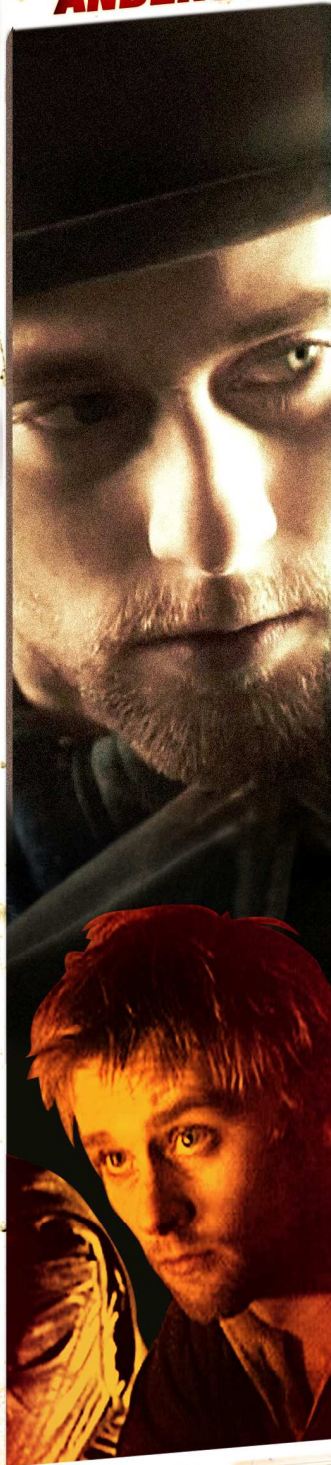


**TIMOTHY
OLYPHANT**



**STEPHEN ERIC
MCINTYRE**

**JOE
ANDERSON**



**ROSSIF
SUTHERLAND**

HIGH LIFE

PRESS KIT

HIGH LIFE

PRESS KIT - REVISED January 29, 2009

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SHORT SYNOPSIS

High Life is a dark comedy about four morphine addicts plotting a daring bank robbery. Dick and his pals have been botching jobs and racking up prison time for years, but this time Dick has the perfect plan for the perfect heist. Problem is, his crew is so rife with fear and loathing that keeping them from killing each other is hard enough; getting to the bank will take an absolute miracle.

LONG SYNOPSIS

Set in 1983 just after the birth of Automated Teller Machines (ATMs), *High Life* is a story about kinship, loyalty, and honor among thieves.

For years, Dick (Timothy Olyphant) and his pals Donnie (Joe Anderson), the hypochondriac pickpocket, and Bug (Stephen Eric McIntyre) the volatile professional thief, have been botching jobs and racking up time in prison. The guys are longtime friends with a shared fondness for morphine and small-time crime. Upon Bug's latest release from jail, he arrives to find Dick at work – real work this time, at a real job, in a real hospital. Not knowing what to make of the new Dick, the volatile Bug promptly gets him fired, and Dick suddenly finds himself in need of quick cash, and desperate for a fix.

So Dick hatches a plan inspired by his friend Donnie's latest scam: Donnie has shown Dick how to pick wallets and skim bits of cash from people's accounts via those amazing new ATM machines, which inspires Dick to mastermind a daring, imaginative bank heist - possibly his best plan to date. The last piece of the puzzle is an alluring front-man for the face of the job: Enter Billy (Rossif Sutherland), the sexy smooth-talking charmer who Dick meets at a Narcotics Anonymous meeting, and the final piece of the puzzle is in place.

It's a perfect plan. Until one of the bank's employees tries to double-cross the guys, and all hell breaks loose.

CAST BIOS

TIMOTHY OLYPHANT as DICK

With an expansive list of diverse film and television credits, Timothy Olyphant is known for his poignant roles in both dramas and comedies. Olyphant garnered critical notice for his powerful portrayal of the tough, honorable, natural born-leader Seth Bullock in HBO's groundbreaking series *Deadwood*. The show was nominated for the Screen Actors Guild for Best Ensemble for the third season.

Olyphant recently finished work on the indie film *A Perfect Getaway*, written and directed by David Twohy. He plays the lead role of Nick, the husband of a couple on their Hawaiian honeymoon which turns dangerous when they discover they are being stalked by a pair of killers. The film also stars Steve Zahn, Kiele Sanchez and Milla Jovovich.

Olyphant last starred in the action-packed drama *Hitman*, in which he plays the lead character, who contrary to his title, also happens to be the protagonist. The entire film was shot on location in Bulgaria and was based on the very popular video game of the same name. Xavier Gens directed and Luc Besson produced. 20th Century Fox released the film worldwide and it grossed approximately \$100 million.

Olyphant can be seen in the 20th Century Fox film *Live Free or Die Hard*, the fourth installment of the *Die Hard* series. Olyphant played the villain opposite Bruce Willis' return as John McClane. Len Wiseman directed and Arnold Rifkin produced the film.

Olyphant can also be seen in Paramount's *Stop-Loss*, in which he plays a Marine Corps General in Iraq. He also stars in *Meet Bill*, alongside Aaron Eckhart and Jessica Alba. The story revolves around a man (Eckhart) going through a mid-life crisis whose wife has an affair with a local newscaster (Olyphant) that is caught on tape and broadcast over the internet. The film was produced and financed by Gotham-based GreeneStreet Films. *Meet Bill* debuted at the 2007 Toronto Film Festival.

Last year Olyphant was seen on the big screen in Sony Picture's romantic comedy *Catch and Release*, starring opposite Jennifer Garner. The movie was written and directed by Susannah Grant. In 2004, Olyphant co-starred with Elisha Cuthbert and Emile Hirsch in the 20th Century Fox Film *The Girl Next Door*. He brilliantly portrayed Kelly, the porn producer, ex-boyfriend of Danielle (Cuthbert), who follows her to suburbia to try and convince her to come back to the business.

Prior to this, Olyphant starred alongside Donnie Wahlberg, Tom Sizemore, Jason Lee and Morgan Freeman in Castle Rock Entertainment's adaptation of Stephen King's best-selling novel *The Dreamcatcher*, which was directed by Lawrence Kasdan.

Other notable film credits include the Warner Bros. film *Rock Star* written by John Stockwell and directed by Stephen Herek, Disney's *Gone in 60 Seconds* and New Line Cinema's *A Man Apart*. In addition, Olyphant starred as Mickey in *Scream 2*, in the indie film *1999*, as well as *A Life Less Ordinary* alongside Cameron Diaz and Ewan McGregor, and *The First Wives Club*.

Olyphant attended the 2002 Sundance Film Festival for his movie *Coastlines*, in which it was screened in competition. Olyphant portrayed Sonny Mann, an ex-con who returns to his Florida hometown and becomes involved with his best friend's wife. The film was directed and written by Victor Nunez. The film also starred Josh Brolin and Sarah Wynter.

In 2002, Olyphant starred in the Sony Classics film *Broken Hearts Club – A Romantic Comedy*, which told the story of a close-knit group of young gay men who struggled to cope with their identity and found comfort in playing together on a softball team. The film also starred Zack Braff, John Mahoney and Dean Cain.

In 1999, Olyphant received great notice as the drug dealer Todd Gaines in Doug Liman's critically applauded film *Go*. Written by John August, *Go* tells a story about events that happen after a drug deal, told from three different points of view.

On television, Olyphant appeared in the HBO film *When Trumpets Fade* by director John Irvin and ABC's critically acclaimed drama *High Incident* as rookie cop Brett Faraday. Olyphant made his television debut with the series *77 Sunset Strip* for Warner Bros. and appeared in the CBS Hallmark Hall of Fame special *Ellen Foster* starring Julie Harris. Olyphant has also enjoyed guest appearances on popular shows such as *My Name Is Earl* and *Sex And The City*.

Born in Hawaii and raised in California, Olyphant attended USC where he developed an interest for the fine arts and performance arts. He studied drawing, painting, sculpting, theater and stand-up comedy. Upon graduation, Olyphant moved to New York to enroll in William Esper's acting program to perfect his craft. There he received the World Theater Award for Outstanding Debut Performance for his role as Tim Hapgood in the Playwright Horizon's *The Monogamist* written by Christopher Kyle. He went on to star in David Sedaris' one-man production *Santaland Diaries* at the Atlantic Theater, directed by Joe Mantello. He recently returned to the Playwright Horizon starring in *Plunge*, also written by Christopher Kyle.

Olyphant lives with his wife and their three children in Los Angeles.

STEPHEN ERIC MCINTYRE as BUG

Best known for his role as the drug dealer Mook in the ABC/Global series *Falcon Beach*, McIntyre returns to series television in 2008 as Uzzie in the new comedy series *Less Than Kind*. 2008 also saw McIntyre appear in the mini-series *Chasing the Devil* directed by Norma Bailey.

Born in Regina, Saskatchewan and raised in Winnipeg, McIntyre fell into acting in 1981 when he met a young Brian Hart (*Mad TV*) and a younger Kyle McCulloch (*South Park*). Together with Robert Slade they formed the improv comedy troupe Possible Nudity. Laughs and acclaim led to roles in theatre, and a move to Calgary, Alberta led to his first opportunities in television (*Lonesome Dove: The Series*) and film (*High Noon*).

Highlights for McIntyre include playing opposite John Turturro in *Fear X* and going nose to nose with Robin Williams and Woody Harrelson in *The Big White*.

JOE ANDERSON as DONNIE

After receiving critical acclaim on the London stage, Joe Anderson starred opposite Ed Harris in Agnieszka Holland's *Copying Beethoven*. He subsequently landed the coveted co-lead in *Across the Universe*, the Beatles musical directed by Julie Taymor for Columbia Pictures.

Thereafter, Joe went on to do co-starring roles in *Becoming Jane* for Miramax and opposite Samantha Morton in *Control*, a biopic about the UK band Joy Division. He was most currently seen in DreamWorks' *The Ruins*, and will next be seen in *Traveling for Universal*, in which he stars opposite Jennifer Aniston and Aaron Eckhart, and *Amelia* for Fox, opposite Hilary Swank and Ewan McGregor.

ROSSIF SUTHERLAND as BILLY

Rossif Sutherland, a rising star, has been incredibly busy the last couple of years building a career in both acting and music. Most recently, he starred in the Clement Virgo feature *Poor Boy's Game* opposite Danny Glover which screened at the 2007 Toronto International Film Festival.

Other film credits include leading roles in *Timeline*, a Paramount feature directed by Richard Donner as well as the independent feature film *Red Doors* directed by Georgia Lee. In Television, Sutherland has guest starred on shows such as *Monk* as well as a recurring in season 10 of NBC's hit show *ER*.

When not acting, Sutherland is busy recording his music. His first record was produced by Byron Wong.

CREW BIOS

GARY YATES – DIRECTOR/WRITER/PRODUCER

Gary Yates was born and raised in Montreal, Quebec. A professional magician for ten years prior to his filmmaking career, Yates made the transition from magic to filmmaking after picking up an old Super-8 camera at a flea market in Amsterdam where he was performing. His first short film entitled *Made For TV* premiered at the Berlin Film Festival in 1992, and went on to win numerous awards. The film was written, produced, directed, shot and edited by Yates. Eventually he gave up performing altogether, dedicating himself to filmmaking.

Yates' films have been critically acclaimed at festivals worldwide including Sundance, Berlin, Toronto, New York, and Shanghai. He has won awards from the Director's Guild and the National Screen Institute, and was short-listed for an Academy Award Nomination for Best Short Film. His first feature film, the award-winning *Seven Times Lucky*, premiered at the Sundance Film Festival to rave reviews, where *Variety* proclaimed it: "An absolute knockout of a feature debut, superbly crafted in every department."

ROBIN CASS – PRODUCER

Robin Cass brings to Triptych Media a diverse background in the visual arts and television. For Triptych Media, Cass' credits include *Lilies* (1996 Genie, Best Film) and *Falling Angels*, the award-winning 2003 Toronto International Film Festival hit. Most recently he produced the documentary *As Slow As Possible* directed by Scott Smith.

Triptych Media's productions include the recent *Emotional Arithmetic*. Based on the novel by Matt Cohen, the film stars Susan Sarandon, Christopher Plummer, Gabriel Byrne, Roy Dupuis and Max von Sydow. Robin and Triptych Media also served as Executive Producer for Richie Mehta's award-winning first feature, *Amal*. The company is best known for 1997's *The Hanging Garden*, Most Popular Film at the Toronto International Film Festival, as well as Deepa Mehta's *The Republic of Love*,

The company's television credits include CBC'S *Tale of Teeka*, winner of the Banff Rockie for Best Children's Program and a nominee for the prestigious Prix Italia. Triptych's *Lucky Girl* won two Gemini awards, including one for its young star, Elisha Cuthbert. Most recently CBC's, *Heydey!* won the Silver Hugo at the Chicago International Film Festival.

ANNA STRATTON – EXECUTIVE PRODUCER

ANNA STRATTON has a background in the theatre, where she worked as a producer, administrator and educator and as Head of English Language Theatre for the Canada Council. She produced many stage productions, including the hit play, *Tamara*. She is a graduate of the Canadian Film Centre. Anna has served on many boards and committees including the Feature Film Project of the Canadian Film Centre, Dance Umbrella of Ontario, the First Night Festival and the Toronto Theatre Festival. She is a co-founder of Reel Canada, the festival of films for high schools and of PRO, the Producer's Roundtable of Ontario, and serves on the OMDC advisory group for screen-based industries.

For Triptych Media, Stratton's select credits include *Lilies* (1996 Genie, Best Film), *The Bay of Love and Sorrows*, Deepa Mehta's *The Republic of Love* and most recently, *Emotional Arithmetic* directed by Paolo Barzman starring Susan Sarandon, Christopher Plummer, Gabriel Byrne, Roy Dupuis and Max von Sydow.

Anna and Triptych Media also served as Executive Producer for Richie Mehta's award-winning first feature hit, *Amal*. The company is best known for 1997's *The Hanging Garden*, Most Popular Film and Best Canadian Feature at the Toronto International Film Festival.

The company's television credits include CTV's *The Bookfair Murders* and CBC's *Tale of Teeka*, winner of the Banff Rockie for Best Children's Program and the Telefilm Canada Prize for Best Canadian Program in addition to being nominated for the prestigious Prix Italia. Triptych's *Lucky Girl* won two Gemini awards, including one for its young star, Elisha Cuthbert. Most recently, *Heydey!* for CBC which, won the Silver Hugo Award For Feature Length Telefilm - Drama at the Chicago International Film Festival.

MORRIS RUSKIN - EXECUTIVE PRODUCER

Morris has produced over forty films including *Glengarry Glen Ross*, *The Man From Elysian Fields*, *Lakeboat*, *Price Of Glory*, *Marilyn Hotchkiss Ballroom Dancing & Charm School*, *The Visit*, *Everything's Gone Green*, *The Signal* and *Weirdsville*. Three of his films have premiered at Sundance; six of his films have premiered at The Toronto International Film Festival; he's produced the opening night film at Slamdance; and he's excited that *High Life* will be his first film to premiere at The Berlin Film Festival. Morris's films have been oft-feted as well: *The Visit* was nominated for four Spirit Awards and this year *The Signal* is nominated for The Cassavetes Spirit Award.

Following the success of *Glengarry*, Morris established his own production company, Shoreline Entertainment, in 1993, which expanded to include a sales and distribution arm in 1997. With Shoreline, Morris has brought hundreds of films to the marketplace. This year Shoreline handled four films in Sundance, including *The Maid*, which won the Grand Jury Prize award in World Cinema. By always working with prominent writers

and directors and by developing and acquiring projects that are attractive to the major studios, mini-majors, and foreign markets alike, Morris has ensured for over sixteen years that Shoreline remain a stable yet versatile and ever-evolving organization.

Morris is presently in production on *Master Harold and the Boys*, which is based on Athol Fugard's famous play and stars Ving Rhames and Freddie Highmore.

LIZ JARVIS – CO-PRODUCER

Liz Jarvis joined Buffalo Gal Pictures in 1995. As producer, production executive, and assistant director, she has been instrumental in building alliances with national and international producers to create a wide range of award-winning feature films, documentaries, and short dramas. Liz developed and produced her first feature film, *Seven Times Lucky*, with writer/director Gary Yates in 2004. Jarvis' subsequent feature film credits include *The Stone Angel*, an adaptation of the acclaimed Margaret Laurence novel, produced with writer / director Kari Skogland, starring Ellen Burstyn and Christine Horne; and *Amreeka*, which she co-produced with First Generation Films and Alcina Pictures, starring Nisreen Faour Ali and Hiam Abbass.

AVI FEDERGREEN – CO-PRODUCER

Federgreen's producing credits include the well received Documentary *As Slow As Possible* directed by Scott Smith, the Canadian Film Centre Short Film titled *Pudge* directed by Annie Bradley, the acclaimed television series *It's Me...Gerald* for Showcase, and the short film *The Chair*; written and directed by Cory Kinney which attained a Bronze Award at the Worldfest Houston International Film Festival, 2000. Federgreen also serves as Associate Producer on the Feature Film *Emotional Arithmetic* starring Susan Sarandon, and Gabriel Byrne and currently serves as Co-Producer on the Feature Film *One Week* directed by Michael McGowan and starring Joshua Jackson.

LEE MACDOUGALL – WRITER

Lee MacDougall was born in New Liskeard, and raised in Cobalt and Kirkland Lake, in Northern Ontario, Canada. He attended the University of Toronto, (BSc) and the Ryerson Theatre School (Acting).

As a writer, MacDougall's critically acclaimed first play, *High Life*, won a Dora Mavor Moore Award for Best New Play, was nominated for a Governor General's Literary Award, and a Chalmers Canadian Play Award. *High Life* has been produced across Canada, and internationally in New York, London, Tokyo and Seoul. His other plays include *The Ginko Tree*, *Resistance*, and an adaptation of W.O. Mitchell's *Who Has Seen the Wind*. Writing for other media includes the screenplay for the feature film *High Life*, and a radio drama for CBC Radio One called *Her Wonders*.

As an actor, MacDougall was HotBlades Harry in the Canadian Premiere of *Urinetown*

(CanStage Co.) He originated the role of Harry in the North American Premiere and first U.S. National tour of *Mamma Mia* (National Broadway Touring Award nomination).

MacDougall spent five seasons with the Stratford Festival (favourite shows include *Cabaret*, *The Boyfriend*, *Arturo Ui*), three seasons with the Shaw Festival (*Counsellor-at-Law*, *On the Town*), and appeared at the Royal Alexandra Theatre, the Elgin Theatre, Theatre Plus, and Young People's Theatre. He has performed across Canada at the Charlottetown Festival, Neptune Theatre in Halifax, the National Arts Centre in Ottawa, Manitoba Theatre Centre in Winnipeg, Theatre Calgary, and the Citadel Theatre in Edmonton.

MICHAEL MARSHALL – DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY

Director of Photography Michael Marshall has been around the film business in one form or another for over 25 years, starting out as a lowly locations PA and working up through the ranks in various capacities ranging from camera assistant to gaffer, finally reaching the heights of DOP, with a few digressions as writer and director thrown in along the way for good measure.

His shooting credits include turns working on projects ranging from the films of Guy Maddin to television series such as *Whistler*. In his spare time he likes to noodle about painting and writing, with a whole range of projects in various stages of development cluttering up his office, their progress interrupted by the features and MOW's that continue to randomly suggest themselves.

DEANNE ROHDE – PRODUCTION DESIGNER

Deanne Rohde began her career in film as a Set Decorator. Her background in photography helped prepare her for working in motion pictures by giving her a great understanding of light and a keen eye for detail.

In a relatively short time as a Production Designer, Deanne has amassed an eclectic body of work. Working with internationally acclaimed director Guy Maddin on the Emmy Award-winning gothic masterpiece *Dracula: Pages from a Virgin's Diary*, Rohde was nominated for a Gemini Award, and took home Manitoba's Blizzard Award for Best Art Direction.

The gritty urban decay of *Seven Times Lucky*, directed by Gary Yates and starring Kevin Pollack, garnered Rohde a Genie nomination for Best Achievement in Art Direction/Production Design. The film premiered at Sundance in 2006, played festivals around the world, and amassed several nominations and awards.

Other feature film credits include *Niagara Motel*, and *Blue State*, which premiered at the 2007 Tribeca film festival. Her most recent feature is the comedy *The High Life* starring Timothy Olyphant, Stephen Eric McIntyre, Joe Andersen and Rossif Sutherland. Rohde has also worked on numerous network M.O.W.'s and other projects.

PRODUCTION NOTES

ABOUT THE DEVELOPMENT

Triptych Media first became aware of *High Life* the play when it premiered at the DuMaurier World Stage Festival in 1997. The public and critical response was euphoric and the play was practically deemed an instant classic. In the years following its debut, *High Life* enjoyed (and continues to enjoy) a solid international reputation with productions around the world including those mounted in Tokyo, Seoul, New York and London.

A number of years later, after securing the film rights, producer Robin Cass and playwright Lee MacDougall began to search for a director. After interviewing about a dozen candidates, Gary Yates emerged hot on the heels of his acclaimed feature debut *Seven Times Lucky* at the Sundance Festival.

There was something about Gary that set him apart from the pack as soon as they began to speak about the property. Cass recalls: "Unlike a number of directors who approached the piece first and foremost as a technical field day so as to render the 'stoner's world' Gary zeroed in on character. No one else had as primary an emotional attachment."

And then Cass and MacDougall watched Yates' work. Yates' film *Seven Times Lucky* garnered some stunning press upon its release. Cass loved Yates' assured, confident rendering of such a skewed world. He also enjoyed Yates' wry humor and use of music. Again, powerful, funny and so simple.

Yates recalls: "Robin sent the play and an early draft of the script that Lee MacDougall had written. There were some things in the script that I liked, but it was still quite stage-bound, which is always the challenge when adapting a play. At the time, I had been working on a story about an armored car heist, and when I read the play I thought those characters would be a good fit for that scenario, that that could be an interesting way to open things up."

Yates eventually took the scriptwriting reins, spending two years writing the screenplay for *High Life*. "It was quite a challenge," Yates recalls. "The trick was to stay true to the spirit of the play while expanding the story and the characters to achieve a satisfying movie experience."

With the finished screenplay in hand, Cass and Yates set out to find the best actors to bring to it life.

ABOUT THE CAST

"Casting is 80% of the director's work," says Yates. "And casting an ensemble can be especially tricky. I started with Dick, he's the ringleader, he's our hero. And in a lot of ways, Tim is Dick. There's a lot of him in there. I first saw Tim in the film *Go*, and really admired his performance. There was an odd charismatic quality about him, a sort of uneasy seductive charm, coupled with a dangerous sense of humor. And his work in *Deadwood* reinforced that. I knew he'd be a perfect fit, so I sent him the script."

Olyphant read the script, and his first impression was the strength of the writing: "I remember thinking, this is just too good, you know, there's no reason not to do it. Then I talked to Gary, and I just really liked his vibe. He was very relaxed, and he seemed very calm, very confident. He just seemed good. Gary delivered a great script out of a great play, which is not easy to do, making a play into a film. No matter how good the play is, it's a whole different deal on film, and I think Gary pulled it off really well."

Olyphant felt a kinship to the character of Dick, explaining: "Dick is trying, you know. He's one of those guys, he has dreams, he has goals, and he's somewhat aware of the possibility of being something more than what he is. But he's just so misguided. There was something very funny and heartbreaking about that."

Once Dick was cast, next came Bug – Dick's 'partner in crime' and best buddy. "Bug is a cohort to Dick, the other half of the Bickersons," says Cass. "They're like a married couple, sort of always at each other, they're the yin and yang of each other. One's the brawn, one's the brains. Bug is the brawn, and he's a bit of a sociopath, an unpredictable kind of guy."

Casting Bug was a challenge and with not much time left before principal photography, Yates approached Cass with an idea – take a look at a local Winnipeg actor named Stephen McIntyre. Yates initially had him in mind for a smaller role, but along the way began to feel he could pull off Bug: "Stephen has these steely blue eyes that can chill you to the bone," says Yates. "But what I find most compelling about him is that underneath that toughness there's a vulnerability. A wounded soul. It's that exciting contradiction that drew me to him."

For Timothy Olyphant, working alongside McIntyre was a nice surprise: "Stephen McIntyre, local boy, what a find. I was watching dailies one day, and I was like, who is this guy? I just wanted to know, *who is this guy?* There's just something great about this, you know. Rarely it happens, very rarely, where you discover somebody through a character for the first time, and so they are that guy. I think for a lot of people who watch this movie, that's going to be their experience – that Steve McIntyre is Bug."

"It's easy to look back when we started this movie, and I wasn't aware of who Stephen McIntyre was, and you could easily see it as a risk – putting this guy who doesn't have a lot of experience in this film. And now, you know, they're gonna look like geniuses for

casting him; he's really great. He brings no baggage to the part, it's a flawless performance. It couldn't be more authentic, you know. Working with him has been one of the most refreshing experiences for me."

Stephen McIntyre, who comes from a theatre and improv background, welcomed the opportunity to play Bug – a character he found very appealing: "I saw a lot of boyish honesty in Bug. Things are very immediate, decisions aren't thought about. There's no thought process really, it's just 'I see that, I want it, I take it' you know. If the thought crosses his mind he just does it, and then doesn't worry too much about justifying it afterwards. In that way, he's a very simple, straight ahead character."

Then there is the character of Donnie, the hypochondriac pickpocket. Enter Joe Anderson.

Yates explains: "What's so remarkable about Joe is that at a relatively young age, he brings an irresistible old-soul charm to his performances, as his work in *Control* and *Across the Universe* demonstrates. And his Donnie is all of that, and very funny as well. It's a remarkably charming, comic performance."

Joe Anderson embraced the role of Donnie, and found him really fun to play: "Donnie is a good guy essentially. He's a bit of a hypochondriac, convinced he's dying of something always, all the time. He's a morphine addict, and a bit of a cokehead, too. A little bipolar also in there, I should think. But quintessentially a sweet guy, a nice guy.

"The guy's a con, but he has a conscience. He steals wallets from old ladies in church, to use their ATM cards to scam money from bank machines. But he always tries to put the wallets back when he's done, because, as Donnie explains it, 'It's awful when you lose your I.D. and stuff.' I think that's what I like best about the character."

Despite the fact that Donnie is a drug addict, Anderson found one aspect in particular similar to himself: "The big kid aspect, the child aspect, was one of the things that Gary and I talked about before I came out, trying to keep a sense of innocence with Donnie. Even though he's not an innocent person per se."

While Donnie may represent the innocent, it's the character of Billy that pours on the charm – a crucial characteristic in order to pull off the bank scam. Billy is the face for the rest of the cons, the front-man. He's the only one who must go into the bank and charm the teller.

Yates auditioned Rossif Sutherland in Los Angeles, and explains: "Rossif walked into the room and I was immediately intrigued. A tall, dark, exotic looking guy, with a laid back, sort of James Dean quality, crossed with a young Brando. I immediately thought, 'Wow, this guy is great'... He was a bag of intriguing contradictions. He did a quick read, and he knew exactly when to smile, how to smile, when to hold back and when to light up. He reminded me of his father (actor Donald Sutherland) as a young man in *The Dirty Dozen*.

You couldn't help but love him."

Adds Cass: "He's a fantastic actor with an incredible laugh and great heart, and he could seduce a football stadium full of people if he wanted to. And that's what makes him a great Billy."

Rossif Sutherland, who came upon his love for acting at the encouragement of father Donald Sutherland, found a lot of joy in playing Billy: "From an outsider's perspective, he may seem like somebody who has a difficult life since he's a drug addict and doesn't have all that much money and is involved in some criminal activities, and may sleep on the streets from time-to-time, and sells his body. But he has sense of humor about life, and I don't think he's afraid of death.

"He's a lot of fun to play in that way because, although I don't envy his existence, there are some things that I can very easily relate to. Which is: today is today, tomorrow will be tomorrow, if tomorrow ever happens then I'm lucky. But today I'll make the most of it, and I'll have a smile on my face and I'll be a happy person. Billy is that way, which is probably why women like him so much, because it's contagious. When somebody sees the joy in life, it brings it out of other people."

ABOUT MAKING THE FILM

High Life was shot in a whirlwind twenty days, in frigid Winnipeg temperatures. Timothy Olyphant enjoyed working with Gary Yates on the set because of his down-to-earth approach:

"The conversations Gary and I have had about the characters are very minimal, they're very simple, and yet it feels like there's been a lot of back-and-forth. It's a nice feeling.

"It's a nice set, very relaxed, very easy going, you have a lot of room to do your job. And Gary's clearly very bright, he delivered a great script out of a great play. He's really been very generous, and working with him has been an easy collaboration right from the beginning. I feel like I'm in very safe hands."

Yates worked with his longtime collaborator, director of photography Michael Marshall, in creating the look of the film. One of the reasons Michael Marshall enjoys working with Yates is, according to Marshall, they 'speak the same language' on set:

"It's always really nice to work with somebody who thinks just the way you do. We watch the same films, and often we speak in quotes from films, so there's really no need to actually say anything real because, you know, he throws the quote at me and I know what he's talking about, and we get on with it.

"There's something I really like in having characters that are kind of trapped in a shadowy world, and by doing that, I like to make things bright around the edges of them

and put them in a cone of shadow. It's kind of an odd way of doing it– you could never do a slapstick comedy that way– but for dark comedy it works really well."

Marshall also pays close attention to how he frames the characters: "So much happens in framing. With comedy, I find that you centre frame a little bit more. There's more of a sense of surprise when something's funny. Using centre framing adds certain unpredictability to the comedy."

According to Marshall, Yates is very specific as to what he wants, yet, at the same time is willing to let both the cast and crew contribute to finding the filmmaking groove:

"Gary will tell me roughly what he wants at the beginning of the day, and then give me and the operator lots of leeway to set the shots ourselves. He's got it pre-visualized, but he likes to think on his feet. Some directors can't seem to change their mind about what they want and get locked in a groove and you're sort of stuck. But he's pretty adaptable, and he's open to suggestions, certainly from the cast, and he's not dogmatic at all. He's very busy with the actors, looking for nuances from them."

Robin Cass sums up: "I hope the people walking into *High Life* the movie have the same experience that I had when I saw the play. You go for whatever reason, and you spend an hour and a half in a world full of criminals and drug addicts, which one might think is not so appealing. But that's this movie's great charm – it's everything you don't expect about that experience that really wins the day."

ANCILLARY NOTES

NOTABLE QUOTES

Gary Yates, Director, Writer, Producer: "I think the theme of the movie is, simply stated: If you live in a dreamworld it will inevitably become a nightmare. Which at first might seem like an odd theme for a comedy, but I think a lot of great comedies share that theme. *Sullivan's Travels*. *The Ladykillers*. *Groundhog Day*. *Tootsie*. *Lost In America*... I could go on all day. And the question posed is: If you have an opportunity to save yourself from that nightmare, to what ends are you willing to go to make yourself a better person?"

Robin Cass, Producer: "There probably isn't a day that goes by in the producing process where you don't wonder whether you've lost your marbles because it's a huge leap of faith. You have to leap off the cliff."

Timothy Olyphant (Dick): “We shot a scene in a jail... and in Winnipeg, being in jail is better than being outside because it’s f***ing freezing outside. There are people in Winnipeg who are actually, like, ‘You know what? Arrest me, because it’s freezing out here.’”

Joe Anderson (Donnie): “Playing an addict is like playing a drunk person – if you play the result then people won’t believe it. People with problems tend to try and do their best to hide it. Drunk people try and act sober. So if you try and do your best to hide that you have a problem, then the problem will come through in a real way.”

Rossif Sutherland (Billy): “Every film that you do, it’s the building of a small family, it’s the company that gets together, and after a couple of months you just all of a sudden move to your own lives. But for the time we are together, we wake up, we go to work together, we finish our days together, we go to sleep, and for that time we’re just one family.”

Stephen McIntyre (Bug): “They say people love a bad guy, and Bug is bad, you know. He’s really bad. So I think people will really love him.”

Michael Marshall (Director of Photography): “Trying to pick your favorite scene is like trying to pick your favorite child. It’s impossible to find your favorite. They’re all good. They all mean something special. Although every now and then there’s a bad kid in the bunch.”