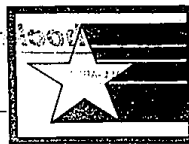


Entertainment

Ethel Simmons editor 644-1100



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O&E

His family story is now a movie

By Ethel Simmons
staff writer

A STORY THAT was told at every family gathering has become a motion picture, "Coupe de Ville." Mike Binder, originally from Birmingham, is the guy who wrote the screenplay and co-produced the film comedy.

Alan Arkin portrays the father, the character who in real life is Binder's late grandfather. The three sons in the movie from Universal Studios are based on three brothers, one of whom is Binder's father, Burt, called Daddy.

Interviewed in his suite at the Radisson Hotel in Southfield, Binder was getting ready to pack and leave. The personable writer and performer was in town on a publicity tour, and had attended the Detroit premiere of "Coupe de Ville" the night before, at the Old Orchard in Farmington Hills.

The movie had its world premiere at the Museum of Modern Art in New York. "I took my dad to it, and he loved it," Binder said. His father, Burt, now lives in Florida. His mother, Judy Trumbull, makes her home in Newport Beach, Calif.

OTHER RELATIVES still living in the Detroit area include cousins, and Uncle Bobby (one of the brothers, played by Patrick Dempsey), who lives in Birmingham. "He saw the movie last night for the first time," Binder said last week.

"Coupe de Ville" also had premieres a few weeks ago at a Los Angeles celebrity gala and in Toronto.

"Audiences honestly love this movie," Binder said. "Time magazine loved it." He said some critics have complained that the story is not new, that it's a foregone conclusion the young brothers who take their Dad's car to Florida are going to smash it up along the way.

Binder declared, "It's a very sweet little fable. This story has been told a million times. My father and his brothers took this trip to Florida and smashed up the car."

"They told this story for 30 years. I realized it was a point in their life when they left like three siblings, and there was a moment when three brothers share something."

BINDER SAID he has put six years of his life into turning the story into a movie. Making the film has



JOHN STORMZANO

Mike Binder, who went to high school in Birmingham, talks about the film "Coupe de Ville," which tells about an experience shared by his father and his father's two brothers.

mount. "It sat on a shelf." Then, Universal picked it up. In the beginning, Binder went to the producers for Woody Allen. He chose them because, "Woody Allen was my high school idol. I always wanted to make movies for his company."

Joe Roth, who was with another company, wanted to direct the movie. Binder recalled, "At the first meeting, Roth said, 'If this movie works people will go out of the theater and call their brothers and sis-

ters.'" Those were the same sentiments Binder always had about the movie.

Binder said the first 20 minutes of "Coupe de Ville" are set in Detroit. You see a sign that says, Detroit, and the scene has a Midwestern feel, but actually was shot on location in the South.

THE MOTOR CITY is where Binder grew up. He moved to Birmingham in junior high school and was graduated from Seaholm High School. "California didn't dilute me," he said of his scripts. "The characters I write are very Midwestern."

Binder's next film is "Northern Lights." He said, "It's a Fox film about a summer camp, Tamakwa. I went to in northern Canada with a bunch of Detroit kids. There's a big Tamakwa family (of campers) in the Detroit area."

"Northern Lights" will start filming in September. "We're now working on a cast. I play Bob Handelman, one of the head counselors, who's been there for 15 years. It's exciting," he said.

Although his home is on the West Coast now, Binder said he doesn't have a Hollywood lifestyle. His only close friend in show business is comic Dave Coulier. "He's a friend of mine and an old roommate. He's from this area. We've been friends for 15 years."

Binder has been married for the last three years. His wife, Diane, is not in the entertainment field. "She runs a bank," Binder said.



Binder describes what it was like working on the movie. As scriptwriter and co-producer for



"Coupe de Ville," he was on the set every day during filming



In scene from "Coupe de Ville," mechanic and brothers deal with the damage to the family car. The movie sets the story in the '60s instead of the '50s when the events of "the Cadillac story" actually occurred.

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