

Interview: Actress Lake Bell Writes, Directs 'In a World...'

Submitted by [PatrickMcD](#) [1] on August 14, 2013 - 5:44pm

- [Demetri Martin](#) [2]
- [Don LaFontaine](#) [3]
- [Geena Davis](#) [4]
- [HollywoodChicago.com Content](#) [5]
- [In a World...](#) [6]
- [Interview](#) [7]
- [Jeff Garlin](#) [8]
- [Ken Marino](#) [9]
- [Lake Bell](#) [10]
- [Michaela Watkins](#) [11]
- [Nick Offerman](#) [12]
- [Patrick McDonald](#) [13]
- [Rob Corddry](#) [14]
- [Voiceover](#) [15]

CHICAGO – Lake Bell is a recognizable and successful character actress, having prominence in television (“Boston Legal”) and films (“It’s Complicated”). For her latest film, she wrote, directed and starred in a gentle parody of the voiceover profession, especially the intoned voices that narrate movie trailers, “In a World...”

Bell was born in New York City, and attended Saratoga College and Rose Bruford College in London, where she got bit with the acting bug and did several high level theater productions, including “The Seagull” and “Six Degrees of Separation.” She began her professional career in 2002 with the film “Speakeasy” and two episodes of TV’s popular “ER.” After a stint on the sitcom “Miss Match” the next year, she landed on “The Practice,” and became a regular on its spinoff, “Boston Legal.” She had a high profile film role as Alec Baldwin’s second wife in “It’s Complicated” (2009), and has performed in and directed episodes of Cartoon Network’s “Children’s Hospital.”



Lake Bell Wrote, Directed and has the Lead Role for 'In a World...'
Photo credit: Roadside Attractions

Lake Bell was interviewed in a press roundtable, in which HollywoodChicago.com participated, and spoke passionately about “In a World,” the first film she in which she has the lead role, plus wrote and directed.

HollywoodChicago.com: What was interesting about this film was that although it was about voice over artists, it never was over-the-top regarding them, and really was about family. How did you create a tribute to the weird occupation of voiceover for ‘In a World...’?

Lake Bell: I’ve always been interested in the voice and sound, especially as it represents who you are, since it is the primary thing people remember after what you look like. I really liked it when I was young because it was something goofy that I could play around with – I used to do accents and dialects, and it became a party trick for my family.

I liked the idea of the blind voice, and its not judged by what a person looks like, and it's the ultimate acting in a way. You can create character by a vocal mechanism, whether it's a different social status, nationality or even gender. In the film, when the actor Ken Marino as Gustav talks to his agent, the old Jewish-sounding man named Siegel, that's actually me playing that role. Because I can, within the voiceover template.

HollywoodChicago.com: You have called this film your 'baby.' How did you land on this film for your feature writer/director debut?

Bell: I actually co-wrote a screenplay years ago, a comedy based on my life that was a lot of fun. But we went down the path of making an independent film, and it eventually burst and fizzled, which was heartbreaking. This left a bad taste in my mouth, and I didn't write for awhile.

I had learned about story structure from the first experience, so when I set out to do 'In a World...' I was jonesing to begin the writing process again. I wanted to write about voiceover, because like anything I wanted to do what inspired me. And this subject is what I felt like writing about. It felt like a perfect opportunity to have a charmingly neurotic central character trying to find her 'voice,' coupled with being a victim of arrested development in her early thirties.

HollywoodChicago.com: It also feels like a microcosm of the entertainment industry as a whole, male dominated with females having to work hard to break into. Was that on your mind as you wrote the film?

Bell: In the film there is a discussion of the 'sexy baby vocal virus' for women, which is comedic but also feminist in nature, about females taking on a vocal trend that ultimately makes them sound like a little girl, when they're actually grown and educated women. That came later in the writing process as a way to suture together the meaning, and give the comedy a little social context and relevance.

HollywoodChicago.com: Which of the main actors surprised you in their depth and interpretation of character versus what you initially wrote on the page?



Lake Bell On Set for 'In a World...'
Photo credit: Roadside Attractions

Bell: I have to give credit to everybody, but Michaela Watkins is one of my closest friends, as is Rob Corddry, and I wrote those roles for them knowing they were capable of the depth that no one had seen from them before. I was really excited to share that, and thrilled that they took the chance with me.

Fred Melamed was a surprise as well, because I knew him from 'A Serious Man' and other smaller parts in Woody Allen films, so I cast him because I thought he could create the richness and comedy in the character of Sam Sotto. Fred is such a nice person in life, that I thought it would be interesting for him to hold onto that as he plays out the despicable part of Sam.

HollywoodChicago.com: In the film, one of the minor characters gives a major speech, one that changes the course of Sam's life. Did you take that from the Shakespearean tradition of that character development?

Bell: Yes, I went to drama school in England and studied the classics, but I don't claim to be Shakespeare. [laughs] There are thematics that are universal, from the classics to now. I loved the idea that a peripheral character would display that profundity.

HollywoodChicago.com: You've played glamorous – like in 'It's Complicated' – and here you're playing more schlumpy. Which requires more subtlety?

Bell: [Laughs] I always say with this film that it's clearly not a vanity piece. There is a freedom in playing yourself truthfully, and I don't walk around glamorously all the time. There have been parts that I've had in which the production was trying to make me look fancier than I am, or visually simulating than I am in real life. I think I'm interested in characters that are real as possible, and if I'm writing a role for myself it's not the type of part I'm necessarily cast for. I'm not sure why, because I'm fairly casual.

HollywoodChicago.com: Finally, you had a lot of your 'Children's Hospital' cast mates in the film. Did that help you, or was it just a totally different vibe?

Bell: I definitely wanted to surround myself with people I knew and who would be supportive of me. It's an intense endeavor to direct, but first and foremost I wanted everyone to be right for their roles. Those people are in my community, the 'Children's Hospital' family, but I'm also inspired by them. I think Michaela Watkins is so amazing, the first short film I wrote was for her. When I know these people as husbands, wives, mother, fathers and friends I see their complexity, and I know that they're right for their characters in the film.

"In a World..." continues its limited release in Chicago on August 16th. See local listings for theaters and show times. Featuring Lake Bell, Rob Corddry, Ken Marino, Demetri Martin, Nick Offerman, Michaela Watkins, Geena Davis and Jeff Garlin. Written and directed by Lake Bell. Rated "R"



[16]

By [PATRICK McDONALD](#) [17]

Senior Staff Writer

HollywoodChicago.com

pat@hollywoodchicago.com [16]

© 2013 Patrick McDonald, HollywoodChicago.com

Source URL (retrieved on Apr 23 2024 - 2:55pm):

<http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/22223/interview-actress-lake-bell-writes-directs-in-a-world>

Links:

[1] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/users/hankq>

[2] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/demetri-martin>

[3] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/don-lafontaine>

[4] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/geena-davis>

[5] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/hollywoodchicagodotcom-content>

[6] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/in-a-world-0>

[7] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/labels/interview.html>

[8] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/jeff-garlin>

[9] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/ken-marino>

[10] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/lake-bell>

[11] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/michaela-watkins>

[12] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/nick-offerman>

[13] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/patrick-mcdonald>

[14] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/rob-corddry>

[15] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/voiceover>

[16] <mailto:pat@hollywoodchicago.com>

[17] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/about#PAT>