

CLEIN FELDMAN WHITE INC.

Marketing + Public Relations  
33 West 54th Street  
New York, NY 10019  
Telephone (212) 247-4100  
Telefax (212) 247-4562

SAMMLUNG VOLKER SCHLÖNDORFF



deutsches  
THE HANDMAID'S TALE

filminstitut  
filmmuseum

Preliminary Production Notes

A Cinecom Entertainment Group release

8584 Melrose Avenue  
West Hollywood, CA 90069  
Telephone (213) 659-4141  
Telex 703037 CPLUSF LSA  
Telefax (213) 659-3995

NOTE:

This story takes place 'a few years from now,' but the aim is not to show a 'futuristic' world. Apart from some special elements -- the clothes, for instance -- appearances are in the main familiar. It is the customs which have changed.

\* \* \*

HANDMAID STUDENTS wear plain oatmeal dresses.

HANDMAIDS are dressed in red ankle length dresses and white headresses.

AUNTS are supervisors in charge of the Handmaids and are dressed in Brown.

THE WIVES wear blue.

MARTHAS are house servants and wear dull green.

GUARDIANS are the civil police and wear uniforms.

THE EYES are the Secret Service and wear plain clothes.

--Harold Pinter



## CAST

Kate..... NATASHA RICHARDSON  
Serena Joy..... FAYE DUNAWAY  
Nick..... AIDAN QUINN  
Moirra..... ELIZABETH McGOVERN  
Aunt Lydia..... VICTORIA TENNANT  
Commander..... ROBERT DUVALL  
Ofglen..... BLANCHE BAKER  
Ofwarren/Janine..... TRACI LIND  
Aunt Helena..... ZOEY WILSON  
Aunt Elizabeth..... KATHRYN DOBY  
Luke..... REINER SCHOENE  
Cora..... LUCIA HARTPENG  
Aunt Sara..... KARMA IBSEN RILEY  
Rita..... LUCILE McINTYRE  
Officer on Bus..... GARY BULLOCK  
June..... ALLISON HOLMES  
Preacher..... J. MICHAEL HUNTER  
Dick..... ROBERT RAIFORD  
Alma..... MIRJAM BOHNET  
T.V. Announcer..... JULIAN E. BELL  
Guard..... DAVID BARNES  
Angel at Desk..... JAMES A. CARLEO III  
Eye in Van..... JIM GRIMSHAW  
Eye..... IVAN MIGEL  
Aunt..... DORIS BOGGS  
Aunt Christina..... ANNEMARIE FENSKE  
Another Wife..... LINDA PIERCE  
Third Wife..... NINA LYNN BLANTON  
Mrs. Warren..... RHESA REAGAN STONE  
Handmaid..... SARA SEIDMAN  
Guardian..... MUSE WATSON  
Martha..... JANELL McLEOD  
Hostess..... ELKE RITSCHEL  
Nun..... JANE LEARNED  
Condemned Man..... RANDALL HAYNES  
Black Woman..... RHONDA BOND  
Wardress..... MIL NICHOLSON

CAST, cont.

Guard #1.....ROBERT PENTZ  
Guard #2.....TOM McGOVERN  
Walter.....DANNY SIMPKINS  
Steve.....JAMES G. MARTIN, JR.  
Ofglen #2.....STEFANIE J. CHEN  
Old Man.....ED L. GRADY  
Baby.....MOLLY SANDICK  
Jill.....BLAIR NICOLE STRUBLE  
T.V. Announcer #2.....BILL OWEN  
Stunt Coordinator.....STEVE KELSO  
Stunt Players.....DICK BUTLER  
JIM WILKEY  
GENE WITHAM  
SCOTT DALE  
DEAN MUMFORD



deutsches  
filminstitut  
filmmuseum

## TECHNICAL CREDITS

Directed by..... VOLKER SCHLONDORFF  
Produced by..... DANIEL WILSON  
Screenplay by..... HAROLD PINTER  
Based on the Novel by..... MARGARET ATWOOD  
Executive Producer..... WOLFGANG GLATTES  
Music by..... RYUICHI SAKAMOTO  
Film Editor..... DAVID RAY  
Director of Photography..... IGOR LUTHER  
Production Designer..... TOM WALSH  
Costume Designer..... COLEEN ATWOOD  
Associate Producers..... GALE GOLDBERG  
ALEX GARTNER  
Casting by..... PAT GOLDEN C.S.A.  
Unit Production Manager..... WOLFGANG GLATTES  
First Assistant Director..... ANTHONY GITTELSON  
Second Assistant Director..... SALLY BRIM  
Conceptual Advisor..... JENNIFER BARTLETT  
Music Supervisors..... PETER AFTERMAN  
DIANE WESSEL  
Set Decorator..... JAN PASCALE  
Art Director..... GREGORY MELTON  
Local Casting..... FINCANNON & ASSOCIATES  
Camera Operator..... MITCHELL AMUNDSEN  
First Assistant Camera..... MIKAEL GLATTES  
Second Assistant Camera..... WILLIAM FINGER  
Add'l Assistant Camera..... NEAL FORNEY  
Still Photographer..... JON GARDEY  
Script Supervisor..... MAMIE MITCHELL  
Sound Mixer..... DANNY MICHAEL  
Sound Boom Operator..... MARC-JON SULLIVAN  
Production Coordinators..... INGRID C. MICHAELS  
STEVEN McAFEE  
Accountants..... JAY SEDRISH  
TAD DRISCOLL  
MIMI GOLDMAN

TECHNICAL CREDITS, cont.

Makeup Supervisor..... JEFF GOODWIN  
Hair Stylist..... ALAN D'ANGERIO  
Key Costumer..... URSULA SCHRADER  
Assistant Costumer..... HARTSELL TAYLOR  
Location Manager.....MICHAEL STROUD  
Property Master.....JACK MARINO  
Assistant Property Master..... JOHN SANDERS  
Special Effects Coordinator..... TOM WARD  
Assistant Special Effects.....JEFF McKAY  
Key Grip.....THADDEUS WADLEIGH  
Best Boy.....CHARLEY GILLERAN  
Dolly Grip..... VICTOR KORTE  
Grips..... IVAN MIGEL  
YORK PHELPS  
Gaffer.....FRIEDER HOCHHEIM  
Best Boy.....GARY SWINK  
Electricians..... ELAN YAARI  
STEPHEN PERRY  
MARK SMITH

# THE HANDMAID'S TALE

## SYNOPSIS

Once upon a time in the recent future, a country went wrong. The country was called the Republic of Gilead. Ecological disasters ravaged the land, resulting in civil war, political turmoil and widespread infertility. Only a very few women could still bear children. These women were called Handmaids.

\* \* \*

Kate (Natasha Richardson) and her family attempt to escape from Gilead. At the border, her husband is murdered and her young daughter is taken away. Kate is captured, tested for fertility, and sent to a training center where a group of women called "Aunts," clad in brown and with cattle prods, indoctrinate her and her fellow handmaids in the duties and glories of their new role, namely to bear children for those in power.

At the Center, Kate meets Moira (Elizabeth McGovern), "who likes girls," yet she is not hanged as others are for "gender treachery," because, as she puts it, "my ovaries are still jumping." Strong willed and fearless, Moira refuses to accept the Center's propaganda and plans a daring escape.

Kate is assigned to an important Commander named Fred (Robert Duvall) and his barren wife, Serena Joy (Faye Dunaway), a former television evangelist. Kate is renamed Offred and given a small room in their home. Forbidden to socialize with the other members of the household, she is to remain in her room until summoned and she is not to speak unless spoken to first.

During her monthly peak of fertility, Offred, the Commander and Serena Joy engage in a sexual "ceremony" taken from the story of Rachel and her handmaid recounted in the Book of Genesis: "Behold my maid Bilhah. Go into her and she will bear upon my knees." During the ceremony, Offred lies motionless between the Commander and his wife. It is a cold, humiliating act. If Kate/Offred becomes pregnant, she knows she will be revered, but the child will be taken from her.

One night the Commander summons Offred to his study, using his chauffeur Nick (Aidan Quinn) as a go-between. Much to Offred's surprise, the Commander is quite a charming man -- he merely wants to "know her better," and play scrabble with her. Only at the end of her visit, in an almost boyish way, does he try to steal a kiss.

The Commander shows her forbidden things from the past, including an old fashion magazine. Flipping through the pages of this outlawed relic, with its pictures of smiling, carefree women dressed in clothes they bought with their own money, Offred is filled with a painful longing for the life she once had assumed was her natural right. The husband she loved is dead; her child is being raised by others and is completely, and irrevocably lost to her.

## SYNOPSIS, page 2.

As time goes on, Offred's secret visits to the Commander's study become more and more frequent. Although still guarded, their relationship grows warmer, and as Offred knows, more dangerous. She relishes the little human contact she has, but realizes that every move holds potential traps; the Commander's growing feelings for her could lead to disaster at any moment.

Through Ofglen (Blanche Baker), a neighboring handmaid who is her companion on her daily trips to the market, Offred discovers the existence of a secret underground that may offer her a chance of escape. Since the Commander holds information that could be vital to them, Offred knows that her handling of the Commander could mean life or death for herself and her fellow handmaids.

One day, Serena Joy makes a startling suggestion. Fearing that it may be the Commander who is infertile, she suggests that Offred meet secretly with the chauffeur. "Why don't you try it with Nick," Serena tells Offred. "He's been with us a long time and he's quite good looking." "What about the Commander?" Offred asks, alarmed by the proposal. "Well, we simply won't tell him," Serena replies.

Serena sets up a secret meeting and Offred goes to Nick. Their lovemaking rekindles all of her passion for life. Though she knows love belongs to the past, her long-suppressed emotions come welling up to the surface. She had fought back any hope of ever feeling anything again, and now that she finds herself falling hopelessly in love, her desire for a life outside of Gilead grows more desperate. Only in Nick does she have any hope or regaining all she has lost.

But the Commander, too, is falling more and more in love. Breaking all the rules, he offers her an evening dress, complete with feather boa, lipstick and make-up. He smuggles her into a nightclub for officers and businessmen, as an "evening rental." The place is called Jezebel's, and it is here that the privileged males of Gilead find everything their puritanical rules forbid: women, alcohol and drugs. "Who are the women?" Offred asks. "Working girls from the past, lawyers, sociologists, schoolteachers -- you name it, we got it," the Commander tells her. "They prefer it here -- to the alternatives."

At Jezebel's, Offred runs into Moira, whose earlier escape had failed; she got caught at the border. Offred shares a cigarette with her -- in the bathroom, as they used to do at the Red Center.

After a few more visits to Nick, Offred believes she is pregnant -- hope for the future now grows within her. As she speaks to Nick of escape, Offred knows she has now reached the end of the line. She is the Commander's mistress, Serena Joy's accomplice, and Nick's lover. Any one of them can now betray her. All she has left is her hope, her love and her will to survive.

## Production Notes

Principal photography began on *THE HANDMAID'S TALE* almost three years to the day that the novel was first brought to the attention of producer Daniel Wilson. An Emmy Award-winning television producer, Wilson was hard at work on a miniseries based on the life of Ernest Hemingway when his wife, actress Zoey Wilson, urged him to read Margaret Atwood's novel.

"I was up to my ears in work but Zoey was very persistent," recalls Wilson. He finally relented, bought the book, and wound up reading it in one sitting. "I was completely knocked out by it. I think what got me was that it was both real and surreal. Here was a novel with a very identifiable situation that was very compelling. I had the feeling, when I put the book down, that, my God, this could happen anywhere.

The Handmaid's Tale operates on many levels. "Every book is, in a way, the answer to a question," author Atwood says. "In this case, the questions were: 'If you were going to take over the United States, how would you do it?' and 'If a woman's place is in the home, how do you get her back there?'" The answer was to combine religion and politics, creating a society, Gilead, that is governed by right-wing religious fundamentalists who have stripped women of all rights and property. Described by Atwood as "a cautionary tale," The Handmaid's Tale is also a taut, Hitchcockian mystery, with a heroine who must find her way out of a psychosexual nightmare.

Wilson immediately began pursuing Atwood to try to acquire the screen rights to the novel. Atwood was on a cross-country promotional tour when Wilson finally caught up with her. "I didn't want to do the script," Atwood remembers, "and one of the primary reasons we sold the rights to Danny was because it was his idea to get Harold Pinter for the screenplay."

"My first thought when I put the book down was that Pinter should write the screenplay," Wilson says. "It just seemed to me that his style would lend itself to the adaptation. Not only his style, but his intellect. It's a book that deals with what could happen to the human condition and Pinter, in all his writing, makes you think, makes you feel, involves you."

"Pinter's very good at writing scenes which play against the dialogue -- in which what people are saying is not what's happening in the scene," Atwood concurs. "That was very much required for this film." Although at work on a new play, Pinter took time out to read Atwood's novel and immediately agreed to write the screenplay.

An outspoken member of groups such as Amnesty International and PEN, Pinter immediately connected with the work, feeling that it had great bearing on not only the

## PRODUCTION NOTES, page 2.

United States, but England, and the entire world. With the Pinter script in hand, Wilson began shopping around for financing.

Wilson recalls, "I rather naively thought that once we had a screenplay as good as this one, with a writer like Harold Pinter, it would be relatively simple to get the film financed. I was dead wrong." Although many studio executives professed to personally love the story, they all turned it down. The innovative independent film company Cinecom was interested, however, and in May of 1987 Wilson made a deal with Cinecom to finance and distribute the film.

With a \$13,000,000 budget, *THE HANDMAID'S TALE* is Cinecom's most ambitious film to date. Long noted for their successful marketing of specialized films such as "A Room with a View," "Stop Making Sense," and "Salaam Bombay!," Cinecom has also produced John Sayles' "Matewan" and is currently producing the film adaptation of Mario Vargas Llosa's *Aunt Julia and the Scriptwriter*, which is being directed by Jon Amiel ("The Singing Detective") and stars Barbara Hershey, Peter Falk and Keanu Reeves.

The project was then brought to director Volker Schlöndorff, who admits that he initially had problems with the premise. "I have a more optimistic view of the American future," Schlöndorff explains. "But, as I got more involved with the relationships between the four or five characters, I found the focus of the story to be less the workings of the society than the very archetypal relations between this young woman, caught like a daughter between her parents, but expected to be a surrogate mother. Our emotional and sexual unconscious gets very involved here."

Casting the pivotal role of Kate/Offred was enlightening. "When I met Natasha Richardson I was very pleased because she was enthusiastic when she read the screenplay," Schlöndorff recalls. "Other actresses turned it down. They felt Offred was a passive character, which, I think stems from a lack of historical experience of true oppression. Because, when there is real oppression, there aren't a lot of ways of being active unless you're suicidal. So Offred is just waiting for the right moment and she has to go through a lot. And she simply has class -- whatever abuse she has to take, she holds up with dignity. She is even quite understanding with her master, but her revenge is fierce."

Richardson had read *The Handmaid's Tale* in 1986, while starring in the London production of "High Society," and had loved it. While other actresses were hesitant about the part, Richardson thought it a great challenge. "It's really a rollercoaster of a role," she says. "There's almost nothing that Offred doesn't experience, everything from hysterical giggles to total desperation. She's very easy to understand and relate to. Like a lot of women, she's a mother and she's warm and quite intelligent and brave. But she can be a wimp, too, and there are a lot of those things in me and in many women. It wasn't something I had to search for."



### PRODUCTION NOTES, page 3.

Executive producer Wolfgang Glattes, who also served as the film's line producer, came on board and the rest of the crew and cast were hired. Wilson, Schlöndorff, and Glattes then scouted several possible shooting locations including cities in New England and Canada. Although the novel is set in what is supposedly Cambridge (Atwood is a Radcliffe alumnus), the filmmakers chose the Durham area of North Carolina for several reasons.

The filmmakers needed a broad change of seasons within their 11-week shooting schedule to depict the passage of time and North Carolina could guarantee snow-covered mountains as well as flowering springtime. According to Glattes, other deciding factors were the helpfulness of the North Carolina Film Commission and the talented pool of actors and technicians based in the area. Finally, Duke University offered a bottomless resource of talented professionals, as well as a rambling campus with breathtaking Gothic architecture which proved to be the perfect backdrop for the film's crowd scenes.

With the assistance of North Carolina-based location manager Michael Stroud, whose credits include "Hiding Out," "Critical Condition," and "Marie," the cities of Durham and Raleigh were opened up to the production. Locations used include the American Tobacco Company's massive brick warehouse, St. Mary's College in Raleigh, two Durham high schools, and the large, colonial home of Lars and Mary Hunsvald, which served as the Commander's house, the film's main location.

Delighted by the opportunity to meet so many new people and closely observe the filmmaking process, the Hunsvalds opened their home to the cast and crew. While lights and cameras were being adjusted for the next shot, Natasha Richardson and many of the crew could often be found in the large Hunsvald kitchen, sampling Mary's homemade Norwegian bread.

The filming at Duke included the enormous "Salvaging" and "Participation" scenes, which involved hundreds of extras and the erection of an imposing gallows opposite the imposing Duke Chapel. The arresting sight of bodies hanging across from the Chapel's towering steeple unnerved a few Duke officials. An editorial appeared the next morning in the local paper questioning the appropriateness of the filmmakers renting space in front of the Chapel, but the controversy ebbed when the filmmakers gave assurances that the gallows would be down in time for Palm Sunday services.

Soon after, Margaret Atwood visited Duke to read from her latest novel, Cat's Eye, and discuss the filming of THE HANDMAID'S TALE. Following her lecture, Atwood visited the set, met with Schlöndorff, Natasha Richardson and Faye Dunaway, and took a tour of many of the locations used to tell her tale.

The Wilmington-based casting agency, Fincanon and Associates, was responsible for casting all but the principal roles, including the hundreds of extras eventually used in the

## PRODUCTION NOTES, page 4.

film. Two of the women who portrayed Aunts, however -- Jane Desmond and Barbara Dickinson -- are dance teachers at Duke who were personally selected by Schlondorff to choreograph the handmaid's elegant, synchronized movements. Several of the women chosen to play handmaids were students of Desmond or Dickinson and the others included housewives, theatre students, lawyers, doctors and artists. Many of those who worked on THE HANDMAID'S TALE -- particularly those who played the handmaids -- worked diligently for many weeks, taking time off from their normal occupations in order to participate in the film. The men who portrayed the Commanders, Angels, Guardians and Eyes included several airline pilots, realtors, and bankers.

Visually creating the world of the near-future described by Margaret Atwood was perhaps the filmmakers' greatest challenge. "The whole look of the movie reflects the premise that this future fundamentalist society is designed, invented and managed by advertising people," says Schlondorff. "An American fascistic society would be characterized by salesmanship, showmanship, advertising, and marketing."

Schlondorff worked closely with the painter Jennifer Bartlett on the design of the film. "She has a very strong visual sense about the Americana of the 1980s -- the post-modern architecture, the K-Mart furnishings, the costumes looking like they came out of a Sears catalogue," says Schlondorff. "All we did was combine existing elements and build a future out of them." Bartlett's work with Schlondorff formed the basis from which the visual world of Gilead arose.

"We tried to take things that we are all familiar with and twist them a little so that everything becomes slightly psychotic," says production designer Tom Walsh, who worked with Schlondorff on "A Gathering of Old Men." All cars in Gilead are devoid of details and painted a dark, matte blue. The different classes of people wear the same costumes, without any personal accessorization allowed. Because reading is outlawed, all signs in Gilead take the form of international symbols or pictographs and handmaids are identified by bar code bracelets which are read by scanners at military checkpoints. Furnishings are simplistic and uniform.

"It's like taking an eraser to society," Walsh explains. "It's like going through a house and pulling out everything you don't really need until you end up with the most important elements. And, by not having so many objects, it becomes more disconcerting."

Schlondorff advised costume designer Colleen Atwood ("Torch Song Trilogy," "Married to the Mob") to think of the costumes as "uniforms ordered from a catalogue issued by the government."

"Instead of showing a desert of ashes, we went to the opposite," says Schlondorff. "There's too much green, the colors are too bright. It's just as vegetation before dying has a last bloom. We don't use any technology, we don't have any tricks of any kind."

"I don't have that dark a vision of America's future," Schlondorff explains in

**PRODUCTION NOTES, PAGE 5.**

conclusion. "But I understand that a lot of people do fear this, so the fear element is real and that fear is enough reason to tell the story. I felt that it wasn't so important to stress the political, sociological, or social aspects, but instead to enter within the psyche of the character and understand that this is a sort of nightmare she has. And the logic of a dream or nightmare is far stronger than the logic of reality."

SAMMLUNG VOLKER SCHLÖNDORFF



deutsches  
filminstitut  
filmmuseum

**THE HANDMAID'S TALE -- BEFORE AND AFTER**  
**by Margaret Atwood**

When I first began thinking about The Handmaid's Tale way back in 1981, I felt it was a very strange sort of book for me to be writing. Also, I was afraid people would think I was merely paranoid.

Like many books, this one began with the question, "What if?" I guess I was tired of having people say, "It can't happen here." They were right only if you accepted their definition of "it." "It" could mean Russian-style Communism, or Germany under Hitler. But what if we were looking at the wrong "it"? What if, while we were busy staring down the wolf at the front door, another one was creeping over the back fence? Once any democracy starts curtailing freedom in the name of freedom, it may end up in trouble. What if you wanted to take over the United States today? What flag could you wave successfully?

The Handmaid's Tale is one answer to these "what if's." It's set in the near future, in a United States that is in the hands of a power-hungry elite who have used their own brand of "Bible-based" religion as an excuse for the suppression of the majority of the population. It's about what happens at the intersection of several trends, all of which are with us today: the rise of right-wing -- and racist -- fundamentalism as a political force, the decline in the caucasian birthrate in North America and northern Europe, and the rise in infertility and birth defects due to increased levels of chemical pollution and radiation, as well as to sexually transmitted diseases.

Among the features of the resulting social order is a great deal of pressure on white women to have babies, if they can, coupled with their harem-like seclusion and a form of polygamy for the richer and more powerful men. (If a thing is valued and in short supply, who usually gets more of it?) All of this is firmly based on the Bible, specifically Genesis 30: 1-13 -- the story of Jacob, his two wives Rachel and Leah, and their two handmaids, who are required to produce children for them. Hence the title.

Despite its futuristic setting, The Handmaid's Tale is not science fiction, if by that you mean Martians, teleportation or life on Venus. Nor is it a sort of travelogue of the future. It's the story of one woman under this regime, told in a very personal way, and part of the challenge for me was the creation of her voice and viewpoint. But I also wanted my book to be firmly based on human nature and fact. There's nothing in it that we as a species have not done, aren't doing now or don't have the technological capability to do. Our idea of what is normal, moral and desirable can be influenced a great deal by circumstance, as any reading of history shows.

As I wrote, I kept a clippings file, and into it went all sorts of oddments, from PCB levels in polar bears to an account of collective hangings in 17th-century England. Many

MARGARET ATWOOD ON "THE HANDMAID'S TALE," cont.

other things are fed into the book as well: my reading of the Bible, which can be liberating or stifling, depending on how it's interpreted and on which parts you stress; my study of Puritan New England, land of my ancestors; my travels in Iran and Afghanistan; my interest in military tactics. As I collected all these bits and pieces, I reflected that there isn't much in the realm of human eccentricity and outrageousness that hadn't already been done.

Upon publication of the book, I braced myself, clippings file at the ready, for the shouts of "paranoid," "impossible," and "ridiculous" that I was sure would arise. But few did. In my native Canada, the response from the media people was a nervous, "Could it happen here?" In England, the book was treated more as a good yarn than as social realism -- after all, they'd already done their own religious-repression number, under Cromwell. But in the United States, where these motifs were closer to home, they didn't even use the word "could." Instead it was, "How long have we got, and how can we prevent it?" I was even interviewed by radio and television stations that don't ordinarily do novels at all, only hard news. Hardly anyone thought this scenario was entirely farfetched.

The book sold much better than I thought it would. I'd never in my life expected to be on The New York Times bestseller list. And there was immediate interest from film producers. It also, to my surprise and delight, won several awards, including the Los Angeles Times Fiction Prize and the Canadian Governor General's Award, as well as being short-listed for the British Booker Prize. All this was a lot better than a rotten tomato.

Despite the book's success however, I sometimes wake up in the night with disturbing thoughts. The Handmaid's Tale shows a future most women and most men would not find pleasant, to put it mildly. We write such books, I think, partly to chart where we might be going, and to see whether we want to go there. But what if this book is not a warning but a forecast? What if it's more real than I ever supposed? The way things are going in the world today, I'd be happy to have someone tell me my book was total, improbable nonsense -- and be right.

With Volker Schlöndorff's film adaptation about to be released (with a script by the magnificent Harold Pinter), it seems to me that the material is even more relevant now than when I wrote the book.

## THE HANDMAID'S TALE -- A GLOSSARY OF TERMS

**Angels of Light** -- Gilead's soldiers

**Aunts** -- Dressed in brown, Aunts are those women who indoctrinate and supervise the handmaids in their rites and rituals.

**Birthmobile** -- The van that carries the Handmaids to the site of an imminent birth.

**Colonies** -- Gilead-controlled areas far from the mainland; usually areas that have been heavily contaminated with nuclear and industrial waste.

**Commanders** -- High-ranking male government officials.

**Eyes** -- Gilead's secret police.

**Gender Treachery** -- Homosexuality, punishable by death (unless a woman is fertile).

**Handmaids** -- Dressed in red, Handmaids are those few women who are still able to conceive. Little more than slaves to their biological fertility, they are assigned to bear children for high-ranking barren couples.

**Marthas** -- Dressed in grey and dull green, Marthas are the housekeepers to the high-ranking.

**Particicution** -- The ritualized execution of male sex-offenders, in which Handmaids tear the sentenced man apart with their bare hands.

**Red Center** -- The Handmaids' central headquarters for training and indoctrination.

**Resettlement** -- The government sponsored "relocation" of various minorities, religious offenders and infertile women.

**Wives** -- Dressed in blue, Wives are married to high-ranking government officials.

**Women's Salvaging** -- The ritualized hanging of women for sex-related crimes.

NATASHA RICHARDSON  
(Kate/Offred)

Natasha Richardson stars as Kate, the wife and mother who is forced to become a handmaid assigned to one of Gilead's most powerful men.

Born in 1963, Richardson attended St. Paul's Girl's School and London's Central School of Speech and Drama. She credits her parents, Vanessa Redgrave and director Tony Richardson, with teaching her about professionalism through their example. "I've learned a great deal about acting from my mother -- just watching her work, seeing the chances she takes. She's never afraid of making a fool of herself while I sometimes tend to try to be more in control. And, from my father, I've learned a lot about what a director expects from an actress."

In 1986, Richardson received the London Drama Critics' Award for Most Promising Newcomer for her portrayal of Nina in Chekhov's "The Seagull," first opposite Samantha Eggar and then opposite her mother. She then appeared in "High Society," a British re-mounting of the Cole Porter musical.

Richardson made her screen debut as Mary Godwin, the author of Frankenstein, in Ken Russell's "Gothic" (1986) and also starred in Pat O'Connor's "A Month in the Country" (1987). She is perhaps best known for her highly acclaimed starring role in Paul Schrader's "Patty Hearst" (1988). She will next be seen in Roland Joffe's "Fat Man and Little Boy," co-starring Paul Newman.

"THE HANDMAID'S TALE is a story about the human spirit and how people overcome and conquer desperate and despairing situations," says Richardson. "For me, it's not a futuristic political tract or a feminist tale of gloom and doom. It's about hope, about how, even in the most dire circumstances, people survive and fight to keep their dignity, their love, and their right to freedom."

The physical and emotional demands of the role -- Kate appears in almost every scene -- did little to dampen Richardson's amazingly high spirits. Clad in her red costume for much of the 11-week shoot ("I used to actually like red!"), Richardson became a much-loved figure on the set -- always warm, unfliningly cordial, and often displaying a delightfully wicked sense of humor.



ROBERT DUVALL  
(The Commander)

One of the screen's most versatile actors, Robert Duvall plays the Commander, the high-ranking government official who develops an unorthodox relationship with his Handmaid, Offred.

Duvall was born in California and slated for a military career by his father, an admiral. Duvall compromised by majoring in history and government at Principia College in Illinois. He later added drama, in which he eventually earned his degree. After a tour of duty with the army, he headed for New York to enroll at the famed Neighborhood Playhouse on the G.I. Bill.

Sanford Meisner first spotted Duvall's potential at the Playhouse, and cast him in such plays as Tennessee Williams' "Camino Real" and "The Midnight Caller" by Horton Foote. Five years later, it was Foote who recommended Duvall for the role of the mysterious but benevolent Boo Radley in "To Kill a Mockingbird" (1963), which became Duvall's screen debut. They have since collaborated on "Tomorrow" (1972), an adaptation of a William Faulkner short story that Duvall considers his best work, and "Tender Mercies" (1983), for which Duvall won the Best Actor Oscar as the born-again country music star Mac Sledge.

Duvall also received a Best Actor Oscar nomination for his portrayal of the gruff Marine flying ace Bull Meechum in "The Great Santini" (1980), and two Best Supporting Actor nominations for his work for Francis Ford Coppola -- as the Corleone's trustworthy consigliere Tom Hagen in "The Godfather" (1972) and as the flamboyant colonel who loves the smell of napalm in the morning in "Apocalypse Now" (1979).

Duvall's many other memorable roles include the villainous cowboy in "True Grit" (1969), the pious Major Frank Burns in M\*A\*S\*H (1970), a cold-hearted television executive in "Network" (1976), a Nazi officer in "The Eagle Has Landed" (1977), Dr. Watson in "The Seven-Per-Cent Solution" (1976), a crooked cop in "True Confessions" (1981) and an L.A. policeman battling gang violence in "Colors" (1988).

Between films Duvall has continually returned to the stage to hone his craft. Among his credits are off-Broadway's "A View from the Bridge," and the Broadway successes "Wait Until Dark" and David Mamet's "American Buffalo."

Duvall has also directed two films: "We're Not the Jet Set" (1977), a documentary about a Nebraska rodeo family which won a London Film Festival Award and "Angelo, My Love" (1983), a portrait of New York's gypsy community.

Among Duvall's other film credits are "Captain Newman, M.D." (1964), "Bullitt" (1968), "The Rain People" (1969), "THX-1138" (1971), "The Conversation" (1974), "The Pursuit of D.B. Cooper" (1981), "The Stone Boy" (1984), "The Natural" (1984), "The Lightship" (1986) and "Belizaire the Cajun" (1986).

Duvall's most recent triumph was his highly-acclaimed performance in the CBS



## ROBERT DUVALL BIOGRAPHY, cont.

miniseries "Lonesome Dove," as the unforgettable Augustus McRae.

Duvall was the filmmakers' first choice for the role of the Commander. His stern, military bearing combined with his cool sexual charm makes the character of the Commander come alive. "I wanted to show the contradictions," says Duvall. "I wanted to bring some humanity to the character -- he falls in love with a woman he is just supposed to procreate with. There's a good side to him." Another reason Duvall accepted the role was to work with Volker Schlöndorff: "If anyone can tilt this story in the right way, it will be him."

The religious fundamentalist milieu of *THE HANDMAID'S TALE* is one that has intrigued Duvall for a long time. He recently completed a screenplay about a fundamentalist preacher involved in a murder that he hopes to produce.



deutsches  
filminstitut  
filmmuseum

FAYE DUNAWAY  
(Serena Joy)

Faye Dunaway plays the Commander's sterile wife, Serena Joy, a former TV evangelist. Her role in *THE HANDMAID'S TALE* reunites her with Robert Duvall, her co-star in "Network," the film which earned her the Best Actress Academy Award.

The daughter of a career Army officer, Dunaway was born in Florida and raised in such diverse places as Utah and Germany. After graduating from Boston University, Dunaway moved to New York to pursue her career as an actress. She joined the Lincoln Center Repertory Company where she appeared in such productions as Arthur Miller's "After the Fall" and "A Man for All Seasons."

A role in the off-Broadway production of "Hoagan's Goat" led to her film debut in "The Happening" (1965), followed by a key part in Otto Preminger's "Hurry Sundown" (1966). A year later, Dunaway won her first Oscar nomination for her now-classic portrayal of Bonnie Parker opposite Warren Beatty in "Bonnie and Clyde" (1967).

Dunaway's many acclaimed films since then include: "The Thomas Crown Affair" (1968) with Steve McQueen; "A Place for Lovers" (1969) opposite Marcello Mastroianni; "Little Big Man" (1970) with Dustin Hoffman; "The Three Musketeers" (1973) and "The Four Musketeers" (1974), both directed by Richard Lester; Roman Polanski's "Chinatown" (1974) for which she received her second Oscar nomination as Best Actress; "Three Days of the Condor" (1975) co-starring Robert Redford; "Network" (1976), for which she received the Oscar as Best Actress for her portrayal of a ruthless television executive; "The Eyes of Laura Mars" (1978); "Mommie Dearest" (1982), in which she portrayed Joan Crawford; Barbet Schroeder's acclaimed "Barfly" (1987), co-starring Mickey Rourke; and "Burning Secret" (1988) with Klaus Maria Brandauer. She has completed the new Lina Wertmuller film, "In a Moonlit Night," "Wait Until Spring, Bandini," based on the cult novel by John Fante, and most recently "Cold Sassy Tree" in which she makes her debut as executive producer.

Among Dunaway's numerous television credits are starring roles in the mini-series "Ellis Island" and "Christopher Columbus." She received widespread acclaim for the television film "Evita Peron," as well as "The Disappearance of Aimee," in which she portrayed another evangelist, Aimee Semple McPherson.

Dunaway was always the filmmaker's first choice for the complex role of Serena. After director Schlöndorff explained the many nuances and contradictions he wanted to explore within the character, Dunaway agreed to take on the role.

"I discovered the film, like the novel, was an intriguing, disturbing and fascinating work," says Dunaway. "I accepted the role primarily because of the ensemble of actors and the chance to work with Volker Schlöndorff, whose previous films I admire. He is a warm, vital and sensitive collaborator."

AIDAN QUINN  
(Nick)

Aidan Quinn portrays Nick, the Commander's chauffeur. Charismatic yet mysterious, it is Nick who gives Offred not only a chance at love but the possibility of escape.

Born in Chicago of Irish parents, Quinn spent much of his youth in Ireland. Although he had always entertained his family with his accurate impersonations of them, it was while living in Dublin that he first exhibited a serious interest in theater. He returned to Chicago and worked with a number of theater groups before moving on to New York.

Quinn made his film debut starring opposite Daryl Hannah in James Foley's "Reckless" (1984). He has since gone on to play a love-struck projectionist in Susan Seidelman's "Desperately Seeking Susan" (1985), Robert DeNiro's brother and romantic rival in Roland Joffe's acclaimed "The Mission" (1986), and a villain in John Badham's suspense-comedy "Stakeout," co-starring Richard Dreyfuss and Emilio Estevez. Most recently, Quinn played the title role in "Crusoe."

On stage, Quinn starred in the off-Broadway productions of Sam Shepard's "Fool for Love" and "A Lie of the Mind," and gave a much-heralded performance in "Hamlet" at Chicago's Wisdom Bridge Theatre.

For his moving performance in "An Early Frost," one of the first TV dramas about AIDS, Quinn was nominated for a Best Actor Emmy. He also appeared in the critically acclaimed PBS American Playhouse production of Arthur Miller's "All My Sons."

Quinn will soon be seen in "The Lemon Sisters" with Diane Keaton and Carol Kane, and "A Perfect Witness," with Brian Dennehy and Stockard Channing.

Quinn found both the screenplay and book of The Handmaid's Tale intriguing and he accepted the part of Nick after speaking with director Schlöndorff about his ideas for the film. The story's dark predictions about the future state of the planet seemed realistic to Quinn, who has been an ardent environmentalist since the age of nineteen. He had a harder time accepting the story's dire forecast for women.

## ELIZABETH McGOVERN

(Moir)

Elizabeth McGovern plays Moira, the rebellious handmaid who befriends Offred (Natasha Richardson). Born in Evanston, Illinois, McGovern moved to California with her family at age ten. She appeared in several stage productions while attending the Oakwood School in North Hollywood, attracting the attention of agent Joan Scott, who encouraged her to continue her dramatic studies. McGovern attended the Juilliard School of Dramatic Art in New York and, while there, won the coveted role of Timothy Hutton's girlfriend in Robert Redford's Oscar-winning "Ordinary People" (1980).

For her next role, that of famed turn-of-the-century beauty Evelyn Nesbit in Milos Forman's "Ragtime" (1981), McGovern earned a Best Supporting Actress nomination. In her third film, Marshall Brickman's "Lovesick" (1983), she played a patient of psychiatrist Dudley Moore.

She then starred in Sergio Leone's epic "Once Upon a Time in America" (1983), opposite Robert DeNiro, and in Richard Benjamin's "Racing with the Moon" (1984).

More recently, McGovern has received acclaim for roles in films as diverse as "Native Son" (1986), "The Bedroom Window" (1987) co-starring Steve Guttenberg and Isabelle Huppert, and John Hughes' "She's Having a Baby" (1988), opposite Kevin Bacon. She will next be seen in "Johnny Handsome," co-starring Mickey Rourke and Ellen Barkin, and "A Shock to the System," opposite Michael Caine.

McGovern is also an accomplished stage actress. Among her off-Broadway credits are Tina Howe's "Painting Churches," David Hare's "A Map of the World," and Shakespeare's "Two Gentlemen of Verona" and "A Midsummer Night's Dream."

Director Schlöndorff handpicked McGovern for the role and, she recalls, "I became interested in the project based on what Volker told me he wanted to do with it. I decided to get on board and see where the ship took me."

McGovern doesn't see the story as cautionary, but, as "more the story of a woman's inner journey, in which the fears and pressures that she experiences take symbolic form in this depiction of an imaginary society."

VICTORIA TENNANT  
(Aunt Lydia)

Victoria Tennant plays Aunt Lydia, one of the women whose job it is to indoctrinate the novice handmaids in the peculiar rites and rituals of their new roles.

Born and raised in Great Britain, Tennant's father was the late Cecil Tennant, a top agent whose clients included Laurence Olivier, Vivien Leigh, John Gielgud, and Natasha Richardson's grandfather, Michael Redgrave. Being raised in that milieu taught Tennant what the profession of acting was all about. "I never thought of it as either glamorous or easy," Tennant remembers. "Everyone I knew was a serious professional who treated their jobs and the people around them with respect. They worked harder than anyone I've ever seen in any other job."

Trained at London's Central School of Speech and Drama, Tennant made her film debut in "The Ragman's Daughter" (1972), directed by Harold Becker. Her other films include Carl Reiner's "All of Me" (1984) co-starring Lily Tomlin and Steve Martin; "Stranger's Kiss" (1984), directed by Matthew Chapman and co-starring Peter Coyote; John Frankenheimer's "The Holcroft Covenant" (1985), opposite Michael Caine and Anthony Andrews; and "Bestseller" (1987), with Brian Dennehy and James Woods. Other features include "Flowers in the Attic" (1987) and "Sphinx" (1981). She recently completed "Fool's Mate," directed by Matthieu Carriere, who was coincidentally the star of director Schlöndorff's first film, "Young Torless."

Tennant is perhaps best known for her starring role opposite Robert Mitchum in the mini-series "Winds of War" and "War and Remembrance." She has also appeared in the TV films "Under Siege" and "Dempsey" and episodes of "Twilight Zone" and "Alfred Hitchcock Presents." She will next be seen in the British miniseries "Act of Will."

Tennant's London theatre credits include roles in "Juno and the Paycock," "The Seagull," "Private Lives," "Wild Strawberries," "Cymbeline," "Romeo and Juliet," "Bus Stop" and "The Bacchae."

Tennant was thrilled when director Volker Schlöndorff offered her the part of Aunt Lydia, a sort of girl scout leader gone mad. "It's the sort of part which begs to be typecast. Volker was brave enough and clever enough to know that those parts are always more interesting if you cast against expectations," says Tennant, who until now has made a career of playing beautiful, well-bred heroines.

"It's a strange part because I never really 'talk' to anyone, I just make speeches," Tennant continues. "I like the speeches because they're insane but with that grain of logic that makes them so dangerous. It was a challenge to make her just strong enough and acceptable enough so that you're not sure if you like or dislike her until you realize what a monster is lurking under that exterior."

BLANCHE BAKER  
(Ofglen)

Since handmaids are not permitted to appear in public alone, Offred (Natasha Richardson) makes her daily sojourns to the market in the company of Ofglen, portrayed by Blanche Baker. It is Ofglen who eventually reveals the existence of an underground resistance movement to Offred.

Blanche Baker, who earned an Emmy for her performance in the NBC miniseries "Holocaust," has starred in a variety of films including "Shakedown" (1988), starring Peter Weller, "Raw Deal" (1986), John Hughes' "Sixteen Candles" (1984), "Cold Feet" (1984) and "The Seduction of Joe Tynan" (1979). Her television work includes the made-for-TV movies "Nobody's Child," "Embassy," and "The Day the Bubble Burst."

Like her fellow handmaids Natasha Richardson and Elizabeth McGovern, Baker has also had an impressive stage career. Just as her mother, Carroll Baker, took the world by storm as the teenage seductress "Baby Doll," Blanche also garnered her earliest acclaim as the ultimate nymphet, "Lolita," in the acclaimed Broadway production. Off-Broadway, Baker has appeared in "Steel Magnolias," "Hannah" and "Poor Little Lambs." She has also appeared in the Yale Repertory Theatre productions of "The Wild Duck" and "White Marriage," directed in the latter by Andrzej Wajda.

TRACI LIND  
(Janine/Ofwarren)

Twenty-year-old Traci Lind plays the unstable handmaid Janine/Ofwarren. Unlike Kate (Natasha Richardson) and Moira (Elizabeth McGovern), Janine lacks the strength to fight the constant indoctrination of the Aunts.

Born and raised in Kentucky, Lind left home at 13 to begin modeling in New York and Paris. At 15, she quit modeling, and began her acting career playing Pru on ABC's "Ryan's Hope."

For her performance in the Merchant/Ivory production "My Little Girl" (1986), her film debut, Lind received critical acclaim for her portrayal of an abused young woman, opposite James Earl Jones, Geraldine Page and Mary Stuart Masterson. Other film appearances include roles in "A Tiger's Tale" (1987) with Ann-Margret and C. Thomas Howell, "Moving" (1988) with Richard Pryor and Randy Quaid, and the horror comedy "Fright Night II" (1989), in which she plays a fearless vampire killer alongside Roddy McDowall.

On television, Lind starred in the ABC miniseries "Casanova," with Richard Chamberlain and "Club Med," a TV movie in which she co-starred with Jack Scalia and Linda Hamilton. Other television work includes guest appearances on "21 Jumpstreet" and "Fame." Immediately after finishing her work on THE HANDMAID'S TALE, Lind filmed a role in Warren Beatty's "Dick Tracy."

## VOLKER SCHLONDORFF

(Director)

Director Volker Schlöndorff is one of the few contemporary filmmakers who can transfer a great novel to the screen in a manner that is both faithful to the text, yet completely cinematic. He is perhaps best known for "The Tin Drum," his powerful adaptation of the acclaimed Gunter Grass novel. The film won the Foreign Language Film Academy Award in 1979 -- the first German film ever so honored -- and shared the Golden Palm Award for Best Film at Cannes that same year.

THE HANDMAID'S TALE is Schlöndorff's first American feature film. He brought with him many former collaborators including cinematographer Igor Luther ("The Tin Drum") and editor David Ray ("Death of a Salesman").

Schlöndorff was born in Wiesbaden, Germany in 1939. His father, a physician, sent him to the Lycee Henri-Quatre in Paris at the age of sixteen. An outstanding student, Schlöndorff won many academic prizes while still in high school. He obtained a university degree in politics and economics, but devoted his free time to screenings at the famed Cinematheque Francaise.

His visits to the Cinematheque gave him the chance to meet many of the young directors of the French New Wave. He went on to become a production assistant, then assistant director, under Louis Malle, Jean-Pierre Melville and Alain Resnais. It was while working as an assistant director on Resnais' "Last Year at Marienbad" that Schlöndorff first met THE HANDMAID'S TALE'S executive producer Wolfgang Glattes, who worked as an extra.

In 1965, Schlöndorff decided to return to Germany "to discover what it really meant to be German." His return coincided with the emergence of the Junger Deutscher Film (Young German Film) movement, the new directors who made up Germany's own New Wave: Rainer Werner Fassbinder, Werner Herzog, Wim Wenders, Alexander Kluge and Jean-Marie Straub.

In 1966, Schlöndorff made his first feature film, "Young Torless," working from his own screenplay of Robert Musil's 19th century novel. The film shared the International Critics Prize at Cannes that same year.

Schlöndorff's many subsequent films include "The Lost Honor of Katharina Blum" (1975), based on the novel by Heinrich Boll, and co-directed by Schlöndorff's wife, actress/filmmaker Margarethe von Trotta; "Coup de Grace" (1976), based on the novel by Marguerite Yourcenar, and starring von Trotta; "Circle of Deceit" (1981), filmed entirely on location in Beirut and starring Bruno Ganz and Hanna Schygulla; and "Swann in Love" (1983), based on episodes from Remembrances of Things Past by Marcel Proust and starring Jeremy Irons.

Schlöndorff has also directed two films for American television, both of which were

VOLKER SCHLONDORFF BIOGRAPHY, cont.

released theatrically abroad: Arthur Miller's "Death of a Salesman," starring Dustin Hoffman and "A Gathering of Old Men," based on the novel by Ernest J. Gaines and starring Louis Gossett, Jr. and Richard Widmark.

Schlondorff describes the locale of *THE HANDMAID'S TALE* as somewhere "on the map of paranoia." When he first read the screenplay and the novel, he was instantly taken by the interweaving human dramas but was unsure about the story's social/political slant.

"It's the war of the sexes much more than any religious/political war," Schlondorff says. "It's about female sexuality, and very much about how your emotional needs may be exploited."

SAMMLUNG VOLKER SCHLÖNDORFF



deutsches  
filminstitut  
filmmuseum



HAROLD PINTER  
(Screenwriter)

Harold Pinter is internationally recognized as one of the greatest living playwrights of the English language. Born in Hackney, East London in 1930, Pinter decided at a young age that he wanted to be an actor. He studied for a year at the Royal Academy of Dramatic Arts, and then began touring with repertory and stock companies throughout Great Britain.

In his spare time, Pinter began writing plays. He wrote his first short play, "The Room," in 1957. That same year he also completed another short play, "The Dumb Waiter," and in 1958 his first full-length play, "The Birthday Party," was produced in London. "The Caretaker," Pinter's second full-length play, won the London Evening Standard Drama Award in 1959. It was later brought to Broadway, where it received further accolades, including the Page 1 Award of the Newspaper Guild of New York.

Beginning with his adaptation of Robert Maugham's novel, The Servant, for director Joseph Losey in 1962, Pinter established himself as one of the world's leading screenwriters. Among the many screen adaptations Pinter has written are "The Caretaker" (1963), which starred Alan Bates, Donald Pleasance and Robert Shaw; "The Pumpkin Eater" (1964), with Peter Finch and Anne Bancroft; "The Go-Between" (1971), directed by Joseph Losey and starring Alan Bates and Julie Christie; "The Last Tycoon" (1976), directed by Elia Kazan and starring Robert DeNiro; "The French Lieutenant's Woman" (1981), adapted from John Fowles' novel and featuring Meryl Streep and Jeremy Irons; "Betrayal" (1983), from his own play and starring Ben Kingsley, Jeremy Irons and Patricia Hodge; and "Turtle Diary" (1985), with Glenda Jackson and Ben Kingsley. Pinter also wrote screenplays for the thriller "The Quiller Memorandum" (1966) and Joseph Losey's "Accident" (1967).

His third full-length play, "The Homecoming," premiered in London in 1965. It won Broadway's Tony Award for Best Play in 1967, and was filmed by director Peter Hall in 1973, with Pinter as screenwriter. "No Man's Land" (1975) had a triumphant run at London's National Theatre with Sir Ralph Richardson and Sir John Gielgud in the lead roles.

Pinter has also adapted many of his works for radio and television, including the short plays "The Dwarfs" (1960), "The Collection" (1961), "The Lover" (1962) and "Landscape" (1968). He has also directed productions of several of his plays, including "The Birthday Party," "The Lover," "The Tea Party" and "Old Times." He also directed Robert Shaw's "The Man in the Glass Booth" in London in 1967 and on Broadway the following year. He made his debut as a feature film director with the American Film Theatre's production of Simon Gray's comedy "Butley" (1974), starring Alan Bates. More recently, Pinter directed the London revival of Tennessee Williams' "Sweet Bird of Youth," starring Lauren Bacall.

MARGARET ATWOOD  
(Author)

Margaret Atwood was born in Ottawa and grew up in northern Ontario, Quebec and Toronto. She received her undergraduate degree from Victoria College at the University of Toronto and her master's degree from Radcliffe College.

The author of more than twenty books, including poetry, fiction and nonfiction, Atwood is perhaps best known for her novels, which include The Edible Woman, Surfacing, Lady Oracle, Life Before Man and Bodily Harm, and her two collections of short fiction, Dancing Girls and Bluebeard's Egg. Cat's Eye, Atwood's most recent novel, was published in early 1989 and quickly made its way onto The New York Times bestseller list.

Atwood's work has been published in more than twenty countries. Boston, Vancouver, Montreal and London are among the many cities in which she has lived, and she has traveled extensively. The Handmaid's Tale was begun in West Berlin and was finished in Alabama.

The idea for The Handmaid's Tale began brewing in Atwood's mind three years before she actually started writing the novel. "I delayed it because I felt it was too crazy," Atwood says. "Then I started noticing that a lot of the things I thought I was more or less making up were now happening, and, indeed, more of them have happened since the publication of the book." Atwood maintains that everything in the book has factual roots in the past and present: "There isn't anything in The Handmaid's Tale that hasn't already happened."

Atwood also considers The Handmaid's Tale a book about her ancestors. "I am a 1630s Puritan on both sides of my family. One of my ancestors was Mary Webster, the witch who got hanged and it didn't take; it didn't kill her so she lived on, much to the consternation of everyone."

DANIEL WILSON  
(Producer)

Daniel Wilson is President and CEO of Daniel Wilson Productions, Inc., which he founded in 1969. Wilson and his company have won more than fifty awards for television and motion picture excellence, including eighteen Emmy Awards, seven Christopher Awards and the George Foster Peabody Award. *THE HANDMAID'S TALE* is Wilson's first theatrical feature film production.

Wilson executive produced the recent multi-million dollar miniseries "Hemingway," which starred Pamela Reed and Stacy Keach, who earned a Golden Globe for his performance. Wilson also executive produced the acclaimed NBC mini-series "Sophisticated Gents," adapted for the screen by Melvin Van Peebles and starring Paul Winfield and Dick Anthony Williams, and the award-winning miniseries "Blood and Honor: Youth Under Hitler." In addition, Wilson produced two NBC television films, "The Great Wallendas," starring Lloyd Bridges and Britt Eklund, and "Charlie and the Great Balloon Chase," starring Jack Albertson.

As one of the producers who originated the Afterschool Special format, Wilson and his company have produced eighteen Afterschool Specials and NBC Special Treats, including the first 90 minute ABC Afterschool Special, "The Late Great Me: Story of a Teenage Alcoholic," which won five Emmys. Other specials Wilson has produced include "Rookie of the Year," starring Jodie Foster, "Henry Winkler Meets William Shakespeare," and "The Secret of Charles Dickens," with Valerie Bertinelli.

Before forming his own company, Wilson was the co-creator and for eight years, producer of the Emmy Award-winning ABC series, "Discovery." Most recently, Wilson supervised the development and execution of the new Christian Science Monitor daily news program "World Monitor," which premiered in September, 1988.

Wilson's next project is "The CBS Murders," based on Richard Hammer's nonfiction book about the 1982 murders of three CBS technicians in New York.

WOLFGANG GLATTES  
(Executive Producer)

Wolfgang Glattes brings an extensive filming background to his role on THE HANDMAID'S TALE. Born in West Germany, Glattes studied architecture in Munich and then industrial design in Stockholm and Paris. Having always been interested in films, Glattes found himself working on "Jack of Diamonds" (1967) when he returned to Munich. Within a matter of weeks, he rose to the rank of first assistant director, a position which marked a turning point in his career.

Thereafter, Glattes worked steadily on American productions shooting in Europe, including Bob Fosse's "Cabaret" (1972), where he met his wife, Fosse's assistant choreographer, Kathryn Doby. They moved to New York in 1977 and later to Los Angeles, where they now live.

Glattes has worked on more than thirty motion pictures in various capacities, from assistant director to production manager, including John Huston's "A Walk with Love and Death" (1969), Michael Ritchie's "Downhill Racer" (1969), Otto Preminger's "Rosebud" (1975), and Robert Aldrich's "Twilight's Last Gleaming" (1977).

Glattes then became associate producer on Sidney Lumet's "Power" (1985) and "The Morning After" (1986). He was associate producer on Robert Benton's "Still of the Night" (1982) and, most recently, Glattes served as executive producer on Benton's "Nadine" (1987) and the musical "Sing" (1989). For Bob Fosse, Glattes was associate producer on "All that Jazz" (1979) and producer on "Star 80" (1983).

THOMAS A. WALSH  
(Production Designer)

Thomas A. Walsh received his B.F.A. from the California Institute of the Arts. He has worked as a set designer, art director and production designer in theater, films and television. He worked with director Volker Schlöndorff previously on the CBS telefilm "A Gathering of Old Men."

As a production designer, Walsh worked on the American Playhouse productions "Miss Lonelyhearts" and "Eugene O'Neill: Journey Toward Genius," was series production designer for HBO's "Vietnam War Story" and worked on episodes of the "Tales from the Darkside" series. He was art director for the television special "Diana Ross in Central Park," "Seven Minutes in Heaven" and the series "Reading Rainbow."

For his work as set designer on "Children of a Lesser God" Walsh received a Tony Award in 1980. He shared the Tony in 1984 as associate set designer on "The Real Thing" and again in 1986 as associate set designer on "I'm Not Rappaport" (both with set designer Tony Walton). Other Broadway credits as associate set designer include "Hurlyburly," "Starlight Express" and "Social Security." Walsh has also worked extensively on both international and regional theater productions, including numerous shows at the Mark Taper Forum in Los Angeles, and overseas tours of "My One and Only," and "I'm Not Rappaport."

COLLEEN ATWOOD  
(Costume Designer)

Atwood's most recent credits as costume designer were on Jonathan Demme's "Married to the Mob," Ridley Scott's "Someone to Watch Over Me," "Torch Song Trilogy" and "Fresh Horses."

Among the numerous other films for which Atwood has designed costumes are David Anspaugh's "Fresh Horses," John Avildsen's "For Keeps," James Toback's "The Pick-Up Artist," Michael Mann's "Manhunter" and Michael Apted's "Critical Condition," "Firstborn" and "Bring on the Night."

JENNIFER BARTLETT  
(Conceptual Advisor)

Jennifer Bartlett knew she wanted to be an artist even as a child. Her first one-woman show, held at Mills College in her senior year, won her acceptance to the Yale University School of Art and Architecture, where she took her B.F.A. degree in 1964 and an M.F.A. degree the following year. Though she began as an abstract artist, she has earned an international reputation for her ongoing exploration of visual experience that has often involved the recording of one image from different perspectives and in different styles and media. She began teaching art at the University of Connecticut, and in 1972 joined the faculty of the School of Visual Arts in New York.

Bartlett has built an impressive body of work in the last two decades. Speaking of "Rhapsody," the monumental work that made Bartlett an art-world star in 1976, New York Times art critic John Russell said it "enlarged our notions of time, and of memory, and of change, and of painting itself." Bartlett's most recent work has combined sculptural objects and painted backdrops and has moved into the realms of architecture, boat-building and furniture making.

In the winter of 1988 Bartlett designed sets and costumes for director Volker Schlöndorff's production of Janacek's opera "From the House of the Dead," and a dramatic adaptation of Heinrich Boll's "Frauen von Flusslandschaft," for the Munich State Theater.

Bartlett has won awards from the American Academy and Institute of Arts and Letters and the American Institute of Architects, among others. Her work has been exhibited in one-woman and group shows in museums and galleries worldwide, and her works are owned by many museums, including the Museum of Modern Art and the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York. She is currently designing a three and a half acre garden for Battery Park in collaboration with the architect Alexander Cooper.

RYUICHI SAKAMOTO  
(Score)

Academy Award-winning composer Ryuichi Sakamoto has worked in a variety of musical genres -- from film scores and avant garde jazz to rock and pop -- and has garnered widespread acclaim for his seamless merging of traditional Eastern and Western musical influences. A native of Japan, Sakamoto first began studying piano at age three. By ten, he was creating his own compositions, and at 18 he enrolled in Tokyo's University Of The Arts to continue his musical studies.

Sakamoto was a founding member of the Yellow Magic Orchestra, the groundbreaking group which changed the face of modern music in Japan and helped bring the country's music to a whole new international audience. After the Yellow Magic Orchestra disbanded in 1983, Sakamoto pursued a recording career as a soloist, as well as collaborating with such artists as David Sylvian, Thomas Dolby, David Van Tieghem and Virginia Astley.

Sakamoto also began to work on music for films, which seemed to go hand in hand with his work as an actor. In fact, Sakamoto appeared in two films in which his music played central roles as well, "Merry Christmas Mr. Lawrence" (1983) and "The Last Emperor" (1987). "The Last Emperor" soundtrack, composed in conjunction with David Byrne and Cong Su, won the Academy Award for Best Score, as well as a Grammy and a Golden Globe.

In 1987 Sakamoto also released "Neo Geo," which was a huge hit internationally. In January 1989 Virgin Records released "Playing The Orchestra," a special CD-only package that featured an overview of Sakamoto's work played by a symphony orchestra. He is currently at work on his next album, which will feature such diverse talents as the Senegalese singer Youssou N'Dour, Robbie Robertson, Jamaican drummer Sly Dunbar and other international artists from Japan, South America, Africa, Europe and America.

## ABOUT CINECOM ENTERTAINMENT GROUP

In its seven years of existence, New York-based Cinecom has emerged as the leading U.S. distributor of quality English-language independent films. Among its successful and critically acclaimed releases are Merchant Ivory's Academy Award-winning "A Room with a View," Jonathan Demme's Talking Heads concert film, "Stop Making Sense," John Sayles' "Matewan" and Mira Nair's "Salaam Bombay!".

Beginning with Gregory Nava's Oscar-nominated "El Norte" and Robert Altman's "Come Back to the Five and Dime Jimmy Dean, Jimmy Dean," Cinecom earned a much-deserved reputation for its savvy marketing and distribution of independent films that in other hands might never have reached the audiences Cinecom found for them. In quick succession, Cinecom launched such films as Bertrand Blier's "Menage," Giorgio Moroder's restored version of Fritz Lang's 1926 classic, "Metropolis," John Sayles' "Brother from Another Planet," "Stop Making Sense" and "A Room with a View," one of the most critically and commercially successful independent films ever.

With these films behind them, Cinecom earned a highly credible reputation in the filmmaking community and began to finance and co-finance the production of feature films. With a philosophy that staunchly defends the filmmaker's creative independence, Cinecom attracts top-notch artistic talent and has been involved in the production and release of such films as Jonathan Demme's film of Spalding Gray's "Swimming to Cambodia," Merchant Ivory's "Maurice," Stephen Frears' controversial "Sammy and Rosie Get Laid," and "Miles from Home," starring Richard Gere and Kevin Anderson.

Cinecom's recent releases include Mira Nair's Academy Award-nominated "Salaam Bombay!," Paul Bartel's outrageous comedy "Scenes from the Class Struggle in Beverly Hills," and "Queen of Hearts," a feature film directed by Jon Amiel, director of the highly acclaimed "The Singing Detective."

Upcoming releases from Cinecom include Volker Schlöndorff's film of "The Handmaid's Tale," based on the best-selling novel by Margaret Atwood with a screenplay by Harold Pinter. Starring Natasha Richardson, Robert Duvall, Faye Dunaway, Aidan Quinn and Elizabeth McGovern, the film is scheduled for release in March. Currently in post-production is "Aunt Julia and the Scriptwriter," a film adaptation of Mario Vargas Llosa's acclaimed novel, directed by Jon Amiel and starring Barbara Hershey, Peter Falk and Keanu Reeves.

Further ahead, Cinecom is involved in the productions of "Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead," written and directed by Tom Stoppard, and starring Richard Dreyfuss, Gary Oldman and Tim Roth, and "Once Around," the first English-language film from director Lasse Hallström ("My Life as a Dog"), which will star Holly Hunter and Richard Dreyfuss.



ABOUT CINECOM, cont.

In May, 1988, SBK Entertainment World, Inc., one of the leading music publishers and entertainment service companies, acquired a significant interest in Cinecom. Stephen C. Swid, former SBK Chairman, subsequently sold SBK to British conglomerate Thorn-EMI and formed SCS Communications, of which Cinecom is now a part. Swid is Chairman and co-CEO of Cinecom.

SAMMLUNG VOLKER SCHLÖNDORFF



deutsches  
filminstitut  
filmmuseum