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Better late than never. The cast and crew of "Friends with Money" share a few laughs as they walked in late for their press conference Friday morning during the photo call. From left to right: Catherine Keener, Joan Cusack, Jennifer Aniston, director Nicole Holofcener and Bobby Stephenson. Photo by Brian Brooks/indieWIRE

## **PARK CITY '06 BUZZ DAILY: Holofcener and Cast Chat About "Friends with Money"; (And Queer Happenings This Weekend)**

by Brian Brooks (January 20, 2006)

The photographers were out en force last night for the **Sundance Film Festival** opening night film, "**Friends with Money**," directed by **Nicole Holofcener** and starring **Jennifer Aniston**, **Joan Cusack**, **Catherine Keener**, **Frances McDormand**, **Jason Isaacs**, **Scott Caan** and **Simon McBurney**.

Most of the cast turned out for the screening at the Eccles in Park City and a nervous Holofcener took it upon herself to make sure the less glitzy members of her production were not forgotten at that starring moment. While Holofcener introduced the cast, she first acknowledged members of her crew on hand and then wished the audience the best; Sundance fest director **Geoff Gilmore** quickly pointed out to Holofcener her snafu and she returned to the microphone to introduce the stars, including Aniston, Cusack and Keener who ventured up to the stage.

The film centers on a group on lifelong friends (Aniston, McDormand, Cusack, and Keener) living on the Westside of Los Angeles. Three of the women have enjoyed a measure of success and financial stability, while one, played by Aniston, faces a dilemma because she leaves her job and turns to cleaning houses for a living in the interim. The

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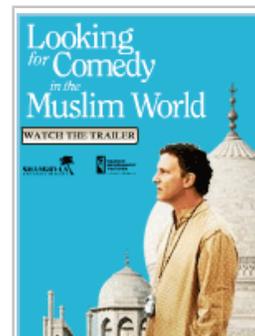


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whirl of social activities and the lives of her friends centered on their husbands and children poses a potential threat to her standing with her longtime friends.

Following the screening Thursday night, crowds then headed over to the Park Meadows Country Club for the official gala opening party. Word on the street from a diverse group of attendees is that the film is a good one...

Press and photographers returned Friday morning for the film's press conference at the Kimball Art Center. The 11am scheduled start-time, however, ran 45 minutes late. When Holofcener and the cast finally made it to the building, Gilmore introduced the conference, acknowledging, "sorry for starting a little late... make that very late."

All was quickly forgiven, though, as Holofcener, sitting in the center of the table along with her cast, again admitted to being anxious, but opened up discussing how the idea of the film came about. "I was very interested in the concept of money and friends [and] what happens when some friends pick up the checks at restaurants when [another] cannot." The director, who first attended Sundance in 1996 with "Walking and Talking," and then "Lovely and Amazing" in 2002, said Sony Pictures Classics obtained the script and liked it.

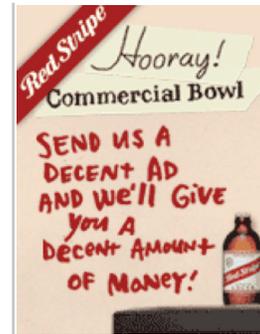
Despite being a Sundance vet, she still felt pressure about her current project. "I don't feel pressure about being here in '96," said Holofcener in response to a question of whether her previous notoriety here was weighing on her. "I feel pressure on how people will receive this movie."

As to be expected, the cast was very supportive of the film and praised Holofcener's story-approach. "What attracted me to the role wasn't necessarily the role, but the entire experience," said McBurney. "Nicole almost never told us anything, but you could feel she was pulling us in a certain [way]."

"I read the script, and it was beautifully written and it felt universal in how people relate to each other," offered Aniston as she sipped coffee during the news conference.

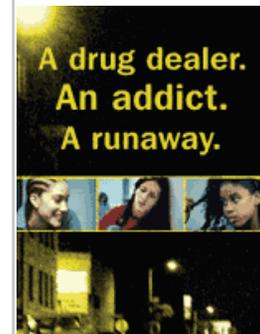
The star factor, of course, was not completely lost to the members of the press assembled, and one press member asked how the media attention most recently given to some members of the cast had affected the shoot, in reference to Aniston's much publicized divorce. "Can I answer that?" said Holofcener. "We mostly did interior shots, so not much press was around..."

Another audience member asked the stars about Sundance's now legendary swag and what any of them have received since arriving. Aniston asked, "What's that?" After explaining "swag" was "free stuff," Keener and Aniston laughed... "Well, we love the pony," said Keener. After more chuckles, Aniston said that she hadn't received anything yet, and wasn't looking for any. Keener then said, "you know, we might get things, but it really isn't 'free.' Everybody wants something



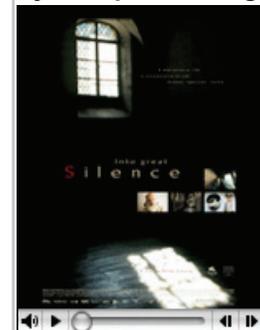
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from you."

Discussing further on the subject of Sundance, one audience member asked what the stars on the panel were doing 25 years ago when the Sundance Institute began. "We weren't born yet," Holofcener joked.

Aniston offered praise for Sundance and said she always enjoys coming here since here. She previously traveled to Park City in 2002 for her role in **Miguel Arteta's "The Good Girl."**

"It's an honor to be here at this festival," said Aniston. "Sundance has allowed me to do things most people wouldn't expect me to do."

### Some of the Happenings to Look for at Sundance Over the Weekend

Saturday at 3pm, Queer Lounge at the Gateway Center will host a conversation with director **Gus Van Sant**. His first feature film "Mala Noche" (1985) and **Cam Archer's "Wild Tiger I Have Known,"** which he executive produced, will lead the fireside chat as part of Queer Lounge panel series.

Continuing on with the gay theme, Planet Out will host its brunch at Ciseros at 11am, while Outfest will host the 10th annual "Queer Brunch" at the Grubsteak House. Director **John Waters** will be in attendance. Should be a hoot.

( posted on Jan 20, 2006 at 03:23PM | filed under [Festival Dispatches](#), [Lead Story](#), [Park City](#) )

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