



FEEL ALL THE FEELINGS: THE FILMS OF GRETA GERWIG

Lady Bird

Lady Bird

Directed by: Greta Gerwig

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Presented by: A24, IAC Films

This production participated in: New York State Governor's Office of Motion Picture & Television Development's Post Production Credit Program
Executive Producer: Lila Yacoub

Produced by: Scott Rudin, Eli Bush, Evelyn O'Neill

Co-producers: Alex G. Scott, Jason Sack

Unit Production Managers: Lila Yacoub, Danielle Blumstein

Production Supervisor: Wednesday Standley

Production Co-ordinator: Wednesday Standley

Assistant Production Co-ordinator:

Kendra Rasmussen

Accounting Manager: Lloyd Robert Pfeffer

Key Production Accountant: Debbie Peterson

Location Manager: Michael Edward Smith

Assistant Location Managers: Kristine Delgado, Brian Johnson

Post-production Supervisor: Isabel Henderson

1st Assistant Director: Jonas Spaccarotelli

2nd Assistant Director: Brendan Lee

2nd 2nd Assistant Directors: Lillian Awa, Teri Barber

Script Supervisor: Jan McWilliams

Casting by: Allison Jones, Jordan Thaler, Heidi Griffiths

Casting Associate: Ben Harris

Extras Casting: Angie Glover, Central Casting

Written by: Greta Gerwig

Director of Photography: Sam Levy

2nd Unit Director of Photography:

David Feeney-Mosier

B Camera Operator: David Feeney-Mosier

Additional B Camera Operator: Dave Anglin

A Camera 1st Assistant: Stephen MacDougall

B Camera 1st Assistant: Jesse Cain

A Camera 2nd Assistant: Vic Deruddere

B Camera 2nd Assistant: Greg Hatton

Digital Imaging Technician: Sean Goller

Chief Lighting Technician: Jerry W. Mundy Jr

Key Grip: Julien Janigo

Still Photographer: Merie Weismiller Wallace, Merrick Morton

Visual Effects Supervisor: Andrew Lim

Visual Effects by: Entoptic

Edited by: Nick Houy

1st Assistant Editor: Nicholas Ramirez

Assistant Editor: Crystal Platas

Production Designer: Chris Jones

Assistant Art Director: Courtney Fain

Sacramento Assistant Art Director: Geoffrey Brown

Set Decorator: Traci Spadorcia

Leadmarr: Nic Weethee

Set Dressers: Keith Balsler, Camilo Castano,

Chase Cushing, Gerald Palone,

Nicholas Warren Lopez

On-set Dresser: Kristen Granados

Property Master: Pery Pascual

Costume Designer: April Napier

Key Costumer: Katina Danabassis

Costumers: Coral Cunningham, Caroline McCosker

Make-up Department Head:

Jacqueline Marie Knowlton

Key Make-up Artist: Erin Walters

Hair Department Head: Aubrey Marie

Key Hair Stylist: Lara Cilento

Title Designers: Teddy Blanks, Leanne Shapton

Music by: Jon Brion

Music Supervisors: Brian Ross, Michael Hill

Music Editor: Suzana Peric

Music Recorded and Mixed by: Greg Koller

Lady Bird is a coming-of-age film, set in Sacramento, California, Greta Gerwig's birthplace, during the early 2000s. 'Lady Bird' is the name adopted by the heroine, a 17-year-old girl at a Catholic high school, who is raging with ambitions and hormones. She throws herself out of a moving car, auditions for a school production of Stephen Sondheim's *Merrily We Roll Along*, dyes her hair pink, shoplifts magazines, challenges a speaker at a school assembly on abortion. As one onlooker puts it, she's 'very baller, very anarchist', but she's also terribly vulnerable and out of place. Saoirse Ronan ('a tiny Meryl Streep') plays every eccentric inch of the title character with conviction, rather than irony. 'She was so emotionally vibrant,' says Gerwig. 'And she could exist at a 10 without ever losing the humour because she didn't ever put it in quotes.' Most of all, Lady Bird wants to get out of Sacramento, to go to college on the East Coast, a haven of imagined cultural sophistication – despite her average grades and the fact that her parents can't afford the fees.

'I'd written a bunch of scenes, but I was struggling with the story I was telling and who the character was,' says Gerwig. 'Then I put everything aside and I just wrote at the top of the page: "Why won't you call me Lady Bird? You promised that you would." And I had no idea where it came from but I thought, "I really want to get to know this person who makes everybody call her by a different name."' It's a name with a different resonance in Britain from in the US, but Gerwig recites the nursery rhyme 'Ladybird Ladybird' nevertheless: the darkness ('Your house is on fire and your children are gone') and the circularity ('fly away home') must have been at the back of her mind. It's the renaming itself that's important, though; as Lady Bird says, it's her given name: 'It's given to me, by me.'

'It's something that a rock star does or something that a nun does,' explains Gerwig. 'And it's always in a way to try to occupy the bigger name you have given yourself.'

Lady Bird wants to reinvent herself again at college, but from the opening title card, bearing a sardonic quote from Joan Didion, to a montage towards the end, the film is really a tribute to Gerwig's hometown: 'I thought the best way to write a love letter to a place is to frame it with a character who doesn't love it and wants to leave and doesn't realise she loves it until it's in the rearview mirror... it's this sense that you have that life must be happening somewhere else and not to you.' Not for nothing did Gerwig, when *Lady Bird* won the Golden Globe for best comedy/musical, thank 'my mom and dad and the people of Sacramento, who gave me roots and wings and helped me get where I am today.' Gerwig tells me she has 'a ton of footage... I want to make myself a movie of Sacramento I can watch when I miss home.'

There are two boys in Lady Bird's life during the span of the film: a sweet, rich drama nerd (Lucas Hedges), and a lofty outsider, also well off, who plays in a band (Timothée Chalamet). They're not the focus, though. Lady Bird is fighting on several other fronts: falling out with her adorable best friend Julie (Beanie Feldstein), trying to get into college, and breaking her mother's frazzled heart several times a day.

The pained relationship between Lady Bird and her mother Marion, played by Laurie Metcalf, is the real heart of the movie, and it's tied up with class and money too. 'This is not about poverty with a capital "P",' says Gerwig. 'Just the everyday stresses of living on the razor's edge of: "Is it going to work or is it not going to work?"' Lady Bird and Marion go thrift-shopping, and for fun persuade estate agents to show them round homes they can never afford; but in reality they are in a precarious position. The family is broke, the father out of work, and Lady Bird gaily tells her friends that she lives 'on the wrong side of the tracks'. While Lady Bird rejects everything from the name her mother gave

Music Contractor: Gina Zimmitti
Production Sound Mixer: Amanda Beggs
Boom Operator: Gail Carroll-Coe
Re-recording Mixers: Skip Lievsay, Paul Hsu
Sound Re-recording: Lee Salevan
Supervising Sound Editor: Paul Hsu
Sound Editors: Nicholas Schenck, Justine Baker
Foley Artist: Marko Costanzo
Foley Recording Engineer: George Lara
Dialect Coach: Kate Wilson
Digital Intermediate by:
 Technicolor Postworks NY
Special Thanks: Noah Baumbach
Cast:
 Saoirse Ronan (*Christine McPherson, 'Lady Bird'*)
 Laurie Metcalf (*Marion McPherson*)
 Tracy Letts (*Larry McPherson*)
 Lucas Hedges (*Danny O'Neill*)
 Timothée Chalamet (*Kyle Scheible*)
 Beanie Feldstein (*Julie Steffans*)
 Lois Smith (*Sister Sarah Joan*)
 Stephen McKinley Henderson (*Father Leviatch*)
 Odeya Rush (*Jenna Walton*)
 Jordan Rodrigues (*Miguel McPherson*)
 Marielle Scott (*Shelly Yuhan*)
 Jake McDorman (*Mr Bruno*)
 John Karna (*Greg Arnue*)
 Bayne Gibby (*Casey Kelly*)
 Laura Marano (*Diana Greenway*)
 Marietta Deprima (*Miss Patty*)
 Daniel Zovatto (*Jonah Ruiz*)
 Kristen Cloke (*Ms Steffans*)
 Andy Buckley (*Uncle Matthew*)
 Paul Keller (*priest*)
 Kathryn Newton (*Darlene Bell*)
 Myra Turley (*Sister Gina*)
 Bob Stephenson (*Father Walther*)
 Abhimanyu Katyal (*friendly banker*)
 Chris Witaske (*business jock*)
 Ben Konigsberg (*David from college*)
 Gurpreet Gill (*convenience store clerk*)
 Richard Jin (*cool coffee manager*)
 Joan Patricia O'Neil (*Danny's grandmother*)
 Robert Figueroa (*cast removal doctor*)
 Carla Valentine (*guidance counsellor*)
 Roman Arabia (*Luis Cruz*)
 Monique Edwards (*NYC nurse*)
 Matthew Maher (*NYC man on street*)
 Anita Kalathara (*prom chairwoman*)
 Debra Miller (*Joyce, saleswoman*)
 Georgia Leva (*senior class candidate*)
 Derek Butler, London Thor, Shaelan O'Connor,
 Christina Offley, Sabrina Schloss,
 Connor Mickiewicz, Erik Daniells
 (*'Merrily We Roll Along' performers*)
 Cynthia Cales, Giselle Grams
 (*Immaculate Heart of Mary teachers*)
 Ithamar Enriquez (*driving instructor*)
 Luisa Lee (*young lady*)
 Danielle Macdonald (*another young lady*)
 Adam Brock (*band lead singer*)
 Bonnie Jean Shelton (*Fab 40s realtor*)
 Rebecca Light (*Mr Bruno's wife*)
 USA 2017
 94 mins

The screening on Wed 26 Jul will be presented with subtitles, including descriptions of non-dialogue audio

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her to the home and the future she expects for her, applying to expensive New York colleges in secret, Marion works double shifts as a nurse. There's no malice on either side, but plenty of unintentional cruelty. I tell Gerwig that the film captured for me the heart-stopping moment when you realise how awful you were to your mother as a teenager.

'I know, it's the most horrible thing,' says Gerwig. 'I think I realise that every day. We always had a joke that we should put up a title card at the very end that just says, "Call your mother."' The tension between the two women ('It's almost chemical') strikes a chord with audiences, Gerwig says: 'I've had so many mothers come up to me and say, "I've been that mother – I understand." You hear the words come out of your mouth and you think, "Oh no, that was wrong," and you can't take it back. And then I've had younger women come up to me and say, "I am that daughter".' Gerwig describes *Lady Bird* as a bait-and-switch, which begins as the story of a teenage girl, then tells a story about her mother instead: 'One person's coming of age is someone else's letting go. And I'm just as interested in the letting go.'

Not that everyone got it, to begin with, as Gerwig found when she tried to raise funds for the film: 'Most people who are producers and can finance films are men. So when I would take them the script and we'd have a meeting about it, if they grew up with sisters or they have daughters they knew exactly what it was. They were like, "That's my mom and my sister" or "That's my wife and my daughter, and I get it." If they hadn't they would look at me and they'd say, "Do women really fight like that?"' Which I couldn't believe. I was like, "Oh you don't know. You have no idea what this is at all."

Gerwig was adamant her film wouldn't fall into the trap of either demonising or canonising the women: 'The truth is there are no perfect mothers and there are no perfect daughters. To celebrate the love, but honour the imperfections, is the only way to go about it. Anything else makes you either feel superior or utterly wretched because you don't live up to this standard. And being a mother is an impossible task.'

Gerwig's mission was not just about representing the mother-daughter dynamic fairly, but challenging the stories that Hollywood tells about women. In high school, she tells me, she protested when the female students were given *Romeo and Juliet* as a set text, while the boys read *Hamlet*. 'I thought, "Did you just give us the love story because we're girls?" I thought it was outrageous. I lodged a complaint.' It was an extremely *Lady Bird* thing to do.

'I consider myself a feminist, so I think inherently any movie I make will be reflective of that. I have made a very active choice too in the movies I wrote with Noah Baumbach [*Frances Ha*, 2012; and *Mistress America*, 2015] and in this movie to have the central love story not be one that's about a boy and a girl,' she says. 'I love those movies. I will probably make one someday. But I think I wanted to put some restrictions on myself and say, "Find another story to tell." This can't be the sum of what we think women can do.'

Gerwig names directors including Brian De Palma, Mike Mills, Spike Jonze and Rebecca Miller and cinematographer Ed Lachman as her informal tutors. 'I got film school from the greats. I mean it was 10 years of film school.' *Lady Bird* prompted Gerwig to take the next step, though. 'When I finished the script I thought: "Well I have more to learn, but there's nothing more I'm going to learn by *not* doing it."

Directing is now in Gerwig's blood, so much is clear. Her joy and pride in *Lady Bird* is palpable, from the shoot itself to taking surreptitious selfies during press junkets: 'It's the best feeling in the world to have written something and be directing it and watch actors bring their whole selves and their bodies and their imaginations to these people,' she says. 'I really can't think of anything I like more than watching actors work.'

Pamela Hutchinson, *Sight and Sound*, March 2018