



“A DEEPLY AFFECTING STORY
about a veteran and his teenage daughter -
MOVINGLY PLAYED by BEN FOSTER and
THOMASIN HARCOURT MCKENZIE”

MANOHLA DARGIS, *The New York Times*

“A POWERFUL FILM
from start to finish.”

Los Angeles Times

“COMPASSION FILLS
EVERY FRAME.”

*Hollywood
REPORTER*

“A universal,
UNFORGETTABLE
EXPERIENCE.”

PLAYLIST

“A passionate,
HUMANISTIC TALE.”

RollingStone

FROM THE ACADEMY AWARD® NOMINATED
WRITER AND DIRECTOR OF *WINTER'S BONE*

LEAVE NO TRACE



SONY PICTURES RELEASING INTERNATIONAL, STAGE 6 FILMS, BRON CREATIVE and TOPIC STUDIOS PRESENT A HARRISON PRODUCTIONS/REISMAN PRODUCTIONS/STILL ROLLING PRODUCTIONS FILM
“LEAVE NO TRACE” BEN FOSTER THOMASIN HARCOURT MCKENZIE JEFF KOBERT AND DALE DICKEY COSTUME DESIGNER KERRY BARDEN AND PAUL SCHWAB COSTUME DESIGNER SUSAN JACOBS HAIR AND MAKEUP DESIGNER HILTON HANDE JEFF
PRODUCED BY CHRIS STANWSON EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS ERIN O'BRYEN JANE RIZZO PRODUCED BY CHAD KEITH DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY MICHAEL MCDONOUGH EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS ARON L. CALBERT JASON CLOTH ANDY POLLACK MICHAEL BLOOM ADAM PANCUS
SCREENPLAY BY DEBRA GRANIK & ANNE ROSELLINI BASED UPON THE BOOK BY PETER ROCK WRITTEN AND DIRECTED BY ANNE HARRISON LINDA REISMAN ANNE ROSELLINI DIRECTED BY DEBRA GRANIK



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LEAVE NO TRACE

Ein Film von
Debra Granik

Filmlänge: 108 Minuten - 2018 - USA - Bild: 1:85,1 - Ton: 5.1

AB 11. OKTOBER IM KINO

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SYNOPSIS

LEAVE NO TRACE ist der aktuelle und eindringliche Film von Debra Granik (**Oscar®**-nominiert für „Winter’s Bone“) und zeigt stimmungsvoll und faszinierend ein Leben am Rande der Gesellschaft.

Die jugendliche Tom (Thomasin Harcourt McKenzie) und ihr Vater Will (Ben Foster), Kriegsveteran, leben seit vielen Jahren unentdeckt in Forest Park, einem riesigen Waldgebiet am Rande von Portland, Oregon. Eine zufällige Begegnung führt zu ihrer Entdeckung und zur Betreuung durch die Sozialbehörde. Sie versuchen sich an ihre neue Umgebung anzupassen, bis eine unerwartete Entscheidung sie auf einen gefährlichen Weg zurück in die Wildnis führt – und sie zwingt, sich mit dem widerstreitenden Wunsch, Teil der Gesellschaft zu sein und dem heftigen Verlangen, abseits zu leben, auseinandersetzen zu müssen.

Debra Granik („Winter’s Bone“, „Stray Dog“, „Down to the Bone“) führte Regie und hat das Drehbuch zusammen mit Anne Rossellini („Winter’s Bone“, „Down to the Bone“) geschrieben. Basierend auf dem Roman „My Abandonment“ von Peter Rock. In den Titelrollen glänzen Ben Foster („Inferno“, „Hell or High Water“, „The Messenger“) sowie Newcomerin Thomasin Harcourt McKenzie. In weiteren Rollen spielen u.a. Jeff Kober und Dale Dickey.

Als Produzenten fungieren: Aaron L. Gilbert, Jason Cloth, Andy Pollack sowie Anne Harrison, Linda Reisman und Anne Rosellini. Michael Bloom und Adam Pincus zeichnen als Executive Producer von LEAVE NO TRACE verantwortlich. Als Koproduzent fungiert Chris Stinson.



PRODUCTION NOTES

From her Sundance Award-winning first feature *Down to the Bone* to her Oscar-nominated feature *Winter's Bone* and her documentary *Stray Dog*, writer and director Debra Granik has examined the lives of outsiders struggling to maintain their independence. Granik's third narrative feature, **Leave No Trace**, set in the Pacific Northwest's hidden byways and forgotten encampments, is based on Peter Rock's novel *My Abandonment*, which is inspired by a true story.

The real-life story that **Leave No Trace** is inspired by has become something of a legend in Portland, and was reported on in *The Oregonian* and elsewhere: a girl and her father were discovered to have been living for four years in the nature preserve bordering the city's downtown area. They ventured into Portland only to collect his disability checks and shop for what they couldn't grow. The girl was healthy, well cared-for, and tested academically above her age group. After being relocated to a horse farm where the father was able to find a job, the pair soon disappeared.

Rock, intrigued by the mystery, created a fictionalized version of the tale that filled in the unknowable details. The author notes, "There were other books inspired by the same story, some more investigative. I'm a fiction writer; the genesis of my book was reading the newspaper stories and wondering what happened to the two people — where they came from, who they were, and how they survived."

The book was brought to Granik and Rosellini's attention via two other frequent moviemaking collaborators, producers Anne Harrison (the Oscar-winning *The Danish Girl*) and Linda Reisman (the Oscar-winning *Affliction*). They originally optioned the novel in 2007, attracted by the book's distinctive voice and landscape, eventually bringing in Granik and longtime collaborator, Anne Rosellini. The four then worked together four years developing the screenplay. In 2016, Harrison and Reisman approached Bron for financing; Bron then brought in First Look, now called Topic, as a financing partner.

The setting for the story is forests and isolated rural enclaves in Oregon and Washington State. Granik was attracted by this environment: "Films that take place in a specific region always speak to Anne and I, and this is a story inextricably tied to the

Pacific Northwest. We could visualize a setting and a journey that would be very photogenic, and a story that would draw us in.”

When we meet the father and daughter, they have been living in a rudimentary encampment, using outdoor living skills to carve out a life almost entirely off the grid and invisible to the outside world. Granik says, “Will and Tom have life experiences that are very different from anything I’ve known or done. Who can live on public land, and stay undetected for so long? And how did they do it? It became clear that to tell this story would require research and deep consultation with a range of Pacific Northwesterners to understand how to film this existence.”

Rock reports, “The plot of the film differs from my book in some ways, but in terms of the tone it’s pretty close. My book has elements of fantasy, and Debra’s movie grounds the characters in more realism.”

Although the screenplay does not use narration, Granik notes that “the teen narrator from Pete’s book led me to wonder about how a person could live happily and richly with few possessions. Tom and Will have a very disciplined lifestyle, and it necessitates a commitment to distinguish between want and need. Thinking about Tom and Will led me back to Henry David Thoreau’s Walden, and to environmentalist Bill McKibben’s reportage as well as One Man’s Wilderness: An Alaskan Odyssey, from Richard Proenneke’s journals.

“Who among us has the inner strength and autonomy to live outside the churning new cell phone cycle and the amplified social chatter of our digital consumer society?”

In approaching the story, Granik also thought back to Shakespeare’s *The Tempest*, with its father-and-daughter characters of Prospero and Miranda: “I’m drawn to the ways classic stories depict close relationships in which people complement and complete each other. Will and Tom look out for each other and also pollinate each other’s mind. Tom has learned to be the adult at times, because of her father’s psychiatric vulnerabilities. He, in turn, is trying to teach her every useful thing he knows.”

Leave No Trace tells the story of two people who forge their own path, with no villain in the tale. Granik remarks, “There are a handful of core themes in literature and film that we learn. But right now it seems that stories which rely on direct threats of violent bodily harm, annihilation, and high-stakes crimes are what get almost all the attention. I’m curious about our appetite for stories that don’t rely on violent actions but still have strong resonance. Several people, all of them strangers, help Will and Tom along the way, but the tension remains high because of how they choose to live. The antagonistic forces are not exerted by any malevolent character, but by something hard to see — the pressure of social conformity and business as usual.

“In this story the stakes are physical and existential survival. When Tom and her father are evicted from public land and don’t have a safety net, those are high stakes. Where do people who don’t fit neatly into the mainstreams of our culture go, and how do they fare?”

The director adds, “The stakes are also tied to the intricate dynamic between Tom and her father. After they are evicted from the park, where they knew how to structure their lives and relate to one another, they are pushed to learn more about one another when forced into the wider world. Will senses that Tom’s curiosity pulls her in a different direction from him, which eventually leads to a fork in their path.

“That is something universal we all have to navigate, but which we do in our own ways. Since coming of age can require that a person cleave themselves from those they are closest to, it’s always high stakes in terms of how hard that can be.”

In the character of Will, Granik returns to a topic she explored in her documentary feature *Stray Dog*, developing it here in a fictional context. “I’m very interested in the lives of veterans, especially how their experiences affect them years after the war,” she explains. “And it’s getting to be long after our wars in Afghanistan and Iraq began, the time when civilians begin to forget, and veterans are left holding the bag.

“The father’s veteran identity was something that Pete had embedded in the book. When we got to Portland to research and scout the movie, I was able to go deeper into the issues that the father character wrestles with, through the help of several vets who

advised on the film based on their personal experiences.” David J. Morris’ book The Evil Hours, about his experience as a Marine with post-traumatic stress (PTS), and Ron Hall, a Vietnam Era vet who was the subject of *Stray Dog*, also provided insight and inspiration.

The Cast

Ben Foster, who plays Will in **Leave No Trace**, is known for intense, tightly wound performances in such movies as *Hell or High Water*, *Lone Survivor*, and *3:10 to Yuma*. “I have appreciated Ben’s work in an array of films, specifically in *The Messenger*,” says Granik. “This was a big, meaty, soulful role, and I thought he’d have room to put that layered intensity he has into it. He’s a very committed, in-depth kind of actor.”

Foster also has an interest in veterans’ experiences. Granik was “touched that he had spent a considerable amount of his working life trying to learn about and understand the experiences of returning soldiers. In several films he’s been asked to delve into that on a very deep level. In discussions with Ben, I also learned that the subject of living off the grid, living with less, and questioning the ubiquity of social media, is very much on his mind. All of that was very helpful.”

The actor reflects, “Although dealing with difficult circumstances, this was a very hopeful script about trying to do the right thing — and I hadn’t been reading a lot of scripts that made me feel very hopeful.

“When the script landed on my desk, my fiancée and I were expecting our first child. So, iterations of fatherhood were very present when I read it. And Debra’s films, particularly *Down to the Bone* and *Stray Dog*, had touched me deeply. Because of this combination, I really wanted the job!”

He and Granik “would take walks together and talk about how someone in Will’s position could make this life make sense for himself. Living with his daughter in a temperate rainforest is in many ways working for him, and it’s working for her. When social services comes, what the father and daughter created, and the world that they know, is turned upside down. What will they be gaining, and losing? They each have to grow in different ways, and this pierces the heart.”

Aware of the responsibility of portraying soldiers' complexities on-screen, Foster notes, "We did not overly articulate what Will is struggling with; his scars are internal. I've had the privilege of talking to a lot of brave men and women about this; I have friends who served and survived and have done a lot of healing.

"What's so inspiring about spending time with those in the service is that they are can-do people; they fix it, they figure it out. It isn't about 'Does it feel right' or 'Do you want to.' It's, you do it. I've tried to then understand how I myself could do that."

For an independent filmmaker, Granik feels that an actor like Foster is a gift: "Ben is a defender of independent films. He puts his spirit into the research, gets immersed, and he stays true to it. He's not afraid of getting muddy or emotionally entangled. He's done profound work on films without frills, and he champions it."

In casting the female lead, Granik encountered Thomasin Harcourt McKenzie, who plays Tom, when her audition tape was submitted to casting directors Kerry Barden and Paul Schnee, who Granik had worked with on *Winter's Bone*: "We had met with an array of teen actors who were really strong, but Thomasin's audition stuck with me the most. I went back to it many times. There was something about the way she approached the character that told me she had a very rich understanding of this role."

The actress was going to have to be able to imagine a life without the things teens today take for granted, like social media. "That's a tall order for a teen from the contemporary world right now," says Granik. "I think with some actors who get exposed early to working in the television and film world, it's very hard for them to recover their innocence. There was something non-urban and non-jaded about Thomasin."

Harcourt McKenzie recounts, "I think the local casting directors knew that I lived close to the bush in New Zealand, [native wooded areas] similar to where Tom lives. I had to do my audition as a self-tape. Instead of just sitting in a chair, I wanted to be creatively connected so I went into a studio with props to create the environment that Tom was living in. I put energy into the audition; the scene was Tom getting ready for

bed, so I had a toothbrush with a bucket, and a sleeping bag, and I wore overalls and a T-shirt.

“Then there was an improv scene I had to do with Debra, of Tom with a rabbit. Instead of pretending, or getting a stuffed animal, I walked down the road to a friend’s house and got a real rabbit.”

Towards the end of the auditioning process, Harcourt McKenzie “did videos of me running around the bush so Debra could see the similarities that Tom and I had — how we live our lives and what we are surrounded by. That really helped Debra feel there was a connection between the character and me.

“In the book My Abandonment she was about 13, but in **Leave No Trace** we never specify Tom’s age. She’s had no social media in her life. She doesn’t have any friends her age. She’s learned to live in her own way, in her own style — curious and observant, and quiet. She has a lot of empathy but I don’t know that she fully realizes she’s kind of the medicine for her Dad; she’s what grounds him. Without Tom, Will would struggle more; she brings him out of his nightmares.”

With regard to those, the actress “didn’t do research on veterans because, although Will is a veteran, he hasn’t shared his war experiences with Tom or opened up to her about PTS. She only knows that he wakes up in the middle of the night. When we got ready to film those scenes, Debra discussed it with me and showed me some of her research — including a PTS survey that veterans take.”

While filming, Harcourt McKenzie made use of acting techniques that she had practiced with her mother, Miranda Harcourt, that emphasize “how to connect.” She says, “Ben and I did that right before filming a scene. We hugged each other for a couple of minutes, listening to each other’s heartbeat, so that we would feel comfortable around each other. We also did a *hongi*.”

The latter is a indigenous traditional greeting, from New Zealand’s Maoris, meaning “sharing the breath of life,” which aided Harcourt McKenzie and Foster in strengthening

their characters' bond. She notes, "We touch noses and foreheads. Here it helped us show their relationship."

"There are different variations," adds Foster. "We did this one in the woods: you put your heads together, you embrace, and you allow the other person to share your space intimately in a safe way. It's a way to connect, and energetically; a trust is exchanged that's beyond words, and Debra found that between us." During filming, Foster and Harcourt McKenzie found a way to use this forehead-to-forehead gesture as a manifestation of Tom and Will's closeness.

The *hongi* only enhanced what was already a fortuitous acting partnership, says Foster. "With some actors you have to figure out how to build something, but with her it was very natural. Thomasin and I developed an intuitive shorthand.

"I didn't feel I was mentoring Thomasin at all; she is a consummate professional, able to improvise beautifully and truthfully, and a grounded actress. She is the child of wonderful artists in their own right; as a new parent myself, I marvel at their parenting of her. I adored working with Thomasin, and I hope this is not the last time."

To cast other roles, Granik reached out to two actors who had appeared in *Winter's Bone*: Dale Dickey and Isaiah Stone, whose role in that film as Jennifer Lawrence's younger brother was his first. In **Leave No Trace**, Dickey plays a character named for her, one whose matter-of-fact, nonjudgmental demeanor is the closest to maternal that Tom has encountered. "There are few people who don't recognize Dale or know her work," says Granik of the actress, who has appeared in scores of television series and films during her long career. "In my eyes she's one of the most beloved character actresses around. Dale is magnificently photogenic and intense. Her eyes say everything. Although Dale has lived most of her life in California, her roots are in Eastern Tennessee so she knows firsthand about different kinds of existences. She can easily enter into the consciousness of a variety of regional worlds, dialects, and different social classes. She's truly malleable and tuned-in."

Stone, who plays Tom's neighbor and the first real friend she makes, was a 13-year-old local when the filmmaker cast him in *Winter's Bone*: "We noticed him in an

agriculture and forestry class. At the time, he was a boy from down the road, but it was clear he's a special soul. He's a survivor of a hardscrabble life, and he radiates a lot of humanity."

Local casting in Portland was done by Simon Max Hill and Rachel Mossey. Granik was excited by who came in to audition and by the non-traditional ways Hill and Mossey used to find people: "Portland is endowed with a wonderful acting scene, and it was a real boon to the production to cast the supporting roles from the gold mine of local talent."

The Woods

To film **Leave No Trace**, the mandate was learning about the skills the characters would need — and had needed — to make a home in the forest. Granik comments, "Tom and Will are part of a subculture built around the preservation and practice of primitive skills. Honing outdoor survival skills comes with an ardor for keeping alive things that our ancestors knew how to do."

The production sought the expertise of outdoor survival consultant Dr. Nicole Apelian, a Portland native, who was masterful in her surviving and thriving in the wilderness on the History Channel show *Alone*. Apelian recounts, "I gave Debra and Anne details about what the day-to-day for these characters living in the woods — in plain sight, yet hiding and keeping a low profile in Forest Park — would entail, specifically in the Pacific Northwest, where it's rainy."

Forest Park — where the true-life story unfolded — is the public municipal park in the Tualatin Mountains, just a few miles west of downtown Portland. Stretching more than eight miles along the banks of the Willamette River, it is one of America's largest urban forests, covering more than 5,100 acres.

"It's like the lungs of the city and it's spectacular," says Granik. "The park is on land that 10,000 years ago was inhabited by tribes who lived on the outskirts of what we now call Portland. It's a rare piece of public land; rangers and the lovers of the park take good care of it."

“There is some terrain where trails stop and that is almost impossible to traverse — very steep and hard to navigate by foot. Yet there are intrepid people who have lived there at times. When we scouted the park, the rangers showed us sites where long-term reclusive dwellers had remained undetected for a considerable time. We then met a local man who had lived for three years in a neighboring park and who showed us some artifacts of his existence, including his hand-crafted solar egg cooker.”

Rock recounts, “Debra and Anne and I walked around Forest Park together with rangers, learning about the way that it is policed and how that has changed several times, depending on the administration.”

In 2017, before filming began, Apelian was brought on board to train the actors: “A lot of this was done in Forest Park — learning tracking, doing drills, listening for bird language which will let you know when people are approaching. It was about bringing into this production a primal connection, like switching a light on that you don’t even realize is off.”

Harcourt McKenzie’s research began before journeying from New Zealand to America to make the film, focusing on the instinctual and process-oriented sides of the character: “Going into it, I didn’t want to know every single thing because Tom doesn’t. I was researching purely the ways that Tom was living her life, and what she was interested in. I went to Adrenalin Forest, a park in New Zealand where you can climb through the trees on platforms. Tom keeps a journal — ideas, notes from the encyclopedia she reads, what mushrooms she’s found — so I started a journal like that, where I drew pictures and wrote in. My journal was what got used in the film — and I couldn’t bring it back to New Zealand after filming, unfortunately, because when I was doing the wilderness training with Nicole I stuck some leaves in it which are not allowed to be brought into New Zealand.”

For Foster, “one of the most remarkable parts of the wilderness training was realizing how much talking we do; as an actor, there’s constant questioning of ‘Why this?’ and ‘Where did that come from?’ so it’s a highly verbal profession.

“In the wilderness, you must listen, on a cellular level; it’s about being able to read nature, being able to read clouds, being able to read tracking of how someone has moved through an area. So one becomes hyper-sensitive to natural surroundings whereas ordinarily there’s a cacophony of distractions. Working with Thomasin in that became much less about verbal and more of perception and awareness.”

Foster and Harcourt McKenzie both threw themselves into the training. Apelian taught them the basic tenets of wilderness living and survival skills: “They learned to make their own fires with a tinder bundle of very fine material, to create their own feather sticks to ensure fires in inclement conditions, and to dig a deep fire pit so that smoke wouldn’t be seen from far away.”

Granik recalls, “Thomasin became aces with her knife. Ben really got into using a ferro rod, which is a way to light fires without matches by scraping a rod made of ferrocium, an alloy that produces ultra-hot sparks, with your knife.”

Apelian adds, “I taught Ben how to build an emergency shelter and then had him teach Thomasin how to do it. Their regular tarp and camp had to be set up so that it can’t be seen until you’re right up at it. We covered how to know when someone has hypothermia and to treat it — something a vet would have learned — and which were the edible and medicinal plants that would be around them.”

Foster notes, “The training for **Leave No Trace** was less militarized — except for learning about your campfire being low-profile, emitting less smoke — and more about survival. Will chooses to live with the barest of needs. So, training with Nicole and with [survival consultant] Alan Kay was intensive in learning about how one lives off the land, making camp, and how to disappear in plain sight.”

Accordingly, Apelian notes that her training also covered “how to blend in when they go into town — being a ‘gray man’ in the way they carry themselves, change clothes, wipe moss off of each other. We walked through the woods to see the ways in which you don’t leave trails; when a route is being used too much, you switch so that no one can follow you.”

Foster sought to get interior re-calibrations accurate. He explains, “When performing, you want to keep the character warm inside you and protect him. For the scenes of Will coming into town, I would tenderize myself for the input overload. When he hears a car door shut, does that trigger a combat memory, or dread that *someone’s coming to take my daughter away*? Is there a fear or disdain of authority? Playing with those internal running dialogues was essential.”

He adds, “To realize that we need a lot less to survive is something that I will carry with me; there can be great joy in a more restrained way of living.”

A feature of the Pacific Northwest is its significant subculture of low-impact living. Outside of the rapid felling of its great forests, there is a culture that supports people who live in a humble way, which includes doing without and making do. Apelian comments, “People do go off the grid out of necessity, and living off the land can still be done in rural areas, but many do so now out of a mixture of want and need.”

On Location

Although Forest Park is very much a character in **Leave No Trace**, all sequences taking place there were filmed in another Oregon park, Clackamas County’s Eagle Fern Park. “It’s very similar in terms of its ecology,” reports Apelian.

For Harcourt McKenzie, filming in order and starting in the forest was helpful in living the arc of the story: “Filming in the forest helped Ben and me get into the groove of Will and Tom’s way of life. We could imagine ourselves taking the same steps as the characters. A hut was made so that we could camp there, mark it and make it our own.”

After their Forest Park encampment is discovered, Tom and her father are evaluated by social workers at a municipal facility. From there they are sent to live on a rural farm, where Will is trained to harvest Christmas trees. For depicting these locations, Granik explains, “I like to include place-specific details and weave them into the narrative. It’s my bent to practice visual anthropology. I always want to know what delights people in different parts of the vast country in which I live, and to find what they do to enrich their lives.

“An example is rural churches and devotional dance, which are a prevalent component of community life in every state. Who is dancing and what that looks like varies widely. I wondered, what would Tom and Will see once they’re brought back into the mainstream, and what would they think?”

Another example is 4H and the local bee-keeping culture. Granik notes, “The practice of kids raising animals varies from region to region, and I wanted to show who Tom would encounter and what they’d be doing.”

Harcourt McKenzie muses, “We weren’t afraid of the bugs crawling around. In the film, my character develops a relationship with bees. I learned about them, and handling them, and now I’m passionate about them still; I’m thinking I will have a beehive myself one day.”

As Will and Tom hit the road to find their way back to a living situation that can sustain their preferred way of life, they land at an old logging camp that is now an outsider enclave nestled in a remote Oregon glen. “Squaw Mountain was a gem of a location, filled with idiosyncrasies and anthropological details,” reflects Granik. “Their community strives to allow for bohemian lifestyles in a very special way. While life in places like Squaw Mountain can be tough, there will still be a bonfire. A guitar will be brought out and played. Bread will be broken. People will co-exist, attempting to live closer to the life they want to live.

“You can’t tell from the film, but the glen in which this camp exists is the last group of trees standing. Timber companies have removed the surrounding forest; there’s no more windbreak and the trees in the camp are blowing down because everything for miles has been taken out.”

Shooting in Oregon meant working with local crew who were intimately familiar with the terrain. Granik recounts, “Oregonians are going to know what a Doug Fir is, how to work with large ferns, and what branches could be ‘widowmakers’ during a storm.”

Crew members were also invaluable in helping to work through Portland’s rainy season. Granik admits, “That became a big part of the look of the film: how to include

the rain! They taught us how to work *with* it so that we never had to stop for the rain, even for sound recording. We would just keep filming inclemency for inclemency.” Director of photography Michael McDonough, having been the cinematographer on Granik’s earlier narrative features, was well-equipped for this and other challenges on the shoot.

Costume designer Erin Orr and her department worked to render all of Harcourt McKenzie and Foster’s costumes water-resistant — not so much to protect the costumes as to protect the actors, since they were being exposed to the elements in a sustained way.

Production designer Chad Keith and his team navigated remarkable landscapes to create a realistic environment that would sustain a no-frills life. “Everything had to be humble, utilitarian, and precise,” states Granik. “Precision is important to Will. The things in their site are practical, but not technologically rarefied. Chad bought used objects, recycled materials, and tools from secondhand stores and garage sales — all things Will would have sought out and used.”

Property master Paul Curtin made sure Will was carrying what a vet would have with him. Apelian conferred with greensman Jules Larrouy on details for Tom’s garden. The goal was for everything to be authentic, but not everything had to be perfect; the slight imperfections are what make Will and Tom real.

Seeing the finished film, Rock recalled a classic movie about a father and daughter being human and making do — *Paper Moon*. He states, “**Leave No Trace** is a beautiful film. The way Michael worked with natural light, the feel of the movie is right.”

Language and Music

Dialect coach Mary McDonald-Lewis worked with Harcourt McKenzie to keep her natural New Zealand speaking voice in an Northwest American register. The actress elaborates, “Mary helped me with specific words and specific rhythms. The New Zealand and American accents are so different that there are definitely a couple of words I found hard to say — like ‘lentils.’ I spoke in my American accent the whole time on-set and I almost convinced myself that I was an American; at the beginning of

filming, not everyone knew I was from New Zealand. We were I think halfway through until one day I made a slip and the boom operator went, ‘What?!’

“There weren’t massive chunks of dialogue in the script and Debra would go through it with me and decide to edit lines, cutting out unnecessary ones. Tom and Will had already spent so much time together that they are aware and attuned to how each other is feeling; things didn’t need to be said.”

Foster concurs, noting that “getting my hands in the dirt during the training allowed me to realize we could express a lot more by saying a lot less. Debra and I worked on the script, paring it down.

“In movies, there is so much exposition; everybody’s telling us what they’re feeling and they’re not feeling a damn thing. Each word Will says is said with reason; instead of talking about what we were doing, we’d just do the physical actions. It felt great!”

Although much of the emotion and drama of **Leave No Trace** is quiet and unspoken, music is part of the aesthetic. For an original musical score, Granik sought out multi-instrumentalist and composer Dickon Hinchliffe, who had scored *Winter’s Bone*.

“Dickon’s talents are wide-ranging,” praises Granik. “He also knows that I love to leave breathing room for viewers to calibrate and decipher their own emotions. Dickon’s score for **Leave No Trace** enhances the film’s mood and ambience, but remains minimal in terms of editorializing.”

Music is played on-screen as well; at one point in the movie, acoustic music enlivens an informal outdoor gathering. Performing live for the sequence are two folk virtuosos: Michael Hurley, a legend with roots in the Greenwich Village folk scene of the 1960s who now lives in Oregon, and Marisa Anderson, a local Oregon musician who has gained a national following.

Granik notes that Hurley, whose unique style of “outsider folk” has earned him a worldwide reputation as a musical outlaw with a surrealist bent, “was recommended to

us by friends of the production, and Marisa knew him professionally and artistically — and she made it happen. She is a prolific and exciting musician in her own right.”

The director refers to the music that the pair plays in the film as “music for the people,” and credits two organizations for helping keep the art form in the public eye: “One is Mississippi Records in Portland, who are archivists and reissue obscure music. The other is a small label out of Seattle called Light in the Attic, a champion and preserver of outsider musicians; some are lesser-known and some are greats who have fallen out of fashion, but now their work is available to us again.”

The filmmakers, including music supervisor Susan Jacobs, were thrilled that singer/songwriter Kendra Smith, admired for her solo work and her recordings with The Dream Syndicate and Opal, agreed to participate. There was a link and resonance to the material as Smith herself has been living off the grid for over 20 years. Light in the Attic connected Granik and Smith, resulting in Smith creating an original song for **Leave No Trace**: “Moon Boat” is performed by Smith with The Magician’s Orchestra.

“Not All Those Who Wander Are Lost”

The inclusion and depiction of regional voices and ways of life places **Leave No Trace** within a longstanding tradition of independent filmmaking. Debra Granik sees her work in this vein: “There always have been and always will be storytellers who wonder about lives at the margins. What stories don’t get up on the screen often?”

Despite the hardships that the characters experience, the director believes that her film has an optimistic slant. She says, “Tom’s father has imbued her with methods by which he has structured his life and with the things he wants her to know about. As she matures, Tom has come to a greater understanding of who her father is and the ways in which they differ. These are steps toward self-acceptance and tolerance of others.”

Thomasin Harcourt McKenzie offers, “I feel that the relationship between the Dad and the daughter, and the quiet quality of the film, will affect people. There are a lot of stereotypes in the world, and when social services first see Tom and Will they assume things. So I think an important theme of **Leave No Trace** is having an understanding

that's not based on how something looks or based solely on your own beliefs about how society should be."

Ben Foster comments, "Life is a quick ride, so love the ones you have and hold them close. It was an extraordinary experience, making this film."

Speaking of the new movie and of her work as a whole, Granik comments, "I'm filled with admiration for choices that go against the grain, because those who live them have found or created a way of life that reverses what you've been trained to believe your whole life.

"I saw a bumper sticker in the areas where we filmed with a quote from J. R. R. Tolkien that I fell in love with while making this movie: 'Not all those who wander are lost.' Many people are searching for alternatives. That fuels my optimism."



About the Cast

BEN FOSTER (Will)

Ben Foster is an actor well-known to audiences for two decades of notable dramatic portrayals. In 2017, he won an Independent Spirit Award for his performance opposite Chris Pine and Jeff Bridges in *Hell or High Water*, written by Taylor Sheridan and directed by David Mackenzie; the film was nominated for four Academy Awards including Best Picture.

He also recently starred in Benedict Andrews' staging of Tennessee Williams' classic *A Streetcar Named Desire*, opposite Gillian Anderson and Vanessa Kirby, at St. Ann's Warehouse in Brooklyn; the production originated at London's Young Vic Theatre. He had previously made his Broadway debut in a revival of Lyle Kessler's *Orphans*, opposite Alec Baldwin and Tom Sturridge, directed by Daniel Sullivan.

Mr. Foster made his film debut starring in the lead role of Barry Levinson's 1950s-set *Liberty Heights*. Since then, his movies have included James Mangold's hit Western *3:10 to Yuma*, for which he shared with the ensemble a Screen Actors Guild Award nomination for Outstanding Performance by a Cast in a Motion Picture; Nick Cassavetes' *Alpha Dog*; Braden King's *Here*; Fernando Meirelles' *360*; Baltasar Kormákur's *Contraband*; David Lowery's *Ain't Them Bodies Saints*; John Krokidas' *Kill Your Darlings*, in which he portrayed poet William Burroughs; Peter Berg's *Lone Survivor*; Craig Gillespie's *The Finest Hours*; Ron Howard's *Inferno*; Scott Cooper's *Hostiles*; and Stephen Frears' *The Program*, in which he starred as Lance Armstrong.

He starred opposite Woody Harrelson in Oren Moverman's *The Messenger* and reunited with the duo for *Rampart*, on which Mr. Foster stepped into a new role, as producer.

He memorably recurred on the classic television series *Six Feet Under*, sharing with his fellow actors a Screen Actors Guild Award for Outstanding Performance by an Ensemble in a Drama Series. Mr. Foster won a Daytime Emmy Award for his performance in the drama about teen bullying, *Bang Bang You're Dead*, directed by Guy Ferland and scripted by William Mastrosimone.

He will next be seen starring on-screen in Mélanie Laurent's *Galveston*, opposite Elle Fanning, which world-premiered at the 2018 SXSW Film Festival.

THOMASIN HARCOURT MCKENZIE (Tom)

New Zealand-born actress Thomasin Harcourt McKenzie was seen by millions of moviegoers as Astrid in *The Hobbit: Battle of the Five Armies*, Peter Jackson's epic conclusion to his movie trilogy.

She then starred alongside Morgana Davies in the short film *The Boyfriend Game*, written and directed by Australian filmmaker Alice Englert, which screened at the Berlin International Film Festival.

Ms. Harcourt McKenzie was acclaimed for her portrayal of real-life rape survivor Louise Nicholas in *Consent: The Louise Nicholas Story*, directed by Robert Sarkies; the telefilm was named Best Television Feature at the New Zealand Screen Awards. Television viewers also took note of her portrayal of Pixie Hannah, battling cancer, in the long-running drama series *Shortland Street*.

She has since played the title role in the television comedy series *Lucy Lewis Can't Lose*; and been part of the ensemble in The Candle-Wasters' *Bright Summer Night*, an adaptation of Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.

Ms. Harcourt McKenzie recently appeared with Melanie Lynskey and Timothy Spall in *The Changeover*, the supernatural drama thriller based on Margaret Mahy's novel; the film version was directed by her parents, Miranda Harcourt and Stuart McKenzie, with her father also adapting the book into the screenplay.

She is currently readying to film director Justin Kurzel's *The True History of the Kelly Gang*, which will star George Mackay as legendary Australian outlaw Ned Kelly with Nicholas Hoult, Travis Fimmel, Essie Davis, and Russell Crowe.

JEFF KOBER (Mr. Walters)

Moviegoers have seen Billings, Montana native Jeff Kober in such films as Clint Eastwood's *Sully*; Anne Fletcher's *The Guilt Trip*, with Barbra Streisand and Seth Rogen; F. Gary Gray's *A Man Apart*; Michael Apter's *Enough*; Rachel Talalay's *Tank Girl*; Seth Winston's Academy Award-winning short *Session Man*; and the fan favorite *Alien Nation*, directed by Graham Baker.

He is currently at work on a new independent feature, *Exposure*, in which he stars opposite Leslie Hope and Bruce Greenwood; he adapted the screenplay for the marital drama from his own play *Pornography*, and Jerry Ciccoritti is directing the film version, which will feature Mr. Kober's real-life tintype photography art.

Among his extensive television work, he is perhaps best known for his costarring role as Dodger on the acclaimed *China Beach*; for his recurring role on *Sons of Anarchy*; and for starring as Daedalus on the cult horror show *Kindred: The Embraced*. He currently has a recurring role on *NCIS: Los Angeles*. His many guest appearances include arcs on *The Walking Dead* and *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*.

As seen on an episode of *The Dog Whisperer*, Mr. Kober is also a teacher of Vedic Meditation, conducting classes from his center in Studio City as well as in New York, Chicago, Montana, India, Mexico City, and Chihuahua. He invites you to visit via www.jeffkobermeditation.com.

DALE DICKEY (Dale)

Dale Dickey's first collaboration with the **Leave No Trace** filmmakers was *Winter's Bone*, directed by Debra Granik, for which she won the Independent Spirit Award as Best Supporting Female and for which she shared the Gotham Independent Film Award for Best Ensemble with her fellow actors from the cast. *Winter's Bone* was an Oscar nominee for Best Picture, as was another of Ms. Dickey's films, *Hell or High Water*, directed by David Mackenzie and starring Ben Foster of **Leave No Trace**.

A familiar face — and voice — to audiences, she was born and raised in Knoxville, Tennessee. She trained with the Clarence Brown Company at the University of Tennessee and received an honorary MFA.

Ms. Dickey's many films also include Clint Eastwood's *Changeling*; Drew Pearce's *Iron Man 3*; J.J. Abrams' *Super 8*; David Twohy's *A Perfect Getaway*; Anne Fletcher's *The Guilt Trip*, also with Jeff Kober of **Leave No Trace**; Tony Scott's *Domino*; and Sean Penn's *The Pledge*.

Television viewers will recognize Ms. Dickey from her recurring roles and guest-starring arcs on such shows as *True Blood*, *Vice Principals*, *Claws*, *Justified*, *Breaking Bad*, *Gilmore Girls*, and *My Name is Earl*. She has made appearances on several dozen more series ranging from *Frasier* to *Grey's Anatomy*. She will be seen this fall in TNT's highly anticipated miniseries *One Day She'll Darken*.



About the Filmmakers

DEBRA GRANIK (Director; Screenwriter)

Debra Granik directed and co-wrote *Winter's Bone*, which was nominated for four Academy Awards: Best Picture (producers, Anne Rosellini and Alix Madigan), Best Actress (Jennifer Lawrence), Best Supporting Actor (John Hawkes), and Best Adapted Screenplay. The screenplay by Ms. Granik and Ms. Rosellini was adapted from Daniel Woodrell's novel of the same name. Among other honors, *Winter's Bone* was named Best Feature at the Gotham Independent Film Awards; won the Grand Jury Prize and the Waldo Salt Screenwriting Award at the Sundance Film Festival, where it world-premiered; and won the Humanitas Prize.

Her first feature was *Down to the Bone*, which she directed and co-wrote and which world-premiered at the Sundance Film Festival, where Ms. Granik was voted the Directing Award and the film's star Vera Farmiga was voted a Special Jury Prize. The filmmakers were nominated for the John Cassavetes Award at the Independent Spirit Awards and Ms. Granik also received a Gotham Independent Film Award nomination; Ms. Farmiga was named Best Actress by the Los Angeles Film Critics Association.

In 2014, Ms. Granik completed her documentary feature *Stray Dog*, which later aired on PBS and was nominated for an Independent Spirit Award. The film's subject is Ron "Stray Dog" Hall.

ANNE HARRISON (Producer)

Anne Harrison is a New York City-based independent film producer.

In 2015, Ms. Harrison produced *The Danish Girl*, directed by Tom Hooper and starring Eddie Redmayne and Alicia Vikander. It was nominated for four Academy Awards, three Golden Globe Awards and five BAFTA Awards (including Outstanding British Film for Ms. Harrison and the filmmaking team), and went on to win an Academy Award and SAG Award for Ms. Vikander.

Prior to that, she produced the critically acclaimed 1950s-set comedy/drama *Two Family House* (winner of the Sundance Audience Award, and nominated for two Spirit

Awards including Best Female Lead for Kelly Macdonald), as well as the contemporary comedy *The Night of the White Pants*, starring Tom Wilkinson. Her films have been invited to Venice, Toronto, Sundance, AFI, and Austin.

Ms. Harrison began her career as Director of Development for Martin Scorsese, working on such acclaimed films as *Goodfellas*, *The Age of Innocence*, *The Last Temptation of Christ*, *Kundun*, and *New York Stories*, as well as launching his production company with Stephen Frears' *The Grifters* (nominated for four Academy Awards, and winner of two Spirit Awards including Best Feature).

She is a Phi Beta Kappa, Magna Cum Laude graduate of Brown University.

LINDA REISMAN (Producer)

Linda Reisman was an Independent Spirit Award nominee as the producer of Best Feature nominee *Affliction*, adapted and directed by Paul Schrader from Russell Banks' novel. The film's stars Nick Nolte and James Coburn received Oscar nominations and many other honors for their performances, with Mr. Nolte named Best Actor by the New York Film Critics Circle and the National Society of Film Critics and with Mr. Coburn taking home the Academy Award for Best Supporting Actor.

Ms. Reisman last teamed with fellow **Leave No Trace** producer Anne Harrison on another award-winning film, *The Danish Girl*; she was executive producer on the Tom Hooper-directed movie, scripted by Lucinda Coxon from the David Ebershoff book. *The Danish Girl* was nominated for four Academy Awards, including Best Actor (Eddie Redmayne), and Alicia Vikander won the Oscar for Best Supporting Actress, among other accolades.

She produced *Waking the Dead*, based on the novel by Scott Spencer and directed by Keith Gordon, starring Billy Crudup and Jennifer Connelly; and Paul Schrader's *Light Sleeper*, nominated for two Independent Spirit Awards and starring Willem Dafoe, Susan Sarandon, and Dana Delany.

For several years, Ms. Reisman was the Head of Production for Francis Coppola's American Zoetrope and supervised development, production, and completion of all

feature films on the company's slate. In that capacity, she was executive producer on Victor Salva's sleeper hit *Jeepers Creepers*; Hal Hartley's *No Such Thing*; Robert Duvall's *Assassination Tango*; and Anthony Abrams and Adam Larson Broder's *Pumpkin*.

She executive-produced Keith Gordon's *Mother Night*, starring Nick Nolte and based on the novel by Kurt Vonnegut. Her early producing credits include Paul Schrader's *The Comfort of Strangers*, adapted from the Ian McEwan novel by Harold Pinter, and *Patty Hearst*, both starring Natasha Richardson.

Ms. Reisman serves as the Senior Distinguished Producer-in-Residence at Emerson College.

ANNE ROSELLINI (Screenwriter; Producer)

Anne Rosellini is an independent filmmaker whose company, with Debra Granik, is Still Rolling Productions. Ms. Rosellini was nominated for an Academy Award twice in the same year, for producing (with Alix Madigan) and co-writing (with Ms. Granik) the Best Picture Oscar nominee *Winter's Bone*. Directed by Ms. Granik, the film also received Academy Award nominations for its stars Jennifer Lawrence and John Hawkes. The screenplay adaptation, from Daniel Woodrell's novel, earned other accolades including Critics' Choice and USC Scriptor Award nominations.

She also produced Ms. Granik's directorial debut, *Down to the Bone*, which world-premiered at the Sundance Film Festival where it took prizes for its director and for its star Vera Farmiga; and Ms. Granik's first feature documentary, *Stray Dog*, broadcast nationally on PBS.

Formerly a programmer for the Seattle International Film Festival, Ms. Rosellini founded the 1 Reel Film Festival in 1996 before moving into acquisitions for AtomFilms, an online platform for films that was way ahead of its time. She holds a BFA from The School of the Art Institute of Chicago.

MICHAEL McDONOUGH (Director of Photography)

Michael McDonough studied fine art at Glasgow School of Art and the Royal College of Art, and was awarded a Prix de Rome art scholarship for studies there in 1991. It was in the latter, the Eternal City, that he affirmed his love of cinema. Coming to the U.S. to study the art form further, he attained an MFA in Film from New York University (NYU).

At NYU he and Debra Granik both studied under directing professor Boris Frumin. Mr. McDonough and Ms. Granik have since made narrative features together, all of which she directed and he was cinematographer on: *Down to the Bone*, the Best Picture Oscar nominee *Winter's Bone* (for which he received an Independent Spirit Award nomination), and now **Leave No Trace**.

Among the other features that he has been director of photography on are Rodrigo García's *Albert Nobbs*, for which stars Glenn Close and Janet McTeer received Academy Award nominations; Terence Davies' *Sunset Song*; Lawrence Kasdan's *Darling Companion*; Stephen Frears' *Lay the Favorite*; Michael Radford's *Elsa & Fred*, starring Shirley MacLaine and Christopher Plummer; Michael Almereyda's documentary *This So-Called Disaster: Sam Shepard Directs the Late Henry Moss*; and David Mackenzie's award-winning *Starred Up*, starring Jack O'Connell and British Independent Film Award winner Ben Mendelsohn.

Mr. McDonough's television credits as cinematographer include Thea Sharrock's *Henry V*, for "The Hollow Crown" series of telefilms, starring Tom Hiddleston; episodes of the upcoming miniseries *One Day She'll Darken*; and the pilot, and several episodes, of the hit show *Fear the Walking Dead*. He has also directed on the latter series.

He is a member of the International Cinematographers Guild, the American Society of Cinematographers, and the British Society of Cinematographers.

CHAD KEITH (Production Designer)

As production designer, Chad Keith has enjoyed extensive creative partnerships with directors Ramin Bahrani, on *Goodbye Solo*, *At Any Price*, and the short *Plastic Bag*; and Jeff Nichols, on *Take Shelter*, *Midnight Special*, and *Loving*.

Among Mr. Keith's other films as production designer are Sean Durkin's award-winning *Martha Marcy May Marlene*, starring Elizabeth Olsen; Andrew Dosunmu's feature directorial debut *Restless City*; David Zellner's *Kumiko, the Treasure Hunter*, starring Rinko Kikuchi; John Carney's *Begin Again*, starring Mark Ruffalo and Keira Knightley; Saar Klein's *After the Fall*; Andrew MacLean's *On the Ice*; Frank Hall Green's *Wildlike*; Brant Sersen's *Splinterheads*, starring Thomas Middleditch and Rachael Taylor; Joel Edgerton's soon-to-be-released *Boy Erased*, starring Lucas Hedges, Nicole Kidman, and Russell Crowe; and Babak Anvari's upcoming thriller starring Zazie Beetz, Armie Hammer, and Dakota Johnson.

JANE RIZZO (Editor)

Jane Rizzo is an editor of both fiction and documentary films. Early in her career, she was part of the editing department on Robert Altman's final projects, the limited series *Tanner on Tanner* and the feature *A Prairie Home Companion*.

Ms. Rizzo's first feature as film editor was Craig Zobel's award-winning *Compliance*, starring Dreama Walker, Ann Dowd, and Bill Camp; she reteamed with the director as editor of *Z for Zachariah*, starring Chiwetel Ejiofor, Chris Pine, and Margot Robbie. Among the other films that she has edited are David Lowery's *Ain't Them Bodies Saints*; Lou Howe's *Gabriel*; and Henry Hobson's *Maggie*, starring Arnold Schwarzenegger and Abigail Breslin.

She has edited episodes of such television and streaming series as *Red Oaks*, *High Maintenance*, *The Get Down*, and the upcoming *Succession*.

A native of Italy, Ms. Rizzo attended the North Carolina School of the Arts.

ERIN ORR (Costume Designer)

Based in Portland, Oregon, Erin Orr is a costume designer and supervisor for feature films and television.

She previously collaborated with **Leave No Trace** director Debra Granik on *Down to the Bone*, starring Vera Farmiga. She was costume designer on David Gordon Green's *All the Real Girls* after co-producing his film *George Washington*.

Among the TV series that Ms. Orr has worked on are *The Librarians* and *Grimm*. Among the movies that she has worked on are Dan Harris' *Imaginary Heroes*, starring Sigourney Weaver; and Joey Lauren Adams' *Come Early Morning*, starring Ashley Judd.

DICKON HINCHLIFFE (Composer)

Dickon Hinchliffe's unique style of composition and arrangements developed from his classical study of the violin, as well as years as a songwriter and recording artist. A multi-instrumentalist (of guitar, violin, piano, and banjo), he is a founding member of the British band Tindersticks, with whom he wrote orchestral arrangements, recorded albums, and toured worldwide.

He began his film composing career when director Claire Denis asked Tindersticks to write music for two of her films; subsequently, Mr. Hinchliffe was invited to score her feature *Friday Night (Vendredi soir)*. Following that acclaimed work, he branched out into working with U.S. and UK directors; he scored Ira Sachs' *Forty Shades of Blue*, which won the Grand Jury Prize at the Sundance Film Festival. Another Sundance Grand Jury Prize winner that he composed the music for was *Winter's Bone*, which marked his first collaboration with **Leave No Trace** director Debra Granik. His score for *Winter's Bone* brought him an Evening Standard Film Award nomination.

Mr. Hinchliffe scored writer/director Steven Knight's award-winning *Locke*, starring Tom Hardy, and reunited with the filmmaker in composing the music for the third season of the latter's television series *Peaky Blinders*. Another extensive creative collaboration was with director James Marsh, on the "1980" telefilm in the *Red Riding* trilogy; the documentary feature *Project Nim*; and the dramatic thriller *Shadow Dancer*, starring British Independent Film Award winner Andrea Riseborough.

He scored the Michael Mann-directed premiere episode of the television series *Luck* as well as Ami Canaan Mann's *Texas Killing Fields*. Among the other films that Mr.

Hinchliffe has scored are Ricky Gervais' *Special Correspondents*; *Little Men*, reuniting him with Ira Sachs; Joel Hopkins' *Last Chance Harvey*; Oren Moverman's *Rampart*; Ramin Bahrani's *At Any Price*; Scott Cooper's *Out of the Furnace*; Phillip Noyce's upcoming *Above Suspicion*; and Andrew Heckler's *Burden* and Idris Elba's *Yardie*, both of which world-premiered at the 2018 Sundance Film Festival as did **Leave No Trace**.

KENDRA SMITH (Original Song, "Moon Boat")

Singer/songwriter Kendra Smith first came to prominence in the 1980s as a member of The Dream Syndicate, with whom she recorded the seminal album *The Days of Wine & Roses*.

Her subsequent recordings made as a member of the band Opal are still revered today for their blending of folk, country, and psychedelic influences. Ms. Smith was the primary singer and co-songwriter in the band.

Her debut solo album, *The Guild of Temporal Adventurers*, followed by *Five Ways of Disappearing* (for the 4AD label), further expanded her following. "Moon Boat," the original song which she co-wrote and recorded (with The Magician's Orchestra) exclusively for **Leave No Trace**, is Ms. Smith's first new work since 1995.