

# THE LAST DUEL

## **PRELIMINARY PRODUCTION INFORMATION**

From 20th Century Studios and visionary filmmaker Ridley Scott comes “The Last Duel,” a gripping tale of betrayal and vengeance set against the brutality of 14<sup>th</sup> century France. Based on actual events, the historical epic unravels long-held assumptions about France’s last sanctioned duel between Jean de Carrouges and Jacques Le Gris, two friends turned bitter rivals.

“The Last Duel” stars Oscar® winner Matt Damon (“Good Will Hunting,” “Ford v Ferrari”), two-time Academy Award® nominee Adam Driver (“Marriage Story,” “BlacKkKlansman”), Emmy® winner Jodie Comer (“Killing Eve,” “Free Guy”) and two-time Oscar winner Ben Affleck (“Argo,” “Good Will Hunting”). The film is directed by four-time Academy Award® nominee Ridley Scott (“The Martian,” “Black Hawk Down,” “Gladiator,” “Thelma & Louise”). The screenplay is by Oscar® nominee Nicole Holofcener (“Can You Ever Forgive Me?”) & Ben Affleck & Matt Damon based on the book by Eric Jager. The film is produced by Ridley Scott, p.g.a., Kevin J. Walsh, p.g.a. (“Manchester by the Sea”), Jennifer Fox, p.g.a. (“Nightcrawler”), Nicole Holofcener, p.g.a., Matt Damon, p.g.a., Ben Affleck, p.g.a. with Kevin Halloran (“Ford v Ferrari”), Drew Vinton (“Promised Land”), Madison Ainley (“Justice League”) serving as executive producers.

Co-starring in the film are Harriet Walter (“Atonement,” “Sense & Sensibility”); Marton Csokas (“Kingdom of Heaven,” “Alice in Wonderland”); Nathaniel Parker (“The Inspector Lynley Mysteries”); Adam Nagiatis (“The Terror”); and Alex Lawther (“Goodbye Christopher Robin”) as King Charles VI.

### **~ ABOUT THE FILM ~**

When a noblewoman in 14<sup>th</sup> century France testifies that her husband’s best friend sexually assaulted her, the fate of all three must be decided in a duel to the death. Told from three distinct perspectives, “The Last Duel” introduces the stories of: Jean de Carrouges (Matt Damon), a seasoned, ambitious knight from a respected family, struggling for power and position; The formidable Jacques Le Gris (Adam Driver), a court favorite who is accused of the unspeakable crime; and Marguerite de Carrouges (Jodie Comer), a hero ahead of her time who risked her life to stand up for the truth.

Grounded in the story of this extraordinary woman, “The Last Duel” is an exploration of power and survival, and the cultural forces that conspired to distort that truth. Despite their shared

experiences, these characters lived in different worlds...and there can only be one truth. “We knew it was an incredible story, the question was how do we tell it in a way that would be really interesting,” says Matt Damon. “And that’s when we came up with the perspectives idea and, ultimately, the kind of the bait and switch, where you have two thirds of a movie with these two men only to discover that this woman is actually the hero of the whole story.”

### **~ A CENTURIES-OLD TALE ~**

“The Last Duel: A True Story of Crime, Scandal, and Trial by Combat in Medieval France” by Eric Jager, which was published in 2004, brings the turbulent Middle Ages to life in striking detail. When etiquette, social aspirations and justice were driven by the codes of chivalry, the consequences for defying the institutions of the time – the Church, the nobility at court, a teenage king – could be severe. “The crime was horrible, but death for her husband and herself does not fit the crime,” says Nicole Holofcener. “She was a victim, and yet it is the ego and the pride of these two men (Carrouges and Le Gris) that becomes the true incentive for the duel.”

For a woman navigating these violent times, one who had no legal standing without the support of her husband, the stakes were even higher. “We found so many aspects of the formal, codified patriarchy of 14<sup>th</sup> century Western Europe to still be present in vestigial ways (and in some cases almost unchanged) in today’s society,” says Ben Affleck. “We wanted to examine how institutions, acculturation and social norms had, and continue to have, such a profound effect on who is believed.”

The film is based on Jager’s extensive research, which involved 10 years of tracking down, translating and scrutinizing centuries-old historical records – everything from chronicles, legal records and property deeds to military receipts, architectural plans and historical maps. “There were new documents that I found in the archives that had either been entirely overlooked or had been only mentioned in very obscure places and that didn’t seem to be a part of the general knowledge that historians and scholars had of this case,” says Eric Jager. “What historians and legal scholars have been saying for centuries, that she was mistaken, or in some cases that she had lied, didn’t seem to be true.”

### **~ THE MAKING OF THE FILM ~**

Men like Jean de Carrouges and Jacques Le Gris were the heroes of their own stories – but unreliable narrators of history. Marguerite’s perspective is essential, offering a needed correction to the men’s unchallenged views of themselves and the world around them.

Matt Damon, Ben Affleck and Nicole Holofcener collaborated on the script, with each writing from the perspective of Carrouges, Le Gris and Marguerite, respectively, to ensure the story effectively captured all three voices. According to Holofcener, “The reason I came on in is because Matt and Ben are not women. Not that they couldn’t write terrific women, plenty of men do, but I think that’s what I was able to add, is my perspective as a female, and a different eye and a different voice as well.”

Filming of “The Last Duel” took place in numerous breathtaking locations in France and Ireland from February 14 to March 12, 2020 in France and from September 4 to October 23, 2020 in Ireland. Some of France’s most majestic and well-preserved castles served as backdrops to this gripping tale, meticulously brought back to their medieval grandeur by a talented team of craftspeople, including: Academy Award®-nominated director of photography Dariusz Wolski, ASC (“News of the World”); Oscar®-nominated production designer Arthur Max (“The Martian”); Oscar®-winning editor Claire Simpson (“Platoon”); Academy Award-winning costume designer Janty Yates (“Gladiator”); and composer Harry Gregson-Williams (“Mulan”).

A filmmaker celebrated for his distinct visual flair and cinematic eye, Ridley Scott is known for his spectacular 360 filmmaking, employing multiple cameras for each scene. “It was really exciting for me to see Ridley’s very distinctive shooting style, which involves multiple cameras capturing all of the action in two parts, but it felt simultaneous,” says Affleck. “There was an incredible amount of energy present depending on where the cameras were pointing. You didn’t know when you were going to be on camera and when you weren’t, which created a sense of urgency and immediacy that was really great.”

Jodie Comer adds, “It’s so important that in each perspective the audience really believes whichever character is narrating it, and that was actually really fun to do. It was also a little dizzying, as sometimes you were shooting three perspectives on the same day.”

In order to ensure the film remained faithful to Marguerite’s story, the studio employed intimacy coordinator Ita O’Brien (“Sex Education”) during principal photography, and the filmmakers consulted with a number of organizations that work directly with survivors. Holofcener says, “After she is raped, the world becomes different forever for Marguerite. She had no rights, no control and no power.”

Damon adds, “It felt like the only story that was worth telling was hers; her incredible bravery under this awful pressure, to be interrogated that way, to be shamed that way, but to never relent and, in that culture, tell the truth about what happened to her.”

### ~ CAST & FILMMAKERS ~

Considered one of the most revered actors in Hollywood today, in terms of talent and box office draw, **MATT DAMON, p.g.a. (Jean de Carrouges/Co-Screenwriter/Producer)** has had a varied and rich career both in front of the camera and behind.

Though far from an overnight success, Damon catapulted into the public eye in 1997 with his first Academy Award® nomination and win for co-writing “Good Will Hunting” with his lifelong friend Ben Affleck. The script also earned the pair a Golden Globe® nomination as well as several critics’ group nominations, and feted Damon with Academy Award, Golden Globe and Screen Actors Guild® (SAG) nominations for best actor.

More recognition followed as Damon earned his third Golden Globe® nomination for his performance in 1999’s “The Talented Mr. Ripley” under the direction of Anthony Minghella,

and in 2009 received Academy Award®, Screen Actors Guild® and Critics' Choice Award nominations for best supporting actor, for his portrayal of South African rugby hero Francois Pienaar in Clint Eastwood's true-life drama "Invictus." Additionally, in the same year, he garnered a Golden Globe nomination for best actor for his starring role in Steven Soderbergh's "The Informant." The connection with Soderbergh proved to be a successful one as he and Damon collaborated again for seven films over his career, including the heist blockbuster films, "Ocean's Eleven," "Ocean's Twelve" and "Ocean's Thirteen," and in 2013 for the HBO Telefilm, "Behind the Candelabra," where Damon played opposite Michael Douglas, and earned Emmy Award®, Golden Globe, Screen Actors Guild and BAFTA Award® nominations for best performance by an actor in a television movie or miniseries.

Hailing from Boston, Damon attended Harvard University and gained his first acting experience with the American Repertory Theatre. He made his feature film debut in "Mystic Pizza," followed by roles in "School Ties," Walter Hill's "Geronimo: An American Legend," the cable project's "Rising Son" and Tommy Lee Jones' "The Good Old Boys." However, it was Matt's portrayal of a guilt-ridden Gulf War veteran, tormented by memories of a battlefield incident, in 1996's "Courage Under Fire," that first put him on the radar of both critics and audiences alike.

The following year, Damon played the title role in Steven Spielberg's award-winning World War II drama, "Saving Private Ryan," and starred in John Dahl's drama "Rounders" and reunited with Ben Affleck and director Kevin Smith to star in the controversial comedy "Dogma."

Damon's other film credits include: Kevin Smith's "Chasing Amy"; Francis Ford Coppola's "The Rainmaker," in which he played an idealistic young attorney; Robert Redford's "The Legend of Bagger Vance"; Billy Bob Thornton's "All the Pretty Horses"; "Gerry" for director Gus Van Sant; a cameo appearance in George Clooney's "Confessions of a Dangerous Mind"; Terry Gilliam's "The Brothers Grimm," with Heath Ledger; the Farrelly brothers' comedy "Stuck on You," opposite Greg Kinnear; Stephen Gaghan's geopolitical thriller "Syriana," with George Clooney; Martin Scorsese's Oscar®-winning Best Picture "The Departed," with Leonardo DiCaprio, Jack Nicholson and Mark Wahlberg; Robert De Niro's dramatic thriller "The Good Shepherd," with De Niro and Angelina Jolie; the action thriller "Green Zone," directed by Paul Greengrass; the drama "Hereafter," which reunited him with director Clint Eastwood; the Coen brothers' remake of the classic western "True Grit"; George Nolfi's thriller "The Adjustment Bureau," opposite Emily Blunt; the thriller "Contagion" for director Steven Soderbergh, Kenneth Lonergan's "Margaret"; "Happy Feet 2," an animated feature to which he lent his voice; "We Bought a Zoo," directed by Cameron Crowe; the sci-fi thriller "Elysium," for director Neil Blomkamp; "Monuments Men" for George Clooney and "Interstellar" for Christopher Nolan.

In 2015, Damon starred in the outer space actioner "The Martian," for director Ridley Scott, in which he played Mark Watney, an astronaut stranded on Mars who struggles to survive until he can be rescued. The film, which was a box-office hit, earned stellar reviews and seven Academy Award® nominations with Damon garnering a nomination for best performance by an actor in a leading role.

In 2016, Damon starred in Yimou Zhang's "The Great Wall"; he served as a producer on the Kenneth Lonergan directed drama "Manchester by the Sea," which received three Critics' Choice Awards® one Golden Globe Award® two BAFTA Awards® and two Academy Awards; and he starred as Jason Bourne in the film of the same title. He reprised the character he originated in the blockbuster action films, "The Bourne Identity," "The Bourne Supremacy" and "The Bourne Ultimatum," reteaming with director Paul Greengrass who helmed the latter two. For his role in the film, Damon received a Critics' Choice Award® nomination for best actor in an action movie.

In 2017, Damon starred in "Suburbicon" for director George Clooney and in "Downsizing" for director Alexander Payne. Most recently, he starred in "Ford vs. Ferrari" for director James Mangold alongside Christian Bale and "Stillwater" for director Tom McCarthy.

In 2000, Damon teamed with Ben Affleck and Chris Moore to form the production company LivePlanet, to produce film, television, and new media projects. LivePlanet produced the documentary "Running the Sahara," directed by Oscar® winner James Moll, as well as three seasons of the Emmy®-nominated series "Project Greenlight," chronicling the making of independent films by first-time writers and directors, spawning three features: "Stolen Summer," "The Battle of Shaker Heights" and "Feast."

The series, which first aired on HBO and later Bravo, was resurrected and the fourth season aired on HBO in September 2015 under Damon and Affleck's banner, Pearl Street Productions. Pearl Street Productions, which has a first look deal with Warner Bros. Pictures, co-produced "Promised Land," which reunited Damon with director Gus Van Sant and was written and produced by Damon and John Krasinski; "Jason Bourne," "Manchester by the Sea" and "Live By Night" for Warner Bros. which Ben directed. The company also produced "Incorporated" for the Syfy Channel, which Alex and David Pastor wrote and directed. Other projects in development include "RFK," which Nikolaj Arcel wrote and will direct and "The Trade," which Jay Roach is attached to direct.

On the small screen, Damon is an executive producer on the Showtime's drama series "City on a Hill," which was recently renewed for a third season. Additionally, Damon both executive produced and appeared in the History Channel project "The People Speak," based on a book co-written by famed historian Howard Zinn and featuring dramatic readings and performances from some of the most famous names in the entertainment industry. In addition, Damon co-founded H2O Africa in 2006, now known as Water.org, a foundation that brings clean water to and sanitation to countries around the world that suffer without that simple need.

**JODIE COMER (Marguerite de Carrouges)** is a British actress best known for her role as Villanelle in BBC America's cult breakout series "Killing Eve." Comer stars in the series, which was produced and written by Phoebe Waller-Bridge, alongside Sandra Oh. Comer's standout performance as the Russian assassin quickly made her a fan favorite among audiences, and earned her an Emmy Award® for lead actress in a drama series in 2019, as well as a BAFTA Award for leading actress. The show received an RTS award as well. The third season of "Killing

Eve” premiered on BBC America and AMC on April 12, 2020 and garnered Comer another Emmy Award nomination for lead actress in a drama series, with the show receiving BAFTA and SAG nominations. Production on the fourth and final season began this summer, with episodes premiering in 2022.

She will next be seen in Ridley Scott’s “Napoleon,” opposite Joaquin Phoenix. In April 2020, Comer was announced to be the first global brand ambassador of luxury skin-care brand, Noble Panacea. Additional credits include “Free Guy,” opposite Ryan Reynolds for director Shawn Levy; “Star Wars: The Rise of Skywalker”; Alan Bennett’s “Talking Heads”; and “Snatches: Moments from Women’s Lives” (BAFTA nominated – Best Short Form Programme).

Comer’s additional television credits include: Channel 4’s “Help,” opposite Stephen Graham, on which she also served as executive producer; “The White Princess,” “Thirteen” (BAFTA and RTS nominated), “Rillington Place,” “Doctor Foster,” “Lady Chatterley’s Lover,” “My Mad Fat Diary,” “Remember Me,” “Inspector George Gently,” “Vera,” “Law & Order: UK,” “Coming Up,” “Casualty,” “Good Cop,” “Silent Witness,” “Doctors,” “Justice,” “Waterloo Road,” “Holby City” and “The Royal Today.”

**BEN AFFLECK, p.g.a. (Pierre d’Alencon/Co-Screenwriter/Producer)** has been recognized for his long-standing career as a director, actor, writer and producer as a recipient of two Academy Awards®, three Golden Globe Awards®, two BAFTA Awards, and two SAG® Awards.

Affleck’s upcoming projects include George Clooney’s “The Tender Bar,” and Robert Rodriguez’s action thriller “Hypnotic.” Affleck recently received critical acclaim, along with a best actor Critics Choice nomination for his work in Gavin O’Connor’s “The Way Back.” Affleck will also be producing the recently announced third season of Showtime’s popular Boston-based drama series, “City on a Hill” with Matt Damon.

Over his decades in the entertainment industry, Affleck’s acting credits include John Madden’s Oscar®-winning “Shakespeare in Love,” David Fincher’s “Gone Girl,” and reprising the iconic role of Batman in three feature films. Affleck’s additional performances include Terrence Malick’s “To the Wonder,” “Extract,” “Pearl Harbor,” “Hollywoodland,” “The Accountant,” “Armageddon” and “Triple Frontier.”

Affleck’s directorial credits include “Live by Night,” “The Town” and “Gone Baby Gone,” for which he earned several critics groups’ awards, including the best directorial debut award from the National Board of Review. In addition to Affleck’s directorial roster, he has co-written screenplays for several films including “The Town,” “Gone Baby Gone” and “Good Will Hunting,” which garnered his first Academy Award® and a Golden Globe Award®.

Most notably, Affleck directed, produced, and starred in the critically acclaimed film “Argo,” which was awarded top honors, including the Golden Globe® and BAFTA Awards for best picture. Among its seven Oscar® nominations, the film took home the title of best picture, best screenplay and best editing. Affleck was also praised for his work on the film, and received the Golden Globe, BAFTA, and Critics’ Choice Awards for best director.

Outside of his successful film career, Affleck is also a passionate advocate and philanthropist who supports many charitable organizations. In March 2010, he founded the Eastern Congo Initiative (ECI), the first U.S.-based advocacy and grant-making initiative wholly focused on the mission of helping the people of eastern Congo support local community-based approaches that create a sustainable and successful society in the long-troubled region.

**RIDLEY SCOTT, p.g.a. (Director/Producer)**, one of the world's foremost directors and producers, is most known for his work on films such as "Thelma & Louise," "Alien," "Black Hawk Down" and "Blade Runner." His film epic "Gladiator" won the Academy Award®, Golden Globe®, and BAFTA Awards for best picture, as well as the Academy Award for best actor in a leading role for Russell Crowe. Throughout his illustrious career, Scott has also been lauded by the Emmy Awards®, Cannes Film Festival and the PGA Awards. In 1968, Scott formed RSA as a commercial production house for some of the world's most recognized corporate brands.

In 1995, Scott formed Scott Free Productions to serve as a production company for his film and television projects such as "Blade Runner 2049," "Murder on the Orient Express," "Hannibal," "American Gangster," "Concussion," the critically-acclaimed CBS drama "The Good Wife," its spin-off "The Good Fight," the highly anticipated upcoming HBO Max sci-fi series, "Raised by Wolves," and the hit telefilms "Killing Lincoln," "Killing Kennedy" and "Killing Jesus." The most recent feature films produced by Scott Free include Jake Scott's "American Woman," Gabriela Cowperthwaite's "The Friend" and Wash Westmoreland's "Earthquake Bird."

As a director, Scott's recent projects include "Alien: Covenant," the sequel to "Prometheus," starring Michael Fassbender and Katherine Waterston, and "All the Money in the World," starring Christopher Plummer, Michelle Williams and Mark Wahlberg. Upcoming films include "House of Gucci," starring Lady Gaga, Adam Driver, Jared Leto, and Al Pacino; and "Napoleon" with Joaquin Phoenix set to star as French military leader and emperor Napoleon.

**NICOLE HOLOFCENER, p.g.a. (Co-Screenwriter/Producer)** wrote, along with Ben Affleck and Matt Damon, the screenplay for Ridley Scott's "The Last Duel," starring Matt Damon, Adam Driver, Jodie Comer and Ben Affleck. She also serves as a producer on the film, which opens in theaters this October.

Holofcener is a critically acclaimed and award winning writer/director, whose films include: "Enough Said" (Fox Searchlight – Julia Louis Dreyfus, James Gandolfini); "Please Give" (Sony Pictures Classics – Catherine Keener, Amanda Peet); "Friends with Money" (Sony Pictures Classics – Catherine Keener, Jennifer Aniston, Frances McDormand); and "Lovely and Amazing" (Lionsgate/Good Machine – Catherine Keener, Brenda Blethyn).

Most recently, she directed Tom Perrotta's HBO Pilot "Mrs. Fletcher," and was nominated for an Academy Award® for best adapted screenplay for the Marielle Heller directed "Can You Ever Forgive Me?" (Fox Searchlight – Melissa McCarthy, Richard E. Grant). Her first film, "Walking

and Talking” (Miramax – Catherine Keener, Anne Heche), was named to Entertainment Weekly’s list of “Top 50 Cult Films of All Time.”

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