a film by
KELLY REICHARDT

MICHELLE WILLIAMS
WILL OLDHAM

UM FILME DE KELLY REICHARDT
WENDY & LUCY

UM DOS MELHORES FILMES DA DÉCADA
SIGHT AND SOUND
WENDY & LUCY

SYNOPSIS

Wendy Carroll is driving to Ketchikan, Alaska, in hopes of a summer of lucrative work at the Northwestern Fish Cannery, and the start of a new life with her dog, Lucy. When her car breaks down in Oregon, however, the thin fabric of her financial situation comes apart, and she confronts a series of increasingly dire economic decisions, with far-ranging repercussions for herself and her dog. Wendy and Lucy addresses issues of sympathy and generosity at the edges of American life, revealing the limits and depths of people's duty to each other in tough times.
E-MAIL TO THE PRODUCER

Neil, how are you today? I enjoyed reading "Wendy & Lucy" and thought I'd send off some random-ish thoughts. Read when you have some time.

I like films that show affection (at least some) for all their characters. I imagine that if Kelly delivers this one in her quiet style, she'll be adding powerful dramatic irony to the sadness, alienation and loss that permeate the story. The script could be read simply as a story illustration of that iconic American sound, the train whistle.
The soundtrack of mourning. The siren of passing hope in the night that better things wait somewhere, anywhere that is not here, another place we could just maybe start again.

I keep wondering about casting the character of Wendy. Obviously, so much hinges on that. She needs to be ineffectual enough to have gotten where she is but she needs to be sympathetic and caring and ordinary enough that she is everywoman. And appealing enough that I want to watch every twitch of tragedy play out on her face and in her posture and words, frame to frame. As I read, she's all that to me.
I like the levels at which the story could be experienced. The dog Lucy could be every political candidate who ever came through smiling and promising. Or every friend Wendy ever had, or every boyfriend. Or every desire and dream that this world has a place and purpose for her.

The story feels condemning to me. I --and all salaried, mortgaged, voting citizens-- am John, the guard, who tells her politely, "You can't sleep here. You can't park here. You have to get off the property." I hope I have his humanity. I know that I have his comfortable way out: a wife, and a ride away from the parking lot. I hope that I am not neo-con Andy, who says "The rules apply to everyone equally." But sometimes I say that too and mean it.

"Wendy & Lucy" reminds me at points of Stephen Crane's well-known short story, "The Open Boat." In that instance, the forces of nature are utterly indifferent to the sailors' fate. For them, the romance of a benevolent universe proves to be a
lie. In this instance, it's the forces of society and technology that are indifferent. There's not really a plot against Wendy. She's just overlooked, under resourced, a casualty that can be ignored without cost because nothing about her existence or predicament has a consequence to the people of Lombard Avenue greater than a procedural inconvenience (pay that fine, tow that car). All her attempts to influence her odds through "mind control" are useless.

I wonder where Wendy will end up and who she will become. Not as another drunk under the trestle or mental case rummaging through the park at night I hope.

I admit that I look for hope. Okay, partly so I don't have to feel the shared social burden of Wendy's life. But also for my own story. Unless she has changed somehow, the tracks can only take her to another Lombard Avenue where she'll have less than she did on this one. I don't want that for her story or mine.

So--still hunting for hope--does she change? I'm not sure. I'll be interested to see how the film experience plays it. I could, for example, feel hope in Wendy's choice at the fence with Lucy. It could be read as a choice to care for the weak when it costs, even when others around her don't. It could also be read as a hard but strong choice to abandon her pointless trust in technology, her "family" back in Indiana, and even her magical thinking that Lucy could ultimately give her what she needs. It could be read as her first actually independent act.

Neil, there's every chance that my take on this story is unbelievably off the mark or limited. But that would only make for more good conversation when we get together. Call when you can. Dad

August 19, 2007
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PRESS REVIEW

“Kelly Reichardt [...] has become one of the most interesting young American filmmakers.”

New York Times, Manohla Dargis and A. O. Scott

“Reichardt is no pessimist and her compassion for Wendy and belief in the kindness of strangers make for an optimistic film which should serve to build her already strong US reputation on an international scale, [...] Williams is superb here, unbeautified and effortlessly natural as a woman driving a clapped out Honda from her homestate of Indiana to Alaska in search of lucrative work at a fish cannery.”

Screen Daily, Mike Goodridge

“Kelly Reichardt, la réalisatrice, filme d'une voix douce. Son interprète, Michelle Williams (vue dans Le Secret de Brokeback Mountain) est d'une exemplaire sobriété. Cette retenue rend encore plus aiguë la brutalité de l'exclusion qui s'abat sur Wendy, sa solitude absolue, qui ne tient qu'à sa pauvreté. Parmi les films pessimistes d'un Festival qui n'en a pas manqué, c'est sans doute l'un des plus beaux, des plus tristes.”

Le Monde, Thomas Sotinel

“Eternelles vertus du “less is more”. A bien des égards, WENDY & LUCY est un “petit” film : durée courte, budget éthique et, surtout, humilité du récit et de la forme. Mais par sa façon de redéployer à modeste échelle contemporaine des mythologies américaines comme celles du hobo, du road-movie, voire du western, par son subtil sous-texte politique, par la justesse de son filmage et du jeu des acteurs (l’androgyne Michelle Williams à la tête d’un excellent casting), par son talent à faire sourdre l’émotion sans pathos ou à ramener l’esprit de résistance à une dimension intime, WENDY & LUCY est un grand petit film, équivalent ciné du rock lo-fi. (...)WENDY & LUCY ne se drape pas de grands discours ou d’effets de manche, il prend la politique à sa racine, au niveau fondamental des individus et de leurs difficultés quotidiennes. On pourrait dire aussi que c'est un film “grassroots”, comme ces collectifs qui ne prétendent pas changer le monde ou conquérir Washington mais ont l’ambition d’améliorer au moins leur proche environnement, leur quartier, leur village. Ce genre d’ambition,
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modeste, ne se poussant pas du col, n'en est pas moins... ambitieux. Et c'est exactement là que se situe la réussite de ce film et de Kelly Reichardt, dans l'adéquation parfaite entre moyens et projet, intentions et résultat, récit et filmage, propos et style. Oui, grand petit film.”

Les Inrockuptibles, Serge Kaganski

"A keenly observational look at the increasing struggle to just get through the day. With a riveting, delicate performance by Michelle Williams, the film builds to something enigmatic and moving."

Los Angeles Times, Mark Olsen

"Gorgeous and Heartbreaking"

New York Magazine

"What may emerge as the best performance of the year. Among the loveliest films at Cannes."

Film Comment, Amy Taubin

"WENDY & LUCY establishes Reichardt, beyond question, as one of the few masters now working in American independent film."

Film Comment, Larry Gross

"A fearlessly independent work...spare, piercing and essentially American."

Entertainment Weekly, Lisa Schwarzbaum

"An unqualified triumph! Williams gives a prodigiously focused and resourceful performance."

Cinema Scope, Kent Jones

"Kelly Reichardt's third film is another small story revolving around seemingly banal events which, like its predecessor Old Joy, builds into a moving cry of despair for its alienated lead character, a young twentysomething woman called Wendy. But Reichardt is no pessimist and her compassion for Wendy and belief in the kindness of strangers make for an optimistic film which should serve to build her already strong US reputation on an international scale."

Screen International, Mike Goodridge
MICHELLE WILLIAMS — Wendy
Michelle Williams starred opposite Heath Ledger in Ang Lee’s “Brokeback Mountain.” Her performance earned her an Academy Award nomination. She has appeared in Thomas McCarthy’s “The Station Agent”, Todd Haynes’ “I’m Not There”, Charlie Kaufman’s “Synecdoche, New York” and Martin Scorsese’s “Shutter Island.”

WILL PATTON — Mechanic
Will Patton appeared with Angelina Jolie in Michael Winterbottom’s “A Mighty Heart”. On stage, Patton played the lead in Sam Shepard’s “A Lie Of The Mind.” His performances in Richard Foreman’s “What Did He See” and Shepard’s “Fool For Love” earned him two Obie Awards as Best Actor.

JOHN ROBINSON — Andy
John Robinson made his acting debut in Gus Van Sant’s “Elephant.” He went on to star in Catherine Hardwicke’s “Lords Of Dogtown,” and played a supporting role in Michael Bay’s “Transformers.” He currently resides in Los Angeles, actively pursuing his own feature writing and directing career.

WILL OLDHAM — Icky
Will Oldham began his career playing a teen preacher in John Sayles’ “Matewan.” He has appeared in Phil Morrison’s “Junebug” and Karl Shefelman’s “Elysian Fields.” As a prolific and influential musician, Oldham has performed under numerous names: Palace, Palace Music, Palace Brothers, Palace Songs, Bonnie Prince Billy and others.

WALTER DALTON — Security guard
Walter Dalton teamed up with his two brothers in 1960 to form The Dalton Boys, a folk group. In 1970, he was hired as staff writer and regular actor on “The Tim Conway Variety Hour”. He has also written for the Smothers Brothers and Donny and Marie Osmond. Dalton was Executive Story Editor on the television shows, “Barney Miller,” “Laverne & Shirley,” “James at 15” and “It’s a Living”. On screen, Dalton appeared in Richard Donner’s “Assassins” and Dwight H. Little’s “Free Willy 2”. 
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FILMMAKER BIOS

KELLY REICHARDT — Co-Writer/Director/Editor
American landscapes and narratives of the road are themes that run throughout Reichardt’s work. Reichardt’s film “Old Joy,” winner of a Tiger Award at the 2007 Rotterdam Festival, is a New Age Western and exploration of contemporary liberal masculinity in the Great Northwest. Reichardt’s first feature, “River of Grass,” a sun- drenched film noir shot in her hometown in Dade County, Florida, was cited as “one of the best films of 1995” by The Village Voice and Film Comment. Her 1999 short, “Ode,” is a super-8 reinterpretation of the Herman Raucher novel “Ode to Billy Joe” and features an original soundtrack by Will Oldham. Reichardt’s other super-8 shorts include “Then a Year” (2002) and “Travis” (2004). Kelly Reichardt is currently a Visiting Assistant Professor at Bard College.

JON RAYMOND — Co-Writer
Jon Raymond is the author of the story “Train Choir,” from which “Wendy and Lucy” was adapted and “Old Joy,” the story on which Kelly Reichardt’s film of the same name was based. His novel, “The Half-Life,” was published in 2004. He is an editor of Plazm magazine, and his writing appears in Artforum, Bookforum and other publications.

NEIL KOPP — Producer
Neil Kopp is a film producer based in Portland, Oregon, where he was born and raised. Kopp was the recipient of the 2008 Independent Spirit Awards’ Producers Award. Kopp is the producer of Kelly Reichardt’s two Portland based features "Old Joy" and "Wendy and Lucy" and Gus Van Sant’s "Paranoid Park". He has also produced numerous music videos for several prominent Portland indie rock bands, including The Shins, The Decemberists, The Thermals and The Dandy Warhols.

ANISH SAVJANI — Producer
Anish Savjani has produced six films since he formed his company filmscience in 2005. Savjani previously honed his production skills as an assistant to producer Scott Rudin and worked on numerous projects while in the Directors Guild of America’s Assistant Director Program. With filmscience, Savjani is always exploring new ways of developing and producing personal films with distinct
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points of view. His latest project is Joe Swanberg’s new feature “Nights and Weekends.”

LARRY FESSENDEN — Producer and Man in Park
Larry Fessenden produced Kelly Reichardt's first feature “River of Grass,” Ti West’s “House of the Devil,” JT Petty’s “Blood Red Earth,” Ilya Chaiken’s “Liberty Kid,” Douglas Buck’s “Sisters,” Jeff Winner’s “Satellite” and David Gebroe's “Zombie Honeymoon”. Fessenden is the writer, director and editor of the award-winning arthorror movies “Habit,” “No Telling” and “Wendigo.” He has operated the production company Glass Eye Pix since 1985, with the mission of supporting individual voices in the arts.

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Wendy          MICHELLE WILLIAMS
Mechanic       WILL PATTON
Andy            JOHN ROBINSON
Man in park     LARRY FESSENDEN
Icky            WILL OLDHAM
Security guard  WALTER DALTON

Director        KELLY REICHARDT
Screenplay      KELLY REICHARDT, JON RAYMOND
Story by        JON RAYMOND
Producers       NEIL KOPP, ANISH SAVJANI, LARRY FESSENDEN
Executive Producers  TODD HAYNES, PHIL MORRISON, RAJEN SAVJANI, JOSHUA BLUM
Director of Photography SAM LEVY
Additional Cinematography GREG SCHMITT
Editor          KELLY REICHARDT

2008 — USA - 35mm — Color - Dolby SR-D - 1:85 — 80’