

In Proximity
Maggie Gyllenhaal and Ryan Coogler
Season 3 Episode 23
Final Transcript

Maggie Gyllenhaal: I didn't know anything about IMAX.

Ryan Coogler: Wait, you were in The Dark Knight though?

Maggie Gyllenhaal: I know!

[LAUGHTER]

Ryan Coogler: Nah, it's a euphoric feeling watching images that big when it's your own images.

Maggie Gyllenhaal: Yeah.

Ryan Coogler: It's crazy.

Paola Mardo: Can you talk a little bit about your process for working with actors?

Maggie Gyllenhaal: With Jesse, I would call things out to her. I never did it to Christian. And then one day he was like, "Maggie, can you yell at me too?"

[0:23 - "In Proximity Theme" by Ludwig Göransson]

[VOICEOVER]

Paola Mardo: You're watching and listening to In Proximity. I'm Paola Mardo and today we've got Maggie Gyllenhaal and Ryan Coogler. As you already know, Ryan Coogler is the writer, director and producer of Sinners and the founder of our production company, Proximity Media. Today I had the pleasure of welcoming Ryan back onto the show for a conversation with Maggie Gyllenhaal, the actress, producer, director, and screenwriter. As an actress, Maggie is known for films such as Secretary, Crazy Heart, and the cult classic Donnie Darko, which also starred her brother Jake. And she was also in the HBO TV series, The Deuce and one of Ryan's favorite movies, The Dark Knight, directed by filmmaker and friend of the pod, Christopher Nolan.

Maggie's directorial debut was The Lost Daughter, which she also wrote the screenplay for. In the film, Olivia Coleman plays a professor who spends a seaside vacation in Greece and becomes consumed by a young mother played by Dakota Johnson, and also her memories of her own young motherhood with her younger self. Played by the actress, Jesse Buckley. Jesse also stars in Maggie's new film, The Bride, which is a wild and imaginative new take and continuation of the classic Frankenstein story. Inspired by the 1935 film, Bride of Frankenstein and the original novel by Mary Shelley. The cast is incredible and includes Christian Bale as Frankenstein himself, Penelope Cruz, Annette Benning, her husband, Peter Sarsgaard, and her brother again, Jake Gyllenhaal, who, fun fact, she directs in this film for the first time. It was a real honor joining Maggie and Ryan in a filmmaker deep dive into their process as writers and

directors working with IMAX cameras, working with family on set and making coffee. And for the film heads out there, I highly recommend you check out the classic films Frankenstein and The Bride of Frankenstein. It was a real treat to dive into those two films before this conversation and for seeing Maggie's new film, The Bride. Enjoy.

[VOICEOVER ENDS]

[2:34 - "KN 9 to 5" by Ludwig Göransson]

Paola Mardo: Welcome, Maggie Gyllenhaal.

Maggie Gyllenhaal: Thank you

Paola Mardo: And Ryan Coogler, to In Proximity! Ryan, what are we doing today on this special episode?

Ryan Coogler: We here to celebrate Maggie, in celebration your second feature film The Bride. That's about to come out soon. I had a chance to watch, Paola had a chance to watch. We're going to talk about it a little bit, but first we'll make you some coffee. It happened because Terra, our head of marketing suggested it for our episode with Michael B. Jordan. I usually make the cast coffee whenever we working, whenever I can. So figure I'll do something for you today. This is a V60 setup, so I'm going to do you a pour over drink with that.

Maggie Gyllenhaal: Pour Over you said?

Ryan Coogler: Yeah, I'm about grind. This is going to be loud!

Maggie Gyllenhaal: Great. What kind of coffee do you usually drink?

Ryan Coogler: Man, I do it all. Like, right now it's usually this. I'm usually making myself a pour over in the morning. These are this, this is from Red Bay in Oakland, so I got these sent down.

Maggie Gyllenhaal: What do you drink on set?

Ryan Coogler: Oh man, I start off usually with a black coffee in the morning, usually from crafty. Ammar is here, he could tell you probably how it goes, and depending on the day it goes down from there. I'm drinking way too much when I'm filming on a day shoot, it's probably... Probably three cups.

Maggie Gyllenhaal: That's not...

Ryan Coogler: On an overnight.

Maggie Gyllenhaal: That's not that much

Ryan Coogler: Like big cups, like the big travelers.

[LAUGHTER]

Paola Mardo: I'm pretty sure you guys drink all kinds of different coffee depending on the day, I'm guessing, or the need. When you guys are on set, do you have a particular coffee order?

Maggie Gyllenhaal: I'll be honest with you. Well, I drink a black coffee to start and then like I said, well when I'm cutting I usually drink and I usually drink a black coffee to start and then, like, in the afternoon maybe some kind of latte. If I need a snack, too much coffee and I feel kind of, like, tweaky. I don't know.

Ryan Coogler: That's the exact feeling I'm going for.

[LAUGHTER]

Maggie Gyllenhaal: Like, those moments when you're shooting at night, I don't know if you have this, but I do where you're like, how am I going to go on?

Ryan Coogler: Yeah.

Maggie Gyllenhaal: That time you hit that gets a little trippy like four o'clock in the morning.

Ryan Coogler: Oh, yeah.

Maggie Gyllenhaal: And you're like, huh?

Ryan Coogler: Especially those first two or three nights.

Maggie Gyllenhaal: Yeah, or 11.

Ryan Coogler: How many did you guys do on The Bride?

Maggie Gyllenhaal: We did a lot of nights on The Bride, but I really wanted to split 'em up. I didn't want to go full chunk of nights and chunk of days. I wanted to try to go into splits and then a couple days of nights if I could. I just feel like it's more sane. How about you?

Ryan Coogler: I mean we were dealing with a lot of nights, but we ended up with more nights because of weather, so we ended up doing the dreaded night time inside.

Maggie Gyllenhaal: Oh yeah, we did too.

Ryan Coogler: Because we got flipped around.

Maggie Gyllenhaal: We did too.

Paola Mardo: Can I ask about that? What is night time inside? For those who don't know?

Ryan Coogler: On movies, you work 10 to 12 hour days and you usually want, it's a lot of union rules with transportation and active turnaround, crew turnaround. So if you work a traditional 12 hour day like we do in the States with the turnaround, your schedule slides and so you might start off on a Monday with a 7:00 AM crew call and by Friday you could be at 10 or 11. And then

you add 12 to that and you weren't going home on Monday, you were going home at seven o'clock. You know, come Friday, you're going home at midnight and it starts to eat into your weekend. And when you have to do night photography, you want to make sure it's absolutely necessary for the visuals that you have, if that makes sense. So you never want to be shooting night time when you inside and you can't see that it's dark outside, but sometimes the schedule gets nip right in a way where it just happens. And we got bit like that on Sinners, but we ended up doing some great work. But yeah, it is tough. Because you living like a vampire, you know what I mean?

Paola Mardo: Literally!

[LAUGHTER]

Maggie Gyllenhaal: Kind of perfect for you. The same with us. We had Christian Bale had six hours of makeup. So if we ever had, which is unusual for someone who's in almost everything, it's I think the realness of his look that took so long. If he wanted to look more like a monster mask, I think it would've been easier. But putting it all, making it look so natural is what really took the time. But because of that, if ever there was a sequence, like the one in the ballroom

Ryan Coogler: Right.

Maggie Gyllenhaal: Where he's in everything, our days if he had five or six hours of makeup, just kept getting pushed later and later and later. So by the end, we were doing the same thing night inside, you call it, where we were shooting inside. There was no reason why we had to be shooting all night, but we were finishing at five o'clock in the morning.

Paola Mardo: Oh man.

Maggie Gyllenhaal: Yeah.

Paola Mardo: How is it Ryan?

Ryan Coogler: Not bad, yeah, not bad. It's smoke.

Paola Mardo: And what's special about pour over?

Ryan Coogler: I think you taste the coffee a little bit more. It is more control and then it is a little bit more ritualistic. So it's like, it kind of calms me down when I'm feeling anxious in the morning. A lot to do. You usually take three to three and a half minutes, so it's a little quick little meditation type of situation. That recipe doesn't yield a ton of coffee, so...

Maggie Gyllenhaal: Thank you.

Ryan Coogler: It's not full, it's usually two full cups.

Paola Mardo: Thank you, very much!

Maggie Gyllenhaal: Cheers.

Ryan Coogler: Cheers. Cheers.

Paola Mardo: Cheers, thank you! Cheers to you! Smooth.

Maggie Gyllenhaal: Yum.

Ryan Coogler: Aight, Cool.

Maggie Gyllenhaal: Great!

Paola Mardo: Thank you for that.

Ryan Coogler: Absolutely.

[8:56 - "In Proximity Theme Stinger" by Ken Nana]

Paola Mardo: Here we are, Maggie and Ryan. Thank you for the coffee. It's keeping us fueled and caffeinated. I feel like I got to hold it up like this. Ryan, you mentioned earlier, you and I just saw *The Bride*. You just saw it very recently as well. If you want to kick us off.

Ryan Coogler: Yeah, the big one I would say is why this story for your second one, having seen it. I can kind of draw some parallels between this and *The Lost Daughter* type of literary adaptation of sorts. Why is this your second feature film?

Maggie Gyllenhaal: I think I am interested, I was really when I started working on this too, what's monstrous outside of us, but also what's monstrous inside of each of us? I guess I also thought, you know, what about a woman monster? I guess I was interested in also just the idea of *The Bride of Frankenstein*. I had only thought of this Elsa Lanchester with the amazing hair. But this idea of Frankenstein, who in the book and in all the old movies is, I mean, he's violent and he does horrible things, but he's also gentle and really smart and so lonely. And in the book, the whole thing, he wants the whole thing he wants, once he gets able to say what he wants is to not be alone.

So, it's fair enough for him to say, please, someone help me, but please dig up a woman from the ground who doesn't know what you're doing and bring her back to life so she can be my girlfriend. I think you have to ask, what about her? And that's what I think the movie's asking that what about her? And then on top of it, there is a character who is dead and she has a whole lot more that she wants to say. And I think she thinks that some of it is too monstrous, too big, too much. She says in the beginning to even think it, let alone say it out loud.

Paola Mardo: I find that really interesting because the original *Bride of Frankenstein* film, spoiler alert, she shows up at the very end. It's called *Bride of Frankenstein*, but she shows up at the very end of the film and she doesn't even speak.

Maggie Gyllenhaal: No.

Paola Mardo: And yet in your film you made her speak, let her speak, made her speak...

Maggie Gyllenhaal: Allowed her to speak.

Paola Mardo: Allowed her to speak. You really created who? Her character in a lot of ways because we only saw, even though she's so iconic, the look of her in the 1930s film, we didn't really know who she was. She didn't really get a chance. She didn't have,

Maggie Gyllenhaal: Yeah, it's called the Bride of Frankenstein, but it's not the Bride of Frankenstein. I hadn't seen the movie just to say I was thinking about what I wanted to do. I saw this guy at a party who had a huge tattoo of the Bride of Frankenstein on his forearm, his whole forearm. And I was like, oh yeah, her, right, what is that? Went back, looked her up on the internet, and then I was like, I got to watch that movie, watch the movie. And I was like, she's not in it. She's like in it for two minutes. And she literally does not say one word, but she's kind of amazing. She wakes up from this weird experiment that she has nothing to do with, and even though she doesn't say no, she's definitely giving no.

Paola Mardo: Yeah, she screams, right?

Maggie Gyllenhaal: She screams and she's basically saying, what the fuck is going on? And especially in 1936, that must've been a kind of radical thing for a woman to do.

Paola Mardo: So let's talk about The Bride, your actor, Jesse Buckley. She played Mary Shelley as well as Ida and the bride of Frankenstein herself. She was a badass. So how do you actually come up with that character in the writing process? Because in the original film, she doesn't speak. We see her at the very end of Bride of Frankenstein, even though the film is called that. And in your film you not only give her a voice, you give her agency, what went into the writing process and creating that character and also working with Jesse?

Maggie Gyllenhaal: I really let myself write this very much kind of from an unconscious place. There was a moment where it was set in like 1870s after the Civil War. At that time, lots of people were speaking to the dead. There was a whole job called being a spiritualist where, and mostly it was women who had to make money somehow after the men in their life had been killed. And I liked this idea of, okay, is people being brought back from the dead? Maybe I'll set it then. And then it shifted and became the thirties when I realized I wanted Frankenstein to be so lonely that the only relationship in his life was with someone on a movie screen. So then I just kind of let it flow and went wherever it was going. And then the weird stuff of, like, "I would prefer not to," I couldn't even remember that comes from a Melville story. And I was like, I know that's from a book, but what book? I just kind of let it all flow. I don't know if you're like that or if you outline or how do you do it?

Ryan Coogler: I'm similar to where you were saying it is more unconscious until I zero in on the thing and then I outline. So for me, it's like an hourglass that shape where it's like unconscious and in the moment an outline is where it gets tight.

Maggie Gyllenhaal: Right.

Ryan Coogler: And then writing the script, making and editing it widens all again, if that makes sense.

Maggie Gyllenhaal: Totally.

Ryan Coogler: Directing is in there somewhere. But, I love the idea of this relationship that he has with this star, but it was so interesting to see Jake as his movie star he connects to. I'm curious how you settled on that

Maggie Gyllenhaal: Well, I think if you're going to look at the monstrous aspects, I guess I really believe we all have them. I don't think it's just me. So that is completely at odds with fantasy movie worlds.

Ryan Coogler: Right.

Maggie Gyllenhaal: You know, the biggest problem is that I just can't seem to get this door open or whatever from a thirties comedy. Those two things don't totally go together, even if you're start to get older and go like, wow, my love, which is deep and important to me, doesn't look totally like the love that I've seen in films. Also, my experience is also that so few movies were directed by women that there was an aspect where I'm like, oh wow, that experience that I've seen in all the movies I've watched my entire life is kind of like my experience. Not exactly, but I'll just, I'll do a little translation and then I'll be able to fit myself into it. Right? So I guess I was interested in the difference between the fantasy movie experience, which actually I love those thirties movies. I love them. And I did a lot of research on them for the movie and watched with my daughters. And I was delighted and loved the clothes and loved the dancing and loved the lighting and love the sets, but the monstrous parts of me don't fit in there. And so I liked the frisson that created. And then to ask Jake, who is just a beautiful singer and so beautiful, his heart, his face, his everything, you know, to be Ronnie Reed.

Paola Mardo: The Hollywood matinee idol who Frankenstein played by Christian Bale is basically idolizes and he loves his movies and is a huge fan.

Maggie Gyllenhaal: And not only idolizes, but I think fantasizes that he has a relationship with him, that they're dear friends, you know, walking through life together. But to ask Jake to do that, who is both beautiful in so many ways and also in touch with the monstrous in himself, I know it. He's my brother, so I know him. I just thought it worked.

[17:53 - "Good Times" by Ludwig Göransson]

Paola Mardo: Sinners and the bride both have extraordinary casts, and it's very clear that you both care a lot about your actors. Can you talk a little bit about your process for working with actors, especially on these two films?

Maggie Gyllenhaal: Yeah. Well, I don't know about you, but one interesting thing is having been an actress for so long, I've worked with so many directors and you haven't worked with any probably.

Ryan Coogler: Zero. I mean, I've produced for them. I worked for directors as a producer, but even then it's a limited number. But you...

Maggie Gyllenhaal: I've worked with so many.

Ryan Coogler: Yeah. Incredible.

Maggie Gyllenhaal: Yes, incredible ones. Ones that were more difficult, ones that were gifts to me, all sorts of things. And one thing I know having been the person who's not ultimately the one in power, is just how valuable freedom is, and to feel heard and to feel seen, and to feel actually, honestly, to feel loved. Because I think it's harder to be a director, no question. It is a way harder job.

Ryan Coogler: It's all

Paola Mardo: Really?

Maggie Gyllenhaal: But I think it's just kind of, it's wild what actors do and so valuable and it does need to be protected with love and freedom. So what I learned on *The Lost Daughter* though was because I was so excited with all my thoughts and ideas about how I'm going to help the actors get to their place. And I love, this is my favorite thing, I think is that each actor needs to be spoken to in a completely different way. And you don't know what it is until you meet them.

Ryan Coogler: I like to say I live in a house like my producer, my wife, she's bilingual. Really sneakily trilingual, but she won't admit to one.

Maggie Gyllenhaal: What are the three?

Ryan Coogler: She speaks American Sign Language. That's what she went to school for.

Maggie Gyllenhaal: Oh, wow!

Ryan Coogler: So, she was an interpreter for over a decade. And then her mom speaks Visayan, which is a dialect of Tagalog, and she understands that too. I think she could speak it, but yeah, she never accounts to it. But then obviously she got English. For me, I barely got English.

Paola Mardo: Not true!

Ryan Coogler: But when it comes to being on a set, especially if you got a sizable cast, that's my time to feel, like, multilingual. You know what I mean? They all got their own languages.

Maggie Gyllenhaal: And to hold them all in your head, the way you hold your kids. You know you're like, okay, Christian's over here doing this, this and Jesse's here and Penelope's over there, and Peter's there. Okay, I'll put Peter down for a second. He's good. And how you're holding everyone and their needs. And I do think being a parent really trained me for that. But Jesse, okay, so what I realized is there were things, if I said to Olivia Coleman some of the trippy shit I say to Jesse, Olivia Coleman would be like, "Maggie, stop. What?" But Jesse, I speak to just as if I were speaking to myself and it goes in water for her. I can tell. Jesse, I think a couple of people have asked me because we've worked together before, is Jesse my muse? I think it's not a respectful enough word for what Jesse is to me. And I know you have long-term also relationships, like, with Michael, but I think that she's a partner. And I think when I was an

actress, I wanted so much to feel like I was an artistic partner. And some people let me feel that way and asked for my mind to be a part of the work. And some people didn't.

Ryan Coogler: You prefer it to be.

Maggie Gyllenhaal: I want everyone's mind. I'll be able to go like, okay, cool, I just need a little more of this and maybe a tiny bit less of this.

Ryan Coogler: But I mean, when you were acting, you preferred to be included in that process.

Maggie Gyllenhaal: Yeah, I was doing the part because I also had something to say with it, and maybe you hadn't thought of that, and maybe it's a gift to you for me to offer my mind to the project. So anyway, Jesse's mind is all over this, and I really hope it's true for all of my, I mean incredible actors in this movie. Of course, casting is so major.

[22:41 - "Good Times" by Ludwig Göransson]

Paola Mardo: Could I ask about the trippy shit you're talking about?

Maggie Gyllenhaal: Yeah, sure.

Paola Mardo: Just because a lot of our audience, they're filmmakers, they're young creatives, they aspire to do what you guys are doing and make films in IMAX. What is your trippy, directorial advice that you give?

Maggie Gyllenhaal: One thing I learned as an actress is don't share what's getting you, where you're going with anybody. I mean, I will share with you, I'm not acting right now. And I mean haven't did a long time, but I remember I had this incredible teacher who is dead now, but yeah, she was an old woman when she died, but really, really taught me a lot. And I remember her giving me a note in The Honorable Woman, this TV show that I did, where she said, I think you might be a hundred years old in this scene and tripping on mushrooms. I was like...

Ryan Coogler: That's incredible. That's an incredible note.

Maggie Gyllenhaal: But, if I had told, and I wasn't, I was just 35 or whatever and not tripping on mushrooms, and I took the note and I had just written it in my script and I just tried playing around with that, being a hundred years old and tripping on mushroom, if I had told that. Now that director might've been okay, but if I had told that to really almost any other director, they would've been like, don't do that. So that's what I mean if I said to Jesse, she can take that and consume it in a way that just only frees her and opens her up. And some people want something more literal and some people want one note at a time, and some people will take six and just see what falls off that. How about you? I'm curious to know how you work with actors.

Ryan Coogler: I came up doing short films and in film school, and we were doing copy credit meal.

Maggie Gyllenhaal: What is that?

Ryan Coogler: You know what that is?

Paola Mardo: Yes, so he's talking about copy credit meal. When you're working on a student film or a low budget film and you're looking for actors and you're casting actors, sometimes you can offer a copy, credit and meal instead of payment. So they get a copy of the film, they get a credit on the movie, and you give them a meal.

Ryan Coogler: We had a SAG contract at USC, so we could work with SAG actors, but we were working with folks that was down to do a student doing a student movie, not get paid these movies, 90% of 'em, maybe a higher percentage. They just kind of were in academic circumstances. Every once in a while, we might go to a festival. So you working with actors of varying calibers and your short film is the most important thing in your life

Maggie Gyllenhaal: Yes.

Ryan Coogler: At the moment. You know what I mean? So I was actually used to, and I was new to working with actors and I was young, so I was giving a lot of verbiage. And what I didn't realize was generally the better the actor generally, the better the actor, the less they want. It was work to be had. But I was flying my way and I did, I was working with Mike, Mel Diaz, a bunch of great actors. We had Octavia Spencer, and I'll never forget, we were in my aunt's house. My uncle actually just passed a few days ago. We were at my aunt's house and she had to do the scene where she gets the call at, her son's been shot and that she got the call from his partner, and she's not with his body. They took him away in an ambulance. She doesn't know what's going on, just that he got shot and she's waking up in the middle of the night. What was her birthday? And I'm working with, I tell you, who's this brilliant actress. And I'm talking to her, talking to her, to her working through the scene, and I don't feel like we've, we've gotten it just yet. And she says to me, she says, "Hey, let me do one where I just work through them all." And I'm like, all right, cool. I go outside and I watch it on the monitor because it was in such a small house. That's where I had to be. And it was absolutely perfect. And I just realized, oh, I lost all this time. I should have did that first. And if that didn't work, then talk. So that taught me to just see what that actor has first.

Maggie Gyllenhaal: Yeah.

Ryan Coogler: And receive that, react to that, and then maybe we talk about it. And that changed everything, that moment there with Octavia. And it's been like that for me since I'm constantly, it's a little bit like dancing or I want to see what your rhythm is, how much you need, and just get in, get out. Unless I get in and you grab me. You know what I mean? Then I'm good because I can talk.

Maggie Gyllenhaal: And also, I think Jesse, she and I had worked together. We started shooting the Ida stuff. So the whole first opening sequence, which is really intense, crazy, right?

Ryan Coogler: Yeah, at the dinner.

Maggie Gyllenhaal: Yeah.

Ryan Coogler: I'm like, yo, where is this going?

Maggie Gyllenhaal: Yeah, I know, I know. But that was really intense. And so she and I were just immediately back into working mode. And I would with Jesse, now, I would not do this with everybody. I would call things out to her as she was working.

Ryan Coogler: While camera's rolling?

Maggie Gyllenhaal: Yes.

Ryan Coogler: Wow!

Maggie Gyllenhaal: I do look at the monitor, and I didn't think I would be the director that looks at the monitor, but I need to, I can't imagine, oh, this is this lens and this is this frame. I need to see it and it makes such a difference. But I had the little one that you can look at this, and I'd be kind of crouched down somewhere and I'd call things out to her. I never did it to Christian. Christian, I would come over, I'd always whisper to everyone so everyone else doesn't know. And I'd whisper. And then one day he was like, "Hi, can you yell at me too?" And I was like, "Yeah, okay." And then I did. I started. And not always, and there's times when no one else can know what you're saying, and it's not for anyone else to know. And then there's other times where you're like, it doesn't matter. Everyone's doing their job. We're doing our job, and I am just talking to you. And that's one of my favorite parts.

Ryan Coogler: Just conducting almost.

Maggie Gyllenhaal: Yeah. Do you do that?

Ryan Coogler: It's a habit that's very hard for me to break. I was taught not to, but I will do it if the actor asked for it. At school, I was taught to always one-on-one, always in private with the actor. And that's what I'll do until they'll say, "Hey, just call it off." You know what I mean? Or keep it rolling. They'll tell you what they need. Especially the super experienced ones.

Maggie Gyllenhaal: Yeah. Well that's the thing is I think you're right. I do think that's a good tenet of just between us whispering your ear

Ryan Coogler: As a base, yeah.

Maggie Gyllenhaal: But then you know how they tell you in third grade or something, "Don't start a sentence with 'and.'" You're like.

[LAUGHTER]

Ryan Coogler: You can't break that.

Maggie Gyllenhaal: With the, and you trust each other and you respect each other and you love each other. Well then, you know.

Ryan Coogler: But also I think for you, I'm not an actor. People know you can act. They know you do this. You know what I mean? They've seen your work. So I think it's a different thing. If I have somebody coming to set, maybe they're an executive now or they're in a producer position, but they've directed before, or they have AD before. You know what I mean? And they

say, hey, it is a thing with me where it's like, alright, I'm going to hear what you're saying differently. Not that I wouldn't listen to somebody else, I listen to everybody, right? The movies for everybody. But I'm going to hear, hear what you say yourself a little bit different. You know what I mean?

Maggie Gyllenhaal: But I also think people also know you can direct. So in the same way, it's like as an actor, you're like, there are so few people. It is such a hard job. When someone could do it well, you're like, I'm giving you my heart, I'm giving you my trust. Just bring it and we'll do as best we can to figure out how to make this real.

Ryan Coogler: How do you direct your brother? Not only we talking about these directing style. I was like, what was that like? Was this the first time you directed him?

Maggie Gyllenhaal: So interesting. Yeah. Well, I guess I think first of all, I really think, do you know my brother?

Ryan Coogler: Of course.

Maggie Gyllenhaal: Okay, good. I just was I feel like you guys would really like each other.

Ryan Coogler: Oh, I love him. Yeah. I don't get to see him as much as I would like. But yeah, when I do this, when we do Texas, great.

Maggie Gyllenhaal: I could just see that. I didn't know that, but I can see that. Listen, honestly, I think it all has to do with love. And I do really love him. So I mean, Jake in the movie, he's so great. In the movie, he was so funny on set and there's not as much comedy of him in the movie, but I was laughing so hard. Tears were streaming down my face at the monitor. And I love him. I also respect him so much. And so how did I direct him? I just was, it was just such a pleasure. Come over and whisper things, tears still coming down my face.

Ryan Coogler: I'm tight with my little brothers and I worked with them before.

Maggie Gyllenhaal: Oh, really?

Ryan Coogler: So it just seemed like a dream.

[33:07 - "Good Times" by Ludwig Göransson]

Maggie Gyllenhaal: Is your athlete past a part of your work? Yeah. How?

Ryan Coogler: Man. Wow. Yeah. All of the things I learned in my previous career, I apply them to this every day. I learned a lot about, you learn a lot about yourself playing football, crashing and people laying off of passes. I've been knocked unconscious, I mean broken things. And what I learned is I'm a rhythm person. I would have games where I would come out on the field and I would know whether I was going to have a big game or not so big a game within the first few plays

Maggie Gyllenhaal: Really? And, it couldn't shift?

Ryan Coogler: That's the thing. I had to learn how to make it shift. When I got on scholarship, I was like, yo, this can't work. And I never mastered it in football, but I think I figured it out with filmmaking.

Maggie Gyllenhaal: I think that's very much acting, actually. I know that feeling actually as an actor. But then also I've applied it to a director because I started as an actress. So this is almost like the things I've learned as an actress absolutely informed my work as a director. But this thing of if you start off or if the rhythm is off, that can be, I think the opportunity. If you just let that be the case for something even more exciting and alive and interesting to happen, if you stop for a second and go like, something is happening here. What is it? Something bubbles up usually that's valuable.

Ryan Coogler: Yea, that was the lesson for me. Because what I would do is I would fight through it. You know what I mean? Instead of acknowledging it, even though I knew it, I would try to.

Maggie Gyllenhaal: Yeah, but you were so young.

Ryan Coogler: Yeah, yeah. But I mean, it is a thing. But so for me now I'm like, alright, I got to do what I can to make sure I'm in rhythm. And if I'm out of rhythm, I got to acknowledge it. Can either take a break or use it as an opportunity to work on...

Maggie Gyllenhaal: To get into some weird thing that's making you be out of rhythm.

Ryan Coogler: Exactly.

Maggie Gyllenhaal: And put it in the work.

Ryan Coogler: Exactly.

[35:48 - "In Proximity Theme Stinger" by Ken Nana]

Maggie Gyllenhaal: Thinking about coming here, I rewatched the tutorial that you gave about aspect ratio, and I was like, damn, I got to prep because I learned so much technically making this movie. I mean if you look at *The Lost Daughter*, it had an incredible cinematographer, H  l  ne Louvart, who made a choice together that was obviously not IMAX. There's no changing aspect ratio in that movie. I learned so much from her. It was as if I thought when I started to make that movie, I thought, I don't know about camera, I don't know about the visuals. I do know about actors. I do know about storytelling. I've lived my life telling stories this way. And then I realized when I started to work with her and prep with her, I was like, no, not only do I really care about this, I really care about this. I care about light, I care about framing. I care about lenses. I just didn't know what they were called. So I learned a lot there. But then coming to this movie, totally different scope with Larry Sher as my cinematographer, I really felt like I was in a kind of wild school. And I was thinking about it. I called him today and I was like, "What was the name of that camera that we used to shoot the chase sequence at night? Because I want to talk about it today." And he's like, "FX three." "Right, right! FX three."

Ryan Coogler: So y'all were predominantly Sony, huh?

Maggie Gyllenhaal: Yeah.

Ryan Coogler: Yeah, Venice.

Maggie Gyllenhaal: We used the Sony, yeah, Venice Two. And we used a couple other things. We had a Phantom for one.

Ryan Coogler: A Phantom for the stairs?

Maggie Gyllenhaal: No, that was not. That was something else.

Paola Mardo: Red Raptor?

Maggie Gyllenhaal: Raptor!

Ryan Coogler: Oh the Red Raptor, okay.

Maggie Gyllenhaal: Yes. And then there's this, I love the shot of her in black and white where she kind of arches her back during the reinvigoration. That's the Phantom. I'm newer at the technical stuff, but so thrilled by it. And when I called Larry to ask the name of that camera, he had just been talking to American Cinematography and he said, he was saying about me that I'm really excited to learn, but I'm not excited to learn about everything.

Ryan Coogler: Right, I got you.

Maggie Gyllenhaal: I don't know how to put the timer on the thing for the espresso maker and my whatever. I don't know how to make the coffee be hot at 7:00 AM. But there are things I want to learn about. And this is one of them. I feel like I learned. It's like I learned Italian and I want to talk about it.

Ryan Coogler: Yeah, no, for sure. So for folks watching it at home, we just rattle off a bunch of cameras. So the Sony Venice is like Sony's flagship cinema camera, large format, high definition camera using all of the top tier singing lenses. And you shot on a Venice Two, which is the newest camera body.

Maggie Gyllenhaal: So I think that the main reason why we went with that camera was because we shot both anamorphic

Ryan Coogler: And spherical.

Maggie Gyllenhaal: And spherical. Exactly. And we did that, and we can get into the iMac stuff because we needed to shoot spherical in order to have the space to grow vertically. We also loved the anamorphic lenses. And so the honest truth is there were places where we changed our mind in the edit and we had to center punch the anamorphic lenses.

Ryan Coogler: To get it to cut, which is spherical?

Maggie Gyllenhaal: To have it be a place where we jumped to one, four, three.

Ryan Coogler: Got you.

Maggie Gyllenhaal: But the Sony Venice Two, you can shoot beautifully with both anamorphic.

Ryan Coogler: Massive, massive sensor.

Maggie Gyllenhaal: Yes.

Ryan Coogler: And great color addition.

Maggie Gyllenhaal: And dark blacks, and you can shoot in the dark beautifully. So I don't know. So that was why I think we went mainly with that camera.

Paola Mardo: For those who are not as technical, myself included, because we did have you sit with your cinematographer on Sinners, Autumn Durald Arkapaw.

Maggie Gyllenhaal: I want to see that as well.

Paola Mardo: Yeah, I highly recommend we'll drop the link below. What I really love, because you guys got technical about that, very similar to what you guys are doing here, but she talked about how you guys started from a place of emotion. That's what dictated a lot of the visuals. And I wonder if you could start there too, your decision to shoot for IMAX and use these different cameras and lenses. What was it in your story or your film that you wanted to project in such a big screen and big format?

Maggie Gyllenhaal: Absolutely. Everything for me is based on something kind of an emotional storytelling. So I think you could say, okay, The Bride is about this, and they go here and they go here and they go here and they go here and this happens. But really there's a whole nother story underneath those basic plot points that is a tiny embroidery, shifts of emotion between the people on the screen, and that's really what motivates all of the plot points in the entire movie. So I didn't know anything about IMAX. And Warner Brothers came to me and said, we're making this big movie and this big scope and we really want

Ryan Coogler: Wait, hold on. Wait. You were in The Dark Knight though.

[LAUGHTER]

Maggie Gyllenhaal: I know. I think that was one of the only movies I've ever seen in IMAX.

Ryan Coogler: Wait, you can't say that to me. Because I went to see the Dark Night at 4:00 AM in IMAX and you killed it in that movie, so you like, oh, anything. I'm like, wait, hold on.

Maggie Gyllenhaal: I watched it at Lincoln Square in IMAX at the premiere, and I had no idea we were shooting that. I had no idea what was happening when I was on the set with it. I had no idea.

Ryan Coogler: Do you remember it being loud? Like the camera being loud?

Maggie Gyllenhaal: That's an interesting question because I've thought about that since, not really. I do remember, I did zero ADR.

Ryan Coogler: Wow, you are blowing my mind right now.

[41:49 - "Good Times" by Ludwig Göransson]

Maggie Gyllenhaal: So I didn't even know. I was like, okay, well, again, kind of like the way I thought I felt about lenses and lighting and cameras and aspect ratios. When I started *The Lost Daughter*, I thought, I don't know. I don't really care about IMAX. And then I came to care deeply about it. I stopped you at that gala event thing, and I was like, I had just come from my IMAX...

Ryan Coogler: Tesh.

Maggie Gyllenhaal: Yes, that day.

Ryan Coogler: I remember that.

Maggie Gyllenhaal: And I was like, "Can we talk?"

Ryan Coogler: It's a euphoric feeling watching images that big, but also when it's your own images. It's crazy. Because when you're working as a director, I don't know what your process is like. It is very clear you are technical, but you also are an actor director as well. Right? That's very clear from *The Lost Daughter* to this. Even if you are looking at the monitor, it's small. It can only be so big and it can only be so big in editorial. So when you see your work on IMAX.

Maggie Gyllenhaal: It's amazing.

Ryan Coogler: It's crazy, right?

Maggie Gyllenhaal: It's amazing. And I was even looking at that thing you did, the explanation of the aspect ratios and the different ways of seeing the movie where you look at your own frame and then you show the expansion so that you can see what it is that we're offering. First of all, you asked me what was motivating the kind of IMAX changes because I had no point of reference. Even though I saw *The Dark Knight* in IMAX with changing aspect ratios, I didn't know what I was watching. So they asked me to do it, and I didn't know the form, so I just imagined it myself. Larry and I, Larry had worked on *Joker* with IMAX changes and stuff, but he explained so much to me and then it just all, I just imagined it. And so I think the way we used it, at least the IMAX guys told me it's unusual, but like you said, the vertical expansion is motivated by something emotional, something in the story. It's not, I mean, actually, I was trying to remember if that FX Three car Chase even expands to One, Four, Three or if it's just One, Nine, Oh. I don't even think we did expand it because it wasn't the place to expand in the movie. There's lots of magic and there's times where we go into a character's mind and almost always we do full expansion there. Well, one thing I am interested in, I know other people have done it, but I got interested in going as slowly as I could with the actual animating of the expansion. Do you do that or you pop?

Ryan Coogler: So in Sinners, we both cut to expanded ratios and animated it. We would decide based on what was happening when, but we didn't. Our expansion timing was really based on the music because it was the Movie kind of a stealth musical. So you guys were playing with experiment and seeing how slow you could do it?

Maggie Gyllenhaal: Sometimes over cuts.

Ryan Coogler: Oh, that's beautiful.

Maggie Gyllenhaal: Yeah, it really was. I actually have so many thoughts about all of these things. What can you do? You know what I mean? So I think that maybe hadn't been done. I didn't know it hadn't been done. It was just that when you're watching the IMAX version, you're like, no, no, no. Actually, in order to make this have the impact it needs to have both because of music and just because of cutting. It would be better to start the expansion here. We make the cut, he's coming around her. I'm thinking of one of Frank's fantasies of dancing, and it's just better. You could just feel it. It's just better when it's slower and it's slower, and then we cut and it's still happening. It's still happening. The weirdest one though, that we did in the very beginning, we start in One, Four, Three. If you can be in One, Four, Three, the movie starts there and you can't totally feel it because it's black. It's Mary Shelley and it's black around her. But then we cut to the restaurant scene with Ida, which was shot, widescreen, anamorphic. We didn't have anything to expand with. So we actually, instead of growing, we shrink the Mary Shelly One, Four, Three stuff down to the, because there's a dissolve. So over the dissolve, we shrink down to the Two, Three, Nine.

Ryan Coogler: I mean, that's so exciting about different people embracing this technology and bringing our own idiosyncrasies to it,

Maggie Gyllenhaal: Right. And experience.

Ryan Coogler: Yes, yes. But I love that. I love that you were falling in love with this technology, while you were being introduced to it.

Maggie Gyllenhaal: That's true.

Ryan Coogler: I fell in love with it when I saw your movie, so it was a goal for me that was distant. I don't know if I ever get a chance to do it, but in this circumstance, for you, it's like it's an opportunity and you embracing it, kind of, as you learn about it. I love that. And that leads to things that happen for what sounds like for the first time I'm listening to these expansions over cuts.

Maggie Gyllenhaal: Right.

Ryan Coogler: It is just awesome. I think that's so awesome for the audience, I think, you know what I mean, to get new experiences.

[48:00 - "Prox Recs Theme" with Ludwig Göransson and Ken Nana]

Paola Mardo: Yes. So before we go, we like to ask our guests to provide a prox rec or a recommendation for our audience to kind of come away with after they watch this episode. It could be anything. It could be a movie, a book, a TV show, a podcast, something that inspires you in your work as a writer director.

Ryan Coogler: It could be anything. Anything. But yeah, if it's on theme, that's great.

Maggie Gyllenhaal: Well, I was thinking that this, I didn't do it on purpose. I just found myself doing it a couple times and I realized before I started work on projects, I, without even meaning to, would watch Silkwood, the Mike Nichols movie. I was like that. And then I realized, this is the third time I've seen Silkwood. Wow. It's every time before I'm about to start acting in something, and I just think it's so alive. Really inspiring

Ryan Coogler: Man. For me, a long time, it was A Prophet for me. I would watch A Prophet

Maggie Gyllenhaal: Jake, too!

Ryan Coogler: We talked about this. Me and him, you just reminded me, man. But yeah I would watch that right before I make something. This movie was the first time I didn't do that,

Maggie Gyllenhaal: Right.

Ryan Coogler: Yeah. This movie I watched, I think because it was a horror movie in some respects. I was like, I'm going to watch some other things, but I identify with that for sure. My rec is going to be The Lost Daughter.

Paola Mardo: There you go.

Ryan Coogler: Yeah, that's my rec. And we here talking about The Bride.

Paola Mardo: Great recommendation. We'll recommend both, but maybe watch one. The Lost Daughter before The Bride.

Ryan Coogler: They can watch The Lost Daughter when this episode drops.

Maggie Gyllenhaal: There you go.

Ryan Coogler: The Lost Daughter is exceptional. I feel like you got similar to what you're doing in The Bride, but you got all of these, you got all these actors given what I think is career bests at the time. You know what I mean? In concert with each other. I just believed all of 'em, and it's a great, what you call it, like a taster or amuse-bouche for The Bride.

Paola Mardo: There you go.

Ryan Coogler: Get them ready for The Bride because you got the multiple narratives and so much perspective on social contracts, the gendered social contracts, all of that's there. So just keep doing what you're doing. Congratulations on this one.

Paola Mardo: Thank you both for being on In Proximity. Cheers to you all.

Ryan Coogler: Thanks Paola.

Maggie Gyllenhaal: Cheers guys. Thanks for the coffee.

[50:47 - "In Proximity Theme" by Ludwig Göransson]

[VOICEOVER]

Paola Mardo: In Proximity is a production of Proximity Media.

The show is hosted, directed and produced by Paola Mardo.

Executive producers are Ryan Coogler, Zinzi Coogler, and Sev Ohanian.

Theme song and additional music is by Ludwig Göransson.

Patrick Epino is our co-director and director of photography.

Ken Nana is our sound designer and mix engineer.

This episode was edited by Patrick Epino.

The production team includes Celine Mendiola, Joy Woo, and Alexandria Santana.

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[VOICEOVER ENDS]