

## “The Old Man” Screening at the Carsey-Wolf Center: Amy Brenneman and Jeff Bridges on the Stage



Photo by: Jorge Rodal Llano

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On Nov. 23, actors Jeff Bridges and Amy Brenneman presented the new season of the series “The Old Man” at UC Santa Barbara’s (UCSB) Pollock Theater. The event was part of “[Panic!](#)”, a screening series organized by the [Carsey-Wolf Center](#) (CWC). The event began with a pre-screening talk moderated by director and screenwriter Brad Silberling. Alongside the actors, he explored the interpretive and narrative challenges encountered during the pre-production and production process.

“The Old Man,” a production by 20th Television in collaboration with The Littlefield Company, is a thriller series based on the titular 2017 novel by Thomas Perry. Throughout fifteen episodes, the audience follows the story of Dan Chase (Jeff Bridges), a former CIA agent who, 30 years

earlier, conducted intelligence operations in Afghanistan. In the first episode, Dan Chase survives an assassination attempt thwarted by his two rottweilers. Afterwards, he is pursued by the CIA in a plot that uncovers dark secrets from his past.

Following the successful release of the first season on June 16, 2022, the second season premiered on Hulu on Sep. 24. Just two months later, more than half of the audience at the CWC screening raised their hands to answer Silberling's question: "Who has seen any of season two of 'The Old Man'?"

A UCSB English alumni, Silberling's credits include films such as "City of Angels," starring Nicholas Cage and Meg Ryan, and the acclaimed Netflix series "Jane the Virgin," among other titles involving celebrities like Steven Spielberg and Meryl Streep.

"For those of you who haven't seen the show, just know this: there are no capes, superpowers, or leading men gallivanting with women half their age. It is a show that lands into the realities of aging," stated Silberling. As he spoke, the audience's gaze fell on Jeff Bridges, a man who, at 74, is not far from the 1990s celebrated actor he once was. After battling COVID-19, cancer, and an earthquake that forced him to evacuate his home, Bridges hasn't lost the look that made him an icon, such as when he played The Dude in the Coen Brothers' film "The Big Lebowski."

"I also challenge the very foundations of male-centric storytelling," continued the director, casting a knowing glance at actress Amy Brenneman.

"I just don't want to play the girlfriend anymore," responded Brenneman, expressing frustration over past roles where her involvement in the story was limited to supporting the male protagonist. The actress made it clear from the moment she accepted the role of Zoe, Dan Chase's partner in "The Old Man," that she had her own plans for her character: "I want to ensure that Zoe has a fully formed point of view and is not just in support of [the male lead]."

Brenneman, known not only for her acting talent but also for her political activism, refuses to accept roles where female characters are relegated to the background. She recounted an anecdote about challenging Michael Mann, director of "Heat," in which she co-starred with Robert De Niro. Mann asked her to sit in a car waiting for De Niro during one of the film's most action-packed scenes. "I just have to say, in my bones as a woman, I don't think I would do that."

For his part, Jeff Bridges, seasoned on the big screen rather than television, admitted that one of his greatest challenges was working with multiple directors. "I was a little bit concerned with all the different directors. You know, I'm used to movies; you've got one director. But with a TV show, every other episode is a different guy."

The discussion didn't simply focus on the challenges faced during the series' production. The actors also took the opportunity to celebrate their profession. "This is something I love about what we do, and I wish the world would work this way — you get all these people from all

different walks of life, different political, philosophical views,” shared Brenneman, always ready to impart wisdom gained from her experience in the acting world.

The event concluded with a Q&A session from the audience. Many raised their hands, eager for the chance to interact with the stars on stage. However, one question stood out from the rest: “What are the plans for the third season?” Silberling responded without hesitation, “I’m an optimist. I think there will be a third season.” With that, the director bid farewell to the two actors, who exited the stage to a resounding round of applause.