

## A PINEWOOD DIALOGUE WITH TODD HAYNES

*Far From Heaven* is Todd Haynes's most critically acclaimed film to date. Nominated for four Oscars, it swept the New York Film Critics Circle awards, including best film and best director. Both an homage to and an update of Douglas Sirk's 1955 melodrama *All that Heaven Allows*, the movie stars Julianne Moore as a 1950s housewife coming to terms with her husband's homosexuality and her own affair with a black man. At a special preview screening, Haynes discussed the film's astonishing craftsmanship, its political relevance for contemporary audiences, and his desire to make a film that would engage audiences intellectually and emotionally.

### **A Pinewood Dialogue following a screening of *Far From Heaven*, moderated by Chief Curator David Schwartz (November 3, 2002):**

SCHWARTZ: And now please welcome Todd Haynes. (Applause)

HAYNES: A lot of people ask me, "What do you do in between your films?" because they don't come out that quickly. And really, for a lot of people who are independent filmmakers and most people—if you write your own work—to write it, to produce it, to direct it, to do the whole thing, and then to promote it, it ends up taking that three- to four-year cycle before you really can get up to start focusing on the next project. So for most of my films, they really did follow there really weren't big breaks. But after *Velvet Goldmine*, I was exhausted. And I think I need to figure out I had not been enjoying the process of filmmaking for some time, at least the production aspects. And I just sort of needed to figure out why and how to make it... I felt very privileged to be a director, but I felt like so many directors would be like, "Oh, I can't wait to get back on the set!" You know, like, "Oooh, the camera!" And I just never felt that way, you know?

So I'd been living in New York for fifteen years at that point, and I decided to really take a break and try to do other things, and read and paint and do stuff that I hadn't done in a long time, and just feel excited again about creatively. And, I don't know, it didn't really work. I read all of Proust; that was the great thing I did that year, that was very positive. But I ultimately was like, "Okay, I'm still figuring out

how to change my life in a way that makes the work as meaningful as possible and as enjoyable as possible." And I think that's slowly what I realized, that the life I was living in New York wasn't enough for me, or wasn't giving me everything I needed. And I don't think I even knew that completely until I left.

I went to Portland, Oregon, to write this script. I was sort of like, "Okay, I'll go write this melodrama, you know." I did say to myself, after *Velvet Goldmine*, "You don't have to put the entire universe into every movie that you make. You can just do a quiet, romantic, domestic melodrama." Of course, it ended up having racism and sexism racism and sexual orientation... It had all the big themes, ultimately. But I went somewhere else to write it. And I really fell in love with this place, and stayed. I lost my apartment in New York later that year. The landlord took it over for an office space. And I was like, "I'm going to stay." So I stayed there. And it was ultimately a really great place to have in my head, even when I wasn't there, throughout this whole production, as a kind of reserve of life that isn't all about my career I guess, you know? So it has been fruitful in a lot of different ways.

SCHWARTZ: Now, you had an impulse to make a melodrama. When I first heard you were doing sort of a Douglas Sirk film, I said, "Okay, what's the twist going to be?" You know, because you did the story of Karen Carpenter, but with Barbie dolls, for example. So I waited for the ironic twist. And sort of the ironic twist, in a way, is that there isn't one. But how did you come to that approach, that you were

going to really try to really remake this style remake a movie in this style?

**HAYNES:** Yeah, it's because I don't feel very ironic about well any of the films that I've made, really. That isn't usually what instigates ideas or gets my enthusiasm going for a certain creative instinct. And I did—I wanted to make a movie, ultimately, that made people cry. I wanted it to be affecting in a genuine way, ultimately. But I wanted to really examine that period, that particular sort of peak, I think, of the women's film vis-à-vis Sirk in the 1950s, and look at how they were made and what they were actually trying to do.

**SCHWARTZ:** And what were your ideas about the 1950s? By evoking Sirk...there are a number of directors who really made worked within the Hollywood system, but made very strong, dark films that play around with our idea of the innocent 1950s. I mean, Douglas Sirk and [Sam] Fuller and Nick Ray. So what was your sort of thinking about the period and what you wanted to do with the 1950s?

**HAYNES:** Yeah, I definitely wanted to sort of look at it from that kind of oppressive, oppressively beautiful vantage point that I think is evident in Sirk's films. There was a point where I sort of said, "Wow, if I was really as smart as Fassbinder, I would or as cool as Fassbinder—and if I was really doing what Sirk was doing relative to his era, I would set it in a contemporary setting." And I thought about that. And I had five little scenarios that I was working with, one of which was [in a] contemporary setting. And I just couldn't I just couldn't resist, I think, getting into they the fabric of that particular period visually—the color, all of the elements of it. But I ultimately was very much aware of where we were kind of politically at the time. Since you know Bush had just been elected, and I basically was like, We're *in* the Fifties, you know. This was before 9/11. And that it could be a really good way to talk about where we really are, through this sort of detour of this period.

**SCHWARTZ:** And so what was it like, then, writing...I mean, then you have to sit down and write dialogue and play around with the idea of clichés and... So what was that like for you, just putting the words in the mouths of these characters?

**HAYNES:** It was weird. It was not nearly as arduous a task as I had experienced in the past in writing. And I wrote it in ten days. I moved to Portland, and my sister knew people who lived there—this is sort of why I went—there was this empty Victorian house in the northwest part of town that I could stay in for three months for free. This lovely lady said I could stay there for free. So all of a sudden—you know what it's like to be in a New York apartment and all of a sudden be in a house...your arms can stretch out! And so I did this sketch of Julianne [Moore]. I knew that she was who I wanted for the part of Cathy. I did this picture of her in the scarf with the glasses and sort of a fall background—still thinking her hair would be red in the movie—and just pinned it up on the window that I was writing in front of, and really wrote the script very quickly, and would come back every night—I like to write at night—and be sort of like: "Wow, what's going to...?" I mean, I knew the plot development, but it was sort of fun; I felt like a spectator. I mean, I hate it when people say, "Oh, the script just wrote itself." That makes me crazy, you know. And I didn't trust it when I finished it, and it was a sort of relatively pleasurable experience to write.

And I wasn't watching—I kept saying, "Oh, you should be watching the movies during the day and..."

**SCHWARTZ:** The Sirk films.

**HAYNES:** The Sirk films—and sort of check in on how close you are and stuff. And I didn't. I waited, and let it kind of find its own shape, I guess. And then of course, later, we would arduously, you know, attend to the films themselves in every possible way, once we were really in production.

**SCHWARTZ:** And how hard was that? This is an independent film produced by Christine Vachon, of course. But you're evoking films that are made by the studio system, where there are all the resources of Hollywood at the disposal of the filmmakers. And you don't—I guess you don't have that.

**HAYNES:** Yeah.

**SCHWARTZ:** But the [production] level is so high, and, of course, you have all the great craftsmanship of Ed Lachman, Elmer Bernstein. If

you could just talk about how you sort of dealt with getting the production level up so high.

**HAYNES:** It's sort of not that different from what I've learned in any kind of independent scenario. It's just so much about careful, careful, arduous—I keep using that word, but—preparation. Just planning it so minutely, because we just didn't have the time to not know exactly what we were doing every day on the set. In terms of the general attention to detail, it was definitely sort of driven by an attention to color, where I began by—and I'd never really done this before, but in my preparation—I started with a big book of visual references, with photos and paintings and drawings and just anything that seemed pertinent, even in a very loose way, to the sort of climate of the film visually and aesthetically and narratively. But then I went through each scene and I started to do these color spectrums, where I'd use about 25 color swatches and just create a color spectrum for each scene that would sort of try to communicate the mood that I was after, in ways that went far beyond anything I could actually put words to.

**SCHWARTZ:** At what point were you doing this?

**HAYNES:** This was in pre-production. This was after. I had the book before I started to hire the crew. But once I had the key people involved, then I went and started to do these color things. So we had something. And then it would ultimately result in meetings with Sandy [Powell]—costumes; Mark [Friedberg]—design; and Ed [Lachman]—DP. And we'd sit for days and talk about color and talk about each department's participation and role in the development of that mood.

**SCHWARTZ:** And was there sort of a rule book that you had, in terms of how you would shoot? I mean, composition, camera movement?

**HAYNES:** Yeah. It was a set of rules. It was almost as if everything about this whole project came from a vernacular specific to this particular period in time, from the script stage all the way through to every aspect of production. It was as if we had a limited dictionary of terms—color, phrases, movements, gestures, camera—that were absolutely finite, really. There would be arrangements and variations within those terms, but they were the prescribed terms that this film engendered, you know? In a

way, I think any creative person's limits are incredibly inspiring. A series of limitations is what gets your creative mind going, and it's why independent film can foster a lot of great decision-making, based on the limitations...

**SCHWARTZ:** So what was it like? I mean, you obviously had worked with Julianne Moore before, but Dennis Quaid was a great piece of casting—he seems I felt he had a really great feeling for what you were getting at.

**HAYNES:** When he first read the script, the first thing he said to me—we were on location scouting in New Jersey, and I got a call, and it was Dennis Quaid on the phone (I'd never spoken to him before)—he said he loved the script, but he said, "You know, I have to say that the emotional effect of this script is"—and I can't remember his exact words, but something about the emotional effect of this script being inseparable from its presentational style. And I thought that was so—it wasn't even saying, "I know that, we have to get past the presentational style to get to the emotion." It was like, "The emotion that this kind of film has to give is based on that different kind of acting." And that style I think reflected every aspect of the script. So he really understood, you know, stylistically, what a challenge it was. People always ask me about the content—was that hard for him and all that; and it wasn't. But what really impressed me was the way all these actors understood the limits of that kind of presentational acting, but also the unique kinds of emotion that it can communicate, that are different and specific to it, and different from naturalism and what that can bring you.

**SCHWARTZ:** But I felt to me, one of the insights that he had was about the 1950s, or about men in the 1950s; the presentational style also relates to how the character of the husband, a businessman, might have acted in the 1950s—that in a way, he sort of used behavior and lines that were expected...

**HAYNES:** Sure, absolutely.

**SCHWARTZ:** ...that real men would be sort of playing their lives out as a script, in order to hide...

**HAYNES:** Right. Yeah, absolutely. As Julianne's character, as well...It's the prescribed way to be, you know? And yet even when the actors in this film are communicating something outside of what's prescribed in their society, it's still written and performed with a very different kind of directness, I think, and cleanness, almost. It's like we were trying to actually define what the difference is in the performance; it's not like they're big and theatrical performances, or characters, you know? It's not big; it's very clean, it's very direct. And what I found when I cast smaller roles in the film is that actors who brought an innate naturalistic approach couldn't... The words on the page sounded way more ludicrous when you tried to kind of throw them away or tether them.

**SCHWARTZ:** Method?

**HAYNES:** Yeah. Or just break them up and, like... You had to commit to the words first in a very direct way, which is hard for a lot of actors to do, and it takes a sort of courage. But all the leads understood it without us having to really work on it, you know? And it was great. I was lucky with that.

**SCHWARTZ:** I mean, the paradox, the phrase "imitation of life," which is so key to... I mean, it's the title of a Douglas Sirk film, but it could apply to all of his films, and could apply to any film—*any* film, I guess, but particularly your films. But how does that come into play for you, because there's this you're dealing with artificiality and stylization to get at very real emotional impacts?

**HAYNES:** To me, that's what film is. I don't think that's any different from any movie. It's *all* fake. And I think when you begin by acknowledging that it's artificial to begin with, you have a much greater possibility of getting to something genuine than when you set out to depict real life, whatever the hell that is. Yeah. That's what has always excited me about film. And it's sort of true, I think, in various ways, for all my films.

**SCHWARTZ:** Was Julianne, was working with her, this performance was it very different from her performance in *Safe*, because of the different time period or style of the film? Could you compare the two? Different?

**HAYNES:** The performances, I think, are extremely different. And the characters, I think, are also extremely different, excluding obvious connections that you can see. But I think Cathy is so much more—Carol White's just so much more at a preliminary stage, I think, in her quest. She's at the very initial formation of a sense of identity—if she achieves that at all in the film; whereas Cathy is at least susceptible to desire, and can at least go there. I think that wasn't even a possibility for Carol White in *Safe*.

**SCHWARTZ:** But you went into production, I think, into shooting, right after September 11, and...

**HAYNES:** Yeah. It happened during our pre... It took two weeks out of our precious six-week pre-production schedule, actually, which was extremely hard on us.

**SCHWARTZ:** But how did this affect your thinking at all about the film, just because you were so focused on making this film that ultimately says a lot about the present day?

**HAYNES:** I don't know if my first concern about it, when it was happening—that day—was just that it was going to give a sort of *carte blanche*, you know, sort of incentive to the administration to unleash all of its, you know, most extreme kind of global and domestic agendas. At the time, I think everybody was just scrambling for some sense to make out of it in a very emotional and direct way. And many people—at first, I think we all felt like; How are we going to really do this? How are we going to make a movie now? But I think, very quickly...and for people who were in New York during that time, I think everyone sort of wished they did have something. After a certain point, you kind of wanted to get into something and apply yourself to something wholly, because it was very hard to live in that day-to-day sort of climate, I think. It was hard.

**SCHWARTZ:** And I want to ask one more thing before I throw it open the audience, but you're now—the response to this film has been pretty amazing. So far, it hasn't opened theatrically, but it's played a lot of festivals and is being talked of, you know, in all the sort of Academy Award buzz and so what about things like that. So what has the initial response been like for you?

**HAYNES:** It's weird for me. It's great, but it's sort of an out-of-body kind of experience for me—at least in terms of it being well-received by very mainstream critics, who aren't usually the critics who find a way into my films. I think what's funny is that some of my favorite Hollywood films are those that played to a popular audience in their time—like Hitchcock or Billy Wilder, or whatever—but have given us plenty of stuff to think about ever since, in ways that may not have been considered or looked at at the time. But I've never really felt that my work was a candidate for that, or that that was my goal. You know? And it definitely feels like this film... and I *like* that about it. I love that it's a film you can take your mom and your grandmother to, and they don't have to know anything about Sirk, or be film buffs, you know, to enter into the story. I think that's amazing; if that ends up happening, it would be really cool.

**SCHWARTZ:** (Repeats audience question) Compare the different experiences of *Velvet Goldmine*, which was a very difficult production, and this production. And then with Julianne Moore—the questioner said he had heard that she doesn't like to rehearse that much—she likes to be spontaneous—and did you find that to be true?

**HAYNES:** Yeah, this was a super-tough one, too. We had... Well, you know, what's interesting when people say, you know, "Well, we've certainly progressed since the Fifties in certain ways, like for instance, choices for women in the world today are way better than back then." And I had to realize that the very fact that this was a film about a woman, who wasn't going to be portrayed by Julia Roberts in the film, meant that this was a serious commercial risk for financiers. That fact alone. And so when the 3 financial bodies that were first interested in committing to this project got together at Cannes—2 Cannes's ago—they said, "\$12 million is all we can commit to this script." They loved the script, they loved the idea, but with Julianne Moore carrying the film: "\$12 million; that's it." We never had a budget that was \$12 million; we didn't think we could get one that would be much—you know, it was going to be more around \$14 million. And that \$2 million difference was painstakingly difficult to get the commitments to by all the people involved. And even that made it a very, very tough film, and the bond company was

not very encouraging. And it was almost like, with more money like twice as much money as I had for *Velvet Goldmine*, and as much preparation and planning as had gone into it, it still felt like, by the powers that surrounded us, we were taking a bigger risk than we ever had in the past, you know what I mean? It made it tough. I don't know that that's necessarily—it certainly is not the fault of the financiers involved, that fact that that's true, I guess, as a risk, or just the risk of a film about a woman. I mean, it's ludicrous; it became true when we were confronted with who to cast for Frank.

It was like, Julianne said she had—there was a project about Amelia Earhart or something like that that she was the lead in. She went to every male lead that she knew, you know, who brought money or some cachet, to play second to her, and they all gracefully declined, because no one will play second—no leading man, unless they're paid a lot of extra money for it, will play second to a woman, you know. It's really sad. I think that's worse than it was in the thirties and forties, when there were a handful of amazing female box-office—who would guarantee box-office, if it was Bette Davis or Joan Crawford or, you know, Katharine Hepburn, whatever. That's so not the case today. So it's really... That made it bad.

Julianne's not rehearsing is not a big problem. We did rehearse. For me, it's about, at the very least, getting a sense of space and movement through, you know, where the actors are going to move around on the set, and then where the camera will go. So I need to do that with the actors. So Julianne and Dennis and I, you know, worked in the house, did rehearsals on the set while it was being built, to get a sense of movement. I don't need—I didn't need acting rehearsals with them. But of course, hearing the lines and hearing, I felt secure; I felt confident about what was starting to happen, so...

**SCHWARTZ:** Did you ever consider having Julianne Moore's and Dennis Haysbert's characters come together at the end? I mean, get on the train together, that sort of thing?

**HAYNES:** As an ending, you mean?

**SCHWARTZ:** Or just get together romantically?

HAYNES: No, I didn't. I knew I wanted this to end um sadly. I did know that. (Laughter)

SCHWARTZ: Okay, this film—the narrative obviously varies from a Douglas Sirk film. Okay but is there any way that you wanted to deviate filmically from the Sirk style? I mean, you know, how did you want to be different from a Sirk film?

HAYNES: No, I didn't really... I was able to learn so much more, I think, at so many levels, about not deviating, where I didn't deviate than where I did. And in fact, to me, the way it deviates from Sirk narratively isn't even *that* much. I mean, people say, "Oh, it's not like a Sirk film, because they talk about homosexuality." But I think what's more weird about this movie is that it talks about homosexuality by showing, you know, two guys sort of kissing for a second, and that's it, you know? And the word is barely mentioned in the film, or... The F-word is used once in the movie, and it's actually a shocking event.

I mean, in an early draft of the script, I toyed with the idea of them being more sexually explicit in the scene where she discovers the men in the office. But it was so much about this really careful balance of shock value or of explosive material, and keeping it completely harnessed by the fact that it's about her, and that it is has to be, ultimately, sort of tempered by the fact that it's her story. and, you know, most films would want to. So I couldn't have, you know, more than one scene of the shrink with Dennis Quaid. Because all of a sudden, your attention would be, like, "Ooh, what's going on over there?" It was hard, because of course that's where all the action is, is offscreen, really. And similarly, the racial themes are outside of this house, so they're sort of... The real big stuff is going on elsewhere. And most movies would be there, you know. So it was definitely all about maintaining a constraint that I thought was effective and dramatically impactful in [Sirk's] films.

SCHWARTZ: What happens to the three major characters after the end credits?

HAYNES: Oh, I don't know. I mean, I think that what's really interesting is how much people ask me this, for a film like this, that seems... Elmer Bernstein talks about it constantly. He's always, like, "Well, I think she's going to be fine. I think she's learned so

much. And I really..." He did. And his last cue he called "Beginnings"—he named it "Beginnings," you know? That her life is really starting when the film ends.

But it was really curious to me—and I actually brought this up: my friend Kelly, who we were talking about before; she's a filmmaker in New York, Kelly Reichardt. And she watched the movie at a press screening here with her dad. Her dad was in town. And she was at the press screening, and she felt like she couldn't totally get into the movie, because her dad was right next to her. And she wanted to really be able to get into it, but she kept thinking about what her dad's making of it, you know. And he's, like, an ex-detective from Florida. And then John Waters was sitting in the row in front of her, so she was thinking about what John Waters was thinking, you know. (Laughter) And the next day, her dad leaves, and she's coming out of a subway, and all of a sudden she just bursts into tears in the middle of—and she's not really a crier type of person, you know. And she just kept saying to herself, "I know they'll write; I know they'll write to each other!" And I just love that because, you know, intellectually, you know, she knew better than to worry about these things. (Laughter)

But I think there's something about... Like, if the movie was made in today's style, Cathy would come home and she'd say to Sybil, "You know, Sybil, I've always, you know, lived my life in the shadow of the men around me. And now I really feel like I've learned that I don't..." You know. There'd be this whole articulated resolution that Sybil would respond to, and you'd feel—we'd all feel really like it really ended; the movie ended, and the character learned something, you know? But we wouldn't be thinking about it the same way afterwards. Because I think in these movies of this time, characters aren't articulate in that way. They don't articulate what they learn. They're moved around by the society. And so we kind of have to watch it from a bit of the outside, and we have more of a job, I think, afterwards, to actually make that connection ourselves, you know? What they learned and what really happened and where it's going to go. And that's an amazing thing about the films from this time, so...

SCHWARTZ: Tell us a little bit more about Elmer Bernstein. I mean, his score is quite amazing. And

obviously, music is always commenting, making some sort of emotional comment. And he, of course, wrote many great scores in the Fifties. Just—could you talk about what his ideas are and what your collaboration was like?

**HAYNES:** Oh, I just love this guy so much. He's eighty years old. And he's the most alive, vital person I think I've ever met. He's just an incredibly articulate and engaged human being. And I was scared. I was intimidated to work with Elmer Bernstein. Like, how do you say, "Actually, I don't really like that," you know? "Can you write that again?" But he loved the story. He loved how it was about the woman. He loved how it was the weird contradictions of it—that she was at the bottom rung of the hierarchies; the dueling human needs, the racial themes, and the sexual themes. And that, as a woman, she occupied the bottom rung of that dynamic, and had to lose everything, sort of, so the men could find their way, in a way. And he found that to be really poignant and true. So I think we were totally fixated on the same kind of emotional core of what the movie was about. And again, because these films don't overstate their points of view, there's a space for music, too, to supplement, and to tell you more than the film is already telling you. I think we hate music today when it affects you emotionally, because the film's doing the same thing. Everything's doing the same thing on top of itself. And you feel like, Oh, stop, I get it, you know? But these films really leave space for each thing to have a role that's important. So the music, which is very strong, has a need for it to be strong. Anyway, for me, it was just an amazing, humbling, and inspiring relationship to have with someone.

**SCHWARTZ:** (Repeats audience question) The character of the gay art dealer, did he have a bigger part in other drafts?

**HAYNES:** Not much. He did have a speech that I cut. Not because he didn't do a great job. That scene's really long. There's a lot that goes on in the art-gallery scene. So we did trim and tighten and tuck, like most people do in their films at some point. I was attached to it, but I also felt like it was communicated everything that you see, visually, with him. But there wasn't really a point of seeing the social sector reacting to him; that was never really in the script.

**SCHWARTZ:** (Repeats audience question) Okay, well, the question about, you know, the inspiration for this movie: was there, one defining thing that happened, where it just sort of came to you, or...pause?

**HAYNES:** Not really, beyond a visual strong visual image of sort of what I described when I did that drawing of—it was a marker drawing, so it had color. So it was about the fall, the blue sky, the intense gold and red trees, her—what I imagined initially as red hair, the dark sunglasses and scarf, and, you know... I think it was...

[Inaudible question about influence of 1950's melodrama]

**HAYNES:** Not really, no. But the plot is such a sort of condensation of existing storylines, like *All That Heaven Allows* sort of meeting aspects of *Imitation of Life* meeting aspects of *The Reckless Moment*, the Max Ophüls film. I had some other scenarios that had—some of them dealt with the theme of a husband's homosexuality and the woman's relative role, in different ways. And some of them had a Hollywood theme. Like, there was one about, you know, how the husband would... Because actually, what's interesting about the 1950s is that there was a lot of homosexuality being accepted in this new, kind of more cool—more A-list kinds of films than melodramas at Universal; but, like, you know, the kind of Montgomery Clift and James Dean and Marlon Brando circles that were in Tennessee Williams adaptations. There was a real sophistication that included gay circles, you know, at that time. And it obviously and ultimately affected the way men were starting to get portrayed on film, as this whole new kind of interiority was being explored in these male characters, that we hadn't seen before. I mean, depictions of women would take quite some time to get overturned, but in the 1950s it was starting to happen with men.

And I sort of thought of a story where the husband's a struggling actor, and he gets kind of sucked into a, you know, a little Hollywood set of gay men, and becomes kind of—his career starts to improve as a result. But it's really still about the wife and how she is left out of it. And they kind of make fun of her primness—you know, of keeping the house and the decorum together—while he's

benefiting from all of these allegiances, you know, whatever. Something along those lines, but...

**SCHWARTZ:** But you know, you had these women—there was an audience, like we said before, for these women’s melodramas. And you had all these great directors like Minnelli and George Cukor dealing with a lot of the same kinds of issues that you’ve been interested in. I’m just wondering, why is it so hard today to make a woman’s melodrama? Or, where did the audience go for those films?

**HAYNES:** I mean, whether or not we would call them melodramas, I just think the fact that films about women’s lives and women’s experiences, the fact that they’re not being made and they’re considered financial [risks], is absurd and ludicrous. And it doesn’t have to be a Michelle Pfeiffer, you know, kind of comfy domestic setting with a little bit of suspense or... I don’t know. You know, the closest things that you see today don’t really seem to be even that much about lived experience, or, you know, the sort of smaller problems that people face in their lives, which don’t have big guns or explosives involved, you know.

**SCHWARTZ:** (Repeats audience question) Okay. Well, so the question is that all of your films in some ways have been period films. In some cases, it’s been the 1970s. In this case, the 1950s. What does that mean, the idea of doing a period film—what does that mean to you?

**HAYNES:** Yeah, I think it’s just part of that whole... Well, in some ways, I think it’s always...my instinct is always sort of metaphoric, to talk about what’s happening in our society now, but through the sort of detour or the parallel or the metaphor of another era. But I also think I enjoy the costumes, you know? I like getting into the drag of that period and really exploring it. But I do think it’s a lot about what you’re saying—it sort of goes along with the idea of history being something we learn through images and movies and constructed ideas that come to us very much from privileged sources, you know? If it’s not the people in power writing the history books, it’s, you know, the moviemakers telling it to us in images; and that’s how we understand the idea of history, that’s how we understand the idea of the past. So what’s to say that using those images is any less real or authentic than to kind of pretend that you know what it was really like back then, and to give it to us in a grittier fashion? Or really, the grittier fashion is usually just the contemporary codes of naturalism imposed on the costumes from the past, you know? So this film definitely is taking absolutely, you know, with a full embrace, the idea that history and memory are constructed and handed down, like cinema, you know? And that it’s a kind of parallel world that we all share, you know, we all have access to, that’s not true and not false; but it’s real, you know.

**SCHWARTZ:** Okay, thanks. Well, that’s so articulate that we’ll end there. And the film opens on Friday. So, thanks. (Applause)

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