

## Director Steve Chase Doesn't Pass Go

Veteran TV commercialmaker shifts to a new U.S. ad roost, attracted by Go Film principals Robert Wherry, Jonathan Weinstein and Gary Rose. Chase's career spans American and Canadian spots, and is highlighted by Super Bowl ads, assorted awards and a coveted Directors Guild of America Award nomination

See page 4

## Taking A Punch At The Live-Action Spot Market

Spot animation house ka-chew! diversifies with formation of new venture, which secures Ellen Knable as executive producer and brings four directors into the fold—Gary Johns, John Lindauer, Kirby Dick and Suzanne Luna—to complement helmers Lori Precious and Bil White. Richard Marlis oversees both shops.

See page 4

## Ray Feeney Visits The SHOOT Chat Room

The storied visual effects software pioneer is about to receive his latest accolade, the Gordon E. Sawyer Award—an Oscar statuette—from the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences. He shares his vision for the future, an assessment of today's technological landscape and looks back on the industry and its significant accomplishments.

See page 14

## ASC Award-Nominated DPs Discuss Their Craft

Filmmaking, commercials are prime topics.

See page 15



# The Big Game

Pop Culture—And Media—To Figure Prominently In Super Bowl Ad Mix; :30 Slot Going For \$2.6 Million

### A SHOOT Staff Report

MIAMI—The Super Bowl is an indelible part of mainstream popular culture, with some academicians contending that the game—and the commercials aired during it—reflect in many respects the tone and tenor of our country's society. Short of getting too esoteric and philosophical about Super Sunday, it's somehow fitting and yet ironic that broadcast television's biggest event in terms of audience reach and buzz may help to propel what is arguably pop culture's medium of choice, the Internet, and specifically broadband entertainment content.

For example, the Super Bowl could provide a bridge to another significant marketing event about to unfold in the online space. Though there's no official confirmation, word is that some of Anheuser-Busch's Big Game ad inventory will help promote its online entertainment network, Bud.TV, which is scheduled to debut on Feb. 5, the day after Super Bowl XLI in Miami. Bud.TV will include sports, stand-up comedy and programs of varying lengths. Most of the shows on various Bud.TV channels will have an interactive component.

As earlier reported (SHOOT, 9/22/06), the Super Bowl itself was a catalyst for the notion of a Bud.TV

Continued on page 12

## Approved Visa Ends Career Limbo For Ahmet

### By Robert Goldrich

LOS ANGELES—Disproving the famed Thomas Wolfe adage that "you can never go home again," Ahmet Ahmet, a creative director with bicoastal Imaginary Forces, is on his way back to Los Angeles—along with his wife and daughter—after having been in limbo for five-plus months, awaiting a visa security clearance to return from London to his stateside job. Ahmet's

situation raised questions about equitably maintaining the delicate balance of civil liberties and national security, particularly since this was a case in which he had a clear right to return to the United States as a law-abiding person and an accomplished professional.

Grateful to now be able to come home and resume his career, Ahmet was in the U.K. with his family to visit his seriously ill mother last August for

what was to be a two-week stay. But when he went to the U.S. Embassy to get his visa approved for a return to Southern California, he was informed that he needed a security clearance. Over the next five months, he and his family had their personal and professional lives disrupted, with no hint as to when there would be a resolution—even with the help of politicians on both sides of the Atlantic who took up his

cause, Rep. Jane Harman (D-Venice, Calif.) and Parliament member Kate Hoey of the British Labor party.

Ahmet, who is a Brit of Turkish Cypriot descent, hadn't anticipated a problem re-entering the U.S. Six years ago he was granted a visa to come stateside and work at Imaginary Forces based on his being a talent of extraordinary ability, with credentials

Continued on page 25

## Directors Reflect On DGA Noms

### By Robert Goldrich

The five nominees for the Directors Guild of America (DGA) Award honoring the best commercial director of 2006 were announced last week (SHOOT, 1/19). SHOOT caught up with the helmers to get their reflections on being nominated.

LOS ANGELES—"At this point in my life I don't need the notoriety or the adulation," related director Joe Pytka of Venice, Calif.-based PYTKA. That's why he rarely enters award show competitions. After all, he's already won the DGA Award for commercials a record-high three times and has received 15 nominations, a tally that also tops all directors.

So why enter the DGA competition this time around? For one, the high regard he holds for the competition. "The DGA is easily the most prestigious organization of its kind in the world. There was a stretch in the 1990s when I didn't enter the DGA Awards because I was a little embarrassed by the success I had in the competition. But I've always respected and admired the guild tremendously."

The other factor prompting Pytka to again enter the DGA Awards fray was his emotional attachment to the work he submitted for consideration: Budweiser's "Clydesdale American Dream" for DDB Chicago; Disney's "Preparation Day" out of Leo Bur-

Continued on page 10

GUAVA  
Creative Visual Effects

By Robert Goldrich

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## Racing Consciousness

In an installment of this column last month (12/15), we promoted the first annual Downhill Derby, a soapbox derby race created to raise funds for The Boys and Girls Clubs of Los Angeles. The event, which took place on Jan. 7, was a major success made possible by assorted participants from the spot-making community.

The derby was the brainchild of Josh Canova, owner/executive producer of Detour Films, Venice, Calif. According to Canova, a little more than \$44,000 was raised for The Boys and Girls Clubs, with some 1,500 people in attendance throughout the course of the day. The event even received local TV news coverage from the ABC, CBS and Fox channels.

Proceeds were raised largely through sponsorships of cars and participating in the race. Taking first place in the derby was director Jeff

Zwart of @radical.media who drove under the pseudonym “The Royal Speed Bomb.” Finishing second was GARTNER and affiliated shops tight, Outsider and The Viral Factory in a car driven by Sully Carter, the 10-year-old son of GARTNER executive producer and AICP/West president Rich Carter. AICP/West was a major

funds to be distributed to all 28 Southland clubs. The clubs provide a safe haven for kids primarily after school, enabling them to channel their energies into art and music programs as well as leadership initiatives, helping the youngsters to make better sense of where their skills and talents lie.

Canova’s assessment of the event

tries; Chelsea Pictures; Detour, Argyle Brothers; Payday/Need Financial; The Camera House; Cutters; Jigsaw; Musikvergneugen; GARTNER; Cut + Run; Machine Head; Location Creations; Zoic Studios; and Zwart (a.k.a. The Royal Speed Bomb).

Canova expects the Downhill Derby to be an annual fund-raiser.

### Josh Canova of Detour Films expects the Downhill Derby to be an annual fund-raiser for The Boys and Girls Clubs of Los Angeles.

supporter of the event. Third place winner was a car sponsored by edit house Cutters and driven by editor Nadia Henrich.

Garnering the best design award was @radical for its “Cuban Cigar” auto, aptly named because the driver and handler both showed up dressed like Fidel Castro and the car looked like it had smoke coming out of it as it raced downhill.

But the big winner was The Boys and Girls Clubs of Los Angeles, with

bears repeating. As he articulated in last month’s column, “We are helping a worthy cause. We researched organizations that help under-served and underprivileged kids and found The Boys and Girls Clubs to be efficiently run with funds and resources going directly to programs that support and nurture youngsters. It’s a chance for the industry to simply give back to the community we live and work in.”

The companies who sponsored cars included: @radical.media; Bob Indus-

The event steering committee for the successful first go around consisted of Canova, Linda Rahn of the Boys and Girls Clubs/L.A. Alliance, Robert Yniiguez, race director of the All American Soapbox Derby, AICP’s Steve Caplan, Rich Carter of GARTNER, Anne Kurtzman of davidandgoliath, Jennifer Smieja of Wieden+Kennedy, Ali Hileman of Mirror Films, Sue Crain of Argyle Brothers, Mel Mathis of The Camera House and Christie Cash of Cut+Run.

## POV



## What Makes Us Laugh? The Globalization of Humor

Since Wyndham Lewis coined the term “global village” in his 1948 book “America and the Cosmic Man,” the “globalization” of everything has happened. The Internet has slammed the door on provincial thinking.

Today, you can find American brands in the heart of Africa, cell phones working on a train through Eastern Europe, and wireless networking in the Yukon.

The globalization of humor has followed, but what makes something universally funny?

“There are all kinds of humor,” states Dan Ruppel, who has taught humor at several universities and is a producer/writer with Padded Room TV. To paraphrase Groucho Marx, “People laugh in many different ways and cry in only one.”

A look into comedy theory offers a different number of reasons why we laugh. The “Theory of Incongruity” is the concept of surprise and irony—an event that isn’t logical or rational. This theory was actually developed by philosopher Immanuel Kant, so next time someone calls your “ironic” commercials low class have them look up Kant. The “Theory of Superiority” is

about ridicule. Comparing something (or someone) better to something worse. In extreme cases, it can result in racist jokes, sick humor or merciless ridicule.

The “Theory of Aggressive Release,” was a concept championed by Sigmund Freud, who identified comic pleasure with the release from adult inhibitions.

The “Theory of Play” encompasses fun, good natured kidding or jesting. This theory was suggested long ago by Aristotle. The “ridiculous” is whatever is out of time and place, but without danger.

When I asked Dean Batali (seven years as a writer on *That 70’s Show*) about comedy, part of the discussion turned serious. “There is something very communal about getting a bunch of people to laugh at the same thing,” he says. “That’s probably why they add laugh tracks to some shows—to make people think they are agreeing with other people on what’s funny. But the truth is, I find comedy a good way to prepare people for deeper meaning.”

Comedy is a unique code that all cultures understand. If the world would have one language we would

definitely have fewer problems based on misunderstanding. Basically, humor is a way of returning back before Babel.

In an age of terrorism, we need comedy more than ever. If we’re going to have a chance to reach across the cultural divide, comedy may be the best method because it’s a simple, common language that transcends

culture, politics and geography. Plus, the fact that it’s difficult to do creates writers and directors that must rise to a higher standard. Which may explain the classic (and last) quote from actor Edmund Gwenn: “Dying is easy. Comedy is difficult.”

Director Philip Cooke is a founding partner in production house TWC, Santa Monica.

## Flash Back

**January 18, 2002** The final vote saw London-headquartered Bartle Bogle Hegarty, with a stateside office in New York, win Levi’s coveted U.S. account from TWBA/Chiat/Day, San Francisco, which had garnered the business back in 1998....Filmmaker Terry Zwigoff, whose feature *Ghost World* recently earned nominations from the Golden Globe Awards and the American Film Institute’s inaugural AFI Awards, has entered the spot arena, coming aboard Independent Media, the Santa-Monica-based production house headed by executive producer Susanne Preissler....

**January, 24 1997** Editors Igor Kovalik and Robert Ivison, both with Los Angeles-based Rock Paper Scissors since 1994, have formed their own commercial boutique, Inside/Out....Ziv Gidron, former executive producer of Hispanic commercial production house Paso Doble, Los Angeles, takes the helm of two new Santa Monica-based ventures—Framework Productions and Framework Editorial....Laurie Irwin, most recently an executive producer at J. Walter Thompson, Chicago, has been promoted to director of broadcast promotion.



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PEOPLE & PROJECTS

# Steve Chase Places A To-Go Order, Changes His U.S. Roost

**By Robert Goldrich**  
 HOLLYWOOD—Steve Chase, the director formerly of Santa Monica-based Reactor Films, has joined bicoastal Go Film for U.S. spot representation. He continues to be handled in Canada by The Partners' Film Company, Toronto. The Southern California-based Chase has recently wrapped a Buick spot starring Tiger Woods for McCann Erickson, Detroit—which he produced independently after exiting Reactor and before joining Go—and a humorous Cadbury Caramilk chocolate bar commercial via Partners' for

the Directors Guild of America (DGA) Award (as best commercial director of 1995), and become known for people-based comedy in the American ad market while carrying more of a generalist's reputation spanning humor, drama, action/adventure, cars and problem solving in Canada.

Up until now, Chase's U.S. spot-making was done with the support of production industry veteran/entrepreneur Michael Romersa at Reactor and other previous related shops. Similarly the director has had stability in Canada with Partners' being his

producers/partners Robert Wherry, Jonathan Weinstein and Gary Rose—all have sales/marketing chops and track records of helping to build and support directorial careers.

"I could have gone with a bigger company but ultimately I liked the three guys and the smaller, manage-

able operation they have created while still being able to keep it among the top production houses in the business," said Chase who quipped, "They [Robert, Jonathan and Gary] sold me on the company with their energy and enthusiasm. And if they can sell me [on the company], they can sell me

in the marketplace."

Chase's directorial pedigree also includes extensive work on the Super Bowl, including such Bud Light spots as the "I Love You" man fare, the "Paper or Plastic" spot in which guys strapped for cash elect to buy beer in-

*Continued on page 8*



Steve Chase's career accomplishments include a DGA Award spot nomination.

agency MacLaren McCann, Toronto. Chase is part of a select field of commercial directors who can boast career longevity, having started out as a helmer some 18 years ago in Canada and then moving stateside a couple of years later. He has been nominated for

sole home over the years. However, Chase exited Reactor to explore other U.S. options, saying he was looking for a company with sales leadership and a boutique feel. He feels that he's found both at Go, citing the fact that the company's principals—executive

**By Robert Goldrich**  
 HOLLYWOOD—Animation studio Klasky Csupo's commercialmaking shop ka-chew! has expanded its reach into live action with the formation of Punch Company.

Veteran rep Ellen Knable has been named executive producer of Punch while also overseeing its national sales efforts. She will additionally run the sales and marketing efforts in the West and Midwest territories for Punch and animation shop ka-chew!.

Punch has brought into the fold directors Gary Johns, John Lindauer, Kirby Dick and Suzanne Luna. Also on the Punch roster are mainstay ka-chew! helmers Lori Precious (spots for

Nickelodeon, Skechers, MTV) and Bill White (Easton, Lipton's, Land's End, and a viral campaign for the Newport Beach Film Festival) who are experienced in multiple disciplines, including live action.

Richard Marlis, executive VP of ka-chew! who oversees both that company and Punch, explained, "Ka-chew! has a renowned reputation in animation and design but has lacked the identity for live action. The creation of Punch expands the identity of ka-chew! in the live-action arena. The addition of Ellen and the new directors contribute an array of talents to an already proven team."

Knable comes over from her inde-

pendent consulting/rep firm eka. She has repped assorted leading directors over the years and is perhaps best known for serving as national sales manager of the former Coppo Films as it grew into prominence.

Natalie Renard, who is ka-chew!'s senior producer, will additionally assume the head of production mantle for Punch.

## Helmets

Johns is an accomplished director, having made his initial industry mark as an agency creative at TBWA\Chiat\Day, Los Angeles. He and creative colleague Jeff Gorman

*Continued on page 8*

## Ka-Chew! Packs Live-Action Punch

## GS&P Brings Sexy Back Into Volunteering For PSAs

*Campaign Shows San Francisco Residents That Giving Is A Beautiful Thing*

**By Nicole Rivard**  
 SAN FRANCISCO—Goodby, Silverstein & Partners (GS&P), San Francisco, went above and beyond the task San Francisco Mayor Gavin Newsom recently posed—to create a campaign for non-profit SF Connect as a call to action for the city's residents and area volunteers to "give a day to San Francisco." Instead of just a campaign, "Volunteering is Sexy"—consisting of print ads, three spots, a micro site, t-shirts and bumper stickers, the agency created a movement.

"Any media we got was donated, so whatever we did had to work extra hard. The foundation for the campaign became more of a grass-roots effort with T-shirts and stickers bearing our "volunteering is sexy" line. Hip stores and boutiques all over San Francisco are now selling the shirts and we're starting to see the stickers show up in unexpected places. It started to feel more like a movement than just an ad campaign," said Ronny Northrop, associate creative director/copy-



"Mural" demonstrates when you feel good volunteering, you look good.

writer at GS & P.

He admitted that the task to say something completely new about volunteering was fairly daunting. "When you think about all the public service campaigns out there, what approach hasn't already been taken or beaten to death?" he said.

Art director Nancy King also pointed out that the effort not only had to get noticed and inspire action, but it had to resonate across the incredibly broad demographic of San Francisco. The creative team started from scratch and thought hard about what felt real in regard to their own experiences with volunteer-

ing. King had a lot of experience working with orphans in places like Africa and India.

"It's funny, but at one point she mentioned all the mileage she's gotten meeting interesting people (mostly guys) when she would bring up her amazing experiences as a volunteer. Inevitably, her stock would go up a few marks," explained Northrop.

"We both realized there's a real human truth in that when you give of yourself, you feel good. You feel confident. And when you feel good, you look good. Because giving of yourself is a beautiful thing. Sexy, even. We

*Continued on Page 25*

## John Marshall Takes Over Sole Ownership Of Villains

**By Robert Goldrich**  
 BEVERLY HILLS—Executive producer John Marshall has assumed sole ownership of Villains, bringing new executive and directorial talent into the Beverly Hills-headquartered production house, as well as establishing a relationship with another shop. He takes over the stake in Villains previously held by partner/executive producer Robin Benson who recently exited to form her own venture, Company, which is currently operating out of interim quarters in Los Angeles and maintains a roster which consists of several former Villains' directors (including Philippe Andre, Fred Goss, Jeff Thomas, Harold Zwart, Sara Marandi and spot representation for feature filmmakers the Coen Brothers).

Marshall has retained several Villains' directors and added to the shop's lineup of helmers. Staying on are directors Dewey Nicks, Mona El Mansouri and Terry Rietta. And entering the Villains' fold is director Basil Schlegel. Also coming aboard is executive producer Nancy Osborne, who previously served as an executive producer at Uncle, Santa Monica, and prior to that at FM Rocks, Santa Monica.

Furthermore, Villains has formed a strategic alliance with commercial

production house Savant headed by partners/executive producers Joby Barnhart and Jamie Miller, both former heads of production at Villains. Savant has moved into the Beverly Hills complex that houses Villains; and while the two companies remain separate entities, Villains is providing Savant with operational, financial and management/advisory support. The arrangement is akin to what Villains had with bicoastal Smuggler for three years, after which Smuggler went off on its own into production house prominence. Savant has a directorial roster which consists of the Waytion collective as well as Eric Hillenbrand, Richard Carroll, Jimmy Diebold, Mat Carter and Jake Knowles. Savant opened last year and the company has since produced work for such agencies as TBWA\Chiat\Day, Los Angeles, Wexley School for Girls, Seattle, and McKinney, Raleigh, N.C.

Getting back to Villains' core roster, Nicks is an accomplished helmer who's been with the company since 2004. He received a Directors Guild of America (DGA) nomination as best commercial director of '99 while at bicoastal Epoch Films. He became a DGA nominee on the strength of Ameritrade's "Let's Light This Can-

*Continued on page 8*

“For commercial work, with multiple formats and HD, you pretty much need to have a Flame.”

— Kirk Balden, A52 Flame Artist

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To see the “Fit” spot and get the rest of the story visit [www.Autodesk.com/A52](http://www.Autodesk.com/A52)



## Reactor Signs Director Rob Luehrs

By Robert Goldrich

SANTA MONICA—Director Rob Luehrs has landed his first career production house roost, signing with Santa Monica-headquartered Reactor Films for exclusive spot representation. He exits his staff creative director post at Euro RSCG Tonic, New York, but will continue to be involved creatively in select projects for the agency on a freelance basis. Luehrs' prime focus will be his directorial career at Reactor.

Over the past year and a half, Luehrs in his spare time fashioned and financed a spec reel to showcase his helming prowess. Included in the mix is a Nike spec commercial, "Shutter Speed," which is featured this week in *SHOOT*'s "The Best Work You May Never See" gallery.

Reactor owner/executive producer Michael Romersa was favorably impressed with Luehrs' spec spots, noting that they reflected not only filmmaking but also advertising sensibilities, dovetailing well with each client's brand personality. (The other spec ads were for Ford and a Mega-Millions lottery client.)

"For my spec work, I went with three high-concept story spots with



Rob Luehrs

high production value," said Luehrs. "The stakes were high in that the reel is designed to set the standard which reflects what I can do as a director... I'm gratified that several top production houses were drawn to the work."

At press time, Luehrs had a pending Reactor job in the works, a music video for Audioslave. Helping bring him into the project was Helyn Taylor, a former talent negotiator for Euro RSCG. Taylor's Hollywood business now deals with procuring and lining up talent for various projects.

Luehrs joined Euro RSCG New York eight years ago as an art director, moving up the ranks to become a creative director at the agency's

Euro RSCG Tonic division, where he has turned out assorted notable spots, including the VESicare "Pipe People" campaign which earned One Show Gold, among other accolades.

Prior to Euro RSCG, Luehrs was a creative director for U.S.-based German jeans company H.I.S., having a hand in such work as a commercial titled "Crop Duster" that went on to gain Clio Award recognition.

Luehrs said he decided to join Reactor based largely on Romersa's track record in nurturing directorial careers and his commitment to "help me build a great reel." Luehrs also cited Reactor's sales force, which includes independent rep Peter McCann on the East Coast and staff West Coast rep Tommy Romersa.

And while Reactor has no formal representation in Canada, Michael Romersa has ties to that market dating back to his affiliation with The Partners' Film Company, Toronto, and its now late founder Don McLean. Luehrs reasoned that Romersa's ability to get choice creative projects from Canada is another dynamic that figures to help advance him as a director, hopefully leading to other opportunities in the American ad arena.

### ARTISANS

## Über Content Lands Field Of Its Dreams

LOS ANGELES—Über Content has signed award-winning director, producer and writer Todd Field for exclusive U.S. spot representation. Field made his feature film debut at the Sundance Film Festival with *In the Bedroom*, an internationally acclaimed movie that was named best picture of the year by *The New York Times* and the Los Angeles Film Critics Association, among others. It went on to receive five Academy Award nominations, including for best picture and best screenplay (written by Field and Rob Festinger).

Field's latest feature endeavor, *Little Children*, recently garnered Golden Globe nominations for best motion picture drama, best actress (Kate Winslet), and best screenplay (Field and Tom Perrotta). The film has also received a screenplay nod from the Writers Guild of America.

"I'm truly honored that Todd sought us out and chose Über to represent him," said executive producer Phyllis Koenig, who is partnered in the company with executive producer Preston Lee. "He's a remarkably gifted master filmmaker."

Field has long been interested in exploring spot opportunities. In fact, he was briefly repped by bicoastal/international @radical media, signing

with that company in 2002, the year he received the Oscar nominations for *In the Bedroom*. Recently after completing work on *Little Children*, he asked around about possible associations. "I heard very good things about Preston and Phyllis from so many people, it made Über Content



Todd Field

sound like an excellent fit," Field recalled. "Sitting down with them confirmed that."

After working as an actor for several years, Field decided to make a career change and enrolled in film school. He started making shorts in '92 as a directing fellow at the American Film Institute (AFI). His six-minute-long *When I Was a Boy* went on

to be screened at Sundance and at the Museum of Modern Art, New York, for its series on "New Directors, New Films." Then he directed *Nonnie & Alex*, which also made Sundance, garnering a Special Jury Prize for shorts, and such honors as the Franklin J. Schaffner Award for Excellence from the AFI.

Subsequently Field started to get director-for-hire offers, which didn't appeal to him. However, he also began getting opportunities to act again, based on a film he had acted in earlier, *Ruby in Paradise*, directed by Victor Nunez. Field performed in several movies, perhaps most notably director Stanley Kubrick's final film, *Eyes Wide Shut*. During the making of that movie, Field had conversations about filmmaking with Kubrick. These talks helped solidify Field's commitment to get back into filmmaking, and he embarked on *In the Bedroom*.

"Filmmaking is a tactile thing, it's a verb, you have to do it," said Field, who is hopeful that commercial projects will inspire his continued growth as a director.

Field rounds out an Über Content roster that is comprised of directors Jordan Brady, Stewart Hendler, Ramaa Mosley, Sean Mullens, and Marc Schöelermann.

### Short Takes

#### PAY IT BACKWARDS

Whereas the "pay it forward" mantra is to pass good deeds along, the antithesis of that is exhibited in Comcast's "Cranky" in which an office employee, upset by his woefully slow Internet connection, snaps at an elderly co-worker, mimicking her jolly greeting, "How's it going, Frank?" As an upbeat tune plays in the background, the now angered woman moves into the hallway, knocking a cup of scalding hot coffee from the hands of a man. The coffee splashes on the face of another guy, who tackles the original coffee drinker.



[CLICK HERE TO VIEW SPOT](#)

The chaos escalates as an office intern smashes a lady's porcelain cat figurine and then a woman jumps on a flailing man's back, scribbling permanent marker doodles on his bald head. Another male throws a computer hard drive housing through an office window. By sharp contrast, a young, fresh-faced man sits in a peaceful, colorful office—just one floor below the havoc. He enjoys Comcast's speedy, hassle-free Internet connection supported by McAfee security. The spot, titled "Cranky," is one of three directed by Tom Routson of bicoastal Tool of North America for The Richards Group, Dallas. Jennifer Siegel and Brian Latt executive produced for Tool, with Caroline Pham serving as producer. The DP was Larry Fong. The creative ensemble at The Richards Group consisted of creative director/copywriter Lennon Courtney, copywriter Tom McDonough, art director Bo McCord and producer Byron Fitts. Editor was Keith James of Red Car, Dallas. Visual effects were done at Red Car's Dallas and Santa Monica facilities. Colorist was Matt McClain of Filmworkers Club, Dallas. Composer was Brian Flores of The Listening Chair, Dallas.....

#### MEDIA DISTRICT

The Los Angeles City Council has designated Venice, Calif., as an official "Media District." The brainchild of mixer Robert Feist, owner of audio post house Ravenswork Studios, the Venice Media District has been created "in response to the changing business landscape" in the beachside community. According to Feist, the Venice Media District has specific goals, including: to create networking opportunities and business-to-business awareness; to raise awareness of the Media District through city designation and promotion; to attract business & entrepreneurs to the area; and to create a vehicle for nonprofits to access the assets of the Media District. Member companies for the Venice Media District encompass such services as production, editorial, music, sound design, animation, voice acting, special effects, graphic design and photography.....

#### PEOPLE IN THE NEWS

Saville Productions, Beverly Hills, Calif., has signed noted director/cinematographer Miles Goodall of Suburban Films, Cape Town, South Africa, for exclusive U.S. spot representation. Goodall-directed spots have garnered recognition from the Cannes Lions,



Miles Goodall

the Shark Awards, the Clios and the New York Festivals, among other assorted competitions. He has helmed commercials for such clients as BMW, Samsung, Volkswagen, Lexus and American Express.....Jen Sienkiewicz is set to join editorial/visual effects boutique Outside/NY as senior producer. During a previous six-year tenure at Crew

Cuts, New York, she held the same title while working on assorted projects, including spots for such clients as G.E., Frito-Lay Brands, Visa, Pepsi and Gillette. Sienkiewicz is also an alumnus of Jump, New York, where she produced campaigns for AT&T, Xerox, Merrill Lynch and 7-Up, among others.....

59th Annual

# DGA AWARDS

**The Directors Guild of America proudly congratulates our Nominees for Outstanding Directorial Achievement in Commercials for 2006**

## **DANTE ARIOLA**

**MJZ**

### **Fallon MN**

*Snowball*, Traveler's Insurance  
Unit Production Manager: Natalie Gillian Hill  
First Assistant Director: Gregory G. McCollum  
Second Assistant Director: John Ray Elmore

### **Wieden & Kennedy Amsterdam**

*First Taste*, Coca Cola  
Unit Production Manager: Natalie Gillian Hill  
First Assistant Director: Gregory G. McCollum  
Second Assistant Director: John Ray Elmore  
Second Second Assistant Director: Vance A. Zanin

### **Bartle Bogle Hegarty**

*Human*, Johnny Walker  
Unit Production Manager: Brady Vant Hull  
First Assistant Director: Haze J. F. Bergeron III  
Second Assistant Director: Ryan E. Lippert

## **BRYAN BUCKLEY** **HUNGRY MAN**

### **Ogilvy & Mather**

*Animal*, Amex  
Unit Production Manager: Stephen W. Ruggieri  
First Assistant Director: Craig H. Owens  
Second Assistant Director: Eric Topp  
Second Second Assistant Director: Robert Torres

### **Crispin Porter Bogusky**

*Manthem*, Burger King  
First Assistant Director: Kevin Byrne

### *More Mayo*, Burger King

First Assistant Director: Rhonda L. Raulston  
Second Assistant Director: Dean Peratsakis

## **DAVID GRAY** **HUNGRY MAN**

### **Ogilvy & Mather**

*Transvestite*, Tribeca Film Festival  
*Mugger*, Tribeca Film Festival  
First Assistant Director: John C. Towse  
Second Assistant Director: Michael R. Vernola

### **Wong Doody**

*Jesus Throws*, Full Tilt Poker  
First Assistant Director: Edward James Walsh  
Second Assistant Director: Ronald C. Misetich

### **Delaney Lund Knox Warren and Partners**

*Born*, Ebay

## **TOM KUNTZ**

**MJZ**

### **Leo Burnett**

*Fruit Pants*, Altoids  
First Assistant Director: Chris Tomas Medak  
Second Assistant Director: Shea Farrell  
Second Second Assistant Directors: Leslie M. Evers,  
Cara Lee McCastlain

### **TBWA Chiat Day**

*Trade*, Skittles  
*Beard*, Skittles  
*Leak*, Skittles  
Unit Production Manager: Caleb Harper Omens  
First Assistant Director: Craig H. Owens  
Second Assistant Director: Eric Topp

## **JOE PYTKA** **PYTKA**

### **DDB**

*Clydesdales American Dream*, Budweiser  
First Assistant Director: Randy Fletcher  
Second Assistant Director: Greg J. Jenks

### **Leo Burnett**

*Preparation*, Disney  
First Assistant Director: Randy Fletcher  
Second Assistant Directors: Randall Scott LaFollette,  
Fred A. Donatelli

### **TBWA Chiat Day**

*Where Were You*, WTC Memorial  
First Assistant Directors: Randy Fletcher, Jermaine Sumra  
Second Assistant Directors: Ryan Lippert, Jennifer Wilkins



**Michael Apted, President**

**Jay D. Roth, National Executive Director**

**[www.dga.org](http://www.dga.org)**

## Ka-chew! Diversifies With Punch

Continued from page 4

then became a lauded directing team at Johns+Gorman Films, with each then going on to successfully launch solo helming careers. Johns' directorial credits include spots for such clients as Lexus, Nike, Coca-Cola, adidas, AT&T, Honda, Sprint, Pepsi, Apple, Reebok and Range Rover, as well as a six-minute film titled *The Donation* for Ford, which debuted during the 2003 season premiere of the hit primetime series *24* on the FOX Network. That installment of *24* ran without commercial interruptions as the first half of *The Donation* ran just before the episode, with the second half of the short shown right after the episode's conclusion. *The Donation*, which came out of JWT Detroit, was done while Johns was seeking a U.S. spot roost—well after he exited Johns+Gorman.

Also well established in spots is director Lindauer who comes over from bicoastal Believe Media, where his final project was a Zicam spot for McCann Erickson, Los Angeles. Other recent Lindauer-helmed fare includes a Chrysler commercial for BBDO Toronto. His directorial credits span spots for McDonald's, Sony, General Mills, Toshiba, Samsung, Land Rover, Honda, Frito-Lay and RJR Nabisco,

among others, and virals for clients that include Kia and Novellua.

While Johns and Lindauer are well known in the spot arena, Dick and Luna are breaking into the commercialmaking ranks. Luna currently directs shorts for *The Jimmy Kimmel Live Show* on ABC-TV. She has some spot credits under her belt, including work for Seattle Auditors and for PartyPoker.com. Luna has additionally directed various original off-Broadway theater productions.

Dick has directed several films,

including *This Film Is Not Yet Rated*, an investigation into the Motion Picture Association of America's ratings system. That project debuted at Sundance last year. Dick also helmed *Twist of Faith*, which went on to garner an Oscar nomination in '05 in the documentary category.

Independent reps Schaffer/Rogers and Ann Asproditas continue to handle, respectively, the East Coast and the South for ka-chew!, and now assume sales responsibilities in those same markets for Punch as well.

## Villains Starts New Chapter

Continued from page 4

dle," "I Just Want To Be Held" and "Square Dance" for OgilvyOne, New York, and Union Bay's "Rocket Man" for Toth Design and Advertising, New York and Concord, Mass. Over the years, Nicks has helmed spots for such clients as Budweiser and San Peligrino, among assorted others.

Rietta started out on the agency side of the business, having served as a creative director at Hill Holliday, San Francisco. While there, his creative contributions on behalf of client the Mill Valley Film Festival earned several honors (One Show Gold, a Bronze Cannes

Lion), as well as inclusion in *SHOOT*'s "The Best Work You May Never See" gallery ("Happy Ending"); he also directed some Mill Valley Film Fest work, which caught the attention of Villains where he has since helmed assorted commercials, as well as branded entertainment fare last year for Samsung ([www.anyfilms.net](http://www.anyfilms.net)'s series of shorts) for Margeotes Fertitta Powell, New York, and Boston-headquartered interactive shop The Barbarian Group (*SHOOT*, 2/24/06). Rietta has also gained recognition as of late for his comedy short film *Crank Calls*.

Mansouri, who makes her home in Spain, has helmed spots all over the world. Her credits include campaigns for Unilever, Beck's and other leading brands across Europe. She also has prior agency experience as a copywriter for several European agencies, including Haye Needham+Partners, Lehner+Schumacher and JWT.

The German-born Schlegel, known as a visual storyteller, is well established as a director internationally, with extensive work for advertisers in Europe and the Far East. His credits include commercials for such clients as Pepsi, JVC, Sony, Visa, Burger King and Miller Beer. Earlier in his career he was repped stateside by Southern California shop V12.

## Go Film Signs Steve Chase

Continued from page 4

stead of toilet paper at the supermarket, and the "Human Cannonball" ad. The director's Big Game credentials also encompass Mountain Dew; Dorito's, including "Laundromat," which helped make Ali Landry a celebrity; and Pizza Hut with commercials that have debuted just prior to the Super Bowl kickoff for several years running—most notably the work starring Jessica Simpson and the Muppets.

Over the years, Chase has directed spots for, among others, AFLAC,

Coca-Cola, Nissan, Molson, General Motors, Dr. Pepper, Pontiac, Jeep, AT&T, Coors, Xbox, Tylenol and Dentyne. For the latter two advertisers, Chase helmed comedy commercials for the Canadian market—Tylenol's "Pistachio" and Dentyne's "Frozen Head"—that went on to gain inclusion in *SHOOT*'s "The Best Work You May Never See" gallery.

The spots that earned Chase his aforementioned DGA Award nomination were for Bud Light, AT&T, Pepsi and Mountain Dew.

## Legalease

By Jeffrey A. Greenbaum



### Creating Some Buzz

Advertisers are increasingly turning to "buzz marketing" to communicate with today's consumers. These consumers are watching (and posting) videos on YouTube. They belong to social networking sites such as mySpace. They have avatars on Second Life. They have their own blogs. And, the theory goes, they are less susceptible to being influenced by traditional advertising campaigns.

Buzz marketing—also called "word of mouth" marketing—encompasses a wide range of offline and online activities where advertisers encourage consumers to spread the word about their products, making these consumers powerful endorsers of their products to their own network of friends.

### Commercial Alert's Complaint

The controversy here isn't about friends who happen to share information about products they like. Instead, organizations such as Commercial Alert say that consumers are being deceived because advertisers are engaging in buzz marketing campaigns, but the consumers do not realize that they are being advertised to. This can happen in many ways. An advertiser may hire someone to pose as a consumer to participate in blogs and other online discussions to promote a product, without disclosing that the consumer is actually a paid endorser. Undisclosed buzz marketing can also take place, for example, when an advertiser distributes videos on the web that look like consumer-generated content, but were really financed by the advertiser.

The Federal Trade Commission (FTC) recently said, in response to a petition from Commercial Alert, that it would not issue specific guidelines governing buzz marketing. Commercial Alert had asked the FTC to require disclosures of sponsor involvement, whenever buzz marketing was occurring. Instead, the FTC said that it would examine buzz marketing campaigns on a case-by-case basis to determine whether a campaign is deceptive and whether to take law enforcement action. The FTC did provide some insight, however, into when disclosure of advertiser involvement may be needed.

### FTC's Guidance

The FTC said that when there is a connection between an endorser and a seller of an advertised product that might materially affect the weight or credibility of the endorsement, that connection should generally be disclosed. The types of connections that may need to be disclosed include, for example, when a consumer has been paid to endorse a product or where the endorser is an employee of the advertiser. The FTC said that, "in some word of mouth marketing contexts, it would appear that consumers may reasonably give more weight to statements that sponsored consumers make about their opinions or experiences with a product based on their assumed independence from the marketer."

The FTC explained that if a consumer tells her friends that the speaker on her cell phone has great sound quality, or that a new dishwasher cleans dishes even when they are not pre-rinsed, those opinions will matter to people more, if consumers don't realize that those opinions were paid for. The FTC said that, in those situations, "it would appear that the failure to disclose the relationship between the marketer and the consumer would be deceptive unless the relationship were otherwise clear from the context."

What does this mean, as a practical matter, for advertisers? If you are hiring people to go out and spread the word about your clients' products on the streets or in blogs, they should generally disclose that they have been paid to give their opinions. And if you're planning on creating a video to distribute on the web that looks like it was made by consumers who just love the product, even though it was really created by you using hired actors, you may just need to disclose that the video is really just advertising.

If you don't, the next buzz about the product may be FTC enforcement action.

\*\*\*

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## DGA Nominees Reflect On Their Work, Recognition From Peers



Joe Pytka



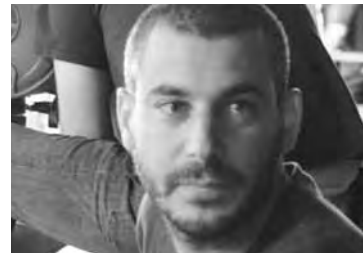
Bryan Buckley



Dante Ariola



David Gray



Tom Kuntz

Continued from page 1

net USA, Chicago; and the World Trade Center Memorial's "Where Were You?" for TBWA/Chiat/Day, New York. "I entered not so much for me but for the clients and the people behind this work," said Pytka, noting that emotional storytelling spots like the Budweiser and World Trade Center fare aren't done that much anymore. "The 9/11 Memorial is important and the Budweiser spot deserved attention as well. I think emotional storytelling and the people behind it need to get recognition because that kind of work is getting lost in the mix of what's popular today."

The Disney spot also carried personal appeal in that Pytka is from Pittsburgh and the chance to shoot the Steelers before last year's Super Bowl was a special experience for the director.

Asked why emotional storytelling is scarce in today's ad marketplace, Pytka said, "It's hard to do. It can be very fragile and if done wrong can turn exploitative...Also there aren't

as many creative giants in advertising. People like Dusenberry [Phil of BBDO] and Riney [Hal of Hal Riney & Partners] knew the value of this work and could make it happen. They also came from backgrounds outside advertising. Now so many of the agency creatives have studied advertising and marketing. They aren't bringing the rich outside experience that guys like Dusenberry and Riney brought into their advertising. It's an extra dimension that's missing today."

### Buckley

Bryan Buckley of bicoastal/international Hungry Man is the only other nominee in this year's field to have won the coveted DGA Award—for best commercial director of '99. This is his third career nomination.

"To be recognized by the DGA is the highest honor for a director," said Buckley.

Particularly gratifying for Buckley is garnering this nomination seven years after his first one; his initial DGA nom came for his work in '99

and then again in '00. "This is a business that is constantly changing, there's huge turnover and the filmmaking and the creative are changing and evolving. It's cool to know that you are continuing to do work that is interesting over the years.

"And the nature of the work nominated this time is much different than what I did years ago to earn the first two nominations," he continued.

"I'm happy to see that change and growth. If you were nominated now for the same kind of work you got nominated for six years ago, that would be a bummer."

Buckley's latest nomination came on the strength of AmEx's "Animal" from Ogilvy & Mather, New York; and Burger King's "Manthem" and "More Mayo" for Crispin Porter+Bogusky, Miami. "They represent different types of storytelling, some deploying special effects or musical elements, live action and combinations in-between. The main consideration for me was showing a range of storytelling."

### Ariola

This marks the fourth career nomination for Dante Ariola of bicoastal/international MJZ, who deeply values being a nominee. He observed that his role as a director trying to do justice to a creative concept "can feel like stumbling through a dark room containing someone else's furniture." But he regards the DGA Award nomination as "a compass that tells me I'm heading in the right direction."

Ariola earned his latest nomination on the basis of: Travelers' "Snowball" for Fallon, Minneapolis; Johnnie Walker's "Human" from Bartle Bogle Hegarty, London; and Coca-Cola's "First Taste" for Wieden+Kennedy, Amsterdam.

He selected these spots for consideration in that they reflected a comedic range: the visual effects-aided sight of a guy stumbling down a hill and picking up other people and objects along the way, snowballing into a mass of man and machine in Travelers' "Snowball"; the esoteric visual humor of an android delivering a soliloquy as to what it is to be human in the Johnnie Walker ad; and the straight-out comedy of Coca-Cola's "First Taste" in which an elderly man finally takes his first sip of Coke, leading him to seek out other "first" experiences, some of a questionable nature.

### Gray

In 2005, David Gray earned inclusion in SHOOT's New Directors Showcase during an event at the DGA Theatre in New York. Now, he's a first-time DGA Award nominee based on select work from '06.

"I'm still in a bit of a state of shock mixed with euphoria," said Gray. "To be able to come this far in the three years I've been directing has been incredible. The nomination is the pinnacle of my directing career thus far."

Gray got an earlier taste of having a hand in a DGA nomination—and win—years ago when he was on the agency side. Buckley earned the DGA Award in '99 on the strength of work which included E\*Trade's "Trimount Studios" spot on which then creative director Gray and his partner Gerry Graf (now executive creative director of TBWA/Chiat/Day, New York) worked for Goodby, Silverstein & Partners, San Francisco.

"I remember how exciting it was to be a part of the body of work that helped Bryan get the DGA Award," said Gray whose directorial nomination now comes on the strength of: the Tribeca Film Festival's "Transvestite" and "Mugger" for Ogilvy & Mather, New York; Fulltiltpoker's "Jesus Throws" out of WongDoody, Culver City, Calif.; and eBay's "Born" via London agency Delaney Lund Know Warren.

Relative to the latter, Gray is appreciative the DGA Award competition opened up to foreign commercials in 2003. (Ariola too benefited from this policy as his entries included spots from BBH, London and W+K, Amsterdam.)

"Advertising has become global and it's great that the DGA has recognized that," said Gray whose entries reflect what he described as "comedy that is human and which people can relate to."

### Kuntz

About a year and a half ago, Tom Kuntz embarked on a solo directorial career, after having been half of a successful helming team at Propaganda Films and then MJZ with Mike Maguire (currently with The Directors Bureau, Hollywood). Now Kuntz, who remains at MJZ, finds himself as an individual director nominated for the DGA Award.

"In some respects, it's an affirmation of my decision to go out on my own as a director," related Kuntz who earned nominee status based on: Altoids' "Fruit Pants" from Leo Burnett USA, Chicago; and Skittles' "Trade," "Beard" and "Leaks" for TBWA/Chiat/Day, New York.

There was no grand strategy behind the selection of those commercials as DGA entries, said Kuntz. "We just picked the spots we thought were the funniest."

Kuntz added he feels quite lucky in that the edgy humor in his entries required and received commitment from the creatives and the clients. "Often a brave concept doesn't survive," he observes.

"Sometimes the concept and the production are strong but ultimately people get uneasy and it doesn't make it through the edit. This work did and for that I'm extremely grateful."

# New Directors Wanted

SHOOT's 2007 5th Annual New Directors Search Is On!

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SHOOT's 5th Annual New Directors Showcase Event will take place May 23rd at the DGA Theater in NYC. For sponsorship info email [rgriener@shootonline.com](mailto:rgriener@shootonline.com).





## HD Essentials

By Carolyn Giardina

### Royo Named Ascent CTO; Shares HD Insights

Santa Monica-headquartered Ascent Media Group (AMG)—whose Creative Services unit includes Company 3, RIOT, Method, POP Sound and other leading brands in commercial post, visual effects and sound—has promoted Jose Royo to the position of chief technology officer. His goal is to provide the overall vision for technology strategy and oversee the execution of all technical aspects of AMG's operating entities.

Royo previously served AMG as senior VP, digital services, where he has worked on developing file-based content management services to aggregate, transform and deliver content for broadband, VOD, mobile and other multi-channel opportunities, and on establishing a technology partnership with HP. In his six-year tenure with the company, Royo also headed the Digital Media Center and the company's New Products Group.

I recently met with Royo, as well as Ascent Media Creative Services CEO Bob Solomon. Our discussion included thoughts on a variety of HD topics.

We started with the current movement toward a next generation, high definition DVD format. The two competing formats are Blu-Ray Disc and HD DVD.

Royo predicted that the winner in this competition would not be evident in 2007. "Maybe 2008," he opined, adding that Warner Bros.' announced R&D on a Blu-Ray/HD DVD Hybrid Disc could, if successful, minimize consumer confusion in this space.

"I think [the issue of which technology will be the next standard] is less to do with consumers seeing the difference [in image quality] and more about value add," he suggested. "Most consumers won't have the technology needed for an untrained eye to see the difference. [To that end] Blu-Ray probably has a better shot because they have a better platform.

"The big drivers will be how many PlayStation 3 systems [which are manufactured by Sony and can play a Blu-Ray Disc] are sold," he said. "If Sony had released it a year earlier, it would have been game over."

He also pointed out that part of the danger of the format war is that "physical media will eventually go away, but it will take a long time."

We shifted the discussion to the DTV transition. Royo believes the industry is capable of meeting the government's Feb. 17, 2009 transition deadline.

"But I think there will be a lot of lobbying to extend the handover," he said, referring to the fact that at the completion of the transition, the broadcasters are required to surrender the analog channels to the government for auction.

And to the all important question about HD advertising, Royo admitted, "I'm still amazed nothing has happened. Most broadcasters haven't upgraded their ad playout servers. Who is going to pay for that? It's amazing that we [typically] watch HD and zero percent of the ads are HD.

With the Super Bowl approaching, Solomon then offered his perspective on advertising production and the big game. He declined to name clients, but estimated that at least 80 percent of the company's Super Bowl work would be completed in HD, which has been the case for the past two years. "Would you want to do a standard definition commercial after spending that kind of money on the media buy?" he pointed out.

Prior to AMG, Royo was CTO at Broadband Sports, director of program, management at Trilogy Software and lead software architect at Harvard University. He holds AM, Ph.D. and MBA degrees from Harvard University where he was a Harvard Baker Scholar and TDK Fellow.

\*\*\*

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# Super Bowl Spot Preview: Who's Doing What For Mega Event?

Continued from page 1

network being viable. The client took note of the many website hits its Super Bowl commercials generated each year. And the number of those hits has grown at an astounding rate annually. In a mega TV event in which the spots are often more entertaining than the game itself, Anheuser-Busch through its advertising has come to be regarded as an entertainment provider, particularly in the comedy and sports arenas. The launch of an entertainment network thus seems a natural extension, especially considering the client's longstanding and ongoing relationships with entertainment and sports' properties.

DDB Chicago will be a key program resource for Bud.TV, helping to create, develop and produce content for the new venture, along with other agencies and production houses spanning spotmaking and Hollywood studio talent. DDB Chicago earlier hired Matt Piedmont—a writer-turned-producer on *Saturday Night Live* (from 1996-'02) and a writer on such feature films as *Joe Dirt*—to serve as Bud.TV's executive producer.

## User-generated content

Another pop culture media dynamic figuring into the Super Bowl equation is user/consumer-generated content, which for some might be a euphemism for amateur hour as the public has been invited to create spots for consideration by such clients as Frito-Lay's Doritos and the National Football League. Goodby, Silverstein

& Partners, San Francisco, is acting as a clearinghouse of sorts for the Doritos' submissions, of which there have been some 1,100. At press time, that field of entrants had been pared down to five finalists, with folks free to vote online for their favorite in deciding which one will air during the Big Game.

One of the finalists is "Mousetrap," a cheese-obsessed spot co-directed by Brett Snider and film school graduate Billy Federighi. The duo is no stranger to such competitions as they previously scored exposure for a Converse commercial they helmed, winning a national contest staged by that advertiser. This time around Snider and Federighi initiated an e-mail blast campaign to their friends and industry colleagues to turn out the vote for their Doritos ad.

Meanwhile for the NFL, a winner has already been declared—devout Buffalo Bills fan Gino Bona, one of some 1,700 fans who auditioned concepts at various stadiums this fall. This is the first TV commercial for Bona who has professionally done some brochure copywriting. The premise for his Super Sunday ad involves the depression that hits all football fans once the season is over. While the Super Bowl is the season's culminating celebratory event, it also marks the start of six months without pro football competition. Bona's ad pitch included such scenes as a fan sadly washing off his face paint, another putting his "Number One" finger in closet mothballs and a group of sports



Robert Goulet stars in Emerald Nuts' Super Bowl ad.

bar patrons being presented with a season-ending finger food and libation tab of \$6,000.

To get his spot on air Feb. 4, Bona had to win over the public who voted over the Internet, as well as two judging teams—one consisting of NFL executives, the other of NFL marketing head Lisa Baird, Oscar-nominated (*Hotel Rwanda*) actor Don Cheadle (who's appeared in NFL spots) and commercial director Joe Pytko of Venice, Calif.-based PYTKA. (Pytko has directed a host of classic spots over the years, including assorted ones, which debuted on the Super Bowl.)

Pytko, though, is where the amateur hour ends. He is directing the spot that's based on Bona's concept.

Also throwing its hat into the consumer-generated content ring is Chevrolet, which has sought pitches primarily from college students studying marketing and advertising. It remains to be seen whether the winning entry will see the light of day during the Super Bowl telecast.

## Price tag

At press time, word was that CBS was fetching an average of \$2.6 million per 30 seconds of ad time on the Super Bowl. That figure, if it holds, will represent an all-time high, surpassing last year's average of \$2.5 million on ABC.

On the tech front, more ads figure to be shown in HD this year than in past Big Games, continuing a trend chronicled in the annual study conducted by Tom Fletcher of equipment rental house Fletcher Chicago. Per that research, for example, the number of HD spots went from 25 during the '05 Super Bowl telecast to 54 in '06. Indeed the call to HD action is all the more compelling for the Super Bowl, an event in which an inordinately high percentage of viewers actually look forward to the commercials. Monday morning quarterbacking will include water cooler talk not only about the Chicago Bears vs. the Indianapolis Colts, but also about the best and worst ads on the game.

So it behooves advertisers to put their best foot forward visually. For instance, Bob Solomon, CEO of Santa Monica-headquartered Ascent Media Services, which is parent to several post houses active in commercials, estimated that at least 80 percent of the company's Super Bowl work would be completed in HD.

## Lineup card

Per usual during this pre-pre-game juncture, many advertisers, agencies, production houses, post shops and other support services are reticent about their Super Bowl projects. In some cases, secrecy has been heightened as clients don't want to tip their ad strategies. Nonetheless, through the industry grapevine and other circuitous routes, *SHOOT* garnered details and a number of credits for some of what may emerge during the Super Bowl telecast.

The now annual rite of Big Game advertising is Anheuser-Busch's 11th hour decision as to what spots to run from a pool of commercials (out of different agencies such as DDB Chicago, Cannonball, St. Louis, and Downtown Partners, Toronto) that have been produced for possible Super Bowl use promoting such brands as Budweiser, Bud Light, Bud Select and Bud.TV. A-B reportedly has bought five minutes of Super Bowl ad time. Pytko has helmed a Budweiser spot for DDB Chicago, which figures to score a Super Sunday time slot. Among other possible candidates in the running for A-B ad slots are Jeff Gorman who has helmed three A-B spots and Dave Merhar who's directed two (both Gorman and Merhar are with bicoastal Sandwick Films); Mike Maguire of The Directors Bureau, Hollywood, who helmed a Budweiser ad shot in New Zealand; David McNally who directed a pair of Bud spots via Villains, Beverly Hills (he has since moved over to recently launched shop Company); a spot featuring a crab protagonist from famed creature creator Stan Winston; and a Budweiser commercial directed by David Kellogg of bicoastal Anonymous Content.

Another perennial Big Game player is BBDO New York, which has a :45 for FedEx scheduled, as well as work for PepsiCo. On the latter front, a prospective spot for Mountain Dew energy drink AMP could make a Big Game appearance; it was directed by Dante Ariola of bicoastal/international MJZ. Pepsi is also the halftime show sponsor. BBDO New York additionally has pre-game ad fare on tap for Alka Seltzer, directed by Nigel Dick of Hollywood-based DNA, and Pizza Hut.

Also becoming synonymous with the Super Bowl over the years has been director Bryan Buckley of bicoastal/international Hungry Man. For the third consecutive year, he has helmed work for CareerBuilder.com from Kramer Crasselt, Chicago. This year is a departure from the first two as the new campaign is shifting from the creative featuring the chimpanzee office workers.

Another advertiser in for the third straight year is Diamond Foods' Emerald Nuts out of Goodby, Silverstein & Partners, San Francisco. The Perlorian Brothers via Biscuit Filmworks, Los Angeles, directed the Emerald Nuts spot which will air during the game's third quarter and features singer/entertainer Robert Goulet. Composing music for the commercial were Andrew Feltenstein and John Nau of Beacon Street Studios, Venice, Calif. Editor was Ian Mackenzie of Mackenzie Cutler, New York.

Automotive clients again figure to be prevalent on Super Sunday. For example, Phil Joanou of MJZ directed a General Motors spot for Deutsch LA. Honda has three spots (two for its Element hybrid vehicle) airing out of Rubin Postaer and Associates, Santa Monica. Toyota Tundra will have two Super Bowl spots directed by Andrew Douglas of Anonymous Content for Saatchi & Saatchi LA, Torrance, Calif.

Director Ulf Johansson of Smith and Sons Films, London, has at least a couple of Super Bowl spots scheduled: Snickers' "Mechanics" for TBWA\Chiat\Day, New York; and a :30 for Garmin global positioning systems out of Fallon, Minneapolis. The former depicts two blue collar workers sharing a Snickers candy bar in a way that will change both of them forever. "Mechanics" was edited by Tom Scherma of bicoastal Cosmo Street.

Via production house Furlined, Santa Monica, Ted Pauly directed a Footlocker/adidas job for AKA Advertising, New York, that is a candidate to gain Big Game exposure. Among other prospective Super Sunday advertisers are Taco Bell, GoDaddy.com, several movie studios, Microsoft Vista and Nationwide Insurance.

# 99% OF ADVERTISING EGOS ARE MALNOURISHED

For a small donation you can make sure yours never goes hungry again.

The rejection and criticism plaguing this industry have reached a new high. Writers, art directors, directors, editors and composers are increasingly vulnerable to self-doubt and insecurity. Working countless hours on ideas that get shot down in less than one (**Fig. A**). For 16 years, the Association of Independent Commercial Producers and The Museum of Modern Art in New York have tried to put an end to this problem, sending 400 trained experts from around the globe to evaluate talent and nourish egos through an annual award show. An award show, that has not only been successful in immortalizing work in MoMA's permanent collection, but also in assuring the corresponding ego a lifetime supply of ass-kissing from juniors (**Fig. B**). You, too, can satisfy your ego's appetite. Just log on to the website, submit your spot and find yourself one step closer to a feast of flattery.

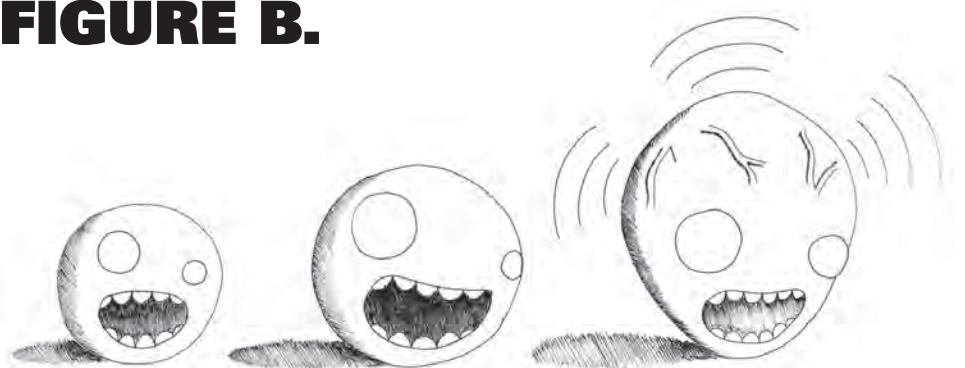
## FIGURE A.



*Ego Normalus    Ego Deflatus    Ego Hackus    Ego Extinctus*

(Fig. A) Mediocrity is an ugly part of this business. Gone unnoticed, it can severely debilitate egos and send those that recognize it, spiraling downward into a pile of self-pity. To avoid a collapse in confidence, we suggest multiple submissions to the 2007 AICP Show.

## FIGURE B.



*Ego Inflatus    Ego Colossus    Ego Boguskus*

(Fig. B) Overegos not-so-anonymous. Every creative entity has one. That guy or gal with a swagger in their step and an extra zero in their paycheck. They have an air of greatness, and yes, it is coming from their head. Join their ranks. Enter the 2007 AICP Show.



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# Ray Feeney

*Visual Effects Software Pioneer To Receive An Academy Award*



**By Carolyn Giardina**

Visual effects software pioneer Ray Feeney has been voted the Gordon E. Sawyer Award by the Board of Governors of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences. The award, an Oscar statuette, will be presented at the Scientific and Technical Awards Dinner on Saturday, Feb. 10, '07.

Feeney began his career at Robert Abel & Associates working on visual effects for commercials and feature films. In '88 he received his first Scientific and Engineering Award from the academy for his part in the development of one of the first motion control camera systems.

A second Scientific and Engineering Award followed in '91 for his work on the Solitaire Image Recorder and two more in '94 honoring his contributions in developing film input scanners and the Cinefusion software implementation of the Ultimatte Blue Screen Compositing Technology.

In '01 the Academy's Board of Governors awarded Feeney the John A. Bonner Medal of Commendation.

Feeney founded RFX Inc. in '78 to provide leading edge scientific and engineering advancements for the film industry, many of which are now in widespread use to produce visual effects for feature films, television shows and commercials. In '95 Feeney launched another company, Silicon Grail, to facilitate software development in the motion picture industry. Silicon Grail's RAYZ software addressed the postproduction need for a digital compositing tool that could be used to efficiently create visual effects for feature films. In '02 Apple Computer acquired the technologies and continues to incorporate them into Apple products.

A co-chair of the academy's Science and Technology Council, Feeney also serves on the academy's Scientific and Engineering Awards Committee and has chaired the Digital Imaging Technology Subcommittee. In addition, Feeney is a founding member and director of the Visual Effects Society as well as a SMPTE fellow.

**SHOOT:** What does it mean to you to have been named as the recipient of the Gordon E. Sawyer Award?

**Feeney:** It's still sinking in. I think it is an incredible honor. I'm very appreciative. The true meaning is still sinking in.

**SHOOT:** You serve as co-chair of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences' Scientific and Technical Council. What are some of the group's current initiatives?

**Feeney:** I chair the advanced technology programs committee. One of the latest efforts that we have underway now is about the digital mastering process, now that movies by and large are not finished on film anymore. The DCI (studio consortium Digital Cinema Initiatives) focused on the needs for theatrical exhibition—the equivalent of the digital print. The academy cares a lot about the equivalent of the digital negative—what is the source and how is that preserved. We are trying to get some unique standards together for digital mastering and archiving. That's a really big issue. We have a very significant effort at the academy to try to come up with a mechanism to specify this. There are two major problems. How do you get the ones and zeros back in the future? And how do you make the ones and zeros mean something when the tools are long since gone. We expect the tools we are using today to not

be around in 40 years. There needs to be a uniform mechanism on top of the proprietary stuff that makes [a "digital negative"] future proof. The academy is known for its archive and cares about preserving the cultural heritage of our craft. We want to be sure movies being made and finished today are going to be around 50 years from now.

**SHOOT:** What issues or trends do you see in the visual effects industry to-

day? Do you have any prime concerns about the state of the business?

**Feeney:** There may not be a viable business model. The way visual effects have been done in the recent past is changing. There are a lot more boutiques. There are fewer large 800-pound gorilla facilities. All the facilities are evolving and changing. It is a period of changes of the business model. In terms of the craft, people are fearless. There is absolutely nothing that the practitioners believe they are not capable of. I look at the work

they are undertaking; the best work is fearless. We are seeing visual effects where the quality and quantity of work that comes up for consideration is second to none.

**SHOOT:** What are the challenges that the industry faces, and what does the industry need to do to meet them successfully?

**Feeney:** Digital technologies are rippling through all aspects of

television and games]. There is similar technology in use, but what consists the filmmaking craft is unique. As we transition, we need to make sure the digital tools allow for the collaborative process of filmmaking. That's what I think is a significant challenge for the adoption of these technologies.

**SHOOT:** What are your predictions relative to the direction of the compositing space?

**Feeney:** I don't have any. It's really hard for companies to justify core development for the motion picture industry alone. It [R&D] is not driven by a business anymore. It's driven by people's passion.

**SHOOT:** What are some additional aspects of the changing business that interest you? Do you see any special opportunities emerging?

**Feeney:** My personal interest is in the realm of digital cinema...It's the digital revolution in all aspects of

filmmaking that I find extremely exciting because it changes all the rules and that's when the more unique creative environment exists. It gives you the ability to change your movie after release and redistribute it.

With the harnessing of these next generation technologies, I see incredible opportunities, for the changes that are happening in production are as fundamental as when sound was invented. The stakes are huge. Digital has affected the record industry, the theaters, and it's getting ready to truly affect the production tools. The tools are training wheels; they are very much in the early days. If you look at how the industry changed with [the advent of] sound, new places were formed, and places went out of business. In periods of upheaval, there's room for talent to emerge.

I think there is a tendency for some filmmakers to grab tools before they are ready. We see some noble experiments, but we haven't seen this whole thing break through yet. It will be a decade before we know what they really mean.

[The advent of] sound was a very meager start. In the digital world we are in the equivalent of just past The Jazz Singer. The technologies that are at hand are so significant, but they are not baked. They are just in the beginning, fragile, a tentative step. The technologies and the craft need to be nurtured. We have to make sure moviemaking comes out of the other side.



*Feeney is slated to receive the Gordon E. Sawyer Award—an Oscar statuette from the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences—on Feb. 10.*

filmmaking. In the 1990s it really changed visual effects. One of the things that I'm most proud of [in Feeney's pioneering efforts over the years] is there is not a question that it is filmmaking. As digital permeates the rest of the pieces of the movie industry, whether we are talking about the camera, or digital intermediates and finishing or theatrical exhibition, the challenge is going to be to ensure that the craft of filmmaking survives the transition. There is a difference between making a movie and other entertainment forms [i.e.

# ASC Award Nominees Discuss Commercials, Filmmaking

By Carolyn Giardina

With awards season underway in Hollywood, the American Society of Cinematographers (ASC) announced its highly anticipated nominations in the feature film competition; the choices also have links to the commercial production industry. This year's nominees are: Emmanuel Lubezki, ASC, AMC for *Children of Men*; Dick Pope, BSC for *The Illusionist*; Robert Richardson, ASC for *The Good Shepherd*; Dean Semler, ASC, ACS for *Apocalypse*; and Vilmos Zsigmond, ASC for *The Black Dahlia*.

This is the eighth ASC nomination for Richardson, the third for Zsigmond who won in 1993 for the telefilm *Stalin*, the second for Lubezki and Semler, and the first for Pope.

"Favorable reviews tend to mention beautiful images, but that's a matter of taste," says ASC president Daryn Okada.

"Artful images can be distressing if that's what it takes to properly affect the emotional flow of a film. Our members judge whether the cinematographer helped to create a sense of time and place that pulls the audience into the story. We ask how the visual language affects the emotional content of the film. Great cinematography is something you feel."

Okada also points out that all five nominees trace their origins to different countries. Semler was born and launched his career in Australia, Zsigmond in Hungary, Lubezki in Mexico, Richardson in the United States, and Pope in England where he still resides.

*SHOOT* caught up with some of the nominees to discuss their nominations, their work, and the state of cinematography for both entertainment and advertising.

## Emmanuel Lubezki

Coincidentally, *SHOOT* connected with Lubezki as he was readying to fly to Argentina to shoot an undisclosed commercial for directing team Traktor of bicoastal/international Partizan. He was thrilled with his ASC nomination. "It's a great honor," he says. "I can't tell you how happy I was when I received the call."

*Children of Men* was shot on 35mm, primarily on location in and around London. "The biggest challenge was to find a language that was appropriate for the film and be consistent. One of the things that worried me the most was that there were violent, war-like scenes; I wanted to make sure we would not glamorize the violence. The message [of the film] is war should be abolished. [But] film likes smoke, and tanks look good on film; we didn't want to glamorize it even more. One



Emmanuel Lubezki

of the ideas was to treat the movie as if we were a group of documentary filmmakers, and we were just following the actors.

"I had an incredible camera operator, George Richmond," Lubezki adds. "This nomination is for both of us, and the whole crew was incredible. Especially with this movie, it was only possible with the collaboration of such a great crew."

Steve Scott of Hollywood-based EFilm served as the colorist for the digital intermediate work. "DI allows you to do so much in postproduction," Lubezki relates. "Unfortunately, it almost feels like DIs are in a very young state."

"What DI offered, in the case of *Children of Men*, is peace," he continues. "We improvised a lot and sometimes I couldn't light with the precision I would like. [DI] relieved some pressure. But the reality is DI is in the early stage. And the quality of the image is much better if you don't go through a DI."

"Same with HD, 2k and 4k; everything I see is incredible. It's another tool, but I don't think you can compare it to film at all. It's ironic that we are living at a time when film is the best it's been, printing is the best it's been and the [film] cameras are amazing and lenses are incredible. It's kind of ironic that it's this incredible time for film and this new technology is trying to replace it. I like the idea of another tool, but it shouldn't replace film."

Lubezki says that between features he enjoys lensing commercials. "They are a great way to work with different directors and try different things," he says. "It keeps you from getting rusty. Every commercial demands something different."

As to working with the aforementioned directing team Traktor, Lubezki says, "They work in a very interesting way. They work two at a time but it is a group, and they are incredible creatively and they like to take chances. They are very good storytellers."

## Robert Richardson

Robert Richardson, who has direc-



Robert Richardson

torial representation through bicoastal Tool of North America, was also working on a commercial when he learned of his ASC nomination. The DP was in New Zealand, shooting a Budweiser commercial with director Mike Maguire of Hollywood-based The Directors Bureau.

Via e-mail, Richardson reported that he has lensed a number of commercials over the past few months. "We just returned from Japan where we shot for Sapporo," he writes. "And prior to that I worked with Mike [Maguire] on Rolling Rock, as well as two long format GE mini-films. During that time period I also shot with Mark Romanek on a Cadillac spot."

On his ASC nomination, Richardson says, "This ASC nomination, in particular, is recognition from my peers, as to the overall quality of the film, *The Good Shepherd*." I perceive this as a collective honor for all departments involved."

The biggest challenge in his work on *The Good Shepherd*, he relates, was "to visualize a hall of mirrors and to capture on film what I would say is luminous darkness, to balance a hidden/secretive world with the search for soul, and foremost to maintain the subtle grace of [Robert DeNiro's] direction."

Richardson reported that his next film project would be an as yet untitled Abu Ghraib documentary helmed by Errol Morris. Morris is rep-



Vilmos Zsigmond

resented for commercials via bicoastal/international @radical.media.

## Vilmos Zsigmond

"It feels great. I was so excited and so honored," Zsigmond says about his ASC nomination. "It was such a big year for cinema with so many good films. I didn't expect it."

The legendary cinematographer, who has also maintained a commercial career over the years, primarily in Europe, explains that *The Black Dahlia* was shot in Super 35 and achieved a "classic film noir look, like the old black-and-white film noir movies of the late '40s."

The film went through a 4k DI process at Hollywood-based Laser Pacific, working with colorist Mike Sowa. "I really believe there is a difference," Zsigmond says of 4k as compared with 2k. "Unfortunately not too many people want to admit it because it is costly. We did tests before [*Black Dahlia*], and I really saw a big difference in the quality."

"I think that's the way to go," he continues. "You are not sacrificing the quality. [4k] means films should look as good as they did in the past. We should go 4k, maybe we will end up with 6k."

When asked about resolution and advertising, Zsigmond says, "For commercials, if they are only being shown on TV, there is no reason to go to 4k."

Zsigmond suggests that shooting film and finishing HD is appropriate for this medium, although he pointed out that if home theater screens are going to get larger, "then maybe I will say 2k is going to show up."

At press time, Zsigmond was in prepro on his next feature, *Bolden*, which tells the story of New Orleans jazz musician Buddy Bolden.

## ASC Awards

Last week, the ASC announced 10 nominees for top honors in the two television categories of the ASC Awards. The finalists in the Television Movie/Miniseries/Pilot category are Thomas Del Ruth, ASC for *Studio 60 on the Sunset Strip* (pilot); Adam Kane for *Heros* (pilot); Walt Loyd, ASC for *The Librarian: Return to King Solomon's Mines* (television); Bill Roe, ASC for *Day Break* (pilot); and John Stokes for the "Umney's Last Case" episode of *Nightmares and Dreamscapes: From the Stories of Stephen King* (miniseries).

The nominees in the Episodic Television competition were chosen by their peers based on one episode of a series. They are Eagle Egilsson for "Darkroom"/*CSI: Miami*; Nathan Hope for "Killer"/*CSI: Crime Scene Investigation*; David Moxness for "Arrow"/*Smallville*; Bill Roe, ASC for "What If They Find Him"/*Day Break*; and Gale Tattersall for "Meaning"/*House*.

The annual ASC Outstanding Achievement Awards will be presented during an awards gala on Feb. 18 at the Hyatt Regency Century Plaza Hotel in Los Angeles. There DP Allen Daviau, ASC-accomplished in features (*E.T. The Extra-Terrestrial*, *The Color Purple*) as well as spots and recently-will receive the ASC Lifetime Achievement Award. Additionally, Donald M. Morgan, ASC (*Something The Lord Made*, *Out of the Ashes*) will receive the first ASC Career Achievement in Television Award.

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Top Spot of the Week

# Nike + iPod Look To (Tommy) Means As Mekanism For Spot "Motivation"

By Christine Champagne

Running has gone hi-tech with the Nike + iPod Sport Kit. The system has runners inserting a chip into a special Nike shoe. That chip beams data to an iPod Nano, which records the time, distance, pace and calories burned in real time as one runs.

After each run, the Nano can be docked and the information from a run can be uploaded to a server so that a runner can actually chart his progress.

That's a rather straightforward and dry description of a breakthrough process, isn't it? Actually, it is exactly the kind of passionless talk Mekanism, San Francisco, sought to avoid when creating and producing a new spot promoting the Nike + iPod. "The challenge was to convey [all that information] in a visceral way," according to director/creative director Tommy Means of Mekanism. "We wanted to explain it in a way that got people fired up."

And they succeeded. You really can't help but get fired up after watching the :60 "Motivation." Directed by Means, the spot finds a runner all decked out in his running gear sitting on a couch in his living room. He is

dressed and ready to go but not feeling motivated. Who among us hasn't been in that situation?

But he finally gets up, turns on his iPod (choosing to listen to OK Go's power pop track "Here It Goes Again" for the U.S. version of the spot, which is also airing in Asia and Australia) and starts running on an enormous treadmill placed in front of projection screens.

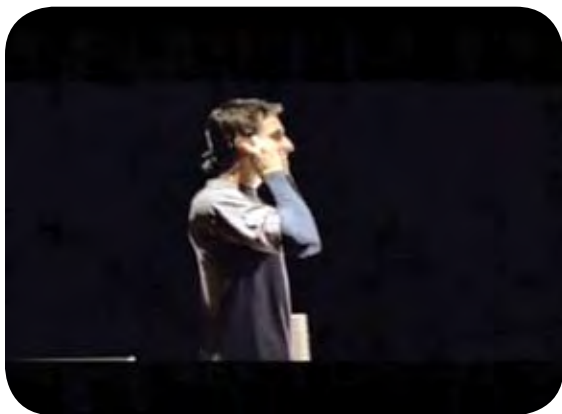
As he runs, we see him pass through a suburban neighborhood with white picket fences. He picks up speed on the run and literally breaks through walls as he hits new personal bests. Each time he breaks through a wall, the scenery changes—

along the way, we see him running through a city financial district and blazing across a beach. (All of this scenery was shot in and around San Francisco on 16mm.)

"What I wanted to try to convey is this journey that you take both geographically and inside your head when you run," Means explained. "When I run, I like to listen to music and look at stuff, and it takes me away. It takes me to this other place, and I wanted to try to convey that sense of escapism."



Tommy Means



[CLICK HERE TO VIEW SPOT](#)

Mekanism created and produced a commercial that shows how the Nike + iPod combo gets someone jump started to exercise, in this case taking a treadmill run and turning it into an excursion of the imagination as our hero reaches new personal breakthroughs in his workout performance.

Means does convey that journey rather beautifully in this artfully rendered piece of advertising.

According to the director, the spot was inspired by and based on an act from Fuerza Bruta, a spectacular stage show with aerial and acrobatic stunts, including one that finds a man in a business suit running on a giant treadmill and breaking through a wall.

"We saw the kernel of an idea there," Means said, "and we took it and pitched it to Nike."

## Argentinian cowboy

Nike gave the go ahead, and Mekanism collaborated with Fuerza Bruta creative director Diqui James, who is credited as theatrical creative director on this job, to make "Motivation." Describing James as "a wild renegade Argentinian creative cowboy," Means said, "You can tell that this is his art. It's something that although when you watch it you're not exactly sure what it means, it means something very, very important to him."

So was James nervous about Mekanism toying with his idea? "There was definitely a combination of flattery and fear," Means acknowledged. "When an artist sees his vision tweaked, there is a little bit of fear going into it."

"But he was so open and so collaborative and so excited about the whole thing in general that by the time we got into the process he was definitely leading the charge."

## On the treadmill

Means and a crew that included DP Jim Frohna and motion design director Emmett Feldman shot "Motivation" on a soundstage just outside Buenos Aires, using a treadmill from Fuerza Bruta and relying on theatrical rather than film style lighting.

Ninety-five percent of the action was caught in-camera. "Because it was based on a theater show where they actually had a giant treadmill and the walls, we thought, 'Instead of replicating that, let's actually shoot it like it was a theater production and do it in-camera,'" said Mekanism's Jason Harris, who served the functions of creative director, copywriter and executive producer.

It was a rather complex two-camera production that found Means leading a Spanish-speaking crew of 150 over the course of the six-day shoot.

A performer from Fuerza Bruta was cast in the role of the runner, and while he routinely performs the

"breaking through the wall" stunt in the show, there remained an element of danger. After all, the steel-framed walls used for the stunt are made of sheetrock and weigh 300 pounds apiece. They are scored to help the actor make the break, but still....

Remarkably, the guy did the stunt sans a harness and emerged unscathed.

Once the shoot wrapped, it was back to the United States where the team at Radium, San Francisco, including Simon Mowry, Inferno artist/creative director/colorist, got to work. While Means got most everything in-camera, he did rely on Radium to composite an iPod interface onto one of the walls the runner jumped through among other things.

Editor Alan Chimenti cut the spot. "He has the patience of Job," Means said laughing. "He was a rock during the whole post production process. It probably lasted ten days or so, and it was probably ten straight days of all-nighters. We were all leaning on Alan, he was holding everybody up."

**TOP Spot OF THE WEEK**

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**CLIENT**  
Nike + iPod Sport Kit

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**PRODUCTION CO./AGENCY**  
Mekanism, San Francisco

**Tommy Means, director/creative director/copywriter; Jim Frohna, DP; Jas on Harris, executive producer/creative director/copywriter; Rod Kilpatrick, copywriter; Emmett Feldman, motion design director; Diqui James, theatrical creative director; Sarah Stevens, line producer.**

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**EDITORIAL/ POST/VISUAL EFFECTS**  
Radium, San Francisco.  
Alan Chimenti, editor; Simon Mowry, Inferno artist/creative director/colorist; Stelio Kitrilakis, managing director; Jeff Blodgett, executive producer; Mary Mathaisell, VFX producer; Penny Krueger, assistant editor; Jennie Burnett, production coordinator; Orin Green, compositor.

**Spypost, San Francisco.**  
Gary Coates, colorist (16mm footage)

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**AUDIO**  
Polarity Post Production, San Francisco.  
Eduardo Mendoza, mixer.

The Best Work You May Never See

# Dir. Rob Luehrs Runs Into A Surprise For Nike

By Robert Goldrich

Director Rob Luehrs—who just signed with Santa Monica-headquartered Reactor Films for spot representation (see separate news story on page 6)—caught the attention of several notable production houses via a reel of spec work, including Nike’s “Shutter Speed,” which is this week’s entry for “The Best Work You May Never See” gallery.

Luehrs had been on staff at Euro RSCG, New York, for the past eight years, initially as an art director and then moving up the ranks to creative director of Euro RSCG Tonic. While he will continue to be involved creatively in select projects for the agency on a freelance basis, Luehrs maintains a prime focus on his directorial career at Reactor. Michael Romersa, owner/executive producer of Reactor, gravitated toward Luehrs based on the personal rapport they established, the director’s agency creative sensibilities and his high caliber spec fare.

“Shutter Speed” starts out with a mundane slice of life. Two tourists—a man and a woman—on a bridge ask a young woman to take a snapshot of them. With camera in hand and kneeling down to shoot up at the pair, the gal is about to click the picture when a man walking his dog moves through the viewfinder frame. She pauses and just when she’s ready to click off a shot, two women pass by. Not wanting yet another surprise subject to saunter through her field of vision, the woman puts the camera down at her side. She and the tourists look both ways. We see that there’s nothing approaching the bridge from either direction. The gal then gets ready to take the picture. Suddenly, another visual perspective takes hold as we see a fast moving motion picture camera move across the bridge, with our POV zipping past the bridge’s guardrails as well as the dotted center line of the road.

The woman then snaps the picture but immediately has a puzzled facial expression as she looks at the digital viewfinder displaying what she has shot. The tourists then get a look-see, finding that their two-shot is instead a three-shot as a world-class runner has zipped across the frame. The camera allows the woman to digitally advance what was captured, revealing the runner’s leg bolting through the field of vision and then a foot wearing a state-of-the-art, cool-looking Nike sneaker.

The couple and the good samaritan picture taker look perplexed as they gaze down the road. “That’s incredible,” says the guy as the slogan, “Run faster” is supered on screen, accompanied by the [nikefree.com](http://nikefree.com) website address.

Luehrs served as director and creative director/writer/art director and financier for “Shutter Speed,” enlisting the support of a friend, producer David Wolfson, who provided production support via his Spoon Films in Austin, Texas. The spot was shot in Southern California’s Sepulveda Dam area by DP Vance Burberry.

### Creative genesis

The creative inspiration for the spot came when Luehrs was on a run along a boardwalk, at which he intersected two tourists. An avid runner, he then wrote “Shutter Speed” and tucked the concept

away for when he eventually would helm it to help advance his longstanding directorial aspirations. “I liked the juxtaposition of a world class runner with somewhat goofy tourists and an amateur photographer,” said Luehrs. “It’s the dynamic of when someone takes a picture and they later find out there’s a UFO in it. There’s a kind of intrigue there. In this case, it led to the ultimate product shot, which we see in the camera viewfinder—only the digital breakdown can capture the shoe and the runner as he blew past.”

Luehrs chose Nike because the advertiser is “at the pinnacle of commercial-making. If you’re going to take that leap to shoot a spec reel and want to be able to compete with top talent, Nike for me was a logical choice.”

### Tone savvy

Luehrs added that an important consideration was to capture the tone of the advertiser, in this case the cool, hip vibe of Nike. “So much of what you’re selling is the tone and the brand’s personality,” he related. “I took the same approach in trying to do justice to the advertiser’s tone in my other spec spots as well [for Ford and a Mega Millions lottery game].”

Romersa found that aspect of Luehr’s spec work particularly appealing. “A lot of filmmakers will create spec commercials from solely a filmmaker’s point of view, trying to shoot something cool that the audience can hopefully relate to on some level,” observed Romersa. “Rob did that but he also approached his spec pieces with an advertising man’s eye, keenly aware of the client’s tone and objectives and the need to appeal to certain targets and markets.”

**credits**

Client Nike (spec spot) Agency Rob Luehrs, creative director/copywriter/art director Production Company Spoon Films, Austin, Texas Rob Luehrs, director; David Wolfson, producer; Vance Burberry, DP Editorial Outside Editorial, New York Scott Gibney, editor; Samuel Barden, assistant editor; Mark Lasko, producer Post Outside Editorial Steve Mottershead, Flame artist/colorist Audio Post Outside Editorial Eric Thompson, mixer Sound Design Amber Music, bicoastal/international Bill Chesley, sound designer

“Shutter Speed” captures the tone of Nike.



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iWork

# Kleenex, JWT New York Want Users To Let It Out In Latest Branding Campaign

Web Films And Interactive Site Give Visitors An Outlet For What They've Bottled Up

By Nicole Rivard

You won't hear anything about how soft Kleenex is or about its cool oval dispenser in the brand's latest campaign. Instead you will see regular people from across the country and London letting out their emotional stories on topics like how they met their mate, coping in the wake of Hurricane Katrina or having a child at the recently launched website LetItOut.com. TV spots rolled out earlier this month to steer people to the site.

"The message used to be 'thank goodness for Kleenex' and they were looking for a completely new brand story, one that was able to touch a lot of different places—TV, online, print, even a live event experience," explained Richie Glickman, creative director and copywriter for JWT New York.

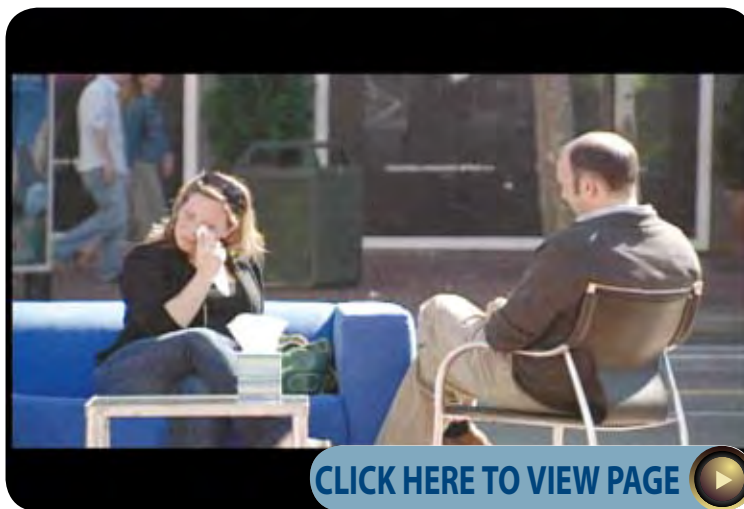
The footage was shot in London, New York, New Orleans and San Francisco and was directed by Brett Morgen of bicoastal Anonymous Content whose recent documentary *Chicago 10* was chosen as the opening night film for the Sundance Film Festival.

In the web films and spots, we see a "good listener" with a big blue couch on the streets of the various cities inviting passersby to have a seat, talk and open up. In case opening up results in happy or sad tears, a box of Kleenex is on hand to wipe them away. "We were able to get a lot of people sitting on the couch sharing their stories. We sat 150 to 200 people down and many had compelling stories with a lot of emotion that really came out. In addition to the spots, there are about 20 web films that will slowly be fed onto the site," Glickman said.

## User participation

Other elements are in the works to contribute to the stickiness of LetItOut.com, which opens with, "Why do people keep things bottled up inside? It makes no sense. Nothing good comes from that. With that in mind, we invite and encourage you to let it out. Let out your tears, your joy, your anger, your frustration, your laughter and even your snot. Why? Because you'll feel better. How do we know? Because we recently went across America and watched all kinds of people let out all kinds of stuff. Some of those moments ended up on TV. Others are right here for your viewing pleasure. So go ahead, check them out—then let it out."

The site is designed as an outlet for user-generated content, where people can upload text, photos or videos in response to different questions, like "When was the last time you laughed so hard you cried?" There is also a link to the MySpace page of indie band Starrfadu whose music can be heard throughout the campaign. Ironically their song, "Let It Out," was not created for this campaign, although it is a perfect fit. Glickman said he loves the fact that they didn't



[CLICK HERE TO VIEW PAGE](#)

The "good listener" looks on as a passerby unbottles her emotions with the help of Kleenex.

spend a million bucks for a song from some established band that would not have suited the nature of the campaign. "The fact that it's these three guys is perfect for this campaign—organic, no celebrity and real," Glickman commented.

Also on the site is a letitout blog overseen by an editor, who will be introducing topics or timely themes that will spark some sort of dialogue. Glickman hopes to have the site up and running smoothly in February. "The real challenge is that this was designed and built here but it has to be integrated with the Kimberly Clark system. That is the thing we are struggling with," he said, adding that despite any struggles, the project has been satisfying because the people's stories were so compelling "The people were very willing to show themselves, not only to the listener who is a total stranger but on camera and on film, especially in New Orleans. Inevitably all stories moved to Hurricane Katrina. People were putting it into perspective, exhibiting a lot of strength. It's amazing to see the strength of that community."

He added that Morgen was key in getting people to show themselves. "His treatment and approach were pretty amazing," said Glickman. "It was his vision to have three cameras going and to shoot HD so we could just be rolling continuously, and to really have the cameras pushed back so people weren't aware of them. It became a very safe little bubble for them to spill it."

Watching people "spill it" is resonating with audiences. "I did a Google alert for Kleenex 'Let it Out' so when anyone starts blogging, I would be aware of it," said Glickman. "I am astonished that there are 50 or 60 separate blogs mentioning it. People are talking, are interested in and like it. The fact that people are responding so well is that Kleenex is a brand that belongs in this world."

credits

**Client:** Kimberly Clark **Agency:** JWT New York Ty Montague, co-president, chief creative officer; Walt Connelly, Toby Barlow, executive creative directors; Jim Carroll, art director; Richie Glickman, creative director/copywriter; Alexander Strohm, Hildie Neuman, Scott Hunter, Christina Grimes, Tamara Holland-Martin, account team **Production Company** Anonymous Content, bicoastal Brett Morgen, director **Editorial** Mad River, Santa Monica, Calif. Mike Elliot/Jim Ulbrich/Lisa Mogol/Will Znidaric, editors



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## Any Which Way You Scan

The usage of 3D scanning as a technique in visual effects is not a new one, but the movement toward more sophisticated visual effects with heightened realism—coupled with shrinking budgets and shortened production schedules—has prompted renewed interest as well as inventive R&D in this area. This work has made scanning an option for all purposes—from the construction of detailed models of talent and full locations to previsualization.

“The driving force in using scanning for commercials is [that one can create] realistic models in a reasonable length of time; this also gives the agency more latitude in creativity,” explains Nick Tesi, VP of 3D scanning firm Eyetronics. “[Scanning coupled with additional visual effects techniques] gives the commercial visual effects team the ability to do movie magic by having an object or person do or have something done to them that would not be practical or possible. It also helps the production speed by off loading [the modeling task] to a more efficient system that allows the commercial house to put their CGI talent on other aspects of the project.”

Eyetronics—headquartered in Leuven, Belgium, and with a U.S. base in Torrance, Calif.—has developed and operates a portable scanning system and service where the team travels with the system on set, for scanning of people, objects, cars and the like.

“In most cases we will go to the set to do the scanning with the actors in wardrobe,” Tesi says. “We have also scanned cars in commercials which can be at our location or close to our studio location.

“Our scan takes a half-hour or less,” he continues. “So for commercials we go on set and scan at the availability of the director. The key for us working on commercials is also flexibility and the ability to turn models over quickly.”

A recent example is the use of Eyetronics’ portable scanning system by West Hollywood-based visual effects house Ring of Fire for “Basketball,” a commercial in the Nike LeBron campaign out of Wieden + Kennedy, Portland, Ore. These spots feature basketball star LeBron James playing various roles. “Bas-

ketball” was helmed by Stacy Wall of bicoastal Epoch Films.

Ring of Fire creative director Jerry Spivack explains that during production the Eyetronics team brought its scanning device to the location shoot, and did the scanning between setups on the day of the production.

“We did full 360-degrees of LeBron’s head and four or five facial expressions for each,” he relates. Spivack reports that it took five to seven minutes

per “character,” a plus as they had a very short window with the athlete. “I like Eyetronics because they have a flexible and fast system,” Spivack says. “The flexibility to bring it on set and shoot there was really great. A few years ago I would not have thought of [scanning on Nike “Basketball”] as a approach because of time. For most commercial schedules, it would not have worked.”

Eyetronics supplied the wire-frame models, textures and all the other needed information to Ring of Fire, which then used this data in the 3D environment to create the LeBron characters. The characters were then composited into the final scenes of the commercial.

Additional spots that were produced using Eyetronics scanning include Santa Monica-based The Syndicate’s British Telecom “Network” ad that was a 2005 nominee for a Visual Effects Society (VES) Award for outstanding visual effects in a commercial. Santa Monica-based effects/animation house Method Studios used the scanning technique for

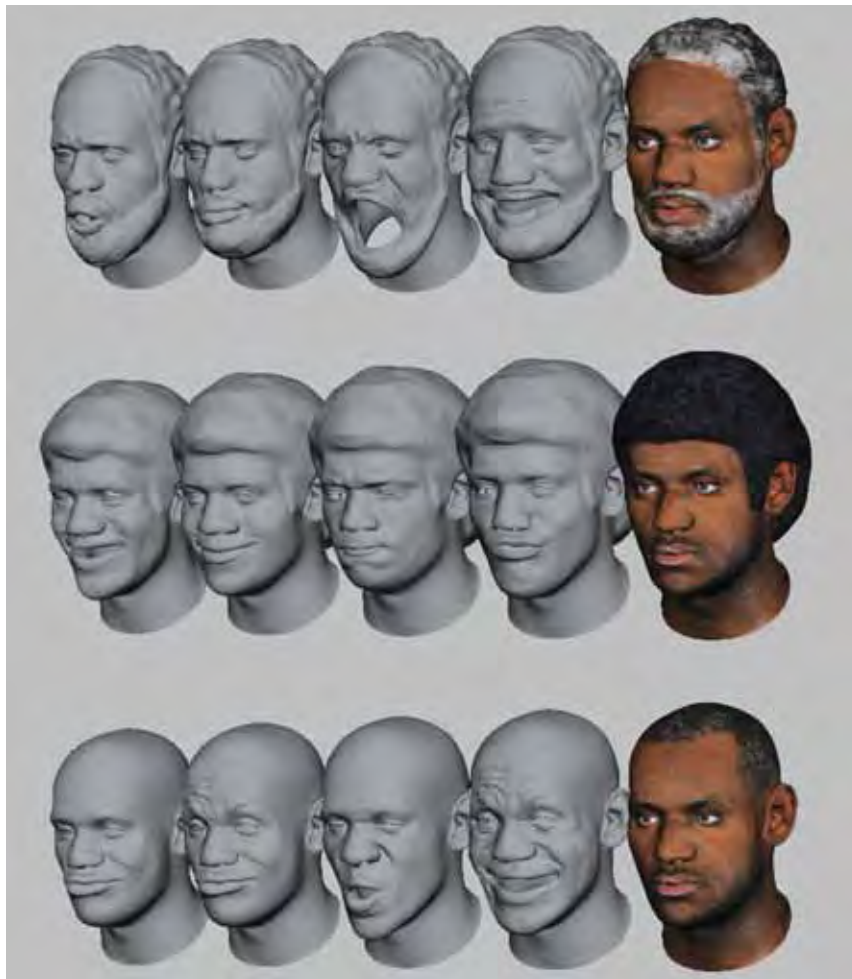
Pepsi’s “Dancetron,” out of Spike DDB, New York.

And Venice-based 2D/3D animation Motion Theory tapped Eyetronics to produce visual effects for Electronic Arts’ “Mechanical Warriors” for Wieden+Kennedy.

### LIDAR

R&D is also forwarding the use of scanning. An example involves a new process that starts with traditional LIDAR (Light Detection and Ranging) scanning, or the process of collecting potentially millions of points from a location that

*Continued on page 20*



Scanning brought the many faces of LeBron James to life for Nike.

Sophisticated  
3D Scanning  
Finds Many  
Applications

By Carolyn Giardina

## Scanning Gains Momentum, Versatility In Visual Effects Arena

Continued from page 19

are measured by distance and then connected to a polymesh, which is an early stage of a 3D model. Traditionally the mesh needs to be cleaned or remodeled before it is useable, which is a time consuming process.

LIDAR scanning is predominantly used for engineering. Venice-based Gradient Effects has developed a LIDAR-based technique designed from a filmmaker's point of view to streamline, simplify and reduce the processing times of sampled data while creat-

ing highly detailed 3D scenes from a set or location. (Gradient was founded last May by Thomas Tannenberger, co-founder of Germany's Das Werk, and Olcun Tan, who previously held R&D positions at companies including London's Mill Film and Los Ange-

les' Dreamworks Animation.)

"[With Gradient's technique] it is possible to scan and immediately utilize the data on location, where traditionally the data had to be processed before it could be used at all," explained Tan. "Our tools allow us to uti-

lize the data right after the scanning process in our favorite 3D applications [such as Maya]. This reduces the cost for utilizing a scanner on location dramatically. Since Gradient Effects is foremost a visual effects house, we stripped everything away in the process, which we feel is not necessary."

Tan emphasizes that the system was not developed with the idea to sell it as a service; rather, it was conceived to streamline Gradient's own visual effects pipeline and to enhance the quality of the work. "The whole thing started out of necessity," Tan says. "Gradient Effects works very closely with directors and producers and to be able to meet the creative and budgetary requirements, we had to streamline the process of visual effects both on location and back in the visual effects facility."

The process involves the use of LIDAR scanning coupled with proprietary software written at Gradient. "In-house we use it for previz, modeling, animation, simulations and lighting," Tan explains. "Our tools can inversely reconstruct camera information [metadata]; this means that we really don't need any camera notes. Another benefit is that we don't need to have as many tracking markers on set as usual, which results in less interference with the filming process."

The Gradient system is still relatively new and is available for commercial and feature productions; it has already been used on several films including the soon to be released Richard Kelly-directed *Southland Tales* and the Mennan Yapo-directed *Premonition*. (Tannenberger was visual effects supervisor on both films).

"On *Premonition* and *Southland Tales*, we pushed our scanning process further into production," Tan relates, explaining that it was tapped for previz by using the actual location data. "Since we have a digital fingerprint of the location we can easily determine how many cameras will be required and where to place them. We worked with all departments together to help them communicate better and to save resources and [prevent] surprises."

Gradient's scanning techniques were also used as part of the special effects process. "We were able to determine all safety distances from the explosives and we could still make sure that the director was able to achieve his artistic goals," Tan says. "And the best was, we were able to brief the whole team without moving out of the production offices. That saves a lot of money for the production and the visual effects. You can ramp your resources as you really need them."



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# Taking Flight

“Flying by the seat of our pants.” “Coping with learning curves.” Those are the types of phrases production and post companies in the Midwest are using to describe how they are dealing with the challenges and opportunities brought on by new technologies and alternative advertising mediums. But despite the uncertainty of it all, the excitement in their voices is palpable.

“To me what’s exciting about getting up and going to work everyday is every single day some new development in digital media happens. And it’s not very often in history that you get to be a part of something—an emerging form of communication,” says Mitch Apley, executive producer of Resolution Digital Studios (RDS) in Chicago. “When I was born, everyone had already figured out how to make movies and television, but right now we are still in the process. We are still trying to figure out how to make this Internet video work and it’s just cool to be a part of it.”

Not only is it cool to be part of forging a new world, it’s good for business.

“Post is doing very, very well. The variety of new outlets for produced material is helping post. It seems like it is very viable even though Detroit has lost some automotive accounts,” comments Sheldon Cohn, executive VP, director of broadcast at Doner Advertising in Southfield, Mich.

But with the trend towards digital acquisition and digital finishing becoming more and more the rule and not the exception, not all companies have stayed viable and some have had to close up shop.

“Part of it is that transitioning from an old analog system to an HD system is expensive. It’s not because the HD technology is particularly pricey, because it’s all computers and pricing is going down, but paying off your legacy analog gear is expensive,” explains Apley. RDS has been around for a little over a year now. “We were fortunate to come into existence without the baggage of two-inch decks and one-inch decks. And we were able to create an HD workflow that is cost efficient and effective.”

In the past year, Steven Wild, president of Grace & Wild in Farmington, Mich., has experienced growing interest in finishing work in HD, and not just from commercial producers. “Many customers producing digital signage, independent theatrical content, long-form broadcast and business television are now either creating or budgeting HD projects. At the same time, they are very tuned into the concept of re-purposing their program material for alternative media distribution, such as Internet video, podcasts, cell phone messaging, etc.,” he says.

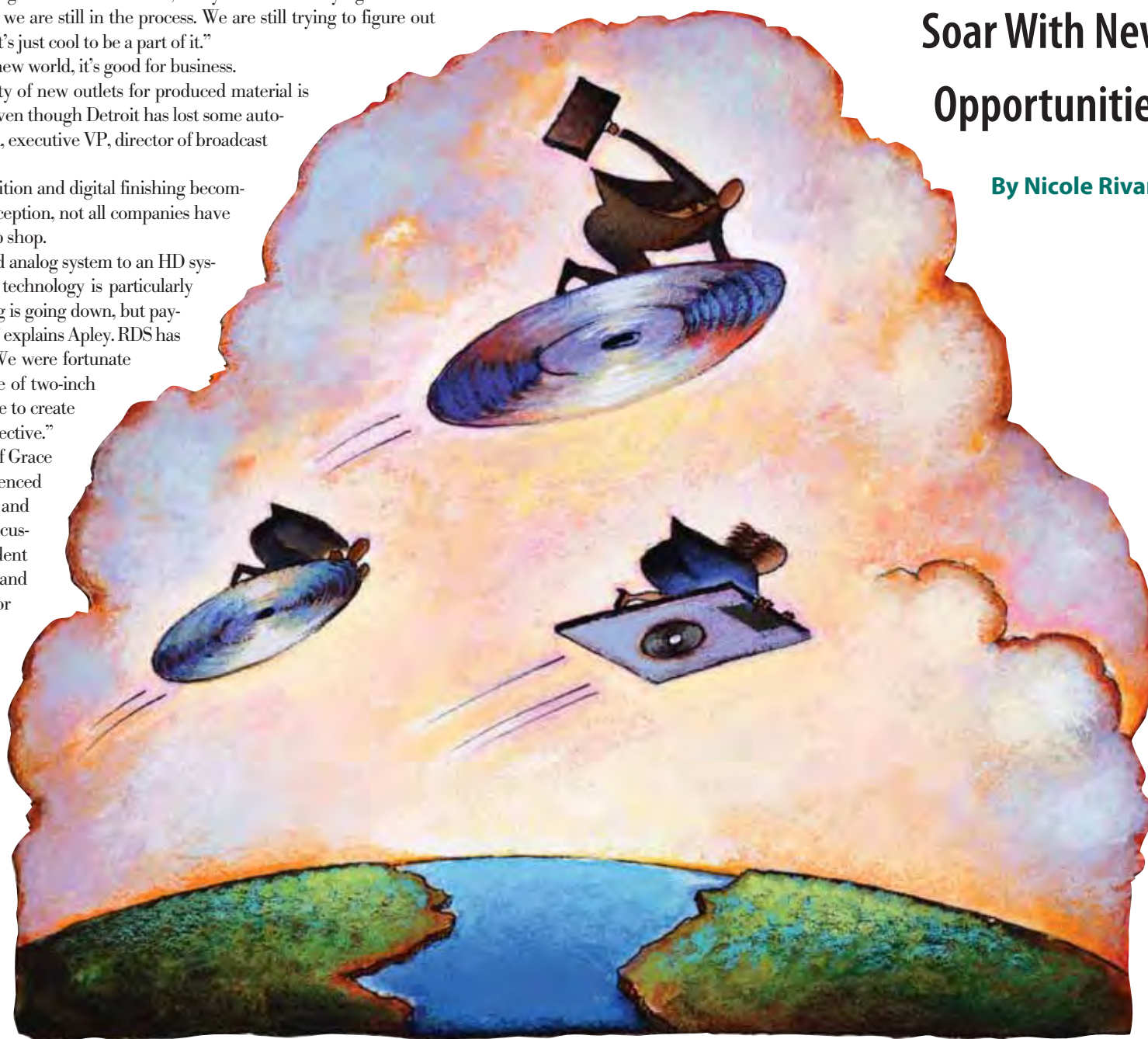
Grace & Wild’s production and post division hdstudios was recently called on by Pass Left Productions of Hillsborough, North Carolina, to shoot half-hour broadband programs in HD and edit and format the programs for Internet delivery for the Borders Group. The Borders’ Book Club programs can be viewed as webcasts on the Bordersmedia.com Web site.

“The HD multi-cam shoot took place on location at a home in Border’s home

*Continued on page 22*

## Shops Transition To Digital Media, Soar With New Opportunities

By Nicole Rivard



Getty Images GBU\_030(RF)

## Midwest Shops Diversify Into Digital Content Space

Continued from page 21

town Ann Arbor, Michigan. Flash programming and DVD authoring and various format conversions were also provided for the website," explains Wild.

"This was the second webcast we

created for Borders, and they have several more projects planned."

### The complete package

Apley notes that a lot of the work RDS does encompasses an entire project from start to finish, which is what

attracted the attention of TV production company Intersport to RDS. Intersport tapped RDS last year during college basketball's March Madness to create some of the first straight to mobile phone content.

"They chose us to help them to

do something for Sprint's Power Vision Network. We did news and coverage and updates of the NCAA men's basketball tournaments. We did hundreds of two- to three-minute hits. Ten minutes after the announcer was done talking, we would have

something up on the phones," Apley recalls. "So we were rolling a live cut directly into an edit system, generating the graphics on the fly, slapping them together, putting on the music, compressing the file, and boom. It was basically like a news broadcast but instead of a tower we were uploading the files to an FTP site."

He adds that they created the metadata and the file structure for all of the files so they showed up in the right order on the phone. "We were handling all of the stuff and it was a huge learning curve, because no one's ever done it before."

It's looking like the RDS team will be doing it again this year because it was a big hit for Sprint. Although the client did not release any official numbers, Apley says it had a huge upswell in its web traffic and the numbers of subscribers.

Apley says RDS is also actively pursuing other original digital media creation. The company just produced an original short-form comedy pilot for NBC Universal's dotcomedy.com. The web network features stand-up, highlights from television comedies, entire episodes from old-school sitcoms and original shorts and digital series like RDS' *Kyle's in a Coma*.

### Show me the money

The thing about digital media that Apley and others find a little bizarre is the lower price points. He says that compared to normal broadcasts where price points are \$30,000 to \$50,000 for a half-hour pilot, digital media is a fifth of that. No one has really figured out the structure of digital entertainment and how to monetize yet. But now that the big guys like Google and MySpace are getting involved, he believes an infrastructure will be put into place.

"This year because of Goo-Tube and Newscorp pushing the MySpace video site pretty hard, I think people are finally going to start making money on this in a pretty major way. Maybe not on cell phones just yet but definitely on the Internet," says Apley. "And as the models come to light that are profitable, then I think we are headed for a time of pretty serious prosperity. All the white papers I'm reading would suggest that in the next three years, we're looking at billions of dollars."

Until then, digital media creation is at least opening up the doors for more ideas to be brought to light because lower cost production means networks are willing to risk more. "The fact that Budweiser has dedicated so many millions of dollars to their own web-based video network, Bud.TV, production companies like us salivate over stuff like that because we've got

**Al Collins, Optical Technician**

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a million ideas. This new emphasis on digital media over the Internet is opening up a lot of opportunities for people with ideas more than the transition from analog to digital television."

One company bringing ideas to the table for Bud.TV is SEED, a branded entertainment company affiliated with Venice, Calif.-based Backyard Productions. Company partner Roy Skillicorn still calls Chicago home. The Backyard family also consists of Transistor Studios, a company specializing in motion graphics, web, print and DVD design.

"We have three entities and the beauty of that is we have the opportunity to create content and produce it in one family," Skillicorn says, reiterating the importance these days of having a one-stop shop, which Apley alluded to earlier. Skillicorn is proud of the work they completed for Bud.TV, adding that he was not at liberty to discuss the details of the three projects but says that two of them are reality shows.



Roy Skillicorn

"There is a big learning curve there. You have lots of cameras and unscripted lines and it's a very new world for us. Basically we are kind of flying by the seat of our pants in some cases," he says with a laugh. He added that Backyard and its affiliates are not alone. "Other companies are on the forefront of this—we are all kind of setting our own rules and trying to get the client to understand our interests and making sure it's a smooth process."

*Continued on page 24*

## Michigan Is 'Open For Business'

### Filming Incentive Program Becomes Reality



Janet Lockwood

To say Janet Lockwood, director of the Michigan Film Office, is thrilled is an understatement. Earlier this month, the Michigan film production incentive package was signed into law by Gov. Jennifer Granholm (D-Mich.). The bill, sponsored by Rep. Bill Huizenga (R-Zeeland), chair of the state's House Commerce Committee, passed in the Senate and in the

House in December.

"After having worked toward this end for nearly four years, I am somewhat over the moon. I have Rep. Bill Huizenga, the governor and several other key legislators to thank for the final push, along with great support from Michigan crew people. It's very cool," says Lockwood.

In a nutshell, commercials, TV series and films are eligible if they spend at least \$200,000 in Michigan. (It can be cumulative over the course of a year.) Companies must submit applications to the film office and treasury and be pre-approved before becoming eligible. The bill includes a graduated scale depending on how much a company spends in Michigan. Between \$200,000 and \$1 million, a company receives up to a 12 percent refund; between \$1 million and \$5 million, a company receives up to a 16 percent refund; between \$5 million to \$10 million, a company receives up to a 20 percent refund; and anything more than \$10 million only receives 20 percent on the first \$10 million. There is a total of \$7 million available per year for four years.

Lockwood hopes to have the measure up and running by Feb. 1. and says she is already getting calls on it even though it has yet to be widely publicized.

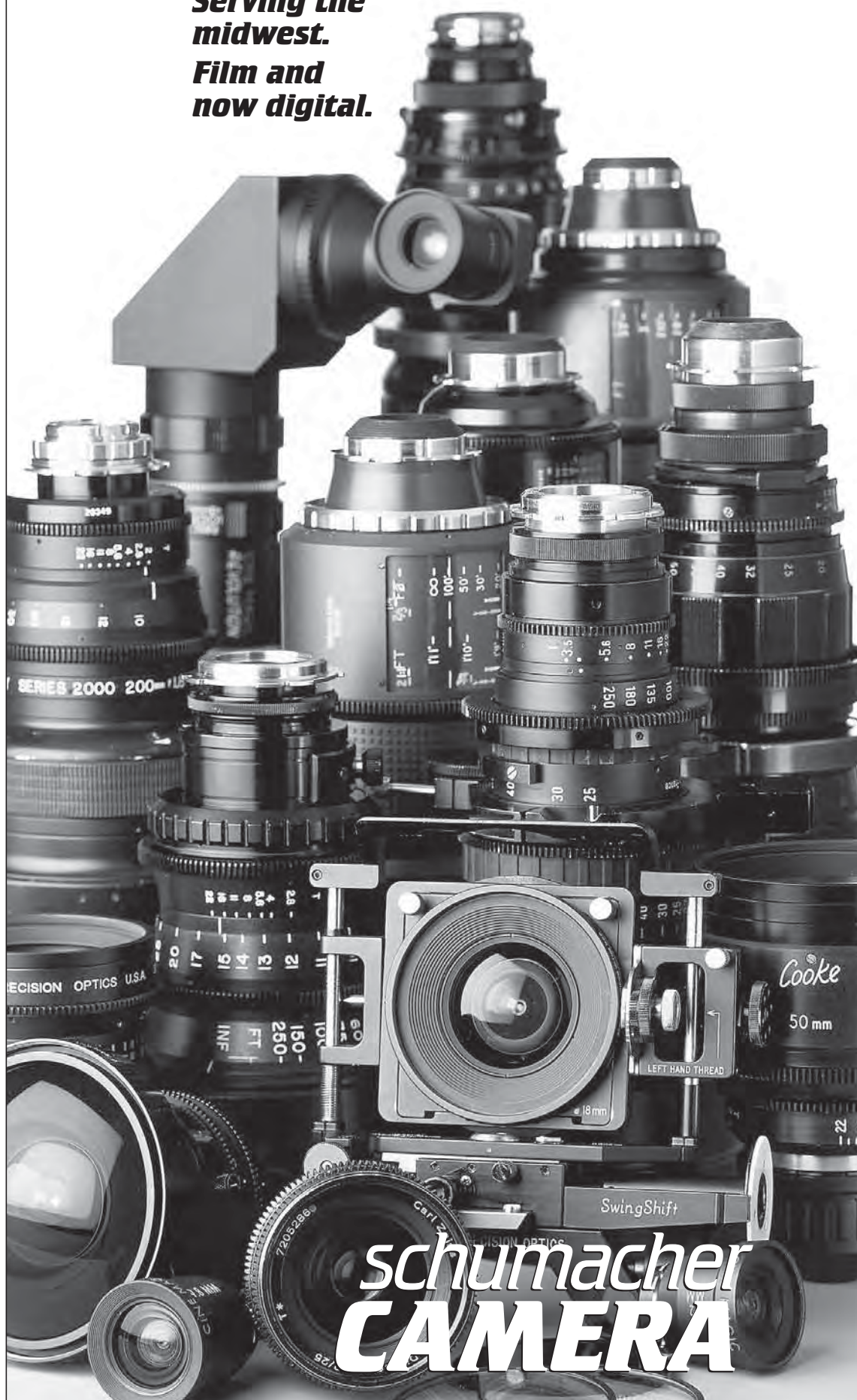
Huizenga is confident this bill will help bring Michigan to the forefront within the film industry. "By offering these incentives, filmmakers will be more likely to shoot commercials, TV series or full feature films in Michigan and in turn contribute greatly to our economy," he said when the bill was passed. "This action says to the industry, Michigan is open for business."

—Nicole Rivard

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## Opportunity Knocks For Several Shops In The Midwest



Tom Duff



Bob Ebel



Steven Wild



Sheldon Cohn



Mitch Apley

Continued from page 23  
**Spots alive and well**

All of these new advertising vehicles are not a death knell for traditional spots either. Instead Skillicorn believes the industry is going to see a resurgence of creative in commercials because they will have to compete. Tom Duff, president/partner of Optimus in Chicago, agrees that commercials are still very much alive. But he is seeing augments to them as “packages.”

“Where we used to define a package as a number of :15s, :30s and :60s, now we see a couple of spots, a webisode, a cinema piece, a print piece or even a longer format branded content piece to be integrated for image purposes as opposed to a specific one time, one message application type thing,” Duff explains. “Not to mention finish it in HD, then they need it in three different formats and seven different standards for global use.

“Why? Branding itself is becoming more complex because of competition, there are a million various mediums available for getting the message out there, and the world is getting smaller by the day.”

**It’s a small world**

Bob Ebel, president of Ebel Productions in Chicago, is being affected by how the Internet has made the world a smaller place. He is receiving a lot of interest from clients in Europe and from cities like London, Milan and Moscow. “I think the Internet has been the tool for that,” says Ebel. He recently met with a production company that is interested in repping him in Europe.

“It’s interesting. What they’ve done is taken my work around to some of the agencies in London. They have never seen that type of work in London. They were very excited about it because they are looking for something different. A lot of the kids’ work we do is unscripted.”

And because of the way he works with kids, he is getting more interest from agencies who want him to work his magic with adults. He garnered attention with the Hallmark campaign for DDB Chicago featuring adults that he did a little over a year ago. He is currently bidding on a project out of California that would also feature adults. “We’re doing a lot where we use non-actors and it’s really fun. What’s critical is the casting, finding the great people and then allowing

the people to be themselves in front of the camera.”

When asked if the growth in popularity of this candid, non-scripted unrehearsed work has anything to do with the user-generated content trend, he said, “I think people can tell today when there is an actor acting. And when you create a commercial that doesn’t look like a commercial, I think it’s refreshing.”

Cohn personally wonders if the trend of pure awareness—an outrageous spot that is strictly for awareness and entertainment sake and doesn’t really have a strong selling message—has peaked. “Spots still need to be entertaining and get awareness but combined with a selling message. I think people are going to start to realize, all the awareness in the world, so what? It remains to be seen,” he said.

The agency recently tapped Picasso Pictures in London to get the selling message across in a lively way for Blockbuster’s Total Access program. “This was always a project with animation because there were a lot of facts that had to be conveyed seamlessly, and a lighthearted animation style seemed to be the best option of a way to communicate what Blockbuster Total Access was about and how it compared to Netflix.”

No matter what the medium, Ebel said he is disappointed when he sees work and there is no concept of what the product really is. “There are too many artists and poets and not enough people who understand that we are marketing products, and you can do both.

“I have a wish that there is more content and less technique in 2007.”

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RDS’ mobile phone content for March Madness

# Ordeal Ends, Creative Dir. Ahmet Returns To Imaginary Forces

Continued from page 1

that included recognition of his artistry from the Royal Television Society and the British Academy of Film and Television Arts. His special OI visa to work in the United States has since been renewed multiple times, the latest covering calendar year 2007. At Imaginary Forces he has distinguished himself in theatrical features (designing the movie trailer for *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone*, the titles for *Spider-Man*, as well as work on *Dreamcatcher*) and advertising (including spots for Ford, Honda and Budweiser, as well as a Nike web/point-of-purchase film featuring Tiger Woods).

Additionally Ahmet thought he would be able to return stateside in a timely manner based on his experience visiting London in 2004; at that time he was subject to a security clearance, which took four months to get. He had reasoned that this time around there would not be an inordinate wait-

ing period since he had a record of a past security clearance. Instead it took even longer the second time to gain authorization to return to the country. Living out of suitcases in a London apartment, Ahmet and his family could do little more than wait since they were not informed about what was causing the delay. The best that can be ascertained is that his surname, Ahmet, matches those of individuals who are ineligible to enter the United States. However the name Ahmet is as common internationally as monikers like Smith or Jones are stateside.

Given his track record, it would have been logical to assume that his identity could have been established and that he could be differentiated in a timely fashion from any other red-flagged person with the name Ahmet. But instead he and his family were detained for an extended period, making it difficult for Ahmet to take on his workload at Imaginary Forces, which supported him throughout this

ordeal, paying his salary as well as his family's housing costs in London during this time.

"Ahmet is a major player at our company," said Peter Frankfurt, creative director/cofounder/executive producer of Imaginary Forces.

"Before he left for London, he had mapped out an ambitious global film for Mercedes-Benz in Germany. He made the presentation that got us the job. But he was never able to return from London in time to produce it as had been planned. He did what he could over the phone and via computer but that is no substitute for what his hands-on, in-person involvement would have meant. Thankfully, the client hung in with us and allowed us to do the job without Ahmet."

Imaginary Forces' CEO/cofounder/managing partner Chip Houghton noted that the company had to turn away a considerable amount of business "because with Ahmet not physically here, we didn't have the bandwidth to take those jobs on."

Frankfurt said of Ahmet, "He's a creative person, extremely professional but how can anyone settle down and do real work [via laptop computer and phone] when you're not only in limbo but dealing with a dying mother, having to home school a daughter because she cannot return to her middle school in Los Angeles and your reputation is being compromised by some sort of security clearance process in which

you don't even know what you're being investigated for?"

SHOOT talked to Ahmet before he obtained the clearance for a stateside return. At that point, he had begun to consider resuming his career in the U.K. "We have to move on with our lives," he said. "We cannot go through much more of a protracted process. The uncertainty has been draining emotionally, financially, personally

and professionally. I'm thankful for Imaginary Forces' support but this has to be resolved soon. It's been a surreal experience in which you pretty much feel powerless."

At that time, Frankfurt expressed anger and frustration over Ahmet's plight, wondering if—or how many—other law-abiding professionals are facing the same situation and being treated unfairly.

## For the Record

In "Spotmakers Poised for Sundance" (1/12), it was incorrectly reported that the late Adrienne Shelly, who directed *Waitress*, was affiliated with Sugarbox Studios, New York. The Sugarbox talent attached to that film was Andrew Hollander who composed the music. *Snow Angels* was produced by Crossroads Films Productions with Cami Taylor, Dan Lindau and Paul Miller serving as producers. That film's director was David Gordon Green.

In "Jayson Moyer Reaches Crossroads" (1/12) the McDonald's spot directed by Moyer was reported as coming out of the San Francisco office of agency Hoffman/Lewis. The job was done for Hoffman/Lewis, St. Louis.

## GS & P Shows Beauty Of Volunteering

Continued from Page 4

put down 'volunteering is sexy' and we knew right away that we had something iconic and true."

Each spot captures people volunteering—cooking for the homeless, planting trees and painting a mural to beautify the city. And since the emphasis is not on how they look but on what they are doing and how it makes them feel good and "sexy," the music was key in creating the right vibe. The spots unfold, to the tune of a licensed track from Nina Simone called "Do I Move You?" featuring the lyrics, "Do I move you, are you willing? Do I groove you, is it thrilling? Do I soothe you, tell the truth now?"

Northrop said that they tried literally hundreds of songs. "We finally boiled it down to two or three, and the Nina Simone tune 'Do I Move You?' was the only one that felt perfect. The song is sexy, but there's still a

little wink there so that the final message doesn't take itself too seriously.

"We all agreed that if we could somehow get the rights to Nina's great song, the spots would be as good as they could be. It was a long shot, but our producer Brian Coate worked some magic and Nina's song was donated. Even her lyrics are perfect."

In addition to the music, the spots could not have resonated with viewers without what director Stephanie Green and DP Kevin Richey brought to the table. (Green directed the job via the agency's GSP Post arm; she has since joined Little Minx, a shop in the family of bicoastal/international RSA companies.)

"Stephanie has an incredible sensibility; it's hard not to love what she creates. And Kevin is tough in all the right ways, he knows what he wants and makes sure he gets it. When Steph and

Kevin said they would do the job, we knew we had lucked out," said King.

But what they didn't know was how much experimentation and collaboration it would take to get to a place where they all liked the work.

"We had already shot the print and loved the way it felt. So, it was an incredibly hard task, translating those real print moments into a TV spot. Thankfully, Steph and Kevin believe in experimentation and tried a ton of different directions until we all felt like we landed in the right place," King said.

Everyone who contributed to the making of the work donated their time, talents and passion, which is a testament to the essence of SF Connect.

"A group of volunteers created an ad campaign about volunteerism. That's something I can believe in," King said.

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## News

### street talk

Santa Monica-headquartered Ascent Media Group has named Richard Andrews as senior VP/COO for media services. In his new capacity, Andrews, formerly president of Technicolor Creative Services, will oversee day-to-day operations at AMG facilities that provide digital media services, including: Digital Media Data Center, Burbank and Northvale, NJ; Blink Digital, New York and L.A.; Cinetech in Valencia, Calif.; Ascent Media Wardour Street, London; Stream, London; and Visiontext, London and L.A.....Bicoastal Hornet has added director Lorenzo Fonda to its roster.....Toy NY has added the team of copywriter

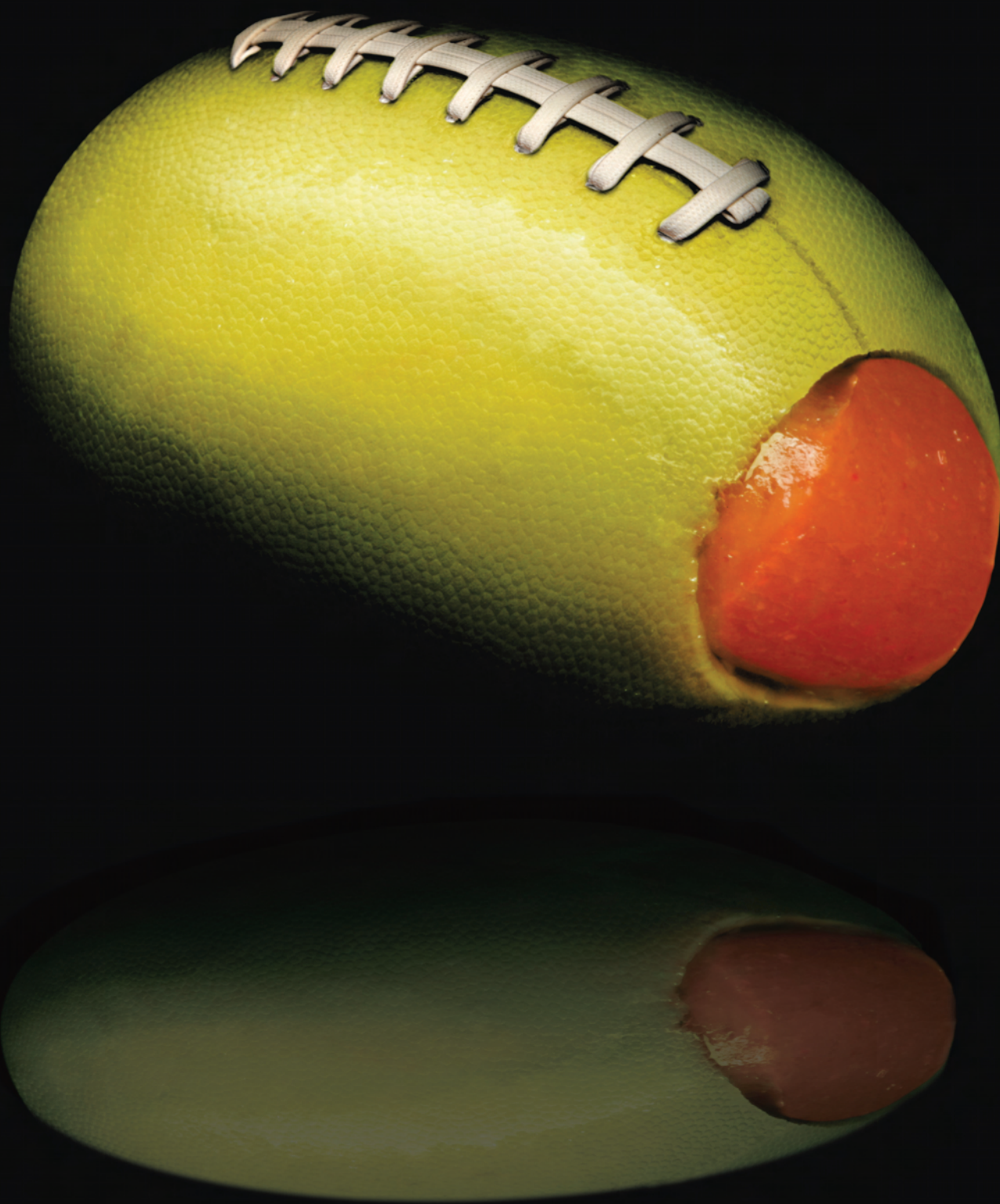
Jake Benjamin and art director Mark Voehringer, formerly of Saatchi & Saatchi, New York. Tiffany McKee, who had been freelancing at Toy as a creative, has also joined the shop....Tony Granger, chief creative officer of Saatchi & Saatchi, New York, will chair the advertising jury for The Art Directors Club's 86th annual Awards competition. Chairing interactive will be Rei Inamoto, global creative director of AKQA. Winners will be announced in the spring with a gala ceremony slated for late May at the ADC Gallery in New York.....Tom McGowan has returned to Quantel to serve as its CEO for North America. He will divide his time between the hardware/software maker's California office and its North American headquarters in Vienna, Va. Earlier in his career, McGowan was VP of broadcast sales at Quantel. He more recently served as director of broadcast sales operations, Midwest and Western States and national sales for Avid Technologies.....

### report

Hollywood-based production house Zoo, headed by executive producers Gower Frost and Jan Wieringa, has signed Regina O'Neill for representation on the West Coast, in Texas and Florida. Zoo's directorial roster includes Simon West, Luca Maroni, Jeff Gordon, Michal Utterback, Hank Benson, James Frost and Diane Van Ussel....Reps Sasha Stern and Jamie Scalera have formed Miss Smith, a New York firm handling the East Coast for a roster including Epoch Films, Sticks+Stones Studios, Cosmo Street Editorial, EyeballNYC, and Crispin Porter+Bogusky, Boulder, Colo.....DP Ketil Dietrichson has signed with the Sheldon Prosnit Agency, Los Angeles....DP Barry Ackroyd (United 93) has joined Endeavor, Beverly Hills, for spot and feature representation....Production designer Chris Gorak, who's worked often with director David Fincher of bicoastal Anonymous Content, is again being repped by The Montana Artists Agency, LA.

### bulletin board

- >January 31-Feb. 2/Palm Springs, CA: HPA Technology Retreat. [www.hpaonline.com](http://www.hpaonline.com)
- >February 3/Los Angeles, CA: 59th Annual DGA Awards Dinner. [www.dga.org](http://www.dga.org)
- >February 11/Los Angeles, CA: VES (Visual Effects Society) Awards. [www.vesawards.com](http://www.vesawards.com)
- >February 22-24/San Diego, CA: Online Marketing Summit. [www.onlinemarketingsummit.com](http://www.onlinemarketingsummit.com)
- >February 27/Las Vegas, NV: Building a Successful Interactive Advertising Business (for agency execs/mgrs). [www.laredogroup.com](http://www.laredogroup.com)
- >March 5-9/San Jose, CA: Game Developers Conference. [www.gdconf.com](http://www.gdconf.com)



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