

TRACEY
ULLMAN

VINCENT
D'ONOFRIO

LILI
TAYLOR

JUDITH
MALINA



The Santangelos
asked for a miracle.
God gave them something
slightly more complicated.

Their daughter Teresa.

JONATHAN DEMME
PRESENTS A NANCY SAVOCA FILM
HOUSEHOLD
saints

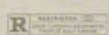


JONATHAN DEMME and FINE LINE FEATURES PRESENT A JONES ENTERTAINMENT GROUP/NEWMAN-GUAY PRODUCTION OF A NANCY SAVOCA FILM

TRACEY ULLMAN VINCENT D'ONOFRIO LILI TAYLOR JUDITH MALINA "HOUSEHOLD SAINTS" Music Supervisor JEFFREY KIMBALL

Original Music By STEPHEN ENDELMAN Costumes By JOHN LYONS and JULIE MADISON Costume Designer EUGENIE BAFALOUKOS Production Designer KALINA IVANOV

Editor ELIZABETH KLING Director of Photography BOBBY BUKOWSKI Executive Producer JONATHAN DEMME Based On The Novel "HOUSEHOLD SAINTS" by FRANCINE PROSE



Screenplay By NANCY SAVOCA and RICHARD GUAY

Produced By RICHARD GUAY and PETER NEWMAN Directed By NANCY SAVOCA



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Illustration: David M. Lawrence. Animation: Patrick M. Sullivan. Photography: David M. Lawrence.

Milestone Films presents a new restoration of

Household Saints

Fine Line Features and Jonathan Demme present
A Jones Entertainment Group, Newman-Guay production
A Milestone Film Release in collaboration with Kino Lorber

A film by Nancy Savoca

Tracey Ullman
Vincent D'Onofrio
Lili Taylor
Judith Malina

Casting by: John Lyons, Julie Madison
Director of Photography: Bobby Bukowski
Production Designer: Kalina Ivanov
Costume Designer: Eugenie Bafaloukos
Music Supervisor: Jeffrey Kimball
Original Music: Stephen Endelman
Edited by: Elizabeth Kling
Executive Producer: Jonathan Demme
Screenplay: Richard Guay & Nancy Savoca
Based on the novel by Francine Prose
Produced by Richard Guay and Peter Newman
Directed by Nancy Savoca

Cast:

Catherine Falconetti	Tracey Ullman
Joseph Santangelo	Vincent D'Onofrio
Teresa	Lili Taylor
Carmela Santangelo	Judith Malina
Nicky Falconetti	Michael Rispoli
Lino Falconetti	Victor Argo
Leonard Villanova	Michael Imperioli
Young Teresa	Rachael Bella
Evelyn Santangelo	Illeana Douglas
Frank Manzone	Joe Grifasi
Father Matthias	Dale Carman
Augie Santangelo	John Di Benedetto

Rita	Marie DeCicco
Cindy Zagarella	Nancy Marie
Lorraine	Sam Josepher
Fran	Elizabeth Bracco
Young Cindy Zagarella	Jessica DiCicco
Judy	Mabel McKeown
Host	Robert Stoke
Sr. Cupertino	Marianne Leone
Vincenzo Santangelo	Thomas Ford
Mr. Shen	George Teng
Mrs. Harris	Mary Portser
Pat Shen	Dzeni Teng
Mary	Elizabeth D'Onofrio
Sr. John Xavier	Phylliss Wenderlich
Sr. Agnes	Schelli Barbaro
Sr. Philomena	Ann Tucker
Jesus	Sebastian Roché
Mrs. Linari	Dorothy Hughes
Nun / Receptionist	Beatrice Boyle
Johnny	Chalotz Lagola
Madame Butterfly	Dawn Saito
Antoinette	Loretta Bassani
Rossina	Caterina D'Alessio
Maria	Marta Fensore
Louis	Calogero Savoca
Neighbor	Anthony Manzo
Neighbor	Vincent Fensore

Storytellers:

Mary	Irma St. Paul
Mario	Leonardo Cimino
Older Mother	Rosemary De Angeles
Younger Mother	Dianna Salvanto
Little Boy	Max Fetner
Baby	Christina Rosa
Baby	Gabriella Rosa

Unit Production Manager:	Steven Stoke
First Assistant Director:	J. Miller Tobin
Second Assistant Director:	MJ April
Art Director:	Charles Lagola
Set Designer:	Jeff McDonald
Set Decorator:	Karin Wiesel
Leadman:	Paul Martin

On-set Dressers: _____ Timothy Pope and Gordon Robert Keath
 Charge Scenic Artist: _____ Mary Creede
 Stand-by Scenic Artist: _____ Russel Holt
 Painters: _____ Patricia Quinn, Carolyn Brand, John Wallace
 Art Department Coordinator: _____ Susan Agnoff
 Construction Coordinator: _____ Barry Spencer
 Construction Foreman: _____ Greg Spencer
 Construction Secretary: _____ Deborah Burnett
 Gang Boss: _____ Dan Jones
 Carpenters: _____ Les Collins, Mike Charboneau, Jeff Grimsman, L. Michael King
 Property Master: _____ Suzanne Lapick
 Assistant Props: _____ Marilyn Hiratzka
 Script Supervisor: _____ Karen Kelsall
 Extras Casting: _____ Julie Oppenheimer
 First Assistant Camera: _____ Mike Latino
 Second Assistant Camera: _____ Theo Pingarelli
 Camera Production Assistant: _____ Duffy Taylor
 Additional Photography: _____ Joseph D'Alessandro, Peter Nelson, Michael Spiller
 Sound Mixer: _____ William Sarokin
 Boom Operator: _____ George Leong
 Gaffer: _____ Charles McNamara
 Best Boy Electrician: _____ Richard Audino
 Electricians: _____ Andrew Watts, Eric Schmidt, Peter Walts, Kelly Curry
 Key Grip: _____ Paul Candrilli
 Best Boy Grip: _____ Eric Klein
 Dolly Grip: _____ Thomas Potoskie
 Grips: _____ Jonathan Mintz, Michael Dhonau
 Location Supervisor: _____ Mary Weisgerber
 Location Manager: _____ James Herring
 Assistant Costume Designer: _____ Jennifer Ingram
 Costume Supervisors: _____ Marina Marit, Amanda Zenil
 Key Hair: _____ Audrey Futterman
 Key Makeup: _____ Kathryn Bihr
 Assistant Makeup: _____ Sarah Mays
 Production Office Coordinator: _____ Wendy Richardson
 Production Auditor: _____ Sheila Allen
 Assistant Office Coordinator: _____ John Daschbach
 Production Assistant: _____ Patrick Marz
 Assistant Auditor: _____ Tammy High
 Assistant Editors: _____ Mayin Lo, Amy Auchincloss
 Second Assistant Editors: _____ Zeborah Tidwell, Gary Levy
 Supervising Sound Editor: _____ Skip Lievsay
 Dialogue Editors: _____ Kevin Lee, M.P.S.E., Jeffrey Stern
 Sound Editor: _____ Eugene Gearty

Music Editor: _____ James Flatto
 Foley Editors: _____ Frank Kern, Steven Visscher, Eliza Paley
 Re-recording Mixer: _____ Tom Fleischman
 Foley Engineer: _____ Stuart Levy
 Foley Walker: _____ Mark Costanzo
 Assistant Sound Editor: _____ Leslie Gimbel
 Apprentice Sound Editor: _____ Julie Lindner
 Still Photographer: _____ Abigayle Tarsches
 Unit Publicist: _____ Teri Kane, Clein+White
 Assistant: Ms. Savoca/Mr. Guay: _____ Trish Adlesic
 2nd 2nd Assistant Director: _____ Sheila Waldron
 Production Supervisor: _____ Shell Hecht
 Production Assistants: _____ Penny Pridemore, David Wechsler, Anthony Hemmingway
 Production Executive: _____ Lani Daniels, Jones Entertainment
 Production Executive: _____ Emily Rosenblum, Peter Newman Productions
 Production Midwife: _____ Maureen Costello
 Childcare Providers: _____ Angela Walshe, Oonagh Evans, Betsey O'Neil, Dawn Glancy
 Transportation Coordinator: _____ Lee Siler
 Transportation Captain: _____ Jessie Smith
 Craft Services: _____ Therese Honeycutt
 Caterer: _____ Ken & Art's Catering
 Sausage Consultant: _____ Luca Paris, Gianluca's Salumeria
 First Aid: _____ George Davis
 Stunt Coordinator: _____ Eliza Coleman
 Special Effects: _____ Greg Hull
 Post Production Supervisor: _____ Trish Adlesic
 Post-production Assistants: _____ Richard Quebral. Robert Featherstone, Dennis Shinnors
 Score Orchestrated and Conducted by Stephen Endelman
 Score Produced by: _____ Alex Steyermark
 Music Coordinator: _____ Kevin Frech
 Assistant Music Coordinator: _____ Sarah Connors
 Music Clearances: _____ Other Noises Music
 Italian Street Band Music produced and arranged by: Douglas J. Cuomo
 Music Recording Engineers: _____ James P. Nichols, Major Little. Douglas McKean, Steve Vavagiakis
 Production Counsel: _____ Susan Bodine
 Excerpts of "Story of a Soul" autobiography of St. Therese of Lisieux, courtesy of ICS Publications
 Production Insurance: _____ George Walden, Albert G. Ruben & Co.
 Financial Consultants: _____ Eric H. Shonz, Larry Roth
 Production Financing: _____ Larry Da Silva, First Interstate Bank
 Production Financing: _____ Stephen Mras, Sumitomo Bank Ltd.:
 Production Financing: _____ Mellon Bank of Pittsburgh
 Payroll Services: _____ Axiom Entertainment Services
 Re-recorded at Sound One

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Synopsis:

In the leafy backyard of a Bronx home, an older Italian-American woman, carries a plate of sausage to the picnic table where her husband, daughter, granddaughter, and great-grandkids are sitting. Her husband remarks that as good as these leftover sausages are, they don't compare to the ones they used to get in the old neighborhood at



Santangelo's. The older woman remembers that they used to call them "miracle sausages." Her granddaughter asks if the sausages worked miracles. No, she replies, it was the butcher's daughter Teresa who made the miracles — because she was a saint. She starts to tell the story of how Teresa's parents got together during the heatwave of 1949 during the San Gennaro Feast. Her husband interrupts her: "Now, if you're gonna tell this story, tell it right. We used to tell it like this. We used to say: 'And it happened, by the Grace of God, that Joseph Santangelo won his wife in a Pinochle game.'"



In the back room of Joseph Santangelo's butcher shop in Little Italy, four men are gathered around a card table, drinking red wine from jelly jars, smoking cigarettes, playing Pinochle, and complaining about the heat. Joseph deals cards to Frank Manzone, the neighborhood butcher, and to Lino Falconetti and his son, Nicky. The Falconettis run a radio repair store across the street. All four are bathed in sweat

and Nicky tells the others that the infernal heat was caused by the atom bomb. Outside, the San Gennaro festival is almost deserted but the band plays on as neighbors gather on stoops and kids sleep on fire escapes.

Joseph is winning and while Nicky and Frank are ready to call it a night, Lino says it is too hot to move. It is the last hand and Frank puts up his next year's batch of homemade wine. Nicky kisses his ticket to *Madame Butterfly* at the Metropolitan Opera and puts it on the table, but the others reject it. Instead, he offers his good conduct medal from the US Army. Joseph bets the North Pole. When the others laugh, he opens his meat locker and a blast of freezing cold air sweeps over the table. When Lino begs "Do it again!" Joseph replies, "Win it off me!" But Lino has nothing to put up — Joseph won't accept his life savings or his shop. Lino tells him that if he wins, Joseph has to keep the locker open as long as he says and offers his daughter Catherine to cover his bet. Joseph agrees and wins. He has a perfect hand — all hearts.



In the Falconetti's apartment, Catherine waters her houseplants and reads a movie magazine.

A beautiful Asian woman in white geisha makeup and a kimono sings an aria from *Madame Butterfly* as cherry blossom petals fall around her. Nicky, handsome in the uniform of a naval officer, joins her in a duet. There is a flash of electricity and Nicky is in the family repair shop holding a short-circuited radio. Lino calls out to Catherine to go to the butcher to get sausage for dinner. She puts down her magazine and runs across the street in the rain to Santangelo's.



Catherine waits as Joseph flirts with a long line of women customers. Finally, the store empties and she orders two pounds of sausage. Joseph's bantering does not impress her. She tells him that she saw him put his thumb on the

scale when he was weighing the meat. He waves his thumb at her and asks if she knows what he can do with it. No, she says. He demonstrates on a sausage and grinning asks: "Now do you understand?" But she has no idea what he is suggesting. For a moment, Joseph envisions Catherine as a young girl in a white confirmation dress, holding a rosary and a prayer book. He tells her that it is his mistake, the price is a dollar even — and she should ask her father where Joseph Santangelo can put his thumb. After she leaves he notices that she paid him eighty-five cents and he laughs.

At the card table, Lino is ready to start playing, but Joseph says that first, they have to settle up last night's game. Lino was so drunk that he doesn't remember but the others confirm that he bet Catherine for a blast of cold air. Joseph tells him that he is serious, he and Catherine will have a church wedding and nobody will ever know about the bet. Lino invites Joseph and his mother to dinner the next night. When he arrives home drunk, he tells Catherine that Joseph likes her and is coming to dinner with his mother. He orders her to make a feast: "I want this meal to be so good, a man would get married to eat like that every night." "Oh yeah, well I got news for you," Catherine replies, "Nobody gets married for the food!"

At the produce stand, Catherine struggles to find fresh vegetables. In her kitchen, a sink full of escarole overflows. When Catherine checks the veal roast, the oven is cold. Sitting down to eat, matriarch Carmela Santangelo looks askance at the meal and the cook. Joseph compliments the antipasto and his mother remarks that it is hard to ruin a cold dish — as she removes a long hair from her plate. When Catherine remarks that there was not much in the stores because of the heatwave, Carmela says that as new immigrants they were so poor she picked shells out of the garbage at Umberto's Clam House to make a delicious soup. Joseph turns and asks her when that happened.

As they leave, Joseph tells Catherine he liked the meal. As soon as the door closes, Lino slaps Catherine across the face and tells her that the food she served was crap. She replies that Joseph just told her the food was great. "Since when does love know about great food?" he replies. "Love?" she asks incredulously. "Whaddaya think all this was about? The good neighbor policy? You're marrying that guy. It's settled. I've given my word." When Catherine replies "This is America," her father yells after her: "This is my house!" Lying in bed, Catherine murmurs "Santangelo" over and over.



Carmela lights a candle to the statue of Saint Gennaro and demands an explanation. Then she asks her dead husband Vincenzo to tell her how their smart son could fall for a Falconetti. Sitting in a chair and smoking a cigar, his ghost replies "Man deals and God stacks the deck."

At the dinner table, the Falconettis eat the food that Carmela cooked and sent over. Catherine and Lino say the sausages are delicious but Nicky pushes the meal aside. He tells them “Some guys, their lives are like opera — beautiful, full. But guys like us, all we got is sausage and Pinochle.” His sister replies that there’s a lot worse in life than sausage and Pinochle.

As Carmela serves her son a plate of sausage, she tells him the reasons he shouldn’t marry Catherine. One: The Falconettis have no money. Two: “That girl is no beauty” — as he can see for himself. Three: “You don’t win your wife in a Pinochle game.” Four: How can he “bring children into this world with that lousy Falconetti luck?” Joseph reassures her that the kids will be half Santangelo. Five: Catherine’s terrible cooking was a bad omen. Six: Who is this girl anyway? He doesn’t even know her. Joseph tells his mother that Catherine is special. Carmela warns her son that if they marry, the rest of his life will taste like Catherine’s meal. He replies, “As I remember, the antipasto was delicious.”

Wedding bells ring as Joseph and Catherine exit the church to a shower of confetti, candy, and coins.



At the Santangelo apartment, Joseph in his underwear waits in bed for Catherine who stands awkwardly, still dressed in her wedding gown and veil. He asks her if she needs anything and she tells him she needs a place to change. “What are you going to change into? Batman?” he asks. He tells her he won’t look and turns off the bedside light. Shyly, she struggles out of her wedding dress and into a long flannel nightgown. She gets into bed and Joseph asks if she understands what he meant when he asked her about where he could put his thumb. She

shakes her head. He pulls up her nightgown and — as she gasps — asks if now she understands? He kisses her and tells her he will now show her what else he can put there.

Climbing on top of her, they make love. Catherine calls out “Santangelo, Santangelo!” She worries that her mother-in-law will hear the creaking bed springs. Don’t worry, he tells her, Carmela sleeps like a log. As Catherine continues to murmur “Santangelo,” the bedroom is bathed in waves of blue light. Bubbles rise as the interior of the room becomes a Baroque sky dotted with clouds. Silently, Carmela, asleep in her bed, floats above the lovers.

In the sun-filled kitchen of the Santangelo apartment, a radiant Catherine shows Joseph her new houseplants. Carmela kneads the ground meat for the sausages and complains to her dead husband that the plants are stealing the oxygen out of their air.

At his produce stand, Frank weighs two eggplants for Catherine and tells her to come back tomorrow — he has some nice spinach for the baby. Three neighborhood women flock around her to offer congratulations and old wives’ tales about how to tell if she’s having a boy or



a girl. Approaching the butcher store, Catherine is stopped by her mother-in-law who warns her that if the baby sees blood and meat it will be trouble. She replies that the baby can’t see anything and goes inside.

Carmela drips candle wax into a basin of water and examines the shape. “A boy,” she exclaims, “baby Enzo!” A gust of wind suddenly blows out the candle and she crosses herself, “Dio mio!”

In Santangelo’s butcher store, a society woman in a feather hat and mink stole has come to see that her Thanksgiving turkey is freshly killed. The visibly pregnant Catherine walks in as Joseph wrestles the large bird and slits its neck. Carmela dashes in and says that her dead husband told her that there was an emergency — she should rush downstairs to the shop. Her mother-in-law tells Catherine that she will give birth to a chicken. Clutching her abdomen, Catherine says “It moved! It feels like wings.”

In the apartment, Carmela asks whether “the little chicken” is moving. Catherine tells her it is just superstition, but when a bird flies through the living room and out the window, she weeps.

Carmela points out a blind man on the sidewalk and tells Catherine that Jimmy Leucci's father was crazy for music and took his pregnant wife "up to a club in Harlem to hear some blind colored piano player. When the blind man finishes playing, he turns around and looks straight at Mrs. Leucci. That's how come poor Jimmy..."

Terrified, Catherine asks if there is anything they can do. Placing an icon beside her statue of Saint Gennaro, Carmela tells her to pray to Saint Anna: "Say what you gotta say!" The young woman entreats the mother of the Virgin to protect her from giving birth to a chicken.

Madame Butterfly flits through the curtains of Nicky Falconett's room as he lies in the dark beside his sleeping father.

Lino is winning big at Pinochle and Joseph is getting nothing but lousy hands. Nicky isn't there — his father thinks he is out looking for a "Jap" wife. Folding his cards, Joseph gets up from the table and says that all day long he has had the feeling that things are not going his way. Looking out the window he sees lights on in his apartment and rushes out.

Joseph sees Carmela carrying a bucket of bloody towels and fetching boiling water. He can hear Catherine moaning and asks if there is anything he can do. His mother tells him to pray. Joseph asks to see his wife. "See? What's there to see? Whaddya think this is — the movies?" she replies as she goes into the room where Catherine is crying in pain.

Joseph kneels and prays to Saint Anna and the statue of Saint Gennaro. Coming out of the room, Carmela takes the icon and burns it on the stove, saying "This is what Saint Anna does for my family. This is what she deserves." She tells her son that Catherine is fine but the baby had no chance. She barely had time to baptize it with a little water before it died. She tells him to go to his wife — go see what he won in the Pinochle game. Catherine turns away when he reaches for her hand. Joseph pulls back the sheets and sees a dead baby with wings on the bloody bed.

As a flotilla of tiny white coffins move across the screen, Joseph asks his mother if the baby will go to heaven. She replies that she doesn't know if her baptism took. If not, the baby will be stuck in limbo. Joseph carries his son's tiny coffin down the stairs of the church as a chorus of voices wonder whether it was Carmela's curse or the Falconettis' bad luck that caused the tragedy.



Coming home from work, Joseph sees dead and dying plants around the apartment. He asks his mother about Catherine. She's in bed, as she has been for eight months. Carmela has invited Lino and Nicky over for dinner, hoping maybe they can help "one of their own."

At the table, Carmela rips up her bread and discards the crust. The food is awful, so Joseph brings out some leftover seafood salad. As Nicky spoons some, he tells the others that in Japan people eat fish and noodles because since the war there have been shortages of many ingredients. Carmela repeats her story of making delicious soup from discarded clam shells and tells him “If a woman can’t cook with what God gives her, she can’t cook.” Nicky replies that she is a fine one to talk. Carmela tells him that at least her son married an Italian girl instead of chasing after the Japanese. “Right,” he replies, “An Italian girl he won in a Pinochle game.” Joseph pounds the table: “That’s my wife you’re talking about! And your sister.” “What Pinochle game?” Catherine asks. Carmela imitates her, mockingly.

At Frank’s produce stand, two neighborhood women gossip about how terrible the Santangelo sausages have become. In the apartment, Carmela mops the floor. Suddenly she sees a vision of herself as a corpse. She smiles and tells Vincenzo that she is coming.

It is Easter Sunday. As bells ring, neighborhood families dressed up in their best clothes head to church. In the apartment, Catherine opens her eyes to a sunlit room where all her plants are blooming. She wakes Joseph and tells him it’s a miracle. He says he has been watering them for weeks. No, they were dead when they went to bed, she insists, and you can’t bring dead things back to life. “Now what kind of a thing is that for a Catholic girl to say, especially on Easter Sunday?” he replies. He admits he threw out the dead plants and replaced them. Catherine replies, laughing: “You cheated!” They make love as the bells ring. Coming out of their room, the couple finds Carmela dead, a pot burning on the stove. “Holy Christ,” Joseph exclaims, “Catherine, this isn’t the miracle you were talking about is it?” “Oh, God no!” she replies, “I didn’t know.”



Joseph kisses Catherine and feeling her belly asks if she is pregnant. They are both elated. Together they look through a book about fetal development and another refuting old wives’ tales. As Catherine reads about the many superstitions, we

see her pack her mother-in-law’s clothes, crucifix, statues, icons, and Vincenzo’s portrait in a cardboard box. She rolls yellow paint on the brown wall where the outline of the crucifix remains. Hugely pregnant and with a chic short hairdo, Catherine walks through the apartment, which now features bright colors and modern new furniture.

A sign in the window of the Santangelo shop announces: "It's a Girl! Teresa Carmela Santangelo Born: December 18, 1952 Weight 7 lbs. 2 oz." Joseph takes his wife and baby daughter home from the hospital in a shiny blue Chevy Deluxe coupe with a red top.

Looking at his baby in the bassinet beside the Christmas tree, Joseph brings up the subject of the Pinochle game. He tells Catherine he would have married her even if he hadn't won. "Did you cheat?" she asks. Sure, he replies. "Isn't that always the way," she replies, "you win your husband in a card game." Stroking his infant daughter, Joseph says, "Look what I won in that card game — an angel."



Six-year-old Teresa, dressed in a parochial school uniform, hurries her mother through the halls of the school. Teresa wants Catherine to see *The Miracle of Our Lady of Fatima*, a Hollywood movie being shown in the parish basement. On-screen, three young Portuguese children kneel in an open field before a vision of the Virgin Mary. They squint to avoid the brilliant white light that She radiates. Teresa watches, transfixed.



In the school bathroom, three young girls are reading an article in the *National Enquirer*. According to the tabloid, the children portrayed in *The Miracle of Our Lady of Fatima* received a prediction from the Virgin which was sealed with instructions that it be opened on October 13, 1960 — on the anniversary of Her last appearance there. Teresa walks in and listens from her seat in the stall. The girls are thrilled because the date of the revelation is just a week away.

Teresa makes a deal with God: she will sit on her bed without moving for five minutes if He will "make the news from Our Lady's letter be good." At the breakfast table, she looks through the morning newspapers. Joseph jokingly asks her if she's looking for the daily double at Belmont. She tells him she is looking for the pope's announcement about the letter with the secret from Our Lady of Fatima. Her father tells her to look in the "Dear Abby" column. When she keeps paging through the newspapers, Joseph suggests that the pope will wait six months and then pass the news off as his own idea. Catherine tells her daughter that it is time for school. Teresa, disappointed, says "I can't believe this."

Catherine discovers that Teresa has replaced the nursery rhyme-themed decorations in her room with the contents of Carmela's box: a painting of the holy family is hanging up, Saint Gennaro is on the bedside table, and the crucifix is back on the bright yellow wall.

In class, the girls pass a note. When the nun demands they explain what is going on, one girl stands up and says: "This whole thing is about us bein' confused about the Letter of Fatima. The pope shoulda opened it three days ago and he didn't say nothing about it." The nun tells the class that whatever the pope decides is for the best.

Clearing the dinner table, her mother asks Teresa about the letter and sees her disappointment. Catherine tells Teresa that when she was little, the nuns told her about the Virgin and the angel Gabriel. At the Annunciation, Mary asked the angel if her pregnancy and child were miracles. Yes, Gabriel replied, adding: "You know Madonna, miracles are all around us but life is too short to sit around waiting for them. We are the ones who must seek them out." Teresa is confused. Her mother tells her that maybe the story of the secret letter was true, maybe not. Perhaps the Virgin was trying to teach everyone what the angel taught her: that life is too short to wait around for a miracle.

Sprawled on her bed, Teresa cries and asks Jesus, "Why are you punishing us like this? Why can't we know the secret?" She worries that He is angry at her for something she did wrong. Teresa asks Jesus to show her how to change. She notices a school assignment marked C minus and the wilting plant on her dresser. "Okay, okay," she says. Teresa waters the plants and does her homework over and over again to make sure it is perfect.



Walking down Mulberry Street, Teresa passes her uncle, who is drinking from a bottle in a brown paper bag. He calls her over and asks about her mother. Nicky tells her that he accepts his fate, unlike Joseph who is "always twisting things his way. That's not fair. That's cheating... You play Pinochle?" He gives her some money for candy and Teresa walks away. In a voiceover, Teresa worries that if her uncle dies he will go to hell. She decides to offer up her first communion for him. In a white dress, lace gloves, and a veil, she accepts the sacrament "For Uncle Nicky, for my parents, for all my family and... for the good of all the world."

Standing in front of an assembly in a high-school gym, a young nun announces that the winner of the St. Bonafice High School Essay Contest is freshman Teresa Carmela Santangelo for her eloquent essay "Why Communism is the Anti-Christ." A teenaged Teresa shyly approaches the lectern and is handed a white book with gold lettering: *The Story of a Soul*. The nun tells her it is

the autobiography of Saint Therese of Lisieux, *The Little Flower*, adding that the saint was “a young girl not unlike yourself who achieved great things in very ordinary ways. May she be an inspiration to you.”



Teresa copies out quotes from Saint Therese’s book into a spiritual notebook and vows to follow the saint’s “little way” — “doing all the little things that go unnoticed, unacknowledged and unappreciated.” She takes brown paper from the butcher shop to reline the silverware drawers. Joseph worries that Teresa is doing too much housework. “She cleans all the time. There’s nothing left to clean up there!”

At the Chinese laundry, Nicky drunkenly tries to talk with the young woman who hands him his shirts. On the sidewalk, he stumbles, yells at someone in his way, and bows to an Asian mother and child. Teresa crosses the street to avoid him and overhears two women gossiping about her uncle: they say that he goes to Chinatown every day looking for an “Oriental girl.”

Overhearing her parents talking about meeting with a college counselor at St. Boniface, Teresa tells them that she is not going to college, she is going to join the Carmelites. “Over my dead body,” her father replies, “You’ll see me buried before any daughter of mine works like a dog 24 hours a day to line the pope’s pockets.” Teresa protests that it is for God, not the pope. Joseph tells her that working as a butcher, he has seen that what makes women beautiful is desire. But the nuns, “they don’t want anything. They come in for veal and you don’t have it, they never blink. They don’t miss a beat. And you know inside they’re saying, ‘It’s God’s will.’” He adds, “Nuns are sick women and my daughter isn’t sick.”

Teresa walks down the crowded, noisy street, silently imploring Jesus to rescue her: “Deliver me from this life sentence. I want to be free to devote myself to my true love — and that is You. If You really want me for a bride, please, please, help me get past my father.” Her parents are eating dinner, but Teresa only picks up a piece of bread and starts tearing it into pieces. She tells them she will eat when they let her join the Carmelites. “Then you’ll starve,” Joseph tells her.

Teresa has not eaten for a week. She throws away every meal and thanks Jesus. In her spiritual journal, she writes that each day without eating brings her closer to her wedding day. In the middle of the night, she wakes to the sound and smell of sausage sizzling. Entering the dark kitchen, Catherine at first sees Carmela standing over the stove. Realizing it is actually her daughter, she tells Teresa, “Sausage on an empty stomach! Sweetheart, start with something easier to digest. A glass of milk, a peach.” The next morning Teresa eats breakfast, but is heartbroken — she has failed and is nothing.

Hearing an aria on the radio, Nicky carries the bulky set down the street in the rain to the closed Chinese laundry and pounds on the door. When the owner and his daughter reluctantly let the drunken man in, Nicky asks them to plug in the radio. He tells them: “‘Tosca!’ 1240 on the dial. This is my music, Italian opera.” The music that plays is not Puccini. The store owner speaks and his daughter translates: “He says that’s Chinese opera.” Nicky returns home. Lino hears his son singing an aria, then silence. Going into the next room, he finds that Nicky has committed hara-kiri with a Japanese sword.

Teresa puts a flower on the ledge outside the window of the Falconetti’s repair shop in front of a photo of her uncle in his Army uniform. Listening to her aunt and parents discuss her future, she worries that her uncle is exiled to the section of hell reserved for suicides — and that she too is in exile. Since she cannot become a nun, Teresa starts as a student at Saint Angela’s Academy and works to bend herself to God’s will.

At a school workshop on “Television and the Future of Catholic Education,” Teresa meets Leonard Villanova, a second-year law student at Saint John’s University. The self-confident young man lectures her discussion group about the exciting potential of television. Leonard asks Teresa to join him for coffee. In the restaurant, he makes fun of the other students for having no ambition. Leonard tells her his “Villanova life plan” for success and asks what her goals are. She tells him that ever since she read Saint Therese, what she has really wanted was to join the convent and serve God. “Aha, the Little Flower,” he replies, “so you’re one of those!” He tells Teresa that half the girls in his neighborhood wanted to grow up to be the Little Flower. He asks her why she wants to set herself apart from the world? Can’t she serve God and her family at the same time?

The coffee shop spins around as Teresa has an epiphany. Remembering her mother’s story, she thinks “You don’t sit around waiting for miracles, because then you come to expect some big announcement to let you know that a miracle is on its way. You miss the point. Life’s miracles sneak up on you. It can come from nowhere. From the simplest things. And today I had a miraculous revelation: God is everywhere.” Suddenly the people in the street outside are moving in slow motion. The folks buying magazines at the newsstand, an older lady getting out of a taxi, lovers kissing, and women crossing the street all seem miraculous. Teresa knows that God has sent Leonard Villanova to her. He walks her home and outside the butcher shop leans in for a quick kiss.



In her journal, Teresa writes that Leonard, whom she thinks of as a brother, has kissed and held her, but she has not felt anything impure. “After all,” she writes, “I am not here of my own free will.”



Teresa and Leonard walk out of a movie theater where the marquee reads "Last Year at Marienbad." After raving about the film, Leonard asks Teresa a favor: Can she help put up some curtains his mother sent him? His apartment has psychedelic posters and the Moody Blues' "Question" is playing.

Teresa hangs blue curtains in Leonard's bedroom. As she finishes, he tells her to take off her clothes. She does and lies down on the bed. Staring up at the ceiling, she thinks: "The sense of freedom was so overwhelming. The saints spoke of floating out of your body. Now I understand what that is." Leonard hurriedly prays "Please, Lord Jesus, get me through this and, I promise, I'll never do it again." As he embraces her, she thinks "God has led me to Leonard's bed. But why?" Leonard wakes up. It is 9:00 he worries that her parents will be upset. Actually, it is Teresa who is upset, thinking "I'm going to hell. I wanted to become a nun, but I didn't. I wanted to go to heaven but I am going to hell." Getting out of bed, she sees that there is blood on the sheets. Leonard tells her to forget it, but Teresa insists on stripping the bed and washing the sheets. Teresa is sick with worry: Are her actions the devil's work, or worse — just life? What if God doesn't have a plan for her?

In Leonard's apartment, Teresa is ironing his red-and-white checked shirt. As he leaves, Leonard encourages her to get out, go see a movie. She tells him she'll be fine. Bent over the ironing board, she hears a cough and looks up. Jesus Christ is there,



smiling at her. His robes are dirty, as are his feet — bloody from his stigmata. His crown of thorns encircles a head full of greasy blonde curls. Teresa thinks that this is a moment she has always longed for and feared, and feels shy. Jesus tells her to go ahead and continue ironing, he

doesn't want to disturb her. His voice is gentle and he has a British accent. He tells her he came to keep her company. As she puts the shirt on a wire hanger, Jesus thanks Teresa for "grooming one of my lambs." He sighs and turns away. There is the sound of something heavy being moved and women weeping and the shadow of a giant cross moves across the window behind the chair where He is sitting.

Jesus says, "If only there was someone to do as much for me." Fingering his stained and ragged garment, he adds, "I was buried in this." Teresa asks him, "I thought they had your shroud at Turin?" No, he has been wearing this garment for two thousand years. He explains that in paintings, he wears a crown and golden raiments, but serving God he has to wear this ragged shroud to remind the angels "of the wear and tear of death, the strain of resurrection. It keeps them from getting sentimental for their lives on earth." Teresa offers to wash it for Jesus — he could put on one of Leonard's robes.



Opening the closet to put away the shirt she ironed, Teresa discovers that the closet is full of red-and-white checked shirts — and dozens more are festooned all around the apartment, covering every surface. Jesus's laughter fills the room. Seeing another

identical shirt draped over the ironing board, Teresa joyfully says "Okay," and resumes ironing.

Hours later, Leonard returns home and is dismayed to find Teresa still ironing his only red-and-white shirt. She tells him that it isn't the same shirt — now he has hundreds! Opening the closet, where there are only a few white shirts hanging, she tells him it is a miracle like the loaves and the fishes or the wedding at Cana. While she sits in the other room, Leonard calls the Santangelos, identifying himself as a friend of Teresa's. When her parents arrive, Teresa ecstatically describes the miracle of the shirts. They take her home.

Over coffee, Joseph and Catherine discuss their daughter. Catherine says they were wrong not to let her go to the convent. In her room, Teresa puts on the white veil she wore at her first communion. She is in love and her Beloved can walk through walls. Lying in bed, she kisses the crucifix and wonders when she will see her sweet Jesus again.

Catherine and Joseph are seated at the desk of a nun who looks through some paperwork as she tells them: "Teresa's case has been diagnosed as one of acute hallucinatory psychosis,

brought on by a particularly difficult and prolonged adolescent psychosexual adjustment, no doubt aggravated by a somewhat obsessional religious nature.” In short, she says, Teresa has “temporarily lost touch with what we call reality.” Catherine asks if their daughter will recover. The nun replies that often these cases are temporary, especially in young people.

Catherine watches Teresa meticulously scrub the floors of the Catholic mental hospital on her hands and knees. She tells her daughter that they will just get dirty again. Teresa replies, “This is my work.” In the laundry room. Teresa happily adds a white folded sheet to a table piled high with clean bed linens.



After a train ride, Joseph and Catherine arrive at the hospital. It is pouring rain and the grounds look sad and bedraggled. A nun at the reception desk tells them that Teresa is in her room, she has a touch of the flu. Sitting up in bed, their daughter looks angelic. Teresa asks Joseph for advice about Pinochle — she has been playing with God, Jesus, and Saint Therese. Joseph asks if these card players are delusional patients. No, she explains, she has been playing cards with God, Jesus, and Saint Therese. They played girls against boys and the girls got slaughtered.

Teresa tells him that the Little Flower isn't much of a player. — she speaks so softly that no one can hear her bids and she passed their opponents every card they needed — as if she didn't want to win. “That's a saint for you,” Catherine replies. Teresa tells them she'll never be a saint: “I wanted to win, I played hard. But even if I'd been an expert, we didn't have a chance. Because God and Jesus drew nothing but high cards. Between them, they took every hand.” She had suspected that God was cheating and when they left, He told her: “Teresa, of all my great miracles, my favorite is tipping the scales and cheating at Pinochle.” Joseph tells her that he can believe it.

During the train ride home, Joseph asks Catherine if Teresa knew about the Pinochle game. She doesn't know for sure... people sometimes talk. He tells his wife that he didn't cheat the night that he won her playing Pinochle — he actually pulled a handful of hearts from the deck. “You think you know how the game is going, but you never really do. Anytime, God can deal you a wild card.” God dealt them a daughter who sees Jesus at the ironing board.

The phone rings in the Santangelos' bedroom. A nun is calling with bad news, their daughter has “gone to God.” When they arrive at the convent they see that overnight the garden has burst into bloom. At Teresa's deathbed, Catherine prays that her daughter's soul goes straight to heaven — all she ever wanted was to be with Him. Joseph notices that there is a smell of roses

"Enough to knock you over!" "Isn't that supposed to happen when a saint dies?" he asks, "Everything starts smelling like flowers? Catherine tells him that Teresa was a beautiful girl but she went crazy ironing shirts in her boyfriend's apartment. Taking his dead daughter's hand, Joseph notices a red mark on her palm. Catherine tells him that this is not a miracle. At the funeral, Catherine sobs on Joseph's shoulder as the community files by the coffin, putting rosaries and notes asking Teresa to intervene with God on their behalf around her body.

In the Bronx backyard, the older woman continues telling the story: "The day she was buried all the patients of the institution were cured." She goes on to tell her dubious daughter and family that from that day on the Santangelo sausages became famous for curing diseases like cancer and heart disease, all because Teresa was a saint. Her daughter replies, "Y'know ma, I could name a list of women as long as my arm who went crazy cooking and cleaning and trying to please everyone. So she saw Jesus at the ironing board, that makes her a saint?" When her great-grandson knocks over a glass of wine, spilling it on the tablecloth, the older woman stands up and says, "She saw God in her work. How many of us can say that, huh?"

"Not me," her granddaughter replies.

Notes on the production of *Household Saints*

— from
co-screenwriter and
producer, Rich Guay



Nancy Savoca and Rich Guay on the set of

Household Saints

Timeline

We [my wife/filmmaking partner Nancy Savoca and I] had been talking to financiers since the fall of 1991 about the movie. In February 1992 we learned that Nancy was pregnant and due in October. That put us on a very specific timeline to make the movie. The decision to not shoot in New York had already been made. There were no tax incentives in those days and there was no way to shoot in the real Little Italy because that neighborhood was packed with busy restaurants and businesses. The exteriors would have been impossible and the interiors in tiny tenement apartments made this a clear candidate for building those apartments. For budgetary reasons the decision was made to go to the soundstages in Wilmington North Carolina. The studios there also had a “New York” street backlot, built for Michael Cimino’s 1985 film *Year of the Dragon*.

With the build taken into account, we needed to shoot from late June to late August. That meant the sets had to begin being built in May. The financing structure was known as a negative pickup where we had sales contracts from a set of companies that we would go to a bank and borrow against in order to finance the production. That meant the dates were locked in place and we had to deliver and finish the film no later than the end of January 1993. The entire calendar for the film — from prep, to production, to post — was built from the baby’s due date.

As negotiations dragged on from March to April, Nancy finally said she was “going to pack our suitcases.” She proceeded to get the bags packed and the deal closed to the point where we left for Wilmington in early May.

Wilmington: Building Little Italy

The task of building so many sets and working on what we found to be a very shabby backlot fell to Kalina Ivanov, our production designer. In searching for a designer we had been told that it was impossible to build all the sets we needed on the budget we had. One designer turned down the job saying that with our budget the film would “look like a porno movie.” Kalina was introduced to us by Jonathan Demme, our Executive Producer. He had worked with her as a storyboard artist, most notably on *Silence of the Lambs*. ***Household Saints*** would be her first production design gig.

Food

Food played a huge role in the film. The Santangelos ran a butcher shop where Joseph notably put his finger on the scale. The sausage, made by Carmela Santangelo, was said to have magic powers and bad meals were bad omens. The challenge of working with food in a place so far from New York was the availability of authentic-looking things like bread and sausage. The prop master worked tirelessly with local bakers and vendors to create the



right look for each thing on the dinner table. It’s probably fair to say that ***Household Saints*** is one of the few films with a “Sausage Consultant” listed in the end credits. Once we got past the authenticity factor, the budget took over. Endless meal plan breakdowns were done by the prop master and reviewed by Nancy and me to get the numbers right. It was not unusual to say, “Okay, cut the sausage in this scene down to 1.5 pounds from 3 and let’s not use 4 peppers but only 2 and make the frying pan smaller so it looks fuller.”

Vegan Sausage

As soon as we thought the food was settled, we got a little surprise. There was a very important point made in the story about how Carmela, Judith Malina’s character, made magical sausage and then her daughter-in-law, Catherine (played by Tracey Ulman) takes over when Carmela dies. When Judith reported for work she informed us that she was a strict vegan and would not touch any sort of animal meat — pork in the case of our sausage. But the story and the shot planned *required* her to massage spices into a huge pile of ground pork meat. The search was on for plant-based substitutes. In 1992, this was a very unusual request — there were no commercially available “meat substitutes” so, once again, the prop department had to start from scratch and invent their own. It took a solid two weeks of testing — including shooting some of their concoctions to see how they photographed — in order to come up with our final sausage meat.



B Camera Inserts

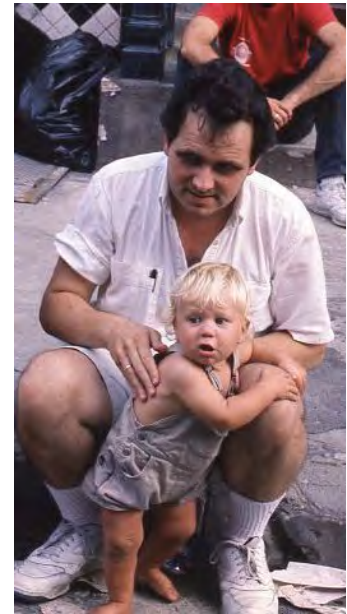
Nancy's shot list was so chocked full of inserts, especially food but also other small details, that it required an entire second unit crew to get all of them. The B unit would work on sets that were standing that we were not using and DP Bobby Bukowski and Nancy would dash around from set to set to check the various shots. The stage was huge and Bobby finally got himself a bicycle to get from set to set. Nancy, now 6-7 months pregnant, would walk from set to set.

The Heat

The heat in North Carolina was intense as shooting started but reached unbearable levels in August. We managed to find some money in the budget to put up an above ground swimming pool for the crew but even the stages were stifling since the air conditioning had to be turned off when the cameras rolled.

Kids Everywhere

Nancy and I had our two sons — ages six and four — but we were not alone. Tracey had two young children — her daughter Mabel is one of the school girls in the classroom scenes. Our co-producer had a son and our editor had two small children. There was always some little one on set. The end credits has a list of the child care givers that were essential to making the production work smoothly.



The Bronx

In casting some of the one-line roles we realized that while there were definitely some Italian folks in the area, they did not sound like they came from New York when they delivered their lines. We also felt that there needed to be a core of authentic looking background actors. The plan was hatched to “import the Bronx” to North Carolina. We got a group of family and friends, organized by Nancy's sister Marta, to plan their vacations around a trip to

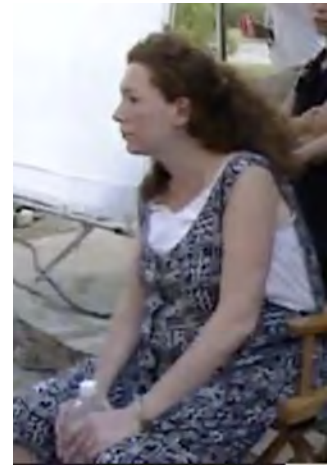


Wilmington. There were about 20 people in all — older folks, families, etc. — who flew down and spent a week at a local motel and formed the core group of background actors.

Calogero Savoca and other Bronx “imports” on the set of *Household Saints*

The Pregnancy!?

This wasn't the first time we had been "pregnant while shooting" — Nancy was pregnant during *True Love*, but she was very early on when we were shooting so that we didn't make any announcements until after the movie was shot. Nancy was actually able to finish the movie in post-production and had that baby, Kenny, literally on the night the film won the Grand Jury Prize at Sundance. *Household Saints* was very different. Everyone knew going in that a baby was coming in October — right in the middle of the picture edit. Nancy would work the 12- to 14-hour days of photography while very pregnant. A PA was assigned the task of always making sure there was a water bottle within her reach and everyone was constantly telling her to "Sit down!"



Nancy sitting on the set with her ever-present water bottle

We had our midwife visiting every few weeks from New York to monitor things. We wrapped photography on August 20th and headed for home a week later — by car with a list of all the hospitals along the way. When we got home Nancy jumped right into the cutting room. The schedule was insanely short. Martina was born on October 14th and Nancy took a one-week break from cutting. She came back in, but two weeks later, work was interrupted when the baby was hospitalized for several days. Somehow the picture was locked on November 14th and the film was delivered at the end of January. The only problem was the film wasn't really finished. Many scenes and the entire concept of the film needed to be revisited — was it to be taken literally? Was the Teresa character really a saint?



Nancy Savoca, Tracey Ullman, Rich Guay and Peter Newman on the set

Nancy realized that the film needed the same context as the novel — the story was a neighborhood legend, just like the Santangelo sausage. The opening line of the book — "And it happened by the grace of God that Joseph Santangelo won his wife in a card game" was such an elegant way to frame the entire story. This line was not in the original script, but, with some breathing room, Nancy came up with a solution. The story would be framed by bookends — an older couple relating to their granddaughter the story of "the miracle sausage" and "the girl who found God in her work." That scene was shot in the Bronx in April 1993, the cutting room was reopened, and the film was finally properly fine cut into the version that was released in September of that year.

The baby? Martina is a filmmaker in her own right and is directing a documentary on the making of *Household Saints*.

The Production Team:

Nancy Savoca, director and co-writer



Filmmaker Nancy Savoca was born in 1959 and grew up in the Bronx, New York. Her parents were Argentine and Sicilian immigrants, Savoca attended Queens College for her first two years as an undergraduate and then transferred to New York University's film school. There, she was awarded the Haig P. Manoogian Award for overall excellence for her short films *Renata* and *Bad Timing*. While still a student, Savoca married Richard Guay in 1980. After graduating, she worked as a storyboard artist and assistant editor on various independent films and music videos. Her first professional experience was as a production assistant to John Sayles on his film *The Brother From Another Planet*, and as an assistant auditor for Jonathan Demme on *Something Wild* and *Married to the Mob*.

Savoca and Guay raised funds to shoot her first film, *True Love*, the story of an Italian-American wedding in the Bronx, which the pair co-wrote and Guay co-produced. The film won the Grand Jury Prize at the 1989 Sundance Film Festival and Savoca was nominated for an Independent Spirit Award as Best Director. The film also garnered Spirit award nominations for Best Picture and Best Actress. In 1991, she directed *Dogfight*, starring River Phoenix and Lili Taylor. Set in 1963, the film is the story of a young Marine and the girl he takes to an "ugly date" contest.

Savoca's third feature, *Household Saints*, adapted Francine Prose's mystical saga of three generations of Italian-American women and starred Tracey Ullman, Lili Taylor, Vincent D'Onofrio, and Judith Malina. The film was named one of the year's best films by twenty national critics. Taylor won an Independent Spirit Award for Best Female Performance and Savoca and Guay received a nomination for Best Screenplay.

Savoca first encountered Prose's novel in 1981 and immediately saw it as a possible film project.

Interviewed on the set of *Household Saints*, she talked about why: "It

reminded me a lot of the stories that I heard my parents talk about by people in our family or people in the neighborhood... [and] it becomes family folklore or magical stories that we tell one another and pass down to generations... If this was a fable, the moral of this story is pay

attention to the little things because that's where all the miracles are. Don't look for the sun coming down from the sky like it did at Fatima. The miracles are right there. It's in your baby being born. It's in people falling in love. It's in people and death and birth."



Nancy Savoca directing the Pinochle scene in *Household Saints*

Her next film was an original comedy, *The 24 Hour Woman*, starring Oscar nominees Rosie Perez and Marianne Jean-Baptiste and Tony winner Patti Lupone. The film premiered at the Sundance Film Festival in 1999 and earned Savoca an American Latin Media Arts nomination for Directing.

Savoca's work in television includes the HBO production, *If These Walls Could Talk*, a powerful three-part film about abortion. She served as co-writer for all three segments and directed two. The film was the highest-rated original movie in HBO history, received Emmy and Golden Globe nominations for best television drama, and won Savoca a Lucy Award from Women In Film for "innovation in television."

Her documentary, *Reno: Rebel Without A Pause* was awarded the Prize for Peace & Liberty by the city of Florence, Italy. *Dirt*, a bilingual story about immigration and class differences in New York, won Savoca Best Director at the Los Angeles Latino Festival and was nominated for Best Original Screenplay by the Writers Guild of America. *Union Square*, starring Mira Sorvino, Tammy Blanchard, and Patti LuPone, premiered at the 2011 Toronto International Film Festival.

The American Museum of the Moving Image hosted a retrospective of Savoca's films. In 2019, her archives were acquired by the University of Michigan for their Film Mavericks Collection which includes the works of Orson Welles, Robert Altman and her mentors, Jonathan Demme and John Sayles. Savoca has taught film production classes at New York University, the University of Michigan, City University of New York, and at film schools across Europe and Latin America. In addition to directing, Savoca wrote (and in some cases, co-wrote with her husband and production partner Guay), eight of her films. The pair also collaborated on their three children, Bobby, Kenny, and Martina. Notably, Savoca directed *True Love* and ***Household Saints*** while pregnant with her younger kids.

Savoca's film credits as a director are *Renata* (short 1982), *Bad Timing* (short 1982), *True Love* (1989), *Dogfight* (1991), ***Household Saints*** (1993), *24-Hour Woman* (1999), *Reno: Rebel Without a Pause* (2002), *Dirt* (2003), *Union Square* (2011), *The Tale of Timmy Two Chins* (short film 2013).

Richard Guay, co-writer and co-producer



Producer, screenwriter, consultant, and teacher Rich Guay was born in 1959 and grew up in New York. He met his future wife and film partner Nancy Savoca when they were both in their teens. Savoca told Guay that she dreamed about making movies, and he encouraged her to enroll in NYU's film program. After they married in 1981, Guay began his film career as a production auditor for such directors as John Sayles, Mike Nichols, and Jonathan Demme.

His first producing effort, which he also co-wrote, was *True Love*, which Savoca directed. The film won the Grand Jury Prize at the Sundance Film Festival and was nominated for an Independent Spirit Award

as Best Picture. Guay produced *Dogfight* starring River Phoenix and Lili Taylor and followed that up by co-writing and producing *Household Saints*, starring Tracey Ullman and Lili Taylor. Taylor won the Spirit Award for Best Actress and Guay was nominated, as co-writer with Savoca, for Best Screenplay.

On the set, Guay spoke about how *Household Saints* came to be: "Nancy read the book when it first came out in 1981 and went crazy over it and recommended it to whoever she was reading for. And of course, they said, 'Oh, a story about a girl that wants to be a saint, really great subject for a movie.' But she just kept plugging away. I didn't read the book at that time. I didn't read it until several years later. But we're always looking for multilayered things that are one subject, one note stories. And this had so much built into it. It's so complex.... And I used to say it's this generational thing, an American fable. But what is the fable about? It's about the miracle of everyday life."



Rich Guay on the set of *Household Saints*

Guay produced the HBO film *Subway Stories*, a feature-length anthology of short films by various directors including Jonathan Demme, Ted Demme, Abel Ferrara, and Alison MacLean.

His next film, *The 24 Hour Woman*, an original comedy he co-wrote and produced, premiered at the Sundance Festival. The film was directed by Savoca and starred Academy Award nominees Rosie Perez and Marianne Jean-Baptiste. Guay produced *Ghost Dog: The Way of the Samurai*, written and directed by Jim Jarmusch and starring Forest Whitaker. The film was an official selection to the Cannes Film Festival and was nominated for an Independent Spirit Award for Best Picture. With director Jonathan Demme, Guay co-produced an independent documentary, *The Utmost* in 1998. In 2001 he co-produced Darnell Martin's drama *Prison Song*.

In 2001 Guay produced the movie version of the hit one-woman show, *Reno: Rebel Without A Pause*, winner of The Prize for Peace & Liberty from the City of Florence. He followed that up with *Dirt*, an original feature that he co-wrote with Savoca. The film won Best Director at the Los Angeles Latino Film Festival and Best Actress at La Cinema Fe in New York. *Dirt*, which he co-wrote with Savoca, also won the top prize at El Cojo Festival in Madrid and the script was nominated for a Writer's Guild Award for Best Original Long Form Teleplay.

Guay was the co-producer of *Kinsey*, written and directed by Bill Condon and starring Liam Neeson and Laura Linney. The film received four Independent Spirit Award Nominations including Best Picture and Linney was nominated for an Academy Award for Best Supporting Actress. He produced Charles Busch's 2006 film, *A Very Serious Person* and was associate producer of Masayuki Ochiai's horror film, *Shutter*, shot entirely on location in Tokyo. In 2011, Guay teamed up with Neda Armian to finance and produce Savoca's feature, *Union Square*, starring Mira Sorvino and Tammy Blanchard. In 2020, he produced *Clover*, a comedy thriller directed by John Abrahams and Mario Torres, Jr.'s short film *Ali's Realm*.

Guay has worked as a production executive for Orion Pictures, Film Finances, United Artists, and New Regency. He has also served as a production accountant, first assistant director, production manager, and post-production supervisor.

As a teacher, he has given master classes in producing at schools around the world, including in Colombia, Brazil, and Argentina for the Motion Picture Association of America. Guay has also taught at the University of Amsterdam's Binger Institute, in Mumbai at Whistling Woods Film School, in Jordan for the Royal Film Commission and at The Red Sea Institute of Cinematic Arts, at Cuba's Escuela Internacional del Cine y Televisión, at the Universidad Veritas in Costa Rica, at the German Film Academy, and at the Republic of Georgia Film Commission. In the US, he has taught at master classes at Quinnipiac College, School of Visual Arts, and New York University's School of Continuing and Professional Studies. Guay has been an Artist-in-Residence at the MFA program at City College of New York where he has taught a production class.

While working as a Vice President at Entertainment Partners, Guay wrote the Academic Curriculum for both Movie Magic Budgeting and Scheduling which has been implemented in film schools across the United States

He and Savoca are the parents of three adults, Bobby, Kenny, and Martina. The couple lives in New York City.

Peter Newman, co-producer

Over the past four decades Peter Newman has produced more than 30 films — establishing him as one of the industry’s leading producers. His New York-based Peter Newman Productions has worked with renowned filmmakers including Robert Altman, Wes Anderson, Paul Auster, Noah Baumbach, Jonathan Demme, Horton Foote, John Sayles, Nancy Savoca, and Wayne Wang and has received a total of 21 Independent Spirit Award nominations.



A former sportscaster, Newman began served as executive producer and host of the PBS special, *Muhammed Ali: One More Miracle*. He went on to produce documentary profiles of ballet dancers Gelsey Kirkland and Natalia Makarova before turning to feature filmmaking in 1982 with Robert Altman’s *Back to the Five and Dime*, *Jimmy Dean*, *Jimmy Dean*. Newman then moved into features full-time, serving either as producer or executive producer Horton Foote’s *1918* and *On Valentine’s Day*, Spalding Gray’s *Swimming to Cambodia*, Altman’s *O.C. & Stiggs*, Anthony Drazan’s *Zebrahead*, and John Sayles’ *The Secret of Roan Inish*. In 1989, Newman produced Nancy Savoca’s *Dogfight*, and he went on to produce her films ***Household Saints*** and *The 24 Hour Woman*.

Asked what he thought was the meaning of ***Household Saints***, Newman said on set: “I don’t think you can put it in a sentence or a thought. It’s a really complex movie... All I can say is I *haven’t* seen it before and I’m looking forward to seeing it when it gets put together.”

With future partner Greg Johnson, Newman produced *Smoke*, directed by Wayne Wang and written by Paul Auster. Among his other producing credits are: Auster’s directorial debut *Lulu on the Bridge*, Wang’s *The Center of the World*, and Bob Gale’s *Interstate 60*.

Newman was a featured speaker at the Sundance Institute’s Producers Conference in 1991 and 2005; as well as having appeared on numerous film festival panels, including Cannes and New York. Additionally, he has lectured on the film business at Yale, Columbia, and Harvard. Since its inception in 2006, Newman has headed up the MBA/MFA Graduate Dual Degree Program at New York University. Newman is a member of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences, the Producers Guild of America, and the British Academy of Television and Video Arts. He lives in New York City with his wife, filmmaker Antonia Dauphin and their three children. Newman is a graduate of Northwestern University.

Jonathan Demme, executive producer



Jonathan Demme (1944–2017) grew up on Long Island, NY and in Miami, FL. After graduating from the University of Florida, he was a movie critic and a publicist before joining Roger Corman's New World Productions as a screenwriter and producer. For Corman, he co-wrote and produced *Angels Hard as They Come* and *the Hot Box* and directed *Caged Heat*, *Crazy Mama*, and *Fighting Mad*. His comedy *Handle With Care* was released by Paramount in 1977.

Demme's *Melvin and Howard* received three Oscar nominations and won two awards. After conflict with the star of his next Hollywood film, Demme stepped back into the independent film world, directing the Talking Heads concert film, *Stop Making Sense*, the

screwball comedy *Something Wild*, a film version of Spalding Gray's stage production *Swimming to America*, and the Mafia comedy *Married to the Mob*. In 1987, he formed his NYC-based production company Clinica Estetico with Edward Saxon and Peter Saraf.

After winning an Academy award for directing *The Silence of the Lambs* in 1991, Demme — inspired by his friend Juan Suárez Botas' illness — made *Philadelphia*, one of the first films to address the AIDS crisis. He went on to direct the feature films *Beloved*, *The Truth About Charlie*, *The Manchurian Candidate*, and *Rachel Getting Married*. Demme also directed music videos for The Pretenders, Justin Timberlake, New Order, Artists Against Apartheid, and Bruce Springsteen. He made two documentaries, *Haiti Dreams of Democracy* and *The Agronomist*, the profile of a Haitian journalist and human rights activist. Demme's documentary *I'm Carolyn Parker* (2011), highlighted rebuilding efforts in New Orleans post Hurricane Katrina.

A generous friend and collaborator, Demme also produced or executive produced films with directors Nancy Savoca, Jill Godmilow, Carl Franklin, Tom Hanks, Spike Jonze, and Noah Hutton. With his second wife, Joanna Howard, he had three children. Demme died of esophageal cancer and heart disease at his home in Manhattan.

During the making of ***Household Saints***, Demme spoke to an interviewer about how and why he joined the production: "I was confident that Nancy was going to make a fantastic film out of this very difficult, challenging, exciting material. So, I agreed to help out and worked with them trying to find the financing... It's been very, very exciting for me, a filmmaker, to observe this other filmmaker Nancy, put her movie together, film it, and then watch the editing process. ... I think it's really a wonderful, wonderful American movie... And egotistically, I love seeing my name on this beautiful motion picture."

Elizabeth Kling, editor

Elizabeth Kling is a NY/LA editor and producer working in film and television. Beginning as an editor in New York, she worked as contributing editor on Errol Morris's *The Thin Blue Line* and editor on many feature films, including *Georgia*, *Household Saints*, *The Invisible Circus*, and *Practical Magic*. In television, she was editor/producer for HBO's acclaimed series *Deadwood* and *Crash* and worked with Veena Sud on *The Killing* and *Seven Seconds*. Kling was executive producer on *Handsome Harry* and *The Drowning*, both directed by Bette Gordon. She co-directed and produced the documentary *Crescendo: The Power of Music* with Jamie Bernstein which was released on Netflix. Most recently Kling was executive producer on the Netflix series *Grand Army* with Katie Cappiello and Joshua Donen. Currently she is developing a series in London with Director Tricia Brock. Kling has taught at the Sundance Lab in Park City, and has been an adjunct professor in editing at Columbia University for many years and currently is a full-time lecturer..



Bobby Bukowski, director of photography



Born in 1953 in New York City, Bobby Bukowski studied biochemistry at SUNY-Stony Brook. En route to a medical school, he discovered his artistic vocation traveling in Europe and India. Soon after, he was enlisted as photographer and videographer documenting a Tibetan Buddhist pilgrimage led by the Dalai Lama to sacred sites along the Ganges. Armed with this material, he applied to the graduate film program at NYU's Tisch School of the Arts. Since the mid-1980s, Bukowski has been employed as cinematographer on close to 100 narrative and documentary films. Bukowski shot Nancy Savoca's 1991 film *Dogfight*, before working as director of photography on *Household Saints*.

Bukowski has also served as an adjunct professor of cinematography, on the graduate level, at the Tisch School of the Arts, Asia, located in Singapore. His filmography credits include *Till*, *99 Homes*, *The Messenger*, *Rampart*, *Arlington Road*, and *Ethan Frome*.

Stephen Endelman, composer

British-born Grammy-nominated composer, arranger, and producer Stephen Endelman's work ranges from lush, classical film scores to pop-driven tapestries. He has worked with Elvis Costello, Diana Krall, KT Tunstall, Sheryl Crow, Robbie Williams, Alanis Morissette, Natalie Cole, and soprano Renee Fleming.



Endelman got his first break working on Nancy Savoca's film *Household Saints*. He had a ten-picture deal with Miramax, which included *Flirting With Disaster* and *The Englishman Who Went Up The Hill But Came Down The Mountain*. He is currently writing a Broadway show based on the iconic television show *Upstairs Downstairs* and is working on an animated series.

Eugenie Bafaloukos, costume designer



Eugenie Bafaloukos had a long and successful career as a costume designer, beginning with her (uncredited) work on husband Ted Bafaloukos' groundbreaking Jamaican reggae film, *Rockers*.

As costume designer/supervisor, she worked on more than a dozen American independent films, including Jonathan Demme's *Something Wild*, Doris Dörrie's *Me and Him*, Stacy Cochran's *My New Gun*, Nancy Savoca's *Dogfight* and *Household Saints*, and George Armitage's *Grosse Pointe Blank*. After relocating from New York to Greece, Eugenie and Ted helped stage amateur productions with the Theatre Club of Andros. After her husband's death in 2016, she continues to live on the island of Andros, Greece.

Kalina Ivanov, production designer

Kalina Ivanov recently designed the upcoming film *The Boys In The Boat* directed by George Clooney. This is the second period film Ivanov collaborated with director Clooney after *The Tender Bar*. Prior to that, Ivanov designed the award-winning HBO series *Lovecraft Country*, created by Misha Green, and produced by Jordan Peele and JJ Abrams, for which she received her second Art Directors Guild Awards nomination. In addition, she earned a Primetime Emmy Award and Art Directors Guild Award for designing the HBO film *Grey Gardens*, directed by Michael Sucsy.

Most recently, Ivanov has lent her talents to the films *Wonder*, directed by Stephen Chbosky; *Long Shot*, directed by Jonathan Levine; and the Emmy-winning Netflix series

Seven Seconds, created by Veena Sud. Her long collaboration with director Robert Redford culminated in designing the period film *The Conspirator*. Her other notable films include the Oscar-nominated *Little Miss Sunshine*, *Max*, *Poltergeist*, *Rabbit Hole*, *The Book of Henry*, *Made of Honor*, *Brown Sugar*, *The Best Man*, *Smoke*, ***Household Saints*** and many others.



In one scene in ***Household Saints***, the characters Teresa and Leonard are seen exiting from an downtown cinema where the marquee advertises *Last Year at Marienbad*. The movie theater's name is the Kalina Cinema, in honor of its production designer.

Her designs have been featured in publications including *Architectural Digest*, *Interiors*, *Perspective Magazine*, and *People Magazine*. She owes much gratitude to her mentor, Jonathan Demme, who gave her the opportunity to storyboard his film *The Silence Of The Lambs*.

Ivanov is a co-founder of the Production Designers Collective and on the board of the Sofia Independent Film Festival. She is a Governor of the Production Design Branch at the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences.

Francine Prose, author



American novelist, short story writer, essayist, and critic, Francine Prose was born in Brooklyn in 1947 and graduated from Radcliffe College in 1968. Beginning with *Judah the Pious* in 1973, she has published twenty-two novels, three short story collections, ten books of nonfiction, and one children's book. In these, she has explored subjects as diverse as Anne Frank, a larcenous pet chimpanzee, Peggy Guggenheim, a mass school shooting, Caravaggio, Sicily, gluttony, Cleopatra, and bacon.

After Prose's novel *Household Saints* first came out, she received a letter from Savoca. On the set of the film Prose talked about entrusting her

writing to the director: "[Savoca's] letter essentially said, 'If I ever get the money, I'd like to make the movie.' And I thought, 'Oh, that's nice.' And I filed it away. I had sort of forgotten about the letter. And then when I saw *True Love*, I watched it on video with my kids, and we're sitting there and I thought, 'She's the perfect person to make it.' ... I feel that Nancy gets the book better than I ever got the book, because it's certainly closer to her personal experience than it is to mine. You know, they're using her family photographs for research on the costumes and the props.... When I read the first version of the script and all the versions of the script, I couldn't tell what I'd made up, what she'd added. It's just an amazing script."



Nancy Savoca and Francine Prose on the set of *Household Saints*

A former president of the PEN American Center and a member of the American Academy of Arts and Letters and the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, Prose is a visiting professor of literature at Bard College. She is the recipient of the 2008 Edith Wharton Achievement Award for Literature, two National Jewish Book awards, and many other grants and awards, including Guggenheim and Fulbright fellowships. She has been married to artist Howard Michels since 1976 and lives in New York City.

The Cast:

Tracey Ullman



Tracey Ullman's career has included enormous success as a singer, comedienne, writer, producer, and actress in both the United Kingdom and the US. Born in 1959 in Slough, Buckinghamshire, Ullman was just six when she witnessed her father Anthony James Ullman's death of a heart attack. Growing up, she and her sister Patti often created shows to entertain her family. Ullman loved to imitate her television stars an elderly neighbor and to sing while her uncle Sid played the guitar. After her mother Doreen remarried, the family moved around the country and Ullman attended numerous state schools, where she wrote and performed in plays. She never imagined

that she would become an actress, assuming that only upper-class, "posh" people could become performers.

At the recommendation of a headmaster, she auditioned for and won a full scholarship to the Italia Conti Academy, a performing arts school. While there, Ullman tried out for the chorus of several West End musicals— a process she found "disgusting and ridiculous." Instead, she focused on studying acting and dancing. Self-describing herself as a "rebellious and sarcastic" student, Ullman left school at sixteen (before they could throw her out) to join a Berlin ballet company for a revival of "Gigi" and later joined the Second Generation dance troupe in England. She later appeared in several musicals in London's West End, including "Grease," "Elvis: the Musical," and "The Rocky Horror Show." Meeting a theatrical agent, Ullman then transitioned to repertory theater in Liverpool and London. Her work in Les Blair's avant-garde improvised play "Four in a Million" at London's Royal Court Theatre won her the London Critics Circle Theatre Award as Most Promising New Actress.

Ullman first performed on British television in a soap opera. After appearing in the BBC sketch comedy show, *A Kick up the Eighties*, she was offered her own show. Ullman fought for the rights to choose the writers, approve scripts, and select costumes. The show, *Three of a Kind* co-starring Lenny Henry and David Copperfield, aired in 1981. Ullman won her first BAFTA (British Academy of Film and Television Arts) award for her work on the show. Ullman married

Allan McKeown, an independent television producer in 1983. Two years later, she starred as a slutty golddigger on the ITV sitcom *Girls on Top* with Dawn French and Jennifer Saunders.

Through a series of coincidences, Ullman became friends with the owners of Stiff Records. In 1983, Ullman's debut album "You Broke My Heart in 17 Places" launched her career as a singer. Her hit songs have included covers of "Breakaway," "They Don't Know," "Move Over Darling," and "My Guy" (which she changed from Madness's "My Girl").

In 1985, Ullman and McKeown relocated full time to Los Angeles. Her first attempt at a US television career was a proposed CBS sitcom *I Love New York* about a British woman working in the big apple. But her agent was not happy and reached out to James L. Brooks, who recommended that Ullman host and star in a sketch show. As Ullman remembers it, she moved to America and was "immediately pregnant." So Brooks told her to go to the Museum of Broadcasting and watch American comedy television shows and get a grounding in American comedy." She did, and discovered Sid Caesar's *Your Show of Shows*: "it was just fabulous sketch comedy to me because it really came from the heart. It was really about playing the reality of a situation. It wasn't just a glib sexual innuendo. It meant something." She also discovered Carol Burnett, Gracie Allen, Madeline Kahn, and Lily Tomlin.

The Tracey Ullman Show debuted on April 5, 1987, and went on to win ten Primetime Emmy Awards — and three for its star. The series also launched Matt Groening's *The Simpsons*, which began as a series of animated shorts. The series ended in 1990 after four successful seasons.

In 1993 Ullman created a British comedy sketch special, *Tracey Ullman: A Class Act*, which also starred *Monty Python*'s Michael Palin. HBO signed her to create a similar US show, *Tracey Ullman Takes on New York*, which aired in October 1993 and won two Emmy awards, a CableAce Award, an American Comedy Award, and a Writers Guild of American Award. In 1996, HBO launched the series *Tracey Takes On...* Ullman also created a television comedy special for HBO in 2003 and the network aired her one-woman stage show *Tracey Ullman: Live and Exposed* in 2005. Spinning off from her e-commerce clothing store Purple Skirt, Ullman hosted a fashion-based talk show, *Tracey Ullman's Visible Panty Lines* on Oxygen from 2001–2002.

Returning to British television, in 2016 Ullman created *Tracey Ullman's Show*, a multi-Emmy nominated comedy sketch series and in 2017, *Tracey Ullman Breaks the News*. Ullman has also appeared on the US television shows *Ally McBeal*, *How I Met Your Mother*, and *Curb Your Enthusiasm*. She starred in the role of Betty Friedan in the limited series *Mrs. America*, garnering another Emmy nomination.

On screen, Ullman has appeared in *Give My Regards to Broad Street* (1984), *Plenty* (1985), *I Love You to Death* (1990), *Robin Hood: Men in Tights* (1993), *Household Saints* (1993), *Bullets Over Broadway* (1994), *Small Time Crooks* (2000), *A Dirty Shame* (2004), *Into The Woods* (2014), and *The Prom* (2020).

In *Household Saints*, Ullman played an Italian American woman who goes from being a naive young girl to a middle-aged mother with a daughter who longs to meet Jesus. Interviewed for the film's electronic press kit in 1993, she was asked what the film was about. Ullman replied, "It's about food and guilt. It's about family. It's



about obsession. It's about excessiveness.... It's a terrific story about women." About director Nancy Savoca, Ullman said "It's a joy to work with her. I'm really enjoying it. I wanted to do it more for her.... I like that [Nancy] hasn't, doesn't make any compromises. She's not the sort of person that's saying 'I'll do this movie because it'll help me in my Hollywood career'... she's not selling out to Hollywood at all." Ullman also spoke about the pleasure of building a character after a career doing sketch comedy: "It's good to concentrate on something for more than seven minutes. I like the progression of this character. I like seeing her at [age] 17 through to 42."

Ullman's stage career spans decades, from early work in the 1970s to performances in Liverpool and London throughout the 1980s. In 1990, she starred opposite Morgan Freeman as Kate in Joe Papp's staging of "The Taming of the Shrew," for Shakespeare in the Park. In 1991 she starred in the one-woman show "The Big Love" on Broadway. Back in Britain, she performed in the drama "My City" in 2011 and in 2012 joined the cast of Eric Idle's improv comedy play "What About Dick?"

Ullman and her husband had two children: Mabel and Johnny. McKeown died in 2013 of prostate cancer. Ullman, who holds dual British and US citizenship, has been listed as one of the UK's richest comedians. She is also an accomplished knitter and co-wrote a book on the subject. She lives in London and New York.

When Ullman was interviewed by the Television Academy Foundation, she was asked how she would like to be remembered, she replied: "As somebody funny, a girl who came from nowhere really, and achieved something by hard work, persistence, and luck. And someone who loved people — genuinely loved studying people and believes in people and has great affection for the struggle of life. Somebody brave. I'd like to be remembered as somebody brave. And who liked to laugh... at herself."

Vincent D'Onofrio

Actor, film producer, and singer Vincent D'Onofrio was born in 1959 in Brooklyn, NY, and grew up in Hawaii and Colorado. After his parents divorced, D'Onofrio lived with his mother in Florida. He learned magic tricks from neighbors and went on to perform locally. D'Onofrio spent summers working backstage at community theaters with his father Gennaro, an interior designer.

Attending the University of Colorado, he became involved with local theater groups in the Boulder area. After moving to New York with his sister Beth, he studied with Sharon Chatten from the Actors Studio and paid the bills working as a bouncer, doorman, personal

bodyguard, and deliveryman. D'Onofrio performed in stage productions at the American Stanislavsky Theatre before making his Broadway debut in "Open Admissions" in 1984. He made his feature film debut that same year in the sex comedy *The First Turn-On!*



On a tip from his friend, actor Matthew Modine, D'Onofrio sent audition tapes to director Stanley Kubrick, who was casting his Vietnam War drama *Full Metal Jacket*. Originally, the role of Private Leonard "Gomer Pyle" Lawrence had been described as a "skinny ignorant redneck," but Kubrick thought the character would be more effective if he were big and clumsy. D'Onofrio gained 80 pounds to play Lawrence. His performance as the dangerously unstable soldier was lauded by critics. After the film wrapped, D'Onofrio lost the weight and went on to play a mechanic in *Adventures in Babysitting*. Both films premiered in 1987. Over the next few years, D'Onofrio portrayed Lili Taylor's fiancé in *Mystic Pizza*, Young Gar in *The Blood of Heroes*, a boatyard worker in *Signs of Life*, and Gordon in *Dying Young*.

During the 1990s, D'Onofrio took on a supporting role in Oliver Stone's *JFK* and a memorable performance in Robert Altman's *The Player*. He played Orson Welles in Tim Burton's *Ed Wood* and starred in the romantic drama *The Whole Wide World* (which he also produced) and the crime thriller *The Winner*. His ability to play both leads and supporting characters have allowed the actor to portray an evil intergalactic insect in *Men in Black*, a train robber in *The Newton Boys*, a former basketball star in *That Championship Season*, a bisexual porn star in *The Velocity of Gary*, Abbie Hoffman in *Steal this Movie*, and a serial killer in *The Cell*.



In 1993, director Nancy Savoca cast D'Onofrio as Joseph Santangelo in her film *Household Saints*. Interviewed on set, he talked about welcoming the opportunity: "I'm representing people in my family. You know, this is the first Italian that I've ever been able to play... and I'm from a very Italian family.... It's very hard to find a good script about Italians, you know, Italian Americans. And, when there is a good script, it's difficult to get the role because there are a lot of actors that get jobs before I do because of box office and things like that. So, you know, you wait, you wait and wait, and then suddenly something fantastic lands

in your lap and you say, 'Wow, I'm glad I waited.'" Speaking about the role religion played in his own upbringing, D'Onofrio said "I was raised very Catholic and with a lot of superstitions... and that feeling of don't mess with religion and don't mess with luck... I have relatives that are very superstitious and to them it's very serious. So you have to respect it. There's a respect that happens in the Santangelo family and our story that keeps things alive in the house."

While he continued to act in films, including *The Salton Seas* and *Imposter*, D'Onofrio joined the cast of the spin-off television series, *Law & Order: Criminal Intent*, playing Detective Robert Goren. During his nine seasons on the hugely-popular show, D'Onofrio also appeared in the films *The Break Up* and *Cadillac Records*. After he left *Law & Order: Criminal Intent* in 2010, he concentrated on feature films, starring in the crime thrillers *Brooklyn's Finest*, *Staten Island*, and *Kill The Irishman*, a biopic about a real-life Irish mob boss-turned-FBI informant. He starred in Jennifer Lynch's serial killer film *Chained*, which received an NC-17 rating when it was released in 2012. He also acted in the films *Broken Horses*, *Escape Plan*, *The Judge*, *Supreme Ruler*, *Pawn Shop Chronicles*, and *Mall*, which he co-wrote with Eric Bogosian. He also directed the feature films *Don't Go in the Woods* and *The Kid*.

In recent years, D'Onofrio joined the Marvel film world, playing supervillain Wilson Fisk in the series *Daredevil*, *Hawkeye*, and the upcoming *Echo*. He has portrayed Vincent "The Chin" Gigante in the crime drama series *Godfather of Harlem* since 2019. D'Onofrio has performed as comedic country singer George Geronimo Gerkie at Joe's Pub and the Hammerstein Ballroom in New York. He has published two books: *Mutha: Stuff and Things*, a self-described "collection of irreverent and poetic short works," and the children's book *Pigs Can't Look Up*. He has taught master acting classes at the Lee Strasberg Theatre & Film Institute.

D'Onofrio directed his daughter actress Leila George in the film *The Kid* (her mother is the actress Greta Scacchi). He married the model and photographer Carin van der Donk in 1997 and they have two sons. The couple filed for divorce in 2023.

Lili Taylor



Actress Lili Taylor was born in 1967 and grew up in the Chicago suburb of Glencoe, IL. Even as a young kid, she wanted to be an actress and she auditioned for commercials and for *The Bad News Bears*. She studied at the Piven Theatre Workshop and got her first professional job while in high school. She attended the Theatre School at DePaul University. After she was thrown out of school for taking an acting job, Taylor went to New York to act in Richard Foreman's avant-garde play, "What Did He See?"

She began her film career with a supporting role in *Mystic Pizza* (playing Jojo, a feisty young woman engaged to

Bill, played by Vincent D'Onofrio), Taylor quickly established herself as a go-to actress for independent filmmakers. She appeared in many key American indie films, including *Say Anything*, *Bright Angel*, *Dogfight*, ***Household Saints***, *Short Cuts*, *The Addiction*, *Cold Fever*, *I Shot Andy Warhol*, *Girls Town*, *Pecker*, *Four Rooms*, *A Slipping Down Life* and *The Notorious Bettie Page* — garnering four Independent Spirit Awards and winning one for Best Supporting Female for her portrayal of Teresa Carmela Santangelo in ***Household Saints***.

Interviewed on set about her role in ***Household Saints***, Taylor talked about why she was attracted to the project: "First of all, just naturally, Nancy being attached to the project attracted me. And I had played Saint Therese in a play three years ago. So I had studied a lot of hagiography... I find saints fascinating." She went on to talk about director Nancy Savoca "She has a heart of gold. Nothing dishonest about her. She's sensitive, she's caring. She's just a good, good person who's a very good director too, and who sets up such a nice atmosphere to work in. It's just like a big family and I just wouldn't pass it up, at all."



Although she worked a lot in independent films, Taylor never made a film for the company responsible for so many indie successes. Harvey Weinstein, she says “HATED me. People would tell me: ‘It’s true, he won’t even see you [for a role].’ I could not get a job with Miramax.”

Taylor did find success in many mainstream movies, including *Born on the Fourth of July*, *Rudy*, *Ransom*, *The Haunting*, *High Fidelity*, *Brooklyn’s Finest*, *Public Enemies*, *Pret-à-Porter*, *The Conjuring*, and *Maze Runner: The Scorch Trials*. Her television career has allowed her to perform in series on broadcast networks, cable stations, and streaming services, in shows as diverse as *Six Feet Under*, *Perry Mason*, *Hemlock Grove*, *American Crime*, *Chambers*, *Outer Range*, *State of Mind*, and *The X-Files*. Taylor has also appeared on stage in “Three Sisters,” “The Library,” “Landscape of the Body,” “Mourning Becomes Electra,” “Aunt Dan and Lemon,” and “Marvin’s Room.”

In 1998, Taylor’s ex-boyfriend Michael Rapaport pled guilty to two counts of harassment and the court issued a protection order for the actress. Taylor has spoken publicly about her alcoholism and was diagnosed as bipolar in the late 1990s after an on-stage breakdown.

She is married to memoirist and poet Nick Flynn, who wrote about the early days of their relationship in his 2010 book *The Ticking Is the Bomb: A Memoir*. They have one daughter, Maeve. Taylor is an activist for conservation issues and serves on the board of the National Audubon Society. She is an avid birdwatcher and lives in upstate New York. In an interview with Ernie Manouse of Houston Public Media in 2018, Taylor talked about aging and experience: “Getting old is wild, but I’m liking the wisdom part of it.”

Judith Malina

Born in Kiel, Germany in 1926 to Polish Jewish parents, Judith Malina moved to New York when she was two — and the city became her home for more than 80 years. Her father, a Conservative rabbi, helped found a Jewish newspaper, the *Jüdisches Zeitgeist*. Her mother, a Yiddish theater actress, shelved her own career ambitions to raise a family.

As a young woman, Malina worked as a waitress, singer, and hat check girl at the Beggar Bar — a cabaret and restaurant owned by German dancer and actress Valeska Gert. Like others on the restaurant staff — including Jackson Pollock, Tennessee Williams, and her future husband, Julian Beck — Malina was influenced by Gert's radical performances.



At the New School for Social Research, Malina trained as an actress with Erwin Piscator — a philosopher of the theater who saw performance as a form of agitprop. But unlike her professor, Malina, a lifelong pacifist and anarchist, was committed to nonviolent political change. When she was asked to rehearse on a Friday night, Malina, an observant Jew, realized she would have to choose between the Sabbath and the theater. She made a drawing of herself holding a picket sign with the slogan: “When my work is prayer and praise, I will labor seven days.” Having made that choice, Malina nevertheless continued to kindle “the shabbos lights in the dressing room, or in a hotel room, which I have managed to do all my life.”

Malina met her husband and long-time collaborator Julian Beck when she was 18 and he was (briefly) a student at Yale. Sharing an interest in political theater, the couple founded The Living Theatre in 1947 — which they ran together until Beck's death in 1985. Deeply influenced by the essays of French playwright Antonin Artaud, The Living Theatre was dedicated to transforming society from a competitive, hierarchical structure to cooperative and communal expression by counteracting complacency in the audience through direct spectacle.

The Living Theatre's motto is “Beautiful Non-violent Anarchist Revolution” and over seventy-five years the company staged nearly a hundred productions performed in eight languages in 28 countries on five continents — a unique body of work that has influenced theater the world over. It pioneered the unconventional staging of poetic drama — the plays of American writers like Gertrude Stein, William Carlos Williams, Paul Goodman, Kenneth Rexroth, and John

Ashbery, as well as European writers rarely produced in America, including Jean Cocteau, Federico Garcia Lorca, Bertolt Brecht, and Luigi Pirandello. Best remembered among these productions, which marked the start of the Off-Broadway movement, were “Doctor Faustus Lights the Lights,” “Tonight We Improvise,” “Many Loves,” “The Connection,” and “The Brig.”

After Beck’s death, Malina ran the theater with company member Hanon Reznikov and the two married in 1988. Reznikov died in 2008 and Malina continued to lead The Living Theater until her death at the Lillian Booth Actors Home in Englewood, NJ in 2015. Beck and Malina’s son Garrick Maxwell Beck is now the company’s director.

In addition to her work with The Living Theater in New York and in Europe, Malina found work in film, playing Al Pacino’s mother in *Dog Day Afternoon*, an encephalitis patient in *Awakenings*, Granny in *The Addams Family*, a Holocaust survivor in *Enemies, A Love Story*, and a superstitious Italian American mother in *Household Saints*. She also appeared in the television series *The Sopranos*, and in the documentaries *New York Memories*, *Love and Politics*, and *Signal Through the Flames*.



Malina found challenges in her role in *Household Saints*. In an interview she did on the set, she spoke about her character: “Carmela’s commitment is to food.... And of course, it’s very interesting for me as a pacifist vegetarian to play this butcher. It’s for me, a whole turnabout of my own commitment and my own sense of pacifism that extends even to the animal world to play a woman whose narrowness shuts out anything but this impulse, this carnivorous impulse to chop it up and stuff it, and feed it to people, and feeling really that this is good. That this is her form of goodness. It’s her form of nurturing. When she wants to be kind to somebody, she says, ‘I’ll make you a little pastina,’ or ‘Here, eat some

more sausage.’ It’s really almost her only means of expressing love.” Because Malina was unwilling to handle real meat, the set decorators on *Household Saints* had to come up with a vegetarian concoction for the scenes where the actress makes the famous Santangelo sausages.

Malina wrote several books, including *Paradise Now: Collective Creation of the Living Theatre*, *The Enormous Despair*, *Love & Politics*, *Full Moon Stages: Personal Notes from 50 Years of The Living Theatre*, *The Diaries of Judith Malina: 1947–1957*, *The Diaries of Judith Malina: 1958–1971*, *Having Loved: New Poems*, and *The Piscator Notebook*.

In a 2015 video interview with Steve Zehentner, Malina shared these insights: “How to change the world? As fast and as well as possible.” “Every crime is a political crime.” “My demand is total bliss for everyone, forever.”

Michael Imperioli



Actor, writer, musician, podcaster, and Buddhist Michael Imperioli was born in 1966 and grew up in upstate New York. His father Dan was a bus driver and an amateur actor and his mother Claire worked in a department store and also acted in local productions.

After graduating from high school in 1983, Imperioli planned to go to college and study pre-med but instead decided to pursue his dream of acting. After moving to the East Village, he took classes at the Lee Strasberg Theatre and Film Institute. He also began to learn to play the guitar and wrote his first song, “Roll It Off Your Skin,” which he recorded many years later with his band Zopa.

A music fan, Imperioli remembers attending life-changing performances by the Smiths, Lou Reed, Patti Smith, Television, the New York Dolls, and Black Francis at clubs in New York and Hoboken. He also performed live as lead vocalist in the NJ-based rock band, Wild Carnation.

At 22, Imperioli produced an Arthur Miller one-act play in New York and cast his father in a small part. Watching his father show up early for rehearsals after working a full shift, Imperioli was moved by the courage it took for this 50-year-old bus driver with no theater training to walk out in front of an audience night after night.

Cast in his first film roles in 1989, Imperioli has gone on to work with many of the era’s great directors, including Martin Scorsese (*Goodfellas*), Mary Harron (*I Shot Andy Warhol*), Spike Lee (*Jungle Fever*, *Malcolm X*, *Girl 6*, *Clockers*, *Summer of Sam*, *Oldboy*), Cheryl Dunye (*My Baby’s Daddy*), Steve Buscemi (*Trees Lounge*), Peter Jackson (*The Lovely Bones*), Nancy Savoca (*Household Saints*) and Walter Hill (*Last Man Standing*). Imperioli wrote and directed *The Hungry Ghosts* in 2009.



After working as a guest performer on television series for several years, Imperioli was cast as Christopher Moltisanti on HBO’s *The Sopranos* in 1999. In his eight years on the show, he was nominated for numerous awards and won the Primetime

Emmy Award for Outstanding Supporting Actor in a Drama Series in 2004 and the Screen Actors Guild Awards for Outstanding Performance by an Ensemble in a Drama Series in 1999 and 2007. He also wrote five episodes of the long-running drama. He has starred in many other television series, including *Law & Order*, *Life on Mars*, *Lincoln Rhyme: Hunt for the Bone Collector*, and most recently *White Lotus* for which he won a Screen Actors Guild Award for Outstanding Performance by an Ensemble in a Drama Series and was nominated for a 2023 Primetime Emmy Award for Outstanding Supporting Actor in a Drama Series.

After spending ten years working on unfinished projects, Imperioli wrote his first screenplay for *Summer of Sam*, which he also acted in and executive produced and Spike Lee directed. He is the author of the critically acclaimed novel *The Perfume Burned His Eyes* and the short story “Yasiri” in the anthology *The Nicotine Chronicles*, edited by Lee Child. Imperioli co-wrote *Woke Up This Morning: The Definitive Oral History of The Sopranos* with fellow actor Steve Schirripa. The two also partnered on the podcast “Talking Sopranos.”

Imperioli went years without playing in a band but he never stopped writing music or practicing the guitar. In 2005, as *The Sopranos* was about to enter its final season, he decided to start Zopa, a rock trio, partly because “it’s easier to get three people to practice consistently than four.” Imperioli knew that the group was on the right track when his *Sopranos* castmate Steven Van Zandt — better known as Little Steven of Bruce Springsteen and the E Street Band — came to one of their early shows and told him to keep playing.

His band’s name, Zopa, means patience in Tibetan. Imperioli is a practicing Buddhist and in the Tibetan tradition your teacher gives you a second name — Zopa is his Buddhist middle name. When — at his kids’ urging — Imperioli competed in and won a “Chopped” celebrity cooking tournament in 2014, he donated the \$50,000 grand prize to the Pureland Project, an organization that builds and maintains schools in rural Tibet. During the Covid-19 pandemic, Imperioli started giving free virtual meditation and Buddhist teaching classes. Those teachings and themes are also present in Zopa’s music.

Imperioli married set and interior designer Victoria Chlebowsky in 1996. The couple lives on Manhattan’s Upper West Side and have three grown children, Isabella, David, and Badin.

When the US Supreme Court ruled in July 2023 in favor of a Christian web designer who refused to create websites to celebrate same-sex weddings, Imperioli posted on Instagram: “I’ve decided to forbid bigots and homophobes from watching *The Sopranos*, *The White Lotus*, *Goodfellas* or any movie or tv show I’ve been in. Thank you Supreme Court for allowing me to discriminate and exclude those who I don’t agree with and am opposed to. USA! USA!” In a follow up post, he wrote: “I believe in religious freedom, freedom of speech and the right for individuals to pursue happiness. I also believe in the separation of church and state as stated in the First Amendment. I believe that all people regardless of race, religion, color, creed, gender or sexuality are entitled to freedom, equality, rights and protection under the laws of our nation. And I vehemently oppose hate, prejudice and bigotry and always have.”

Michael Rispoli



American actor Michael Rispoli was born in 1960 and grew up with seven siblings in Tappan, NY, a New York City suburb. He majored in theater at the State University of New York at Plattsburgh and graduated in 1982

Michael Rispoli's theater credits include Stephen Adly Guirgis' Pulitzer Prize-winning "Between Riverside and Crazy" at Atlantic Theater Company and Second Stage and the Circle Rep/ Steppenwolf revival of "Balm in Gilead" directed by John Malkovich. He is a co-founder of the Willow Cabin Theatre Company that produced the Tony-nominated "Wilder, Wilder, Wilder."

Rispoli's film and television career began in the early 1990s with an uncredited role in Irwin Winkler's *Night and the City*, followed up by his performance as Nicky in Nancy Savoca's *Household Saints*.

He has worked with many esteemed filmmakers, including Martha Coolidge (*Angie*), Gus Van Sant (*To Die For*), Brian de Palma (*Snake Eyes*), Spike Lee (*Summer of Sam*), Danny De Vito (*Death to Smoochy*), Tony Scott (*The Taking of Pelham 123*) Michael Bay (*Pain & Gain*), and Savoca (*Union Square*). On television, Rispoli has appeared on dozens of shows, including recurring roles on *The Sopranos*, *Third Watch*, *The Black Donnellys*, *Billions*, *The Offer*, *The Deuce*, *Feed the Beast*, *Those Who Kill*, *Magic City*, *Big Apple*, *Bram and Alice*, and *The Great Defender*.



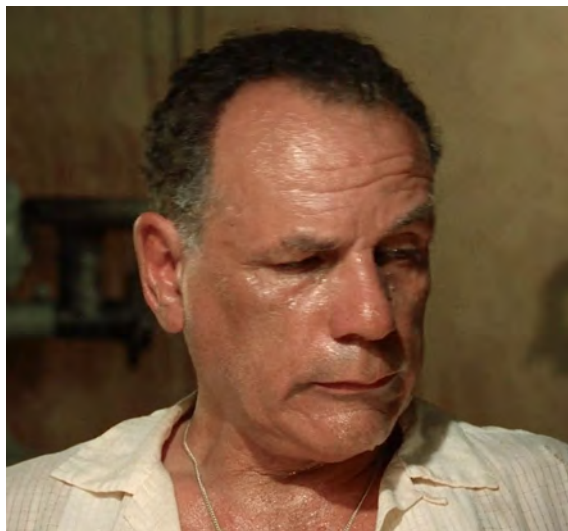
Rispoli and his wife Madeline have three adult children. In his off time, the actor trains in Tae Kwon Do and makes wine.

Victor Argo

Actor, singer, and songwriter Victor Argo (1934–2004) was born Víctor Jiménez to a Puerto Rican family and raised in the Bronx. His Latin upbringing and proximity to Jewish and Irish cultures gave him a multicultural preparation for a 50-year career as a character actor on stage, on television, and in films.

While he attempted to break into show business, Argo worked as a jewelry seller, a printer, and a cab driver. To counter the prejudice against Latino performers, he adopted the surname "Argo" to better his casting chances. While performing Off-Broadway during the 1960s, Argo met Yoko Ono, with whom he participated in "Happenings." He also became friends with fledgling actor

Harvey Keitel, with whom he would go on to act in twelve films. In 1977, Argo became a founding member of the Riverside Shakespeare Company in New York City.



Argo made his major film and television debuts in the early 1970s. Working in both Los Angeles and New York, he became a durable movie tough guy and a favorite of directors Martin Scorsese, Abel Ferrara, Paul Auster, Nancy Savoca, and Woody Allen. Argo's film credits include *Taxi Driver*, *The Rose*, *New York Stories*, *The Last Temptation of Christ*, *Shadows and Fog*, *True Romance*, ***Household Saints***, and *Coyote Ugly*. Argo also had roles on TV series including *Little Bill*, *Miami Vice*, *Kojak*, *Dream Street*, *Law & Order*, and *Mary Hartman, Mary Hartman*.

Argo continued to work in the theater and his credits include "Clean," "The Dog Problem,"

"Breaking Legs," and "Floating Islands." Shortly before his death, he realized a lifelong dream of acting on Broadway in the Pulitzer Prize-winning drama "Anna in the Tropics." Argo was also a guitar player and songwriter. A devotee of country music, he traveled to Nashville in the 1960s, where he recorded and released a single, "Dime a Dozen." He continued to compose music throughout his life and often sang in his films. He died of complications from lung cancer in New York City at the age of 69.

Nancy Savoca Discovers It's Hard To Be a "Saint" In Today's Secular Age: Interview with Roger Ebert October 3, 1993

<https://www.rogerebert.com/interviews/nancy-savoca-discovers-its-hard-to-be-a-saint-in-todays-secular-age>

TORONTO — There is no entry in the Random House Encyclopedia for "The Little Flower," but a Catholic hearing the name will immediately recognize it. Therese de Lisieux lived from 1873 to 1897, practiced great humility in her life, and became a saint almost by acclamation. She would probably be astonished that generations of Catholic girls venerate her as fervently as young Catholic boys these days venerate Michael Jordan.



Therese did not aspire to greatness. She believed you could praise the Lord in little ways, by scrubbing floors and pots and pans, and Offering It Up. Because of her devotion and simplicity, the Little Flower is believed to possess a special ability to intercede with Jesus.

I know all of these things because I went to Catholic school when St. Therese was the most popular of all of the saints of the church, excepting Mary, of course. And because I am a product of that time, I sat through the new movie *Household Saints* with a tide of recognition rising within me. The ring of truth

This is not a religious movie. God forbid! Religious movies are widely thought to be death at the box office. But it is a movie about religion, in which the comedy and the truth are about equally effective, and if you attended Catholic schools before Vatican II, you are likely to find yourself whispering to your friends, "All of this stuff is exactly like it was!"

Others (those vast masses we used to lump together as "non-Catholics") will no doubt think the film exaggerated. It is not. It is about those decades in America, roughly between the 1950s and the 1980s, when calling someone a "devout Catholic" stopped sounding like praise, and started carrying the suggestion that the person had a problem.

Many years ago, Pauline Kael wrote a piece about the three best American directors of the 1970s — Altman, Scorsese and Coppola — and said what they had in common was pre-Vatican II Catholicism. They were raised with richer imagery: They got the incense, the Latin and the mysticism of the church, she said, while the Protestants were playing golf and voting for Eisenhower.

Household Saints (which opened Friday at the Fine Arts) is directed by a woman from a similar background: Nancy Savoca, who is Italian and Argentinian and who knows about piety. Her film

chronicles three generations of an Italian American family in New York's Little Italy. The Sicilian grandmother comes from a time when religion, superstition and old wives tales all had a constant and powerful presence. The parents grow out of that time and into a modern America of consumerism and middle-class prosperity. It's symbolic that when the grandmother dies, they repaint her dark and gloomy old apartment in bright pastels.

And then there is their daughter, significantly named Teresa, a sweet and warm-hearted young woman who does not quite catch on with the modern age. She has a special devotion to the Little Flower, and her spirituality makes everyone uneasy, especially her father. (When she says she would like to enter the convent, he explodes: "No daughter of mine is gonna line the Pope's pockets!") *Household Saints* is, in short, about the problems of being a saint in today's world, when people are going to think you're a little crazy. The same activities that were praised by priests 50 years ago are now treated by psychiatrists.

I talked with Nancy Savoca this year at the Toronto Film Festival. She is one of the most life-affirming of all current filmmakers; her feature credits are *True Love* (1989) and *Dogfight* (1991). The first movie introduced Annabella Sciorra in the story of a tempestuous romance and marriage in the Bronx, and the second was about a young Korea-bound soldier who dates a plain girl (Lili Taylor) on his last night of shore leave, breaks her heart and realizes too late he may have done some damage to his own. One-of-a-kind film

Now here she is with this wonderful, one-of-a-kind film, again starring Lili Taylor, and with Vincent D'Onofrio and Tracey Ullman as the parents, and New York acting legend Judith Malina as the grandmother. The movie's godfather and executive producer, who joined in the interview, was Jonathan Demme, whose last feature was the rather different *The Silence of the Lambs*.

But Demme has made a documentary since then, *Cousin Bobby*, about his cousin who is an Episcopal priest in Harlem, and who, in his own stubborn and quixotic way, is also going about becoming a saint in a secular age. So perhaps it is not surprising that when Savoca approached Demme with the novel *Household Saints*, published in 1981 by Francine Prose, he agreed that it cried out to be filmed.

"Some people might have questioned who this movie would appeal to," Savoca said. "I think there's a martyr in all of us, just waiting to come out. And St. Therese makes it seem possible. Because as Lili's character says, 'I didn't get shot full of arrows. But I can do this. I can scrub, I can wash, I, too, can be a saint.' It's an attainable thing."



The way you get to be a saint is made so clear to you in Catholic school. If you're raised that way, it's the underlying fabric; it's more real to you than physics or chemistry. It's grace and sin.

"Yep," Savoca said. "I was raised that way. Full, full, full. Argentinian-Catholic and Sicilian-Catholic. Those are my backgrounds. My mother ran a very strong Catholic household. My grandmother in Argentina converted people left and right. She would get closer to heaven with each one she converted. Any beggar who came by got food, and instructions to go see the priest. In this country, stuff like that seems to come from a long time ago, but when you go to Argentina, it is the 1950s."

But movies in America these days simply don't deal with religion like that.

"Yeah, but people do care about this stuff," she said. "I know I do. I read Francine Prose's novel 10 years ago. And just totally fell in love with it for a million reasons. One of them was my spiritual heritage, which I was in turmoil over. Religion was a serious thing with me and a natural part of my life until I started reading, and meeting people who didn't come from where I came from. And then I started questioning everything, and I threw everything out, but then nothing fit anymore, and I knew I had to go back and find some things to keep that would make sense to me."

So filming this story was a way of facing those questions?

"I was really scared. I told myself, it's such a complicated book, and there's so much stuff that could be really bad if it's not done right. So I need a lot of years to find the answers to my questions and then I'll know what I'm talking about, and I can make the movie."

"Of course what wound up happening is that I didn't find the answers, and then I realized that's why I wanted to make the movie: because I didn't have them, and the story didn't have them, either. It was just about trying to be religious in an age that doesn't understand you."

It's a good thing, probably, that Savoca waited 10 years, because in the meantime, Lili Taylor came into the picture. You will remember her if you saw *Mystic Pizza* (1988), where she was the heir to the famous sauce recipe, or *Say Anything* (1989), where she performed her deeply earnest and therefore very funny folk songs, or the overlooked *Bright Angel* (1991), where she was a runaway teenager, or *Dogfight*.

"I told Lili while we were making *Dogfight* that there was this book I wanted to film," Savoca said, "and she was definitely Teresa. But making the book seemed harder and harder, and that's when we said to Jonathan Demme, 'Help us out, because we're in the middle of this thing, and it ain't moving and I'm pregnant and what am I doing?'"

Demme was willing. He had invested earlier in Savoca's *True Love* and admired the movie a lot, and "we're neighbors now. We talk a lot about movies and as this project started, I got kinda pulled in as one of the producing team."

The clout of a major director like Demme usually helps smaller movies get made. Still, “we went everywhere and got rejected,” Savoca said, “and I knew that if it fell through, there was never going to be another time.”

Some people would have advised you to start with the story of the Lili Taylor character. But she only enters the movie in the last 45 minutes or so. There’s all the earlier story, about how her parents met because her father won the hand of her mother in a card game, and how they changed, and grew more “modern.”

Savoca smiled. “The beauty of this book was that you never knew what was going to happen next. Here are these people, and you don’t know why you’re reading about them, but you love them. Then you look back and everything just falls into place. You realize that if it hadn’t been hot, her future husband wouldn’t have been playing Pinochle, and he wouldn’t have gotten drunk and he and Lili’s father wouldn’t have gambled over whether he could marry her, and each little piece fell together just like life.”

It’s gotta be more than fate, I said. She nodded. Here we were, two Catholics on familiar ground.

“You go. . . . I don’t know, is there a plan? Is it coincidence? There’s a reason why this stuff happens. But trying to make sense of the reason is what life is all about. So that was the beauty of the thing. That for Teresa, everything was part of God’s plan. The movie is about the deep dark ancient religion, where we all come from, and then America, the bright and clean. They treat that house the way we treat religion: Paint the room over, get rid of the old junk, throw it in the garbage, I don’t need it, I want to move on and be progressive, we don’t need history!”

By the end of the film, Teresa receives a visit from Jesus, and has lost touch with what her parents think of as a normal life. Do you, I asked, think she goes mad?

Savoca shrugged a little sadly.

“By definition, a saint is someone who looks for God. And that’s what she does. But she becomes so internal, she leaves out the external world. Maybe that’s mental illness. If she were analyzed, maybe they’d put them on Prozac or something. But that’s part of the deal if you’re looking for God. So I think you have to have it both ways.”

Milestone Films

In 34 years in film distribution and restoration, Milestone has built a reputation for releasing classic cinema masterpieces, groundbreaking documentaries, and American independent features. Thanks to the company's work in rediscovering and releasing important films such as Charles Burnett's *Killer of Sheep*, Kent Mackenzie's, *The Exiles*, Mikhail Kalatozov's *I Am Cuba*, Marcel Ophuls' *The Sorrow and the Pity*, the Mariposa Film Group's *Word is Out*, Ayoka Chenzira's *Alma's Rainbow*, and Alfred Hitchcock's *Bon Voyage* and *Aventure Malgache*, Milestone has long occupied a position as one of the country's most influential independent distributors. Important contemporary artists who have co-presented Milestone restorations include Martin Scorsese, Francis Ford Coppola, Barbara Kopple, Steven Soderbergh, Thelma Schoonmaker, Jonathan Demme, Dustin Hoffman, and Charles Burnett.



In 1995, Milestone received the first Special Archival Award from the National Society of Film Critics for its restoration and release of *I Am Cuba*. Manohla Dargis at *LA Weekly* chose Milestone as the 1999 "Indie Distributor of the Year." In 2004, the National Society of Film Critics awarded Milestone with a Film Heritage award. That same year the International Film Seminars presented the company its prestigious Leo Award and the New York Film Critics Circle voted the company a Special Award "in honor of 15 years of restoring classic films." In November 2007, Milestone was awarded the Fort Lee Film Commission's first Lewis Selznick Award for contributions to film history. In January 2008, the Los Angeles Film Critics Association chose to give its first Legacy of Cinema Award "to Dennis Doros and Amy Heller of Milestone Film & Video for their tireless efforts on behalf of film restoration and preservation." And in March 2008, Milestone was honored by Anthology Film Archive for its work in preservation.

The company won Best Rediscovery in the Il Cinema Ritrovato DVD Awards for its release of *Winter Soldier* in 2006 and again in 2010 for *The Exiles*. In 2015, Il Cinema Ritrovato honored Milestone for Best Blu-ray, for the *Project Shirley* series. In 2011, Milestone was the first distributor ever chosen for two Film Heritage Awards in the same year by the National Society of Film Critics for the releases of *On the Bowery* and *Word is Out*. The American Library Association selected *Word is Out* for its Notable Videos for Adults, the first classic film ever so chosen.

In December 2012, Milestone became the first two-time winner of the prestigious New York Film Critics' Circle's "Special Award" and also received another National Society of Film Critics

Film Heritage Award, this time for the company's work restoring, preserving and distributing the films of iconoclast director Shirley Clarke. In 2019, Doros and Heller were honored with the Art House Convergence's Spotlight Lifetime Achievement Award and the Denver Silent Film Festival's David Shepard Career Achievement Award. In 2023, Milestone received the Ambler Cinematic Arts Award.

In 2009, Dennis Doros was elected as one of the Directors of the Board of the Association of the Moving Image Archivists (AMIA) and established the organization's press office in 2010. He served three terms on the board. In 2016, he was honored with AMIA's William O'Farrell Award in recognition for services to the field. From 2017–2021, Doros served as President of AMIA, and on the board of the Co-ordinating Council of Audio-Visual Archives Associations. From 2018–2021, Doros was a member of the National Film Preservation Board, which helps select the Library of Congress's yearly additions to the National Film Registry.

Heller and Doros have lectured internationally on the importance of saving and screening films outside the mainstream. In recent years, Milestone premiered pristine restorations of Nancy Savoca's *Household Saints*, David Schickele's *Bushman*, Bridgett Davis' *Naked Acts*, Mikhail Kalatozov's *I Am Cuba*; Lois Weber's *Shoes* and *The Dumb Girl of Portici*; Kathleen Collins's *Losing Ground*; George T. Nierenberg's *Say Amen*, *Somebody* and *No Maps on My Taps*; the films of Rob Epstein and Jeffrey Friedman, including the Oscar®-winning *Common Threads*, Ayoka Chenzira's *Alma's Rainbow*, and Eleanor Antin's *The Man Without a World*. They produced Ross Lipman's acclaimed essay film *Notfilm*.

In 2021, Milestone entered into a distribution agreement with Kino Lorber, which has allowed co-founders Doros and Heller more time to focus on the rediscovery and restoration of films that will delight viewers and challenge the cinematic canon. The pair — along with filmmakers Nancy Savoca, Rich Guay, Ira Deutchman, Mary Harron, Geoffrey Fletcher, and attorney Susan Bodine — have also been actively involved in the founding of a new non-profit organization, Missing Movies, dedicated to addressing the current cinephile's dilemma — thousands of films that are no longer available to the public.

“They care and they love movies.” — Martin Scorsese

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