



This image released by The Orchard shows Jesse Eisenberg, left, and Devin Druid in a scene from "Louder Than Bombs." — AP

Katie Holmes moves behind the camera for 'All We Had'

Katie Holmes walks into Jean-Georges clutching an oversized paper coffee cup. "I'm the jerk who brought the Starbucks," she laughs, as a waiter swoops down to whisk the offending coffee from her hand. Holmes, casually elegant in jeans and a tan coat, has been holed up in an editing suite, putting the finishing touches on her directorial debut "All We Had." An adaptation of Annie Weatherwax's novel, the film's look at a family pushed into poverty by the 2008 financial crisis seems worlds removed from the crowd at the posh Trump Tower restaurant.

"There was a line in the book, something like, 'Superheroes drive broken-down cars, and they take their kid with them everywhere no matter what,'" Holmes said. "That was such a wonderful theme and a nice thing to put into the world." Holmes not only directed the film, she stars as Rita, a hardscrabble mother fighting to create a better life for her daughter. The story resonated with the multihyphenate, who drew on her relationship with Suri, her 9-year-old daughter with Tom Cruise, to create her character. Emerging as one of the most promising actresses of her generation, with compelling turns in "Wonder Boys" and "Pieces of April" while starring in TV series "Dawson's Creek," Holmes found her subsequent marriage to and divorce from Cruise picked over by tabloids.

She's kept a lower profile in recent years, appearing in Broadway plays, in an arc on "Ray Donovan," and as Jackie Kennedy in "The Kennedys," while largely shunning the spotlight. Holmes got comfortable in the director's chair while shepherding a "30 for 30" documentary about gymnast Nadia Comaneci for ESPN, then set her sights on directing a feature. It was a career move that Jane Rosenthal, her friend and

founder of the Tribeca Film Festival, had urged the actress to make. "When you produce or direct, you have more control of your own destiny," said Rosenthal, who signed on to produce the film. Cablevision and Madison Square Garden chief James Dolan financed the picture, which premieres April 15 at the Tribeca fest.

Holmes meticulously worked out a shot list and storyboarded the project, shot over 24 days last summer in New York City and the Lower Hudson Valley. Even before filming started, she would send Rosenthal photos or videos that inspired her. "One day my daughter and I were going to ballet class," said Holmes, "and the sun was shining a certain way and I was videoing on my iPhone because the shadows were great." Adam Schweitzer, Holmes' longterm agent, helped the actress find the project at the manuscript stage with his team at ICM. He visited the set and came away impressed by the way Holmes juggled multiple roles. "Maybe it comes from being an actress, but she's really great at communicating," said Schweitzer. "She had total command." Overseeing "All We Had" required Holmes to dig deep. "I was trying to find the look and tone," she said. And while the character of Rita was a meaty role, her struggles to keep her family afloat financially were emotionally draining. Despite the twin pressures of both jobs, Holmes insists she was never tempted to stick just to directing. "I'm an actress," she said simply. "You don't give good roles away." "All We Had" premieres at Tribeca on April 15. ICM Partners is handling sales for the film. — Reuters



Innovative storytelling lifts 'Louder Than Bombs'

Few actors, male or female, are better at portraying an innate sense of mystery than the great French actress Isabelle Huppert. Her face seems to hold dozens of expressions all at once. You get the sense that there's always something deeper underneath - and that you'll never really know all of it. And so it should be little surprise that Huppert is the most watchable and, yes, mysterious element of "Louder Than Bombs," by Norwegian director Joachim Trier - even though her character is already dead. The film - intimate and often moving, yet ultimately too disjointed to feel satisfying - examines her character's life only in flashback, exploring the effects of her loss on family members. And yet, though we want to know more about her than we get, she's the most vibrant presence onscreen.

Sympathetic character

Huppert plays Isabelle Reed, a celebrated war photographer. Despite a career spent flirting with danger in far-off locales, her death has come in the most mundane of places: On a road near her home in suburban New York, in a car crash. Isabelle has left three men behind to grieve, all in crucial states of transition. Her husband, Gene (a thoughtful Gabriel Byrne) is an former film actor now teaching in the local school. Her older son, Jonah (Jesse Eisenberg) is a wunderkind university professor and new father, a responsibility he seems highly ambivalent about (when, oh when will Eisenberg play a sympathetic character? Not here.) And her youngest, Conrad (Devin Druid, touching), is just trying to get through high school, adolescence and a painful first crush, not to mention cope with the death of his mother.

The action, such as it is - the film progresses in a decidedly non-linear fashion - begins three years after Isabelle's death. Gene is helping to

organize a retrospective of his wife's work, a project that will involve the dredging up of some unpleasant truths. Richard (David Strathairn), a dashing former colleague of Isabelle's, is writing an article to accompany the show, and tells Gene he'll have to address the true cause of Isabelle's death, which was reported as an accident. Not to give away too much, but each man in the film seems to be at a different place in his understanding of - or explanation for - the tragic event. And so we see different scenarios of the crash unfold.

Everyone misbehaves

This multiple-perspectives technique is one favored by Trier, who's making his English-language debut here, throughout the film (Eskil Vogt co-wrote the screenplay.) At one point, we see Gene, concerned about Conrad, surreptitiously follow his son from a park to a cafe to a cemetery, trying to figure out his behavior. Only later, when we see the scene replayed from Conrad's perspective, do we understand what the heck he was doing. But what the heck is anyone doing in this movie? One might say that every character in this study of a family in disarray means to do the right thing, but has a strange way of showing it. Everyone misbehaves. Eisenberg's Jonah is the first person we see in the film, holding the sweet, tiny finger of his newborn baby in the hospital, marveling over this new life. Moments later, though, he runs into an old girlfriend and lies, bald-faced (and hilariously), about the reason he's in the hospital. Apparently he's not quite comfortable with his new role as a father. —AP



File photo shows Kesha arriving on the red carpet for the MTV Video Music Awards (VMA) at The Forum in Inglewood, California. — AFP

Singer Kesha loses suit over abuse

A judge on Wednesday refused a plea by US singer Kesha to free her from a contract with an allegedly abusive producer, in a case that has galvanized feminists. Kesha had asked a court to suspend her exclusive contract with Dr Luke's Kemosabe Records, part of the Sony Music conglomerate, saying that the producer raped her and tormented her emotionally. But a New York judge dismissed her lawsuit on largely technical grounds, ruling in one count that Kesha could not seize on the city's laws against hate crimes.

Kesha failed to prove that Dr. Luke "harbored animus toward women or was motivated by gender animus when he allegedly behaved violently toward Kesha," Judge Shirley Kornreich wrote. "Every rape is not a gender-motivated hate crime," she wrote. The lawsuit did not ask the court to look into the substance of the assault allegations. Kesha said that Dr. Luke, whose real name is Lukasz Gottwald, drugged and raped her in 2005 and 2008.

The 29-year-old singer, whose full name is Kesha Rose Seberty, did not press charges at the time and said in the lawsuit that Dr. Luke

threatened to destroy her career if she went public. But the judge said the court did not have jurisdiction, with Kesha living in California and entering the contract with the New York-based label after the alleged violence occurred.

"Kesha failed to plead that any of the alleged discrimination occurred in New York State or City," the judge wrote, adding that the statute of limitations had likely passed in any case on rape charges. The decision deals a major blow to Kesha although she had also filed suit in California. Kesha has enjoyed an outpouring of support after the New York court in February refused to issue an initial injunction on the contract. Adele and Taylor Swift, two of the top women in music, have both publicly backed Kesha and feminist protesters have rallied outside Sony Music's New York headquarters. —AFP