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Title: In Transit: Jason Reitman & 'Up in the Air'

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Reitman's third feature *Up in the Air* arrives in theaters today, in a cloud of Oscar buzz and Clooney-swooning. The film, the 32-year old Reitman's follow-up to *Juno*, tracks a constantly traveling, emotionally cut off, professional downsizer's relationships with two women, one a romantic partner, assuredly and sexily embodied by Vera Farmiga, and the other a wunderkind colleague, played by newcomer Anna Kendrick. A few weeks ago (before Reitman produced his infamous pie-chart, otherwise, we would have asked about it too), Reitman got on the phone with us to discuss Kendrick, why it's more rewarding to write for women, how it's easier to get a first movie made than a second and a charming spot called Baywash.

What state are you in?

I'm in a state of panic! I have been flying every day for the last eight days.

So you don't know the answer?

I am in Orlando and yesterday I flew from LA and the day before I flew from London, the day before that Paris and then Madrid.

You're well on your way to a million frequent flyer miles yourself.

I've done this for a long time. Even when I was directing commercials I was doing a lot of travel. I've always been a fan of being on planes. There is a reason I made this movie.

And what was that?

I have to interrupt your question for one second. I am in Orlando and I swear to God I am passing by a bikini carwash with two girls in bikinis sitting on lawn chairs and the place is called Baywash.

That's amazing. It's also 11:50am which is early for bikinis.

Seriously. These are the moments that Diablo is really sad that she's not on the road with me. She was not there for Baywash. These are the times when I am like, "Wow, I should stop and take a photo." But then I am like, "Oh no, they will think I am a creep."

Don't you think people stop and take photos of them all the time? Isn't that the point?

Maybe. But maybe you have to get a carwash if you want to take a photo. I guess it's less creepy for me to say, "This is funny, I want to take a photo." Rather than, "Here, start washing my car and then I am going to start taking photos." That's probably nastier. Oh there's WJR! Sorry there's a radio station here with my initials that we are actually passing. Okay I will answer your questions because I know that's why we're on the phone.

How did you go about casting Anna Kendrick for this part?

I don't want to make it sound as though I went into my career thinking, I'm going to discover talented young actresses. This wasn't an agenda of mine from day one. That's what I find filmmaking is, it's only once you're a few movies in, people look back and go, "Oh you seem to be drawn towards this or you do that." Anna and Ellen [Page, of *Juno*] are obviously very

different actresses but I guess their commonality is the uniqueness of their voices. Ellen Page is unlike anyone her own age and Anna Kendrick is unlike anyone her own age. There is an authenticity to their voices that really stands out amongst a generation of actresses that feel built for television. Anna Kendrick represents the type of girl I never see onscreen, a girl who is just too smart for her own good and kind of thinks she has the world summed up and at the same time is completely vulnerable. She reminds me of two of the girls I have fallen in love with over the course of my life, including my wife. Young girls are almost tormented by their own intelligence. There is kind of a wicked intelligence to Anna Kendrick that reminds me of actresses from the forties and fifties, like Veronica Lake in Sullivan's Travels. They just speak a mile a minute and are so smart and so funny and really one of a kind. It's exciting to put those kinds of voices and faces onscreen. There is so much homogeneity and so much that seems the same I feel excited to put a voice up there that's unlike anything anyone has seen before.

Do you think the homogeneity of actors is a result of pressure for a type from the industry?

I mean look, at the end of the day, people want a certain kind of thing on television and in the theaters, and studios and television networks want to provide that and actors want jobs. So they try to fit the mold that sells. It's kind of obvious. My instinct is to do something different. There is something really addictive about finding fresh voices and I feel like I have done that now, two movies in a row and I would like to continue that.

Did you know you wanted to cast Anna after watching her in Rocket Science, and Ellen after seeing her in Hard Candy?

Yeah, absolutely. I remember seeing both those girls and going, "Who is this and where has she been hiding?" I remember thinking about there is just an insane amount of confidence to both of them. I find that more and more people are scared of being unique. You find that not only among actors but among young people. There is just this tendency to be as similar to the next person as humanly possible. I saw Rocket Science and she just kind of burst from the screen. I don't really know how to articulate how exciting her performance was.

Do you remember as a kid, or younger man, watching films and having a similar feeling about other performances?

It was kind of different because as a kid if I would have seen Anna or Ellen I would have just fallen in love with them and would have been infatuated with them. Now I have a slightly more professional point of view. I remember seeing Reese Witherspoon in Election and being blown away by her. Reese in Election was like, "Why aren't there more parts like this for young women?"

Are you cognizant of writing those kinds of parts for women?

Well, it's more interesting to write for women in that most of men's stories have been told. I want to write original stories. I want to write stories that when you meet these characters and when you when you hear what they're about you feel like you're meeting someone new. A lot of the guy stories, quite frankly, have just been told and there are so many women's stories that have yet to be told.