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Spring 2009 Directors Issue

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19 Spring Directors Series

Profiles of leading helmers, a look at up-and-coming talent, and DPs who have diversified into spot directing.



35 Editors On Directors

Editors discuss collaborating with directors and the shorthand that emerges from long-time relationships.



6 Business Climate

John Marshall, who closed Villains, reflects on the pressures being brought to bear on production companies.

Production Prospects In The Southeast

Region is bullish on the future.
Businesses invest in infrastructure.
See page 10



Brother, Can You Spare 60 Days?

Economy Exacerbates Slow Payment Problem For Production Companies



By Robert Goldrich

LOS ANGELES—At press time, General Motors (GM)—which already received \$13.4 billion in federal loans since late last year—was asking Washington, D.C., for another \$16.6 billion to stave off bankruptcy.

The company has submitted a plan to the U.S. Treasury Department to justify the additional loan. GM reported a loss amounting to \$30.9 billion in 2008.

So the question being posed to small entrepreneurial production companies—which have little margin for error in today's tight economy—is: Do you want to bankroll GM as well?

GM has put forth a payment guideline to the production community whereby the first 50 percent of the amount owed on a job will be paid to the production house 60 days after the first shoot day. Then the remaining 50 percent would be paid 60 days after delivery.

There have been rumors floating about through second and third-hand sources of a production company or two that have accepted those terms in order to be on GM's list of so-called preferred providers. But *SHOOT* has been unable to confirm if this scuttlebutt is true.

Furthermore, even if a production house were inclined to accommodate the GM request, that shop would be hard pressed to get the necessary short-term loan to do so in light of the credit freeze that has gripped the global marketplace.

Fronting money for work in this manner—particularly multiple jobs—would be tantamount to financial suicide, according to Matt Miller, president/CEO of the Association of Independent Commercial Producers (AICP), who outlined the economic basics for executives at production companies during last month's AICP owners summit in Los Angeles.

Continued on page 14

Mixed Views On CA Film Incentives

By Robert Goldrich

SACRAMENTO, Calif.—Whether you view the glass as half full, half empty or shattered depends on your perspective relative to California's unexpected passage of an incentives program to help keep and attract filming in the Golden State.

The measure came through as part of California's long awaited new fiscal year budget. Conventional wisdom was that with the state facing a \$40 billion-plus deficit, there was little or no chance of a lensing tax credit/incentives program gaining traction in the legislature.

But as it turned out, the state's financial woes instead resulted in politicians seeking an economic stimulus package which included a tax credit for qualifying feature films, movies of the week, miniseries and certain episodic TV fare.

Details of the provisions and how the measure will be applied and implemented are being worked out by the California Film Commission (CFC). The annual appropriation of \$100 million becomes available on July 1 (for the fiscal year July 1, 2009 through June 30, 2010). The CFC anticipates having the application process up and running sometime in July. The measure, which is funded by a \$100 million appropriation for each of

Continued on page 14

AFCI Locations Trade Show Set To Buck The Economy

SANTA MONICA, Calif.—Despite or in some respects because of a battered economy, the 24th annual Association of Film Commissioners International (AFCI) Locations Trade Show—which will run from April 16-18 at the Santa Monica Civic Auditorium—is more than holding its own. Booth space is sold out, meaning that some 260-plus exhibitors—film commissions and support services companies—will be

showcasing their wares. Furthermore, there's a larger number of additional companies on the waiting list to be Locations Trade Show exhibitors as compared to 2008.

Some 30-plus nations will be represented among those exhibitors. And there are several first-time film commission exhibitors, such as Bavaria, Serbia and Namibia.

AFCI CEO Bill Lindstrom noted

that an increasing number of countries, regions and municipalities are seeing the prudence of having a professional film commission given the significant revenue filmmaking can generate for the economy.

At the same time, many film commissions are feeling the fiscal squeeze. Consider production incentives programs that could have funding decreased or eliminated due to budget

shortfalls in such states as New York, Pennsylvania and Wisconsin.

Yet the silver lining is that the economic crisis has governments seriously looking for ways to stimulate revenue. Thus California, which has a massive budget deficit, nonetheless recently passed an incentives program for select feature films and TV programs, though commercials are excluded (see

Continued on page 9

Business Slow? Here's a Low Cost Idea to Pick Up the Pace and Charge Ahead...

The **SHOOT Publicity Wire Service** reaches media, clients, prospects, and prosumers/consumers, as well as the industry stakeholders and influencers that affect the advertising, broadband video, filmmaking, cinema, media and television businesses while establishing your release in the vital online SHOOT "Database of Record."

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By Robert Goldrich

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EDITORIAL

Publisher & Editorial Director

Roberta Grier

203.227.1699 ext. 13 rgrier@shootonline.com

Editor

Robert Goldrich

323.960.8035 ext. 6681 rgoldrich@shootonline.com

Contributors

Christine Champagne
Millie Takaki

ADVERTISING

Display Advertising Inquires
ads@shootonline.com

203.227.1699 ext. 13

Advertising Production

Gerald Giannone

203.227.1699 ext. 12 ads@shootonline.com

Classified

203.227.1699 ext. 12 classified@shootonline.com

SHOOTonline Directory Listings

203.227.1699 ext. 11 mmorgera@shootonline.com

OFFICES

Main Office

21 Charles Street #203
Westport, CT 06880 USA

203.227.1699 Fax: 203.227.2787

West

650 N. Bronson Avenue, Suite B140
Los Angeles, CA 90004 USA

323.960.8035 Fax: 323.960.8036

Circulation

203.227.1699 ext. 12 circulation@shootonline.com

Editorial Production Manager/Reprints/Article Rights

Michael Morgera

203.227.1699 ext. 11 mmorgera@shootonline.com

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Cutting Remarks

Sadly in today's economy the term "cutting your losses" has become prevalent. Just ask most anyone who's investment strategizing with regards to his or her stock portfolio or dwindling 401K plan.

Indeed the country and pretty much all its states are in budget shortfall, figuring out where to cut and presumably first cutting those areas that are putting a strain on the bottom line. Yet in the short-sighted madness that is the body politic, states sorely in need of capital aren't always cutting losses but rather programs that are providing capital. It's like the cutting losses mantra has perversely turned into cutting profits.

Consider production tax credits and filming incentives which are actually bringing in more money than is being spent on them. Yet still states such as Pennsylvania, Wisconsin and New York are reportedly contemplating

reducing or not continuing funding for their incentive packages.

An Ernst and Young report forecast that between 2005 and 2010, TV and film productions and related activities in New York are expected to generate about \$2.7 billion in state and city tax revenues, compared with an estimated \$690 million in state and city cred-

Unfortunately, commercials are conspicuous by their absence from the filming incentives program recently passed in California.

its claimed during the same period.

A movement is underway in New York to preserve and make permanent New York's incentives program amid concerns it could be sacrificed as the state struggles with how to deal with a \$14 billion deficit. Separately New York has a progressive incentives program in place expressly for commercials, which is a key contributor to the health of the economy.

At least California finally has approved filming incentives (see this

week's news story) that apply to qualified features and TV programs. However the Golden State incentives do not apply to commercials, an omission that is penny wise and pound foolish, according to Matt Miller, president/CEO of the Association of Independent Commercial Producers (AICP).

Miller contended that Gov.

tremely important part of the industry. I'd like to remind the 'Governator' that when the Writers Guild decided to pull a bonehead move with their actor brethren doing the same thing, television and feature work dried up. The only thing in the filming economic engine keeping Hollywood alive has been commercials."

Schwarzenegger and the legislators "screwed us, not taking into account the work of the coalition [a broad-based entertainment group that educated government about the issues involved] and instead opting for language floated by other entities into the budget. They circumvented the good work of the coalition and that doesn't ultimately help anybody."

The ultimate losers in all of this, continued Miller, are the people of California. "Commercials are an ex-

Even at that, commercials have been down in California, migrating to other states which have incentives in place that cover spots. This decline is reflected in FilmL.A. permit statistics with on-location spot production down 11 percent in 2008 as compared to '07 (SHOOT, 1/16).

Miller affirmed that an effective incentives program very much needs "to take into account the everyday production like commercials that is so vital to the economy."

POV



Loudness Wars

I would bet that, like most people, you watch TV with the remote in your hand. And not because you're constantly changing the channel, but because you're riding the volume like it's a fader on a console. I feel your pain and I apologize. The typical blast that ensues at the commercial break is nothing short of alarming and as a spot mixer I need to accept at least partial responsibility.

I have been mixing television commercials for nearly 10 years and I can tell you that a LOUD mix is a regular expectation of my job because the client requests it. And to a certain extent, I can sympathize with their position. The last thing they want to hear is their spot come in half as loud as the one right before it. But this may be out of control. Because of the varying loud volume of spots, neighbors are complaining, thumbs are getting tired and, if you have a sleeping two-year-old nearby, late-night TV viewing is completely out of the question.

It used to be that analog recording kept things in check. There was a physical limitation to the medium that for the most part standardized dialogue levels. Digital recording changed things. For one, no longer is there an industry-wide standard for

audio-levels. But more importantly digital recording allows greater headroom for "hotter" recordings without distortion. And products like the L2 Ultramaximizer allow for all new degrees of "transparent" limiting that dramatically increase loudness. Using this tool and others like it to extremes creates an effect, for the most part undesirable, known as hyper-limiting. Although hyper-limited mixes are certainly "louder" than those that are not, they are the inevitable result of a lack of regulation—and the cause of the advertiser's worst enemy, the dreaded mute.

How can we improve the situation? To start, producers might simply tell their mixer to "make sure not to make it too loud," or "make it a bit more dynamic." "Can you leave the car crash louder than my whispering announcer" and "can we have the chorus of the song louder than the verse?" You get the drift. Right now, the biggest challenge for the mixer in a typical spot mix is figuring out how to maximize the loudness of every critical element regardless of its overall purpose in the story. In an attempt to assure we have the undivided grasp of our viewers' attention, we create an uninteresting mix. If capturing viewer interest is our goal, then creating a dynamic mix, one with loud and soft moments, is impor-

tant. It is how to "break through."

We might also start adhering to network specific delivery requirements regarding dialogue normalization. Dolby's LMI100 meter allows a programmer to measure the loudness of a program's dialogue. According to Dolby, "when the dial norm value is properly implemented across multiple programs, the home listener can switch between programs and perceive the dialogue in each program at

the same level." Imagine that.

In conclusion, it's time to retreat from the front lines of the Loudness War. With your direction as my producer I can bring the levels back down to earth and we can all live together peacefully. No complaining neighbors, no woken-up children and most importantly the remote left where it should be...on the coffee table.

[Nathan Dubin is a staff mixer at Margarita Mix/Santa Monica.]

Flash Back

March 12 & 26, 2004 HSI Productions has teamed with video game creative shop Immaterial, Los Angeles, to form medium, a Culver City, Calif.-headquartered venture specializing in the development of interactive entertainment....Bicoastal Villains has signed director Dewey Nicks for exclusive spot representation....A proposal for business tax reform in the City of Los Angeles has received an endorsement from the Association of Independent Commercial Producers (AICP). If passed, the measure would provide relief to many small and medium-sized production houses that shoot in Los Angeles....

March 12 & 26, 1999 Kinka Usher of Santa Monica-based House of Usher Films has been named Best Commercial Director of '98 by the Directors Guild of America (DGA)....Director Sid Roberson has signed with New York-based Taxi Films for exclusive U.S. spot representation....Bicoastal Curious Pictures has added Mike Bennion to its directorial roster for representation in the U.S. For the last year Bennion was represented worldwide through The End....

how many
production
companies finish
what they start?



PEOPLE & PROJECTS

Director Gerard Joins Über Content For Commercials

HOLLYWOOD, Calif.—Über Content, the Hollywood shop headed by partners/executive producers Preston Lee and Phyllis Koenig, has signed director Luis Gerard for exclusive North American spot representation. He comes over from greatguns: USA.

Gerard has directed international campaigns for Sprint, Honda, Nissan, Suzuki, LG and Volkswagen, among others, and recently completed a Target campaign via Peterson/Milla/Hooks, Minneapolis.

“The first thing you notice about Luis is that he brings a powerful cine-

screen. In 2005, he helmed Gain’s “Airport,” Ace’s “Karate,” and Ragu’s “Father and Son” which were all short-listed at Cannes that year. “Father and Son” snagged a Gold Shark at Kinsale and Ragu’s “Fingers” a Bronze. Gerard also earned inclusion in the 2004 Y&R Young Directors Showcase.

Gerard has worked extensively around the world, helming projects via Euro/London, Saatchi/Sydney, Lowe/Bangkok, and others. He recently shot a spot for Banco Popular via McCann Erickson/Madrid, featuring Pao Gasol of the Los Angeles Lakers. Gerard’s

visual storytelling is by far the most enjoyable aspect for me.”

While he did not study film formally, Gerard—born and raised in Puerto Rico and who continues to live in San Juan—teamed with a college classmate to make a short film, *Que Sera*, that screened at the Venice Film Festival.

“This was an experiment in storytelling without dialogue, in black and white,” Gerard recalled. “As a follow-up, I wrote another short, that was all dialogue and in color.”

A creative director from leading agency Eje/Puerto Rico saw that film and thought Gerard could take on

commercials. His first campaign for the agency was for Levi’s and from there his directorial career began to gain momentum.

Gerard is represented in Spain by Group Films and in Mexico by Santos. He remains with Great Guns, London, for work in the U.K.



Luis Gerard is now an Über director stateside while continuing to go Great Guns in the U.K.

matic signature to his work,” said Lee. “From casting to locations to composition, there is always a storytelling motive to his shots.”

Entering the spot biz in 2000, Gerard immediately sought opportunities to bring scope and impact to the

U.S. spot work includes ads for Honda (RPA), Tropicana (Element 79), Kellogg’s (Leo Burnett), Lexus (Team One), and Trident (JWT/NY). The work has varied in tone and genre. “I like the challenge of doing different things,” he said, “but, as a director,

Mortar Merrier With The Docter Twins

By Robert Goldrich

HOLLYWOOD, Calif.—Directorial duo the Docter Twins (Matt & Jason) has signed with Mortar, Inc.—the Hollywood house headed by director David Merhar and executive producer Grayson Bithell—for exclusive representation.

Matt and Jason Docter come over from DUCK Studios, Los Angeles. They are up-and-coming talents as underscored by their inclusion in last year’s *SHOOT* New Directors Showcase on the strength of such work as the comedy commercial “Gotcha,” part of a multi-spot Wienerschnitzel campaign out of DGWB Advertising, Santa Ana, Calif.

The live-action helming team got

into the Showcase shortly after joining DUCK Studios, a mixed media shop with a longstanding reputation in animation.

“Gotcha,” originally a broadcast spot, has since taken on a viral life of its own, generating 300,000-plus hits on YouTube. Additionally “Gotcha” gained inclusion into the TBS Network special *The Funniest Commercials of 2008*.

While the Wienerschnitzel work was predominantly live action, the Docter Twins often found themselves helming the live-action portions of mixed media jobs at DUCK. They want to continue to mesh disciplines yet feel they are better positioned to

focus on live action at Mortar, which was a prime factor attracting them to the company.

Also drawing them to Mortar was their personal history in that years back when they broke into L.A. filmmaking. Matt and Jason Docter served as production assistants on jobs directed by Merhar.

From this grass-roots perspective, The Docter Twins got to know the director and his long-time producing compatriot Bithell, and kept in touch. The Docters also became fans of Merhar’s work as he went on to direct noted spots via such shops as HSI and Sandwick Films.

Continued on page 15

John Marshall Reflects On Economic Pressures Impacting Production Houses

By Robert Goldrich

LOS ANGELES—As covered in this issue’s lead story, the economic squeeze is tightening on commercial production houses. Indeed the financial pressures being exerted in the marketplace—particularly the slow payment dynamic—proved to be a significant factor in the closure of longstanding production company Villains. Dating back to its predecessor shop GMS, which opened in 1985, Villains enjoyed a 23-plus year run (the Villains banner was established in ‘97) until its owner John Marshall closed the Los Angeles-based company in October.

SHOOT recently caught up with Marshall—a partner in GMS and then Villains before becoming the shop’s sole owner a couple of years ago (*SHOOT*, 1/26/07)—to gain his reflections on growing industry challenges that triggered his decision to pull out of the business.

While he was still in the process of tying up some company loose ends at press time, Marshall said Villains has closed with a clean slate and its financial obligations met.



John Marshall

“The business isn’t as much fun as it used to be for production companies generally,” assessed Marshall.

“Slow payment was just getting very difficult for us. And seeing what GM [General Motors] is doing now in terms of delaying payments even further [see the earlier referenced front page story] makes the situation even more difficult. GM has been a leader in trying to do its own guidelines.”

Add to this the growing prevalence of sequential liability by which agencies won’t pay production houses according to the contractually agreed upon timetable if they haven’t yet been paid by the clients, and

you find the production community bankrolling in many cases large multi-national agencies and clients for extended periods. Even those houses that have regularly fronted money for inordinate periods of time are finding it more difficult to do so now in light of a credit freeze that has made getting short-term financing pretty much improbable, if not impossible.

“Getting lines of credit is hard,” said Marshall. “And no bank in its right mind would loan you money on a GM contract. We’re in a climate where everybody is squeezing everybody and that contributed to our deciding to close Villains. I love this business. It’s been very good to me over the years. But now as far as my getting back into it, I think I’d rather take cyanide.”

Marshall noted that if the squeeze continues, clients and agencies will find themselves with more limited choices in the production community as more houses will have to close. “They’ll wonder,” said Marshall,

Continued on page 15

Fools and Horses Signs Director John Zissimos

LOS ANGELES—Director John Zissimos, formerly of bicoastal/international Hungry Man, has joined Fools and Horses, the Los Angeles-based production house headed by owners/executive producers Shelly Townsend and Cyn Guzman, for exclusive U.S. representation in commercials.

A former creative director with TBWA/Chiat/Day, New York, Warwick Baker Fiore, New York, J. Walter Thompson (JWT), New York and San Francisco, and McCann Erickson, San Francisco, Zissimos has done award-winning creative work for such clients as Nissan, Nestle, Lipton and Amstel.

As a spot director specializing in comedy/dialogue, he has helmed campaigns and commercial projects for assorted clients, including Mike’s Hard Lemonade, Airborne, PG&E and the Inside Out Film Festival, all of which he wrapped as part of the directing team Zissimos+Rowan (in tandem with former agency creative colleague Greg Rowan).

Zissimos was repped by Hungry Man initially as a member of that directing duo and then as a solo helmer. Among Zissimos’ individual directo-

rial credits are spot work for Major League Baseball’s San Francisco Giants, and his first two assignments under the Fools and Horses banner: a Sprint viral campaign that came out of Goodby, Silverstein & Partners, San Francisco, and the comedic tongue-in-cheek “Quick, Get that Dog Some ALPO” campaign from Fallon Minneapolis.

Zissimos observed that his agency background has proved invaluable when engaging in collaborations with creative and production teams.

“I know what it’s like to spend a year with a :30 script and at the one-yard line hand it off to a director. I know how hard that is so I try to make something good and bring to life these ideas.”

During his agency tenure, Zissimos directed select projects for clients, including Mike’s Hard Lemonade at McCann Erickson, San Francisco. That work set the tone for what turned out to be a successful campaign for several years running.

Zissimos rounds out a Fools and Horses directorial roster comprised of David Denneen, Fuzzi Galuzzi, Kai Sehr, Laurence Thrush, Francois Valla, and Erik Van Wyk.



John Zissimos

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FilmCore Launches Facility In Chicago

CHICAGO—FilmCore, which maintains editorial studios in New York, Santa Monica and San Francisco, has extended its reach to the Midwest with the launch of a facility in Chicago.

The new shop, which features two Avid editing suites, is headed by editor Angelo Valencia, formerly of FilmCore's Santa Monica operation.

Valencia has been working in Chicago on an informal basis for nearly a year. Joined by producer Kim Walsh (formerly Kim Berman), he has completed projects for such accounts as Kenmore (Y&R, Chicago), Wrigley's (AMV/BBDO, London) and EA Games (Heat, San Francisco). Editors Gordon Carey and Livio Sanchez, who are based in the Santa Monica office, have also recently traveled to Chicago to cut spots. Based on their success, FilmCore decided to establish a permanent site.

For Valencia, the move marks a homecoming of sorts. Prior to joining FilmCore last year, he spent six years cutting commercials at The Whitehouse in Chicago.

"I've worked in San Francisco, Texas, New York, and Los Angeles but Chicago has always felt like



Angelo Valencia

home," said Valencia. "Now it feels as though I never left."

John Dingfield

FilmCore Chicago's roster will also include editor John Dingfield, who joins the company after nine years editing with Cutters, Chicago.

Dingfield brings strong relationships with Chicago agencies and a growing reputation, especially for comedy work. His credits include the Bud Light spot "Language of Love" (Latinworks, Austin) that featured comedian Carlos Mencia and aired during the 2008 Super Bowl. Dingfield has also cut spots for Office Max (DDB Chicago), Nintendo (Leo Burnett, Chi-

cago) and Coinstar (Publicis, Seattle).

"FilmCore has always been on my radar—I've followed the careers of several FilmCore editors," said Dingfield. "When I heard they were opening a shop in Chicago, I kept my ears open. In the end, I was lucky enough that they approached me."

Dingfield, who has a background as a writer and director of short films, said that he's always had a special affinity for comedy. "I love cutting comedy—the timing and leaving enough open space for a joke to play out," he observed. "Also, my clients are great. People who write and understand comedy are just fun to work with."

Walsh began her career at Optimus, Chicago, nine years ago. Prior to connecting with FilmCore, Walsh was a producer at Red Car in Chicago.

Valencia noted that FilmCore Chicago will apply the same formula that has worked for the company in its other locations: an intimate, boutique-style editing environment coupled with access to a broad range of editorial talent. "Although we have four locations, FilmCore operates like one unit," he said. "Each office supports the others and the editors are available to work anywhere."

ARTISANS

Crew Cuts Adds VFX, Audio, Finishing

NEW YORK—Mainstay editorial house Crew Cuts has diversified into visual effects, finishing and audio/sound design with new hires and resources. The New York shop has brought Nick Montgomery aboard to head its audio operation, Ian Glaum to oversee a new VFX department, and Josh Weiss to lead the finishing charge.

Clients can tap into any of these services, either individually or packaged with each other and/or with Crew Cuts' editorial offerings. For partner/editor Sherri Margulies, though, the diversification isn't solely about packaging for cost savings advantages. "We wanted to bring in A-level talent on par with the talent we're known for in editing so that Super Bowl spots and other major projects could come in here and know they were getting the best offered across all these different disciplines," she said. "We fortified our services from the inside out, hitting the different niches—sound, visual effects, graphics—that are so intertwined with the offline editorial process."

Weiss hails from Charlex, New York. He is a hybrid talent spanning online, compositing, motion graphics and telecine. In the colorist capacity via Crew Cuts, which is a Final Cut Pro house, he uses Final Cut's Color toolset. His compositing credits include

campaigns for E*Trade and Gillette. Crew Cuts has launched two online/compositing/color correcting rooms.

Meanwhile Glaum, who had been freelancing at Crew Cuts, now comes on staff to lead a department offering design, effects and motion graphics. Prior to freelancing, Glaum—proficient



I-r: Montgomery, Glaum, Weiss on a wide ranging VFX toolset—was best known for his tenure at Quiet Man, New York.

And Montgomery, a sound designer/audio engineer/supervising sound editor, comes over from videogame publisher Rockstar Games. Joining Rockstar in 2004, Montgomery melded his audio talent into the company's then emerging cinematic in-game content. His work can be heard on such

Rockstar games as Grand Theft Auto San Andreas to Grand Theft Auto IV. Montgomery also headed up sound design and mixing for Rockstar's TV and online ad campaigns.

Nancy Shames, partner/executive producer at Crew Cuts, likes the fact that Montgomery comes from a different creative pocket of the business, meaning that he will be a new talent to many on the commercialmaking side.

To help clients tap into the talent across different departments, Crew Cuts has also hired producer Stephanie Norris, formerly of Pure, New York.

To house its expansion, Crew Cuts took over adjacent space vacated by Buzz (which recently moved, with its key players helping to launch N.Y. audio post house Sonic Union).

Crew Cuts has already wrapped a couple of jobs that have availed themselves of varied services at the studio: a graphics-intense Comcast package of three spots for Digitas, New York; and a campaign for La Quinta Inns & Suites out of Mullen, Winston-Salem, N.C.

Crew Cuts' Jon Daniel edited the Comcast campaign with Glaum handling effects, final confirm by Weiss and audio mixing by Montgomery. Margulies cut the La Quinta spots with Montgomery serving as mixer and Weiss handling final conform.

8 SHOOT March 20, 2009

Short Takes

RIDEOUT LEADS RESISTANCE FOR PS3

Crossroads' recently signed director Stuart Rideout helms a terrifying tale of Armageddon for the PS3's Resistance 2 game via Deutsch LA. The spine-chilling :60 titled "Resistance 2" cuts to menacing prophets from various periods in time including: the desert prophet, the oracle, the young Buddhist monk, the blind man, and the voodoo lady. Their sensory accounts anecdotally tell the story of impending doom. Interspersed scenes from the game mix with supposed reality.



CLICK HERE TO VIEW SPOT

The Deutsch creative ensemble included creative directors Jason Elm and Michael Bryce, art director Brandt Lewis, copywriter Josh Fell and producer Marisa Wasser.

Rideout directed the job via Rascal Films prior to joining Crossroads. Exec producing for Rascal were Jim Golden, Pete Christy and Scott Horan. The DP was Bill Pope.

Editor was Lisa Gunning of The Whitehouse, with post/effects from Zoic, and sound design by Loren Silber of Lime Studios.

A FRANTIC SEARCH FOR SPOT DIRECTORS

Frantic Branded Content + Commercials, a division of film and television production company Frantic Films Corp., and Toronto-headquartered ad agency TAXI, along with spot production company Soft Citizen, have partnered to develop Commercial Break, a reality television series on the hunt for Canada's next big commercial director. The show centers on weekly challenges in which contestants create television spots for actual brands. The activities of a real-world ad agency, their clients and unique advertising challenges are incorporated into the plot of each episode.

In the 10-episode original series set to launch this year, 10 contestants, chosen from a cross-country search, compete for an exclusive one-year contract with Soft Citizen, Vancouver and Toronto. Each week a panel of judges comprised of TAXI executive creative director Steve Mykolyn, Soft Citizen exec producer Dr. Link York and a guest evaluate contestants' work. As each contestant is eliminated, projects become increasingly challenging.

For TAXI, co-creating a reality TV series offered a new type of brand exposure for clients (even for those who do not typically advertise on TV), and exposure for the agency beyond the trade community. But most importantly, the program provides viewers with a rare glimpse into advertising at a time of tremendous popular interest in the craft.

PEOPLE IN THE NEWS....

Rick O'Hare has joined Deluxe Entertainment Services Group Inc., headquartered in Hollywood, as senior VP, studio account management and operations. He will manage Deluxe's relationships with studio clients and be responsible for servicing major accounts across all divisions, achieving process improvements, and integrating Deluxe's many service offerings. The hire marks O'Hare's return to Deluxe. He began his career with Twentieth Century Fox/Deluxe Laboratories when Deluxe was owned by Fox.



Rick O'Hare

He served as VP of administration at Deluxe and executive in charge of FoxWorldwideTechnical Services and Fox Movietone News. Among other positions he held was senior VP of digital distribution for Sony Pictures Entertainment....Global independent ad agency la comunidad, with its stateside foothold in Miami, has appointed Richard Monturo as executive director of strategy and technology. He formerly was head of strategic planning tams for Lowe, TBWA and StrawberryFrog....

Seminars, Master Classes Slated For AFCI Locations Trade Show

Continued from page 3
separate news story).

Another sign of the times is that in past recessions, the very existence of film commissions was threatened, with some closing altogether and others fighting to stave off elimination. That's not the case this time around. Yes, travel and marketing budgets will likely face cutbacks in funding but governments on local, state and national levels now readily recognize that having a strong film commission in place can contribute substantively to economic recovery.

Pre-registration for the Locations Trade Show is strong as an increasing number of producers, production executives and other filmmaking decision-makers, including location scouts, view this as a must-attend event in order to get a better handle on relevant location trends, information and varied resources domestically and internationally.

Seminars

Though panelists were in the process of being lined up at press time, the Locations Trade Show has three seminars scheduled, two of which are being organized by and held at Loyola Law School in downtown Los Angeles on Friday, April 17.

The Loyola program is aimed at filmmakers, lawyers, film commissioners and studio, network and indie executives. The first session will explore how digital technology is changing the face of filmed entertainment from script development and production to new means of distribution and exhibition, with a focus on evolving business and financial models. Panel moderator will be attorney Ezra Doner of Herrick, Feinstein LLP, New York.

The afternoon session, titled "Doubling Incentives," will present case studies of films that have accessed production incentives in two or more jurisdictions, overcoming creative, logistical and bureaucratic hurdles. Doner is also slated to moderate this panel discussion.

Separately the AFCI on the previous day, Thursday, April 16, has a panel discussion scheduled that will set out to explore the financial relationships between the film commission and production communities.

Slated for the Doubletree Guest Suites in Santa Monica, this session is a continuation of the dialogue between film commissioners and industry executives which began during last year's AFCI Cineposium in Wellington, New Zealand. Panel discussion moderator will be Jeff Monks, film commissioner at the South Carolina Film Commission.

University

Also continuing is the AFCI University educational initiative for film commissioners. For the two days (April 14-15) prior to the beginning of the Locations Trade Show, the AFCI will present a Film Commission Pro-

fessional class for aspiring film commissioners looking to get established. Plus there will be two Master Classes, one centering on the film commissioner as economic developer, the other focusing on marketing strategies for film commissions.

The AFCI University is designed to raise the qualifications and professional standards for film commissions and commissioners so they can be of even greater service to the production community at large.

The upcoming round of AFCI

University classes will be held at the Sheraton Delfina Hotel, down the street from the Santa Monica Civic Auditorium.

For more info on the Locations Trade Show and AFCI University, log onto www.afci.org.

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Setting The Stage For Spotmaking Success In The Southeast

Despite a challenged economy, states are enthused over business prospects on varied production fronts.

A SHOOT Staff Report

The largest film and television studio lot east of California will soon become even larger.

EUE Screen Gems Studios in Wilmington, North Carolina, has broken ground on Stage 10, the third largest stage in the U.S. and the only one of its size and scope outside a Hollywood, Calif. studio lot.

Stage 10 has 37,500 square feet of production space with a height of 45 feet and dimensions of 150 x 250 feet. Additionally it will contain a 60 x 60 foot special effects water tank, with a depth of 10 and a half feet, making it the largest and deepest water tank in North America.

Currently under construction, Stage 10 is slated to be available for film, TV and commercial production around mid-May.

The expansion reflects the fact, said Bill Vassar, executive VP of EUE Screen Gems Studios, that “we are confident and committed to production in North Carolina.”

With nine stages already in operation, Chris Cooney, COO and president of EUE/Screen Gems Ltd., noted that the investment in Stage 10 “comes at an economic time when most private sector investments and film assets will be reconsidered or abandoned.

“We are committed to North Carolina,” affirmed Cooney, “and are steadfast in our mission to secure the future

of filmmaking in Wilmington.”

Part of this bullishness on business prospects even in the face of a difficult economy is due to North Carolina’s filming incentives which have given a jump start to production activity in the state.

(Legislation that took effect in summer of 2006 provides a full 15 percent tax credit on productions \$250,000 and over, and not exceeding a credit per project of \$7.5 million. Commercials qualify for this incentive. Also, filmmakers pay only one percent sales and use tax on all production-related items purchased. For more information, log onto the North Carolina Film Office website, www.ncfilm.com or directly to www.ncfilm.com/incentives-benefits.html.)

Generating business

The incentives package, said Vassar, has in recent years played “an instrumental role in helping to get projects over here.”

He cited a \$65 million feature film titled *Bolden* which came to North Carolina a couple of years ago and is currently being edited. The movie tapped into North Carolina locations, facilities and stages, and likely would not have come to the state if not for the incentives lure.

About to wrap its sixth season and slated to embark on a seventh at EUE Screen Gems Studios is the hit TV

series *One Tree Hill*. The show is also advertiser friendly with progressive promotional tie-ins.

Vassar recalled one of the series’ characters having a band and an accompanying website as part of the plotline. This evolved into her having a band and website in real life, with Sunkist Orange Soda sponsoring both the website and the band’s popular-concert tour.

Commercials are also making their way to North Carolina and EUE Screen Gems Studios is looking to get more spotmaking activity into the state’s production pipeline.

“We’re working on a campaign to get the story out on how beneficial it is to shoot in North Carolina,” related Vassar. “It’s more than just the 15 percent incentive for any commercial that spends \$250,000 or more in the state. The locations are gorgeous, the resources are here ranging from lighting/grip facility to the stages.

“And most importantly,” he continued, “there’s a depth of crew talent. Over a thousand crew members live and work in the Wilmington area... This in turn has led to more local production companies keeping their production here, companies that in the past seemingly always ended up in Los Angeles.”

In some respects the runaway production tide has thus been stemmed, if not reversed to a degree as more home-

grown fare is opting to remain at home.

Vassar added that North Carolina also benefits from a down-home attitude reflected in a cooperative, problem-solving spirit. This refreshing orientation, he noted, can represent quite a departure from the dog-eat-dog competitiveness sometimes found in so-called major markets.

Optimism

The optimism expressed—and backed by the action of EUE Screen Gems Studios investment—isn’t confined to North Carolina.

SHOOT found industry folk in Georgia, Mississippi and Tennessee also encouraged over the future while still realistically acknowledging the uncertain economic climate.

Mississippi in particular knows about economic uncertainty as parts of the state were heavily hit by Hurricane Katrina, translating into fiscal problems that came long before the financial woes that have since come to the fore with the onset of an all-encompassing global recession.

Still, there’s a sense of economic recovery in Mississippi with its film commissioner Ward Emling outlining for SHOOT a progressive incentives program designed to help encourage commercial production in the state. (See Emling’s survey feedback later on in this feature story.)

In a survey of the Southeast re-

gion’s film commissioners—including Emling who is a past president of the Association of Film Commissioners International (AFCI)—we posed the following two-pronged query:

How have meaningful filming incentives—or the lack thereof—that apply to commercials impacted advertising industry business in your state? And has industry infrastructure been positively impacted in your market as a result of incentives?

Furthermore, SHOOT canvassed production and postproduction shops in the region to get a better handle on their business, asking them this multipart survey question:

What’s the nature of the ad content business you’re attracting? National television campaigns, regional spots, broadband video/mobile content, sponsored web films, webisodes, etc.? (You can cite specific projects as examples.) How has the nature of this business changed over the past year or two? (For instance, whereas production of a web project might have been piggybacked in the past onto a broadcast :30 shoot, are exclusive shoots now the norm when it comes to “new media” projects?)

Here’s a sampling of the feedback we received:



Ward Emling,
director,
Mississippi
Film Office

Commercials are specifically included in our incentive program for two major reasons: (1) commercials have an immediate impact on our production infra-

structure, and (2) bottom line issues are increasingly important to the commercial producer.

We created a low minimum spend (\$20,000) with the commercial industry (and our local filmmakers) in mind, and the turnaround time on our rebate is 40 to 45 days which gets the money back to the producer in a hurry.

One of our Mississippi production companies, Eyevox, has utilized the rebate in all categories: television series production, short film production and commercial production, and we expect our other companies to follow.

Several other product specific companies (Mossy Oak, Primos) have also taken advantage of the incentive.

Our crew base has grown and benefited through paychecks and experience, and our production companies through expanded equipment and postproduction capabilities.



Aaron Syrett,
director,
North Carolina
Film Office

The North Carolina Film Incentive we believe has had a meaningful impact on commercial business in the State. Since the inception of the North Carolina

incentive program North Carolina has seen an increase in commercial production. In the past year in and around the Charlotte North Carolina region alone we have hosted @radical.media, the Go Daddy Group, and RSA Films to name a few. North Carolina’s low minimum spend threshold of \$250k per project or campaign works well with commercial budgets. There is no application process. North Carolina understands the time constraints that are put commercial producers. We knew from the outset that this is a market we wanted to heavily recruit, and that is one thing we learned in putting together a solid program for commercial production. Commercials can’t afford to wait for an approval process for an incentive, that is what makes North Carolina a perfect fit for commercial production. No matter how many incentives North Carolina offers, at the end of the day it is the unspoken incentive that closes the deal; and for North Carolina it is a deep crew of professional technicians and the equipment that make it so easy to shoot in North Carolina.



Bill Thompson,
deputy commissioner,
Georgia Film, Music &
Digital Entertainment
Office,
Georgia Department of
Economic Development

Georgia’s production incentives provide a 20% tax credit for all qualifying commercial produc-

tions. Virtually all labor, equipment rentals, and other production expenses qualify for the incentives. The credit may be used toward a production company’s own Georgia tax liability or it may be transferred (sold) only once to a Georgia taxpayer.

Our state’s commercial production has increased significantly since the 2008 Georgia Entertainment Industry Incentives were passed into law in May of last year. In 2008, 204 agency commercial productions with budgets totaling more than \$35 million were produced in GA. We expect this level of production to double or triple in 2009. Feature films may qualify for an up to 30% incentive in Georgia.

Georgia advertising agencies service accounts such as Home Depot, United Parcel Service, Eastman Kodak, DirecTV, Delta Airlines, Intercontinental Hotels, Coca-Cola Company, United States Marine Corps, AT&T, Dow Chemical Company, International Marriott Hotels, Texas Instruments, and many other Fortune 100, 300

Continued on page 13

The locations. The crews. The infrastructure. The film-making tradition. The tax incentives. And opening soon, Stage 10. Relax. NC FILM OFFICE. 866.468.2273



NAB Preview: Technology And Future Of Ad Biz Will Be Prevalent

A SHOOT Staff Report

LAS VEGAS—The exhibit floor will be front and center stage per usual at the upcoming National Association of Broadcasters (NAB) Show April 18-23 in Las Vegas. Yet while cameras, workflow, post and audio wares will be top

of mind, off the exhibit floor a mindful eye will be cast to the future of the advertising business on several fronts.

There will be a keynote address by Malcolm Gladwell, bestselling author of *The Tipping Point*, *Blink* and *Outliers*, whose work has been embraced

by some in the advertising/marketing arena as a mantra for connecting with people. Another keynote will be delivered by Henry Selick, director of the 3D, stop motion animated film *Coraline*, the first feature film out of LAIKA, the Portland, Ore.-headquar-

tered animation studio known for its work in commercials, TV, shorts and music videos.

Linked with the NAB Show will be the Advertising Innovations Summit (co-produced by iHollywoodForum), a daylong (April 21) series of addresses

and panel sessions focusing on the future of TV and broadband advertising. Among the keynote speakers are: Ed Montes, regional manager, North America, for Havas Digital; and Mark Tutssel, chief creative officer for Leo Burnett Worldwide, who will share "Agency Insights on Transforming the Advertising Industry."

Exhibit floor

News is already being made on the exhibit front relative to one leading manufacturer that's opted not to showcase its wares at NAB while another prominent company is returning. The former is Quantel.

"It's not a decision that we've come to without a great deal of thought," stated Quantel CEO Ray Cross. "However in the current general economic climate we quite simply can't justify the \$1 million-plus investment that exhibiting at NAB would require. This year we're being prudent; I'm sure our customers are too."

"The roadshows we've been running around the world over the last year have showed us that many of our customers really appreciate the convenience and individual attention that such events can offer," Cross continued. "These initiatives will therefore continue to be at the forefront of our customer-facing activities over the coming months, in combination with the regular visits that our R&D, support, sales, marketing and management teams make to our users."

Cross added, "We are busy working on new projects for major customers around the world at the moment and are progressing exciting new developments such as V4.1 and beyond, RED workflow, Stereo3D, Dino and FCP server integration to name a few. Not going to NAB in this challenging year will allow R&D to focus fully on delivering for our customers. This year delivery, not marketing, comes first."

On the flip side, now returning to the NAB exhibit floor is Avid Technology. In a pre-NAB announcement, Avid is now offering native support for the RED R3D file format, delivering customers increased efficiencies in the editorial and finishing process of RED-originated projects.

As for what to look forward to at NAB, Jason Matthew Jacob, technical consultant at N.Y. edit house Outside, cited "new digital camera technology" that will be previewed (or released) "and the new workflows that will result. The RED camera woke everyone up to high end digital acquisition and with the SI-2k making face time in Oscar winner *Slumdog*, it will be interesting to see new players in this market and how the Genesis and Viper evolve as well as new tech from Sony."



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Southeast Feedback

Continued from page 10
and 500 companies.

Because of our new incentives, our workforce is growing, our infrastructure is expanding in terms of soundstages and production studios, and our supplier base is multiplying.



Tamera Brooks,
owner/executive producer,
Stray Dog, Nashville, Tenn.

Stray Dog, a film production company based in Nashville, TN, continues to attract national and regional spot production work from within the Southeast but other markets as well. Over the last year there has been a definite turn toward more new media work such as virals, webisodes and

corporate work. More agencies are focusing on a multimedia approach to branding their clients products. We are seeing viral and web specific projects being produced exclusively instead of in addition to spot work. Fortunately for Stray Dog, we are well equipped to handle whatever type work comes our way. Our diverse directors roster and relationships within the industry allow us to be flexible enough to work within any medium.



Kathleen Fitch,
Vice President,
Crawford Post Production, Atlanta

Crawford Post Production's latest projects range from national and regional commercials to content for the Internet and mobile industries with webisodes and mobisodes. Crawford Post has seen an increase of Web-based spots and can offer clients a complete in-house solution. Recent webisodes include

U.S. Marine Corps (JWT Atlanta), TNT series promotion (Turner Studios) and Purolator (The Buntin Group).

Regardless of the final deliverable, Crawford Post provides all the right services to get the project to air such as conversions, captioning and encoding. Every project, whether it's for television or large and small venues, needs talent to effectively communicate the client's message.

Over the years, the true core hasn't changed and that is the talent to tell the tale, create the effects, enhance the color, animate the graphics, compose the music and do the sound design to deliver the best story possible. The talent always endures the test of time.



Cathy Wilson,
executive producer,
Red Truck Films, Raleigh, N.C.

By 2008's year-end, Red Truck Films delivered a combination of spots for TV as well as broadband content. For Virgin Airways, through McKinney, we shot content for banner ads and Captivate - like you see in taxicabs and elevators. Due to tightening budgets we actually saw fewer multi-

media jobs packaged. Clients either wanted spots for TV or content only. This year agencies are encouraging their clients to package jobs for greater efficiencies. Knowing clients are producing less, we are all thinking in ways to create work that can be multi-purposed. As budgets continue to tighten we've actually seen an increase in board flow since we can match a talented director roster with the ability to package post through our sister companies, Serious Robots and Blazing Music + Sound.



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We know what keeps you up at night. That's why Georgia is where you'll find everything you need for a world-class production. With multiple incentives, a sales tax exemption, and up to a 30% tax credit, you'll be able to put more money where it belongs—on the screen. Our deep crew base and diverse locations, ranging from rural to urban and mountains to ocean, are part of a dynamic production center that has the facilities and expertise to handle everything your project demands. All you have to bring is your suitcase.

To learn more, call the Georgia Film, Music & Digital Entertainment Office at 404-962-4052 or visit www.georgia.org/entertainment.



Delayed Payments Jeopardize Spot Production Community

Continued from page 3

In a power point presentation, Miller showed how the cash flow under the General Motors payment plan would unfold, putting production houses in a major financial hole within a short period of time. Ironically, a production company that fronts significant sums of money without being paid in a timely fashion can find that the worst thing that can happen is being awarded another job.

That additional job could push a negative cash flow situation into a financial disaster, translating into the death knell for a production house already in a predicament.

"People are looking for answers," Miller told *SHOOT*. "And while it might seem simplistic, we thought it was important to explain to everybody the basics of good business, that cash flow is essential and you have to make sure that you stay solvent. Otherwise you can jeopardize not only your company but the entire business. Labor costs have to be paid in a timely manner and other costs cannot be strung out. For production companies fronting large sums of money, what's

worse than getting one GM job is to get two."

In the case of GM and other clients that are at an economic crossroads, said Miller, there are doubts that these advertisers can meet their financial obligations. In these cases, he affirmed, production companies are in no position to extend credit. Rather they need legal assurances that they will get paid. Such assurances can take the form of receiving 100 percent payment for the job up front or having 100 percent of the payment placed into an account that is specified for the production (with proper documentation outlining the terms of disbursement of the funds). It would also be prudent to get written assurances that put production houses in a strong legal position if a client were to go bankrupt.

Big squeeze

GM isn't the only client looking to string out payments. Miller noted for example that Anheuser-Busch InBev has floated a policy of 120 days before payment is made on invoices. Other clients and agencies too have made

vendors wait for payment over extended periods, putting production houses and others in often difficult if not untenable cash flow situations.

According to the annual AICP membership survey, the most frequent explanation given by ad agencies to production companies for late payment is that the client has not yet paid the agency. This sequential liability explanation/justification for untimely payments has indeed gained prominence over the years. A growing number of agencies have included stricter terms into their contracts, including sequential liability, which translates into the agency meeting payment terms it has agreed to only if it has been paid by the client. Otherwise, the production company must look to the client for payment.

To deal with this situation, the AICP has advised production houses to make sure that the client: has an "agent relationship" with the agency; has committed to the terms of the contract that the production company has negotiated with the agency; and is fully aware of the payment terms and is committed to meet them if the agency

doesn't. To confirm these three suggested points, the AICP recommends that the advertiser countersign the final contract along with the agency.

Miller noted that sequential liability was created to provide protection for ad agencies in the area of large media purchases should a client declare bankruptcy. The concern was that within that transactional time frame, a client could go bankrupt, leaving the agency stuck with financial liability and media inventory.

"What's happened, though," said Miller, "is that sequential liability has become a substitution to evade and avoid the payment terms that are specified in the agency contract for production. Sequential liability is supposed to be for purchasing media and affording protection from bankruptcy. It wasn't supposed to be about cash flow but it's being applied to cash flow to our detriment."

And at press time the vise was tightening with the news that agency holding company Omnicom is insisting on a sequential liability provision in production contracts, language that could prove onerous for production houses.

To mitigate against the slow payment problem, including sequential liability, the AICP has had in place since late 2006 a 75-25 national guideline whereby the first payment to the production company should be 75 percent of the contract price on a job. This way a production company isn't behind the financial eight ball from the very beginning of a job.

Education

The AICP's role in all this, observed Miller, is to educate its members and the industry. As a trade association, the AICP cannot dictate how its member companies do business. Individual companies decide how they do business.

By providing education, the AICP hopes that those production companies make informed decisions, with an eye towards not only their own well-being but also that of the entire production community.

"We want companies to understand what their decisions mean," said Miller. "If you go on that [GM] preferred vendor list, you're done. No company can survive those terms. You're done if you accept those terms."

California Passes Filming Incentives Measure; Spots Excluded

Continued from page 3

the next five years (making for a total of \$500 million), includes such broad strokes as:

- A 20 percent tax credit for a "qualified motion picture which includes feature films (\$1 million minimum to \$75 million maximum production budget), television movies or TV miniseries (\$500,000 minimum production budget) and new TV series licensed for original distribution on basic cable (\$1 million minimum budget; one-half hour shows and other exclusions apply).

- A 25 percent tax credit for a "qualified motion picture" that is: A TV series, without regard to episode length, that filmed all of its prior season or seasons outside of California; or an independent film (\$1 million to \$10 million budget) that is produced by a company that is not publicly traded and for which publicly traded companies do not own more than 25 percent of the producing company).

- Among the key requirements is that 75 percent of production days be in or total production budget be spent in California.

- Qualified taxpayers are allowed a credit against income and/or sales and use taxes, based on qualified expenditures, for taxable years beginning on or after January 1, 2011. Only tax credits issued to an independent film may

be transferred or sold to an unrelated party. Other qualified taxpayers may carry over tax credits for five years and transfer tax credits to an affiliate.

(Qualified expenditures are amounts paid or incurred for the purchase or lease of tangible personal property and qualified wages for services performed in California. The following wages are not qualified expenditures: writers, directors, music directors, music composers, music supervisors, producers and performers other than background actors with no scripted lines).

Spot omission

Amy Lemisch, executive director of the CFC, said she is "thrilled to see an incentives package come to pass. An entertainment industry coalition has been working on this for much longer than I have. I've been here four and a half years and industry efforts started long before then. This program reflects the recognition we have long sought from the legislature that the filming industry is vital to the state's economic well-being."

At the same time, Lemisch noted that commercials were a part of all the prior drafts she saw of incentives legislation and that it's unfortunate they are not part of this breakthrough measure. She added that the Association of Independent Commercial Pro-

ducers (AICP) has been "extremely active" as part of the entertainment industry coalition and put in significant efforts to bring progressive incentives to fruition.

Matt Miller, president/CEO of the AICP, affirmed that his organization did much work over the years to help bring an incentives package about in California. The AICP, he noted, was a major part of the industry coalition which educated legislators and government officials about the issues involved and the importance of filmmaking—from commercials to long-form TV and feature content—to the state's economy.

Miller contended that Gov. Schwarzenegger (R-CA) and the legislators "screwed us, not taking into account the work of the coalition and instead opting for language floated by other entities into the budget. They circumvented the good work of the coalition and that doesn't ultimately help anybody."

The ultimate losers in all this, continued Miller, are the people of California. "Commercials are an extremely important part of the industry. I'd like to remind the 'Governator' that when the Writers Guild decided to pull a bonehead move with their actor brethren doing the same thing, television and feature work dried up. The only thing in the filming economic

engine keeping Hollywood alive has been commercials."

Even at that, commercials have been down in California, migrating to other states which have incentives in place that cover spots. This decline is reflected in FilmL.A. permit statistics with on-location spot production down 11 percent in 2008 as compared to '07 (*SHOOT*, 1/16).

"Commercials needed to be addressed in California's incentives program," stressed Miller. "This now seems like more of an ego thing for Governor Schwarzenegger who's looking to get high profile projects back—like striking back against New York which took the TV series *Ugly Betty* away from Los Angeles. Now that Governor Patterson hasn't put funding into New York's filming incentives program [which is separate from New York's commercials incentives package that remains intact], politically it's a chance for Governor Schwarzenegger to score points.

"But an effective incentives program," concluded Miller, "needs to go beyond this and take into account the everyday production like commercials that is so vital to the economy."

In the February newsletter for private nonprofit film permitting and community relations organization FilmL.A., its president Paul Audley wrote, "The state legislature has rec-

ognized that the filmed entertainment industry is extremely mobile and that an incentive will make California more competitive vis-à-vis other states with generous incentives.

"Though the \$100 million annual cap will likely mean credits will be snatched up within weeks or months of the program's start...the result will be an increase in filmed productions choosing to film in California instead of out of state, thereby creating jobs and generating tax revenue," continued Audley. "While I welcome and believe in the future benefits of this incentive—our film production data has most effectively been used to substantiate the impact of 'ran-away' production—I hope state leaders will analyze the incentive's results and consider expanding the program's scope and size in the future."

Toward that end, Audley cited commercials—as well as feature films with budgets greater than \$75 million—as being most worthy of inclusion.

He observed that last month's passage of the initial incentives program represents "a positive step towards reclaiming our signature industry. The door is now ajar. By throwing the door fully open [to commercials and bigger budgeted features], the entertainment industry can once again underpin our state's economy to the benefit of each and every Californian."

Docter Twins Come Aboard Mortar

Continued from page 6

Mortar's signing of The Docter Twins represents the company's first expansion of its directorial roster. Formed about a year ago, Mortar began eyeing additional directors in November, ultimately gravitating towards The Docter Twins based on what Merhar described as their "smart comedy and smart visuals."

That mix of comedy and visuals is reflected in the Wienerschnitzel campaign as well as in a two-spot package for POMx iced coffee out of in-house agency The Fire Station, and a Kellogg's Gripz commercial conceived by Leo Burnett, Chicago.

One of the offbeat POMx spots, "Breakroom"—featuring human beings dressed as sheep characters—recently won a Gold Medal at the Los Angeles ADDY Awards.

Content development

The Docter Twins additionally see the opportunity for their creative chops to be put to good use at Mortar which, said Jason, "is not just a pro-



The Docter Twins

duction house but also very much a creative shop."

He cited Merhar's agency creative experience [at Fusion Idea Lab, Chicago], which has translated into special projects at Mortar, including a sitcom pilot developed at the company and written and directed by Merhar.

The sitcom, said Bithell, also lends itself to the integration of other marketers' products "without being heavy handed. It's an innovative integrated comedic pilot."

Merhar added, "Production companies are looking to get into other forms of content. We are in a unique position in that we are able to create that content ourselves."

Rock roots

Both Jason and Matt Docter are graduates of the University of Illinois where they each double majored in English and film. In college, the Docter Twins established an indie rock band which went on to tour with internationally known acts such as Oasis, Matthew Sweet and Sheryl Crow.

Between tours, Matt began producing and directing documentary projects for PBS while Jason moved to Los Angeles to record a solo record and then entered the world of television commercial production.

Matt shortly thereafter joined his brother on the West Coast and the twins then garnered a record deal with Virgin Records.

The contract birthed songs which have been placed in shows like *Army Wives*, *ER*, *Roswell* and MTV's *The Real World*.

The Docter Twins even did a musical end tag for the aforementioned POMx television commercials that they recently directed.

Marshall On Spot Biz

Continued from page 6

"why a bunch of 25-year-old kids are running their production with little or no clue about advertising."

Marshall observed that the handwriting has been on the wall for some time. He said that the actors' strike of 2000 took a major bite out of the business as clients who were forced to go overseas to shoot learned they could continue to run those spots for years sans having to pay residuals.

Marshall also referenced an AICP study done years back in which a UCLA business professor characterized commercial production practices as being part of a bad business model. "I remember him making such points as we are managers of directors careers and not getting paid for it. We are show-

ing our markup to our clients, which is something that most businesses would never do," said Marshall. "Though we don't do cost-plus anymore, it's like the business has become cost-minus for many production companies."

As for his future plans, Marshall said he has several businesses and interests outside the spotmaking industry which he will likely pursue. And in the big picture, Marshall can't complain given the long run enjoyed by Villains, which includes, he said, helping to launch Smuggler, a production company success story. "I'll miss the many friends I've made in the business and getting to collaborate with them," affirmed Marshall. "I'll also miss line producing which I love to this day."

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Top Spot of the Week

Director Helen Hunt, StrawberryFrog Visit Inspiration Café For TrueNorth

By Christine Champagne

Even the most cynical amongst us has to be touched by TrueNorth's hopeful "Inspiration Café."

Created by New York's StrawberryFrog and directed by Oscar-winning actress Helen Hunt, who is repped by bicoastal Chelsea for spotwork, the :60, which debuted during the recent Academy Awards telecast, introduces us to a remarkable woman named Lisa Nigro, a former Chicago police officer whose mission in life is to care for the homeless.

As we learn in the documentary-style commercial, Nigro delivered sandwiches to those in need with a little red wagon at first, then she graduated to an automobile and a school bus before opening a café for the homeless called the Inspiration Café.

One café has since grown to three, and Nigro also runs job training and housing programs nowadays.

"The magic of the Inspiration Café is to know that you would be missed if you didn't come. Someone is waiting for you. Someone is pacing the floor for you," Nigro says in the spot. "That's the gift of being expected."

A quick unobtrusive pitch for Frito-Lay's TrueNorth nut-cluster snacks is

then made during the closing seconds of the commercial via a quick product shot accompanied by a voiceover that relates, "Lisa's true north is serving the homeless with dignity. Ours is simple: turning an ordinary nut into an extraordinary snack."

One has to ask if the client was hesitant about running commercials—"Inspiration Café" was one of four similarly uplifting spots that broke during the Oscars—that don't spend much time selling their product. "When you name something TrueNorth, and you define it as pursuing your one true passion in life, it would be a little disingenuous to make such a lofty statement and



Lisa Nigro

not showcase these people who are doing amazing things and pursuing their one true passion like you did," StrawberryFrog creative director Josh Greenspan said, noting that more product-oriented ads are in the media mix as well.

In order to find subjects for the spots that celebrate those following their true north, the company ran a contest, setting up a website through which people could nominate themselves or others. Nigro, a woman with boomer appeal—that's the de-

mographic TrueNorth is going after—whose story aligned nicely with that of the brand's, was chosen from nearly 3,000 entries.

Spot debut

With an amazing subject to shoot, Hunt, who has directed episodes of *Mad About You* and the feature film *Then She Found Me*, made her spot directing debut with "Inspiration Café." The director wanted Nigro to feel like "part of the team, not some subject that we would manipulate and steal something from," so she made sure to clue Nigro in as to what she was going for from the get-go.

As for Hunt's plan, she wanted to hone in on the theme of what it's like to not be expected. "Lisa talked about what it's like to not be expected [on a casting tape], which is something that I hadn't thought about before," Hunt said. "If you are a homeless person in America, there is no one looking at their watch and worrying because you didn't show up at the time you said you were going to show up. So I thought, 'I'm going to go for that, and whatever else happens will be happy accidents along the way.'"

Hunt and cinematographer Peter Donahue, who shot *Then She Found Me*, filmed "Inspiration Café" in two and a half days, and some of the most compelling images they captured are the "portraits" they shot of the homeless people who eat at the café.

"Across the board, from our side to the client side to Helen's side, that's our favorite portion of the entire spot," Greenspan said. "It's rare that you get to actually look into these people's eyes, and with these long shots that almost hang on a fraction of a second too long, you're kind of forced to confront them and really see the faces of the people that are being helped."

Joy ride

While the portraits are quietly riveting, it should be noted that the overall tone of this spot is actually quite joyful. In fact, we see Nigro laughing in the kitchen and smiling with her patrons. "I wanted to make sure I captured that," Hunt said, noting, "I think some of the people involved were a little nervous about that part of it, and you could certainly do it the wrong way—you know, where everything's peppy and happy. But I thought for the portraits to land, it would be important that there be a lot of buoyancy in the first half of it."

Hunt added, "Also, I wouldn't have done it if it wasn't true. Lisa really does

run around hugging everybody. She is a spirited human being."

Nigro's infectious energy and can-do attitude are nicely captured in :60 and :30 versions of "Inspiration Café" edited by Rob Watzke. Hunt has known Watzke, who cuts spots out of Beast Editorial, bicoastal and Dallas, for years.

After giving him some notes on what she wanted in terms of visuals, pacing and music (the final track was ultimately composed by Jimmy Haun of Beta Patrol, Los Angeles), Watzke took a first pass at the spot.

Hunt worked with him to finesse it, then the StrawberryFrog team joined the process.

Hunt is pleased with the two commercials that were fashioned in the end, noting that the agency made sure her voice was heard.

"When it was, 'Do we go left, or do we go right?,' they let it go my way," she shared, "so that I could feel a sense of ownership about the film."

**TOP
Spot
OF THE WEEK**

CLIENT
TrueNorth.
AGENCY

StrawberryFrog, New York.
Kevin McKeon, executive creative director; Josh Greenspan, Corinna Falusi, creative directors; Rob Farber, producer.

PRODUCTION COMPANY
Chelsea, bicoastal.
Helen Hunt, director; Peter Donahue, DP; Allison Amon, Lisa Mehling, John LaChapelle, executive producers; Jonathan Gribetz, producer; Helga Gruber, production supervisor. Shot on location in Chicago.

EDITORIAL
Beast Editorial, bicoastal.
Rob Watzke, editor; Valerie Petrusson, Joanne Ferraro, executive producers; Vic Barczyk, assistant editor.

POST
The Mill, New York.
Fergus McCall, colorist.
Soul7, New York.
Jon Tomasiello, online editor.

MUSIC
Beta Patrol, Los Angeles.
Jimmy Haun, composer; Bryan Ray Turcotte, executive producer; Ceinwyn Clark, producer.

AUDIO
audioEngine, New York.
Rex Recker, mixer.



[CLICK HERE TO VIEW SPOT](#)

Former Chicago police officer Lisa Nigro found her TrueNorth calling in Inspiration Café, which is now three cafes providing nourishment—not just food but also caring, job training, housing programs and dignity—to the homeless. Oscar-winning actress Helen Hunt directed this spot profiling Nigro.

The Best Work You May Never See

Dom & Nic, Burnett Play With A Full Deck

By Robert Goldrich

It's not yet a game of 52 pick-up but portions of the housing market in the U.K. are tantamount to houses of cards that are falling, with each representing another resident or family having to relocate or worse becoming homeless for an extended period.

In this public service spot for housing and homelessness charity organization Shelter, we see the cards ending up scattered across an anywhere town in the U.K., our perspective being seemingly that of a passenger glancing out the window of a moving train.

At first the view appears to be a typical urban landscape. But as we move past the various houses and blocks, the camera reveals that some are constructed from giant playing cards. Furthermore, several of these houses of cards are falling apart, the cards tumbling off and away in slow motion.

Combined with a melancholy, repetitive piano, synth and percussion accompaniment (drawn from Radiohead's song, "Videotape," on the "In Rainbows" album), the effect is powerful and moving, an eloquent visual metaphor for the fragility of the housing situation for many in the current economy.

The last house of cards we see is not a single flat but rather a towering apartment building, the top of which is disintegrating before our eyes.

A voiceover (from actress Samantha Morton) then relates, "An estimated 75,000 homes will be repossessed this year. The housing crisis is real. Please help. Visit shelter.org.uk."

Gimme Shelter

Dom & Nic of Outsider, London, directed this pro bono PSA, "House of Cards," for Shelter out of Leo Burnett, London. (Dom & Nic—a.k.a. Nicholas Goffey and Dominic Hawley—are repped stateside for commercials and music videos by Los Angeles-based Oil Factory.)

The Shelter organization offers intervention and assistance to those people hit hard by the housing crisis, and serves as a lobbying force for legislative and community reforms.

Framestore, London, donated its services, creating low-key yet impactful visual effects that were integral to the concept. Framestore's visual effects supervisors on the job were long-time Dom & Nic collaborator, VFX supervisor Ben Cronin, and CG lead/3D technical director Simon French.

"We shot the raw material over one day on the line between Shepherd's Bush Market and Goldhawk Road stations," said Cronin, "We had very little time and had to take whichever trains came along. We only had about five takes in all—and the sun was going in and out, there were camera problems on one take. So it was a little hectic. The nature of the shot we wanted, and the effects we were going to be adding, meant that it had to be done as one take."

Some of the buildings that are made of cards were positioned over existing buildings which meant in some cases that they had to be completely removed,

while others—such as the final tower block (a tall apartment building)—were inserted into available gaps in the landscape. Whichever, Cronin had plenty of alterations, tidying up, and a lot of roto, all in addition to the compositing of the card structures and their collapsing constituent elements.

Playing Cards

These cards—their construction, their collapsing, and their lighting—were the sole responsibility of French. "I was involved from the concept stage," said French, "And once I knew what they'd need, I was able to do some research and groundwork into the most efficient way of constructing these card houses. Much of this was scripted to make sure that simulation and render geometry matched after each revision. Although at first glance it might look like a straightforward 'rigid bodies falling into each other' problem, the sheer number of cards involved meant that Maya could have had problems handling the data. In the end I used Maya's nCloth for the simulation, and the cards were rendered with Mental Ray. nCloth is primarily designed to create flowing cloths, garments and the like, so cards were not strictly what it's meant for. But it's quite an open system and it served my purposes very well, being a very rugged solver. Each card becomes the face of a polygon, with the whole building the complete object, which makes the whole simulation much more manageable."

The Burnett team included creative director Jonathan Burley, creatives Daniel Fisher, Pete Gosselin, Richard Brim and Jay Hunt, and producer Graeme Light. Jon Madsen produced for Outsider. Tom Townend was the DP.

credits

Client Shelter Agency Leo Burnett, London Jonathan Burley, creative director; Daniel Fisher, Pete Gosselin, Richard Brim, Jay Hunt, creatives; Graeme Light, producer. **Production Outsider, London** Dom & Nic, directors; Jon Madsen, producer; Tom Townend, DP. **Post/Visual Effects** Framestore London Ben Cronin, VFX supervisor; Simon French, CG lead/3D technical director; Dave Ludlam, colorist.

Visual EFX artisans shuffle the cards for Shelter.



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DIRECTORS



Spring is a magical season, a time for renewal and a fresh start. And we're definitely getting fresh in this spring edition of *SHOOT's* Directors Series. Even in our individual profiles of accomplished directors who are helping to shape advertising in traditional and new forms, there's a sense of newness, perhaps best underscored by Peter Thwaites, this year's DGA Award winner as best commercial director of 2008. While hardly a newcomer, he is a fresh new face that's been thrust into prominence, beating out a field of more established directorial nominees and making a name for himself beyond the U.K. where he continues to be handled by Gorgeous Enterprises, with stateside representation via Anonymous Content.

Other fresh choices come from the agency side. There's Kim Gehrig, a former creative at Mother, London, who has made her mark directorially at Academy Films, London, most notably with Amnesty International's *You Are Powerful*. And then there's Jason Zada, a co-founder and the former executive creative director of interactive agency EVB, who is now focused fully on directing at Tool of North America.

In terms of feature talent now bringing a freshness to the advertising scene, consider Ross Katz and Ondi Timoner. The former just signed with TWC for spot representation, fresh off his critically acclaimed HBO film *Taking Chance*. And Timoner is a lauded documentary filmmaker whose *We Live in Public* just won the Grand Jury Prize for U.S. Documentary Film at the Sundance Film Festival. Timoner has already begun to establish herself in spots and is handled by Nonfiction Unlimited.

This is just a smattering of the talent that's showcased in this special edition. Our lineup of up-and-coming directors is quite diverse and includes a couple of brothers who opened some major doors on a shoestring budget, a "time sculptor," an agency creative who's type O Positive, a music video helper who has diversified into spots, and a European who moved to Brooklyn and is now directing through a Chicago shop which represents a unique production business model.

And then in our Cinematographers Series, we look at several notable DPs who have settled nicely into the commercial director's chair.

So read about our spring crop of Magic Makers and enjoy. As always, we very much welcome your feedback.

—**Robert Goldrich**, Editor
rgoldrich@shootonline.com

Profiles

- Pete Berg**
by Christine Champagne 20
- Kim Gehrig**
by Robert Goldrich 21
- Ross Katz**
by Robert Goldrich 22
- Simon McQuoid**
by Robert Goldrich 23
- Rupert Sanders**
by Robert Goldrich 24
- Smith & Foulkes**
by Robert Goldrich 25
- Peter Thwaites**
by Millie Takaki 26

- Ondi Timoner**
by Robert Goldrich 26
- Jason Zada**
by Robert Goldrich 27

Features

- Directors/Cinematographers**
- DPs In The Director's Chair**
by Robert Goldrich and Millie Takaki 28
- Up-And-Coming Directors**
- The Spring Collection**
by Robert Goldrich and Millie Takaki 31
- Editors On Directors**
- Cutting and Collaborating**
by Robert Goldrich and Millie Takaki 35





Peter Berg

Hooray for "Huluwood"

By Christine Champagne

Football figures into some of Peter Berg's best work these days, including the critically acclaimed series *Friday Night Lights*, which he brought to television after directing the film of the same name—both projects were based on H.C. Bissinger's book about a Texas town obsessed with high school football.

Then there is that irreverent Hulu spot starring *30 Rock*'s Alec Baldwin. Okay, it isn't football-themed, but the Berg-directed "Alec In Huluwood" did debut during Super Bowl XLIII, and it was one of the few standout spots we saw during the Big Game this year.

Lauded by advertising critics and the public, the :60 has Baldwin taking and running with the notion that watching too much television will rot our brains. He notes that Hulu beams TV shows to your computer anytime, anywhere for free and "there's nothing you can do to stop it. I mean what are you going to do? Turn off your TV and computer?"

"Once your brain is reduced to a cottage cheese-like mush," continues Baldwin, "we'll scoop them up with a melon baller and gobble them right on up."

An animated tentacle then emerges from under Baldwin's suit coat, confirming that he is an intergalactic alien creature and that Hulu is indeed this other world's weapon of choice for conquering human civilization.

A parting voiceover relates, "Hulu, an evil plot to destroy the world. Enjoy."

Berg couldn't say no to the Hulu campaign—he also directed a spot featuring *Dollhouse* star Eliza Dushku titled "Eliza Fondue" and a :30 spot with Baldwin that hadn't broken as of press time—when Crispin Porter + Bogusky (CP+B) presented the idea (a joint effort between the agency's Boulder and Miami shops) to him.

For starters, Berg is a big fan of the web video service, and when it comes to selecting spot jobs the director, who signed with bicoastal Pony Show Entertainment just over a year ago after previous stints with New York's The Shooting Gallery and bicoastal Tool of North America, said his choices rely "first and foremost on the product."

While Berg has to be truly invested in what he is selling, he also has to be sold on a concept, of course, and he said CP+B came to him with well thought-out ideas for the Hulu spots. So the biggest challenge for Berg in shooting "Alec In Huluwood" in particular was ensuring that the visual effects were the best they could be.

"I knew that the quality of Alec Baldwin's performance would be strong," Berg related, "and, frankly, I wanted to make sure that we didn't have cheap, bogus-looking effects that would detract from that."

As you'll recall, there are various effects in the spot (actually, more than you'd realize, Berg said, noting there are set extensions), including an animated brain and animated tentacles that suddenly emerge from under Baldwin's jacket.

"The CG component is always challenging in any spot because you're dealing with limited resources, and because this was a Super Bowl spot, we were dealing with limited time," Berg said.

"We had to work quickly with the folks at Method [the Santa Monica, Calif.-based visual effects shop] to get it right, and you never quite know until the last second whether it's going to work."

The visual effects may have been a concern but working with the talent in the Hulu spots wasn't given that Baldwin and Dushku are experienced actors as is Berg, who is perhaps best known for his television series work as *Chicago Hope*'s Dr. Billy Kronk as well as roles in films such as *The Last Seduction*. "Dealing with actors can be a confusing and sometimes intimidating experience for directors or ad agency folks or clients who don't have a lot of experience with the language of an actor. They can be intimidated on how to approach actors and are

"I think having spent as much time as I have acting kind of has given me a good shorthand for figuring out what it is a specific actor needs..."



Hulu's "Alec In Huluwood"

often at a loss as to how to communicate with actors. I think having spent as much time as I have acting kind of has given me a good shorthand for figuring out what it is a specific actor needs to not only make them feel comfortable but help them understand what it is that people want from them," Berg observed, adding, "Actors generally want to please, but they're just oftentimes nervous, insecure and unsure of how to do that."

Asked if he has ever appeared in a commercial as an actor, Berg has to pause to think back on his career. "No, I don't think I ever have," he mused.

That said, Berg is open to appearing in a spot and would happily step in front of the camera for Hulu if the opportunity presented itself. After all, as the producer of *Friday Night Lights*, a show which many fans watch on Hulu, Berg would be the perfect spokesman.

While Berg's Hulu work has gotten him notice in as of late, he also recently got a chance to direct his first music video. The client: was none other than singer Christina Aguilera. "I'm a huge fan of hers," Berg shared, "and I guess she had heard that I was a big fan and asked me if I wanted to do something with her, and I said yes sight unseen."

The clip, "Keeps Gettin' Better," finds Aguilera sitting at a console, reviewing imagery in which she appears as characters ranging from a retro hippie chick to a modern biker chick. Directing the Aguilera video, which takes viewers on a digital trip through time, truly tested and ultimately improved his effects capabilities, said Berg, whose first serious immersion in effects came when he directed the Will Smith film *Hancock* about a hard-living superhero who falls out of favor with the masses.

"I like the idea of testing myself and trying lots of different things," Berg said, "and for the last year and a half or so, I've been trying to learn as much as I can about the world of visual effects because there is so much innovative work you can do now with it."

Berg is happy with how the Aguilera video turned out, although he says he would have loved to have more time to work on it.

"I've never done anything as quickly as I did the Aguilera video. That was really fast, particularly in postproduction. I think the challenge for us there was it was such a post-heavy video, and our post schedule was really short," Berg said. "If we had had another week or so to play around in post, it would have been really helpful."

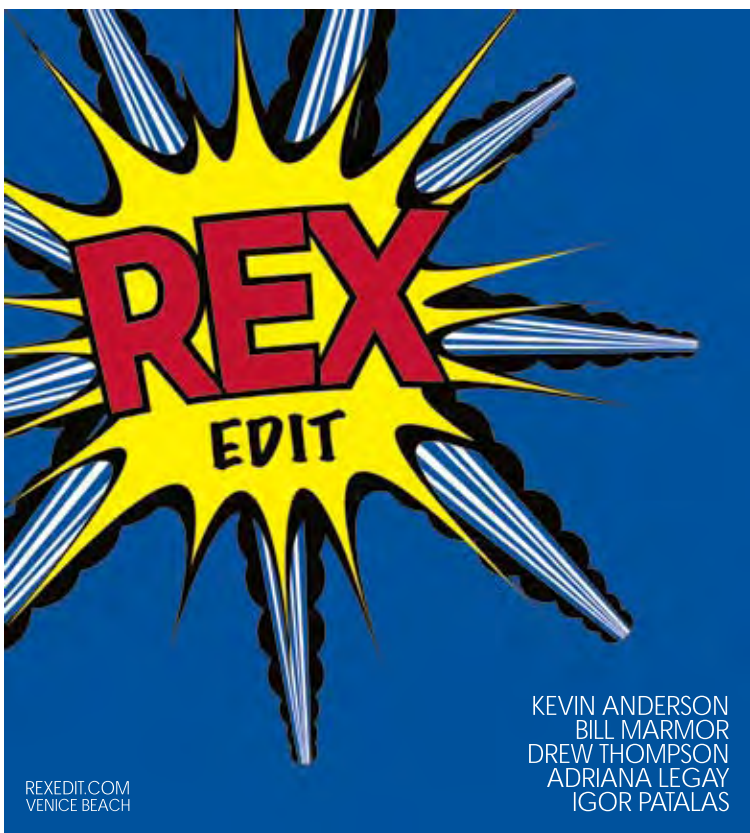
The director would love to do another video, by the way. "I'm a huge White Stripes fan," he enthused. "If the White Stripes call, I'd do a video for them in a second."

For now, though, Berg is busy trying to make sure that NBC picks up *Friday Night Lights*—which, incidentally, is an advertiser-friendly show that has skillfully incorporated sponsors such as T.G.I. Friday's (one of the characters worked at the restaurant), Toyota (another character sold the company's cars) and Under Armour (the football players wear the sports apparel) without turning off the audience—for another season.

Additionally, at press time, Berg, who has directed films including the aforementioned *Hancock* and the Jamie Foxx/Jennifer Garner action thriller *The Kingdom*, was about to make a decision on his next feature project, revealing that he was considering a remake of *Dune* as well as a couple of other projects.

And, of course, Berg will gladly take on select spot assignments that appeal to his product as well as creative sensibilities.

"I don't often have the time to do commercials," Berg said, "but I really love doing them when I'm available."



Kim Gehrig

Former Mother creative scores as a filmmaker.

By Robert Goldrich

Born in Australia, Kim Gehrig moved to London to study graphic design at Central St Martins for what was supposed to be a three-month stretch. Twelve years later, she's still in the U.K., having landed right out of school a creative role at ad agency Mother in London and establishing herself there before settling into the director's chair.

Though she is new to spot directing, it doesn't quite fit to call her a new director. Gehrig enjoyed an eight-year tenure at Mother, as a creative and creative director on lauded work. For the past two-and-a-half years she diversified into directing while with Mother, directing music videos via Academy Films, London.

Late last year she formally exited Mother to focus full time on directing, securing her first "commercial," a branding short for Amnesty International out of Mother that put her on the map as a helmer in a major way. Gehrig not only directed the Academy-produced Amnesty piece, titled *You Are Powerful*, but also contributed to it as a writer working in concert with her former Mother colleagues.

The 90-second film opens on a young African American man who smiles confidently into the camera after setting his bicycle aside. Then in what seems a world away we see news footage of a man who is about to be lynched. Suddenly the African-American enters the scene and lifts the noose off the intended vic-

tim's neck, saving his life.

Next an elderly woman intervenes, single-handedly holding back a line of militia who had been beating demonstrators in the streets. To see this gray-haired, rather frail looking woman stop the violence is a most inspiring sight.

A middle-aged man then comes to the rescue in yet another broadcast news footage scenario, untying a prisoner's hands and removing his blindfold.

Then another man leaves his world to free people from a dark prison cell.

A pregnant woman exits the safety of her home to stop the beating of an innocent man halfway around the world.

Next a woman in a business suit performs the heroic feat of standing between a firing squad and its target, preventing a foreign government-

sponsored execution.

And finally a gal in jogger's sweats ends her workout in a lovely neighborhood park to go to far more dangerous turf where she takes a semiautomatic weapon away from a child. This after we see assorted scenes of children being armed and deployed as soldiers.

The camera returns to this last heroine, at which time we see a supered message that simply reads, "You Are Powerful."

Continued on page 30



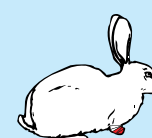
Amnesty International's *You Are Powerful*



"When you look around for a production company, you want to be at a place that makes the work you would like to make."

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Ross Katz

Taking care with Taking Chance

By Robert Goldrich

In our 2009 Sundance Film Festival coverage in January centering on advertising industry artisans whose work was being showcased, *SHOOT* did not list *Taking Chance*. That's because the first-time director of the film didn't have a spotmaking affiliation.

But since then, the poignant *Taking Chance* has aired on HBO, received rave reviews, and director Ross Katz has come aboard the roster of TWC, Santa Monica, to direct commercials.

Now that we're armed with hindsight, Katz's entry into the ad arena seems a natural given the dialogue/storytelling prowess reflected in *Taking Chance*, which he not only directed but also co-wrote with Lieutenant Colonel Michael Strobl, USMC (Ret.), a Desert Storm veteran. With a tasteful and restrained hand, Katz chronicles the journey of Strobl (portrayed by Kevin Bacon), a volunteer military escort officer who was assigned to accompany the body of 19-year old Lance Corporal Chance Phelps, USMC. Phelps was killed in action in Iraq. Strobl escorted the fallen soldier across America back to Phelps' hometown of Dubois, Wyoming, in the spring of 2004.

The film is based on Strobl's diary of the trip, which captures his own inner thoughts and emotions as well as the reactions of the people he encountered along the way. Like the diary itself which has taken on a life of its own online and been embraced by families who have made the ultimate sacrifice, this film is touching, moving, caring and pays homage to the life and story of the individual who sadly ends up coming home in a flag-draped coffin. The film is an honest look at what the war means in the context of a single person and all those who have been touched by him or her. It's a thoughtful and emotional departure from the politicizing of the war that has become otherwise inescapable. Remarkably the film doesn't fall into the trap of manipulative patriotic sentimentality, in large part due to Bacon's performance, the attention to detail such as in the military's fastidious preparation and presentation of Phelps' body and his personal effects, and most notably Katz's directorial touch.

Asked why he chose *Taking Chance* to take a chance on his directing debut, Katz related, "Ironically when HBO first sent me this project, I sat on it for a



Katz directs Kevin Bacon in *Taking Chance*

couple of weeks. I didn't want to do anything that had to do with the war in Iraq. It was fall of 2006 and if you didn't know where you stood on the war at that point, you were living under a rock. I didn't think there was anything I could add to the discussion."

But then Katz read the story and was captivated. "It added something original that I hadn't known, delving into this amazing purgatory between the time someone dies in the field and when they are delivered to their family for burial. It gave me a hunger to know more," recalled Katz, "and what started out as sociological in nature became very personal for me, an obsession really that resulted in a very personal film. I wanted to create something that was beautiful but not unreal. I did not want to make a documentary but rather something that captured the poetry of what it is these individuals do whom we never see—the escort, the cargo handlers, the volunteers."

For Katz, the project passed the litmus test as explained by a good friend. "She said if you're going to lose sleep at night and live with regret that you never did the project, then it means you should do it. Anything else, you should pass. This met the test," affirmed Katz. "I couldn't sleep after I read the story."

Katz himself was well prepared to pass the litmus test of transitioning from noted feature producer to a successful first-time director. He is a two-time Best Picture Academy Award nominee as a producer for director Todd Field's *In The Bedroom* and filmmaker Sofia Coppola's *Lost In Translation*.

"As a producer, I was very hands-on," said Katz. "I was on set every day for all the films I produced and had a kind of front row seat to working with remarkable directors. That helped me a lot as a director. I had all of this physical production experience, creative producing experience and was a well rounded producer. I understand the mechanics of filmmaking in terms of the minutiae as well as the big picture. But still once you get in the director's chair, it's completely different. In some ways it's familiar. In other ways it's like completely starting over again—but that made it exciting, daunting and without question the most thrilling experience of my career."

He's now looking to add to the thrill by diversifying into commercials. "You're in a feature for the long haul. You're living in one world for a long period of time. But I love to stretch different creative muscles," explained Katz. "And you get to do that, moving from one world to another in commercials. You get all the wonders of filmmaking and have the great challenge of having to say a lot within a small time frame."

The other allure of spots for Katz is the chance to collaborate. "I've never been one of those people who says, 'I do what I do, you do what you do, leave me alone.' I have found great inspiration in the folks I've worked with over the years. I like the idea of collaborating with others, working with an agency, kind of completing and arriving at a vision for what the intent is for a commercial."

As for why he gravitated to TWC, Katz said he had an instant rapport with company partners Mark Thomas and Ralph Winter who both saw *Taking Chance*. "They had an incredibly passionate response to the film and wanted to meet with me. In the middle of the chaos that is Sundance I saw down with Mark and Ralph and connected with them. They're filmmakers."

Katz's next feature project as a director is a political thriller, *Amateur American*. Still, he also plans to honor prior producing commitments for three other films: Jonathan Mahler's *The Challenge*; *Strange But True* based on the best selling novel by John Searles; and *Road Movie*, co-produced by Susan B. Landau.

"These are three stories that I want to help to get told so I'm producing them," said Katz. "But beyond that my full focus will be on directing."

"I love to stretch different creative muscles. And you get to do that, moving from one world to another in commercials."



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Simon McQuoid

Uncommon range, common ground

By Robert Goldrich

The 2008 Gunn Report ranked Simon McQuoid the third most awarded commercial director of the year, citing such work as his lauded pair of films for the launch of Halo 3 for Microsoft's Xbox out of McCann Erickson and TAC, San Francisco.

While that work is notable in and of itself as the Film Grand Prix honor at Cannes, a D&AD Gold Pencil, and several One Show Gold Pencils would attest, it's all the more impressive when put in the context of McQuoid's other projects, a prime example being Holiday Inn Express' "Rapper" out of Fallon Minneapolis.

A *SHOOT* Top Spot in November, "Rapper" opens on a Manhattan street corner where a mild mannered businessman is challenged to a freestyle rap battle by a group of hipsters. To our surprise—and theirs—the square dude is more than up to the challenge, launching into a street rhyme sprinkled with references to strategic plans and Power Point presentations. He wraps the wrap with, "I betcha y'all wonder why my rhyme is so tight. I did stay at a Holiday Inn Express last night."

The commercial debuted right after the opening monologue for *Saturday Night Live*. And until Holiday Inn Express was mentioned, it was reported that many viewers thought "Rapper" was an *SNL* skit. Al Kelly, executive creative director at Fallon, told *SHOOT* he regarded that bit of viewer confusion as "a

huge compliment."

Juxtapose this comedy with the Halo 3 fare—in which video game advertising/marketing is taken to a new plateau, with moving documentary portraits of battlefield vets sharing tales of war—and you have a vast directorial range atypical in a business known for pigeon-holing talent.



[CLICK HERE TO VIEW SPOT](#)

Holiday Inn Express' "Rapper"

wards smart comedy. Dumb comedy can be funny but I'm not sure it's right for me. I'm also looking to bring a visual strength to the idea, a power and visceral quality when I can."

The idea also comes first in terms of McQuoid's approach. "My execution comes out of what I feel is right for the idea. I don't necessarily arrive at each job and try to impart my thumb print onto it. Instead I try to draw out the qualities that are there."

McQuoid is grateful for the scope of his project opportunities and has heard the comments about his range. Yet paradoxically he observed that this range comes from a relatively narrow focus. "I'm searching for things that can have a moving, powerful result—whether it be comedy, serious or a mixture of both," said McQuoid. "I'm not necessarily aiming for one or the other. That's irrelevant to me. I'm drawn to the smart idea first and if the idea happens to be funny, then I'm doing comedy. I will say that I lean to-

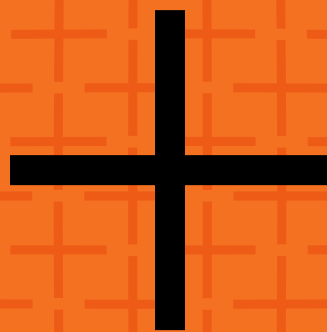


"I'm searching for things that can have a moving, powerful result—whether it be comedy, serious or a mixture of both."

Continued on page 34

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Rupert Sanders

Work that's other worldly yet accessible

By Robert Goldrich

"It's fun to create these different worlds," said director Rupert Sanders of MJZ regarding his work over the past year such as Monster.com's "Legs" for BBDO New York, and Travelers' "Delivery" from Fallon Minneapolis, two of the spots which helped him earn in January his second career Directors Guild of America (DGA) Award nomination as best commercial director of the year.

While he doesn't know what new paths his spotmaking will traverse, Sanders has a firm grasp of how his ad industry endeavors have evolved over the last couple of years.

"I've had the chance to be more the owner of narrative storytelling, to build films that have emotion, that are not just visual. Yet they are in the context of different worlds. I feel fortunate to have gotten the chance to take on more visceral narrative cinematic pieces."

"Legs" and "Delivery" certainly are larger than life stories but their success is that they are slices of life to which people can still readily relate and enjoy on various levels.

Consider "Legs" which charmingly tells the tale of a man who gets out of bed and gets ready for work. He walks through a quaint, picturesque village and then the camera reveals him to have massive legs that dwarf the rest of his body even though he himself is a big man who towers over all others. We see him pass villagers from all walks of life, some engaged in mundane tasks, others in more significant endeavors such as a young couple who just got married and are celebrating. Our large-legged protagonist briefly joins the joyous celebration before continuing on his way.

He then arrives at what looks like an isolated shed in the middle of a field. He enters the makeshift structure, which we discover houses a rickety elevator that he takes down to the depths of the earth.

As the elevator descends rapidly, he holds his ears in discomfort due to the jarring drop in altitude. The elevator door opens, placing him in what looks like a mineshaft. He walks through the shaft catacombs, which have the feel of an elaborate maze, and finally arrives at his destination—an enormous gyrosphere contraption that centers on another man who's seated upon a bicycle and peddling away feverishly. He too has massive legs and is glad to see the relief shift coming to take over his duties.

For a moment he stops peddling so that his replacement can take over. When the peddling comes to a halt, so too does the power throughout the village. The abrupt nature of this transition jostles about a man taking a bath as water jumps out of the tub, knocks another gent off his bike as he was riding through a field, and causes the bride, groom and rest of the wedding party to topple just as a camera is taking a picture of them.

Our original large-legged chap then begins peddling and in the process returns the village to normalcy.

Sanders created an unusual world right down to village inhabitants speaking Esperanto, a language that was created to be universal but has instead become relatively obscure.

Nonetheless this quirky world with all its esoteric touches is one that viewers can easily connect to, which from a storyteller's perspective represents a delicate balancing act.

It's a balancing act that plays out naturally and authentically, translating into

"You have to find a project you can wholeheartedly invest in because ultimately it will describe who you are as a filmmaker."



Monster.com's "Legs"

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Travelers' "Delivery"

[CLICK HERE TO VIEW SPOT](#)

a common thread that runs through Sanders' body of work, also reflected in the whimsical world presented in Travelers' "Delivery" in which a man with a giant umbrella magically comes to the rescue and aid of everyday people..

In one sequence, the umbrella even serves as a boat giving circus performers safe passage across a river. In another scene, the umbrella takes flight as the man uses it to get children back to their home.

Then there's the recently debuted "Field Generals" for Nike's Brand Jordan out of Wieden+Kennedy, Portland, Ore. Here Sanders introduces us to a world we know, pro basketball, but the game plays out like a revelation.

"The concept as it was presented to me was simply basketball at war, basketball is war," related Sanders.

The court has the feel of a battlefield as NBA stars like Chris Paul, Carmelo Anthony and Rip Hamilton seem more like warriors waging a frenetic, fast paced war.

The shouting we hear on the "battlefield" adds to the chaotic, other worldly feel. Yet the emotion conveyed is a part of the game to which viewers can relate.

"This was another kind of a world that I very much enjoyed having a voice in," said the director.

In postproduction at press time were several other worlds directed by Sanders, including an ITV campaign for BBH London, a Puma job out of Droga 5, New York, and a package of adidas commercials via I80 Amsterdam. Though he wasn't at liberty to discuss these projects in detail, Sanders noted that they all took him to new places which he found both challenging and rewarding.

At the same time, Sanders would like to diversify into another world, that of feature filmmaking.

"I've come close on a couple of projects that haven't materialized. But it comes down to being careful. You can't just rush into something you regret. That approach has served me well in commercials so I'm sticking to it."

Asked to elaborate on that approach, the director related, "You have to find a project you can wholeheartedly invest in because ultimately it will describe who you are as a filmmaker. You can't just take on anything that you aren't very much invested in. This isn't a nine-to-five job. It's a passion."



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Smith & Foulkes

Moving upward on both sides of the Atlantic

By Robert Goldrich

Adam Foulkes and Alan Smith, best known as the directing team of Smith & Foulkes at London studio Nexus Productions, are no strangers to the industry awards show circuit, having been at the forefront of commercial animation for some time. But two honors—one a major win in 2005, the other a nomination outside the spotmaking milieu this year—have put them on the filmmaking map in different ways.

The first was the Grand Prix honor at the Cannes International Advertising Festival which was bestowed upon their now classic Honda spot “Grrr” out of Wieden+Kennedy, London.

The fanciful animated ad tells the story of how Kenichi Nagahiro, an engineer at Honda, hated what were then the standard diesel engines. So he wound up creating a new, more efficient diesel model, the VTEC.

The spot featured diesel engines flying through a colorful landscape filled with bunnies and rainbows while a catchy tune, performed by Garrison Keillor, asks, “Can Hate be good?” The answer, in the form of a new engine, is yes. (The Cannes win, incidentally came on the heels of “Grrr” earning best of show at The One Show, the Grand Clio, the GRANDY at the ANDY Awards, an AICP Show honor for international advertising excellence, and two coveted Black Pencils at London’s D&AD Awards.)



This Way Up

This widespread international recognition further spurred on a career in commercials for Smith and Foulkes that has produced assorted memorable projects, including the Coca-Cola “Video Game” spot which helped re-establish Coke as a feel-good brand as well as an impactful Super Bowl advertiser in ‘07.

Fast forward to January ‘09 and Smith and Foulkes enjoyed another career defining honor—though it remains to be seen what the results of that defining might be. The directing duo received their first Academy Award nomination for *This Way Up*, a 3D animated short that’s a wonderful slapstick adventure following father and son undertakers as they battle a series of mishaps while trying to deliver a coffin to the graveyard.

The Oscar nom “opened up all these doors,” said Foulkes.

Smith concurred, noting that these doors probably would have opened up eventually but the Academy recognition opened them up much sooner.

One such door was that of Creative Artists Agency (CAA in Beverly Hills, Calif.), which signed the duo for long-form representation and introduced them when they came out to Los Angeles for the Oscars, said Smith, “to anyone and everyone in animated feature films. We got the chance to introduce ourselves, to tell people what we’re about, and to get their advice as well. We’ve been looking

Continued on page 37



“For many years, commercials have been our creative lifeblood. It’s a discipline we value and want to keep active in.”



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Peter Thwaites

DGA Award winner looks Stateside

By Millie Takaki

Some nine years ago, Peter Thwaites, who at the time was an established DP in commercials, got what he describes as “my biggest break, being taken on as a director at Gorgeous Enterprises in London. I had only directed a corporate test film before that, so it was something of a leap of faith for them.”

Fast forward to today and Thwaites has seen his career grow by leaps and bounds, the biggest punctuation mark to date being his winning in January the coveted DGA Award as best commercial director of 2008.

Thwaites—who’s still at Gorgeous while continuing to be repped stateside by Anonymous Content—earned the DGA honor on the strength of two entries: Barclaycard’s “Water Slide” for BBH London, and Guinness’ “Light Show” out of Irish International BBDO, Dublin.

The former shows a swim trunks-clad employee taking a wondrous amusement park-like commute home from the office—his mode of transportation being an enormous waterslide that winds its way through the city all the way to his suburban abode. Along the way he slides through a grocery store where he buys a banana which he pays for by sliding his Barclaycard past a sensor. He is able to use the card repeatedly without slowing down his commute.

“From a directing point of view, the spot was a huge balancing act,” related Thwaites. “The key was balancing elements of postproduction and live action and trying to make something so technical be true to a human narrative storyline that connects with people. That’s always the hardest thing for a director who serves as a balancing force, and overseer and creative force on this kind of project. The director has to keep his eye on the ball, making sure you stay true

to the simple idea. I felt sort of like a ringleader with so many post people [from The Mill, London] involved.

Guinness’ “Light Show” also entailed collaboration with The Mill. “The idea was an office building being a pint of Guinness as reflected in the configuration of lights that are on inside the building,” said Thwaites. “Again for me it’s important within this essentially visual piece to keep a narrative flow by managing the scale of the job and keeping the ultimate focus on the simplicity of the idea.”

By winning the DGA honor, Thwaites topped a formidable field of nominees: Anonymous Content’s David Fincher, a past winner of the DGA commercials honor (as the top spot helmer of ‘03); and a trio of directors from MJZ—Fredrik Bond who’s been nominated for the honor three times during his career; and Tom Kuntz and Rupert Sanders who have each received two nominations.

When first-time DGA nominee Thwaites was announced the winner during the awards ceremony, he seemed genuinely surprised. Now looking back on that night of January 31, he related, “The evening as a whole will fade in my memory as things naturally do. However, the moment when my name was called and I stumbled toward the stage thinking ‘what the fuck do I say now’ is seared into memory forever.”

As for what the DGA Award means to him personally and professionally, Thwaites observed, “It acts as an antidote to all the doubts and fears that one naturally feels when working creatively. It’s an affirmation of all that I do, so naturally it’s a huge boost.”

Continued on page 34



Barclaycard’s “Water Slide”

“It [the DGA Award] acts as an antidote to all the doubts and fears that one naturally feels when working creatively. It’s an affirmation of all that I do, so naturally it’s a huge boost.”



Ondi Timoner

Sundance Grand Jury winner commits to spots

By Robert Goldrich

In announcing the Grand Jury Prize winner for U.S. Documentary Film at the Sundance Film Festival back in January, director Carl Deal (who won the very same honor in 2008 for *Trouble The Water*, which he co-directed with Tia Lessin), observed, “Documentaries carry us into worlds we know nothing about, into places we might not necessarily want to travel. And in doing so, they address critical issues and force us to think a little differently about who we are and what we do.”

Referring to the winning Sundance documentary which he had not yet identified, Deal continued, “This film will scare the living crap out of you by putting us into a world that is as seductive as it is terrifying and in a very personal way challenges each of us to think about the consequences of how we interact with the world and with each other.”

Deal then presented the ‘09 Sundance Grand Jury Award to director Ondi Timoner for *We Live In Public*.

The documentary tells the story of the Internet’s revolutionary impact on human interaction as reflected through the eyes of influential maverick yet up until now relatively obscure web pioneer Josh Harris who invested part of the fortune he made on a shocking art project in New York in which people became part of a controlled community where their lives were chronicled on the Internet. Harris too became a subject of that art project as web viewers saw him in his everyday life, including one day when he was in the bathroom and received a phone call informing him that his dot-com investments had bottomed out and he had lost his entire fortune.

The documentary captures Harris as both a heroic visionary and a tragic character of sorts, who way back in the 1980s saw the web as satiating—and at the

same time exploiting—people’s needs for fame.

We Live in Public marked Timoner’s return to Sundance. In 2004 her first major feature documentary, *DIG!*, debuted at the festival and won the Grand Jury Prize. The film represented some seven years of her life filming two bands, providing insights into the collision of art and commerce.

A year later Timoner had her short film *Recycle* also make the Sundance Film Festival cut. The six-minute documentary introduced us to a homeless man who by recycling old plants created a beautiful makeshift green thumb garden in Los Angeles’ historic Echo Park neighborhood.

Timoner’s documentary filmography also includes *Join Us* which tackles brainwashing and the epidemic of cults in America.

The director described the film, which explores one cult and the rehabilitative treatment undergone by four families who experienced it, as her personal “jazz album,” meaning that it’s a deserving piece of art that she’d like to see gain greater mainstream exposure. *Join Us* debuted at the Los Angeles Film Festival in ‘07 and

talks are currently underway to show the film on the Sundance Channel. (More information on this documentary and the many issues it addresses can be found on Joinusthemovie.com.)

Among Timoner’s recent endeavors was directing two of the segments for the *CNN Heroes* program and event. She chronicled the efforts of Yohannes Gebregeorgis and Viola Vaughn. The former started Ethiopia Reads, which brings free public libraries and literacy programs to thousands of children in Ethiopia. And Vaughn founded the 10,000 Girls initiative which helps girls in Senegal succeed in school and learn business skills.

Continued on page 38



We Live in Public

“I hope the visual sensibilities in this film [*We Live in Public*] open up some visual opportunities for me in commercials.”

Jason Zada

Multi-screens, multi-faceted

By Robert Goldrich

A noted ad agency creative director moving into the director's chair is hardly a revelation. Agencies have been a spawning ground for assorted directors over the years. But Jason Zada brings a new dimension to the transition in that his creative chops are in the interactive arena.

Zada made his creative mark at San Francisco-based EVB, an interactive agency which he co-founded with CEO Daniel Stein in 2000. (Omnicom bought a majority stake in the shop in '06.) For eight years, Zada served as EVB's executive creative director, creating ground-breaking online experiences for major advertisers such as adidas, 2K Sports, Levi's, JCPenney, Wrigley, Old Spice and Office Max. For the latter, Zada created and directed the "Elf Yourself" viral campaign, which generated hundreds of millions of online hits, gaining an unlikely place in pop culture.

It was during the last year of his successful EVB tenure that Zada started directing a good majority of the projects coming out of the agency. Beyond "Elf Yourself," those endeavors included advertising for adidas MLS (TV campaign/online episodes), JCPenney (online content) and 2K Sports (TV spot/online episodes).

The 2K Sports fare promoted the company's All-Pro Football 2K8 video game. Centerpiece of the campaign was a series of six two-minute online episodes starring rapper Rakim and other hip hop artists reciting poetry that paid homage to legendary football players accompanied by footage from the video game in which the legends appear. A broadcast :30 featuring Rakim emerged from the online mix.

Zada himself emerged with a career decision some six months ago, exiting EVB to pursue directing full time. In January he landed at bicoastal Tool of North America, a production company with a pedigree in successfully bringing agency creatives turned di-



rectors into the marketplace.

At the same time Zada brings a different perspective into that marketplace. "I didn't direct one story and force it to fit each screen for a campaign," related Zada. "You try to come up with the right story for each medium. You don't necessarily compress a broadcast spot for screening on a cell phone. You might, though, take the piece of that spot's story that makes sense for the phone user and adapt it.

"Multi-disciplinary directors," continued Zada, "are going to play more of an integral role in helping figure out the various pieces. Some of the best creatives I have worked with [at EVB, Zada found major agencies like Crispin, Goodby and BBDO tapping into his expertise] are open to collaboration. So let's see now what we—directors and agencies—can do working side by side. That's what I wanted as a creative director when working with a director. And it's what I hope to experience as a director collaborating with the creative community."

Meanwhile Tool envisions Zada as being active in traditional spotmaking as well as in thinking and creating well outside the :30 and :60 box.

At press time Zada was directing a Smokey Bear fire prevention TV PSA for Drafftcb, Irvine, Calif., his first job under the Tool banner. Independently he has wrapped three episodes of a branded entertainment digital series *We All Float On*, which centers on two best friends in their late 20s who refuse to grow up. Zada said one

Continued on page 38

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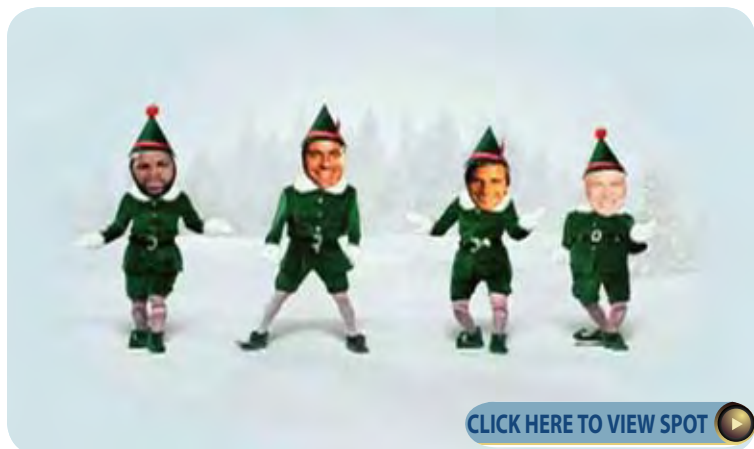
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Office Max's "Elf Yourself" viral campaign

**Noted
Cinematographers
Diversify Into
Helming
Spots—And An
Oscar Nominated
Documentary**

**By Robert Goldrich and
Mildred Takaki**

For DPs looking to make their mark as directors, varied inspiring examples come to mind. For one, it was just five years ago that accomplished feature (*Being John Malkovich*, *Adaptation*, *Lost In Translation*) and commercials cinematographer Lance Acord of Park Pictures earned a coveted Directors Guild of America (DGA) nomination as best spot director of '03 for Nike's "Cross Country Spirit," out of Wieden+ Kennedy, Portland, Ore.; adidas' "Wake Up Call" via 180 Communications, Amsterdam; and Mitsubishi's "Part Car/Part Religion," for Deutsch LA.

More recently, Ellen Kuras—who is professionally first and foremost a cinematographer spanning notable features (*Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind*) and commercials (Coca-Cola's "It's Mine," Nike's "Hello Tomorrow")—saw her directorial debut, *Nerakhoon* (*The Betrayal*), earn an Academy Award nomination this year for best documentary.

Telling the story of a refugee family from Laos, the film is a mesh of documentary, soulful dramatic narrative and intimate love story. Kuras conceived of, shaped, directed and shot the film in her spare time over the past 20-plus years. (For the full backstory on the film, see *SHOOT*'s coverage in the 1/25/08 issue.) Kuras shot and directed *Nerakhoon* (the Lao word for "betrayal") but shared directorial credit with her window to that Laotian family and world, teacher/translator Thavisouk ("Thavi") Phrasavath.

Nerakhoon has scored on numerous fronts. Well before it received the Oscar nomination, the documentary was showcased at the 2008 Sundance Film Festival and made its New York premiere at the Human Rights Watch International Film Festival at Lincoln Center.

With such successes as reflected in examples like Kuras and Acord, *SHOOT* sought out some other notable cinematographers who are extending their reach to the director's chair: Emmanuel "Chivo" Lubezki who recently joined bicoastal/international production house Station Film for spot directorial representation; and Wally Pfister and Janusz Kaminski whose commercial directing roost

is Independent Media, Santa Monica.

Lubezki

"As a cinematographer, I like to do different things. Once you find a formula for something, I try not to use it again. That sometimes gets you into trouble. Once you find something is working, you don't keep applying it to everything. You look to reinvent and create something else from scratch that will work," said Lubezki, a four time cinematography Oscar nominee (for *Children of Men*, *A Little Princess*, *Sleepy Hollow* and *The New World*).

This quest to find different challenges has led to Lubezki recently signing with Station Films to move into spot directing. In years past, he's helmed some Latin American commercials but is now committed to taking on a more ambitious slate of U.S. spot assignments. "For me, branching out into other areas of filmmaking such as directing seems like a very natural extension of my career."

Stephen Orent, Station Film's managing partner, said upon signing Lubezki, "When I think of what Emmanuel has seen through the lens of the camera, the directors he's collaborated with and the innovation he has brought to the industry in such a short amount of time, I get extremely excited about the possibilities [he has as a director]."

On the feature front, Lubezki has shot for and collaborated with such filmmakers as The Coen Brothers, Terrence Malick, Tim Burton, Michael Mann and long-time friend Alfonso

Cuaron. As a commercials DP, Lubezki has lensed for directors who include Cuaron, Traktor, Fredrik Bond, Malcolm Venville and David Fincher.

"Every time you work with a good director, you learn something about how to be honest with the material, how to find the essence of the story," said Lubezki who cited his collaborations on spots with Traktor as an example. "Those guys are always trying to find out the best way to do justice to the story, which point of view is going to be the most effective for what you're trying to accomplish."

DPs In The Director's Chair



DIRECTORS/CINEMATOGRAPHERS

Working with this kind of talent is better than any film school. With each different director and script, there are different sets of limitations and necessities, which have you looking to find the right equation to tell the story in the best way possible.”

With the experience of working with major actors and real people, movies and commercials with complex visual effects, shooting film and digital—the latter including scenes he lensed for director Michael Mann on *Ali*—Lubezki simply related, “I want to bring all of this to bear in commercials as a director, to help communicate and



Emmanuel Lubezki

connect with viewers.”

Asked about his digital cinematography endeavors, Lubezki related, “Digital doesn’t look like film and I don’t think it replaces film. But digital is a new toolset that is of great value.” Lubezki has shot projects or portions of projects with such electronic cameras as Red, Phantom and Genesis. He’s also done test footage on the Viper.

Lubezki noted that for a feature, a DP and director have to pretty much maintain the style and language they shape and create for the project over an extended period of time, perhaps 100 days of shooting. “For each commercial, though, the style and language change and so within a relatively short time frame you get to delve into something entirely new and creative. I’m looking forward to doing more of that as a director through Station.”

Wally Pfister

A three-time Oscar nominee, most recently this year for *The Dark Knight*, Pfister has long harbored directorial aspirations. “In my heart of hearts, I’ve always been a storyteller. And as a cinematographer I’ve had the incredible opportunity to work with terrific people and learn from them, helping



Wally Pfister

to make me a better storyteller.”

One of those people is director Christopher Nolan whose films earned the Oscar noms for Pfister—*Batman Begins*, *The Prestige* and *The Dark Knight*. “Watching Chris closely over the past ten years, I’ve seen his incredible rapport with actors and the performances that have resulted—Pacino in *Insomnia*, Heath Ledger in *The Dark*

Knight, Michael Caine and Hugh Jackman in *The Prestige*. Chris has been my mentor. I continue to watch and learn from him, and will be shooting his next project [*Inception*]. It’s a close collaboration I greatly value.”

Pfister said he continues to occasionally shoot for directors from whom he can learn, citing not only Nolan but also spot gigs for MJZ helpers

Rupert Sanders, Fredrik Bond and Craig Gillespie. While Pfister usually shoots 35mm film, he experimented for example shooting part of a Sanders-directed Nike commercial with Panavision’s high-def Iconix camera. “I really liked the Iconix. It’s a small camera that lets you get in the faces of the athletes. We even mounted one on a mop following Nike shoes across

the floor. We mixed this imagery with 35mm film.”

Amidst his lensing projects, Pfister has managed as of late to gain traction as a spot director via Independent Media. During his last extended window of availability, Pfister directed a Verizon job for Global Hue, New York, a pair of Toyota assignments out of

Continued on page 30

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Cinematographers Reflect On Their Directorial Experiences

Continued from page 29

Saatchi & Saatchi LA in Torrance, Calif., a Rolling Rock Beer campaign via Momentum, New York, and Subaru out of Minneapolis-based ad agency Carmichael Lynch.

And while he understandably is known for his visual sensibilities, the latest advertising fare he's taken on as director/DP has moved him into other genres. For example, the Verizon assignment was actor performance driven and had a documentary feel while one of the Toyota spots took the comedic form of a mock political ad. Subaru entailed a quirky story, and Rolling Rock was an anthem-like commercial showcasing actor performance. Additionally Pfister shot a concurrent print campaign for Rolling Rock.

Getting these opportunities has been gratifying for Pfister who acknowledged that when it comes to a DP directing, agencies can be "hesitant to trust you with [actor] performance. I'm glad I'm starting to get those kind of opportunities. A real ex-

citement and joy came when I started going to casting sessions, watching actors audition. I found I have strong opinions as to what worked and what didn't. I've trusted that judgement and things have worked out."

Janusz Kaminski

A two-time Academy Award winner (*Saving Private Ryan*, *Schindler's List*) and four-time nominee for best cinematography (the other two noms being for *The Diving Bell and The Butterfly* and *Amistad*), Kaminski has settled nicely into the director's chair with a couple of features (including the personal Polish language film *Lost Souls*) and varied commercials, among the notable being Reebok's "Migration"—produced by Independent Media for mcgarrybowen, New York—which earned distinction as a *SHOOT* Top Spot of the Week last year.

The :60 showed NFL players migrating to training camp from varied geographies and walks of life. While so much sports-related advertising is

macho and aggressive, "Migration" departed from that norm by being powerfully quiet and even soulful.

Kaminski related that his experience as a feature filmmaker—both as director and cinematographer—enables him to bring some of those sensibilities to commercials. "You tend to have a slightly different storytelling approach than strictly commercial directors," he observed. "It comes from the size of the image you're used to dealing with. You tend to go a bit wider than commercial directors. You think of the image not as a second and a half but more in terms of the emotion of the image...And the movie experience has you focusing more on performance than frequently unnecessary details—like whether or not the frame is pristine and perfect. The emotions and the story are more important than the details."

Kaminski has been directing spots since '97. "Typically I do commercials for three or four months, then shoot a movie for seven months, then come



Janusz Kaminski

back to commercials. I love directing commercials. The hard part is that whenever I come back, in some respects I'm the new guy again and have to be reintroduced to people. Sometimes agency people are new in their roles and we have to make an effort to connect or reconnect."

Working with world-class filmmakers such as Steven Spielberg and Julian Schnabel as a cinematographer, Kaminski said he has learned much that he has applied to his own directing endeavors. And he very much enjoys the collaborative nature of com-

mercialmaking, noting that he has found working with agency creative teams "very enjoyable most of the time. They understand the medium very well, have created, lived with and thoroughly know the concept."

As for what new ground he hopes to break in commercials, Kaminski would like the chance to occasionally direct comedy, diversifying beyond his demonstrated prowess in visual storytelling. He feels energized after shooting *Funny People*, a comedy/drama directed and written by Judd Apatow. Kaminski likes the improvisational style of Apatow.

"Great ideas will come up as the camera is rolling. He would feed lines to actors," related Kaminski of Apatow. "It all started with the script and storyline but during the filming process, he would not be afraid to introduce new lines and ideas to advance that script and storyline. He would shape the film this way and it again shows the value of being open to what works during a shoot."

Kim Gehrig

Continued from page 21

Marking the 60th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, *You Are Powerful* is being screened in movie theaters across the U.K. All the action in the short unfolds to the moving accompaniment of the song "Until the Day is Done," donated by REM.

The piece serves as a powerful, poignant branding and fundraising film for Amnesty International.

You Are Powerful deployed the talents of visual effects/postproduction houses Smoke & Mirrors, New York and London, Framestore, London, and Rushes, London.

Collaboration among the houses was paramount as the central idea relied heavily on post, compositing hero characters into news footage so they appear to interact with the events. Fifty days of post work were required but only 11 days were available.

Sean Broughton, Smoke & Mirrors' creative director in New York, related, "This [project] was an opportunity to do some real good, so pulling out all the stops was the only way to go...Understanding exactly how she [Gehrig] wanted each shot to feel, as well as work technically, was very important. She shot everything we needed perfectly to make the shots work as well as they did...while capturing the right emotional vibe."

Ed Sayer, who served as Mother's producer on the job, said, "There are many ways to approach any post task and in this case we gained the eclectic opinions of all this top worldwide post talent and when anyone talked, everyone listened. So the film received the benefit of all that experience and the joy of all that talent. It couldn't have been done in the time without this total and ego-less cooperation."

Depicting everyday people briefly leaving their comfortable environments, entering scenes of violence and then helping to stop the atrocities, *You Are Powerful* went on to earn an online ThinkBox Award.

Channeling

Speaking of thinking outside the box, Gehrig's next directorial gig debuted as a one-time broadcast event on Saturday, Feb. 28, in the U.K., with a story spanning three 60-second spots spilling over from one U.K. TV channel to the next.

The sequential spots for travel web-

site lastminute.com out of London agency Karmarama are humorous and whimsical with the first spot having debuted at 9:50 p.m. on ITV. Viewers were then encouraged to change over to Channel 4 at 9:51 p.m. for the second spot to continue the story and then to Channel 5 at 9:52 p.m. for the final :60 installment. The action in the :60s is akin to an audience wave en masse in a sports stadium—except it's characterized as a "Mexican Thumb Wave" and the scope goes way beyond any single venue.

"In many respects, it's like a travelogue of people from and in different parts of the world with the sequences cleverly connected," observed Gehrig. "The feel is one of home movie-like, user-generated content."

While this mini-campaign is dramatically different in tone from the seriousness of the Amnesty short, there's an inspiring vibe to both of Gehrig's first spot directing endeavors. She related, "The Amnesty piece was created not to guilt trip people but to inspire them by making them feel good about their power to make a difference. There's also a feel-good charm to lastminute.com."

A bit of whimsy is also evident in Gehrig's most recent music video, Wiley's "Cash In My Pocket," in which bankers—generally vilified in light of a harsh, bailout-littered economic climate—are put in more of a silly, joyful light, with lyrics like "all I really want is money in my pocket." The video

plays intentionally amateurish, as if a bunch of bankers made it.

Yet there's nothing amateur about Gehrig's approach to directing. She gravitated towards Academy Films as her production house roost based on its penchant for what she characterized as "classical filmmaking" and a long-time admiration for the work and creative sensibilities of director Jonathan Glazer.

"When you look around for a production company, you want to be at a place that makes the work you would like to make," explained Gehrig whose directorial vision has also been shaped by her experience on the agency side which spans acclaimed work over the years for such clients as Schweppes, Brit-art, Coca-Cola and Motorola.

"The lessons learned at Mother have helped me as a director," said Gehrig. "The most important lesson for me was the importance of the idea. I love ideas, being able to spot an idea and communicate an idea are two of the biggest strengths I gleaned at Mother. The intellectual rigor of and around an idea is what I take with me and hold close to my creative heart."

Gehrig hopes this "heart" will know no geographic bounds. As she continues to seek challenging European projects via Academy Films, the London house has entered into a reciprocal representation relationship with bicoastal Park Pictures, giving Gehrig a stateside home if the proper American work emerges.

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The Spring Collection

SHOOT's batch of up-and-coming directors this time around includes a young helmer who's already mentoring other aspiring, even younger filmmakers, a couple of brothers who have opened some major industry doors on a shoestring budget, a hybrid artist who's not only a director but a sculptor, musician, skateboarder and entrepreneurial developer of a skatewear brand, an agency creative who's settled nicely into the director's chair while exhibiting a distinctive brand of humor, and a director who hails from Italy, moved to Brooklyn where he gained a foothold in helming hip-hop artist music videos and who recently signed with a Chicago shop which affords him a creative handle on projects that goes right through to completion.

Here's our spring collection of promising directors to watch:

Purchase Brothers

While they cobbled together a mini arsenal of production and post software for their experimental and spec filmmaking over the years, the Toronto-based Purchase Brothers—David and Ian—didn't have much purchasing power readily available when it came to creating and directing a short film they had envisioned based on the popular *Half-Life* video game which they had been fans of and playing for nearly a decade. Yet that lack of funding is what makes the film David and Ian Purchase ultimately turned out all the more remarkable.

With \$500 that was pretty much all put into props and wardrobe, David and Ian Purchase directed *Escape from City 17*, a spec short that has the look and feel of a big budget action movie. David and Ian recently posted the short online and it became a YouTube sensation overnight, generating more than 500,000 hits during its first 24 hours. By the end of the first weekend, the film exceeded a million hits and earned the lofty status of the number one piece of content viewed worldwide during that period. The Internet community and gaming sites globally were abuzz. A traffic overload caused the Purchase Brothers own website to crash.

Valve Corp., the developer of the original game, flew the brothers from Toronto to Seattle for a meeting. Valve CEO Gabe Newell said, "After seeing some of the dreadful ways that Hollywood has attempted to turn videogames into film, it was great to see how well the Purchase Brothers have brought our game to life. Hollywood could learn a lot from these guys."

Indeed Hollywood has jumped on that learning curve. Based on the short, CAA has signed David and Ian for feature representation while Anonymous

Content's talent firm has inked them for feature management.

On the commercialmaking front, Toronto-based production house Sons and Daughters has added the brothers to its family tree. Subsequently Anonymous Content took on stateside spot representation for the Purchase Brothers (*SHOOT*, 3/13).

Sons and Daughters was the first industry shop to take notice as an intern there turned the company onto the short. "The intern asked for a day off to work on this spec project that his friends were doing," recalled Liane Thomas, exec producer of Sons and Daughters. "He then wanted to show us that he actually took off time from his internship for something industry related and brought this short to screen for us. It wasn't finished yet but it was pretty darn close. We screened it in our director's lounge. Everyone here, from me to the receptionist, saw it and all our jaws dropped. It's amazing work and we feel fortunate to have the Purchase Brothers with us."

A second short on *Half-Life* is in the works and should be completed in a couple of months. This time around, though, the brothers have assembled a community of artists to help out. "After release of the first short film," said Ian Purchase, "we received tons of emails from CG artists who wanted to help with compositing, 3D work, tracking, in all different fields. They just wanted to be involved in the next installment—they didn't want money, they just wanted credit for having worked on it. We've built up a little army of new talent that is poised to show off their skills."

Beyond their love for *Half-Life*, David and Ian Purchase had another motivation for making their now resoundingly successful *Escape From City 17*.

"We have been working on and off for the past two and a half years on a feature film that is pretty much the same brand of guerilla filmmaking

with cool visual effects," related David Purchase. "A friend told us we should think about trying to link up with some commercial production companies and that sounded like a good idea. We could use the money and then could maybe put that money back into our movie. So we decided to try to get some spec work off the ground to show to commercial production companies." Out of this emerged the first *Half-Life* spec short.

David and Ian Purchase began their filmmaking odyssey as youngsters shooting with a high 8 videocam, learning in-camera editing and then hitting their digital stride, incorporating that software into their toolset. Now at the ripe old

Continued on page 32

**New directors
provide a breath
of fresh air
this season**

**By Robert Goldrich
and Millie Takaki**



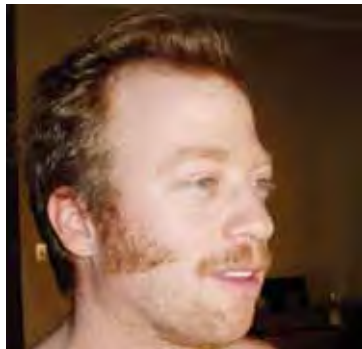
UP-AND-COMING DIRECTORS



The Purchase Brothers



Melina



Kenny



Mitch Stratten



Zollo

Emerging Directors Come From Diverse Filmmaking Disciplines

Continued from page 31

ages of 25 and 23, respectively, David and Ian Purchase are on the cusp of making major marks in spotmaking and longer form content.

Melina

Melina Matsoukas, a.k.a. Melina, went to NYU as a math major, not entirely sure what she wanted to do in terms of a career. "I was good at a lot of subjects but not passionate about any one thing," she recalled. "Then I started seeing kids at the NYU film program, writing, telling stories. I liked what I saw and given my math skills, I also liked the technical aspects of filmmaking so I took my first film class over the summer. It was quite intensive and I fell in love with it. I transferred into NYU Film School my second year."

She gained exposure in the music video production community through a small production company where her cousin worked as head of production. While an NYU undergrad, Melina worked as a PA on music videos and directed her own projects independently. Her NYU short film *Negros Negros*, a brother and sister coming-of-age story which she wrote, directed and edited, garnered a nomination for a student DGA Award.

Melina was poised to hit the marketplace upon graduating from NYU but then something came up—the chance to learn about cinematography as part of the Master's program at the American Film Institute (AFI) in Los Angeles. "As

a director, I wanted to be more informed about cinematography," she explained.

Indeed she became quite well informed, which launched her professionally in video production, first at FM Rocks and then for a few jobs at HSI. Melina started to build cache as a director, and then landed on the rosters of Black Dog Films for videos, and sister shop RSA for commercials.

Overall Melina has worked for only two years professionally yet has amassed clip credits for such artists as Jennifer Lopez, Eve, Keri Hilson, Ludacris, Pharrell, NeYo, Leona Lewis, Lady Gaga, Lily Allen and Katy Perry. Melina was recently named the MVPA Director of the Year based on her work with Beyonce, Snoop Dogg and J-Lo in '08.

This young rising director found particularly gratifying the opportunity to help other young aspiring directors last year when she was selected to participate in an MTV programming initiative in which MTV Africa and Shell Oil were partnered. Melina was chosen to mentor young filmmakers in Kenya as they collaborated to make music videos for top local performers.

The work of the Kenya group—including directorial, cinematography and producing talent—which Melina took under her wing went on to win the MTV competition against teams from South Africa, Nigeria and Ghana. The winning video gained airtime on MTV Africa.

Also in the latter half of '08, Melina diversified into commercials via RSA, first

landing a DirecTV spot from Deutsch LA, a remake of the "Upgrade U" music video she had directed for Beyonce. "We recreated one set from the video to shoot new footage with Beyonce, and used some footage from the actual video for the final spot," said Melina. "It was part of the DirecTV campaign in which scenes from famous movies and in my case the Beyonce video were recreated as commercials."

Next Cramer Krasselt, Chicago, gravitated to Melina for a public service spot on behalf of non-profit advocacy group the Illinois Council on Developmental Disabilities.

Centered on "Retarded" signs being posted at different venues throughout a city, the spot draws attention to the insensitivity of that term when people say it. "A lot of my music video work is very beauty oriented and about performances," said Melina. "This PSA was more filmic. It was a great experience in that I got to work with DP Sal Totino [*Frost/Nixon*, *The Da Vinci Code*, *Cinderella Man*]. We shot eight locations in a day, ran around all over LA. The work was very beautiful, had a cinematic feel yet still managed to capture the beauty of everyday lives. It feels real—the emotions of the characters and the landscape. That was essential because we wanted people to relate to what is an important message."

Kenny

An accomplished agency creative, Kenny Herzog (now the mono-monikered director Kenny) didn't harbor

directorial aspirations at the outset of his tenure at Ogilvy & Mather, New York, and then a stint at Taxi New York (followed by freelancing for such shops as DDB Chicago, Toy, New York, and Brooklyn Brothers). "I certainly didn't plan on being a director but as I went to more and more shoots, I found a comfort zone on the set and started to think about it [directing]."

Kenny got a taste of directing a couple of years back while freelancing for DDB Chicago and being a key creative contributor to what became the Bud Light "Dude" campaign. He wound up co-directing the original "Dude" spot and some other work in the campaign.

His first full-fledged solo directing gig came as a freelancer: a Gatorade spot, "Victory, for Element 79 Partners, Chicago, which at one point looked like it might be destined for the Super Bowl last year but wound up not making the Big Game cut. Still the ad showcased his comedic sensibilities as a coach rejects a celebratory sideline shower of vitamin water, clearly a poor substitute for the real thing—being doused by Gatorade.

The Gatorade job was produced by spot shop O Positive, as was Kenny's next job, Comcast's "Mothers" for Goodby, Silverstein & Partners, San Francisco, in which one mom after another collapses upon receiving a Mother's Day phone call from their sons. Why would these young men call out of the blue after seemingly never bothering to phone their mothers? The answer: Comcast's offer of free long-distance calls to mom on her special day.

Shortly after wrapping that commercial, Kenny decided to formally join O Positive, his first career production house roost. The decision was easy for him based not only on his two positive experiences on Gatorade and Comcast but also his affinity for company co-founder Jim Jenkins and the opportunities the house can afford him.

"The trickling down of great scripts at a large company means that 15 directors get to see it before I even know about it," related Kenny. "At O Positive Jim [Jenkins] and David [Shane] are the only directors above me. This means I have a fighting chance. And

these guys are mentors. Even if Jim likes a script for instance but thinks it might be better for me, he's supportive of me getting a shot at it."

Kenny and Jenkins first met at Ogilvy where they collaborated as creatives. During that time Kenny also got involved creatively in Jenkins' boutique shop, Nicebigbrain (with Ogilvy's permission). Jenkins and Kenny have a creative rapport which continues to this day at O Positive.

"I can collaborate with Jim and David at O Positive on just about everything. We're working on things writing-wise and joke-wise," said Kenny. "It's a great situation."

Kenny got the chance to work client-direct creatively and as a director via O Positive on Boomerang GPS' "Santa." In the spot, Santa Claus clearly has come down the wrong chimney as we see a dreidel, a Menorah and other trappings of a Jewish family. A young lad in pajamas looks down from the top of the staircase quizzically at St. Nick. The lesson—get a Boomerang GPS to make sure you're wind up at the right place.

Kenny has received confirmation that O Positive is indeed the right place for him. At press time he was about to direct an 11 spot Air/Iran package for Cramer Krasselt, New York.

"I'm grateful for the opportunities that are emerging for me here," said Kenny. "My comfort level and people's comfort level with me is in performance-driven comedy. But hopefully I can evolve into broadening that scope into more visually driven work as well. I think and feel I'm at the right company to help me grow as a director."

Mitch Stratten

"When what we watch is constantly redefining itself, shouldn't how we watch it do the same?" That tagline to a commercial for Toshiba's Upscaling line of TV sets, monitors and computers is most apropos not only for the advertiser but also as it applies to the director of the spot, Mitch Stratten of bicoastal/international Hungry Man, whose work is helping to redefine and reshape imagery and visual storytelling.

Titled "Time Sculpture," the Toshiba ad for Grey London is a technical tour de force, deploying more than

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UP-AND-COMING DIRECTORS

200 video cameras aligned and linked together to create a 360 degree inward view of a circular set on which people perform various tasks. Stratten teamed with The Mill, London, to capture a series of separate moving images that were brought together to form one seamless, visually engaging action sequence.

"Time Sculpture" has a distinctively different visual signature and it embodies a look and technique that had been dancing around in Stratten's mind for some time. He wound up compositing a visual test of his concept on a laptop computer and began showing it to prospective clients whose product lines are built on technical innovation. Ultimately Stratten's idea caught the eyes and ears of Toshiba and Grey.

"I was a little paranoid about turning my test work over to anyone, worried that if they liked the idea, they would just give it to a bigger shot director," said Stratten. "I was a fairly new director and thought maybe they wouldn't entrust the work to me."

"Time Sculpture" marked Stratten's first job with Hungry Man, and it has generated considerable buzz for both

Toshiba and the director since its debut in late '08.

The spot earned a Visual Effects Society (VES) Award nomination earlier this year, and the making-of video has proven to be popular as well, showing how the director's vision in collaboration with Grey and The Mill resulted in the final commercial.

Stratten is a hybrid artist, a South African director who's a sculptor, a musician, a high-tech aficionado, a skateboarder and the developer of a skatewear brand.

At the age of 18, he graduated from art school in Johannesburg. A design studio in South Africa hired him and there he received an education in designing and compositing images on computers. Stratten then went to Italy to work at communications center Fabrica, followed by a stint at record label Quartermass in Belgium.

Quartermass released some of the electronic music Stratten composed and asked him to design the company website, which went on to garner considerable industry recognition.

From there, it was back to South Africa where Stratten joined production house Terraplane and began to direct

commercials, the first for Dairybelle out of TBWA Johannesburg in 2007.

Then came a mix of films and genres, including an indie skateboarding documentary titled *Bang Chong* (distributed globally through VAS Entertainment), and a live-action/animatronic puppet music film, *Oh Diamond, Diamond, Thou Little Knowest The Mischief Thou Hast Done*, for his own music act, Nodern. The film *Diamond, Diamond* came out in tandem with two tracks from Nodern's debut release on Sub Rosa records.

Fast forward to today and Stratten is eager to take on new challenges, particularly in commercialmaking. He is hopeful of breaking into the American ad market—and he's recently received several such inquiries via Hungry Man, the shop he joined last year.

"I think the different skills I've developed in filmmaking, design, art and music kind of can all come together in commercials. It's a medium I very much like and to which I want to contribute."

Zollo

Mehdi Zollo, a.k.a. Zollo, is one of the young emerging talents recently

tabbed to be part of the ONE roster, ONE being the production arm of Chicago-headquartered post house Optimus. Launched last summer, ONE at Optimus is headed by executive producer/managing director John Noble, an agency veteran who prior to ONE served as senior VP/director of production and digital at Element 79, Chicago.

Zollo embodies an atypical mix of European sensibilities and an American urban aesthetic, the former stemming from his being a native of Rome, spending much of his time there and in Switzerland, and then going to Paris where he worked as a DJ while studying at cinema school ESRA. Soon after, he started working on movie sets, assisting on photo shoots, and eventually directed a few shorts.

In 2005 Zollo left Paris and moved to Brooklyn, where he fell in love with the vibrant urban scene and immediately began shooting music videos. He first established himself as a helmer of hip-hop artist clips, including for Atlantic Records artists Flo Rida and Gorilla Zoe.

Zollo's directorial reel also include spec commercials for adidas (featuring a couple's lively chase of a pet chick-

en), Nike (featuring a young lad break dancing under the shower of a broken fire hydrant in a Brooklyn street) and Spalding (profiling a boastful basketball lover who articulates his passion for the game from a rooftop).

The Spalding spec piece caught the eye of New York agency Uniworld, which awarded Zollo a Time Warner Cable spot profiling a young woman named Ana.

Noble met Zollo in New York through a mutual friend, marketing exec Tracy Reid from HUM, Santa Monica. (Reid has since joined Culver City, Calif.-based The Famous Group as an executive producer.)

Noble said he was drawn to Zollo's prowess in authentic dialogue/humor as well as his European touch and urban edge.

Conversely, Zollo was attracted to Noble's respected agency pedigree and to the ONE model.

"I like the idea of being able to direct and follow a project right through to completion," said Zollo. "I was seduced by the idea of being able to supervise and customize a project thanks to the post talent and resources available to me through Optimus."



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Simon McQuoid

Continued from page 23
Common ground

Just as McQuoid sees his varied work sharing a common bond in the form of his valuing “the idea at the heart of the script,” it was common ground that prompted him to start a new chapter in his career as he recently left GO Film (which produced the Halo 3 and Holiday Inn projects) to join Imperial Woodpecker, the house just launched by director Stacy Wall and producer Doug Halbert.

McQuoid feels simpatico with Wall. They both come from agency creative backgrounds and have similar sensibilities. “The way Stacy approaches ideas is similar to the way I go about it,” related McQuoid. “Stacy and I go back some time. When I was at TBWA\Chiat\Day, I gave him one of his first jobs to direct [for Cadbury Canada]. We formed a really good relationship as a result of that. I guess from that point on, there was a connection. But then you drift apart here and there over the years. I’ve very much enjoyed watching Stacy’s career progress during this

time. I respect Stacy and I like what he and Doug are setting up, a company that values quality over quantity. They want to keep things simple and small, not a giant list of directors. We have the opportunity to collaborate with each other here. Once I met Doug, I felt a similar connection to him. And just the opportunity to be in on the ground floor of a new company is exciting.”

McQuoid came to directing in much the same manner as Wall, breaking into the biz on the agency creative side, albeit in a different hemisphere. After studying graphic design in Perth, Australia, McQuoid served as an art director at several Aussie ad agencies, including AdLink, FCB Shorter and Clemenger BBDO before moving to the U.S. in 1995. As an art director at Clarity Coverdale Fury, Minneapolis, Hill Holliday, Boston, and then as a creative director at TBWA\Chiat\Day, N.Y., McQuoid worked for clients such as Absolut, Nextel and Samsonite.

In 2003, McQuoid transitioned to directing and in this capacity has turned out work for assorted clients, includ-

ing Lexus, HBO, Sony Blu-ray and the Partnership for a Drug-Free America. For the latter, McQuoid helmed “The Talk,” which earned a 2006 AICP Show honor and with it a place in the New York Museum of Modern Art’s

permanent film archives. Among McQuoid’s latest work is an LG spot promotionally tied into the feature film *The Day The Earth Stood Still* out of Young & Rubicam, New York.

Representation on planet earth isn’t

standing still, though, for McQuoid. Besides landing at Imperial Woodpecker for the American ad market, McQuoid has joined Revolver for representation in Australia, New Zealand and Asia.

Peter Thwaites

Continued from page 26

The DGA recognition also raises his profile in the U.S. “Even before I knew I was nominated, I was considering moving to L.A. for a few months to push forward with my U.S. presence and sort of say ‘hello.’ Now of course this plan seems better than ever, so the Thwaites family is on the move.”

Thwaites is no stranger to stateside spotmaking with such credits as a Nascar campaign for Y&R Chicago, Lexus for Team One, El Segundo, Calif., and UBS for Publicis New York.

Late bloomer

Looking back on his beginnings in the biz, Thwaites recalled “getting inter-

ested in film late in life. The thing that initially excited me was the idea of being creative in collaboration as opposed to isolation. It was fun to shoot films because it was a bunch of people all working together towards the same aim.

“I eventually got into [U.K.] National Film School and came out a DP working mainly in spots. After a few years working with great directors, I thought I might have a go myself. I’ve always felt that ideas were key to everything, even when a DP, so maybe it [directing] was a natural progression.”

He linked with Gorgeous and in ‘00 earned inclusion into Saatchi’s New Directors Showcase. Thwaites’ notable European spot directing cred-

its include: Honda’s “Asimo” out of Wieden+Kennedy, London, which is a charming tale of the robot Asimo, giving technology a human personality; Vodafone’s “Mayfly” via BBH London, a celebratory CG story of the common mayfly living out his life in a single day; and Orange’s “Kissback” from Marcel France, a very French story of a mother-son relationship.

As for his career priority after winning the DGA honor, Thwaites related, “Essentially I want to work with the best creatives and the best ideas wherever they may be. Although the U.K. market is fantastic in these respects, clearly diversifying into the U.S. market will help me towards that goal.”

Peep Show

www.peepshowpost.com

Editors
Andrea MacArthur
Amanda Perry
Gary Knight
Tony Kearns
Matthew McKinnon
Jerry Chater
Bryan Dyke
Joe McNally
&
Nick Diss

Peepshow USA
Contact Anne Vega
anne@peepshowpost.com
+1 212 624 2727

West Coast Rep
Sara Barnhouse
sara@peepshowpost.com
+1 310 384 3037

Peepshow UK
Contact Liv Lawton
liv@peepshowpost.com
+44 20 7434 9555

Cutting And Collaborating

In some respects this is a continuation of a *SHOOT* feature story earlier this year (1/30) in which editors Angus Wall and Kirk Baxter of Rock Paper Scissors, Santa Monica, talked in detail about their working relationship with director David Fincher, among their latest notable collaborations being *The Curious Case of Benjamin Button* (for which Wall and Baxter were nominated for the editing Oscar) and the three spots for which Fincher recently earned a Directors Guild of America (DGA) Award nomination as best commercial director of 2008. (Wall cut Nike's "Fate" while Baxter edited Apple's "Hallway" and Stand Up To Cancer's "Stand Up For Something.")

Now in the context of our Directors Issue, we thought it a good idea to follow up with other editors regarding their give and take with directors, gaining insights into the telepathic short-hand communication that has developed over the course of special creative long-term relationships.

Jinx Godfrey

For more than 10 years, editor Jinx Godfrey—who edits stateside via FilmCore and in the U.K. through Marshall Street Editors—has enjoyed a working relationship with director James Marsh, a recent highlight being the director's *Man on Wire* winning the best documentary Oscar this year. The documentary earlier scored the best British film honor at the BAFTA Awards, won Godfrey the best edited documentary Eddie Award from the American Cinema Editors (ACE), and earned both the Jury Prize and Audience Award at the 2008 Sundance Film Festival.

Man on Wire tells the story of a young Frenchman, Philippe Petit, who in 1974 walked on a wire suspended between the towers of the World Trade Center, 1,350 feet off the ground. He "danced" on the wire for more than an hour and crossed it eight times before being arrested in what was termed "the artistic crime of the century."

"I knew it was a very good story," recalled Godfrey. "As soon as James started the work, I was able to see the footage and the quality of the contributors. The interviewees were incredibly articulate. The wealth of the filming archives added a great del-Philippe's footage shot sync 16mm in the 1970s, and James

found this amazing Brooklyn Museum of Art archive footage of the World Trade Center being built. All these elements and of course the original footage James captured made for a wonderful journey. I feel incredibly fortunate to have had the chance to work on it."

That work was on and off, spread out over the course of about a year—two weeks here, two weeks there—for what Godfrey estimates turned out to be a total of 12 weeks.

"I've worked with James on dramas and documentaries," related Marsh. "For the dramas, I can work while he's shooting and present him an assembly. With documentaries, we tend to sit down together in the cutting room in a very close-knit, hands-on collaboration. We start in one place and move on to different places. It's a great ride, intellectually very challenging."

"Over the years, we have developed a shorthand in communicating, each knowing or at least having a pretty good idea of what the other is thinking. It's a joy to work with James. There are no insecurities. He trusts me. I know what he likes."

Currently Godfrey is working on a Marsh-directed drama, *Nineteen Eighty*, a feature film based on David Peace's novel of the same title, in which police corruption gets in the way of the intense search for a killer in Yorkshire, England.

Godfrey and Marsh first came together on a documentary for the BBC about musician/composer John Cale. Godfrey said that before she met Marsh she was impressed by his documentary filmmaking and had wanted to work with him for some time. A friend of hers, an executive producer at BBC Wales, asked Marsh to take on

the Cale project. That friend put the director in touch with Godfrey.

"I think James might have decided to work with me reluctantly at first," said Godfrey. "But we hit it off. He started to show me bits and pieces of *Wisconsin Death Trip* that he had already shot."

Godfrey then cut the drama *Wisconsin Death Trip* which went on to gain recognition at the Venice and Telluride Film Festivals. Among the other notable

Continued on page 36

Editors Reflect On Relationships With Directors

By Robert Goldrich and
Mildred Takaki



Editors Discuss Long-Time Working Relationships With Directors

Continued from page 35

projects Godfrey has cut for Marsh are *The Team*, a cinema verite documentary about a homeless soccer team from New York City that competes at the first annual Homeless Soccer World Cup in Graz, Austria, in July 2003; and the feature *The King*, in which a troubled man searches for the father he's never met.

There's even been a short-form collaboration as Godfrey has cut the lone commercial Marsh has directed



Jinx Godfrey

up to this point, an ambitious Audi job for Wieden+Kennedy, which he was awarded shortly after *Wisconsin Death Trip*.

Godfrey conjectured that Marsh could garner more spotmaking opportunities now in light of the success of *Man on Wire*. Marsh is repped for ad assignments via Maximum Entertainment, New York.

Andrea MacArthur

Some seven years ago, editor Andrea MacArthur was booked on a Lee Jeans' "Buddy Lee" campaign directed by Dante Ariola, who has since gone on to be a DGA Award winner and multiple nominee at MJZ.

"I actually don't know how I got the 'Buddy Lee' job to begin with," related MacArthur. "Maybe it was because I had a lot of quirky comedy on my reel for [directors] Traktor and Bryan Buckley. Whatever the reason, I'm grateful because I got the chance to work with Dante who I've come to adore. I naturally had a sense for him from the beginning. I see what



Andrea MacArthur

he shoots and have a good idea of the way he wants it to be. It all feels very natural. We've grown to know each other quite well."

MacArthur, who cuts via Peepshow stateside and in the U.K., has edited assorted jobs helmed by Ariola.

"What's great is the tremendous range of those projects," said MacArthur of Ariola's work. "He can be and can do so many different things. From comedy to the beautiful strangeness of Heineken's 'Disturbance' and Lexus' 'Missing H's' to the multi-layered special effects storytelling for Wrigley 5 gum and the recent Pepsi 'Pass' which takes us through different period pieces from the 1890s to today, showing us the common thread running through the different generations. It's a variety that's great for an editor to get the chance to work on."

Of Ariola, she added, "He usually prefers to see something that's been done. He trusts me to do a finished cut and then we can work on it together if he thinks more work needs to be done. While there's still time to then do this or that, he usually likes what I have done and there's not all that much to do. Dante is very hands-on in all areas but to have him let go and trust me enough to let me do what I do is gratifying."

Gavin Cutler

In January when director Tom Kuntz of MJZ earned his second career DGA Award nomination as best commercial director of the year, editor Gavin Cutler of MacKenzie Cutler, New York, could be seen smiling—not just because of the comedic content of the director's entries but the fact that Cutler cut three of the four Kuntz-helmed spots that struck a responsive chord with DGA judges.

Those three ads were Skittle's "Pinata" for TBWA\Chiat\Day, New York, FedEx's "Carrier Pigeons" via BBDO New York (a 2008 Super Bowl commercial), and the California Milk Processor Board's "White Gold Is" out of Goodby, Silverstein & Partners in San Francisco (among the prime entries that helped Goodby, Silverstein earn distinction as both *SHOOT*'s Advertising Agency and Interactive Agency of the Year in '08).

Cutler has enjoyed collaborating with Kuntz over the years, dating back to when the latter was part of the helming team Kuntz & Maguire (Mike Maguire), having moved out of their agency creative positions to pursue directing full time some nine years ago. Cutler cut the duo's first job on the production house side but didn't reunite with Kuntz until some years later when he went solo as a director.

Ever since, Cutler and Kuntz have



Gavin Cutler

worked together fairly regularly though Kuntz continues to team with other editors as well.

"I think the big difference I've seen is how Tom has evolved over the years not just as a director but as an editor," related Cutler. "He really gets involved and spends a lot of time on projects all the way through. Not all directors can find the time to do that or want to but it's part of Tom's makeup, and it's an approach that has contributed to his great success."

This means Cutler finds himself editing with Kuntz, with both collaborating in the same edit suite on some jobs. Other times they'll work via postings when they're not in the same city. But either way it's a close-knit collaboration. At the same time, though, there's a trust by which the director lets go and frees Cutler to do what he does best.

Cutler and Kuntz will also come together in person typically when the job entails varied media content, extending beyond spots to web fare and music videos like in the "White Gold Is" campaign.

"It was fun to help create this fictional character [the spandex clad lead band rocker White Gold, replete with milk-filled guitar]," recalled Cutler. "Tom shot so much that we generated a wealth of material, some of which didn't get shown. For about four or five months, when someone asked for my reel, I just sent out a White Gold reel, partly because I wanted people to get to see the full body of that work, including some of the stuff that didn't gain exposure."

And the collaborative beat goes on between Kuntz and Cutler, a prime example being Careerbuilder.com's "Tips" from Wieden+Kennedy, Portland, Ore., which debuted on this year's Super Bowl.

The spot depicts several red flags signaling that you're in the wrong job and need to make a change. We open on a woman, for instance, who's so distraught that she's primal screaming in her car as she drives into her workplace parking lot. Other "tip-offs" that you should look for another gig include fantasizing about being

elsewhere (we see the woman riding a dolphin through ocean waves), being regularly ridiculed by fellow workers (a man in deadpan fashion greets a guy who's seated at a workstation with a cheerful "hey, dummy"), sitting next to an undesirable coworker (who's dressed in Speedo swim trunks while clipping his toenails) and daydreaming about punching small animals (with a small cuddly, koala bear—who's wearing eyeglasses—on the receiving end).

These different tip-offs are recited and continually repeated in a Twelve Days of Xmas-like (yet not sing songy) fashion, heightening the absurdity as well as the all too real need felt by many that a change of job is imperative. And CareerBuilders is the place to help realize such a much needed change of employment.

The end tag slogan simply reads: "Start Building."

Cutler and Kuntz started building a rapport long ago. "We communicate in short hand. I think you'll find this with all the editors and directors you talk to who have had a working relationship for some time," observed Cutler. "You build up this trust. For Tom and I, it's very much built on the same sensibility and a work ethic. Tom and I are painfully focused. The way we work jibes together. And with a common sensibility, he normally doesn't have to worry if I am going to find the right moments in what he's shot."

Steve Gandolfi

Editor Steve Gandolfi, founder of Cut+Run, bicoastal and London, is also no stranger to director Kuntz. Gandolfi cut the fourth spot for which Kuntz earned this year's DGA Award nomination: Xbox's "Lips for TAG, San Francisco.

Yet for the purposes of this feature story, *SHOOT* looks to Gandolfi to reflect on his longstanding working relationship with director Daniel Kleinman of Rattling Stick, London (repped stateside by bicoastal Epoch Films), encompassing assorted projects, including the lauded Guinness "noitulovE" spot, noted ads for Sony PlayStation, Audi ("Wakeboarder"), adidas ("Impossible Field"), even a few James Bond film intros.

"I did a lot of work through the production company Limelight many moons ago," recalled Gandolfi, "and I was introduced to Danny Kleinman. We met, said hello and he gave me a job for Sky Television through BBH [London]. I believe this was one of the first jobs we did, it was such a long time ago now.

"My relationship with Danny has been an extraordinary experience for me. Every job I do with Danny I learn a little bit more about editing. If I was

ever to direct, which I would not, he would be the man to edit my films for me. When we work together, he always leaves me alone to cut the film and then he comes in and I can see in his face when he walks through the door he knows how the film should be edited. He looks at my cuts and then we put them to one side and start again. We work normally from 10 a.m. until 6 p.m.—within that time span, the creativity level is unbelievable. He considers things from every angle. Once we have done various edits, we go back and compare all the versions that I have done with his and usually we mix them up together."

Gandolfi feels it is "important to edit a rough cut of the film with the director to understand what was in their head before they put it to celluloid. This is true with U.S. jobs too, including my recent projects with Lance Acord, Mark Malloy, Tom Kuntz, Paul Middleditch and Chris Smith. After I



Steve Gandolfi

get the rough cut, I can go in with the agency with a complete fresh mind and look at the dailies again, do the usual rough cut, then look at the cut and the director's cut—normally the best edit shines through in comparison, sometimes it is a combination of the two."

A number of Kleinman-directed commercials stand out for Gandolfi though he shared, "It's tough to pick a favorite." The editor related, "Working with Danny on every project he does is outstanding."

Asked if there's an adjustment for him working with American as compared to U.K. agencies, Gandolfi observed, "For the last 15 years I have been working in America, Africa, Australia, London and more with every type of agency and every type of director. Editing is editing and at its core there is nothing different working with anyone. It's how you adapt yourself. There is never animosity between people if the editor handles it correctly. I work with some of the biggest players in the film world and we never have a problem. It may be working for 25 years and it may be that I just absolutely love what I do."

Smith & Foulkes

Continued from page 25

to get in features at Nexus as an extension of our work in commercials and this accelerated the timetable. Now we're working on ideas, and seeing properties, books and scripts."

In two or three months, once they have sorted out their options, Smith and Foulkes will likely come back out to Los Angeles in order to get a better handle on what long-form opportunity to pursue, if any.

What's certain, they said, is their continued involvement in spots.

"For many years, commercials have been our creative lifeblood. It's a discipline we value and want to keep active in," affirmed Smith.

Indeed their latest ad-making endeavors represent a wide creative range. For one, the Comcast campaign out of Goodby, Silverstein & Partners, San Francisco, brings live-action performers into an animated world known as Comcast Town. Singing a lively tune, the actors take us through this town in a single continuous shot sans any cuts.

With other animated creations—such as VHS tapes, kung fu ninjas, penguins, giant manga squirrels, dancing ice cream cones and spaceman—coming into play as an ensemble supporting cast, a whimsical world unfolds before our eyes, with the live-action performers still serving as the focal point, branding Comcast in quite a different way than before.

Yet whimsical can be complex as Smith & Foulkes set out to build this world in an isometric style often associated with illustration and gaming, visually representing three-dimensional subjects and objects within the framework of two dimensions.

"There was a huge technical side to this job," said Foulkes. "What we liked very much was the chance to choreograph people's movements and to direct live-action performance which we don't always get the opportunity to do as people often think of us as just animation directors. I like the fact that this kind of work gets us thought of in a broader range."

This represented the second recent

live-action opportunity for Smith & Foulkes who earlier helmed Coca-Cola's "Avatar" (a Super Bowl commercial for Wieden+Kennedy, Portland, Ore.), bringing people together with their online avatar alter egos and other characters.

In stark contrast to the feel good continuation of the Coca-Cola "Happiness"-themed ad campaign, Smith & Foulkes just wrapped a U.K. Department of Transport package of PSAs for Leo Burnett, London, which poignantly conveys the importance of road safety for kids.

In one public service spot, for example, we are introduced to an animated lad who didn't stop, look and listen before crossing the street. The youngster is on crutches and before the accident, he was athletic and loved to play football. He cannot anymore because his leg was bent backwards and broken in multiple places. Now all he can do is watch others play the game he loved, as we see a soccer ball roll towards him. He is unable to kick it or even pick it up.



This Way Up

Smith and Foulkes noted that their years of commercialmaking have given them more discipline in their approach to storytelling.

"Every frame has to have a purpose, you dissect stuff down to its essence, you have three seconds to set a tone, another few seconds to establish a character," related Smith. "And the nature of the commercials we do is so different, one experience informs the next for us as directors. We are constantly learning and growing."

Thus when they had the opportunity to direct *This Way Up*, eight-plus minutes of screen time seemed like a major luxury.

"You have more time to show facial expressions and to convey emotions," observed Foulkes.

"You can stay with something a bit longer on film but our work in commercials has helped us to not stay on something too long, to make sure that we stayed relevant to the story with our images."

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Ondi Timoner

Continued from page 26
Spot experience

Represented for commercials via bicoastal Nonfiction Unlimited, Timoner has a penchant for spotmaking. She has been active with work for such clients as Ford, the U.S. Army and State Farm.

The Army fare included short web films that Timoner directed, portraying young recruits and how military training and experience impacted their lives.

As for the State Farm campaign out of DDB Chicago, Timoner helmed two national spots which had her following the grass-roots efforts of State Farm agents to help and comfort victims of Hurricane Katrina. One such story was of a State Farm employee who organized five trips from Oregon to Mississippi, each with U-Haul shipments of supplies to the needy.

"I love doing commercials," related Timoner. "I remember going to Alaska for Ford and JWT. The sun never rose. The best we could get was a dark blue sky from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. We spent five days there total to find oil workers using super duty Ford trucks in different ways, getting a mix of race, gender,

personality and jobs. I met workers in the cafeteria, at the oil rig, throughout the pipeline and talked to them. We picked several and did portraits of their lives for Ford.

"What a pleasure for me to be able to go into this world I've never been in before and figure out how to tell people what it's like."

Timoner affirmed that despite her continuing heavy duty time on the film festival circuit for *We Live In Public*, she is committed to opening up her filmmaking schedule to accommodate more commercials.

"It's a form I love and every experience I've had in commercials has been an incredible shot in the arm for me personally and creatively."

While her documentary filmmaking expertise has translated into spot opportunities, Timoner hopes that *We Live In Public* will help add yet another dimension to her opportunities in the commercials industry.

We Live In Public, she said, "is very much a textured piece, heavy in graphics with a strong visual motif." This was born in large part out of her collaboration on the film with graphic designer David Eagle.

"The form should follow the content and that's how we created the visual motif—in order to be true to the film's subject...I hope the visual sensibilities in this film open up some visual opportunities for me in commercials. Ad agencies are sending me in to meet people and get their real stories but that can at times be less exciting visually. I'd like the chance to do even more exciting visual work in commercials with clients and agencies continuing to tap into my documentary storytelling."

The New York advertising community can get a first-hand look at *We Live In Public* and meet Timoner when the film screens as part of the New Directors/New Films initiative (March 25-April 5) presented by New York's Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) and The Film Society of Lincoln Center. At press time, *We Live In Public* was slated to be showcased at MoMA on April 5.

Among the film's other stops was the recently wrapped South by Southwest (SXSW) Fest in Austin, with the New Orleans International Human Rights Film Festival as well as the Los Angeles Film Festival both upcoming.

Jason Zada

Continued from page 27

brand, which he wasn't yet at liberty to publicly identify, has already come on board, with the goal being to secure three more. The brand support is needed not only to fund the production but also a media plan to drive viewers to the show.

"This series is being done from an entertainment-first perspective," said Zada. "We're developing great entertainment and finding brands that fit and can properly integrate themselves

into the show." He noted that Tool has helped in an advisory role.

"This isn't at all knocking the work I've done previously but Tool gives me an extra edge," observed Zada. "Being around extremely talented folks on the production side and seeing the high quality, world class production value coming out of Tool is inspiring. It will elevate my work."

"The other factor behind my decision to join Tool was I wanted to go to a place that is open to looking at where

the industry is going and that wants to get more involved in the digital side of things. The directors here are so creative. I am learning from them and hopefully they can learn from me on some level, particularly in the digital space. It's one big learning pool."

Zada recalled that EVB opened as the dot-com biz was "going down the toilet. But we had this idea to do really interesting storytelling online with brands, kinds of storytelling that weren't being done at that time in the digital space. We got much more into this sort of filmed entertainment on the Internet—and that eventually led me back to filmmaking which I was fascinated with back when I was a kid. You find that true innovation and pioneering can blossom even during down times like when the dot-com business looked bad.

"Today I'm in love with where we are at in the industry. Obviously no one is in love with where we're at in terms of the economy. But there are still incredible opportunities.

"In some respects," said Zada, "it's a scary time. You don't know where the cards are going to fall. But it's such a fascinating time. Yes, money is moving into digital. But TV is never going to go away. It will just transform and we have the chance to be part of and to help shape that transformation."

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street talk

Director Larry Frey has joined the roster of Company, Los Angeles, reuniting with shop executive producers Robin Benson and Richard Goldstein. Frey, who had been repped by Chelsea Pictures, joins a Company lineup of directors that includes Philippe Andre, Adam Cameron, Mona El Mansouri, Fred Goss, David McNally, Harry Patramanis, Harald Zwart and the Coen Brothers....Bicoastal commercial/entertainment production company Original Film, headed by executive producers Bruce Mellon, Jeff Devlin and Joe Piccirillo, has added director Yann Secouet to its roster, and formed a strategic creative alliance with London-based 76 Ltd, which represents Secouet throughout Europe....Feature film director Gregor Jordan (*Two Hands*, *Buffalo Soldiers*, *Ned Kelly*, *The Informers*) of Prodigy Australia and New Zealand made his first foray into TV commercial directing with a series of spots for Telstra out of Aussie agency BWM....Colorists Bob Festa and Clark Muller have teamed with executive producer Darby Walker to launch New Hat, a nonlinear-style telecine boutique with a roster comprised of colorists Festa, Muller, Beau Leon, Adolfo Martinelli and Marcelo Aprile. Carla Pagi is senior producer at New Hat....Creative editorial and post house Mad River has reached a milestone, celebrating its 20-year anniversary. The company maintains full service facilities in Santa Monica, New York and Detroit. Numerous artisans have contributed to Mad River's longevity, two of the key players being partners/editors Michael Elliot and Lucas Eskin....Creatives Tony Davidson and Kim Papworth, who have been at Wieden+Kennedy, London, since 2000, have been named agency partners of the global W+K network....

rep report

Editorial house Cut + Run (L.A., N.Y., London) has signed Jolie Miller, Ann Zagaroli and Brad Edelstein of simpatico for exclusive East Coast commercial representation.... Audio post house Margarita Mix, Santa Monica, has appointed Greg Laube to the newly created post of director of business development. Laube, who founded and operated three noted editorial houses over the years—Brass Knuckles Editorial, Laube-Roth & Associates and The Mission—will work with Margarita Mix director of sales/producer Whitney Warren....Dexter Randazzo, West Coast rep for production company Shilo, is now also repping L.A. spot music/sound design company Squeak E. Clean Productions on the West Coast....Michael Constantine has been hired as director of global marketing for Prime Focus Group, which operates nine VFX/post facilities in India, four in the U.K. and four in North America....The Directors Network/TDN Artists, which recently moved to Culver City, Calif., has signed comedy directors Grapefruit and Brian Ades. Additionally DPs Kirk Bachman and Heimo Ritzinger are now available for spots via TDN....

bulletin board

- >March 26/New York, NY: AAF Advertising Hall of Fame Luncheon. www.advertisinghalloffame.org
- >March 27/Redland, FL: AAF SBI AF. www.southbeachanimationfest.com
- >March 30/New York, NY: Adv. Research Foundation: Re:Think '09 Convention. www.arf.org
- >April 15/SHOOT "New Directors Search" Entry Deadline. www.shootonline.com/go/search
- >April 16-18/Santa Monica, California: AFCI Locations. www.afci.org
- >Apr 20-23/Las Vegas, NV: NAB Conv. www.nab.org
- >May 20/Beverly Hills, CA: AICE Awards. www.aice.org

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Do You Have What It Takes To Be The Next Hot New Director?

SHOOT is conducting a worldwide search to discover the best up-and-coming directors who, based on their initial work, show promise to make positive contributions to advertising and/or entertainment in its traditional and emerging forms. The search is conducted by SHOOT's editorial staff with input from ad agency creative directors, heads of production, production company heads and established directors.

After the best work is selected SHOOT will compile the 2009 SHOOT New Directors Showcase Reel and interview the directors for a special feature that will appear in SHOOT's May 22 issue, pdf version, HTML edition, and on SHOOTonline.com, bringing worldwide attention to the work and the directors. In addition, the work will be screened for an audience of key ad agency and production industry decision-makers at SHOOT's 2009 New Directors Showcase Event at the DGA Theatre in New York City on May 28. Coverage of the event will appear in SHOOT in June and the showcase reel will be posted on SHOOT's website.

See last years 2008 New Directors Web Reel at www.shootonline.com/go/search. The directors selected for the Showcase come from diverse backgrounds. Some first established themselves on the agency side, while others were DPs, feature filmmakers or film



The final reel will be screened for an audience of key advertising agency and production industry decision-makers at SHOOT's 2009 New Directors Showcase Event at the DGA Theatre in New York City on May 28.

New Directors receive enormous career-making exposure!

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Harold Einstein
SHOOT 2008 New Director,
Station Film



"As directors, we are continually inspired by the imagination of our peers. SHOOT Magazine does a fantastic job of filling our brains with the most exciting, creative ideas of the day and it's New Director's Showcase is no exception. We were thrilled and honored to be included in such a highly talented event. It was almost like telling our Grandmother we had won an academy award... or two."

Jason & Matt Docter,
DOCTER TWINS
SHOOT 2008 New Directors
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students. One bond the directors share is great style and vision, whether it be reflected in comedy, visuals or storytelling.

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Category 3

Other: music videos, short films, feature films

Directors can submit work that was completed in the last 16 months. (January 2008-April 2009) (excerpts from shorts, and excerpts from long-form film or other entertainment fare should be NO MORE than 5 minutes in length) Must be directing commercials less than two years (three if work has been regional only) & must be available to direct commercials.

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Cinematographer, director, philosopher, visionary

Like any artist, working in any medium, the material you work upon is part of the creative process. And it's what I find in working with film that I truly cherish and enjoy.

"I don't consider shooting digital, unless it's supposed to look like digital."

Creative control. It's the one thing everyone in this business wants. Film gives it to me. I can push it a few stops, work through tough lighting situations, play with the processing, experiment with emulsions, and get a lot in-camera that would be difficult to duplicate in post. And it's got that look. You know, that film look. HD has its place, but I rarely spec a job where I would choose it over film.

Lance Acord refuses to compromise.

Learn more about why film continues to be the standard at kodak.com/go/motion

Film. No Compromise.

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