

TRICKS OF A WOMAN: Massachusetts Indie Film Sweeps the 6th Monaco International Film Festival in Monte Carlo

Winning Best Picture, Best Actress and Both Best Supporting Actor and Actress Film Written, Shot, and Produced in Massachusetts

TRICKS OF A WOMAN, a new romantic comedy starring Scott Elrod (MEN IN TREES), Carlos Leon (OZ, "Law & Order"), Vincent Pastore ("The Sopranos"), Natasha Lyonne (AMERICAN PIE, BUT I WANT TO BE A CHEERLEADER), and newcomer Erika Portnoy, received the Angel Award for Best Picture, as well as awards for Best Actress to Portnoy, Best Supporting Actor to Leon, and Best Supporting Actress to Lyonne, at the 6th Monaco International Film Festival December 6th, at the Theatre Princess Grace in Monte Carlo. The Angel Awards are bestowed on films that convey the best messages of humanity, either for positive change, love or inner values, or for a new beginning of quality entertainment through adventure, suspense, comedy and romance.

TRICKS OF A WOMAN is the second New England film to win an Angel Award at the Monaco International Film Festival. The first being Gabrielle Savage Dockerman's MISSING IN AMERICA starring Danny Glover (See IMAGINE Dec/Jan 2005).

TRICKS OF A WOMAN screened on opening night, December 4, which also marked the film's world premiere. Festival co-founders, Executive Director Rosana Golden and Director of Programming Dean Bentley, select the Angel Awards Trophy winner for best film while an international jury headed

by British actress Camilla Rutherford (who won a Screen Actors Guild award for her part in GOSFORD PARK) judged the Angel Awards competition. "We loved the film because it carries a dream and it has innocence and love in it," Golden said.

"At first we were honored to have been chosen as the festival's opening night film, but we were even more thrilled to sweep the awards," said Erika Portnoy who is also the film's executive producer. "It's especially gratifying that the film won in Europe at a festival that recognizes films with a positive message."

A modern day twist on "Pygmalion," TRICKS OF A WOMAN revolves around a fashion photographer who is forced to accept a bet that he can turn any girl into a super-model. The Massachusetts written and produced film was shot on location in Massachusetts in July 2008.

Produced by Boston-based Mutressa Movies and directed by Todd Norwood (THE WAYFARERS), the film stars native Bulgarian Erika Portnoy, who co-wrote the screenplay together with Norwood and Richard A. Lasser (the upcoming PEARL OF THE ORIENT to be directed by Ken Russell) and is the film's executive producer. Prior to entering the film business Portnoy worked as a model, which included a high profile spread in Vogue.

Even with a low budget, the producers were able to attract some well-known actors



who were drawn to the script's characters. For example, Vincent Pastore welcomed the opportunity to play a warm character after playing many gangster roles, such as in "The Sopranos." The Boston community was also very supportive of the film, donating everything from limousine service to the use of a RED camera, which enabled the production to have a 35mm look using digital technology.

For more information about the film visit www.mutressamovies.com. For more information about the Monaco International Film Festival, visit www.monacofilmfest.com.

Monaco International Film Festival Executive Director Rosana Golden, TRICKS OF A WOMAN stars Scott Elrod, Carlos Leon, Erika Portnoy, and the film's director and writer Todd Norwood (who is from New Hampshire). The made in Massachusetts film swept the Angel and all the Best Awards at the Monaco International Film Festival on December 6th. Photo by Remi Abudu.

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the roof and drove across the country.

What is your occupation?

I am currently a writers' assistant on the CBS show "How I Met Your Mother."

What are some of your accomplishments?

I would consider my continuing work in the industry to be my biggest accomplishment. I started as a PA on a low-budget feature and worked my way up to 2nd 2nd AD and then to 2nd AD. I worked as an office PA on a couple of reality shows and then moved up to coordinator. I then moved into big-budget features, working as an office and set PA on RUSH HOUR 3 and then as an executive assistant at the production company responsible for BLOOD DIAMOND and THE LAST SAMURAI. Working freelance requires a great deal of patience and persistence, two qualities I have developed since moving to LA.

Why did you move to Los Angeles?

Growing up, I had a large sign hanging on my wall. It was a green, plastic reproduction of a California freeway sign with a large arrow and the words "Los Angeles." It was always just a matter of time before I moved to the west coast. When I came to LA to participate in a film workshop at UCLA in my late teens, I officially knew this was where I needed to be to pursue my dream of directing films.

What do you like about Los Angeles?

The weather in LA is beautiful. You never have to check the forecast to know that it's going to be 70 and sunny. It's also nice to

know that many of the people that move to Los Angeles do so with a passion to tell stories and work in the film industry.

Would you ever consider working in or moving back to New England?

The thought of moving back to New England has, in fact, crossed my mind since Massachusetts passed their new tax incentive. But because I'm finally, after three long years, starting to move up the proverbial ladder; I will stay in LA for now. If, at some point in the future, I feel like I can achieve the goals I have set for myself regardless of where I live, I would certainly like to move back east.



JONATHAN S. SWARTZ

Lighting Technical Director, Sony Picture's Imageworks

Where are you from originally?

Wenham, MA.

How long have you lived in Los Angeles?

Three years.

What are some of your accomplishments?

Working on feature films like I AM LEGEND, SPEED RACER and EAGLE EYE. Specifically, working to drive the look of a sequence on SPEED RACER and the lighting of the Ariia computer and Reaper on EAGLE EYE.

Why did you move to Los Angeles?

For my job at Imageworks.

What do you like about Los Angeles?

The fact that the sun sets over the ocean! Oh, and the farmers' markets.

Would you ever consider working in or moving back to New England?

Most definitely. As long as there's a visual effects team or animation house with work in features, I'd be there!



VALERIE WEISS

Filmmaker

Where are you from originally?

Philadelphia. But I lived around Boston, JP and Cambridge for

8 years. I moved to get my PhD at Harvard. Boston shaped me because I moved there right after college. It's where I started making movies, so it informed me as film director.

How long have you lived in Los Angeles?

Five years.

What are some of your accomplishments?

I did the AFI directing workshop for women - they only take 8 women out of hundreds who apply - and made the short film TRANSGRESSIONS which won a BAFTA/LA Student Film Award, among others. I founded PhD Productions (<http://phdproductions.com/>) and we're working on a feature, LOS-

ING CONTROL, about a female scientist that wants scientific proof that her boyfriend is the "one." I also wrote a TV Pilot, UNDER THE MANHATTAN BRIDGE, based on my first film, DANCE BY DESIGN that I've been pitching to networks.

Why did you move to Los Angeles?

After founding and running Harvard University's Dudley Film Program, I wanted to pursue a professional career as a film director. My husband, Rob Johnson, who was a lawyer in Boston, wanted to be an actor. With both career choices we decided to make the move (Rob's since been on 24 and THE MENTALIST). Another benefit to LA is a bigger concentration of actors and creative collaborators.

What do you like about Los Angeles?

I love that the majority of my friends are artists. I love the creative energy here. It's really easy to get people together to make something. The sunshine, of course. You don't feel crazy for pursuing creative dreams here because everyone is taking creative risks.

Would you ever consider working in or moving back to New England?

Absolutely. LOSING CONTROL is set there. So depending on the costs...

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