

ONE EIGHTY

180



APPALACHIA

A NEW PBS SERIES **BY THE** JAMES AGEE FILM PROJECT

A HISTORY OF MOUNTAINS AND PEOPLE

NARRATED BY **SISSY SPACEK**

A four-part series for PBS exploring the intersection of natural history and human history in one of America's national treasures

Winter 2009
The Motion
Picture
Industry
Newsletter

filmmc
NORTH CAROLINA FILM OFFICE
NCFILM.COM

Contact Information

Staff

Aaron Syrett, Director

Hannah Whitley,
Executive Assistant
to the Director

Sallie Hedrick,
Production Executive

Phone

866.468.2273 toll free
919.733.9900 tel
919.715.0151 fax

Physical Address

North Carolina Film Office
301 N. Wilmington Street
Raleigh, North Carolina USA
27601

Mailing Address

North Carolina Film Office
4324 Mail Service Center
Raleigh, North Carolina USA
27699-4324

www.ncfilm.com

NC Film Office Rocks at Sundance

The North Carolina Film Office showcased North Carolina's Southern hospitality and the ease of working in our state to Sundance Film Festival guests with a 10-by-3.5-foot rocking director's chair weighing more than 1,000 pounds at the Salt Lake City International Airport.

The oversized freestanding installation was on display until the end of January. The director's chair with the filmNC logo rocked gently in the baggage claim area next to the Sundance Film Festival shuttle.

"The rocking film director's chair is a visual reminder to the film industry how easy it is to film in North Carolina," says Aaron Syrett, NC Film Office director. "North Carolina's infrastructure, diverse geography and competitive tax incentives are just a few reasons film producers can sit back and relax while filming in the state."

The chair took one month to create and two hours to install onsite on



Egyptian Theatre, Sundance Film Festival

Friday, Jan. 9, 2009. The chair rocked continuously, thanks to a quiet motor and subtle lighting drawing attention to the installation. The chair is generated intended buzz, with coverage in USA TODAY and the Salt Lake Tribune, among others.

As attendees departed the festival the North Carolina Film Office's new ad campaign featuring the rocking chair was displayed on 11 digital display panels at the airport.

Watch the chair rock on YouTube: www.youtube.com/watch?v=DIHcjsMjEUo



Front Cover:

New HBO TV series Eastbound and Down unites old friends

By Amy Hotz

Not long ago, UNCSA Alumni Ben Best, Danny McBride and pal Jody Hill combined the money in their pockets to buy a case of beer, which they consumed while sitting in a kiddie pool behind Best's house in Charlotte. They were each broke and dreaming.

"It was a really nice day and we were sitting there and we just started talking about ideas for TV shows because David (Gordon) Green was hitting it off so well," Best said, referring to a schoolmate who had found success in Hollywood. "We were actually showing up at parties and there would be people there that were in the industry and so we figured we'd better start coming up with good ideas and have stuff ready in case we were ever talking to someone."

The three friends met in 1995 at the N.C. School of the Arts. Green, who wrote and directed *All The Real Girls* (winner of the 2003 Jury Prize at the Sundance

Film Festival) who also is involved in *Eastbound*, was one year ahead of them. But they all became like family, Best said. Most recently, Green directed McBride in the hit *Pineapple Express*, opposite Seth Rogen and James Franco.

A couple years ago, while sitting on the couch at his home in Charlotte, Best got a call from McBride. Will Ferrell had seen Hill, Best and McBride's independent movie *The Footfist Way* (which was released theatrically in May 2008) and wanted to know if they had anything else in the works. It turns out, sipping beer in kiddie pools was good for the creative juices. One of the ideas they threw around that day became *Eastbound and Down*.

Ferrell's company, Gary Sanchez Productions, produced a six-episode season for HBO this past winter in Wilmington. McBride, who also writes for the show, stars as Kenny, a washed up professional baseball player. After getting kicked off the team, the only place Kenny has to go is back home to Shelby, N.C. Salt is thrown onto that ego-busting wound when the only job he can find is as a P.E. teacher at a middle school.

For Best, Wilmington has offered a comfortable and ideal place to film.

"We just wanted to get ... out of L.A., you

know? And coming back to our home state, there are so many good things. I mean, we bring business to it, we get to be by the ocean," Best said.

He's been to Wilmington many times over the past 20 years and helped produce the pilot, which filmed in Wilmington the summer of 2007. But he had to wait until late 2008 to return for the full series.

"It was a little bit of a fight, but once we got here, HBO immediately brought another show here, (HBO's) "Little Britain (USA)," and they love it. They love coming to Wilmington."

Courtesy Star News

Eastbound and Down premieres February 15 on HBO

For more information visit: www.hbo.com/eastboundanddown



Ben Best and Danny McBride.
Photo Courtesy Fred Norris/HBO

UNCSA Alumni Receive Honors

By Marla Carpenter



Two UNCSA film students have been honored by the American Society of Cinematographers (ASC).

Aaron Dunson, who graduated in 2008, earned the ASC Burton Stone Heritage Award for outstanding achievement in student filmmaking – the top prize in

the undergraduate competition – for his work on the student film *Asphyxia*. *Asphyxia* also screened at the Ojai, Cucalorus and Asheville film festivals.

"These students have demonstrated an ability to create images for their films that visually evoke the emotions of the story in a collaborative environment," says ASC President Daryn Okada. "The ASC designed this award to encourage talented student filmmakers to pursue careers in cinematography. Several past winners are now working in the industry and following their dreams."

Jeffrey S. Taylor, who is a UNCSA college senior, was among four students awarded honorable mention in the competition for his work on the student film *1915*, which also won the Directors Guild of America (DGA) Award.

Both Dunson and Taylor will receive their awards as part of the 23rd Annual American Society of Cinematographers Outstanding Achievement Awards ceremony in Los Angeles on February 15.

Upcoming Events

That's Not Mine! Film Festival
Durham, NC
February 20 - 21, 2009
www.tnmfilmfest.com

Nevermore Film Festival
Durham, NC
February 20 - 22, 2009
http://festivals.carolinatheatre.org/nevermore

Carolina Film and Video Festival
Greensboro, NC
February 25 - 28, 2009
www.carolinafilmandvideofestival.org

North Carolina Film Council
Meeting
Raleigh, NC
March 26, 2009

Full Frame Documentary Film
Festival
Durham, NC
April 2-5, 2009
www.fullframefest.org

RiverRun International Film
Festival
Winston Salem, NC
April 26 - 29, 2009
www.riverrunfilm.com

Blu Moon Film Festival
Greenville, NC
April 28 - May 2, 2009
www.blumoonfilm.com

NFCO at SXSW

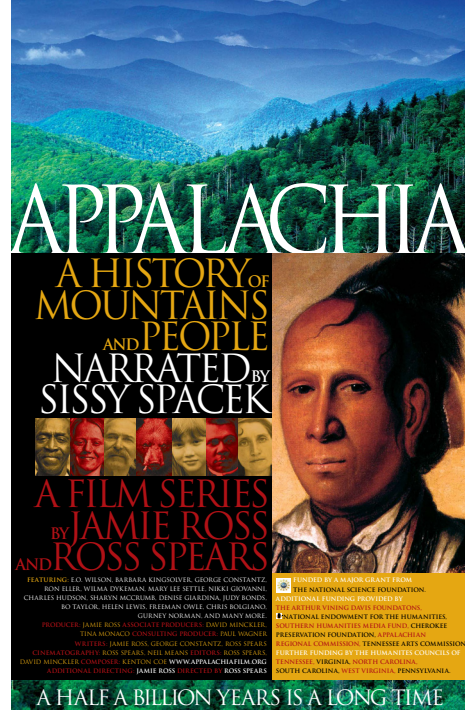
The North Carolina Film Office will participate in the South by Southwest Film Festival in Austin, TX from March 13-21, 2009. The NCFO partners with both Advantage West and the Piedmont Triad Film Commission to sponsor this event. www.sxsw.com

Mark It!

The miniseries *Appalachia*, partly filmed in Asheville, NC will premiere in April 2009 on PBS. The four-part film tells the story of Appalachia through the birth of the mountains, its people and culture, its wildlife, development and more, said producer Jamie Ross, a former longtime Asheville resident. The \$2.5 million high-definition film is narrated by Oscar-winning actress Sissy Spacek and directed by Oscar nominee Ross Spears. Chapters also explore the creation of the mountains and its first residents, the colonists who later arrived and "the challenges and cultures we have in the mountains today," Ross said. "We pull all the fascinating history of the region together," she added. "It's the backyard of 13 states." Ten years in the making, "a good half of it was shot (in Western North Carolina)," including the Botanical Gardens at Asheville, the



Ross Spears, Jamie Ross



Joyce Kilmer Memorial Forest and in Cherokee, Ross said. "The mountains are the main characters." Visit www.appalachiafilm.org for more information.

Dates Airing on PBS:

PART ONE: Time and Terrain
April 9th, 2009 10:00pm
PART TWO: New Green World
April 16th, 2009 10:00pm
PART THREE: Mountain Revolutions
April 23rd, 2009 10:00pm
PART FOUR: Power and Place
April 30th, 2009 10:00pm

Crew Notes

The revised North Carolina Film Office Resource Directory is accepting registrations! All NC crew, vendors, and support services are invited to register at no cost. The North Carolina Film Office Resource Directory now allows registrants to personally update listings at any time and view available production opportunities. Powered by ReelScout™, it sets a new standard for film directories around the world, and allows filmmakers to locate North Carolina industry professionals like never before. Register Now! Visit www.ncfilm.com and click on the FILM DIRECTORY tab to get started.

Tax Incentive Update

In 2008 the North Carolina Film Office assisted over 200 productions interested in filming in North Carolina. Between 2007 and 2008, 34 productions in both film and television were awarded North Carolina's film tax credit. These productions collectively filmed in 28 different counties in every region of the state. These productions spent \$162,759,603 in North Carolina on goods, services, and wages, employing 16,271 people. The total cost of NC's tax credit totaled \$15,413,936 demonstrating an impressive return on investment: For every \$1.00 the State of North Carolina invested, \$10.56 was put back into local economies by the motion picture industry.

Bees is the People's Choice

The Secret Life of Bees took top honors of the 2008 People's Choice Awards in early January. *The Secret Life of Bees* won awards for Favorite Drama and Favorite Independent Movie. Actresses Queen Latifah and Dakota Fanning accepted the awards during the ceremony at the Shrine Auditorium in Los Angeles. *The Secret Life of Bees* filmed in the Wilmington area in early 2008. The film is based on Sue Monk Kidd's New York Times Bestseller of the same name. Drama stars Dakota Fanning and Queen Latifah alongside Jennifer Hudson and Alicia Keys. Coupled with our state's extraordinary locations and phenomenal infrastructure, North Carolina's celebrated film tax incentive helped bring the production to the State of North Carolina.

NCFO on Facebook

The North Carolina Film Office made its Facebook debut in early January. The North Carolina Film Office Facebook page features pictures, videos, event information and more! With a Facebook account, become a "fan" of the North Carolina Film Office page and gain exclusive access to the North Carolina Film Office. Creation of the Facebook page is another progressive step taken by the North Carolina Film Office to boost North Carolina's global visibility in the 21st century.

THE Slate

The North Carolina Film Office would like to thank North Carolina's 6 regional film commissions for their tremendous efforts and continued support for North Carolina's film industry. Together with the Charlotte Regional Film Commission, Durham Film Commission, Eastern NC Regional Film Commission, Piedmont Triad Film Commission, Western NC Film Commission, and Wilmington Regional Film Commission our offices represent a team of professionals working in tandem for the benefit of motion picture in North Carolina. Their enthusiasm and dedication is not only without comparison but also greatly appreciated and respected.

Looking Back at *The Secret Life of Bees*



Bottom Left: Director and Screenwriter Gina Prince-Bythewood on the set with the Novelist of the book Sue Monk Kidd.

Above: Queen Latifah, Sophie Okonedo, Jennifer Hudson, Alicia Keys and Dakota Fanning.

Far Left: Dakota Fanning (top) and Jennifer Hudson

North Carolina Film Council

The North Carolina Film Office is supported by a governor-appointed group who offer advice and guidance in the interest of North Carolina's film industry. The North Carolina Film Council meets 3 times a year in different regions across the state. The next meeting is scheduled for March 26, 2009 in Raleigh. Current members are:

Chair: Bob Seligson, Raleigh

Vice-Chair: E.A. Tod Thorne,

Charlotte

T.E. Austin, II, Durham

Timothy M. Bourne, Wilmington

Nancy Buirski, Durham

Mark de Castrique, Charlotte

Craig Fincannon, Wilmington

Joseph A. Gomez, Raleigh

Monty Hagler, High Point

NC State Sen. Kay R. Hagan,

Greensboro

Cress Horne, Marshville

Donna E. Mack, Raleigh

NC State Rep. Daniel F. McComas,

Wilmington

Thom Mount, Durham /Beverly

Hills, California

James M. O'Brien, III, Raleigh

Margaret Palmer, Durham

Dale Pollock, Winston-Salem

Herman A. Stone, Charlotte

Travis Tatham, Asheville

Kelly R. Tenney, Castle Hayne

Beth Troutman, Concord

Robyn Yigit Smith, Chapel Hill

Margaret C. Ward, Burlington

Arthur Watkins, Raleigh

Bill Vassar, Wilmington

Zoo Filez Wins Gold Award

By Rod Hackney

Asheboro, NC - A syndicated television series produced by the North Carolina Zoo has been named a Gold Winner in the 2008 International Ava Awards competition recognizing outstanding achievement in video production.

The Zoo FileZ was selected for the honor among 2,200 entries from throughout the United States, Canada and several other countries in the competition. Slated to begin its eleventh season in the spring, *The Zoo FileZ* is a series of two-minute video features that focus on the N.C. Zoo's animal and plant collections, staff members, educational programs, veterinary care, field conservation efforts and other programs. The series is written and hosted by Zoo Public Relations Manager

Herman Stone Honored

Herman Stone, CEO of Stone Theatres and founder of Consolidated Theatres, was awarded North Carolina's prestigious *Order of the Long Leaf Pine*, a distinction reserved for individuals who have demonstrated outstanding service to the state.

Stone, a film industry veteran who has served on the North Carolina Film Council since his appointment in 2003, has helped cultivate the state's burgeoning film industry over the years while developing his own theatre enterprises. Governor Mike Easley, who originally appointed Stone to the NC Film Council, presented the award before leaving office in January.

Stone led the National Association of Theatre Owners for two terms as regional president from 1982 to 1986 and he continues today to serve on the board of directors. He was named "Statesman of the Year" at the 2003 ShowSouth Conference.



Photo Courtesy Tom Gillespie



Rod Hackney with Terry Shiels of Shiels Productions in Charlotte serving as director of photography and co-producer.

The Zoo FileZ airs weekly from April through October on 10 broadcast stations and two cable system in cities across North Carolina. The series has previously been recognized with several national awards for outstanding video production, including the prestigious Mercury Award as well as the Videographer and the Communicator Awards.

The Order of the Long Leaf Pine is the highest civilian honor that can be bestowed by North Carolina's Governor. Past recipients include Charles Kuralt, Michael Jordan and Maya Angelou.



Herman Stone

NCFO hires interns

In the fall of 2008 the North Carolina Film Office created an offsite Location Scout Internship Program. Students from across the state photographed North Carolina locations and got a chance to receive academic credit for their work.

The program's design prepares the interns for real work in the industry. Upon being hired, interns attend an orientation with the NC Film Office's Director, Aaron Syrett. At the orientation, they learn how to shoot and stitch their photographs. They are also given their first few assignments. During the remainder of the semester, the interns communicate with the NCFO to receive and submit their assignments. Finally at the end of the semester, the interns are required to present a final project in the office.

The Location Scout Internship Program will be offered continuously throughout the spring, summer and fall semesters.

Fall 2008 Interns
Ragan Dalton, Junior, NC State University
Elizabeth Lemon, Senior, Randolph Community College
Julia White, Senior, NC State University
Kristen Wippermann, Senior, Wake Forest University
Janet Wu, Senior, Duke University
Kristen Zachary, Senior, Elon College

ONE Sheet...

By Beth Petty, Charlotte Regional Film Commission

Blake Edwards, the 2009 International Winner of YouTube's Project:Direct, credits Charlotte's creative cooperation as being a large part of his success. Without it, Edwards would have been in L.A., and his award winning film ¡Perfecto! would not have been made.

Edwards, who says he inherited the creativity gene from his parents, seemed destined to become a filmmaker. In spite of his best efforts to become a visual artist, movie-making opportunities kept presenting themselves. He made his first short films in youth group at Matthews United Methodist Church. Next came a film appreciation class at East Mecklenburg High School where he made his first 10-minute short, *Lack Thereof*, about a student's worst nightmare - forgetting to wear pants to school.

After graduating from UNC Chapel Hill, Edwards planned to break into film in L.A. He'd bought new tires and was selling his possessions in preparation for the trip when a friend's wedding in

Charlotte detoured him. There, in his hometown, he found the creative - and supportive - climate he didn't even know he needed.

"It was the community my heart was aching for," Edwards said. "There were dreamers, creators, musicians, each promoting and supporting one another's gifts, propelling each other towards success."



Blake Edwards

It was in just such a creative environment that Edwards met Erin Fede, his workplace cubicle neighbor. She had starred in and written Project Direct's 2007 runner-up, *Gone in a Flash*. When entries for this year's contest opened, Edwards and Fede jumped on the opportunity to collaborate and the rest, as they say, is history.

With Edwards directing and editing, Fede acting and Edwards' five roommates serving as production assistants, cast and crew, ¡Perfecto! was born. Since it was an international contest, Edwards wanted the film to appeal to an international audience. Fortunately, Charlotte had locations that could stand in for France, India, the Middle East and Russia. The audience and judges loved it; ¡Perfecto! won.

Edwards and Fede were flown to the Sundance Film Festival and the roommates made the 32-hour trek via minivan. At one point during an appointed lunch meeting, Edwards found himself sitting between Sundance's director of programming and senior programmer.

"It was a filmmaker's dream," he says. "Everyone was so complimentary of our work. And when they asked us where we found the locations, I could say, 'one place - Charlotte!' It's exciting that Charlotte could play all those different places."

Watch ¡Perfecto! on YouTube: www.youtube.com/watch?v=JSVzmhJQYPw

Unscripted...

Years ago when I was writing on a project in Chicago, I got a call from the director saying the locations I had called for in the script -- a dam, tunnels and a railroad train (that we could wreck) -- couldn't be found in Southern Illinois. So I sent him to North Carolina and the rest is history: The Fugitive wouldn't have been The Fugitive without North Carolina.

Having grown up in Charlotte and Gastonia I always hoped I'd come across another project that could bring me back home. That's why I was thrilled three years ago when a producer sent me Tim Tyson's book

Blood Done Sign My Name, the non-fiction account of the 1970 murder of a young black Vietnam vet in Oxford, NC and the subsequent trial and aftermath that changed the town forever. The independent film however would require tremendous amounts of imagination and budget restraint to produce. There were marches, church locations, riots, and courtroom scenes all requiring hundreds of extras. Not to mention the need for period wardrobe and cars. From the start the North Carolina Film Office was a full partner in the process. From scouting and clearing locations to housing and transportation the Commission helped us solve every one of our challenges. Its staff was not only helpful; they were informed, understood our project and stayed poised to assist us all the way to the wrap.

While I brought several of my production keys from Los Angeles, we made it a point of the company was to hire local crews wherever possible. The caliber of North Carolina crews was outstanding, especially given the tough workdays our schedule required.

Being a native it was also important to get the sound right as well. I wanted my actors to come from the south. Our large ensemble cast was put together entirely by Wilmington based Fincannon & Associates, the best casting agency anywhere.

In short, shooting in North Carolina was fabulous. I will be back.

*Jeb Stuart
Producer/Director/Writer
Blood Done Sign My Name
Writer, The Fugitive*



filmc

