EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW

A Character That Shows Up in Two Phone Calls.

Steve Buscemi and Parker Posey talk with Paul Salfen about Wild Horse Nine, now in theaters from Searchlight Pictures, and about a Martin McDonagh script you want to start over, a part that arrives in two phone calls, and an island that felt like time travel.

Interview by Paul Salfen · AMFM Magazine



Official theatrical poster for Wild Horse Nine. From the Searchlight Pictures press room. The one-sheet lists a theatrical date of November 6.

Parker Posey was in Bangkok, shooting the third season of HBO's *The White Lotus*, when the wish arrived. Sam Rockwell, she told Paul Salfen, was preparing to go do work on Martin McDonagh's next movie. "God, I wish I could work with him," she said. "I'd seen his writing. I'd seen his plays and his movies."

She got the work, and it was not a large one on paper. "To create a character that shows up in two phone calls," Posey said. The character is Marge, the wife of Rockwell's CIA officer, Lee, in McDonagh's *Wild Horse Nine*, which is now in theaters from Searchlight Pictures after opening in the United States and Canada on November 6, 2026. Shortly before the 1973 Chilean coup, Lee and his partner, Chris, played by John Malkovich, are dispatched from Santiago to Easter Island by their bureau chief, MJ, played by Steve Buscemi. Among the island's iconic statues, and as the longtime partners wrestle with their dark pasts and present conspiracies, Chris's newfound bond with a pair of rebellious students, played by Mariana di Girolamo and Ailín Salas, threatens to send everyone's trip to this remote paradise sideways. Tom Waits is officially billed with Posey.

Posey still went to Easter Island for eight days. She heard Malkovich and Rockwell run lines and talk theater stories. She listened to Malkovich talk about Steppenwolf, the Chicago company he helped found. She had seen him, she said, in Lanford Wilson's *Burn This* "in like 1989 on Broadway." Buscemi, talking with Salfen alongside her, was less interested in the travelogue than in the pages. Reading the script, he said, was an adventure. You get to the end, and then you want to start over. You just don't want to be the weak link. The film around them, they said after finishing the script, is one that really loves being entertaining.

A SCRIPT YOU WANT TO START OVER

Salfen told them it was an honor to talk about the movie, and that anything McDonagh does has a way of standing apart. Posey took the compliment, then explained why the writing is the event.

"It's rare for auteurs to get their films made even, you know, today," she said. "And it used to not be. So when there's great writing out there, you know, it's going to be good. It makes your work like you get to swim in a body of water and play, you know. It's a level that you get to perform at and to be supported by the writing. And it's fun. It's an honor, you know?"

The third season of *The White Lotus*, for which Posey later received an Emmy nomination, had already put her in a much larger public conversation than the independent films that first made her name, including *Best in Show*. The honor she was describing was older than that, and simpler: a writer whose plays and movies she already knew, and a chance to perform at the level the pages allow.

Salfen asked Buscemi if it was the same for him.

"Just reading the script, you know, it's an adventure reading it," Buscemi said. "You get to the end, and then you want to start over. Oh, now I've learned stuff about these characters or my character, and now I have to read it again and, you know, see what other layers and colors are there. And that never stops, you know, even in the shooting. I think Martin likes to play around and he loves actors and he likes to see what we bring to it. And of course, for us, we're working with a master."

Buscemi has spent decades doing exactly that kind of close work, in films including *Reservoir Dogs* and *Fargo* and for years on *Boardwalk Empire*. Here he is the man in Santiago who sends the other two men to the island. The pleasure he described was not the location. It was the reread, and a director who wanted to see what the actors brought once they had learned the colors.

After they finished the script, they said, the feeling was joy. "This movie really loves being entertaining," they said. "It's really enjoying itself and what it can deliver to an audience. And you can feel it. He really put his all in it."

> *"This movie really loves being entertaining."*

YOU JUST DON'T WANT TO BE THE WEAK LINK

Salfen asked what they keep in mind when they go into a film like this, whether there is a line they say to themselves before they walk on set, or in life, that keeps them working at this level. Buscemi's answer was as unromantic as a call sheet.

"For me, it's just know my lines, you know?" he said. "So that I'm not the one who's going to screw up, and I'll have the freedom, you know, to try different things or whatever Martin asked me to do, to sort of modulate the performance. You just don't want to be the weak link going in. Knowing that you're working with an incredible cast, you want to be as good as everybody else. And I feel like I'm only as good as the people that I work with. When you know you're going to be working with such talent, it's just a joy."

> *"You just don't want to be the weak link going in."*

The creed fits the film’s own design. *Wild Horse Nine* is not a star vehicle in the old sense. McDonagh, the writer-director of *In Bruges*, *Three Billboards Outside Ebbing, Missouri*, and *The Banshees of Inisherin*, has again built a small company in which a bureau chief and a wife on the other end of a phone line have to be as precise as the men on Easter Island. Buscemi’s method is to know the lines well enough that he can still play, and then to meet the people around him.



From L to R: Steve Buscemi, Sam Rockwell, and John Malkovich in WILD HORSE NINE. Photo by Searchlight Pictures/Diego Araya Corvalán, Courtesy of Searchlight Pictures. © 2026 Searchlight Pictures. All Rights Reserved.

TWO PHONE CALLS, EIGHT DAYS

Posey described a different kind of precision. Marge does not go to Easter Island in the story. The work, as she told Salfen, was to know what the character wears, and what she looks like, and then to make two phone calls count.

“I was there on Easter Island for eight days,” she said. “So I got to hear John and Sam run lines and talk theater stories and listen to John talk about Steppenwolf. And I’d seen him in *Burn This* in like 1989 on Broadway. So I’m a fan of great movies and actors and storytellers. So it’s exciting, you know, it’s exciting to be a part of it.”



Parker Posey in WILD HORSE NINE. Photo by Searchlight Pictures/Justin Lubin. Courtesy of Searchlight Pictures. © 2026 Searchlight Pictures. All Rights Reserved.

The eight days are the telling detail. A part that shows up in two phone calls did not, in this company, mean a short, isolated job. Posey went to the island anyway, sat with the two leads, and treated the assignment as a chance to be around actors she already admired. Malkovich originated Pale in *Burn This* on Broadway in 1987, in a run that continued into 1988. Posey remembered it as “like 1989.” The date in her telling is the memory of a fan who then found herself, decades later, listening to the same actor talk about Steppenwolf between takes.

MORE THAN A VACATION

Salfen suggested that it sounded like a great paid vacation. Posey did not leave it there.

“It was more than a vacation because, I mean, Easter Island was like time travel,” she said. “This is a mystical, soulful, unusual place and beautiful. So, yeah. What a, how lucky, you know.”

The film premiered in competition at the 83rd Venice International Film Festival on September 3, 2026, before Telluride and a Canadian premiere at Toronto, and it is in theaters now. It is rated R, for pervasive language, some strong violence, drug use, and sexual references, and it runs 1 hour 56 minutes. For Buscemi, the luck was a script he wanted to start over as soon as he finished it, and a cast he did not want to let down. For Posey, it was a wish made in Bangkok, a character who arrives in two phone calls, eight days on the island, and a place that felt like time travel. McDonagh put his all in it, they said. The work was to meet that, even in the briefest scenes.

FIND WILD HORSE NINE

In theaters: Now playing. Opened November 6, 2026, in the United States and Canada, from Searchlight Pictures, following a world premiere at the 83rd Venice International Film Festival on September 3, 2026.

Showtimes and official site: searchlightpictures.com/wild-horse-nine

Official trailer: WILD HORSE NINE | Official Trailer | Searchlight Pictures

The film: Written and directed by Martin McDonagh. Produced by Graham Broadbent, Pete Czernin, Martin McDonagh, and Anita Overland. A Searchlight Pictures release, in association with Film4, of a Blueprint Pictures production. Starring John Malkovich, Sam Rockwell, Steve Buscemi, Mariana di Girolamo, and Ailín Salas, with Tom Waits and Parker Posey. Running time: 1 hour 56 minutes. Rated R for pervasive language, some strong violence, drug use and sexual references.

Interview conducted by Paul Salfen for AMFM Magazine.

Paul Salfen is Managing Editor of AMFM Magazine and a veteran interviewer of film, television, music, and sports figures. He is the author of Going For It!, a collection of Hail Mary moments from the artists and athletes he has spent two decades putting on the record.