancer survivor, motivational speaker and now, the subject of a major motion picture. “If anybody would have told me that I was going to play for the NFL and then have a Disney movie based on my life . . .wow, there’s so much surreality to it,” he says. “It’s scary, it’s spooky and it’s unreal. But I’m deeply humbled by it all and really touched and honored.”

It may seem like yet another dream come true, but even back in 1976, when the 30 year-old Papale first got the unheard-of chance to trade in his Philadelphia Eagles seasons tickets for an actual spot on the team, many remarked that the story – “*fan turns overnight into player*” -- sounded like a movie. Some compared him to cinema’s Rocky, the classic Philly underdog who also came to the fore in ’76. Papale’s tale truly seemed stranger than fiction – and no one found it more unlikely than Papale himself. “I was just pursuing my dream,” he says, “but I had no idea it would have such a positive impact on so many people. It’s a really gratifying thing to be in that position.”

Like thousands of other hopefuls, Papale had decided on a whim to turn up at the Eagles’ 1976 open tryouts, which were held by newly arrived coach Dick Vermeil because he was looking for a fresh way to infuse more heart and courage into a team badly in need of some inspiration. Most people thought the try-outs were little more than a stunt. But not Vermeil. He was serious about finding a talented outsider and when he saw the speedy Papale dash across the field, he decided that Vince was it.

Yet even when Papale was signed as a player, no one imagined he could last. Surely, he would be pulverized, intimidated, forced to quit by the extraordinary physical and mental demands of pro football. Once again, Papale proved the naysayers wrong, playing for three seasons with the Eagles, and helping to turn around the fate of a team that would go on to incredible triumph in Super Bowl XV. At a time when

Philadelphia sports fans were crushed by defeats, and when the nation was recovering from Watergate, Vietnam, the Energy Crisis and a period of tumult as it approached its 200th birthday, Vince became a badly needed hero from the ranks of ordinary, everyday Americans.

“Even back in 1976 people talked about how Vince’s story was a movie just waiting to be made,” executive producer Victor Constantino explains. “I heard from Philly sportswriter Ray Didinger that the sportswriters themselves used to joke about who would play Vermeil and who would play Papale. Robert Redford was the consensus choice for Vermeil back in ‘76, by the way.”

For all the talk and excitement, however, a movie about Papale never got off the ground in the 70s and, in the intervening years, the story was nearly lost. It wasn’t until decades later, with the advent of cable television, that Papale’s inspirational tale came to light once more. When a contemporary piece on Papale, Vermeil and the turn-around of the Eagles aired on ESPN, it quickly caught the eye of several filmmakers. One of those was INVINCIBLE producer Ken Mok, who was riveted by Papale’s unlikely, rags-to-wide-receiver story. He in turn alerted Victor Constantino, with whom he was then collaborating on another project.

“(Producer) Ken (Mok) gave me a call and said, ‘There’s something I saw on ESPN. It’s a four-minute tape... can I send it to you?’ I said sure -- but I figured it was probably one of those things where you watch it and call back right away to say, ‘No thank you; not for us,’” recalls Constantino. “Instead, within 90 seconds of watching that tape – 90 seconds into it – I knew it was a movie. It was the quintessential sports story about a guy overcoming the most insurmountable odds.”

Mok had already approached Papale about acquiring the rights to his story, but there were still several competitors and it wasn’t a done deal until Constantino stepped in and made his pitch. Part of the persuasiveness of Constantino’s vision was his plan to bring in Mark Ciardi and Gordon Gray of Mayhem pictures, renown for bringing two rousing and tremendously successful real-life sports stories to the screen with “The Rookie” -- about a high school baseball coach who gets a rare chance to play in the major leagues -- and “Miracle” --about the coach who inspired the unexpectedly victorious 1980 U.S. Olympic Hockey Team -- both released by Walt Disney Pictures.

“Those were my two favorite movies of all time,” says Papale. “I was so excited to have the chance to be involved with them and with Disney.”

For Ciardi and Gray, who were among those whose interest had been piqued when they first saw the ESPN story, the project seemed a perfect match. “We felt really lucky to get this project,” says Ciardi. “Like ‘The Rookie’ and ‘Miracle’ it’s about second chances and about the idea that it’s never too late to put everything on the line for a dream. It’s truly a real-life ‘Rocky,’ where you have this 30 year-old season ticket holder who plays touch football with his friends and suddenly he has a chance, if he’s willing to go through an incredible test of his strength and will, to live out his one greatest hope. For a

guy who's usually sitting up in the stands to come down and play with his beloved team is a fantasy that millions can relate to – and it really happened.”

Adds Gordon Gray: “It’s a unique and inspirational story about someone who thought his best years were behind him. He’s 30 years old, he’s lost his teaching job, his wife has left him and now he has this one opportunity to try out for the Eagles -- and he ends up making the most out of it.”

When it came to choosing a director for INVINCIBLE, it seemed only fitting that the producers ultimately went with an untested newcomer – a man who had already garnered acclaim as a cinematographer but had never had a chance to direct a feature film: Ericson Core. Constantino had been developing the script for about a year when he met with Core, whose work as a cinematographer includes “Daredevil” and “The Fast and the Furious.”

The production never looked back. With Core performing double duty as both director and cinematographer, there was even more weight on the shoulders of the newcomer. But any fears proved unfounded once the producers saw the immense preparation that Core brought to the complex action of the football scenes, and his easy rapport with cast and crew. “It was a difficult thing to pull off to play both roles” says Gray, “but Ericson’s got the personality to handle it. He was very prepared.”

From the minute he read the script Core felt that INVINCIBLE was exactly the kind of movie he’d been looking for to make his directing debut. “I thought Vince’s journey was so heroic – it’s not that he set out to change the world but what he did was so courageous and bold that it raised the hopes of people all around him and that was something huge,” Core observes. “The story reminded me more of ‘Rocky’ than any other sports movie I can think of because it’s about more than sports – it’s about the human spirit and rooting for characters because you understand what drives them, because you really get to know and care about them.”

On the set, Core put the emphasis, appropriately, on teamwork. “It freaked people out that I would pick things up and move them, and do things that are considered outside the realm of the director, but I wanted everybody working closely together like a real team,” he explains. “We had a story that we all cared so deeply about and that’s what made it such a great experience.”

TWO MEN WHO BELIEVED: **THE TRUE STORIES OF VINCE PAPALE AND DICK VERMEIL**

To forge INVINCIBLE into a tightly structured cinematic entertainment, screenwriter Brad Gann mixed fiction in with the factual life experiences of Vince Papale. Despite some changes and additions, however, it was always the core human truth of Papale’s story that inspired the heart of the movie. “But the deepest truth of it – which is this amazingly strong belief in himself that allowed Vince to attempt the completely impossible – is very much there.”

Today, 30 years after the events depicted in INVINCIBLE, Papale still marvels at the transformation of his fate. “As a kid, I used to sit in the stands with my father watching Eagles games,” he recalls. “The players were all idols of mine, big-time heroes. I never could have imagined I would be in the same fraternity as them. For me, it was enough to be inspiring the kids that I was teaching.”

Papale’s story was always intimately interwoven with that of Dick Vermeil, the handsome, young, “golden boy” coach who had just led UCLA to a Rose Bowl victory when he joined the the Eagles in 1976. Despite his success in college ball, Vermeil was new to Philly and to the NFL, and was initially seen as an outsider. If he wanted to turn things around for the Eagles, he knew he had to prove himself to the team and especially the fans. He did so by demanding everything he could get from his players and by placing an emphasis on spirit and grit over raw talent. The coach would soon come to be known for his passion during and his emotional tears after victories – and also for instigating the public tryouts that would bring out more from Vince Papale than he ever knew was possible. Together, these two mavericks would carry the team to new heights through sheer determination.

“When Vermeil came to Philadelphia,” recounts executive producer Ezra Swerdlow, “he was inheriting a team that really had been beaten down, that was hurting. Vermeil was a college coach, and I think he wanted to make the statement when he got here that all bets were off. He decided to start from scratch – and he declared that he would hold an open tryout to recruit new blood for the team. It was unheard of.”

Vermeil however was willing to bypass convention. As a man who always believed that character above all created winners, he saw his job with the Eagles as changing the team’s entire outlook. Recalls Vermeil: “Philadelphia has intense fans and I think they were skeptics at first, but when they saw what we were doing they started to come aboard. As a first-time NFL coach, there’s always some insecurity, but I said I’m gonna just jump in with both feet and fight and scramble as hard as I can. We had to send a message that we were going to try to build a tough, intense atmosphere.”

“With the open try-outs our expectations weren’t that great,” he continues. “We were hoping to find two or three guys who would at least be good camp players – and just maybe one plum who would make the team. All kinds of people turned out, in all different shapes and sizes. We had a doctor, and guys with big bellies and kids with aspirations right out of high school. It was a wide variety.”

When Papale showed up to work out with the Eagles on that fateful day, he felt he had nothing to lose. “I was thinking, ‘there’s no reason why I can’t be out here,’” remembers Papale. “All I wanted was one chance to prove myself against the best and they gave me that.”

Papale made the most of his shot at the try-out, running a 4.5 second forty-yard dash and demonstrating strong catching skills. “Vince looked like an athlete and he had the ability to run fast and gracefully and catch the football,” remembers Vermeil. “He was by far the most impressive. For never

having played football, he knew how the game was played, he liked the intensity of the game and he was passionate about it. He was an infectious sort of guy and very genuine.” So it was that Vermeil took another risk and invited Papale to come to camp and eventually join the Eagles as a wide receiver and special teams player.

It was a decision that paid off on numerous levels. “The fans got very involved with him,” Vermeil adds. “The city really wanted to see Vince play and succeed. When he did something really well, he got a better ovation than anyone.”

But the transition wasn’t easy for Papale, especially with regard to the men who would ultimately become his teammates. “They hated him in the beginning,” says Constantino. “He was threatening the roster spot of the wide receiver ahead of him, and it was tough for him, because he was taking away the spot of a guy that the team revered and loved.”

Yet nothing would deter the unstoppable Papale. Ultimately, Papale’s rock-solid determination won over his teammates just as it had his coach. In the team’s home opener at Veterans Stadium, Papale stepped up his game another exciting notch. “I kicked some serious butt out there in that game,” he laughs. “Up till then, everybody thought I was a publicity stunt. But after that game and one of the big hits I made at the end of the game, I got invited to my first team party. That’s when I knew I really belonged.”

Papale continued to play well for the Eagles throughout the season. Even after he retired from football in 1979 Papale continued to be an inspiration with his incredible passion for life and unassailably positive attitude. He has worked as a counselor for families with the student loan program Sallie Mae and, most recently, his courage was tested in a battle with colorectal cancer. He has since become a sought after national spokesperson who raises vital awareness about cancer prevention.

After going through so much, Papale sees INVINCIBLE as being about much more than just one man’s exciting ride in the NFL – he sees it as being about an attitude. Says Papale: “I think this movie is not so much about me or my experiences, it’s about anybody out there who faces adversity, who is up against the toughest of odds, and decides to make their dreams come true anyway.”

A ROOKIE WITH AN INCREDIBLE DREAM: MARK WAHLBERG IS VINCE PAPALE

When Mark Ciardi and Gordon Gray read the screenplay for INVINCIBLE, they knew that casting would be absolutely key to bringing the character of Vince Papale to life. They also knew they would need a leading man with a definitive mix of qualities – an actor with a down-to-earth, Ordinary Joe type of persona but also with authentic athletic prowess and the drive of a man who refuses to quit. “We

thought of Mark Wahlberg immediately while reading the script,” recalls Gray. “It was one of the film’s easiest decisions because he’s not only a great athlete who can throw his body around and take hits, but he encompassed Vince at every level – not just physically but emotionally. Mark worked so hard and really kind of channeled everything that Vince went through to accomplish what he did.”

Wahlberg, who harbored his own football dreams as a kid, had never heard of Vince Papale before he read the script – but afterwards, Papale stuck with him as one of the more intriguing film heroes he’d encountered. “Here’s a man who defied all the odds and uplifted his friends, his family and his city,” he says. “He’s a guy who never really had a lot of luck, but for him it was all about heart. He had that rare willingness to sacrifice everything for something he loves. Reading about him, I really felt this was the kind of movie I’d like to see.”

Taking on a character inspired by a still-living hero was somewhat daunting, Wahlberg admits, but also exciting. “I felt a real responsibility to do him justice,” he says. “I haven’t felt this much responsibility since ‘The Perfect Storm,’ which was also based on a true story. Vince turned out to be an amazing inspiration to me – and I wanted to do right by him because I believe that his story can inspire others to pursue their dreams.”

To get to the essence of Papale’s personality, Wahlberg struck up a friendship with him that continues to this day. “Vince is a great guy, he’s a real standup, solid person and to have the luxury of being around someone like that throughout the shoot was a real blessing,” says Wahlberg. “I hope, more than anything, we made a movie that he’ll be proud of.”

When Papale heard that Wahlberg was being considered to play him in INVINCIBLE, he wasn’t sure at first what to make of it. He was unfamiliar with most of Wahlberg’s work. “We decided to rent every movie that he had made, from ‘Three Kings’ to ‘Perfect Storm,’” recalls Papale, “and I discovered that he is the real deal. He’s a truly talented actor.” After meeting with Wahlberg in New York, Papale was completely won over. “He blew us away with his sincerity and he assured us that he would play the part with passion, compassion and enthusiasm,” Papale continues. “You can’t ask for more than that.”

As their friendship grew, Papale shared some of his idiosyncrasies as a player with Wahlberg. “We spent a lot of time together with him studying me and asking me questions and Mark really transformed himself,” says Papale. “It turned out that we have a lot in common. We both came from a certain tough kind of background and know what it means to try to make the right choices in your life.”

In preparation for the role, Wahlberg had to go through intensive, muscle-jarring training, putting his body through the same infamously brutal workouts performed by hopeful rookies in NFL training camps. The process was agonizing, yet thrilling, because not unlike Papale, Wahlberg saw it as a rare chance to fulfill a long-held football fantasy. The sheer physicality of the role gave him a deep satisfaction. “I loved getting out there, working hard and sleeping really, really well,” he says.

As the training intensified, the film's Football Coordinator Mark Ellis became more and more impressed with Wahlberg's physical gifts. "He runs incredibly well, right with the pro and arena football players we cast. He's got great peripheral vision. He sees the play unfolding. He loves the contact, so much that it scares me sometimes, but he flat gets after it. His hard work and determination were truly admirable," Ellis says.

Adds Papale: "The things Mark did on the field amazed me. You can't teach that kind of stuff. You could have the most amazing coach in the world and it wouldn't do any good without that natural talent. With the catches he made and the moves he had, I swear he could have made it as a player."

Wahlberg was so determined to prove himself that he volunteered to take numerous real hits on screen – despite the considerable risks to health and safety. "I knew it would be better for the film, even it wasn't better for me," he laughs. Indeed, Wahlberg was so serious about it that he required no help from the makeup department to provide him with welts and bruises – he acquired dozens on his own.

He explains: "If you don't do it the right way, you definitely feel a lot more pain, but I learned pretty quickly. I had to, because I only ever played tackle football before, where you grab 'em by the shirt and throw 'em to the ground. But this is more like two cars colliding."

To get even better at it, Wahlberg did his homework, but that didn't make it any less dangerous. "I found the best guys out there at hitting, because that's what Vince's specialty was, and really studied what they do," he explains. "I didn't hesitate to ask questions because I wanted people to feel like what they are seeing on screen is really happening. I'm just lucky that I didn't get seriously hurt, that nobody got hurt. I would often say a couple extra prayers, thanking God for keeping everybody safe because when you're out there and the adrenaline's flowing, anything can happen."

Says Mark Ciardi of the star's fearless approach to the role: "By proving that he could take a hit, Mark showed that he was really one of the guys. Everyone on the film really appreciated what he did." Adds Gordon Gray: "Mark gained a lot of respect from the real players in the cast by being out there for every play, every practice and treating them as equals. They became buddies."

Ericson Core was amazed by how far Wahlberg was willing to go. "There might be 2 or 3 shots where we used a stunt double for Mark, but that's it. He's incredibly tough, and I don't think many other actors could have survived all that Mark went through in making this film. He also brought a lot of intelligence to his work. He plays this role with such intensity that you get to see a whole new side of his talent."

Wahlberg also found himself enjoying the collaboration with the director. "Ericson never seemed like a first-time director," Wahlberg muses. "He's got some real substance and he really cares about the

story and the characters. We would spend all day talking about Vince and who he is. He's not just about the shots and the style -- I think Ericson really wanted to make a movie with heart."

On set, Wahlberg also began to forge a tight bond with Greg Kinnear as Vince's motivating coach Dick Vermeil. In Wahlberg's view, no one could have been more appropriate for the role. "Much more than Vince, Dick Vermeil is a very recognizable guy and when I first read the script, Greg Kinnear was the face I immediately thought of to play him," he recalls. "He has a lot of the qualities of Vermeil."

While Wahlberg says he loved getting the chance to live out his football dreams, he also was motivated by a desire to make the kind of movie he most enjoys watching. "When I go to the movies, I want to see greatness, I want to see people succeed and excel, and I think it's always more interesting when they have to do it through great adversity," he summarizes. "I want to see characters who weren't born into success and who didn't get all the lucky breaks, but who made it because they have more heart and determination. That's who Vince Papale is."

A LEGENDARY COACH WHO TOOK A CHANCE ON AN ORDINARY JOE: GREG KINNEAR IS DICK VERMEIL

Gordon Gray saw Greg Kinnear as providing the perfect contrast to Mark Wahlberg. "Mark has that East Coast, urban, tough, athletic quality and for Vermeil, we wanted somebody from a completely different world," he notes. "Greg is that kind of West Coast, sensitive guy -- and that's who Vermeil is."

Having grown up in Indiana, Kinnear never knew the story of Papale but was definitely familiar with the famed coaching skills of Vermeil. To get a more close-up view of the man, he spent an intensive period of time getting to know him and his coaching style. "I made a trip to Dick's training camp in Wisconsin so I could watch him work with players," Kinnear explains. "He actually introduced me to the players, which was probably the most nerve-wracking thing that happened to me during this movie!"

He continues: "It was a great experience because I found him to be a terrific guy and could see that he is a legend for a lot of different reasons, His intensity, his commitment to winning, his comprehension of the game are all remarkable. And then there's his emotional side. I think one of the more exciting things about him is that unique volatility that he has. He wants to win -- but it comes from something deep inside him."

Vermeil was equally impressed with Kinnear. "I really enjoyed Greg," says the football legend. "He was very down to earth, very easy to visit with and very sincere about getting everything right so that I would be proud of it. I really respected that." He adds: "Nobody knows me better than my oldest son, who was an extra on the film, and he said, 'Dad this guy has you nailed.'"

Like Wahlberg, Kinnear felt a need to make the portrait as true-to-life in tone as he possibly could – and he had his own motivation. “If I didn’t do it right, I was pretty worried Dick might show up on my doorstep,” jokes Kinnear

Along the way, Kinnear began to gain insights into what drove Vermeil, who left behind his achievements in West Coast college football, to head to the East Coast to take on the NFL’s ailing Philadelphia Eagles as a mistrusted outsider. “There was a lot of cynicism about him in the beginning,” Kinnear notes. “Here was this California guy coming into a blue-collar town that takes its football very seriously, and I think people wondered if they had made a huge mistake. But Dick proved them wrong.”

He did so by doing things like holding the open try-outs that turned up Vince Papale. “Dick had a real sense that he was trying to build something – and if that meant calling in all the bartenders and would-be football players from around town, he was willing to try that,” Kinnear explains.

Having met the real Vince Papale as well, Kinnear developed a keen understanding of what Dick Vermeil saw in him, despite his advancing age and lack of experience. “Vince is just a wonderful, high energy guy who is kind of an Every Man that anyone can relate to,” Kinnear observes. “I found him to really be an inspired person. You can see how he brought bags full of spirit to the team and the people around him. Back then, his team, the city, the country, everything was in pretty bad shape but Papale had that simple, driving passion and determination that gave a lot of people hope.”

In forging his relationship with Mark Wahlberg as Papale, Kinnear saw that his character shares a lot in common with the inexperienced rookie. “These were two guys who were both in over their heads at exactly the same time,” he says, “and even though they were from completely different social and economic backgrounds, they converged together over something they both really loved and cared about. I thought the script handled their relationship really beautifully.”

Papale especially enjoyed Kinnear’s metamorphosis. “When I first saw him in the green pants, the white belt and the long hair, I thought ‘my God, it’s Dick,’” he recalls. “And when I heard him give Dick’s speeches – it gave me goosebumps that he had taken it that far.”

One of the biggest tests for Kinnear came in the scene when Vermeil gives his climactic speech before the pivotal game against the Giants. It’s a vital moment in the film and putting even more pressure on Kinnear was the fact that Dick Vermeil’s son was on the set that day. Yet Kinnear was able to step up his game when he needed to do it. “Dick’s son said he got chills watching Greg perform it was so real,” recalls Ericson Core. “Greg is such a chameleon that I think he can make himself completely into someone else. He really shows how much Dick and Vince had in common in that they were both guys who no one believed in yet proved themselves to be inspirational people.”

AN IRRESISTIBLE GIANTS FAN: ELIZABETH BANKS IS JANET CANTWELL

Into the mostly male, adrenaline-fueled world of INVINCIBLE comes Elizabeth Banks as Janet Cantwell, the beautiful bar waitress who at first draws sparks from Vince Papale as a fan of the Eagles rival NY Giants but later inspires him when he is at his lowest ebb and ultimately becomes his greatest love. Banks, who has previously charmed audiences with smaller roles in “Spider Man,” “Catch Me If You Can” and “Seabiscuit,” took the filmmakers by storm at her audition.

“We looked at a lot of different people for this role,” comments Core. “But Elizabeth was unbelievable. In a film where she’s surrounded by male energy, she holds her own and then some. She’s funny, sweet, smart and very sexy. There was also incredible chemistry between Elizabeth and Mark. They danced around each other in a beautiful way that really shows onscreen. Their relationship is fascinating to me because it’s very real and it isn’t at all perfect. They both clearly have been shaken up and injured in life and they have to juke and jive around each other to get to know each other but it’s truthful to the way so many relationships really are.”

Banks attended the University of Pennsylvania so she was thrilled to return to Philadelphia. Like nearly everyone who first encounters Vince Papale’s story, she also was moved by its underlying themes. “I think INVINCIBLE is about how anybody can make their dreams come true if you really go after them without ever giving up,” she says. “Vince obviously had some natural talent, but he got his dream job mostly because he had a lot of soul.”

Though the Massachusetts born Banks admits to being a New England Patriots fan, she also had a lot of personal experience in just how passionate people in Pennsylvania are about football. “Philly is such a great sports town,” she says. “I went to Eagles games when I lived in Philly and I adore the fans – they are demanding and committed which makes seeing games so much fun. I loved Veterans Stadium, which no longer exists, but was thrilled with how well they recreated it with CGI for this movie.”

Banks had no trouble understanding why the character of Janet in the film would be so strongly attracted to Vince Papale, in spite of their conflicts and differences. “He had courage and audacity – but he also went through periods of doubting himself and I think that is kind of endearing,” she notes. “Janet just admires his quest. It doesn’t matter to her whether he wins or loses – it’s the fact that he tries with so much of himself and doesn’t hold anything back that makes her fall for him.”

IMPACT!
BRINGING REAL BONE-CRUNCHING NFL ACTION TO THE SCREEN

While the dreams of Vince Papale drive INVINCIBLE, the film is also propelled by some of the most visceral football action seen on screen – which authentically recreates the style of play of Papale and Vermeil’s 1976 Philadelphia Eagles. “We wanted to really get audiences inside the game,” comments Gordon Gray. “We put a lot of effort and energy into getting the football right.”

To get to the heart of football’s swift and aggressive beauty, the filmmakers knew that the cooperation of the NFL – rarely given to Hollywood – would be essential. The league turns down most scripts that it’s sent and has become actively involved in only three productions in Hollywood history: “Jerry Maguire,” “Brian’s Song” and “Black Sunday.” So the filmmakers couldn’t have been more thrilled when the NFL decided to partner with the film and allow the production full access to archives, vintage uniforms and more.

The story itself is what attracted the NFL to make its first foray into feature films in the 21st Century. Says Tracy Perlman, Director of Entertainment Marketing and Promotions for the National Football League explains the film’s appeal to the league: “The NFL and its players represent so much more than what America comes together to watch on Sundays and Monday nights. INVINCIBLE takes the helmets off the players to reveal the hard-working men who struggle to make their dreams come true.”

Once the NFL came on board, they were involved at every turn. “We were a full partner in this production throughout its development,” notes Perlman. “We provided the use of NFL and team logos, worked to ensure authenticity in the look and feel of the football action scenes. We engaged our official sponsors and licensees to create footballs and helmets worn in the mid-70s. We hosted the cast at an NFL Draft event and also enjoyed watching Mark Wahlberg and Greg Kinnear work the room at the Draft at Radio City Music Hall. We even brought together Kinnear with Coach Dick Vermeil at training camp last summer.”

Meanwhile, to re-create the on-field exploits of the Eagles, the filmmakers brought in Mark Ellis, a former college football player and co-founder of Reel Sports, a company that has raised the bar on forging realistic action in sports movies. Not only had Ellis previously worked with Mark Ciardi and Gordon Gray to forge the stunningly true-to-the-sport baseball sequences for “The Rookie” and hockey sequences in “Miracle,” he also had honed his football choreography on such films as “The Longest Yard,” “The Replacements,” “Any Given Sunday” and “Varsity Blues.” He was now ready to take on-screen football to the next level.

The story of Papale resonated with Ellis. “In America, we love the underdog, we love the guy who was never supposed to get a shot but somehow finds his way– and that’s exactly what happened with Vince,” Ellis says. “You have to understand that it’s easier to become a U.S. Congressman than it is to

become a pro football player – and nobody does it at 30 without having played college ball. The odds of this kind of thing happening, whether today or in 1976, are close to impossible.”

Ellis also relished the challenge ahead. “When you have a movie that is based on a true story and that the NFL is sanctioning that puts more pressure on you to make sure everything is as true and authentic as possible,” he notes. “So that’s what we aimed for – keeping it true to the period, true to that era of football and true to what happened in 1976. The game has changed so much in the last 25 years, you really get a sense of how it used to be.”

When it came to choreographing key sequences from the 1976 games, Ellis found himself blessed. “To have the cooperation of the NFL and the incredible assets of NFL Films at our disposal meant that we could go back and research every single move, and get a really deep understanding of Coach Vermeil’s schemes offensively and defensively, and then match them up with our own choreography,” he explains. “After watching all the films, interviewing Dick Vermeil and Vince Papale and doing all the research, we then began to put together all our X’s and O’s.”

Throughout the process, Vermeil’s constant input was invaluable. “Dick always believed so much in Vince and he wanted to see this story told,” says Ellis. “He also understands all that Vince meant to his town and his team. More than that, Dick has miles and miles and years and years of football behind him. So to ask him very specific questions about what happened was very exciting. We asked him as many little things as we could – from cadence to huddles to how he ran his practices at camp – and we kept everything as true to form as we could.”

Reel Sports also was involved in the intensive training of Mark Wahlberg. “Our job was to make sure that Mark got a chance to feel what exactly it was like to be a wide receiver/special teams guy in 1976 under Dick Vermeil,” explains Ellis. “So we put him through a similar type of training and we watched him rise to the occasion.”

Meanwhile, Ellis and his team faced a far more formidable task: recruiting the dozens upon dozens of experienced football players they would need to portray Papale’s teammates on the Eagles, as well as the players on the opposing teams. Because they were looking for men with the skills to carry out complicated game choreography and able and willing to take real hits on screen, the filmmakers knew they would have to look beyond actors to true pros. So began a month-long casting campaign, during which the filmmakers crossed the country, pulling cast members from the ranks of college football, arena football, the Canadian football league, and players who had either just retired from the NFL, or, alternately, had just missed making the cut.

Each of the players was put through a week-long audition process – akin to an NFL try-out -- testing their strength, agility and ability to work on camera. The final result was a roster of 75 players who could be deployed whenever the re-created games called for them. “This procedure was a lot like

putting together a real football team,” Ellis says. “You had to know what your needs were and find the right players to fulfill them all. We were looking mainly for people who could play multiple positions and were good fundamental football players, and I think we put together an exciting group.”

The casting of the players also took into account the look and makeup of the actual 1976 NFL teams depicted in the film. “We tried to match the ethnic breakdown, as well as heights and weights so they would be true to form for the Eagles,” notes Ellis. “In 1976, all the guys wore their hair a little bit longer, so we even started contacting our cast two months before we had them show up, and said, ‘don’t shave, don’t get a haircut, and be here ready for camp.’”

After a four-week training camp designed to whip the players into fighting shape, filming began in earnest as the teams brought to life some of the most dynamic and memorable plays from the 1976 season. Despite the careful choreography of each play for the screen, the cast found that the filming could be just as grueling, or even more so, than a game itself. After all, pros in the NFL gear up to take their hits once a week, but the team Ellis assembled for INVINCIBLE had to take those hits day in, day out.

“It’s hard,” admits Stink Fisher, a former NFL free agent who plays Vince’s teammate Denny Franks in the film. “It’s not so much when the whistle blows and the cameras are up and rolling because then you’re simply focused on what you have to do. But it’s the aftermath, when you go home and you gotta get up the next morning and start trying to walk on these feet that don’t want to be walked on yet... that’s when it starts hitting you like, ‘wow, I don’t know how Jerry Rice is still doing this.’”

On-set safety was an especially big concern for Ellis, especially due to the period nature of the story and the restrictions it put on the equipment. “You’re talking about helmets and pads that are 25 years old, and we’re asking 250 pound guys to hit at full speed, so safety becomes a major issue,” Ellis remarks. Ellis resolved the problem with help from the equipment department, which customized helmets and pads to resemble the old-school 1976 equipment but with modern-day protections inside.

When the time came to put all the pieces together and put their star onto the line of scrimmage, the results were better than the team could have hoped: Wahlberg took the roughest hits his “teammates” could dish out, and he gave back as good as he got. Producer Mark Ciardi notes: “You see them all in the movie. One especially hard one – one the crew hasn’t stopped talking about -- is a sideline hit that Mark took, and it’s pretty bone-jarring, and he gets up after being hit and runs right back onto the field. I think that says it all.”

Regarding that now-legendary sideline hit, Ellis admits: “My heart skipped a couple of beats. I figured my career had just ended! But Mark always managed to somehow make it bigger and better than I ever imagined it would be.” In the end, a few skipped heartbeats seemed small price to pay for spectacular shots that capture the spirit of a man, a football team and an entire production.

SPIRIT OF 76: SHOOTING IN PHILADELPHIA

Part of the magic of Vince Papale's tale of triumph arose from the time and place where it occurred: in a down-trodden Philadelphia whose sports fans were at rock bottom in the year of America's Bicentennial -- and at a time when a post-Watergate, post-Vietnam nation was in desperate need of true heroes. From the start, the filmmaking team of INVINCIBLE dedicated themselves to capturing that atmosphere. "1976 was a big year," says producer Mark Ciardi. "Philadelphia was the location for a lot of the Bicentennial productions that year, and it was such an important moment for the country -- so we wanted to incorporate that into the story, as well as having fun with the outfits and hairstyles of the '70s."

"The context of the time is so important to the film," adds Victor Constantino. "It was a bad time in much of the country, but especially in the Northeast and especially in Philly. Inspiration couldn't even be drawn from their sports teams, as the Eagles had had eleven straight losing seasons. So it was in this atmosphere that Vince's courage and determination made such a difference."

Philly produced two heroes in 1976. Just as Papale's extraordinary rookie season was reaching its climax, United Artists released "Rocky," featuring Sylvester Stallone's breakthrough performance in the title role. The primal similarity between the "Italian Stallion" and Vince Papale—both rising from the mean streets of South Philly to find unprecedented success — was much-remarked on at the time. This too, inspired the filmmakers to go for a look that was evocative of that period.

Says Ericson Core: "We were inspired by all those character driven stories from the 70s -- 'Marathon Man,' 'The French Connection,' 'Serpico.' We tried to stick to a degree to 70s technology, not glossing it up, but giving you the raw essence of the characters and the heart of the story."

The decision was made early on to shoot as much of the film as possible in Philly -- starting on the same rough-and-tumble South Philly streets from which Vince Papale first emerged, with their old rowhouses and low-rise tenements. "It was great to shoot in so many authentic locations because there was so much truth to it," comments Core. "To go the real places where Vince lived and played, to be in his real neighborhood and get a feel for it, really guided us all, both cast and crew."

Core continues: "I really wanted to give the film a sense of the grittiness that is South Philly -- and contrast that with the pro football world which is so removed from Vince's everyday reality. We created a very different tone for Vince's life in the neighborhood and that with the Eagles. In South Philly, the camera is much more static because the world, the economy and hope are stagnant, and there's a languidness to those visuals. When we get on the football field, there's a much more frenetic energy that comes to life. Ultimately, when Vince breaks through to who he really wants to be, at the game against the Giants, the camera moves more smoothly with him, where he seems to control the frame. We

also shot the games differently in the beginning – where the players are more distant. Then, when Vince gets on the field, the camera gets right down in there emotionally with him.”

Unfortunately, the one place in Philadelphia that was so central to Papale’s story– the Veterans Stadium where he once sat in the stands and then played on the field – was demolished shortly before filming began, forcing the filmmakers to re-create it. “The first time I visited Vince in Philly, he drove me by the rubble pile that was Veteran’s Stadium,” recalls Core. “They were still clearing it out to make a parking lot for the new stadiums so that was sad to see. Fortunately, we were able instead to shoot at Franklin Field at the University of Pennsylvania, where the Eagles actually did play before Veterans was built, and it turned out to be a wonderful location. It’s not nearly as tall or as big, but we were able to use it for the groundwork knowing that we would have Matte World Digital fill in the rest of the stadium much in the same way they created ancient stadiums for ‘Gladiator.’”

Of course, when you’re making a movie about a city’s local hero, you also find that city will bend over backwards to help. Says Mark Ciardi: “The fans were great, the extras were great, and to be able to come back to the exact place where it happened – you can’t beat it.”

To further transform Philadelphia and its citizens into their 1976 incarnation, Ericson Core worked closely with costume designer Susan Lyall who aimed to be true to the way things really were. “Everyone thinks 1976 is ‘Saturday Night Fever’ and disco, but that was a bit later, so we tried to dodge that look,” explains Lyall. “Anyway, Vince’s world is much grittier than that. It’s deeply unglamorous.”

To evoke the informality of the times, Lyall employed well-worn, vintage versions of leisure suits, tight t-shirts, short shorts and acres of polyester – but it wasn’t always easy to convince the cast to wear them. “I thought everyone looked really good in the clothes, but they all protested,” admits Lyall. “The short shorts sent everybody into a tailspin. I never knew how self-conscious men were about their legs until this movie, I have to say!”

When it came to the football uniforms, Lyall had a major advantage. “Because this was an NFL-sponsored film we had the right, and in fact the duty, to create exact replica uniforms,” she explains. Still, her work was cut out for her. “We did a lot of research, a lot of freezing of old NFL films, and I even went to Vince Papale’s house and looked at his old jersey. We paid a lot of attention to detail – right down to the very different fabrics that were used then and period-correct padding – to make sure we got it right. Everything was different – the uniforms fit more snugly, the mesh they used for the uniforms was completely see-through, even the zippers on the pants were different. And because it was the Bicentennial, the Philadelphia Eagles had a ’76 Liberty Bell patch.”

She continues: “Then there were the helmets, and we had to work out exactly where the striping went, how the mouth guards had to fit, and also the cleats. It was a lot like putting together a big puzzle.”

Lyall also worked with Core to create a contrasting palette for South Philly and the football field. “Ericson is very specific about color,” she says. “He wanted very saturated colors for Philly, dark and autumnal with burgundys dark greens and golds, while with the football team, we use high graphics and big contrasts, with hot whites and sharp greens. They are really like polar opposites.”

By the climax of INVINCIBLE, these polar opposites have managed to come together – as Vince brings the guts and tenacity he developed in his neighborhood right into the hyper-energized emotions of the game. More than any particular visual, it was this ineffable essence of inspiration that Ericson Core hoped to capture on the screen with the film inspired by Papale.

He summarizes: “Everyone has faced adversity in their lives, but what Vince Papale showed us in 1976 is that even a person who had to face so much of it can still rise to the challenge and succeed.”

WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

VINCE PAPALE

It seems that much of Vince Papale's life has been spent inspiring the hopes and dreams of others. Having started with a first career as a teacher, he then went on to the unexpected NFL career depicted in INVINCIBLE – becoming the most unlikely rookie without a college football background ever to play the game. More recently, he has worked in higher education as a marketing executive with Sallie Mae, traveling the East Coast helping young students to fulfill their college ambitions by offering advice on financial assistance.

Papale also recently survived a battle with colorectal cancer, an experience that led him to another unexpected career – this time as an impassioned national spokesperson for cancer prevention. He also donates time to a number of charities focused on helping cancer patients, including the Philadelphia Eagles' Fly For Leukemia.

Making his home in Cherry Hill, NJ, Papale lives with his wife Janet, a former member of the USA World Gymnastics Team, and their two school-age children. They are the only married couple to have been inducted individually into the Pennsylvania Sports Hall of Fame.

DICK VERMEIL

In 2006, Dick Vermeil announced his retirement from football after 15 seasons as a head NFL coach, most recently with the Kansas City Chiefs. During his career, Vermeil etched his name amongst some of the NFL's coaching elite in 2003, when he became one of just five head coaches in league history to take three different teams to the playoffs.

Vermeil's lasting contributions to the game of the football date back far longer than his tenure in pro football which began in '69. He owns the rare distinction of being named "Coach of the Year" on four levels: high school, junior college, NCAA Division I and the NFL. Vermeil is also just one of four coaches in NFL history to lead two different teams to the Super Bowl, first Philadelphia in Super Bowl XV and then leading St. Louis to a win in Super Bowl XXXIV. Nineteen years after winning the NFL Coach of the Year honor for the initial time with the '80 Philadelphia Eagles, Vermeil was once again honored as the NFL's Coach of the Year following the '99 season with St. Louis and was a consensus "Coach of the Year" selection among pro football publications and by virtually every major event in the country, including Kansas City's own 101 Banquet.

After his seven seasons with the Eagles from '76-82, Vermeil engineered four Philadelphia playoff appearances. Vermeil began a 14-year broadcasting career, serving as an NFL and college football analyst for CBS and ABC from '83-96. In addition to being the only head coach to lead his team to victories in both the Super Bowl and the Rose Bowl, he is also the only individual to coach a team in the Rose Bowl and later broadcast a Rose Bowl contest. Vermeil and his wife, Carol, have three children and 11 grandchildren.

About the Cast

MARK WAHLBERG (Vince Papale) will next be seen in Martin Scorsese's "The Departed." He most recently starred in "Four Brothers" for director John Singleton and the critically acclaimed existential comedy "I Heart Huckabees." Last summer, he led a stellar cast in the heist movie "The Italian Job." He has enjoyed playing diverse characters in both mainstream box-office hits and eclectic independent films. He's worked with such prestigious directors as David O. Russell, Wolfgang Petersen, Tim Burton and Paul Thomas Anderson.

Wahlberg's remarkable film career began with Penny Marshall's "Renaissance Man" and "The Basketball Diaries," followed by a star turn opposite Reese Witherspoon in "Fear." His breakout performance in "Boogie Nights" launched him into the public consciousness and headlined "Three Kings" and "The Perfect Storm" with George Clooney. He followed those with "Rock Star," "Planet of the Apes" and "The Truth About Charlie."

GREG KINNEAR (Dick Vermeil) continues to build upon his already impressive resume with roles in the most diverse of projects. With 2006 shaping up to be a very busy year for the Academy Award® nominated actor, Kinnear can currently be seen in what was the hit of the 2006 Sundance Film Festival, "Little Miss Sunshine." The ensemble dark comedy also stars Steve Carell and Toni Collette and is set in the world of children's beauty pageants. The buzz film of the festival, "Little Miss Sunshine" was acquired in a bidding war by Fox Searchlight and was recently released to outstanding reviews.

Next up, Kinnear will star in Richard Linklater's "Fast Food Nation," based on the best-selling book by Eric Schlosser. Fox Searchlight will distribute the film this fall. He will also be seen starring in The Weinstein Company's "Unknown," a thriller in which Kinnear plays one of five men who wake up in a locked-down warehouse with no memory of who they are. Kinnear is currently in production on "Feast of Love," a drama in which he will star alongside Morgan Freeman.

Within the past two years, Kinnear starred in the dark comedy, "The Matador" with Pierce Brosnan, "The Bad News Bears" opposite Billy Bob Thornton, and lent his voice as "Ratchet" in the highly successful animated film, "Robots."

2002 saw the release of the critically-acclaimed biopic of actor and comedian Bob Crane, "Auto Focus" for director Paul Schrader; that year also saw Kinnear battling on the big screen opposite Mel

Gibson in the feature “We Were Soldiers” focusing on the Vietnam War battle of La Drang. That year he lit up the small screen as well in the emotion-driven Norman Jewison HBO movie “Dinner with Friends” alongside Toni Collette, Dennis Quaid, and Andie MacDowell.

Some of Kinnear’s other credits include the romantic comedy “Someone Like You” with Ashley Judd and Hugh Jackman, the Farrelly brothers’ comedy “Stuck on You” in which he co-starred with Matt Damon, Sam Raimi’s supernatural thriller “The Gift” alongside Cate Blanchett and Katie Holmes, and director Neil LaBute’s black comedy “Nurse Betty” opposite Renee Zellweger, Morgan Freeman, and Chris Rock.

In 1997, Kinnear starred alongside Jack Nicholson as his unfortunate neighbor Simon in James L. Brooks’ Academy Award nominated film “As Good As It Gets.” His performance garnered him not only an Academy Award® nomination, but earned him the honor of being named Best Supporting Actor by the National Board of Review; he was also nominated in the same category at The Golden Globes and The Screen Actors Guild Awards that year.

Kinnear made his feature film debut in the Sydney Pollack-directed remake “Sabrina” in which he co-starred with Harrison Ford and Julia Ormond. His performance prompted the trade organization of the movie theatre owners to name him NATO ShoWest’s “Star of Tomorrow.” Following his Oscar®-nominated performance in “As Good As It Gets,” he co-starred in Nora Ephron’s romantic hit comedy “You’ve Got Mail” with Tom Hanks and Meg Ryan, Mike Nichol’s “What Planet Are You From?” with Gary Shandling and Annette Bening, and appeared in a cameo role as ‘Captain Amazing’ in “Mystery Man.”

Kinnear first gained prominence as the animated, wisecracking host of E! Entertainment Television’s “Talk Soup” in 1991. As the first host of “Talk Soup,” he was the master of not one, but of all talk shows with his witty commentary on clips from such programs as “Sally Jesse Raphael,” “Jerry Springer,” and “Montel.” Eventually taking on the additional role of executive producer on the show, Kinnear earned an Emmy Award, rave reviews, and established a cult-like following.

As the popularity of “Talk Soup” grew, Kinnear captured the attention of NBC executive who were searching for a replacement for Bob Costas. In 1994, after three successful seasons with “Talk Soup,” Kinnear left the show permanently and became the host and executive producer of his own NBC late-night talk show “Later with Greg Kinnear.”

Kinnear grew up virtually all over the world as his family followed his State Department father to disparate locales such as Logansport, Indiana; Washington, D.C.; Beirut, Lebanon; and Athens, Greece. He currently resides in Los Angeles with his wife and daughter.

ELIZABETH BANKS (Janet Cantwell) is one of the most promising young talents in Hollywood. Following her starring role in "Seabiscuit" as 'Marcella Howard' opposite Jeff Bridges and Tobey Macguire, Banks has taken the industry by storm.

Banks recently completed production on the independent comedy "Bill," produced by GreeneStreet Films and also starring Aaron Eckhart and Jessica Alba. The script was written by Melisa Wallack who will co-direct with her husband Bernie Goldman. The film follows a man (Eckhart) fed up with his job and married to an adulterous wife (Banks) who then reluctantly mentors a rebellious teen (Alba).

On the small screen Banks was recently seen in the season finale of NBC's "Scrubs." She will reprise her role in the forthcoming season. She will also be seen in the CBS mini series "Comanche Moon" which is the prequel to "Lonesome Dove."

Banks was recently seen in "Sisters," an independent film based on Anton Chekov's "Three Sisters," which stars Maria Bello and Eric McCormack. She was also seen in Universal Pictures' critically acclaimed horror/comedy "Slither," written and directed by James Gunn. The film tells the tale of an alien plague that infects a small town and causes a local to go on a killing spree.

In August 2005, Elizabeth made a memorable turn Universal's quirky comedy "The 40-Year-Old Virgin." The film starred Steve Carell and Katherine Keener. Banks played a playful bookstore employee who seduces Carell's character.

In June 2005, Banks was seen starring in the Sony Classics/Ivory Merchant drama "Heights" opposite Glenn Close and James Marsden. The film was directed by Chris Terio and written by Amy Fox. Said Ebert and Roeper "...performances are all excellent, with Banks the real find here. The camera loves her...."

Also in 2005, Banks appeared in the IFC Film's "The Baxter," a romantic comedy set in Brooklyn about a guy who is constantly being left at the altar. Banks appears in the film with Michael Showalter, Justin Theroux, Michael Williams, Peter Dinklage and Paul Rudd. The film opened in New York on Friday, August 26th and in Los Angeles on September 2nd. Banks was also recently seen in Miramax Films' "Daltry Calhoun" starring Johnny Knoxville. She also appeared in Showtime Independent Films' "Sexual Life" which screened at the Los Angeles Film Festival. The film profiles the interlinking love lives of eight Los Angeles residents and stars James LeGros, Tom Everett Scott and Azura Skye.

In 2003 Banks appeared opposite Tobey Maguire in "Spider Man 2," reprising her role as Betty Brant, which director Sam Raimi created for her in the first "Spider Man" blockbuster. She will return with this role in "Spider Man 3," which will be released Memorial Day weekend 2007. She also appeared opposite Leonardo DiCaprio in Steve Spielberg's "Catch Me If You Can."

Banks' additional feature credits include roles in John Singleton's "Shaft" with Samuel L. Jackson and "Wet Hot American Summer" starring Janeane Garofalo and David Hyde Pierce. She has also appeared in several independent features including "The Trade" and "Ordinary Sinner," which won the Best Film Award at the 2002 Slamdunk Film Festival in Park City. Her extensive theater credits include roles in American Conservatory Theatre's productions of "Hurly Burly," "Bethlehem," "A Midsummer Night's Dream," "A Woman of No Importance" and "Uncle Vanya", as well as the Guthrie Theater's production of "Summer & Smoke" directed by David Esbjornson. This summer Banks played Cherie, the female lead in William Inge's comedy "Bus Stop," as part of the Williamstown Theater Festival.

Originally from Massachusetts, Banks received her Bachelor's Degree from the University of Pennsylvania and her Graduate Degree at the American Conservatory Theater. Banks currently resides in Los Angeles.

KIRK ACEVEDO (Tommy), an accomplished film, stage and television actor, stars in the independent feature "5 Up 2 Down," directed by Steven Kessler and which recently premiered at the Las Vegas Film Festival.

Acevedo is set in the highly anticipated Paul Haggis television drama for NBC, "The Black Donnelly's" which will air early next year. Kirk also starred in "Law and Order: Trial by Jury" for the same network.

Additional television credits include portraying Sgt. Joseph Toye in HBO's critically acclaimed series "Band of Brothers." In 2001, the series was awarded the Emmy and Golden Globe for best mini-series. Acevedo was a series regular on the HBO television drama, "Oz," which earned him CableAce and five Alma nominations for his role as Miguel Alvarez. He has also guest-starred on the popular series "Third Watch," "NYPD Blue," "24," and "Numbers," among others.

Notable film credits include Terrence Malick's "The New World" and "The Thin Red Line," for which he won an Alma Award for Best Supporting Actor in 1998. He was also in "Boiler Room" for New Line, and the independent films, "Cruel and Unusual," directed by Barry Levinson, "Dinner Rush," and "In the Weeds."

On the stage, Acevedo was nominated for a Drama Desk award for his outstanding performance in Sam Shepard's *Tooth of Crime*.

Kirk resides in New York and Los Angeles with his wife and daughter.

KEVIN CONWAY (Frank Papale) has created many memorable characters in film, television and theater. Conway's career on the stage includes: "Other People's Money" (Off-Broadway - Outer Critics' Circle Award for Best Actor), "The Elephant Man" (Original Broadway), "Of Mice And Men" (Broadway and Kennedy Center), "King John" (NY Shakespeare Festival), "On The Waterfront" (Broadway – Drama League Award "Best Actor"), "When Ya Comin' Back Red Ryder?" (Off-Broadway and Los Angeles Obie, Drama Desk and L.A. Awards for Best Actor), "Long Day's Journey Into Night" (Kennedy Center and Broadway) and his personal favorite, "One Flew Over the Cuckoos' Nest" (Off-Broadway).

In addition to performing, Conway has directed for the stage, debuting with "Mecca" by English playwright, Ted Whitehead, selected by TIME magazine as one of the top 10 plays of the year, earning both the playwright and Conway Drama Desk Award Nominations. He went on to direct "Other People's Money" (Chicago, San Francisco and Los Angeles – Critics Award) and "The Elephant Man" (Westport, CT). In New York, he helmed productions of "Short Eyes" by Miguel Pinero starring Lawrence Fishburne, Ving Rhames and Michael O'Keefe, "The Milk Train Doesn't Stop Here Anymore" with Elizabeth Ashley and Amanda Plummer, and Ted Whitehead's "The Man Who Fell in Love with His Wife," in which Conway also starred.

Conway also directed the feature film, "El Sol y la Luna" starring Joaquim De Almeida, Mila Burnette and Jose Ferrer, in addition to several documentaries. He has done extensive narrations for television shows and commercials including work on numerous documentaries by the acclaimed Ken Burns, most notably as the voice of Mark Twain. On television, Conway has starred in numerous mini-series and specials including "Gettysburg," "Streets of Laredo," "Calm at Sunset, Calm at Dawn," "Rage Of Angels," "The Scarlet Letter," "The Elephant Man," "The Whipping Boy," "Flamingo Rising," "Deadliest Season," "When Will I Be Loved," "Something About Amelia," "The Gardeners' Son," "Jesse" and the sci-fi cult classic "The Lathe of Heaven." He has guest-starred on many television series, including playing "Kayless" the Klingon Messiah on "Star Trek: The Next Generation." He can also be seen in the upcoming Showtime series "Brotherhood," as well as NBC's "Black Donnelly's" created by Academy Award® winners Bobby Moresco and Paul Haggis ("Crash").

Conway has starred in over twenty feature films including: "Looking for Richard," "The Confession," "The Quick and the Dead," "Ramblin' Rose," "Jennifer 8," "One Good Cop," "F.I.S.T.," "Paradise Alley," "Slaughterhouse 5," "Funny Farm," "13 Days," "Black Knight," "Gettysburg," "Gods and Generals" and "Mystic River."

MICHAEL KELLY (Pete) just completed work on three feature films, including "Tenderness," directed by John Polson and starring Russell Crowe, "Broken English" (written/directed by Zoe

Cassavetes) and “The Afterlight” (written/directed by Craig Macneill and Alexei Kaleina). Recent work includes the film “Loggerheads,” which was nominated for the Grand Jury Prize at the Sundance Film Festival in 2005, and “Carlito’s Way: Rise to Power,” the prequel to the 1993 hit, “Carlito’s Way” in which he stars alongside Jay Hernandez and Sean ‘P. Diddy’ Combs. Other recent projects include: The Role of ‘Bobby Crocker’ in the USA network television series “Kojak,” with Ving Rhames and Chazz Palminterri, and ‘CJ’ in the 2004 Universal blockbuster hit “Dawn of the Dead.” Kelly also appeared in M. Night Shyamalan’s “Unbreakable,” as well as Milos Forman’s “Man on the Moon,” where he played Jim Carey’s brother, ‘Michael Kaufman.’ Kelly’s Indie film credits include: “River Red” (Sundance Film Festival) and “Origin of Species” (Gold Award winner at Houston Film Festival). Kelly was a series regular on UPN’s one hour action drama, “Level 9,” and has guest starred in numerous hit television shows, including “Law & Order: Special Victims Unit,” “Law & Order,” “The Shield,” “Judging Amy,” “The Jury,” “Third Watch,” and “The Sopranos,” in which he plays the recurring role of FBI Agent ‘Goddard’. A lifetime member of The Actor’s Studio, Kelly has performed in such plays as Arthur Penn’s production of *Major Crimes*, Theatre Studio’s *Miss Julie*, as well as in a production of *In Search of Strindberg* staged in Stockholm, Sweden.

MICHAEL RISPOLI (Max) has amassed an impressive film and television career, showing his range as an actor by appearing in dramas, comedies, and thrillers. His recent films include “Lonely Hearts” with John Travolta and Salma Hayek and “The Weather Man,” opposite Nicolas Cage and Michael Caine, as well as two indie films, “Black Irish” and “One Last Thing.” His other credits include “Mr. 3000,” opposite Bernie Mac, “Death to Smoochy,” directed by Danny DeVito, Spike Lee’s “Summer of Sam,” John Dahl’s “Rounders” and Brian De Palma’s “Snake Eyes.” Rispoli played the lead in “Two Family House,” which won the Sundance Film Festival Audience Award in 2000. Some of his other feature credits are “Scared City,” “Volcano,” “To Die For,” “Feeling Minnesota,” “While You Were Sleeping,” “The Juror” and “One Tough Cop.”

Rispoli is perhaps best known for his recurring role as Jackie Aprile in the HBO series, “The Sopranos.” Other recurring roles for television include NBC’s “Third Watch” and CBS’s “Touched by an Angel.” He has also appeared as a guest lead in both “ER” and “Law & Order: Criminal Intent.” Rispoli has starred in numerous television series, including “The Beat,” “The Great Defender,” “The Larsens of Las Vegas,” “My Guys,” “Billy Club” and “Bram and Alice.”

Rispoli began his career on stage, performing in the Circle Rep/Steppenwolf revival of “Balm in Gilead,” directed by John Malkovich. He then became a co-founder of the Willow Cabin Theatre Company. The WCTC staged a production of “Wilder, Wilder, Wilder – Three by Thornton” that moved to Off-Broadway and then to Broadway, earning a Tony nomination. In 2004, Michael starred and

received glorious reviews in the Off-Broadway production of the play “Magic Hands Freddy” opposite Ralph Macchio. Rispoli has appeared in New York and regional theatre in productions of “Macbeth,” “Tartuffe,” “A Midsummer Night’s Dream” and O’Neill’s “Sea Plays,” among many others. Since then, he has accumulated an extensive list of movie, television, and stage credits.

MICHAEL NOURI (Leonard Tose) stars as ‘Dr. Neil Roberts’ on FOX’s smash hit “The OC.” On the big screen, he was most recently seen in “Last Holiday,” starring Queen Latifah, and “Boynton Beach Bereavement Club,” opposite Dyan Cannon. Nouri has enjoyed a long career spanning film, television and theatre. His extensive film work includes: “Flashdance,” “The Terminal,” Billy Crystal’s “61*,” “High Roller: The Stu Unger Story,” “Lovely and Amazing,” “Finding Forrester,” starring opposite Sean Connery, “Goodbye Columbus,” “Davinci’s Way,” “The Imagemaker,” “Gobots,” “Chameleon,” “Fatal Sky,” “Total Exposure,” “Black Ice,” “Fortunes of War,” “To The Limit” and “The Hidden,” for which he won the Best Actor Award at the Avoriaz Film Festival.

Nouri has recently guest starred on “South Beach,” “Enterprise,” “Cold Case,” “The Practice,” “The West Wing,” “Law & Order: SVU” and “Criminal Intent.” He played the lead role of ‘Lucky Luciano’ in the highly-rated NBC series “The Gangster Chronicles” and received an Emmy nomination for “Search for Tomorrow.” Nouri starred in the NBC series “Bay City Blues,” three series for CBS – “Love and War,” “Downtown,” and “Beacon Hill” – and in the title role of the series “The Curse of Dracula.” Additional television work includes “The Doris Duke Story,” “Rage of Angels,” opposite Jaclyn Smith,” “The Last Convertible,” “Contract on Cherry Street,” supporting Frank Sinatra,” “Shattered Dreams,” the title role in “Quiet Victory: The Charlie Wedemeyer Story,” “Between Two Women,” “The Story Continues,” “Danielle Steele’s Changes,” “In The Arms of a Killer,” “Psychic,” “Exclusive,” “The Sands of Time,” “Between Love and Honor,” and “Eyes of Terror,” with Barbara Eden.

Nouri starred on Broadway opposite Julie Andrews in “Victor/Victoria” and in “Forty Carats,” opposite Julie Harris. He recently starred in “Can Can” for the Encores series at City Center and in the Goodspeed Theatre production of “Camille Claudel,” opposite Linda Eder. He also toplined a seven-month national tour of “South Pacific.” Nouri serves as ambassador to the Multiple Sclerosis Society and to the Seeds of Peace charity.

About the Filmmakers

ERICSON CORE (Director; Director of Photography) makes his feature directorial debut with INVINCIBLE, after establishing himself as a cinematographer. He previously served as an episodic director on the series “Family Law,” as well as directing commercial spots for such clients as Nike, Honda, Pontiac and Infiniti and music videos by the artists Wheat and Boo-Yaa T.R.I.B.E.

Core served as director of photography on the feature films “Daredevil,” “The Fast And The Furious” (nominated as AFI Cinematographer Of The Year), “Dancing At The Blue Iguana,” “Mumford,” “Payback” and “187.” As a cinematographer, he has also shot commercial spots for clients such as Infinity, Toyota, Nike, MLB, and Lee Jeans, and music videos for such diverse artists as Goo Goo Dolls, Moby, Selena, Michael Jackson, Rod Stewart, Mike Watt, RUN-DMC and the Rolling Stones.

BRAD GANN (Writer) made his directorial debut with the indie film “Black Irish,” about a South Boston Irish-Catholic family, which Gann also wrote. He earlier wrote the screenplay for the action drama “Static,” currently in development.

MARK CIARDI and GORDON GRAY (Producers) are the heads of Mayhem Pictures, which enjoys a first-look overhead deal with Walt Disney Pictures. Mayhem most recently produced the studio’s box office hit “Miracle,” based on the inspiring true story of the 1980 American Winter Olympics Gold Medal Hockey team. Revered by audiences and critics alike, “Miracle” was honored by the Broadcast Film Critics Association with a Best Family Film nomination as well as an ESPY Award for Best Sports Film.

Mayhem is currently in production on the Disney comedy “The Game Plan” starring Dwayne “The Rock” Johnson as a superstar quarterback whose rich and famous lifestyle is suddenly sacked when he discovers the 7-year-old daughter he never knew he had.

The company is currently in development on Walden Media’s “Carlisle School,” about Olympic gold medalist Jim Thorpe which is being written by John Sayles.

Mayhem’s also produced the critically acclaimed “The Rookie,” starring Dennis Quaid as Texas baseball coach Jim Morris, who makes the major league after agreeing to try out if his high school team made the playoffs. The film won an ESPY Award for Best Sports Film.

Prior to partnering with Gordon Gray to form Mayhem Pictures, Mark Ciardi was a pitcher for the Major League Baseball’s Milwaukee Brewers, playing for the team in 1987.

KEN MOK (Producer) is founder and president of 10x10 Entertainment, a production

company which produces television, film and alternative media.

Among the television projects being produced under the 10x10 banner are the CW network's top rated reality series, "America's Next Top Model," "24-7," a reality series for MTV and "The White Rapper," a musical competition series for VH1. Mok is currently in pre-production on a new reality series for the CW entitled "Search for the Next Pussycat Doll." That project is being produced in conjunction with the film Director MCG and Robin Antin – founder of the Pussycat Dolls singing group.

Mr. Mok also created the hit show "Making the Band" which continues its run on MTV and "WWE Tough Enough," which is part of the WWE line-up. 10x10 has also produced television series for the Fox, ABC, USA Networks and HGTV.

Mr. Mok is also co-founder of the company, KM² with partner Krish Menon. KM² specializes in product-integrated programming as well as web 2.0 ventures. Currently KM² is launching a new social community with Tyra Banks that focuses on the world of fashion. The company is also launching product-integrated programming overseas in the People's Republic of China.

Prior to producing, Mr. Mok served as Vice President of MTV Productions, where he oversaw its television series and MOWs. Mok also served as Director of Comedy Development at ABC, and began his network career at NBC as creative executive. Mok began his professional career as a producer for CNN, where he wrote and produced. In addition to his producing credits, Mok also directs, most recently for the television specials "THEM" for NBC.

A native of Larchmont, N.Y., Mr. Mok currently resides in Los Angeles and is the devoted father to a beautiful 5-year old daughter.

VICTOR H. CONSTANTINO (Executive Producer), a native of Los Angeles, experienced his first East Coast winter while attending Harvard College. During his junior year, he decided to apply his Government coursework and served as a staffer to Rep. Joseph P. Kennedy II (D-MA) on Capitol Hill.

After graduation, Constantino returned to Southern California and year-round sunshine, embarking on a long-desired career in film. He first served as an assistant to producer Hunt Lowry before joining Junction Entertainment. There, he worked as Creative Executive, developing "Disney's The Kid" and "National Treasure" for director Jon Turteltaub. He then co-headed his own production shingle, Spilled Milk Productions, with producing partner and fellow executive producer, Nikki Reed.

Constantino now serves as Sr. Vice President, Production and Development, for Mayhem Pictures for producers Mark Ciardi and Gordon Gray. INVINCIBLE represents his inaugural producing credit.

A year after departing her post as VP of Production for Junction Entertainment to concentrate on independent producing, **NICOLE REED (Executive Producer)** has joined writer/producer Barry Kemp's Bungalow 78 Productions as head of Production in his newly pactured Touchstone Television deal.

Reed joins the company after a successful year as an independent producer, setting up two features at Disney with partner Victor Constantino under their Spilled Milk Productions banner. INVINCIBLE and "The Princess and The Pauper," currently being written by April Blair.

Prior to joining Bungalow 78, Reed spent 8 years at Jon Turteltaub's Junction Entertainment, rising to V.P. of Production in 2000. There, she oversaw such films as Walt Disney's "The Kid," and the recently released adventure hit, "National Treasure." Reed began her career as an assistant to Kathleen Kennedy at The Kennedy/Marshall Co. in 1995.

"I look forward to working with such an accomplished producer as Barry," said Reed. "Television has always been a passion for me, and I also look forward to expanding the slate of feature films Barry currently has in development."

Bungalow 78 currently has several half hour pilots under consideration for this Fall, including "Bobby Cannon" at Touchstone starring Kevin Sorbo, which Kemp has created and written.

EZRA SWERDLOW (Executive Producer) has been making films with the most talented filmmakers in the world for over 20 years. He has worked closely with four Academy Award winning directors including Sydney Pollack, Barry Levinson, Mike Nichols, and Woody Allen. He has had the opportunity to be intimately involved in the entire spectrum of movie making, collaborating with the best directors, actors, cinematographers, production designers, and editors in the entertainment industry. Swerdlow's credits include Mark Levin's "Little Manhattan," David Koepp's "Secret Window," Barry Levinson's "Wag The Dog," Mel Brooks' "Life Stinks," Joe Ruben's "The Good Son" and Forest Whitaker's "Waiting to Exhale."

MARK ELLIS (Football Coordinator) as co-founder and president of ReelSports has helped redefine the depiction of sports action in the entertainment industry. As a second unit director and action coordinator, Mark has become an invaluable partner behind the camera and on the field. He has directed/coached a number of Oscar® winning actors as well as Hall of Fame athletes. The over two-dozen movies in which Mark has been involved have grossed over a billion dollars in box office sales. From dramatizing true-life stories such as *The Rookie*, *Coach Carter*, *Miracle*, *Invincible* and *We Are Marshall*, to working on comedies such as *The Longest Yard* and *Mr. 3000*, Mark has become the recognized leader in sports action direction and coordination.

Mark's career in the film industry began in 1992 when he was hired to coordinate the football action in the movie *The Program*. Over the next nine years, Mark worked on nearly a dozen film and television projects. As the demand for his services grew, Mark recognized the opportunity to capitalize on a new niche in the entertainment/sports industry and formed ReelSports in 2001.

Since the inception of ReelSports, Mark has collaborated on multiple projects ranging from film and television to commercials and video games. Mark and ReelSports have distinguished themselves as the only multi-sport film specialists in the world, consulting on almost every major sports genre including football, basketball, baseball and hockey. His collaborative work has already been honored with five ESPY nominations. Two of the films, *The Rookie* and *Miracle*, were awarded "Best Sports Movie of the Year."

SARAH KNOWLES (Production Designer) studied painting and printmaking at SUNY Purchase and Tyler School of Art / Rome program. Knowles worked as an Art Director on films such as "Gattaca" and "Catch Me If You Can," both nominated for Academy Awards® for Best Art Direction. Prior to working on INVINCIBLE for Disney, Knowles' credits as Production Designer include "The Notebook" for New Line Cinema, and HBO's "Warm Springs," for which she received an Emmy for Outstanding Art Direction.

SUSAN LYALL (Costume Designer) takes a distinct approach to costume design; her attention to detail has resulted in collaborations with many of Hollywood's most respected filmmakers including Jodie Foster ("Little Man Tate" and "Home For The Holidays"), Michael Apted ("Nell," "Extreme Measures" and "Blink") and David Mamet ("State and Main" and "The Spanish Prisoner"). Since her first film experience in 1985 (when she was the dresser for screen legend Bette Davis), Lyall served as costume designer for close to thirty motion pictures including Mira Nair's "Mississippi Masala," "The Mothman Prophecies" for director Mark Pellington, "Music of the Heart" starring Meryl Streep, Barry Sonnenfeld's "For Love Or Money," "200 Cigarettes," Edward Burns' "She's The One," and Steven Soderbergh's "King of the Hill." Her most recent work can be seen in Disney's "Flight Plan" starring Jodie Foster and Peter Sarsgaard. Lyall also just completed the New York romantic comedy, "Music and Lyrics By...", directed by Marc Lawrence, starring Hugh Grant and Drew Barrymore.

Raised and educated in Ottawa, Canada, Lyall came to New York in the early 80s to study costume design at the Fashion Institute of Technology (FIT). She began her career at New York's highly regarded Circle Repertory Company and continued designing for several years for various on and off-Broadway productions.

VINCE PAPALE (Consultant) graduated from Interboro High School in 1964 as a 3 sport Varsity Letter winner senior year: football, basketball, & track. He was awarded a full athletic scholarship (Track & Field) to attend St. Joseph's College, where he graduated with an MS Degree in Marketing/Management Science and captained the Track Team his Senior Year, receiving the award for Most Outstanding Senior Athlete in 1968. He still holds the Indoor Pole Vault record.

Vince taught Middle School Business Education, in the Interboro School District from 1968 to 1974, also enjoying stints as Head Coach for Track & Field and Assistant Football Coach.

In 1976, at the age of 30, Vince tried out for the Philadelphia Eagles and made the team. He was with the Eagles for 4 seasons, as a wide receiver, and was voted Special Teams Captain by his teammates. Papale was voted Man of the Year by the Eagles, in 1978, for his many charitable activities, and honored by the NFL as a finalist for the league's prestigious Byron "Whizzer" White Award. His career was cut short by a shoulder injury in 1979.

Following his retirement from the NFL, Vince served as a TV and radio broadcaster for 8 years. Following this, he entered the world of commercial mortgage banking which led to his present position as a Marketing Executive for Sallie Mae, the nation's #1 student financial aid company. Papale has since served as chairman or co-chairman for a multitude of humanitarian causes, including Philadelphia Vietnam Veterans, Spina Bifida Association, Association for Retarded Citizens, Deborah Hospital, Multiple Sclerosis Society, and the American Heart Association. He has also worked with the Eagles Fly for Leukemia, the Police Athletic League, the Special Olympics, Maxwell Football Club, the Sunshine Foundation, the Boy Scouts, and the Variety Club. Vince has received the Chapel of the Four Chaplain's Humanitarian Award, the United Way's Gold Award, and the Jaycee's Distinguished Service Award.

Papale is married to the former Janet Cantwell. They reside in Cherry Hill, NJ, with their two children, Gabriella & Vincent. Janet is a former member of the USA World Gymnastics team and has coached and taught gymnastics all over the world. They remain the only married couple to have been inducted individually into the PA Sports Hall of Fame.