



Re-releases

The Ice Storm

The Ice Storm

Director: Ang Lee

Production Companies:

Twentieth Century Fox Film Corporation,

Fox Searchlight Pictures, Good Machine

Producers: Ted Hope, James Schamus, Ang Lee

Associate Producers: Alysse Bezahler,

Anthony Bregman

Unit Production Manager: Alysse Bezahler

Production Supervisor: Nancy Kriegel

Production Co-ordinator: Beth A. Boyd

Location Supervisor: Declan Baldwin,

Featureline Inc

Location Co-ordinator: Shannon Bowen

Post-production Supervisors: Anthony Bregman,

Kelly Miller

1st Assistant Directors: Stephen Wertimer,

James W. Murray Jr

2nd Assistant Directors: Lisa Rowe, Brian O'Kelley

2nd 2nd Assistant Director: Linda Perkins

Script Supervisor: Mary Cybulski

Casting: Avy Kaufman

Casting Associate: Julie Lichter

Screenplay: James Schamus

Based on the novel by: Rick Moody

Director of Photography: Frederick Elmes

2nd Unit Photography: Frank Prinzi

Camera Operators: Phil Oetiker, John Sosenko

Steadicam Operators: Andy Casey, Rick Rafael

Digital Visual Effects: Balsmeyer & Everett Inc

Special Effects Supervisor: John Ottesen

Train Miniatures: Sessums Engineering,

Jack Sessums, Gary Maxwell, Michael Sajbel

Editor: Tim Squyres

Production Designer: Mark Friedberg

Art Director: Bob Shaw

Set Decorator: Stephanie Carroll

Scenic Artists: Eric Bart, Steve Barth, Steve

Caldwell, Marshall Carbee, Lauren Doner, Judy

Evans, Michael Greene, Christopher Hébel, Richard

Jones, Eugene Kagansky, Arcady Kotler, E. Reynold

Maier, Vietta Maier, Michael Miles, Don Nance,

John Paul, Cheryl Stewart

Storyboards: Brick Mason

Costume Designer: Carol Oditz

Associate Costume Designer: Elizabeth Shelton

Wardrobe Supervisors: Melissa Adzima-Stanton,

Tom Stokes

Make-up Artists: Michael Bigger, James Sarzotti

Make-up (Ms Weaver): Linda Devetta

Hairstylist: Aaron F. Quarles

Titles: NY Bureau

Opticals: The Effects House

Music: Mychael Danna

Gamelan Music: Evergreen Club Gamelan

Ensemble, Bill Brennan, Mark Duggan, Paul Houle,

Blair Mackay

North American Native Flutes: Daniel Cecil Hill

Conductor: Christopher Dedrick

Orchestrations: Jamie Hopkins

Music Supervisor: Alex Steyermark

Music Editor: Pat Mullins

Score Recorder/Mixer: Brad Haehnel

Sound Co-ordinator: Ghretta Hynd

Sound Mixer: Drew Kunin

Re-recording Mixer: Reilly Steele

Supervising Sound Editor: Philip Stockton

Dialogue Editor: Fred Rosenberg

Sound Effects Designer: Eugene Gearty

ADR Recordists: David Boulton, Sound One,

Andy Kris, Inc Spin Cycle Post

ADR Editor: Marissa Littlefield

Foley Supervisor: Bruce Pross

With its spare, circular story line, the ability to crystallise so much of what it is about in its visuals, and an exceptional cast delivering the most precise of spoken lines, *The Ice Storm* is cinema at its most immaculate. Everything from Mark Friedberg's wonderfully researched production design though to Frederick Elmes' crisp cinematography and Mychael Danna's wintry wind-instrument-based score is perfectly conceived. Undoubtedly, it confirms its director Ang Lee and his regular producer/screenwriter James Schamus as a world-class filmmaking team.

Based on Rick Moody's novel written in 1994, it is also one of the most intelligently observed appraisals of the 70s and, more precisely, of the watershed year of 1973. The reference points are brilliantly assembled – toe socks, and the television show *Divorce Court* and Philip Roth's *When She Was Good* are ever so briefly glimpsed – and used not as decorative retro accessories but as means of commenting on the dislocation of the moment and the confusion of those trying to live through it. Importantly, obvious historical referents are threaded through but don't dominate the film. Nixon and Watergate are as much part of the texture as crocheted tank tops. (Though a hilarious scene showing the sexually precocious 14-year-old Wendy wearing a Nixon mask while she and Mikey attempt sex makes a somewhat oblique but wry comment on the political shenanigans of the era.

On the other hand, key 1973 phenomena are wisely left implicit. For example, acerbic Janey Carver's calculated view of sex surely signals that she has mastered the 'zipless fuck' of Erica Jong's imagination. Indeed, *The Ice Storm* is about bourgeois lives that are cluttered up with goodies and ideas to be tried on for size. The more conservative Hoods, whose home is a discordant mix of two-or-so decades' furnishings, are straining to swing with the rest of them, an effort signalled equally by the buying of new chinaware and Elena's purchase of proto-New Age philosophies. In contrast, the Carvers, with their cool Philip Johnson-style glass house that ostensibly signals openness about their lives, have severed themselves from a past predicated on picket-fenced ideals.

Architecture is essential to the film and director Lee has a rare skill: the ability to communicate via the spatial relationships between the characters and the things around them. A brief scene depicts Ben at work in the city, a bored man in a board meeting, sitting as stiffly as the skyscrapers glimpsed in the window behind him. His sense of discomfort with power and himself is neatly secured in this wordless moment. (By way of contrast, Janey's voracious appetite for domination is economically conveyed when she toys with her son's cowboy whip out in their back garden, a delicious moment which Sigourney Weaver makes her own.)

Perhaps the most symbolic and dangerously gaping space of them all in the film is Mikey's haunting ground, the swimming pool empty of water and collecting dry leaves. Like some waiting mass grave, it implies the deep dead-end of affluence while firmly rooting the film in John Cheever country (Frank and Eleanor Perry's adaptation of *The Swimmer* of 1968 would make an interesting double bill with *The Ice Storm*, as would the 1970 Perry movie, *Diary of a Mad Housewife*). The empty pool also augurs the tragedy to come, *The Ice Storm's coup de grâce* that finally underscores the fragility of relationships and life itself.

Lizzie Francke, *Sight and Sound*, February 1998

Foley Artist: Marko Costanzo
 Foley Editors: Frank Kern, Kam Chan
 Stunt Co-ordinators: G.A. Aguilar, Douglas Crosby
 Stunts: Jill Brown, Danny Downey, Lizzie Olesker, Susan Trout
 Cast:
 Kevin Kline (*Ben Hood*)
 Joan Allen (*Elena Hood*)
 Henry Czerny (*George Clair*)
 Adam Hann-Byrd (*Sandy Carver*)
 David Krumholtz (*Francis Davenport*)
 Tobey Maguire (*Paul Hood*)
 Christina Ricci (*Wendy Hood*)
 Jamey Sheridan (*Jim Carver*)
 Elijah Wood (*Mikey Carver*)
 Sigourney Weaver (*Janey Carver*)
 Kate Burton (*Dorothy Franklin*)
 William Cain (*Ted Shackley*)
 Michael Cumpsty (*Philip Edwards*)
 Maia Danziger (*Mrs Gadd*)
 Michael Egerman (*pharmacist*)
 Christine Farrell (*Marie Earle*)
 Glenn Fitzgerald (*Neil Conrad*)
 Tom Flagg (*train conductor*)
 Jonathan Freeman (*Ted Franklin*)
 Barbara Garrick (*weather reporter*)
 Dennis Gazomiro (*Stephen Earle*)
 John Benjamin Hickey (*Mark Boland*)
 Katie Holmes (*Libbets Casey*)
 Allison Janney (*Dot Halford*)
 Byron Jennings (*Pierce Sawyer*)
 Colette Kilroy (*Sari Steele*)
 Ivan Kronenfeld (*Jack Moellering*)
 Daniel McDonald (*weatherman*)
 Miles Marek (*Mr Gadd*)
 Donna Mitchell (*Maria Conrad*)
 Barbara Neal (*Helen Wentworth*)
 Nancy Opel (*Claudia White*)
 Larry Pine (*Dave Gorman*)
 Marcell Rosenblatt (*Mikey's teacher*)
 Wendy Scott (*pharmacy attendant*)
 Evelyn Solann (*woman in pharmacy*)
 Jessica Stone (*Marge*)
 Sarah Thompson (*Beth*)
 Scott Wentworth (*Paul's teacher*)
 Rob Westenberg (*Rob Halford*)
 USA 1997
 113 mins
 Digital (restoration)

A StudioCanal re-release

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**SIGHT
AND
SOUND**

The Ice Storm was brought to the attention of producer James Schamus by his wife, literary scout Nancy Krikorian, who knew Rick Moody from Columbia University's MFA program. 'It's an astonishingly cinematic book,' says Schamus. 'But, because of its truly literary qualities, people may have missed its extraordinary cinematic possibilities.'

Schamus showed the book to Ang Lee, with whom he and partner Ted Hope had already made four films. Despite the obvious appeal of Moody's comedy of familial errors for the creator of *The Wedding Banquet*, Lee says what attracted him to the book was its climax: the scene where Ben Hood makes a shocking discovery in the ice, followed by the emotional reunion of the Hood family on the morning after the storm. 'The book moved me at those two points,' says Lee. 'I knew there was a movie there.'

Lee signed on to make and film and it fell to Schamus, while he and Lee were in England making *Sense and Sensibility*, to turn Moody's very literary novel into a screenplay that would serve the director's purposes. (Lee and Schamus had previously worked together on the writing of Lee's first three films, *Pushing Hands*, *The Wedding Banquet* and *Eat Drink Man Woman*.)

The Ice Storm, which is set in the High Seventies, is a period piece, like Ang Lee's previous film: an adaptation of Jane Austen's *Sense and Sensibility* that was nominated for seven Academy Awards and won one, for Emma Thompson's screenplay. 'I felt this was just the opposite of *Sense and Sensibility*,' Lee says. 'In *Sense and Sensibility* the social code wants you to be rational and good, and the characters want to be bad; in *The Ice Storm* the social code wants you to be bad, and actually they're not so bad after all – they still want to be good!'

In other ways, *The Ice Storm* is a new departure for the filmmaker. In Lee's first three films the characters are breaking with old ways, but the values of tradition are movingly embodied by the wise, dignified father played in each film by Sihung Lung. (Lee jokingly refers to those films as his 'Father Knows Best' trilogy.) 'Wise' and 'dignified', however, are hardly the words to describe *The Ice Storm*'s befuddled anti-hero Ben Hood, or any of the other parents in the film, who are too preoccupied with their own need for 'self-realisation' to set an example for their children.

'The structure of society is breaking down more in this film than in my early films,' Lee says. 'The situation is more chaotic. The whole nation is in an adolescent period, experimenting with new things, new rules – even the adults are behaving like adolescents.'

'At the same time, the period portrayed is innocent and good, because people are rebelling against old rules and the old order. The concept of the New Age looks a little funny today, but the characters in the film are reaching out for something. We're jaded now, while the people of that era were very fresh and bold about reaching for their limits.'

'What they encounter in the process is human nature, and the ice storm, which gives you a little more respect for Nature. It turns out that we're not that free after all.'

Production notes