

SPACEY

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In the movie, the garage is Lester's personal space. Did you have a choice in the kind of props used in there?

Sam and I started talking about the garage of becoming Lester's sanctuary. It clearly had been taken over by just storage, you know, just its whatever a garage might have been in life earlier. We decided to go back and find the things Lester would have had if he were in college. That sort of became his place. I left the cold and rather stark home inside a house and slowly moved his life out into the garage. One of my favorite images is that car sitting in the driveway. He's just shaking it up.

What's your stage background? What was it like having somebody like Sam directing this film?

I've been incredibly fortunate with first- or second-time directors. I like it a lot because there's no pattern to their way of working. They really are open to almost anything. So you find that they are willing to take more chances.

And he kept us informed. He would always show us storyboards and how he wanted a scene to be framed — what he wanted it to look like, how he wanted us to look in the scene. So I knew all that going in, but I could never know going in that his use of images, his use of music, his feeling and mood automatically was startling.

I love the narration in the movie. Was it scripted?

All of the narration was there [in the script]. Sam and I, one day, needed a guide track to

give the editors and we went up to a small room with a recorder, like these little ones, and we recorded all of Lester's voice-overs. And I never redid it. There was something about not knowing what those images would be that that dialogue went well with.

"One of my favorite images is that red car sitting in the driveway. He's just shaking it up."

— Kevin Spacey
on his character in *American Beauty*

Your movie shatters the vision of a utopian suburbia. If you had a message you'd like the audience to take away from this, what would it be?

Let me play devil's advocate with the premise of your question because I don't think it reveals anything specifically about suburbia any more than it reveals anything about urban life. I think where this film takes place, the fact that these two very specific families are examined, in no way shape or form means that we're trying to say this is what life is like in suburbia. I think this is what life is like for a lot of people.

Tell us about the catchline, "Look Closer."

We actually give our production designer the credit for that. She cut that out of a fashion magazine. She was going through a fashion magazine deciding what should go on certain walls, and she decided "look closer" should be on my bulletin board at the office. And that

wasn't the campaign, but what happened was, they kept screening the movie and finally the DreamWorks marketing people said "What does that say behind his desk?" So they saved themselves hundreds of thousands of dollars in marketing meetings to find a concept because it actually turns out to be pretty accurate.

What would you say to those who get upset about an older man who is having a relationship with a teenager?

I think that anybody that feels uneasy about it, it's uneasiness about the subject, not uneasiness with the actual relationship because there isn't one. There's a fantasy life that Lester has. There is no relationship until the very end of the film, where he makes the right decision. Keep it in the context of the film. Those two people, what they learn from each other, I think is breathtaking.

The movie is about finding beauty. What things do you find beautiful in it?

Sometimes the things that are presented as beautiful or the things that we think are beautiful sometimes makes us miss the things that are really truly beautiful, but appear mundane. I think that's true with people, too.

You've got the Hollywood star of fame. What is involved with that?

It started with a fan club. They recommended to the Hollywood Chamber of Commerce that they consider me for that. I didn't think anything happened like that until you were much older ... there's a certain part of that stuff that's a little Hollywood cheesy, but what actually made the day amazing is it actually became a pretty personal thing. I think it meant even more to all the people that have been working with me than it did for me. But I understand already that there's gum on it.

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11:30 2:25 4:55 8:00 10:35	
MYSTERY, ALASKA* (R)	DRIVE ME CRAZY* (PG-13)
12:25 2:50 5:20 7:55 10:30 12:50	
ROAD TO GOUCHLAND* (G)	DOUBLE JEOPARDY (R)
1:00 3:30 7:10 9:40 12:20	12:05 2:35 5:05 7:35 10:05
12:45 2:40 4:50 7:35	
BLUE STREAK (PG-13)	FOR LOVE OF THE GAME (R)
12:15 2:00 5:00 7:45 10:30 12:40	12:15 3:25 6:45 9:40 12:35
12:00 2:00 7:15	
THE LIAR (PG-13)	RANDOM HEARTS* (R)
1:00 4:00 7:00 10:00 12:55	
9:25	
RUNAWAY BRIDE (PG)	STIGMATA* (R)
12:00 4:10 7:05 9:50 12:25	11:55 2:20 4:45 7:25 9:55 12:30
STR OF ECHOS (R)	THE SIXTH SENSE (PG-13)
11:45 4:40 10:00	12:00 2:45 5:10 7:40 10:15 12:45
SUPERSTAR* (PG-13)	
12:50 3:00 5:15 7:45 10:25 12:35	

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