

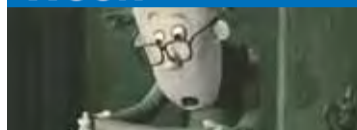
SHOOT®

THE LEADING PUBLICATION FOR COMMERCIAL, INTERACTIVE, & BRANDED CONTENT PRODUCTION

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JANUARY 27, 2006

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Super Bowl Players: HD, A-B, The Winter Olympic Games

The Big Game Continues To Be A Big Ticket Event With ABC Fetching A Record High Average Of \$2.5 Million Per 30-Second Time Slot

A *SHOOT* Staff Report DETROIT—Though it is still short of the ultimate goal line, HD is slated to gain significant yardage during Super Bowl XL in Detroit, being telecast by ABC on Feb. 5.

Yet while HD gets closer to prominence on Super Sunday, some say the Big Game is uncomfortably close to the Winter Olympics in terms of scheduling, spurring some advertisers to pull out of the former and invest in the latter. The Winter Games begin five days after the Super Bowl and run through Feb. 26 in Torino, Italy.

Nonetheless a number of Super Bowl advertising mainstays remain, including Anheuser-Busch (A-B), General Motors, PepsiCo and Federal Express. A-B has been the exclusive beer category advertiser on the Big Game for 18 years and continues as the event's biggest advertiser with a reported total of

ten :30 time slots.

And while there may be a few more Super Sunday time slots open at this late juncture than would normally be available, ABC is certainly cashing in, fetching an average of \$2.5 million per :30 seconds of ad time. That figure, if it holds, will represent an all-time high, exceeding last year's average of \$2.4 million on FOX.

HD

The Super Bowl has aired in HD since 2000. During the first several years, those watching the Big Game on HD sets might have been struck by the diminished picture quality—and borders—of most spots as compared to the high-resolution display of the game itself. Aside from a few ads shown in HD, including some feature film trailers, adver-

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SAG, WGA Stay Firm On Branded Fare

By Robert Goldrich HOLLYWOOD, Calif.—The Writers Guild of America (WGA) West and the Screen Actors Guild (SAG) are holding firm in their stance that their members should have a creative and financial stake in branded entertainment deals. However, WGA West president Patric Verrone acknowledged that television/cable networks, feature/TV studios and producers have thus far ignored the Guilds' invitation in November to enter into a dialogue on the matter. SAG and WGA West have been trying to spark negotiations on establishing a code of conduct

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Ad Plans Take Form For Dir. David Cornell

By Robert Goldrich LOS ANGELES—Director David Cornell, who at press time was wrapping the final job at longstanding production house Headquarters, is set to join Form, the Los Angeles-headquartered shop headed by executive producer Craig Rodgers and director Jesse Dylan.

Via phone, *SHOOT* reached Cornell in Australia where Headquarters' swan song assign-

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Mooney Links With Pytka, Fitzpatrick

By Robert Goldrich NEW YORK—Tom Mooney, president of Headquarters, a long-standing house which officially closes its doors at month's end (*SHOOT*, 1/13, p. 1), is teaming with director Joe Pytka and executive producer Tara Fitzpatrick of Venice, Calif.-based PYTKA to launch an as yet unnamed production house.

The new bicoastal venture—with executive producer Mooney heading the New York office, and

Fitzpatrick the West Coast shop—will operate under the PYTKA umbrella and represent up-and-coming directorial talent. Mooney said that Pytka could help to mentor the new shop's directors.

The company's prime offerings to the agency community will be a crop of promising new directors backed by world-class production facilitated by Fitzpatrick's extensive spotmaking experience. At the same time, Mooney wants the business/creative model for

the new company to be flexible enough to serve agency creatives in other ways. For one, he sees agency creative directors and creative artisans directing select projects through the company, accessing the PYTKA production infrastructure and, if they like, perhaps comparing notes with Pytka himself.

Mooney said that a growing number of agency creatives are directing projects. Many of these

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Infrastructure

Past installments of this column have focused on industry relief efforts in the wake of the devastation wrought on the Gulf Coast by Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. We covered the initiative taken by individual directors such as John O'Hagan of RSA and Matt Ogens, formerly of Headquarters. These helmers went to impacted areas, offering help and supplies. For the American Red Cross, Ogens shot video footage and still photos of the people and neighborhoods affected by the hurricanes.

SHOOT also covered the trucking in of needed supplies to the needy—with caravans organized jointly by Zoic Studios and



Backyard Productions, as well as by Janimation and Post Asylum.

In our January "Meet The Commish" column, Alex Schott, director of the Louisiana Governor's Office of Film and Television, expressed optimism that filming would play a significant role in helping the state's economy to recover.

Now further advancing those positive prospects voiced by Schott is the news that a major soundstage and production/post complex is being built on some 11-plus acres of land in Baton Rouge. The facility, the Celtic Media Centre, is scheduled to have its first phase of construction—entailing five stages, production offices and a post stu-

dio—completed during the third quarter of this year. The construction is taking place on a partial facility, which had been vacated by rapper Master P.

Key movers in the new facility are Baton Rouge-based real estate developer The Celtic Group, Nova Pictures, Baton Rouge and Los Angeles, and Hollywood-headquartered Raleigh Studios, which is billed as being the largest independent studio group in the country. Raleigh, which manages some one million square feet of studio space, is particularly well known for its stage complexes in Hollywood and Manhattan Beach, Calif., which host a mix of projects ranging from spots to longform.

Raleigh is serving as a design

consultant to the Baton Rouge facility. After it's completed, the Celtic Media Centre will be managed by Raleigh. And Raleigh's lighting company, Hollywood Rentals, is slated to supply lighting and other production resources to the Baton Rouge studio.

Michael Moore, president of Raleigh Studios, said Louisiana's major financial incentives for filming will become more accessible to commercialmakers who tap into Celtic Media Centre resources. While feature and TV producers have taken advantage of those tax credit incentives, the spot industry hasn't done so at nearly the same level. Moore hopes to help change this, noting that a producer's commercials can qualify for the Louisiana tax credit based on their cumulative

impact spanning production and post.

Beyond incentives, the Celtic Media Centre embodies another coveted "i" word, infrastructure. Each element, incentives and infrastructure, feeds off of and spurs on the other. The Baton Rouge facility is a major boost to the state's infrastructure. The development of these kinds of resources—and a skilled workforce—can translate to more filming in Louisiana, recouping in this post-Katrina era the positive effects of an industry that's been a prime contributor to the health of the state's economy.

Creative Voice

By Kristin Wilcha

TBWA/Chiat/Day's Joe Shands Discusses Nissan's VOD Fare

Nissan is delving fully into video on demand (VOD) with a series of shorts created by TBWA/Chiat/Day, Los Angeles. Presented under the Shift_Passion banner, the sponsored films celebrate the passion and dedication of football fans. Viewers can opt in to see the



Joe Shands, creative director at TBWA/Chiat/Day

films as a part of DirecTV's NFL Sunday Ticket subscription package, a subscription service that gives viewers access to all regular-season NFL games; on Mondays after the games, subscribers can view highlights of the previous day's games. Prior to those highlights starting, viewers were able to opt in and view the

who oversaw the project. "They were wonderful about this. We presented these ideas to them, and they saw the value of video on demand, and they gave us the go ahead to do something that's all about 'sponsored by.' It wasn't filled with cars; it was really about the passion for football, and the love we have for the game

Nissan content—the agency team dubbed the space vodpods. The films were also posted on www.ifilm.com, and will eventually be available on Nissan's Web site.

"I've got to give Nissan a lot of credit," stated Joe Shands, the creative director at TBWA/Chiat/Day

of football. They are one of the companies that now can claim that they're taking good advantage of video on demand, this new emerging media opportunity."

Good Vibrations, a documentary directed by Adam Forstadt and Matt Kalish of the agency's in-house production arm, focuses on the Electric Football League (EFL), a group of grown men who play electric football, a game consisting of plastic player figures who are moved about a table-top-sized field by an electric motor. Popular in the 1960s and '70s, the game has enjoyed a resurgence. The film chronicles a tournament of players, and was shot in a conference room at Los Angeles' Fox Hill Mall. *Covered In Gold*, directed by Richard Sears of Green Dot Films, Santa Monica, focuses on Chuck, a trophy model—he's the guy whose likeness can be found on everything from trophies featuring a pool player, a fisherman and even a snow-mobile enthusiast. Chuck's always had a dream though—to pose for a football trophy, feeling it would honor a sport he's loved since childhood. He even has a space on his bookshelf cleared for the day when his dream comes true. Finally, Chuck gets the call that he's needed to pose for a football trophy; the film chronicles his preparations and eventual triumph.

The third film, *Hinkleton, The Town Football Needs*, was directed by Jon Nowak, also of Green Dot. The film focuses on Peyton Fowler, the mayor of a fictional town in Iowa called Hinkleton, as he works to make his dream of having a football franchise come true. He gets the whole town behind him, coming up with an elaborate proposal

for The Silos—the team even comes up with a mascot—a top-heavy silo. Alas, it's not meant to be—Hinkleton doesn't get its team, but it's not giving up on the dream. Nissan is barely mentioned or seen in the films, except fleetingly, like in *Hinkleton*, where the mayor is seen driving along in his Nissan.

THE PROCESS

"We decided that this opportunity is not just for re-purposing already existing film or commercials," related Shands, who notes that initially Nissan and the agency filled its slots with "making of" videos of recent campaigns while they figured out what would ultimately fit there. "It really should be written to. We're asking guys who are dying to see the Dallas/Philadelphia game because they missed it on Sunday, [to before] diving into their favorite game, to click on a film and watch it, and stay with it for four minutes."

Shands noted that his team and Nissan wanted to "write things that are not ads, because guys will see that coming from the Lincoln Tunnel." Instead, they focused the project on passion for the game, which tied into Nissan's passion for a great driving experience.

"I think the guys did a great job," said Rob Schwartz, executive creative director at TBWA/Chiat/Day, who oversees the Nissan account. "I think [the films are] authentic—we're not trying to wedge irrelevant product shots. We're just trying to do something special and let the halo of the charm you're finding in the films just find its way to Nissan."

Nowak and Sears were selected to direct based on their col-

Continued on page 6

FLASHBACK

5 YEARS / 10 YEARS



5 Years Ago

□ January 26, 2001/Howard Spivey, head of TV at BMP DDB London, is leaving the ad shop to join The Comfort Zone, a London-headquartered talent representation/ad agency consultancy firm....Director Robert B. Martin, Jr., has signed with Slo.Graffiti, a satellite of Palomar Pictures, Los Angeles.... Film California First, an anti-runway production initiative that reimburses certain film-related costs incurred on qualified productions, has officially launched....The Association of Independent Commercial Producers (AICP) Show will mark its 10th anniversary with a switch in venues—rather than its traditional home at the Museum of Modern Art, which is under renovation, the Show will take place at The Metropolitan Museum of Art....

10 Years Ago

□ January 26, 1996/Directors Kevin Donovan and Josh Taft are signing with bicoastal/international Satellite Films. Donovan comes over from bicoastal Bedford Falls, while Taft shifts from his now shuttered Cowboy Films....Clint Clemens, a director/cameraman, is signing with bicoastal Johns+Gorman Films. The shop also introduces directors Rent Sidon and Brian Scott Weber to the commercial arena....Directors Jonathan Taylor and Cameron Casey are joining Bedford Falls....Bicoastal HSI Productions has partnered with two Chicago production execs, David James and Donna Daguanno, to form Neptune....

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Dir. Mark Gustafson Amps Up Animated Family Of Sports Fans

"Believe," Wieden+Kennedy's Endearing Spot For ESPN, Celebrates Eternal Optimism

By Christine Champagne

It's a rainy day in Buffalo, New York, where the Mitchell family is gathered in their drab living room to watch a Buffalo Bills game at the outset of a new stop-motion animated spot for ESPN titled "Believe" (:30). Sadly, it looks like the Bills are going to lose yet again.

But, suddenly, there is hope. The Bills make a fumble recovery that leads to a touchdown. With that, the sun comes out from behind the clouds, the inside of the Mitchell home is filled with glorious color, and the family joyously celebrates. A little boy who had been sitting on the couch curled up in a ball gets on the floor and starts spinning with delight like one of the Three Stooges; dear old grandma even gets into the act, doing the old churning butter dance. Despite her advanced age, she has some serious moves.

Unfortunately, their elation is short-lived. Within seconds, officials disallow the touchdown, and the Bills lose once again. With the team's loss comes the loss of color and joy in the Mitchell family's world.

But they had hope—at least for a little while. Part of ESPN's "Without Sports" campaign, the spot ends with the super: "Without Sports, We'd Stop Believing."

The work of creatives Scott Hayes and Eric Stevens, copywriter and art director, respectively, at Wieden+Kennedy (W+K), New York, the spot aims to—and succeeds in—depicting the dramatic highs and lows sports fans experience. "Your mood changes as your team's fortunes change," Hayes said, using his agency partner, a long-suffering Buffalo Bills fan, as an example. "Eric here is in a much better mood when the Bills are winning, but when the Bills are losing, he's kind of grumpy." (In turn, Hayes is in a much better mood when the Boston Red Sox are winning but kind of grumpy when they are on the short end of the score.)

Given the range of emotions that needed to be portrayed in "Believe," W+K chose to go the animation route, which allowed them to take advantage of color cues to underscore feelings. "Color is a quick read," Stevens remarked.

DON'T STOP BELIEVIN'

W+K put its faith in director Mark Gustafson of Laika/



[CLICK HERE TO VIEW SPOT](#)

house, Portland, Ore. to execute "Believe." Hayes noted that Gustafson "had a few things on his reel that went to a dark place, and that's where we were starting out with this."

To help Gustafson bring "Believe" to life, Laika/house executive producer Lourri Hammack surrounded him with high-profile talent—art director Nelson Lowry, who most recently art directed *Tim Burton's Corpse Bride*, and DP Eric Adkins, who was the cinematographer on *Sky Captain and the*

enhanced through the use of lighting and color timing.

Mood was also depicted through the performances of the characters, of course. "There is no dialogue in the spot, so each family member's feelings had to be expressed through body language," pointed out Gustafson, who had fun making the Mitchell family an especially demonstrative bunch during the portion of the spot where the Bills are on top.

Gustafson also peppered "Believe" with more subtle

imagery," Gustafson commented. "You have to look at the spot over and over before you see it all."

The spot is eighty-five percent stop-motion with a smattering of CGI, including the rainfall we see at the top of the spot.

SIGHTS AND SOUNDS

The sound design was also a key element of the production, offering a means for viewers to get more specifics regarding the developments in the game the family is watching. (We never actually see the TV screen during "Believe." We only see the Mitchell family's reactions to the TV.)

Lance Limbocker of Downstream, Portland, Ore. took on the task of sound design, infusing the spot's soundtrack with everything from commentator chatter to crowd sounds. Fortunately, Downstream is just down the road from Laika/house, so Limbocker and Laika/house were able to work closely. Laika/house actually sent Limbocker the cut as it evolved, allowing him to build up the track, which includes touches of music provided by Santa Monica's Endless Noise, as they went along.

All in all, the project proceeded smoothly, according to Hammack, who credited the creative team at W+K with having a clear vision of what it wanted from the start. That clear vision was particularly important given the short time-frame Laika/house was given

"There is no dialogue in the spot, so each family member's feelings had to be expressed through body language."

—Director Mark Gustafson

World of Tomorrow. Character designer Gesine Kratzner, who is perhaps best known for the Esure mouse character in the United Kingdom, also worked on the project.

Two set designs were created for the spot—one dark and gloomy, the other colorful and vibrant. The desired mood was

touches. If you look closely, you will see that some of the people that are celebrating the Bills touchdown out in the street drop to their knees when they realize that all is lost. One guy throws himself off a roof, and the mailbox slumps in defeat. "That's the fun stuff for us to come up with—that really dense

TOP SPOT OF THE WEEK

Client

ESPN

Production Company

Laika/house, Portland, Ore.

Mark Gustafson, director; Eric Adkins, DP; Nelson Lowry, art director; Gesine Kratzner, character designer; Lourri Hammack, executive producer; Paul Diener, senior producer.

Agency

Wieden+Kennedy, New York.

Todd Waterbury and Kevin Proudfoot, creative directors; Paul Renner and Derek Barnes, associate creative directors; Scott Hayes, copywriter; Eric Stevens, art director; Gary Krieg, executive producer; Jesse Wann, producer.

Post/Visual Effects

Laika/house.

Cam Williams, editor; Rex Carter, Flame artist.

Music

Endless Noise, Santa Monica.

Jeff Elmassian, creative director/composer; Andy Rehfeldt, composer; Shari Christensen, executive producer.

Sound Design/Audio

Downstream, Portland.

Lance Limbocker, sound designer/mixer.

to shoot "Believe"—only three weeks for a project that ideally would have been shot in six or seven weeks. "We threw an immense amount of resources behind this to pull it off," Hammack said, "and it shows onscreen."

THE BEST WORK YOU MAY NEVER SEE THE BEST WORK YOU MAY NEVER SEE THE BEST WORK YOU MAY NEVER SEE THE BES

Ad Agency Offers Rethink Of Protection Against HIV/AIDS

Man-In-The-Street Interviews Yield A Thesaurus Chock-full Of Private Parts

By Robert Goldrich

Consider this spot a humorous, sometimes earthy, tongue-in-cheek thesaurus of terms men have for their genitals. But rather than crude, this piece has a playful tone advancing what turns out to be a surprisingly worthwhile message.

In the style of man-in-the-street interviews, we see one guy after the next in rapid-fire succession describe the pet name he has for his private part.

"Captain Howdy," says one.

"Action Jackson," responds another.

The list is imaginatively funny, irreverent and immodest: "The Bold Avenger." "Admiral Winky." "Senor Fantastica." "Slim Jim and The Twins." "My Little Prince." "Third Leg." "Mister Wigley." "Skippy." "Kickstand." "Salty Sausage." "Chief Justice Weatherbee." "Huge."

Putting this list of offbeat synonyms into rather significant context is a super that reads, "Whatever you call it, thanks for keeping it safe."

We then see a condom packet with the AIDS Vancouver logo on it, accompanied by a Web site address, GayMenPlaySafe.com.

The sponsors of this message are then identified as AIDS Vancouver (B.C.) and a national advisory team of partner organizations working in HIV and AIDS prevention and education.

Titled "Admiral Winky," the spot is currently running in Canada. The concept came from a team at Vancouver agency Rethink, which is aptly named, providing in this case a rethink of how to raise awareness of HIV/AIDS prevention and acknowledge that a growing segment of the population is thankfully choosing to act responsibly. While humor can be risky for such a serious message, in this case it gains the attention of viewers, engaging them in a different, unexpected way.

Lena Beug of Toronto production house Reginald Pike directed the spot for Rethink. James


[CLICK HERE TO VIEW SPOT](#)


Davis and Josefina Nadurata executive produced for Reginald Pike, with Jennifer Walker serving as producer. The DP was John Houtman.

The creative ensemble at Rethink consisted of creative directors Ian Grais and Chris Staples, art director Tony Hird, writer/associate creative director Katie Ainsworth, and producer Laura Rioux.

Alan Bartolic, a Vancouver-based freelancer, edited the spot. Online editor was Rob Doucet of Cycle Media, Vancouver. Colorist was Gary Shaw of Technicolor, Vancouver. Audio post mixer was Colin Weinmaster of Wave Productions, Vancouver.

Wave Productions' Brandon Edwards and Bob Smart served as sound designer and music composer, respectively.

In addition to the spot, which is also gaining play on the Web, the campaign includes billboards, posters and print ads. The ad package was funded largely by a grant from the Public Health Agency of Canada, which supports national HIV-prevention campaigns targeting gay males.

Rethink has a track record of making an impact on this issue. Several years ago the agency was behind the noted "Arouse" campaign that used the tagline "Condom or Cocktail?" to address the then rising rate of infection among young gay men.

The principal actors were Donald Sales, Andre Taillon, Ryan Steel, Casey Manderson, Urosh Certic, Darcy Michael, Bryce Martel, Leo Chiang, Heath Whitelock, Andy Canete, Marty Gage, Steven Bidwell, Shafin Karmin, Graham Hoyer and Taylor Miller.

"Chemical Spill"

By Robert Goldrich

We open on a train wreck, with news crews scrambling to get to the nighttime scene. The story turns out to be even more harrowing when word gets out that there's been a major chemical spill.

A TV news anchor relates this breaking development to his viewers. Already a team of environmental experts has been dispatched to the area to clean up the situation. Dressed in chemical retardant suits, they begin their investigation, opening the train cars in search of the hazardous materials.

One toxic control worker is astounded to discover that the situation is even "worse than we thought." At that point, we see that a train boxcar is filled with broken open cartons of cigarettes. In the background we hear a voice deliver a laundry list of the toxins that have been released, including DDT, cyanide, arsenic and formaldehyde.

"If this stuff catches fire, it's over," assesses an environ-


[CLICK HERE TO VIEW SPOT](#)

mental expert.

An end tag slogan reads, "Cigarette smoke contains over 4,000 chemicals, many of which are deadly." Accompanying this message is a logo identifying the spot's sponsor, The Partnership For a Healthy Mississippi, and a Web site address, Generationfree.com.

"Chemical Spill," which is airing throughout Mississippi, was conceived by a creative team at Jackson, Miss.-based agency Maris, West & Baker (MWB). Marc Leffler, writer/creative director at MWB, noted that the idea from the spot came from its parting statistic about 4,000 chemicals. "So many hazardous toxins released at once, in large enough quantity, would make for a massive chemical spill," he said.

The core MWB creative team on "Chemical Spill" consisted of Leffler and art director Chris Nolen. Special effects DP Eric Swenson was selected to direct and shoot the spot, which was run through Jackson production house Krauscape Films. Monte Kraus and Philip Scarborough served as producers. The latter was also the spot's editor, with Kraus additionally serving as production designer.

Colorist was Steve Franko of Video Post & Transfer, Dallas. Sam Watson of Sound By Sam, Jackson, was sound designer/audio post mixer.

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Showstoppers

Editors behind DGA Award-nominated work discuss the process.

The Directors Guild of America (DGA) will announce the winner of the honor for best commercial director of 2005 at a ceremony on Jan. 28. The field of nominees consists of some of the most talented helmers working in the spot world. And along with their talent and dedication to their craft, these directors have worked with some of the top artisans in the field, including stellar editors.

This week, *SHOOT* surveyed the cutters behind the work that led to each director's DGA nomination. Craig Gillespie of bicoastal/international MJZ earned his nod based on four spots: Ameriquest Mortgage's "Mini Mart" and "Surprise Dinner," out of DDB Direct, Los Angeles, and Altoids' "People of Pain" and "Fable of the Fruit Bat," out of Leo Burnett USA, Chicago. Haines Hall of bicoastal Spot Welders cut the Ameriquest work, while Paul Martinez of bicoastal Lost Planet cut the Altoids spots.

Spike Jonze of MJZ was nominated on the strength of adidas' "Hello Tomorrow," out of TBWA/Chiat/Day, San Francisco, and cut by Hall; Miller's "Penguin," out of Young & Rubicam, Chicago, and edited by Stephen Berger, then of Spot Welders (he recently shifted to bicoastal Final Cut); and the Gap's "Pardon Our Dust," out of Crispin Porter + Bogusky, Miami, and edited by Final Cut's Eric Zumbrennen.

MJZ partner/director Rocky Morton was nominated for Bell South's "Kung Fu Clowns" and "Dance Fight Plumbers" out of West Wayne, Atlanta, and edited by Gavin Cutler of MacKenzie Cutler, New York; and CBS' "Take Your Work Home," out of The Martin Agency, Richmond, Va., and cut by the monomikered Katz of bicoastal Cosmo Street; and Cheese Nips' "Office," out of JWT, New York, and cut by Jason MacDonald, then of Mad River Post—he has since joined Cosmo Street.

Noam Murro of Biscuit Filmworks, Los Angeles, was nominated for Hummer H3's "Monster," out of Modernista!, Boston; Nike's "Run Barefoot" via Wieden + Kennedy, Portland, Ore.; and Orange's "Black Out," from Mother, London. Avi Oron of Bikini Edit cut all three spots.

Rupert Sanders of MJZ was singled out for adidas' "Made To Perfection," out of TBWA/Chiat/Day (the spot was done via now defunct Omaha Pictures), and "Joy" for Xbox, out of McCann Erickson, San Francisco. Neil Smith, who works via the London office of The Whitehouse cut both ads.

STEPHEN BERGER FINAL CUT, BICOASTAL

Why and how did you get into editing? Why? Because I was intrigued by it, believed I could do it and, in pursuing it, discovered that I really enjoy it. The how is a little more complicated, but to make a long story short, after several years of working on the post facility side of things, I began assisting Eric Zumbrennen at Spot Welders in June of 2000. Because of how busy and generous he was (and still is), working with him led to many opportunities to cut. It was in taking advantage of those opportunities that I discovered how much I enjoy it.

What do you think of Miller's "Penguins" leading to a DGA nomination for Spike Jonze? I'm thrilled. He clearly deserves it and it's an honor to have been a participant in a project that may help lead to the award.

Do you frequently work with him? I've had the good fortune of getting to edit with/for him several times. The first time was to cut the *Torrance Rises* documentary for his Director's Series DVD. Other projects included a short film and spots for Volvo's "Mystery Of Dalara" project, music videos for the Yeah Yeah Yeahs and Ludacris and, of course, this Miller project. From the very first project—even though I was just starting to try and build an editing career—he was extremely collaborative and trusting, which is something that helped me gain confidence early on. There's an inherent humanity to his work that's very appealing and, obviously, he's incredibly and creatively talented and insightful.

How did you get involved in this particular project? Eric

Zumbrennen was originally going to cut the whole project, but the pre-production editing wound up being more involved than anticipated—conflicting with a project Eric was finishing—and I was free to jump in. It turned out the pre-production editing was so vital to the project that Eric and Spike agreed it would be best if I saw it through. The whole campaign consisted of six, three- to five-minute Internet films (one for each of six animals) and a spot for each. I cut the six films and Eric and I each cut three spots from the films.

Are you happy with the end product?

Very happy. I'll try to avoid clichés here, but it's just so different from any-



AA032490 Iswoop/Alstair Berg/Getty Images

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Editors Talk About Their Craft, Collaboration And DGA-Nominated Work

Continued from page 12

thing that's currently being done commercially. There's naturalness to the dialogue and, especially in the films, one gets to know the nuances and charms of each character pretty well. Plus the whole campaign is very funny.

Do you think he'll win the honor? No way to know, but he deserves to win.



Stephen Berger

What's your most recent spot project? Ironically, the most recent was a combo spot of the six animals from the Miller campaign. Before that was a spot for Toyota Hybrid Synergy Drive.

What outside projects—e.g., shorts films or features or TV—have you completed in the past year? I edited an MTV special for the movie *Murderball*—kind of a *Jackass* meets *Murderball* piece (the *Jackass* guys liked the movie so much they wanted to help promote it). I also cut some short films for the "Life On Board" campaign for Volvo, which won a Titanium Lion at the Cannes International Advertising Festival, a Yeah Yeah Yeahs concert DVD, a Beck concert and another Volvo short film for their new C70. I think that's it in terms of recent projects.



Miller Lite's "Penguin"

What's the best part about being an editor? For me it's the feeling of putting the pieces together and having them work—having them flow. Getting to tell a story and hopefully, no matter what I'm working on, getting to bring out the feeling and the humanity in it. My most favorite thing may well be the air guitarist's visceral thrill I get when, during work on a music video or con-

cert, I get to make a particularly dynamic cut during a particularly dynamic musical moment (for me it's probably the next best thing to actually playing the music). Getting to do creative work is right up there as well.

What's the worst part? Waiting.

Do you have an all-time favorite ad you cut? The Miller stuff is so good, so unique. There's no way it could have been scripted or acted the way it happened. Definitely my favorite.

If you could have worked on any spot airing now, which would it be and why? I'm almost embarrassed to say that I haven't had any kind of broadcast TV in my home for over 10 years so I don't really know what's on. I do read the trades and watch reels online so I have an awareness of the highlighted work being done. Out of what I've seen—even though it's a few months old now—I'd have to say the Bacardi "No Bad Dancing" spot because it looks like it was a blast to cut.



Gavin Cutler

GAVIN CUTLER MACKENZIE CUTLER, NEW YORK

Why and how did you get into editing? I went through a film/art program in college that taught me to despise "the industry." I got a job in commercials editing as soon as I graduated.

What do you think of Bell South's "Kung Fu Clowns" and "Dance Fight Plumbers" leading to a DGA nomination for Rocky Morton? Do you frequently work with him? Naturally I think it's great for Rocky and I hope he annihilates the competition. Unless, of course, I worked



Bell South's "Dancing Plumbers"

on some of the other projects being considered in which case I would just say something vague about the fickle nature of award shows. Rocky and I have collaborated on a number of projects. He is smart and fun to work and play with. We seem to share a certain understanding of the dark side.

How did you get involved in this particular project? Are you happy with the end product? I suppose I was considered for the project because of my relationship with Rocky and Bobby Pearce (writer). But my official answer is because I am the greatest editor in history.

I was fairly happy with the end product. The client was quite nervous so there was a lot of soothing and petting from the agency to keep things on track. That seems to be the norm though since there is so much fear in advertising that if you are not seriously pushing people out of their comfort zone, you are not doing your job.

What's your most recent spot project? FedEx Super Bowl that I can't talk about and a very cinematic spot for Staples shot by that madman Thierry Poiraud.

What outside projects—e.g., shorts films or features or TV—have you completed in the past year? I did a first cut of a feature shot by Bruce Van Dusen. Someday I will pursue more long-format work but for the moment I am still having fun bound by 30 seconds.

What's the best part about being an editor? I love the creative balance between working alone and collaborating. The first cut is a very solitary effort filled with internal turmoil and agony, which I love. The ensuing collaboration I try to fill with as many laughs as humanly possible. It helps to work with great people. And not to have to deal with all the politics.

What's the worst part? I'll tell you in five years.

Do you have an all-time favorite ad you cut? Why of course the one I did for that genius Rocky Morton.

If you could have worked on any spot airing now, which would it be and why? Why wasn't I considered for "Grrr"?

HAINES HALL SPOT WELDERS, BICOASTAL

Why and how did you get into editing? In the early '90s I was hired by Propaganda Films, first as a runner and then working in the tape vault/dub room. When I was offered the job in



Haines Hall

the vault, it became this decision for me between production and postproduction. Post seemed to fit me well as I was the only person at Propaganda who knew how to set the clock on the VCR. It was a busy time for them, with directors like David Fincher and Mark Romanek making commercials and music videos like we'd never seen before. In the vault, we would watch these clips over and over. They had Calloway (tape based linear) editing bays in-house. All of these amazing editors were cutting for those directors... Jim Haygood, Robert Duffy, Scott Chestnut, John Murray, Tom Muldoon, Michael Heldman and others. It was like "on the job training" for me. I would go in to the bays at night and "re-edit" their clips just for myself. Then I began cutting directors reels, which led me to my first music videos that I edited for Paul Rachman, a great editor turned director. A couple of years later, directors like Spike Jonze, Mike Mills and Doug Aitken came along and I started working regularly for them as a freelance editor. All of these directors taught me loads about editing.



adidas' "Hello Tomorrow"

What do you think of Ameritrust Mortgage's "Mini Mart" and "Surprise Dinner" leading to a DGA nomination for Craig Gillespie and adidas' "Hello Tomorrow" getting the nod for Spike Jonze? Do you frequently work with both directors? How did you get involved in these particular projects? Are you happy with the end product? I think the Ameritrust campaign is a really smart one. The spots are really quiet and they almost don't need sound to work. Especially "Surprise Dinner." For that spot to cut through all the clamor of

the Super Bowl means it must be working. Craig is a great director. He gives you lots of coverage and options. You can tell that he comes up with great ideas/adlibs during the shoot. This was the first time I worked with Craig. Currently we are finishing another round of Ameritrust spots for the Super Bowl following the same format that are equally as funny and effective.

The adidas spot just seemed to be entirely new territory for advertising. It's one of those spots that you can watch over and over without getting bored. When Spike does an ad, he brings so much of himself to the whole project, right from the beginning. I have worked with Spike since those early days at Propaganda/Satellite. He always brings something unique and different. I am very proud of both of these projects.

What's your most recent spot project? What outside projects—e.g., shorts films or features or TV—have you completed in the past year? Along with the Ameritrust campaign for this year's Super Bowl, I have just finished a couple of spots with Stacy Wall for Nike ("LeBrons"), and Dish Network. In 2005 The film *Thumbsucker*, directed by Mike Mills was released. I co-edited that film with Angus Wall. I am also working on a really interesting documentary about donated bicycles shipped to Ghana to help communities with transportation issues. Earlier in 2005 I edited a multiple screen video installation for Doug Aitken. I have done several of these over the years. These installations are always challenging in that we have none of the usual "rules" for traditional narrative projects. The "story" is often told on multiple screens simultaneously. And the architecture of the installation is often developed as we edit so that the two work together.

What's the best part about being an editor? All the glamour and the hot girls.

What's the worst part? All the glamour and the hot girls.

Do you have an all-time favorite ad you cut? That is a really hard question. I can't say I have a favorite but Dewey Nicks directed a spot for Ameritrust called "Let's Light This Candle" a few years back that was really fun to cut. The main actor was genius and ad-libbed his way through most of the takes.

If you could have worked on any spot airing now, which would it be and why? I don't know who did it but I really like the Lexus ad that works as a split screen until the end when the



Katz

split becomes one full image of the car. I can watch that one over and over.

**KATZ
COSMO STREET,
BICOASTAL**

Why and how did you get into editing? I started to edit because I needed to survive and it was the only option I had at the time. When I first arrived to L.A., I was broke, without a job, could not speak English and did not have a work permit. I had a few silly jobs and one of them was teaching to play the piano to kids. The mother of



CLICK HERE TO VIEW SPOT

CBS' "Take Your Work Home"

a student was a costume designer and asked me if I could help her find music for a reel. One thing leading to another I ended up re-cutting the whole thing with two 3/4-inch decks and a lot of luck. She showed her reel around, and next thing you know, I am the new guy who cuts reels in town. From reels to music video and then onto commercials, here I am.

What do you think of CBS' "Take Your Work Home" for CSI leading to a DGA nomination for Rocky Morton? Without a doubt this spot crystallizes Rocky's humor, amazing sense of story telling and mastery of camera work.

Do you frequently work with him? Yes. I have been working with Rocky for several years.

How did you get involved in this particular project? Because Rocky suggested to the agency that I work with them.

Are you happy with the end product? I am extremely proud of the result. The :60 is very cinematic and intriguing. I am surprised that the spot aired the way Rocky conceived it—I thought the subject matter would have been too shocking for our censors. I was so sure it would not air that I made a bet with the agency

that if they play the 60: on TV, I'd wear a dress to work—well, I looked great in violet!

Do you think he'll win the honor? He is one of the very best. I don't see why he would not get this honor.

What's your most recent spot project? Coke, UPS, Chevy...

What outside projects—e.g., shorts films or features or TV—have you completed in the past year? A feature called *Greener Mountains*, directed by Lee Shallot Chermal.

What's the best part about being an editor? The glory.

What's the worst part? Paparazzi.

Do you have an all-time favorite ad you cut? The first one I ever cut. It was such an achievement at the time. It's like your first love—how can you ever forget?

If you could have worked on any spot airing now, which would it be and why? I wish you could ask me the question again after the Super-Bowl.

**JASON MACDONALD
COSMO STREET,
BICOASTAL**

Why and how did you get into editing? My mother told me I lacked direction. She was right.

What do you think of Cheese Nips "Office" leading to a DGA nomination for Rocky Morton? I think it is very well deserved. The spot turned out great. All of his spots turn out great.

Do you frequently work with him? First time, and hopefully not the last.

How did you get involved in this particular project? Through the agency, JWT.

Are you happy with the end product? Very. It turned out to be very funny, and Rocky's timing was perfect.



Jason MacDonald

Do you think he'll win the honor? That's a very tough question. He's up against some great talent, but he's a great talent, so it's hard to say. I wish him the best of luck.

What's your most recent spot project? Radio Shack with Kevin Thomas. Avis with Matt Aselton. Nationwide with Kinka Usher.

What outside projects—e.g., shorts films or features or TV—have you completed in the past year? I made a home movie with my girlfriend.



CLICK HERE TO VIEW SPOT

Cheese Nips' "Office"

What's the best part about being an editor? If you must work, may as well do something that's fun. I think editing funny spots is fun.

What's the worst part? It is work after all.

Do you have an all-time favorite ad you cut? Target with Heidi Klum and Darth Vader. It's one shot.

If you could have worked on any spot airing now, which would it be and why? "Ernie the Kletpo." It's brilliant. So funny, I can watch it over and over again.

**PAUL MARTINEZ
LOST PLANET, BICOASTAL**

Why and how did you get into editing? My interest in photography led me to study film in college where after cutting my first student project I decided I wanted spend the rest of my life in a dark room. My first job in the industry was as a production assistant at Lorimar Television. I used to come in before work and hang out with a couple editors who had been in TV and movie editorial for 50 years, and watch them work on the last years of *Dallas*. I got a break as an apprentice editor, and went on to work as an assistant on various motion pictures—*Braveheart*, *The Horse Whisperer*, *U Turn*. I would eventually work with Hank Corwin, who gave me the opportunity to enter the madness of commercial editing.

What do you think of Altoids "People of Pain" and "Fable of the Fruit Bat" leading to a DGA nomination for Craig Gillespie? Do you frequently work with him? How did you get involved in this particular project? Are

you happy with the end product? Do you think he'll win the honor? This is the second package that I had cut with the Altoids team. I had just previously finished another package for Toyota that Craig had directed and was fortunate to be able to work with what I like to call an editor's director. Craig's shoots are so well thought out, and he completely understands the best way, editorially, to tell a story. In short, his film cuts like butter—make that butter with a hot cleaver.

I love the sepia look of the film that Craig decided on and the old documentary-style music that is reminiscent of the *Mutual of Omaha's Wild Kingdom* where Marlin Perkins' assistant Jim would be in some ridiculously dangerous situation while this melancholy scratchy music played in the background. I must say that "Fruit Bat" only has one edit in it (like some of my best work) because Craig had amazingly nailed the performance, camera move, practical rigging and product display in two shots. I still laugh when I see these spots. I mean, after all what can be more funny than a guy getting kicked in the nuts? Except maybe two guys getting kicked in the nuts.

What's your most recent spot project? A Goldfrap video, "Ride A White Horse," lensed by director Diane Martel.

What if any outside projects have you completed in the past year? I do quite a few music videos with Diane Martel. The most memorable one of late was for Franz Ferdinand where they make a mockery of an installation art exhibit (a must see for you art lovers). I also edited *Everything In This Country Must*, a short film that was directed by Gary McKendry and nominated for an Academy Award last year.

What's the best part about being an editor? Having the ability to emotionally connect with a viewer by how you edit a story. And being able to collaborate with creative people.

What's the worst part? Missing the opportunity to connect with a viewer by how you edit a story. And not being home enough.

Do you have an all time favorite cut? I have more than one favorite, and I edit many different genres that are hard to compare. The Altoids stuff is always a favorite. Most recently the Ali G spots for TNT were a favorite because working with Sacha Baron Cohen (Ali G) and all the guys from Spike/DDB was a great collaborative experience. And I think that Sacha is truly a comedic genius. I also like the cut on the Adidas MLS spot "Night Practice." That was a great collaboration with Kinka Usher and the gang from TBWA/Chiat/Day, San Francisco and 180.



Paul Martinez

Also, anytime I work with Chuck McBride, I usually take away something creatively that I can use in my storytelling as an editor. He is amazing editorially and that MLS spot was no exception. Not to mention I get more material for my Chuck impression.

If you could work on any spot airing now what would it be? There are two spots for Vans that I recently saw, one titled "AM," one titled "PM." The film and the edit were very raw unlike most spots you see. I thought that the edit was great however so I don't think I could have improved it.



CLICK HERE TO VIEW SPOT

Altoid's "People of Pain"

**AVI ORON
BIKINI EDIT, NEW YORK**

Why and how did you get into editing? The Israeli Air Force didn't accept me because I didn't have perfect 20/20 vision, so I decided to take up editing.

What do you think of Nike's "Barefoot Runner," Hummer H3's "Monsters" and Orange's "Black Out" leading to a DGA nomination for Noam Murro? Nike's "Barefoot": in a remake there's always a risk that you are going to make yourself look bad. On this visual spot the added value comes from the subtlety of the execution both in the shoot and post. The end of course has a nice creative twist.

Hummer's "Monster": the challenge on a very complex effects spot was to keep the biggest assets of the spot: the storytelling, the humanity and emotion of the monsters—and to use the visual effects in a very nonchalant way to be the background for the story.

Orange's "Black Out": the story of the 2003 New York blackout. With nine hours of dailies from multiple cameras with hundreds of heroes of extremely well shot film. The challenge was to tell the real

Cutting Remarks From The Editors Behind The DGA Award Nominees

Continued from page 14

story of the blackout in only 60 seconds. We were lucky, I guess.

Do you frequently work with him? Noam and myself go way back working together—I work on almost every job of his.



Avi Oron

How did you get involved in these particular projects? Are you happy with the end products? We are very fortunate to be involved in high-creative boards that come from the agency. Our job is to guard it. Most of the time we are very lucky and very happy with the end results.

Do you think he'll win the honor? I don't know who will win. What I know is that he is extremely talented.

What's your most recent spot project? Adidas and Disney with TBWA/Chiat/Day, San Francisco, and American Express with Ogilvy & Mather, New York.

What outside projects—e.g., shorts films or features or TV—have you completed in the past year? We've been approached for some feature work, but as of now we are still waiting for the right one.

What's the best part about being an editor? The challenge of finding different ways to make any spot an interesting one. I believe in presenting different versions to the agency as a result of finding unplanned found footage that sparks new ideas.

What's the worst part? Client revisions (we all love those, don't we?).

Do you have an all-time favorite ad you cut? Got Milk's "Birthday"



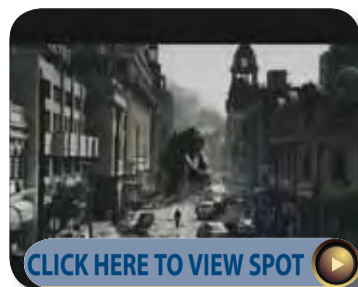
"Black Out"

If you could have worked on any spot airing now, which would it be and why? Spots for Volkswagen, Burger King and Intel—I think they have great creative ideas with enormous potential and opportunity in the editorial execution.

NEIL SMITH WHITEHOUSE, LONDON

Why and how did you get into editing? I started, like most people in this profession, by being a runner at an editing company. Making tea, stacking toilet rolls and getting people sushi lunches. Then moving up to be an assistant editor, when I had proved my self to be not too annoying. It was a bit like an old fashioned apprenticeship, learning a craft on the job from someone who in turn had learnt their craft in a similar way. To be honest, it is also a bit of a test to see how much stamina and staying power you have—a test to see if you can put up with long hours and demanding clients, later on in life.

I got into editing because I love making things in a dark room all by myself. Have done since I was a child. I would spend hours making little models inside shoeboxes upstairs in my bedroom, then taking them downstairs to show my usually completely disinterested parents. I also have a theater background studying drama at University. I had never really wanted to be an actor, I only did it because people said I was good at it, and there weren't many things people used to say that to me about. I acted right up to the point when I realized I wasn't nearly as pushy or talented to make it. Editing seemed to be a good use of my instinctive dramatic sympathies combined with a patience and love of crafting things. There is something very intimate and involving about editing, the way you can dramatically affect a narrative in the space of a few minutes, with a few changes of shots or music or picture order. It is a strange mix of interpreting others' visions and adding your own. You can't define where the boundaries are—you just have to trust your instinct. I also love the range of it as well. From subtle, almost infinitesimal nuanced changes to huge dramatic 'swap the front with the end' ones. The depressing bit is when you see a truly wonderful idea ruined by either politics that have nothing to do with making the best spot or endless petty changes that take away the initial delight and freshness.



X-Box's "Joy"

What do you think of adidas' "Made To Perfection" and Xbox's "Joy" leading to a DGA nomination for Rupert Sanders? Do you frequently work with him? Do you think he'll win the honor?

I am obviously delighted for Rupert, although being from London, I confess I don't really understand what it signifies. Rupert and I have worked together for years, both starting out at roughly the same time. Our two careers have pretty much grown in sync. It is very rewarding when you develop creative partnerships. The lack of tension encourages honesty and adventurousness. Because trust is there you can be very free creatively. Free to try things, which may turn out to be rubbish without worrying about being misinterpreted as a fool. To be honest you must take this approach whatever the relationship, but it is more comfortable when the lines of communication are well established.



Neil Smith

How did you get involved in this particular project? Are you happy with the end product?

I got involved with both spots because Rupert very kindly asked me to, and the agencies very kindly didn't object. Sometimes American creative teams are a little wary if the U.K director wants to involve his regular U.K editor. I guess the fear is that they won't have any control in the edit room, but really the control should lie with whoever has the best idea, from whatever quarter it comes. It is a collaborative medium after all. Ultimate control will always rest with the client because they foot the bill. However, we all know really the final say will be with the audience.

I think they both nominated spots work for different reasons. Xbox is epic in feel and has a quite curious ending, in that it doesn't attempt to answer any questions. The world the kid enters just is—there is no attempt to formulate a logic behind what he does or why things are happening. I really like that about it. What he encounters is quite anarchic really and he and the spot are entirely comfortable with that.

Adidas is simpler in a way. The narrative unfolds and the pleasure is in the cinematic telling of the story. It is quite refreshing to see a basketball-based commercial that doesn't feel the need to do a skills demonstration.

If you could have worked on any spot airing now, which would it be and why? There seems to have been a bit of an upswing in creativity this last year, with a number of really brilliant ads. Honda keep on coming up with the goods, the latest one with the choir making the cars noises is a delight. Smirnoff 'Distillation' is another that springs to mind. Clever, simple, and beautifully put together. Sony "Balls" was also refreshing in its simplicity. Any ad which talks to you in an intelligent way, is not afraid to demand a bit of thinking or emotion from the viewer and avoids the need to be aspirational will always get my vote.

ERIC ZUMBRUNNEN FINAL CUT, BICOASTAL

Why and how did you get into editing? I fell into it and never climbed out. I got a job in an online facility after college and worked my way up to doing offline. At one point I was a runner dropping tapes off at a facility and while waiting for something I was listening to someone in one of the edit bays repeat a short section of dialogue over and over. I remember thinking, "Who would want to do that all day?"

What do you think of Gap's "Dust" leading to a DGA nomination for Spike Jonze?

He deserves it. Even though the spot brims with destruction, it doesn't bludgeon you. There's



Eric Zumbrunnen



The Gap's "Pardon Our Dust"

a deftness and humor that Spike brings to something like this. He can shoot a car crashing through the window of a store and make it exciting, surprising and funny at the same time. My nose is a dark chocolaty brown right now.

Do you frequently work with him? Yes. With a few notable exceptions I've done the majority of his stuff from commercials to music videos to feature films for the last 12 years.

How did you get involved in this particular project? Vince Landay, Spike's longtime producer, told me about it.

Are you happy with the end product? I think it turned out very well. It has mayhem, destruction, a car crash, a lumberjack and a dog. What more could you want?

Do you think he'll win the honor? I hope so, but I've also worked with Craig [Gillespie] and Rocky [Morton] (not on their nominated stuff) so I'd be happy if they won.

What's your most recent spot project? A Coca-Cola campaign directed by Lance Acord that I've co-edited with JD Smyth.

What outside projects—e.g., shorts films or features or TV—have you completed in the past year? None. The past year has been all about spots.

What's the best part about being an editor? How much you can shape the final piece through your efforts. And it's fun.

What's the worst part? That seems negative. I'd rather be positive. It's more fun to be positive.

Do you have an all-time favorite ad you cut? Honestly, it's hard to pick one. Gap's "Dust," Ikea's "Lamp," adidas "Laila," and Levi's "Doctors" are four off the top of my head that I like.

If you could have worked on any spot airing now, which would it be and why? I hardly watch TV so I'm not that up-to-date on what's out there. I suppose I should do my homework.



Hollywood Is Ape Over Oz and New Zealand

By Carolyn Giardina

The Asia Pacific region that encompasses Australia and New Zealand continues to grow as a hot spot for production of big budget feature films—and commercials.

Peter Jackson's *The Lord of the Rings* put New Zealand front and center on the Hollywood map a few years back, and the region remains there thanks to a steady stream of successful features including Jackson's latest, Universal's *King Kong*; as well as Walt Disney Pictures and Walden Media's *The Chronicles of Narnia: The Lion, The Witch, and The Wardrobe*, directed by Andrew Adamson, which used New Zealand locations and stages for production.

"The film business is primarily a business, and the studios are looking to maximize their dollar," says Bruce Carter, creative director at Sydney, Australia-based post and visual effects house Animal Logic, which also maintains an office in Venice, Calif. "But we can't rely on economics. Every project we pitch on our creative credentials. That's really important."

Carter and others interviewed for this story emphasize that the region also offers a mature industry and infrastructure. "Studios can get high quality work here, for good value," Carter says.

Helping this along, Carter relates, is the commercial industry. Here it is not uncommon to work on both features and spots. "There is an active cross pollination; even tools developed on films may be used the next week on a commercial. And commercials can have a very experienced film crew. That cross pollination is very important and very active. We are also English speaking, have a great climate, [locations], and all of that factors in," he adds.

King Kong senior visual effects supervisor Joe Letteri adds that commercials also get to take advantage of efficient and developed feature pipelines, a plus for the spot industry's tighter production schedules.

Letteri also identifies broadband as an important factor in that it enables work to be sent quickly to other countries for review and approval. He reports that Wellington, N.Z.-based post/visual effects company WETA Digital, his current roost, wrote a software program called Remote Player that is used to allow two sites to watch work simultaneously. Animal Logic also developed a proprietary review and approval system.

London-headquartered Sohonet offers connectivity at multiple sites in both Australia and New Zealand, and reports that as a whole, this service experiences frequent use for international productions.

WETA

With its work on *The Lord of the Rings* and *King Kong*, WETA Digital has made a strong name for itself, and Letteri reports that things remain busy at WETA.

"We always get a lot of inquiries about commercials," he says, adding that the company can especially accommodate a lot of spot work when it is between major features. This is one of those times; WETA is currently busy with multiple commercial assignments for clients in the U.S. and U.K., among other markets, as well as some feature work, including a sequence for *X-Men 3*, scheduled for a May release by 20th Century Fox, directed by Brett Ratner and starring Hugh Jackman, Patrick Stewart, Ian McKellen and Halle Berry. Letteri predicts that WETA's next big feature project will be *Halo*, a feature that Jackson plans to produce; he has not yet named a helmer.

"Peter Jackson will consistently produce big products of interest," Animal Logic's Carter relates. "That helps this region very much. Alongside that is the east coast of Australia, Fox Studios in Sydney, Warners in Brisbane, and Docklands in Melbourne. Across those three cities, there are soundstages and crews. There's a real maturity across the board. I would expect the trend of large films being made down here to continue... at least that's what we are hoping."

In 2006, one can also expect a steady stream of discussion about Australian film production. Highly anticipated *Superman Returns*, scheduled for a June release by Warner Bros., starring Brandon Routh and

Kate Bosworth, is being lensed in Oz and is already generating a lot of interest.

Meanwhile, Animal Logic is producing its first fully-CG animated feature, *Happy Feet*, which is scheduled for a November '06 release by Warner Bros. Feature Distribution and features the voices of Elijah Wood and Brittany Murphy.

Animal Logic has produced effects for features including *Stealth*, *House of Flying Daggers*, *Hero* and *Moulin Rouge* and is also a busy commercial house that has been making news in recent months for its effects work on Carlton Draft's "Big Ad," directed by Paul Middleditch of Sydney-based Plaza Films and created by agency George Patterson Partners in Melbourne. "Big Ad" features digital crowds of thousands on a sweeping landscape, and has already garnered advertising awards including two Gold Sharks at the 43rd annual Shark Awards, held in Ennis, Ireland (*SHOOT*, 9/23/05, p. 1).

"Our journey is a familiar one for a mature company in the advertising industry; it expanded and took on visual effects work in the features," says Carter. To accommodate production of *Happy Feet*, he explains that Animal Logic restructured to offer a separate animation division and visual effects unit.

The company currently has roughly 430 employees, just under half in animation. That pipeline is built around primarily Maya (which was acquired earlier this month by Autodesk Media & Entertainment) and Avid's Softimage XSI.

Happy Feet actually began thanks to a relationship with the animated feature's director, George Miller, a resident of Australia and with whom Animal Logic previously worked on *Babe: Pig in the City*.

"Miller had been developing the film with Warner Bros. and we have a good relationship," relates Carter. "We did testing and a proof of concept...eventually that turned into a film [project]."

PIONEERING DI

New Zealand and Australia have also found themselves on the map as pioneers in the Digital Intermediate (DI) process, which has fast taken hold in feature post. DI is the process of transferring film to data for all post including color timing to form a digital master, which is used to create the film deliverables. The key DI houses in the region currently include WETA; Sydney and Melbourne-based Digital Pictures; Auckland-based Oktober; and Atlab in Auckland, Sydney, Melbourne, and the Gold Coast.

One of the early projects to employ DI technology was *The Lord of the Rings*. Here, Jackson's team used a digital color grading system based on Colorfront technology, which was since acquired by Autodesk Media & Entertainment and is the heart of its Discreet Lustre color grading software. Lustre was used to grade *King Kong*.

"*The Lord of the Rings* definitely required DI; it warranted this otherworldly feel. DI helped create that sense of somewhere else," recalls *King Kong* supervising colorist Dave Cole, who has worked in New Zealand and Australia, at companies including WETA, Digital Pictures and Oktober. "People were not afraid to get in and start building momentum on something that seemed to be the way films were going to be handled in the not-too-distant future."

Cole explains that during production of *King Kong*, his team stayed on top of technical developments as color grading tools are currently evolving at a fast pace. He noted that as Lustre's features matured, the *King Kong* team switched to a newer software version during the course of the production.

Looking back on how DI has developed in its short life, Cole sees how the Australia/New Zealand region became a leader. "There was an eagerness not to be left behind," he says. "And everyone wore multiple hats [on a production], and so it didn't need a crew of 50. In pioneering days, that's good"

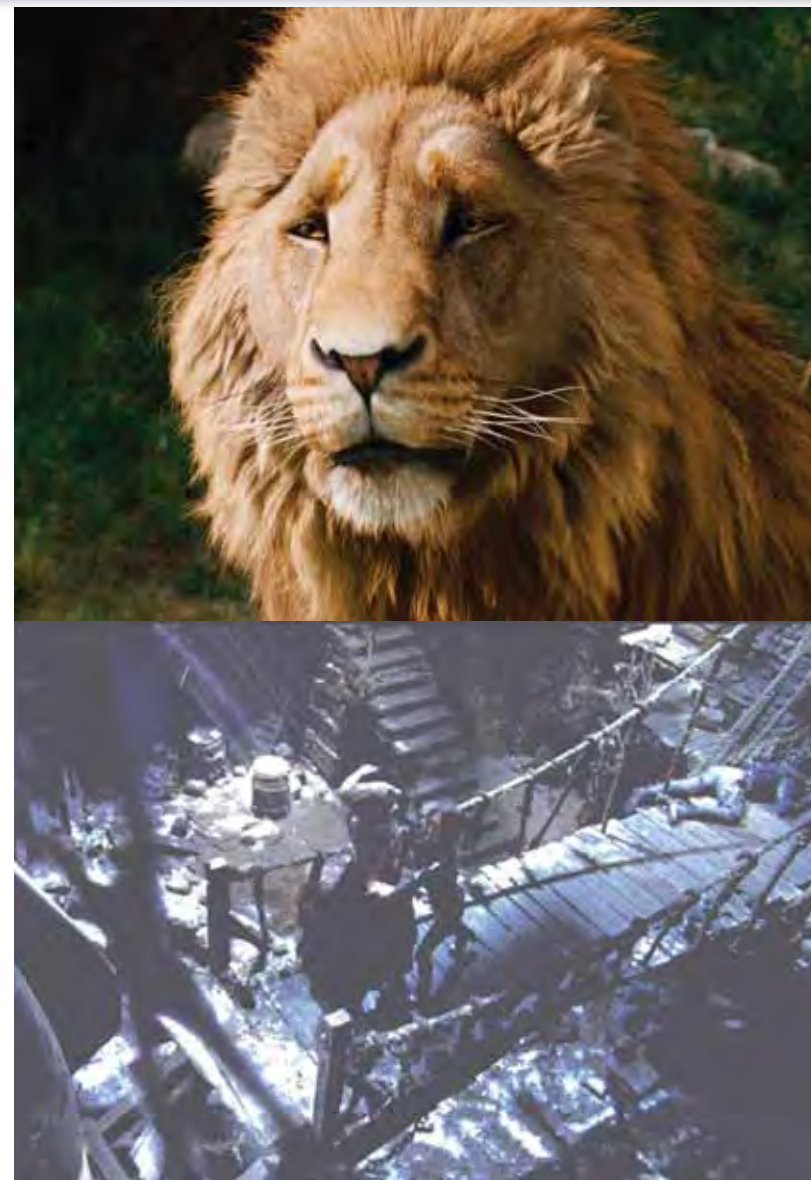


King Kong 2005. Universal Studios. All rights reserved. Image courtesy of WETA Digital Ltd./Universal Studios. Australia location images courtesy of AusFilm.

Chronicles Of Feature And Spot VFX

An increasing number of visual effects houses also have a hand in high-profile theatrical work.

By Carolyn Giardina



Last weekend, the Visual Effects Society (VES) held its annual Show and Tell, featuring some of the work nominated for its annual VES Awards, which this year will be staged Feb. 15 at the Hollywood Palladium.

These presenters, coupled with news from additional visual effects houses, underscore the commercial industry's significant involvement in feature visual effects production.

All interviewed for this article agree that developing technology and processes are an enabler, allowing them to work more efficiently, faster, and with more creative options. Many also agree that with feature productions employing more and complex visual effects, they are also splitting the work among many houses, meaning that more boutiques can get involved in these jobs. And as always, sources emphasize that the assignments still always come back to talent.

Dennis Murren, eight-time Academy Award winner and visual effects supervisor at San Francisco-based Industrial Light + Magic (ILM), opines that the trend of using many visual effects houses for a large effects film will continue. "What is driving this is competition for price," he says, adding that it also adds a level of security, as a production is not tied to one house if a problem develops with a vendor.

Among the films up for the coveted prize for outstanding visual effects in an effects-driven film is Walt Disney Pictures and Walden Media's *The Chronicles of Narnia: The Lion, The Witch, and The Wardrobe*, directed by Andrew Adamson. This is a great example of a collaboration between multiple houses.

The film features 1,617 effects shots shared primarily by Los Angeles-based Rhythm & Hues, Culver City-based Sony Picture Imageworks, and ILM.

With a production of this magnitude, Bill Westenhofer, R&H's visual effects supervisor on *Narnia*, relates that an efficient pipeline was key to supporting R&H's 400-strong effects team. "The pipeline we set up was as important as the aesthetics side," he says.

One of the film's challenges was the creation of many digital characters. This included Aslan the lion, who is the central character, as well as Mr. and Mrs. Beaver, Mr. Fox, wolves Maugrim and Vardin, the faun Mr. Tumnus, the centaur Oriues, the minotaur Otmin, as well as bears, cheetahs, cyclops, hawks, leopards, tigers, unicorns and more.

The complex Aslan was created by R&H, and is up for the VES Award for outstanding animated character in a live action film. Development of Aslan lasted two years. Aslan's rig utilized processes including a muscle system, dynamically driven skin shake, compression-based wrinkles, blend shapes and a dynamics-driven mane.

Among the innovations was a process to control muscle firing. Character riggers wrote software that would analyze Aslan's motion over time and properly fire the muscle in anticipation of actions and relax them when the character came to a stop.

The team studied pictures and video clips of lion behavior, and even spent a day with a caged lion. Meanwhile the performance was modeled after Gregory Peck's Atticus Finch from *To Kill a Mockingbird*, using frames of emotional expressions as the basis for the lion's expressions.

Since several of the key digital characters were created at a sole vendor, there were instances where two or three of the facilities would have to work on the same shot. In the end, the production had to coordinate over 100 shared shots between the three lead facilities. Six of the shots in the film were worked on by all three houses.

Representatives from the three effects houses met with director Adamson's team to determine who would be responsible for scanning and completing each shot. They also worked together on compatibility issues.

R&H additionally played a key role in realizing the film's climactic battle scene, featuring Aslan's 5,000 combatants against the White Witch's 20,000-strong army. The sequence was achieved with motion capture and Massive, the artificial intelligence-based software used for crowd replication and developed for the production of *The Lord of the Rings*. In the commercial world, it was most famously deployed in a commercial by The Mill, London and New York, on Sony PlayStation's "Mountain"—created by TBWA, London, and directed by Frank Budgen of London-based Gorgeous—which went on to win the 2004 Cannes Grand Prix and a string of accolades. The spot concluded with a memorable shot of 146,000 digital actors forming a "mountain" of people in the center of a city. (Budgen works stateside through bicoastal Anonymous Content.)

"Massive allows [digital] characters to be able to come really close to the camera," says Westenhofer, adding that *Narnia* was his first outing with Massive. "We could bring the Massive characters immediately behind the hero characters."

R&H executive producer Paul Babb expects that *Narnia* will have an impact on the overall reputation of R&H, both for features and

The Chronicles of Narnia: The Lion, The Witch, and The Wardrobe, with effects by Rhythm & Hues; *Serenity*, with effects by Zoic Studios, and *Underworld: Evolution*, with effects by Ntropic.

Continued on next page

17-Chronicles of Feature and Spot VFX 18-A Matter of Trust

A Matter of Trust

VES spot nominees discuss their work and relationship with the director.

By Carolyn Giardina

Next month, the Visual Effects Society (VES) will stage its fourth annual VES Awards, which will be held at the Hollywood Palladium. And looking back at the history of the category for outstanding visual effects in a commercial, a trend has taken hold.

Including its two current nominations, Framestore-CFC, London and New York, has already earned a total of five spot nominations in recent years—all of which were directed by Daniel Kleinman, who currently maintains his London-based Kleinman Productions. Also making a consistent showing has been Venice, Calif.-based Digital Domain (DD) with a total of four spot nominations, including one this year, and all were directed by David Fincher of bicoastal Anonymous Content.

This year's commercial nominees are: William Bartlett, Scott Griffin, Jake Mengers, and Andrew Boyd for Framestore's SUV safety ad "Keep it on all Fours"; Bartlett, Griffin, Boyd and Dan Seddon for Framestore's Guinness spot "noitulovE"; and Eric Barba, Lisa Beroud, Janelle Croshaw and Greg Teegarden for DD's Motorola "PEBL" commercial.

In addition to this year's work, Kleinman also directed Framestore's prior VES wins in the commercials category: XBOX's "Mosquito" in 2003 and Johnnie Walker's "Fish" in 2004, as well as last year's nominee, Johnnie Walker's "Tree." And Fincher also helmed previous DD commercial category nominees, Adidas' "Mechanical Legs," "Nike Gamebreakers," and Nike's "Speed Chain."

Representatives from Framestore and DD say that the consistency with these directors is about a great relationship and the directors' willingness to take risks.

"David [Fincher] tends to be on the bleeding edge, and those [are the spots that] tend to

stand out," says DD nominee and visual effects supervisor Barba. "David has the eye, has great ideas, picks the right creative, and allows us to do new and cool things. He is not afraid to push the envelope."

"We have had a team working with him for the last four years, since 'Mechanical Legs,'" Barba continues. "We are in a groove. We know when he expects, and he has confidence in us. He is driving us forward... We do the planning, pre-vis and execution with him."

Framestore nominee and head of 3D commercials Boyd had similar observations about his company's relationship with Kleinman. "He wins great projects to begin with...and he doesn't take the safe route," he relates. "He is purely interested in a good looking picture, and he trusts us a lot to come up with things."

"He also comes up with a vision and sticks with it, so you are always maximizing your efforts," Boyd adds. "And he has the ability to look at work in process and appreciate the information that is there and comment on it."

Like DD and Fincher, Kleinman and Framestore share a long-time relationship, and Boyd agrees that this is a plus.

Together, Kleinman and Framestore have created spots of increasing complexity. Boyd says the biggest challenge is time, noting that a production schedule for a commercial could be 14 weeks where a feature could be 18 months. "Clients expect the same quality for both," he explains. "[In a commercial] there's less room for error and you have to be more clever about how you go about it. The standard has become so high, so it's a big factor."

"We have a very strong technical team," he adds. "A lot of it is about developing technology that you can reuse."

Time was certainly the key to the three-and-a-half month schedule for "NoitulovE," created by London's AMV BBDO, which essentially starts at the end, as it were, with three men in a bar raising their pints and enjoying their first sip of Guinness. The men move in backwards-motion out of the bar and into the street. Scenes continue to shift backward and down the evolutionary chain where viewers see prehistoric flightless bird creatures, tiny dinosaurs, and finally mudskippers.

Boyd points out that each shot featured a different creature and a different set of problems. "Everything we developed was for one shot, and then we had to develop something else for the next shot."

This included a total of 15 CG creatures, as well as trees, grasslands, rivers, waterfalls, a meteorite and millions of year's worth of geological transition. "There was such a huge amount of work to do," Boyd says. "We started by dividing the 3D team into two groups—one to handle creatures, the other for all the rest."

Framestore's second nomination, from BBH, New York, featured a rodeo scene where competitors ride strange CG beasts called "Esuvees"—creatures intended to personify the spirit of the vehicles. Over 50 shots of the long-haired creatures were completed in three months.

Boyd says the biggest challenge was the creature's hair and fur. The Esuvee's coat is bison-esque, with both thick hair and areas of shorter fur. Nominee and senior technical director Mengers explains, "The fur is not so much of a problem these days—CG has pretty much come to grips with it. But long hair? That's still a real



commercials. "It hasn't changed the business yet, but people look at us in different way. [Before *Narnia*] some [only] saw us as the talking animals company... Now we are bidding on projects that we probably would not have been included in if not for this movie."

R&H is one of the larger commercial effects companies, so it has the R&D resources, talent and tools to support feature work. But these days, small and medium sized effects houses are also playing in the theatrical world.

For instance, Zoic Studios in Culver City recently completed roughly 220 shots for Universal Pictures' *Serenity*, a Joss Whedon film. And currently, it is finishing 12 spots for Cadillac, via Leo Burnett Detroit and directed by Sean Thonson of bicoastal/international MJZ. Zoic creative director/partner Loni Peristere noted that the spots had a "very fast turnaround, and one sequence required completely virtual backgrounds; we used technology developed to create virtual background for *Serenity*."

Peristere says that companies of Zoic's size (roughly 125) can now "develop proprietary and innovative tools that push the art of animation forward that can't be developed in a [smaller] boutique." But he points out that more advanced off-the-shelf software also enables talented individuals at boutiques to participate in feature production.

Also carrying a theme from the *Narnia* production, Peristere adds that communication is vital. "We have used video conferencing and share networks and shared dailies Faster bandwidth also really helps [create a] review process that is unique and unified; you can be in Australia and working with six different houses."

Also working on features is the likes of San Francisco and Santa Monica-based effects and production house Ntropic, a boutique of 18 employees whose feature credits include *The Matrix Revolutions*, as well as commercials for such clients as Nissan, Mercedes, Coca-Cola and Kohls.

Ntropic's most recent feature is *Underworld: Evolution*, the latest installment from director Len Wiseman, starring Kate Beckinsale, which was released last week by Screen Gems for Sony Pictures Entertainment and Lakeshore Entertainment, and opened number one at the box office. The film features roughly 500 effects shots; for 90 of them Wiseman returned to Ntropic, where he previously worked with creative director and senior visual effects supervisor Nathan Robinson and his team on *Underworld* in 2003.

Lead by visual effects supervisors Robinson and Andrew Sinagra, Ntropic's work is largely a combination of CG and 2D effects.

Robinson says his company benefits from the fact that "technology has gotten faster, the cost of storage has gone down, and rendering power is increasing. He adds that the digital intermediate process is also prompting some new advantages. "We used to do a filmout to see a comp; we didn't do that on *Underworld: Evolution*," he explains. "We cut that process out of budget. Now with DI, there's more latitude to tweak stuff."

In general, "the methodology allows us to get the product done faster," he says, adding that this is also important on the commercial side of the equation due to the tight production schedules. "The nice part is that we develop techniques for features and use them in commercials, and [in turn] commercials feed features."

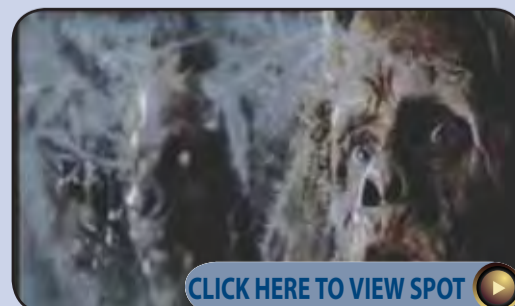
Robinson also points out that today there are more opportunities for visual effects houses to work on features because there is more demand. "Everything is digital—removing a wire, taking out a tree; the number of [visual effects shots in a film] is growing."



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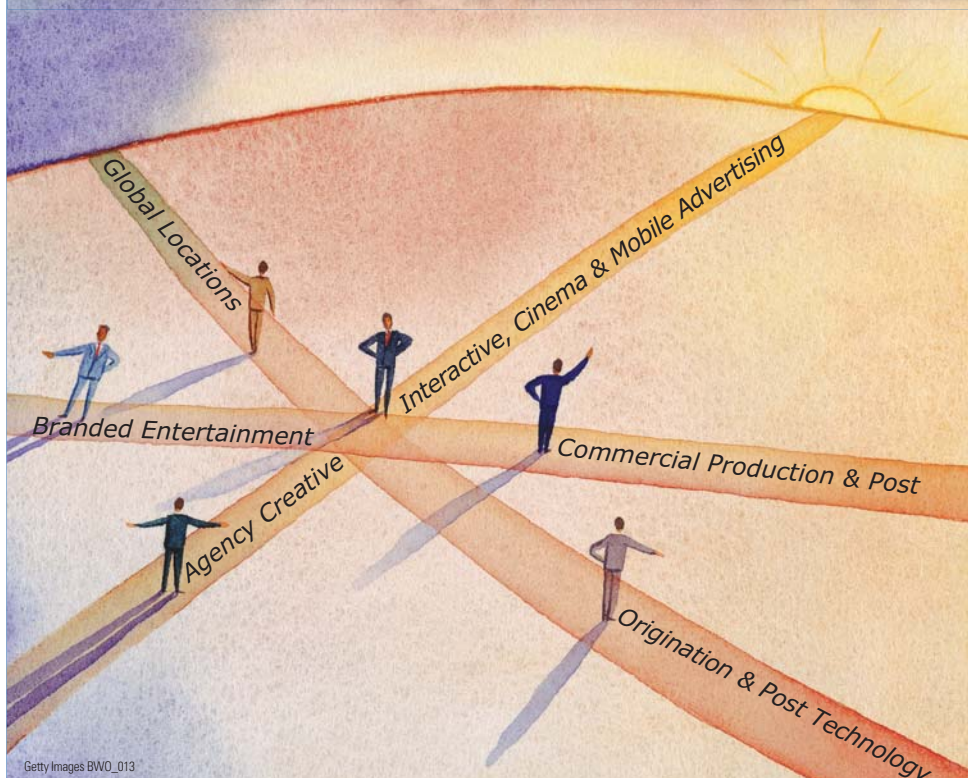


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From top: Motorola's "PEBL," "Keep It On All Fours" for SUV safety; and Guinness' "noitulovE."

Continued on page 19

All Paths Connect Via SHOOT in 2006



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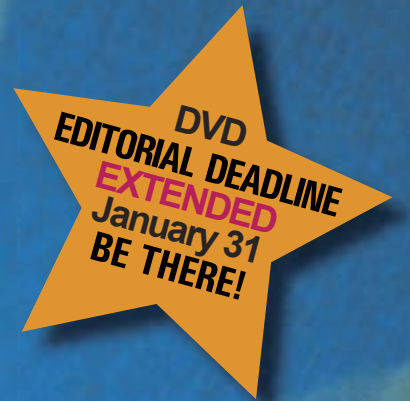
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street talk

Director Jim Hosking of bicoastal/international Partizan is slated to join Los Angeles-headquartered Biscuit Filmworks effective Feb. 1.....**Feature film director** Lisa Cholodenko (*Laurel Canyon*, *High Art*) has signed with Partizan for commercial representation....**Director** Aaron Stoller, known for creating and directing assorted notable spots and promos at MTV, has come aboard Venice, Calif.-based Backyard for exclusive representation. Stoller broke into MTV's on-air promotions department as an intern and then moved up the ladder, eventually becoming a director. While still at MTV, Stoller directed several Backyard-produced commercials for such clients as Nintendo, Anheuser-Busch, Pringles and Frito-Lay.....**Mirror Films, Hollywood**, headed by exec producer Eric Barrett, has added director Kevin Kerslake, whose experience spans spots, music videos, episodic TV and documentaries. Over the past several years, Kerslake focused primarily on screenwriting whild doing client-direct work with action sports clients Burton, Quiksilver and DC Shoes via his own company, Gigantic. His joining Mirror signals his return to commercialmaking. Also coming aboard Mirror is head of production Ali Hileman....**Director/DP** Gordon Willis, Jr., has signed with Santa Monica-based BeachHouse Films....**Director** Scott McCullough, formerly of BeachHouse, has joined Story, with offices in Chicago, Santa Monica and New York, for exclusive national spot representation....**Sparks Productions, Toronto**, has taken on representation in Canada for comedy director Frank Devos of Lovo Films, Belgium. He continues to be repped stateside by Saville Productions, Beverly Hills.....**Stefanie Hirschtritt, a former producer at J. Walter Thompson, New York**, has come aboard Ohio Edit, New York, as a producer....**Producer** Lisa Houck, formerly of Spot Welders, New York, has joined Phoenix Edit, Effects & Design, San Francisco.....

rep report

Grace Silverstein of independent firm Reel Grace has taken on representation on the West Coast and in Texas for Fischer Edit, Minneapolis, and its music company, Modern Music, also in Minneapolis....MBW Represents, Michael Waxman's Venice, Calif.-based indie firm, has brought rep John Buckley on board and added three clients for representation on the West Coast and in Texas: newly formed production house Uber Content, Hollywood; Cut+Run, Santa Monica, and motion graphics shop National Television....David Barron has joined The Production Farm, New York, as its in-house sales rep. The production house's directorial roster includes Paul Fuentes, Hugo Cariss, Carlos Gutierrez, Len Prince and The Farmers....Dana Dubay has been promoted to head of sales at Compulsive Pictures, New York....The Judy Marks Agency, Los Angeles, has signed DP Curtis Wehr for commercial representation....DP David Ungaro is now repped for commercials, music videos and features through Lyons Sheldon Prosnit Agency, Los Angeles....Production designer Happy Masee has signed with Innovative Artists, Santa Monica, for commercials and music videos. He recently wrapped The Gardener of Eden with director Kevin Connolly....DP Roberto Schaefer is now available for all work through Innovative Artists after completing principal photography on For Your Consideration, directed by Christopher Guest.....

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