

= Michelle Williams (actress) =

Michelle Ingrid Williams (born September 9 , 1980) is an American actress . She began her career with television guest appearances , and made her feature film debut in *Lassie* (1994) , which earned her a Youth in Film nomination . She gained wider recognition for her role as Jen Lindley on the The WB series *Dawson 's Creek* from 1998 to 2003 .

Williams received critical acclaim for her role as the wife of Ennis Del Mar in *Brokeback Mountain* (2005) , for which she won a Broadcast Film Critics Association Award and was nominated for the SAG Award , BAFTA Award , Golden Globe , and Academy Award for Best Supporting Actress . She followed this with films such as Martin Scorsese 's *Shutter Island* (2010) .

Williams ' performance as a drifter in 2008 's *Wendy and Lucy* earned her a Independent Spirit Award nomination , and her work in *Blue Valentine* (2010) garnered her nominations for the Golden Globe Award and the Academy Award for Best Actress . She won a Golden Globe and an Independent Spirit Award for her portrayal of Marilyn Monroe in *My Week with Marilyn* (2011) , which also garnered her BAFTA , SAG , and Academy Award nominations .

On Broadway , Williams appeared in a revival of the musical *Cabaret* in 2014 and a revival of the play *Blackbird* in 2016 . She received a Tony Award for Best Actress in a Play nomination for the latter .

= = Early life = =

Williams was born in Kalispell , Montana , the daughter of Carla Ingrid (née Swenson) , and Larry Richard Williams . Her parents are separated , and she has one sister , Paige , and three half @-@ siblings . Her mother is a homemaker , and her father is an author , stock and commodities trader , and two @-@ time Republican Party nominee for the United States Senate from Montana . Williams has some Norwegian ancestry , along with more distant English , German , Danish , Swiss , Swedish , Scottish , and Welsh roots . As a child , she kept to herself and was self @-@ sufficient ; as she has said , " I was really secretive with my parents and I think I sort of continued that ... I found that by keeping to myself I got on OK . I don 't know why . " When Williams was nine , her family moved to San Diego , California . She became interested in acting at an early age when she saw a local production of *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* .

= = Career = =

= = = 1990s = = =

Williams began her career in the early 1990s by making guest appearances in television programs such as *Step by Step* and *Home Improvement* . In 1993 , she portrayed the role of Bridget Bowers in *Baywatch* . The actress debuted in the adventure film *Lassie* (1994) . In *Species* , she played a role as the younger version of Sil , an alien @-@ human who quickly grows up to become the monster character played by Natasha Henstridge . Following this , Williams made appearances in the made @-@ for @-@ television movies *My Son Is Innocent* (1996) , which saw her transition into more dramatic work , and *Killing Mr. Griffin* (1997) , where she plays a member of Susan 's (played by Amy Jo Johnson) geek clique .

At age 15 , with her parents ' approval , she filed for emancipation from them , so she could better pursue her acting career and not have to worry about child labor work laws . After completing the ninth grade at the Upper School of Santa Fe Christian Schools , in Solana Beach , California , she left school because of severe bullying . Subsequently , Williams was home @-@ tutored by her father and later graduated with a GED from a correspondence school .

She moved to Los Angeles and quickly secured a prominent role in *Dawson 's Creek* . Williams said later that she thought she knew all she needed to know since age 15 . She said in 2011 that she chose emancipation as she was influenced by other young actors doing it . In 1997 , unhappy with

the roles they were being offered , Williams and several actor friends wrote a script entitled Blink . It was sold , but nothing happened with it .

A starring role alongside James Van Der Beek , Katie Holmes and Joshua Jackson in hit teen TV drama , Dawson 's Creek (1998 ? 2003) , helped raise them to prominence . At age 17 , Williams portrayed Jen Lindley , to whom she related because they both grew up " too fast . " For filming of the semi @-@ autobiographical series based on its creator , Kevin Williamson 's childhood , she moved to North Carolina . In an interview with USA Today , she described her character as " this stable , happy @-@ go @-@ lucky girl still wrestling with demons . " She said that being on Creek enabled her to choose her projects , and has stated that

Being on a show like Dawson 's Creek for so long ... you spend so much of the year doing something you are not entirely invested in . So when you devote yourself to nine months of the year to that kind of work , you have to make awfully certain that you spend the three precious months off in a way that 's true and not time @-@ wasting .

Williams continued to perform in films as well . Her first mainstream production was in the slasher film Halloween H20 : 20 Years Later (1998) . It was a financial success , making \$ 55 million against its \$ 17 million budget . With Kirsten Dunst , Williams co @-@ starred in the comedy Dick (1999) . The movie is a parody , recounting the Watergate scandal , which led to the resignation of U.S. President Richard Nixon . She began to do more challenging work , starting with a small part in But I 'm a Cheerleader , directed by Jamie Babbit .

Commodity Trading

Following in her father 's footsteps , in 1997 Williams entered the Robbins World Cup Championship of Futures Trading which she won by turning \$ 10 @,@ 000 into more than \$ 100 @,@ 000 . With a return of 900 % , Williams is currently ranked as the third highest winner of the competition since it began in 1984 .

= = = 2000 ? 05 = = =

She appeared in the HBO television movie sequel If These Walls Could Talk 2 (2000) . Divided into three separate sections , it follows lesbian couples in different time periods . Williams and Chloë Sevigny appeared in the second segment , which revealed bitter divisions in the feminist movement during 1972 . While Entertainment Weekly critic , Ken Tucker , praised Sevigny , he said Williams had overdone her character 's " grinning eagerness to be naughty " .

From then on , Williams began to work in independent features , which attracted smaller audiences . " I feel like I haven 't been working in a particularly flashy or visible way , " she reflected to Vogue magazine . " If you weren 't looking for them , you would miss the movies that I 've made that I 'm proud of . " For Me Without You (2001) , Williams co @-@ starred with Anna Friel . The movie 's reception was split , with review aggregator website , Rotten Tomatoes , reporting it to have a 66 percent rating based on 65 reviews . Next was Prozac Nation (2002) , starring Christina Ricci and based on the autobiography of the same name by Elizabeth Wurtzel . It dealt with her struggle with major depression . Asked if her roommate role was interesting to play , Williams said : " I think what it needed to be was helpful . Somebody to stand like this [punches her hand] so that she [Ricci] could keep smacking up against it . "

The next year she had a role in The United States of Leland (2003) , as the grieving sister of a murdered boy . Reviews were mostly negative , with The Globe and Mail 's Liam Lacey calling it " neither an insightful nor well @-@ made film . " Williams rounded out the year in The Station Agent . A dramedy , it follows a dwarf Fin (Peter Dinklage) , who lives in an abandoned train depot , and starts a friendship with a librarian played by Williams . All the cast members , including Bobby Cannavale and Patricia Clarkson , were nominated for an Screen Actors Guild Award for Best Cast in a motion picture .

After Creek ended in 2003 , Williams admitted having difficulty finding the right roles , and said she was seen as a " pop tart " . That year , she played Varya in Anton Chekhov 's The Cherry Orchard with Jessica Chastain and Linda Emond at the Williamstown Theatre Festival .

Wim Wenders wrote the film Land of Plenty (2004) , which investigates anxiety and disillusionment

in a post @-@ 9 / 11 America , with Williams in mind . She played Lana , a worker in a homeless shelter trying to contact her troubled Vietnam veteran uncle (John Diehl) . The 2006 Independent Spirit Awards nominated her for Best Actress .

She next appeared in Imaginary Heroes (2005) , about the effect a son 's suicide has on his suburban family . It made less than \$ 300 @,@ 000 worldwide in ticket sales . With Meat Loaf , she starred as an impressionable young woman fixated on mental health in A Hole in One , a period piece that was the 2005 feature film debut of Richard Ledes and generally ignored .

In a rare comedy turn , she starred in The Baxter alongside writer / director Michael Showalter . The film received mostly negative reviews , but critics praised Williams . " Only when Williams is around does the movie seem human , true , and funny : Even in her slapstick there 's pain , " wrote The Boston Globe reporter Wesley Morris . " She 's almost too good : It 's not until she 's left a scene that you realize the movie isn 't working . " Released on August 26 , Showalter 's movie made \$ 37 @,@ 000 opening weekend before going on to gross over \$ 180 @,@ 000 domestically .

Williams gained public recognition for Brokeback Mountain , a film directed by Ang Lee that depicts the homosexual relationship between Ennis Del Mar and Jack Twist (Heath Ledger and Jake Gyllenhaal) . Williams plays Ennis ' wife Alma , who becomes aware of the true nature of his and Jack 's relationship when she sees them in an embrace . After viewing The Station Agent , casting director Avy Kaufman suggested to Lee that he cast Williams as Alma . The film was a box office hit , grossing around \$ 178 million worldwide in ticket sale revenue against its \$ 14 million production costs . The film received eight Oscar nominations , the most for any film that year , including a Best Supporting Actress nomination for Williams , and it won three accolades at the 78th Academy Awards . The saffron Vera Wang dress , which she wore to the Academy Awards in March 2006 , has been cited by Cosmopolitan magazine as one of the Best Oscar dresses of all time .

= = = 2006 ? present = = =

Williams returned with The Hawk Is Dying (2007) , also starring Michael Pitt . Its story tells of George (played by Paul Giamatti) trying to find meaning in his life by training a wild red tailed hawk . Williams was cast as Pitt 's girlfriend , the only person who understands George 's growing obsession . The film made \$ 7 @,@ 000 domestically playing at one theater . Five months after giving birth , Williams was back in front of the camera for The Hottest State , a film by Ethan Hawke adapted from his 1996 book . Critics gave it negative reviews for being too pretentious and self @-@ aware . Variety writer Leslie Felperin believed the film underused Williams as one of the main character 's former lovers . It did a limited theatrical run on August 24 , ultimately grossing \$ 137 @,@ 340 . Williams played Edie Sedgwick , muse of Andy Warhol , as a part of the biographical ensemble piece I 'm Not There , inspired by the musician Bob Dylan . In October 2006 , she signed on to play a blonde known as S , who seduces Ewan McGregor 's character in Deception (2008) , originally called The Tourist . Williams and McGregor worked together again in Incendiary , about the aftermath of a terrorist attack at a football game , based on Chris Cleaves 's 2005 book of the same name . She portrayed the protagonist , an unnamed adulterous British mother who loses her husband and son in the attack . In his The Independent review , Robert Hanks assessed it to be " sloppy " and said Williams deserved better .

Impressed by her work in Dick , the screenwriter Charlie Kaufman cast Williams in his directorial debut Synecdoche , New York , with a cast featuring Philip Seymour Hoffman and Emily Watson . A box office bomb , it was praised in the media , appearing on many top ten critics ' lists for 2008 . Wendy and Lucy , an acclaimed small @-@ budget , low @-@ key drama directed and co @-@ written by Kelly Reichardt , follows Wendy (Williams) , a drifter looking to start a new life , searching for her dog Lucy after a series of setbacks . Unlike others , including the director , Williams did not find the film depressing . " Personally I like seeing those kinds of movies . I find them comforting because they make me feel less alone . " As the lead actress of Wendy and Lucy , she enjoyed the documentary style of the film . Houston Chronicle writer Amy Biancolli said her performance , " a bare @-@ bones accomplishment of no small heft , " was the movie 's key . The Toronto Film Critics Association Awards named Williams and the film 2008 's Best Actress and Best

Movie .

Filming for *Mammoth* (2009) took Williams to locations in Sweden , Thailand and the Philippines . She and Gael García Bernal played the co @-@ leads : a successful couple dealing with issues related to modern day globalization . It was director Lukas Moodysson 's first English @-@ language movie and found distribution through IFC Films .

Martin Scorsese cast the actress in the supporting role of the dead wife haunting the dreams of marshal Teddy Daniels (played by Leonardo DiCaprio) in *Shutter Island* , a psychological thriller based on Dennis Lehane 's 2003 best @-@ selling novel by the same name . Originally due out in October 2009 , its release date was bumped to February 19 , 2010 . With \$ 41 @.@ 1 million in ticket sales at over 2 @,@ 900 locations , *Shutter Island* gave Williams her widest release and best opening weekend stats . In December , she starred opposite Ryan Gosling as a struggling married couple in the romantic drama *Blue Valentine* . The filmmaker Derek Cianfrance made Williams and Gosling live together during the day for a month to get into character . She later said that the experience was great and wished she had appreciated it more . Shown at 2010 's Sundance Film Festival , Cannes Film Festival and BFI London Film Festival , the movie was a hit among critics . Both actors were lauded with praise and awards attention . " Ms. Williams and Mr. Gosling are exemplars of New Method sincerity , able to be fully and achingly present every moment on screen together , " wrote The New York Times columnist A.O. Scott . Her performance as Cindy , who has grown tired of her husband 's lack of direction and addictions , was nominated for Best Actress by the Golden Globe Awards and Academy Awards .

Meek 's Cutoff was shot in Burns , Oregon and reunited Williams with Reichardt . It is based on a historical incident on the Oregon Trail in 1845 , in which the frontier guide Stephen Meek led a wagon train on an ill @-@ fated journey through a desert . After premiering during the 67th Venice International Film Festival , the well @-@ reviewed bleak period piece saw a limited release in cinemas starting April 8 , 2011 .

Williams was cast over Kate Hudson , Scarlett Johansson , and Amy Adams as Marilyn Monroe in *My Week with Marilyn* , a British drama film based on two novels by Colin Clark , depicting the making of the film *The Prince and the Showgirl* (1957) . Initially terrified of taking on the role , she turned down the offer . " Physically and vocally , everything about her is different from me , " she explained . Eventually , she found the offer too good to pass up . Williams took vocal lessons so she could sing in the movie , as lip @-@ syncing was uncomfortable . Williams won the Golden Globe Award for Best Actress ? Motion Picture Comedy or Musical for her performance . Her next performance was in *Take This Waltz* (2011) , directed by Sarah Polley in Canada , that focuses on a young married couple (Williams and Seth Rogen) dealing with monogamy and fidelity . Williams co @-@ starred with James Franco in Walt Disney Pictures 's *Oz the Great and Powerful* , a 3 @-@ D prequel released March 8 , 2013 . She has signed to do a sequel to the film . In July 2013 , she became the new face of Louis Vuitton handbags .

Williams was featured in the music video for Wild Nothing 's " Paradise " featured on the 2012 album *Nocturne* .

Williams made her Broadway debut in the revival of *Cabaret* , in the role of Sally Bowles . The production opened on April 24 , 2014 and she ended her run on November 9 , 2014 . Also in 2014 , she will star in the feature film adaptation of the World War II biopic novel *Suite Française* , in which she plays Lucile Angellier , a French villager who falls in love with Bruno von Falk , a German soldier played by Matthias Schoenaerts .

= = Personal life = =

Williams began dating Australian actor Heath Ledger , her *Brokeback Mountain* co @-@ star , in 2004 after meeting on the set of their film . In late April 2005 People first reported that Williams and Ledger were expecting a child together . On October 28 , 2005 , Williams gave birth to their daughter Matilda Rose Ledger .

During Williams and Ledger 's time together , they lived together in Brooklyn , New York . By September 2007 , the couple amicably ended their three @-@ year relationship . Of the break @-@

up , People quoted her telling Elle magazine , " I didn 't know where to go . I couldn 't imagine any place in the world that was gonna feel good to me . " After Ledger 's death from a combined drug intoxication (CDI) in January 2008 , the usually under @-@ the @-@ radar actress and her daughter became an interest of the media and were often followed by paparazzi . As a result , Williams rarely gave interviews until the end of 2009 .

On February 1 , 2008 , in her first public statement after Ledger 's death , Williams expressed her heartbreak and described Ledger 's spirit as surviving in their daughter , who looks like him . Later that month she attended his memorial and funeral services .

In July 2008 , seven months after the death of Ledger , Williams began dating director Spike Jonze . They met on the set of Synecdoche , New York , which Williams starred in and Jonze produced . Williams called the timing of their relationship " impossible " , and ended it in September 2009 . In July 2015 , it was reported that Williams had begun dating author Jonathan Safran Foer .

= = Awards and nominations = =