

Entertainment

Ethel Simmons editor/644-1100



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'Big Story': made in Detroit

Some scenes shot in Bloomfield Hills

By Tom Panzenhagen
staff writer

BRIAN LAWRENCE, like a growing number of young and dedicated, Detroit-area moviemakers, wants to see his star rise over Motown, not Hollywood. "You're allowed more freedom to work outside Hollywood — you've more control over the product," he said. "And the nice thing about independent films is you can make them anywhere; Detroit is one of the better places because studio facilities are very good here."

Lawrence, 32, lives in Southfield. His latest film, called "The Big Story," is being shot in Detroit and Bloomfield Hills. A 30-minute "prototype" of the projected, feature-length film already is finished.

Lawrence also runs an acting workshop called The Studio on Washington Avenue (in Royal Oak), and he's the co-

founder and head of the year-old Independent Film Producers Association of Michigan (IFPAM), a non-profit clearinghouse of film talent in southeastern Michigan.

It's not unusual to find the graceful, slightly built Lawrence teaching acting classes from 10 a.m. to 11:30 p.m. Tuesdays and Thursdays, holding casting calls on behalf of area filmmakers on a Saturday morning, and on the set directing "The Big Story" whenever and wherever he can line up cast, crew and location.

Lawrence may be no more dedicated to film than other area moviemakers, but he certainly is more involved in its many different aspects.

LAWRENCE STRESSES classic filmmaking methods and acting techniques — routinely citing Konstantin Stanislavsky's theories of method acting — when discussing "The Big Story."

"A lot of other directors don't know acting theory and, to some extent, are cynical of it, and I don't understand that," Lawrence said.

"The Big Story" is about a newspaper man who's "too cynical to be a reporter because he doesn't believe there's truth," according to the director. The reporter, while on an assignment, witnesses a murder and must elude the killers.

"It's in the Hitchcock tradition of the innocent man becoming a victim. He just shows up for an interview and several hours later he's being chased by murderers," Lawrence said.



photos by GARY CASKEY/staff photographer

Director Brian Lawrence (left) of Southfield stresses classic acting techniques to actors Brian Schulz of Warren and Susan Michalek of

Birmingham during filming of his movie "The Big Story."

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Brian Lawrence
Southfield director

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