

Kevin Costner To Play For Durham Bulls

DURHAM - To celebrate the 20th anniversary of the hit movie "Bull Durham", actor Kevin Costner will be returning to Durham on July 4th to play in the Durham Bulls Athletic Park, although with a microphone in his hand, not a baseball bat.

Costner and his band, Modern West, are coming to Durham to celebrate Independence Day with a concert at the downtown ball park on July 4th, the Durham Bulls baseball team announced today. The City of Durham's annual fireworks extravaganza will follow the concert.



Ever since the "Bull Durham" movie starring Kevin Costner, Susan Sarandon, and Tim Robbins hit the screens in 1988, the City of Durham has embraced the movie as a showcase of the city's love for its baseball team, which used to play in an aging ballpark until a new stadium was built next to the American Tobacco complex. The movie gave the Durham baseball team a national reputation and put a spotlight on the city. In addition, several scenes in the movie were filmed in the Triangle area, including a famous scene shot at Mitch's Tavern on Hillsborough Street in Raleigh.

Costner starred in the role of Crash Davis, an aging catcher sent down to A-ball to work with a young pitching prospect on the Durham Bulls. A real Crash Davis played baseball for the team in the 1940's and

he became well-known because of the movie and even later played a role in the baseball film "Cobb" starring Tommy Lee Jones.

"This is really exciting for the Triangle," Durham Bulls General Manager Mike Birling said in a statement. "Our season long celebration of the 20th Anniversary of Bull Durham couldn't have a better highlight than bringing Kevin Costner back to Durham."

Sports Illustrated magazine once ranked the film the Greatest Sports Movie of all time. The movie was produced by Durham native Thom Mount, who produced a series of hit movies throughout the 1970's and 1980's and 1990's and is well-known as a successful producer and former President of Universal Pictures.

Costner is also known for his role in two other baseball movie, "Field of Dreams" and "For Love Of The Game."

He's also known for plenty of other landmark films including "Dances With Wolves", "JFK", "Tin Cup", "The Untouchables", "Open Range", and has had recent hits with movies like "The Guardian."

Movie fans may be surprised to hear that Costner is also a musician and has been in a band for decades.

As the leader of Kevin Costner & Modern West band, Costner leads a tight knit group of long time friends who sing original material penned by the band but also songs written by some of Kevin's famous musical friends.

The Durham Bulls say that his band sprang from the roots of Costner's very first band, Roving Boy, which had been placed on hiatus as Kevin's acting career took off.

Now, some twenty years later, the core of this band, Kevin, John Coinman and Blair Forward have reunited as Kevin Costner & Modern West. Other members of the band include lead guitarist Teddy Morgan and drummer Larry Cobb.

Tickets for the concert go on sale to the general public at 9:00 a.m. on Thursday, June 5th at the Durham Bulls Box Office, by phone at (919) 956-BULL or online at www.durhambulls.com. The Durham Bulls also say a waiting list has been started as well.

Bladenboro native honored with award

Lynn Davis Minges, executive director of the N.C. Division of Tourism, Film and Sports Development, has been honored by Peace College with its 2008 Distinguished Alumna Award.

Minges, a 1980 graduate of Peace, has led the division since 1992 when she became the first woman to direct the office. In her role, Minges has helped grow the state's tourism, film and sports activities into a \$15 billion industry.

She serves on the national board of directors for the Travel Industry Association of America and is an executive member of the National Council of State Travel Directors where she has chaired and served on numerous committees.

"The Distinguished Alumna Award at Peace recognizes accomplishments in career, community and family," said Laura Bingham, president of Peace College. "I can think of no better recipient than Lynn Minges, who successfully leads a competitive industry, bringing in more than 45 million visitors to North Carolina annually.

"We are immensely proud of her professional success and for her contributions to Peace College as an alumnae leader."

Under Minges's leadership, her division has been recognized with numerous national and international awards for marketing excellence. Minges has been recognized by Triangle Business Journal with its "Outstanding Women in Business Award."

Minges holds an A.A. degree from Peace and a B.A. in political science from N.C. State University. A native of Bladenboro, she makes her home in Raleigh with her husband, Brad and their two daughters.

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NC Film Industry Wants Tax Breaks To Last Longer Catherine M. Welch

WILMINGTON, NC (2008-05-15) Wilmington film officials are pushing for lawmakers to extend the state's film incentives package.

North Carolina's film incentives give a 15% tax rebate on production costs between \$250,000 and \$7.5 million.



It expires at the end of next year, and those in North Carolina's film industry want to push back the sunset to attract film production well into next year.

New Hanover County Republican Danny McComas sponsored incentives legislation in the state House. He says extending them this session will be tough.

"Well it's difficult because we just met, and this is the short session and money's gonna be a little tight, but I'm cautiously optimistic that we'll be able to do that."

Bill Vassar, head of Screen Gems Studios in Wilmington says the industry is seeking to extend the incentives package for five years.

Do you have insight or expertise on this topic?
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news@whqr.org.

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Eno Short Division Update

Gods of Society

There was considerable sound difficulties. Kevin Ashmont has trudged through those problems and decided we do not need voice overs. He hopes to deliver the final version prior to the end of June.

The Shoebox

The original footage was recently found. This was originally titled Forced to Protect. This footage will be delivered to Travis Johnson an editor for post production. We may have this complete by end of June.

The Last Breakfast

Director is Aravind Ragupathi. We are only waiting for sound tracks now.

BMW

The three completed BMW tv spec ads are complete and on the YouTube Channel - ERMPTV. They are excellent. Please view them and comment.

NASA/JPL Project

The first song by Feeding the Fire about the SUN is complete and on our YouTube Channel - ERMPTV. Editor Michael Elliott completed the Feeding the Fire project. The second song shot by Matteo LaMuralia at Kings Theatre in Raleigh is by the band BUS. Both are ready now for animation work.

Forced to Protect - Three Shorts

The production is still a go. The picture cut has been done. We are just waiting on sound and music. I passed off all three episodes to our music composer last week and talked to him this weekend. So far, he is composing the first episode and then work on the others in 2 week intervals. I have also redone all the gamblers VO's with another actor. We have one more session to finish up on improving episode 3's "the Gamblers dialogue". Episodes 1 and 2 original dialogue and improve dialogue is done and getting inputted by our editor. We have had A LOT of problems with sound. So to fix this problem I am getting a new sound FX editor from NCSA, Joe Morganton. He will start with episode 1 and go from there.



Felder festival of short films long on terrific film making

By:Bill Thompson

In a cold Nantucket winter, a man falls victim to his own apprehensions in the movie short winner 'Fear A Following,' by local moviemaker Barret B. Burlage, featured at the Fifth Annual Felder Film Festival from 7 to 9 p.m., Wednesday and on June 5 in the Ballroom of Charleston on the Beach Holiday Inn, Folly Beach.



Taking the (film) short path to hearts and minds is the 5th-annual Felder Film Festival, a consistently engaging celebration of short films mounted by Moving Images Group, the digital cinema division of Actor's Theatre of South Carolina.

A Piccolo Spoleto event, the festival will be held Wednesday and Thursday from 7 to 9 p.m. in the ballroom of the Charleston on the Beach Holiday Inn at Folly Beach.

Created by gifted stage and screen actor Clarence Felder, director and cinematographer Michael Givens and writer-director Nick Smith of Nick Smith Films, the festival is designed "to promote and develop new filmmakers and education of new visual technologies in the Charleston area."

The playbill showcases the work of filmmakers local, national and international, with a maximum 12-minute run time.

This year's industry pro guest is Todd Tinkham of Tinkhamtown Productions in North Carolina, who will conduct a free seminar on Navigating the Festival Circuit on Thursday at 5:30 p.m., preceding that night's screenings. Tinkham's 18 award-winning short movies have been screened at more than 200 festivals. Among his latest is "Alexa," both in the Felder Fest competition and earmarked for the Slamdance Film Festival in January 2009.

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Once again, organizers are presenting a companion event in the Felder Family Film Fest, which unspools for free Sunday at 2 p.m. at Physicians Auditorium on the campus of the College of Charleston. Created by theater and film actress Lisa Morelli, shorts are chosen by judges strictly for family appeal. Included is a free workshop for young moviemakers and their families from 3 to 4 p.m.

For more information, e-mail ccfelder@aol.com, call 843- 588-9636 or go online at www.actorstheatreofsc.org.



Ethel Snipe Coakley, a basketmaker from the Four Mile Community in Mount Pleasant, is seen here in the documentary 'Bin Yah.'

"Bin Yah" reprise

The affecting and pointed documentary "Bin Yah: There's No Place Like Home," directed by Justin Nathanson, will screen June 3 at 11 a.m. and 6 p.m. at the Mother Emanuel AME Church downtown. This Piccolo Spoleto event will be followed by a broadcast June 12 at 10 p.m. on SCETV's "Southern Lens."

In direct, poignant and often disturbing terms, the film explores the impact of suburban sprawl and political inaction on historically black communities in Mount Pleasant. Yet unlike so many documentaries these days, it is not driven solely by ideology.

Both screenings are free, and will be followed by a panel discussion with the director and participants from the film.

Produced by Nancy Cregg and Cara White, and narrated by Ron Daise, "Bin Yah" (Gullah for "been here") employs the testimonies of residents to reveal the culture and history of these threatened communities, to make palpable the importance of land and the concept of home, and to give a voice to those who don't always have a chance to be heard. Those interviewed include residents from the Four Mile, Six Mile, Hamlin/Seven Mile, Phillips, Remley's Point/Scanlonville, Snowden and John's Island communities, locales established by freed slaves and home to generations of their families.

Music for the film is by Darryl E. Horne. The director of photography is Jesse Berger.

Busting stereotypes

As if the silly caricatures of the Charlie Chan detective flicks weren't bad enough (inevitably starring an American actor "disguised" as an Oriental), Hollywood of the '40s compounded its jingoistic wartime depictions of sadistic Asian soldiers and spies with '50s fare dominated by "inscrutable" plotters and soul-less commies.

Not that those in power in Mao's China and ultra-insular North Korea did not provide ample fodder for exaggeration.

Exploring Occidental images of Orientals in English-language films is the point of Turner Classic Movies' "Race and Hollywood: Asian Images in Film," a series running Tuesdays and Thursdays, beginning at 8 p.m. throughout June.

Joining TCM's redoubtable host and guide will be Dr. Peter X Feng, editor of Screening Asian-Americans and author of "Identities in Motion: Asian-American Film and Video."

Each night's movie selection will focus on a particular theme, such as an exploration of how films have depicted interracial and intercultural relationships and a look at the career of Anna May Wong, the actress whose roles during the 1930s and 1940s ranged from victims to temptresses.

Noting the work of Asian filmmakers has never been more popular in the West than today, TCM will provide an updated chronicle of the enduring careers of contemporary Asian stars like Gong Li and Jackie Chan.

'Foot Fist Way' gives it the old college try

By Stephen Saito

TO HEAR Will Ferrell's producing partner Adam McKay tell it, America is about to come down with a case of "Foot Fist" fever.

"I heard [John] McCain made mention of [the movie] at some town hall meeting in Iowa, then he kind of did the bow and then said to some reporters, 'Like "Foot Fist Way"? No one?' "

OK. So maybe he's kidding about Sen. McCain's endorsement, but McKay and Ferrell think the ultra-low-budget taekwondo comedy "The Foot Fist Way" is no joke, even though the film has had its share of Hollywood heavyweights in stitches ever since its premiere at Sundance in 2006.

With its mix of easy gags, foul-mouthed banter and hilariously awkward moments of unease, "The Foot Fist Way" has kicked down the door of the industry for friends turned filmmakers Danny McBride, Ben Best and Jody Hill. The trio of North Carolina School of the Arts grads just wanted to make something they thought was funny, collectively coming up with the concept and script about a deluded sensei named Fred Simmons who presides over a class of old ladies, pimply faced teens and ankle-biters.

Having moved to L.A. and looking to get away from what he calls "pretty soulless work" as a supervising story editor on MTV's "Real World/Road Rules Challenges," Hill saved up \$35,000 over a four-year period to direct a labor of love inspired by his youth studying martial arts, with McBride starring as Simmons.

In the summer of 2005, McBride finally fastened his black belt while Hill scrambled around Concord, N.C., recruiting students from his alma mater to work on the crew and getting all the production value he could from using a largely vacant apartment complex owned by his father as a setting and a Ferrari lent by a family friend as a prop.

The one extravagance the budget allowed was for the potential casting of '80s action star Michael Dudikoff ("American Ninja") for the role of Simmons' idol, Chuck "The Truck" Wallace. But when Hill couldn't find a way to contact Dudikoff, Best stepped into the role. Less than a month after wrapping a 19-day shoot, they sent the film off to the Sundance Film Festival, not knowing whether their go-for-broke comedy would fly.

Though the film received a warm reaction at Sundance ("If any Sundance movie deserves discovery and cult status it is 'The Foot Fist Way,'" said [a review from website Ain't It Cool News](#)), no major buyers pursued it.

Ultimately, Best, Hill and McBride left Park City, Utah, with a debilitating flu but with no distributor for the film.

And while that's usually the end of the story for most indie movies, it was just the beginning for "Foot Fist." In the spring of 2006, Ferrell and McKay, who were starting up their own production company, Gary Sanchez, were looking to get into business with new and unique comedic voices. Their manager and comedy kingmaker, Jimmy Miller, passed them a screener of "The Foot Fist Way." At first viewing, they didn't quite know what to make of mullet-sporting, karate-chopping McBride and his cartoonish brand of so-stupid-it's-somehow-smart bravado. McKay likens it to "that moment where you go to buy a house and [it's] the first thing you see, but you can't trust it."

Yet after the two watched the movie repeatedly, they decided that not only was it original and fresh but also that they wanted to back the filmmakers and help introduce them to audiences. "The Foot Fist Way" was later acquired by Paramount Vantage, which was in the process of signing an overall production deal with Gary Sanchez.



McKay says the acquisition took a while because they were launching Gary Sanchez when they picked up the movie. "We hadn't even signed our deal contracts with Vantage," he says. "And so we got [the film] and there was a big delay just literally setting up our offices and getting the company going. . . . We all agreed to give it that late spring shot where it can go into summer and then catch an audience. 'Napoleon Dynamite' is the obvious example."

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But a strange thing happened in that year before the movie hit the multiplex. Copies of it had been floating around Hollywood, and it became an underground sensation with many of the industry's most influential comics. McBride and Hill recall the surreal experience of being invited by Judd Apatow to the set of "Knocked Up" and finding "Freaks and Geeks" alums Seth Rogen, Jason Segel and Martin Starr sitting in Apatow's trailer, watching "The Foot Fist Way" on a monitor and shouting out their favorite parts.

"We're sitting there like what . . . is going on?" says McBride. "How did we end up here?"

Although their next project together, the Gary Sanchez-produced HBO series "East Bound and Down," centers on another underdog in the form of a baseball player (McBride) who is past his prime, the trio already seems to have beaten the odds, especially since the three had modest expectations for "The Foot Fist Way."

"We wanted to show off our bodies," jokes Best.

Adds McBride, "Yeah, it's like, 'Jody, whatever I do in this movie, I have to be able to wear denim shorts. I've got to show people these calves.' "

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NC Filmmakers Attend Cannes By Brian Clarey

CANNES, FRANCE - After spending a whole five hours making a film, some Greensboro filmmakers find themselves attending the biggest film festival in the world.

"Innndeeeeeee!"

"liinnnnnnn Deeeeeeeee!"

"INNNNNNDEEDEEEEEEEEEEE"

The crowd is going straight-up bananas outside the Palais Festival, the red-carpeted stairs rising behind them like some whorish Aztec pyramid.

"Innndeeeee."

It's Sunday, the fifth day of the Festival de Cannes, and the Croisette has already seen thousands of tourists, dozens of red-carpet strolls and the somewhat disturbing spectacle of a karate-chopping Jack Black in front of a cadre of big, fat pandas. Today there are free Indiana Jones hats for anyone with elbows sharp enough to wedge through the crowd and exclamations loud enough to catch the attention of the promotional hotties in cargo shorts, a blonde and a tanned brunette, both in Indy hats themselves.

"INNNDDEEE!" they scream from behind the police barricades as the hotties pass to the longest and loudest those cheap brown fedoras, each emblazoned with the fiery logo from Dr. Jones' newest adventure, Indiana Jones and the Kingdom of the Crystal Skull, starring a somewhat wizened Harrison Ford, who today ascended the red carpet with Steven Spielberg and Cate Blanchett in tow, to the snapping of a thousand shutters.

It's probably the most notorious film of the festival - the highest budget, the biggest stars, the largest promotional presence in billboards and banners along the Croisette - and there's serious kinetic action down here on the sidewalk among the hooplers, pretty much all of whom will have to get in line and buy a ticket if they want to catch the on-screen action. But for now, there's always the hats.

"Innndeeee!"

And now everybody's wearing them, from the stroller-pushing weekend tourists to the drunken, slumming cosmopolitans to the bleary-eyed paparazzi standing on ladders under the date palm trees, with clear sightlines to the red carpet. And by the main entrance to the Palais Festival, several floors removed from the aerie described by those crimson stairs but certainly more accessible to us regular folk, the buzz is strong for this film, which comes nearly 20 years after the last installment of the series.

"Indee!" fancy locals say as they hold up signs begging for tickets, accented with the letters "SVP," which I've come to understand means si vous plait.

"Indee!" say the slick-ass tuxedoed Euroboys as they hold up a homemade banner bearing an interpretation of the film's logo.

"Indy!" they say as they pose for pictures in their cheap brown fedoras and bought-for-the-occasion shades, sunburns settling into their forearms and the backs of their necks.

And for this moment the buzz over Steven Spielberg's newest blockbuster runs like a current through this part of the Croisette, and you might start to think to yourself, God damn, son, I gotta go see this movie.

But the word among the insiders, those with super-sharp tuxedos and jewels that twinkle like personal celestialities and small decks of laminates slung around their necks like VIP tarot, the ones whose opinions matter at this moment more than that of anyone who might eventually see the film, has already been spoken, and now it lays there like an epitaph, indelible and forever.

Indiana Jones and the Kingdom of the Crystal Skull kind of sucks.

This is the 61st Festival de Cannes, the most famous film festival in the world, which was born in the cradle of fascism and, in fact, owes its existence to those brown- and black shirts who dared to place politics over art.

Before Cannes, the largest film festival was the Mostra di Venezia, it's top prize, no shit, called the Mussolini Cup. But in 1938, when Jean Renoir's *Le Grande Illusion* lost to what many consider to be a German propaganda film, *Olympia*, commissioned by Joseph Goebbels and involving Mussolini's son.

The French weren't having it, and the Festival de Cannes was born as an event where creativity trumps commerce, though in its inaugural year, 1939, it was called the Festival International du Film and it was cut short after its opening night because the British and French responded to the Nazi invasion of Poland the next day.

Over the years it's generated its own historical footnotes: Brigitte Bardot was discovered posing topless for photographers on the beach in the days before celebrity sex tapes served the same purpose. Grace Kelly met Prince Rainier here, the first chapter of their international love story. An unfinished version of *Apocalypse Now* won the Palm d'Or, the festival's highest prize, in 1979.

The list of films that have won the Golden Palm is astounding: Federico Fellini's *La Dolce Vita*, *MASH*, *Taxi Driver*, *All That Jazz*, *Paris, Texas*, *The Pianist*, *Fahrenheit 9/11*.

And by now you're probably asking yourself what a two-bit journalist from the North Carolina Triad is doing here, notebook in hand, rubbing elbows and hustling party invites with filmdom's elite.

It's a fair question. And the short answer is: I cheated.

I am not a filmmaker. Except, in another, more accurate sense, I am. My journey to Cannes began last August as part of a crew that entered Greensboro's installation of the international 48 Hour Film Project, wherein a five- to seven-minute film must be written, shot and edited in the span of two days. We came up with a concept: the sparse tale of a sad, abused girl who is trying to make a break from her horrible life. And after a hectic shoot, we ended up winning in Greensboro. A couple months later, at Filmapalooza in San Jose, Calif., we were named in the top dozen out of a couple thousand international entrants. With the honor came the opportunity to screen in the Short Film Corner in the basement of the Palais Festival during the festivities in Cannes. A few months of preparation and fundraising, and here I am strolling the Croisette in this mad, beautiful throng. The only difference between them and me is that most people screening films at the festival worked half a lifetime to get here; the work that brought me here, my individual contribution, took about five hours.

There are five of us from the crew and we've secured a small villa up in the hills of le Cannet overlooking the beachfront city. We've got five days, a modest bankroll by Cannes standards - the dollar is running about two to one against the Euro - and low-level passes that give us access to the Palais Festival, that hulking, brick-like structure on the beach, the Short Film Corner and very little else. No matter to a guy like me - I've always been able to survive pretty well by my wits, and every journalist knows it's easier to get forgiven than it is to get permission. Besides, unless you're a high-level industry insider, an up-and-coming starlet willing to put out or the owner of a mega-yacht docked on the pier, all the action is in the bars and on the streets.

My mandate is simple: experience, experience, experience. Talk to as many people as possible; have some great meals; drink with the locals and run with the tourists; keep an eye out for celebrities; keep an ear to the ground. And most of all, see if I can sweet-talk this magnificent city and this spectacular festival to yield some of their secrets to me.

The first 48 hours goes by in a frenetic blur.

Our crew assembles by the palais, we secure our credentials and, after I sneak into a reception at the Short Film Corner to which I was not entitled to attend - "How did you get in here?" a woman from New York asked me - we take dinner on a side street café with some of the other filmmakers from the 48 Hour Film Project.

We walk the seaside streets for a while, beautiful neighborhoods overlooked by wrought-iron balconies and balustrades, and then head back to the villa to put on nighttime clothes: black suits and gowns; hard, shiny shoes.

By then we've met up with a local by name of Michael who's been cruising the hills on a ballsy scooter, and after we hit a beachside tent party featuring 20 drinks and lingered hotties who wriggle on tabletops we ask him to take us to a cool bar. He leads us down a short side street to a nightspot called Sun7, which is where we would usher in the dawn every night thereafter.

On that first night I meet a phalanx of Brits, one of which leads the kind of life I would have sworn I'd be living if you'd have asked me 20 years ago: wealthy, international, single and rich. Plus he's huge, with a head like a magnificent pumpkin and an ass that looks like it was made from a couple bowling balls. I take to calling him "Big Me."

His friend, who looks like a symphony conductor in his white bow tie, is interested in our path to Cannes. He asks me what I'm working on, and I synopse the plot of a novel I've been kicking around for a few years. I tell him my major apprehension about screenwriting: that it is stripped of the little details and stylistic prose that I've come to see as aspects of my overall style.

Back at Sun7 the next night I see him again.

"I've been thinking about your screenplay," he tells me. "You know, in Eastern Europe, scripts come in two parts. The first is a description, kind of like a novel. The second consists of only dialogue. Just lines. I think perhaps you might be more comfortable with that style."

I think: Perhaps I would.

Like any good American during his first time abroad, I become filled with this sense of patronizing acceptance of my nation and countrymen.

Their money makes so much sense, I think. Different colors and sizes. And two-euro coins? That's pure genius. I've got a pocketful of change and it's like 20 bucks.

Two different flushes on the toilets? I muse. A small one for a piss and a big one for a crap? Brilliant! Why can't we do that?

"How does it feel to live in a poor country?" we ask each other every time we exchange dollars for euros.

And: "You would never see that in the States," we say, rarely in a positive light.

It is an easy thing to be seduced by Cannes, particularly during the festival when you're carousing down a street closed in by ancient architecture surrounded by beautiful people from the finer corners of the world, a steady parade of six-figure cars rolling slowly, conspicuously by.

But even at its bones the city is remarkable, an amalgamation of some of those US cities I love the most: the climate of San Francisco, and it's geography, too, with craggy, cave-dotted shores; and there are palisades like those upriver from Manhattan; and of course there are echoes of New Orleans' French Quarter, my old neighborhood, everywhere I look.

And in all my encounters I experience not a shred of anti-American sentiment. Most Frenchmen I meet seem to feel sort of sorry for us, and three of them, on separate occasions, bring up 9-11 and the collapse of the Twin Towers. They do so reverently, almost apologetically. "We do not understand why," one man at a café told me.

Michael, the scooter-riding local, leaves a bag of fresh cherries on our doorstep the day after taking us around town. And on my second day, when I get off at the wrong bus stop on my way up to le Cannet, a middle-aged French couple pulls out a map and drives me to the doorstep of my villa.

The scenery is magnificent; the food sublime. There are no mosquitos and the air smells fresh and sweet, save for the occasional whiff of alcohol vapors that seem to be coming from the scooters everyone maneuvers through traffic.

And when I ponder this society they've built here on the banks of the Mediterranean, I keep thinking about something Chris Matthews said on television one night when describing another European nation.

"Do you ever get the feeling they're playing chess and we're playing checkers?"

On Tuesday night at le Petit Majestic the waiter, a fellow who looks to be in his forties, wears horn-rimmed glasses, earring plugs that blink colored lights, a mesh T-shirt, booty shorts that highlight his package, black thigh-high stockings with a pack of Marlboros tucked into them and a pair of Puma high-tops in metallic green. And he's pulling it off.

We'd heard about this place the night before - the unofficial Riviera Clubhouse of the British film industry in the shadow of the Grand Hotel - but couldn't even get near it and settled in at Sun7 to usher in the morning.

But we're here tonight, and the fancy waiter has already propositioned me.

"Twenty-three euros," he says, and then prances over to a waiting cab, gesturing to me wildly. I am unsure of local customs and therefore don't know which one of us is on the paying end of the transaction, and dammit, if I was gay I just might give this guy a go. But no matter how many pastis the guy sells me, it is just not gonna happen for him.

Ah yes, the pastis... a little bombshell I discover quite by accident, tipped off by a passing fancyman holding a cloudy glass of the stuff. It's a gentler version of absinthe, stripped of wormwood when that vile stuff became banned. The liqueur, which when diluted with water is likely the most popular drink in the country, still packs quite a wallop, and I may even mean it when I say I am never drinking that shit again.

The night was still a winner, though. We hooked up with a Finnish crowd who had procured a small apartment overlooking Rue d'Antibe, just above a Dolce & Gabbana retailer. There, on a rooftop patio amid lemon trees and a gently falling rain, we sipped a Finnish beer called Koff and watched their trailers. One was for a feature called Iron Sky, a sci-fi comedy about a Nazi colony established on the dark side of the moon in 1948 which is now preparing to invade the earth.

You kind of had to be there.



And in the street outside le Petit Majestic, while I'm standing there gabbing on about god knows what, I turn around and literally rub elbows with Steven Spielberg as he passes through the crowd. He was so close I could have stolen his watch.

At least I think it was him. Pastis, you know.

I may very well be the only North Carolina-based journalist in Cannes for this year's festival, and one who was turned down for press credentials at that, a fact that the festival keepers actually had on record, which I discovered when I tried to bullshit my way into a temporary press cred.

But more than 4,000 members of the press are here, from more than 1,600 media outlets, television and print, mostly. The Los Angeles Times has a banner hanging from a hotel balcony and Variety has established a beachhead in a small strip behind the Grand Hotel where they file their stories in a newsroom that an editor tells me is "private" just before bouncing me out.

And over on the patio at the Grand Hotel the journo ease in for afternoon drinks and late deadlines. A table of television folk prepare for a six-o'clock package to air in the US; a fellow laptop rattler sips a cocktail at a table on the grass and searches for that perfect word. And still, just down the lawn, the Croisette flows like a vital artery.

The paparazzi move hurriedly in small packs, many wearing rumpled and sweaty tuxedos but others looking appropriately unprofessional. Or they'll gather in flocks, perched on ladders like birds on a wire, craning for that perfect shot. Or they'll pick a spot and wait out their prey, like those TMZ guys camped out on the docks under the tent outside Diddy's yacht. Or they'll hunt alone, picking out famous faces that have strayed from the VIP rooms, from behind the velvet ropes. They'll drop to a knee and start shooting right there in the street. And invariably, within seconds, they'll be joined by fellow solitary hunters.

Perhaps in different surroundings it would seem distasteful. But no one in Cannes is here to be ignored, and the ability to attract attention is a prized talent. In fact, this is what showbiz is all about: to be able to yell, "Hey everybody, look over here!" and actually get people to pay attention to what you're doing, and hold them there for a meaningful amount of time.

This comes to me in a pastis-induced moment of epiphany, inspired by an event earlier in the day.

Down in the film market in the main chamber beneath the Palais Festival, we happen upon a trailer for a film called Ong-Bak 2 starring a guy named Tony Jaa. Jaa is the baddest, quickest, most creative martial-arts asskicker I've ever seen on film. An example: In one scene he grabs a guy's Adam's apple, twists it upside down and then cocks it like a shotgun.

We sit and watch for a while, and pretty soon a crowd gathers, and we're all like, "Ooooh!" and "Awwwwww!" and "Daaaammmm!"

Before the trailer runs its course, a guy with a sweater tied around his neck who stinks like money approaches, waving a business card in his hand and speaking in a British accent.

"Who is selling this film?"

It's all about the eyeballs.



Universal Studios Fire May Cost Tens Of Millions

LOS ANGELES -- Universal Studios tried Tuesday to put a good face on the accidental weekend fire that ripped through its back lot.

But a comparison to a previous fire in 1990 suggests the blaze could inflict tens of millions of dollars in short-term damage on corporate parent General Electric Co.

The biggest casualty was the New York streetscape set, a favorite among filmmakers who pay tens of thousands of dollars a day to cast it in blockbusters such as "Spider-Man 2" and "Transformers" along with popular TV shows.

The studio also lost its popular King Kong attraction; an undetermined number of film and music recordings; and a full day of revenue when it didn't open for visitors on Sunday.

An average of 25,000 people visit on weekend days this time of year.

The damage has not yet been tallied but will likely exceed the estimated \$25 million caused by a fire in 1990 that also destroyed the streetscape and caused minor water damage to the King Kong attraction.

Authorities initially put the size of Sunday's fire at 3.5 acres. NBC Universal spokeswoman Cindy Gardner said Tuesday the blaze approached five acres. The 1990 fire charred about three acres.

Universal has said the studio and theme park were already back to business as usual.

"We're very grateful there was no loss of life, and no serious injury," Gardner said. "It was tragic and iconic, but it can be replaced and it can be rebuilt."

Photo Double for Shia LaBeouf

Transformers 2 needs a photo double for Shia LaBeouf (5'10") This is a SAG project. Send to: tr2philadelphia@gmail.com It's Always Sunny in Philadelphia needs a stand in for Danny DeVito (4'11") This is an AFTRA project. Send to: sunnyphilly1@gmail.com Shooting for both projects is in Philadelphia in June 2008. If available, please e-mail a picture/resume to the appropriate e-mail address.

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Third Annual Carrboro Film Festival

Dear Filmmaker - Special to you: send us your films!! The Third Annual Carrboro Film Festival is now open for submissions. The first deadline is August 29th. The late deadline is Monday, September 22nd. This is the most fun, most local, standing-room-only film festival where every filmmaker gets to meet their audience.

Please point your browser at the Festival web site: <http://www.carrborofilmfestival.com> to download the 2008 revised guidelines and entry forms.

As always our only requirement is that you must have some kind of contact (breathed the air, for example) with Orange County, North Carolina. In previous years our liberal interpretation of this rule has allowed us to accept films from New Zealand, California, even Durham!! Don't miss out on the fun.

Jim McQuaid
"Registrar"
2008 Carrboro Film Festival



