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HEROES OF KATRINA:
A Short Film

and

KEEPING THE FAITH
A Feature Film

By

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Press Information

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“HEROES OF KATRINA:

Is the short version of:

“Keeping the Faith”

Gulf coast residents, faith based organizations, and celebrities participate in this disaster relief film which will be used as a vehicle to help put lives back on track. The thirty minute “Heroes of Katrina” was cut from the longer feature version of which will be used to help in the rebuilding efforts.

The Feature DVD has mobilized some of Hollywood’s celebrities and other concerned citizens who care to help put people back in homes and churches.



This project is structured as a tool to empower people to help themselves with the donations from the film. It will also be used to

attract other philanthropic organizations or individuals that would like to adopt a church, or citizen, to raise money on their behalf.

Bobby Mardis and Fat Chance Films have helped mobilize the Hollywood Community to participate in a seventy-two (72) minute DVD and a thirty (30) minute festival version. The initial budget was funded by Bobby Mardis as well as concerned companies and citizens within the entertainment, corporate, and private communities. This project was developed specifically to help in the rebuilding efforts of the Gulf Coast citizens. The project is called “**Katrina: Keeping the Faith**” and the thirty minute version is called, “**Heroes of Katrina.**” Fat Chance Films has been in existence for fifteen years, producing independent films, videos commercials, pilots, electronic press kits (EPKs) and related projects.

The managing principals of Fat Chance Films, Bobby Mardis and Lynn McGee, are the producers of the project. Lynn is a member of the “Foundation of the Mid South” who job is to disseminate millions of dollars to non profits in the South. Bobby Mardis is also the writer and director of the film. The co-executive producer, Tona Broussard-Wilson, produces international shows for Nike and other corporate industrial ventures. Co-producers are Tanya Kersey, founder of Hollywood Black Film Festival and *Black Talent News*; Reginald T. Dorsey, producer of the theatrical drama, “Kings of the Evening;” Emmy-award winning producer, Perry Brents of “Gangs: Facts Every Parent Should Know;” Kevin Suber, producer of the AXE Film Series and the award winning film “Punk”; and former NBA player turned producer, Olden Polynice. Additional writer, Dion Raymond, Esq., is the author of one of the celebrity poem segments included on the DVD. The music composers are Duane Benjamin and Vanessa Burch. Duane has worked with Marvin Gaye, Kirk Franklin, the L.A. Philharmonic and A Tribute to Ella at Greek Theater. Vanessa is credited as the musical director for Gladys Knight, Oleta Adams, Natalie Cole, Women in Jazz, and the television series “Singing Bee.”

Some of Hollywood’s top actors supported the project by either giving uplifting words of inspiration, or reciting phrases in Katrina oriented poems. Some of the the participating talent include: Maya Angelou, Kobe Bryant, Blair Underwood, Loretta Devine, Shaq, Debbie Allen, Norm Nixon, Bill Duke, Duane Martin, Jamie Fox, Queen Latifah, Ice Cube, Bobby Brown, Victoria Rowell, Harry Lennox, Ruby Dee, Christopher Reed, Robert Townsend, Marla Gibbs, Eric LaSalle, Larenz Tate, Todd Bridges, Elise Neal, Megan Good, Bokeem Woodbine, Paula Jay Parker, and Terence Howard. Over one hundred celebrities have participated in the project and will be placed on the DVD on a bonus channel.

The story is told through the eyes of the survivors. Their emotional accounting of the events and first hand stories are included throughout the program. Key interviews came from people who actually saved the lives of a number of victims.

Other participants include members of faith-based organizations who traveled to the Gulf Coast to specifically help with the relief efforts.

The project was divided into two phases. The first phase dealt with getting the project shot and completed. The second phase is designed to acquire the sponsors who will adopt a church, or an elderly person who has been displaced. After matching up the people, the mission is to get one thousand DVDs to the churches who will adopt, so that they can use the film as a give-a-way for a donation of \$30.00 each. That donation is then used to help in placing people back in homes and getting churches up and running again. All transactions will be accountable and visible through a public website under construction: www.Katrina500.com.

Over two Years after the storm, some neighborhoods still haven't received assistance!



Some homes will never be refurbished.



Neighborhoods will never be the same.



People are there to help people.



Cleaning up, rebuilding and helping our fellow man is the only human option!



Specifically, the proceeds of this film will be used as seed money to help people help themselves. We are committed in helping rebuilding 500 churches and 500 homes of elderly victims. It will take private parties, groups and organizations to **adopt** a church, a family, and acquire donations to start the healing process. Although the film is a commemorative project so that everyone remembers this historic event, more importantly, it is a vehicle to be used in directing lives back to normalcy. Every American can help by making a donation through their participating church and receiving a commemorative DVD. Getting involved will send a message to the displaced victims suggesting that Americans care, and will stand by them in times of need. Anyone of us could have been caught in a catastrophe like Hurricane Katrina, and lost everything! We would want the same kind of attention directed towards our plights as we struggle to get through this extensive rebuilding effort. It is over two years later but the clean-up, rebuilding and emotional scars still remain as though the event happened yesterday. Helping to rebuild lives is everyone’s responsibility as humans.

SPONSORSHIP and SUPPORTERS

Fat Chance Films is currently seeking churches, sponsors and supporters to help realize the fundraising potential of **“Katrina: Keeping the Faith.”** The final product will be transferred to DVD, duplicated, and then disseminated to concerned citizens (churches) and to Katrina empathizers throughout the country. It is anticipated that people from all walks of life will also provide resources to support the relief efforts. And as a side note, the members of our southern churches and communities are displaced citizens of the hurricane, not refugees! They live in this great country we call USA.

We solicited the help of individuals, corporations, vendors, celebrities, artists and anyone with a compassionate heart who felt blessed enough to make a difference in someone else’s life, in order to complete the film. We’ve accomplished that goal but the job is not done!

We often ask, “What can I do to make a difference?” Well, here is an opportunity to make a difference in at least **500 churches** and with **500 displaced elderly homeowners**. This is an opportunity to give to a worthy cause in a time where Americans need to pull together to help fellow citizens. It will take additional blessings, hard work and participation from all U.S. citizens to make this project

work. Donating thirty dollars and receiving a commemorative DVD is the minimal action that can be taken. For those who want to participate on a larger scale, they can help in adopting a church or family.

“Katrina: Keeping the Faith” is monumental in that it can create a significant impact by immediately benefiting the moral and ethical fiber of our communities, the churches and families. We are trying to make a statement to Americans and to the rest of the world by simply saying that we support all our people in time of disasters. Potential sponsors will play a large part in the success of this project. Every camera, piece of tape, light, sound equipment and ounce of food given to this project has helped and will help build an even larger picture as we strive to achieve our financial goal. It can be done!

This humanitarian relief effort will give hope and provide temporary resolution to a long-term problem. People can join in by helping on an exponential basis. It will take that kind of effort to achieve our financial goals and to bring the damaged areas back to being livable. In the straight-to-video market, this project is capable of generating a conservative \$30,000,000 per every 1,000,000 units of donations that are acquired. That is the goal - to get one million donations and pass out one million DVDs to the citizens who help, which is a do-able goal.

PUBLISHED FACTUAL OVERVIEW

Bobby Mardis and Fat Chance Films have produced a feature-length documentary film and a short film based on the 2005 hurricane that impacted Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, and parts of Florida. These films chronicle the event, spotlight the disparity of people who have not only lost their homes, lives and dignity, and acknowledge the heroes who should be recognized for their efforts in taking control of the problem. The **heroes** are the faith-based organizations. On an uplifting note, the film will also focus on the people who saved lives and continue to help even two years later. Scores of concerned citizens and religious based groups have made themselves available to pick up the ball where governmental relief organizations have fallen short.

The film covers some of the facts and historical information that set the stage for not only the disparities some people experienced, but chronicles the giving and positive spirit of people who chose to volunteer. There has been an exorbitant amount of property and life loss as a result of the Katrina catastrophe. It is estimated that the effects of Hurricane Katrina could cost our nation as much as \$300 billion. Washington spent \$62 billion in the first few weeks of the disaster with \$2 billion spent each day for meals, temporary shelter and contracts for rebuilding infrastructures. This type of disaster and the estimated cost is unprecedented in the history of our country. Those dollars have not fixed the problem.

There are 90,000 square miles of the Gulf Coast that must be repaired and/or rebuilt. An entire city was under contaminated water which we have yet to realize

the effects of that harmful, bacteria-filled water. Pending social and health issues are surely in the future and the same individuals who are wading through the water might be affected. New Orleans, was 80% underwater after the hurricane, could cost over \$100 billion, alone, to rebuild. Mississippi and Alabama equally had under publicized property devastation. However, the most devastating effect of this disaster is the loss of life which is estimated to be in the hundreds and possibly thousands. This event triggered the largest displacement of individuals in our nation’s history and also brought to the surface visible discrimination viewed on television like a reality show. It is estimated that there are over one million people who have been displaced to neighboring states and cities for an indefinite period of time. Some people have no home to return to and as of September 2007, others can not afford to return home. Our nation must undertake the dauntingly long term task of providing relief for our citizens, now! This film will help take a small bite out of the problem and place the issue back into the minds of Americans in hopes that they react responsibly.

As of September 15, 2005, New Orleans was almost totally drained of water, but was left with exorbitant amounts of contamination and property devastation. The death toll was significant as emergency response teams searched homes. Public officials determined which homes had to be permanently destroyed as water soiled material and mold made repairs difficult. Even as of February 2006, months after the hurricane, thousands of people were unaccounted for and feared washed out to sea, eaten by alligators, intentionally killed, undiscovered in homes, or without explanation: just gone! The problem remains enormous. As of September 2007, not much has changed. One fourth of the citizens are back and only fifteen percent of the churches are operational. Although Americans carry on as though the problem is fixed, slow progress still plagues the Gulf Coast. Some homes have been fixed but the majority has not. Other issues ranging from insurance problems, mental issues, increased crime, land and mortgage issues, political maneuvering and lack of funding have come to the forefront. The government has proven that they can not fix the problem alone, or at all. The help of the general public is requested, needed and imperative!

Make no mistake, the U.S. citizens’ show of support has been astronomical as we all have proven that we can join together to help in this effort. The real test of support will come now, after the initial “emotional giving period” is over and the next wave of financial support begins. Money is only half the problem. Only ideas, physical help, implemented plans, community involvement and calculated strategy can rebuild an infrastructure and the psyche of Gulf Coast citizens.

Once again, our objective is to sell DVDs to raise money to help in the initial rebuilding of churches and housing for the traumatized elderly. We understand, see and realize that there has been a disproportionate number of minorities affected by “the help” that did not come in a timely fashion. Our hope is that the government will implement a better, long-term plan to help these individuals, however, to bridge the gap, Fat Chance Films and the entertainment community are joining together to help resolve the problem by supporting this project. This

proposal assumes that state and government assistance will continue, but the problem is so massive that every U.S. citizens will have to join in “one way or another” so that the recovery can be completed quicker than our governments’ current pace.

FILMMAKER APPROACH

Bobby Mardis’ approach to shining the spotlight on the subject is simply to visually document the aftermath of the hurricane, state the problem, and give an overview of the solution-oriented people who were there to help in the recovery. The point of view of the project is loosely derived from Clyde Jones, a resident of New Orleans whose mother’s house was destroyed, but more importantly, the help generating angle is exemplified from the perspective of faith-based organization. Denominations of all kinds are represented. Hurricane Katrina has devastated Louisiana, Mississippi and Alabama physically, mentally and property wise. The confidence level of citizens dropped to an “all time low” when the lack of governmental help was clearly demonstrated within the first five to six days of the event.

Certain groups of people have traditionally been placed in last position in terms of receiving help. To date, it appears that the religious based groups and special help based groups were more consistent in their helping practices while on the front line of this disaster. This film exhibits the issues and solutions to the daunting task of regaining control of lives, and communities. The objective is to inform the general public of the problem, immortalize this historical event, garner enough empathy and understanding to incite activism, and ultimately use all DVD proceeds to give all profits to churches and elderly homeowners as grants.

The documentary will be used to inform, support and fundraise to help rebuild the targeted structures. Fat Chance Films is also open to partnering with other organizations that are already in place and in the middle of the rebuilding effort. Finally, the short film will tour the festival circuit, air on broadcast channels and be submitted for Academy Award consideration. It will also be used as a marketing tool to gather support, education and draw people to the website. The DVD is truly a self-help tool. “Giving a helping hand,” is a theme expressed in the films and shows that American citizens are basically good by nature and will come to the rescue to help their fellow citizens, regardless of race, color or religion. Although the media showed an angle spectacularizing the event, the entire story was not told. The stories and pathos of the film comes directly from the Katrina survivors talking about their perspective and how it has affected their lives. It also addresses the issue of who continues to help the displaced, and why. Although there might be two or three themes, the only conclusion that can be expressed is that, people only grow when they join in to help one another for a common goal, which is positive in nature.

We have on-camera interviews of least fifty people who have been directly affected by Hurricane Katrina with the loss of a relative, property, job or mental stability.

The stories will be framed with footage acquired during Katrina. The primary subject matter is, “people who help, and why.” This project is more proactive and uplifting, therefore, the blame game will not be the focus. President Bush, FEMA’s Mr. Brown, and the political power brokers who were accused of being lackadaisical in their help efforts - are not mentioned. Although the film states the facts, it also leaves you uplifted and inspired by the goodness of people. At the end of the film we have a feeling of hope that this event and the aftermath will pass and that everything will be okay in the end.

Notes

On January 29, 2006, Bobby Mardis was sitting in his church, West Angeles in Los Angeles, California and heard Bishop Blake call for people working on a project who needed a miracle to come forward. A couple of months prior to this event, he decided to embark upon a project to help in the de-molding and rebuilding efforts of the Gulf Coast. He has relatives who were seriously affected by Hurricane Katrina and who were displaced and needed help. Although Bobby rallied his family together by implementing an emailing campaign for relatives outside of the Gulf Coast to send money to the affected family members inside of the region, it just wasn’t enough. The problem was much bigger that one person or family could handle, even when concentrating on helping a few relatives.

At that point he thought about ways of making more of an impact by encompassing his filmmaking skills. Bobby made the decision to travel to Mississippi, Alabama and Louisiana in a quest to capture footage of the displaced to concentrate more on the heroes than the negative elements that most news stations covered. He felt that this was a fresher approach seeing that the other issues were already covered by the news media and by Spike Lee in his HBO documentary. The problem was funding and the lack of it. He prayed about it and tried to come up with a plan to travel to the Gulf, but was still at a stalemate because of the lack of production funds. Fast forward to August 29th where he was sitting in the balcony at church and listening to his pastor. That was a special day because Bishop Blake publicly asked if anyone was working on a project and needed a miracle for that project to come to fruition. Most of the words that came from Blake’s mouth were almost custom designed for Bobby’s ears and plight. When Bishop Blake finally asked for people to get out of their seats and come forward, Bobby apprehensively got up and walked down.

Usually, Bobby never stands and comes forward on issues even though they might pertain to him, but in this service, the words spoke to him and touched his heart in a special way. While walking down from the balcony to the front of the auditorium, Bobby prayed for an answer, a way to achieve his goal and for the miracle he needed to finance the film. Although he felt that this message was

specifically catered to his plight, he looked around to find that others had heard the call and was on a quest for their own mission. Bishop Blake prayed over all of the people who came down and gave them the inspiration to move forward with their projects. The prayer gave Bobby the inspiration to move forward, however, he still did not have the methodology, nor the funds. That week, Bobby would go to Starbucks to strategize. Although he didn't necessarily talk with other Starbuck patrons, he used their energy in his process. He moved forward with the movie concept as though it was already funded. Bobby mapped out the travel routes and prepared questions that he would ask when given the opportunity. The only fuel that he could use was the faith that the answer or miracle would expose itself and hopefully someone would come forward with the money to fund this venture.

The next Sunday, Bishop Blake once again referred to the miracle and almost catered his sermon to fit Bobby's needs and give him further inspiration to move forward. It was as though once again Bishop Blake was talking directly to Bobby. It was more surreal than not. The chatter and Walla from the membership seemed to die down to an inaudible level and Bishop Blake's voice was clear and specific. Bobby states, “It was like he was in my living room talking directly to me over coffee.” At this point, the plight became not only necessary, but imperative. Still that week, it appeared that no financial solution, or miracle had stepped forward and no clear method of funding was in sight. After continuing to watch footage on television and communicate with some of his connections in the Gulf, the mission was anchored in his heart and it was time to make a bold move.

The only answer that was a “realistic fix” was using his American Express Gold card. Although he was not excited about acquiring additional bills that would be significant, and more importantly, due thirty days from receiving the bill, it was the only answer that presented itself. Bobby had been shooting, “Passing the Torch” a jazz doc and used this same methodology, but was momentarily redirected towards this new passion. He figured that if it was a good enough methodology for the Jazz doc, then it would be good enough for the Katrina project. For now, the Jazz piece had to be put on the back burner so that his quest to find relief in the Gulf Coast would become a reality. The following week he boarded a plane headed for New Orleans where he rented a car and traveled around the city. He also traveled up the coast along the destruction route.

Lynn McGee, who lives in Jackson Mississippi, arranged meetings with some of the victims that she had indirectly helped through the groups that had been funded by her employer. The Foundation is an organization whose mandate was to acquire money from larger sources and disseminate those grants to community groups that were helping in the relief effort. Faith based organization were at the center of the people who found themselves as primary sources of help. A week a traveling and shooting paid off with extraordinary footage of testimonials as well as unbelievable b-roll footage. The footage that was seen on the news did not affectively give the full scope of the problem. You would have to go to the south to see and talk with the people to really get an idea of the magnitude of the

problem. Bobby stated that “if the look of the streets and cities were a Hollywood set, even Hollywood couldn’t afford the production design.” The place was a mess. The solutions to fixing the problem seemed so far off until just maintaining sanity and keeping people fed became the priority. Once things became somewhat stabilized, then the officials could come up with a game plan to get things back in order. There were three more subsequent trips to the coast capturing additional footage and interviews. Bobby stated that, “there were times where the trips were more costly because the citizens were staying in the cheaper hotels, the only hotels that were available were extremely expensive.” Although one of the families had lost their home, they offered to share their temporary housing with Bobby for a couple of days. To this day Bobby is still moved by the generosity they displayed, even in their fragile and emotional state.

When thinking about the miracle he needed to fund the trip, it became clear to Bobby that some miracles come in installments as opposed to one big lottery winning miracle. The installments were clear, every time the bill came, the phone rang and a job came from out of the sky to help pay for that bill. It was almost like clock work. Even when the job didn’t completely pay for what became his “Katrina Habit,” there were other credit cards to transfer the balance. The key objective was to make sure that the Amex was paid and that his credit remained good. That particular card had been his way of achieving his miracle and ultimately was responsible for getting the film shot and in the can.

Bobby stated that, “While shooting the project, at times it was quite emotional because people were still in the realm of their physical and financial losses. It was impossible to not be empathetic and connect on an emotional level.” The people who were interviewed were torn up and any mention of their problem instantly brought them back to the actual moments of destruction or loss of a family member.” This filmmaking journey became a soul searching journey that may have been his quest for clarity in his personal self realization plight. “It was explained to me that living in a home one day and being without everything the next day was hard to cope with, less knowing being optimistic towards the future,” Bobby states. When you realize the fact that you could have loss of life in the equation, then it was clear how things became unbearable for the citizens.

When Bobby came back to Los Angeles he increased his mission by placing another objective on his plate of acquiring one hundred Hollywood celebrities’ interviews. Tanya Kersey, the founder of Hollywood Black Film Festival became his ally and co-producer. She helped in reaching talent that he could not get alone because of the lack of access. There were a number of days that Tanya called Bobby up to cover some award shows that gave them access to celebrities. They actually killed two birds with one stone by shooting for Black Talent News for the first part of the interview gave an introduction to Bobby’s question and request for participation. At the end of Tanya’s business, we respectfully asked if they would give us a comment on Katrina for this project. Everyone who was asked except for a few people agreed to participate. There were a number of red carpet events that aided in acquiring the bulk of talent for the film. Every

celebrity added to the total and helped to get closer to the goal of acquiring one hundred. They knew that each and every celebrity that was acquired was also an element of his miracle. Bobby stated that, “it’s a blessing because no one had to do anything, but instead they felt that their participation would help in one way shape or form.” “We were elated that Black Hollywood was coming forward to give their voice and concerns for their fellow citizens,” Bobby suggested.

Bobby would go back and forth between shooting with Tanya and shooting actors in a green screen situation at Wesley Snipe’s old studio, Miminsi in Hollywood. Reginald T. Dorsey, one of his co-producers called on a number of mutual friends to come to a session where they would sit in front of the green screen and recite Katrina catered poetry. People like Lawrence Hilton Jacobs, Glynn Turman, Dawn Lewis, Blair Underwood and a number of other celebrities all helped. They dropped what they were doing and came down to lend a helping hand for the good of the project. A couple of days of recording the poems got everything recorded and in the can.

Connie Collins, a friend and associate hooked Bobby up with an NBA player, Olden Polynice who met with him at a coffee shop where he suggested that Bobby show up at the All STAR game in Houston. Olden told Bobby that nothing is guaranteed, but if he showed up, then it was a possibility of acquiring Shaq and Kobe among others. Although financially strapped, once again he pulled out the credit card and showed up at the hotel where the press and television media were housed. Bobby stated that he was once of the original members of Robert Townsend’s “Hollywood Shuffle” so he had already been exposed to Robert’s credit card financing methodology. This made it easier to swallow the excessive use of the card for this project as well as the jazz projects.

The problem was that Olden didn’t arrive at the location until that afternoon and Bobby had to find a way inside of the facility without the proper credentials. That was close to impossible because the police department ran the security. Bobby said, “Usually when they run things, they don’t care if you are a relative of a player, agent or manager, if you don’t have a pass that they recognize, then you just don’t get inside, period.”

Through some maneuvering with a police officer and a press badge that Bobby made on his home computer, he got inside, then got to the second floor where the interviews took place. The first person that he bumped into was Charles Barkley, but unfortunately he wasn’t set up to do any interviews yet. “I never did get Charles which was one of the biggest regrets,” Bobby states. He actually hung out right in the middle bees nest in the lounge where the police hung out. It was funny that people saw him talking and walking with the head guy and assumed that I was the clear. This actually helped me until Olden came. They immediately picked up some interviews and words of inspiration from some of the key players. “I saw Michael Jordan be he was like Michael Jackson in his hay day. It was impossible to get to him and get an interview with the hoopla that was surrounding him” stated Bobby. However, he was thankful that after months

of shooting and seeking out the celebrities that wanted to contribute, he was happy with who he acquired.

A major coup happened when Carl Weathers hooked Bobby up with one of his friends at Sony. I actually needed a sound mix on the films, “Katrina: Keeping the Faith” which was the feature and “Heroes of Katrina” which was the thirty minute short was in need of a sound mix. After meeting with a key executive, he agreed to help the people of the Gulf Coast by helping me complete the project. This was major! The fact that I am getting a full studio mix which would have cost me thousands of dollars yet another installment of his miracle. It is clear to him that when you walk by faith, your prayers can be answered. He stated that, “it might sound like a cliché, but it might not happen when you want it to happen, but it’s always on time.

We are still not out of the water yet. He personally still owes about twenty thousand in credit card bills for the project. This project is still one of faith as he walks confident that the bills will continue to take care of themselves as they have been on a monthly basis. Bobby states, “It seems that when you are doing the right thing, those kinds of worries get handled with a simple phone call with job that literally comes from out of the sky.”

The goal was coming within reach. He was getting the involvement of one hundred African American players in Hollywood with a name. Between Reggie Dorsey, Tanya Henley, T’keyah Keymah, Clyde Jones and a number of other hook ups, this was starting to look achievable. The six degrees of separation concept and the fact that things were starting to come together a little easier, was making the entire project obtainable and within sight.

After submitting a proposal to a number of potential investors or people with access, it was still hard to get a check to fund the balance of the film. At this point, the word ‘Katrina’ had been over exposed and out of the news. Also the fact that Mardi Gras had taken place gave a lot of people the idea that things were back to normal. However, the reality was that a couple of streets from the main festival route were still devastated areas. Initially Bobby was baffled at why they would have Mardi Gras, but then after talking to the people of the city, he found out that it was a mental and finance thing. They needed to mentally have the festival to see progress and to get out of the mental funk and it generated much needed income for the city.

It’s actually two years later and the piece is coming together and miracles are still happening. Bobby is still on cloud nine after his Sony mix. During the layback process the unthinkable happened...his Lacie drive crashed which housed the film. This was a major obstacle as Bobby was on his last stretch as he was headed for home. Luckily, he spit out some visuals for the Sony mix and used them as a replacement.

As we move forward to the next phase of the master plan, Bobby prays that churches will see his vision and jump on board of the adopt-a-church program.

MARKETING STRATEGY

The development and utilization of innovative contemporary marketing techniques is instrumental in realizing the full profit potential of consumer products. “Katrina: Keeping the Faith” provides unique opportunities to engage creative techniques to maximize its dollar return and donation amount. The DVD market has exploded with profits in a good number of instances that far exceed any theatrical exhibition. We are keeping the budget and cost low so that the donations will be much greater.

Some of our marketing ideas will include:

1. Our primary goal is to disseminate through faith based organizations through out the country.
2. Product Sponsorship: Major suppliers will benefit from the product tie-ins.
3. Public Relations representative will orchestrate a national campaign to draw people to the market and to the website.
4. Massive email campaign directing people to the websites. Additionally, information will be fed to church affiliates, bookstores and communication outlets.
5. Concerned citizens, social groups and corporations will be approached to aid in the donations and dissemination of the DVD.
6. The short film will be used to drum up awareness and energy at festivals around the country. This is another way of getting to large crowds in hopes that they can also acquire DVDs as a purely grass roots method of promoting.
7. Street teams helping distribute flyers in key cities will be another form of marketing.
8. Public Broadcast of the short film in conjunction with a call in telethon type program geared to acquire rebuilding donations.
9. An urban radio campaign directing people to the website and call centers.
10. Hopefully a national coffee chain with strong ties to communities will help spark public attention and dissemination of the free DVD.

EXHIBITION OF PROJECT

Exposing different viewerships to this product is important, therefore, we will also co-partner with churches. We will schedule screenings at faith-based

organizations around the country to gather support and participation in the program.

Of course, website exhibition of the project will be utilized by Fat Chance Films and all other exhibition outlets needed to bring maximum visibility to the project and its participants will be explored.

SELECTING CHURCHES AND CITIZENS

We will work with the Foundation for the Mid South and other organizations, governmental agencies and social groups to identify the families and churches that need help in the assisted housing arena. We would like to work directly with the families in order to ensure that all of the monies are provided directly to them in the most efficient manner without governmental/agency bureaucracy and/or covering the administration costs of established national relief agencies. We are also compiling a personal list of families who have been directly affected by the loss of their permanent residency and have been personally displaced to other areas of the city and country because of Hurricane Katrina.

During the first phase of this project, we are utilizing a criteria directed at “head of house holds” who are 65 years of age or older, retired and are on fixed incomes. During the recent trip to the affected Gulf Coast region, the research shows that a number of homes are facing a quagmire, which prevents rebuilding in an expeditious fashion. Simply put, older people cannot afford to rebuild their homes and move back in to resume their lives. In some cases, there are people who have not secured insurance and find it impossible to clean up the mold, much less know how to rebuild or replace their belongings. This “Catch 22” has left people with a sense of hopelessness with no way out other than depending upon federal aid which might not be coming for some time, if at all.

DISTRIBUTION

This is a grassroots effort originated by the people, for the people. The Katrina500 program is interested in any person, or entity who sees the vision of the program and can help achieve the objective of acquiring donations for the purpose of rebuilding structures in the Gulf Coast.

The distribution plan for the 72 minute film is as follows: The film will be mastered into a DVD and a broadcast standard Digi-beta. The Digi-beta will be screened on television in national forums. I have had previous works viewed on Showtime and BET along with PBS local stations. The same methodology for acquiring a broadcast will apply. The DVD version of the film will be sold by church groups and organizations around the country. The proceeds will be awarded in the form of grants of up to \$30,000 each to help in rebuilding churches and \$15,000 each to help in rebuilding homes of elderly citizens.

Although the funding task seems enormous, it will only take 750,000 DVDs sold at thirty dollars each to achieve this goal.

1. The primary market where the DVD will be distributed is contributing churches all over the country. One thousand (1,000) units will be distributed to one thousand (1,000) churches and their memberships will be responsible for acquiring donations for those units at (\$30.00) each.
2. The website www.katrina500.com will be a source where units will be acquired through donations by the general public. Relevant information identifying the adopt-a-church program will be exemplified through this site as well.
3. We are also approaching a popular coffee shop chain in hopes that it will jump on board of the DVD distribution program.

The thirty minute version “Heroes of Katrina” will be submitted all over the world in film festivals to enlighten and inform the viewers. I have personally been honored with over sixteen awards in film festivals nationally and internationally.

The demographics that I am trying to reach include any and everyone who sympathizes with the plight of the displaced Katrina victims and people who care about what is being done about the rebuilding efforts in the Gulf Coast. Although the focus is not to point fingers at FEMA, the President, the Governor or Mayor, it is literally impossible to not establish what the problem is without expressing a point of view which might insinuate who might have been responsible for the pain of many of our poor citizens. However, this injustice is secondary to the goodness in people as exemplified in the groups who have helped and who continue to help people on the ground level. This film will also be used in the spirit of human giving, self-preservation of man and society.



BOBBY MARDIS - BIOGRAPHY

(“Katrina: Keeping the Faith” Producer / Director)

Bobby Mardis gained notoriety as a filmmaker by earning honors and awards, including the Silver Hugo Award at Chicago's International Film Festival for his 1991 film "Why Colors?" an anti-gang violence comedy.

Mardis is best known as an actor, having worked on such films as "Hollywood Shuffle," "The Five Heartbeats," "House Party 3," "Rocky IV," and "I'm Gonna Get You Sucka." He has also had an extensive television acting career with projects like, "What's Happening," "The Young and the Restless," and "The Jacksons: An American Dream," to name a few. In the HBO Comedy Series entitled “Robert Townsend and his Partners in Crime”, Mardis played Robert Townsend's identical twin brother, River Arington. The joke was they looked nothing alike.

Born and raised in Hammond, Indiana, outside of Chicago, Mardis started out as an artist creating with charcoal, pencil, and ink on canvas. His creative passion for art took a backseat to traditional studies and athletics when he left Hammond to attend U.C.L.A. where he earned a spot as a hurdler on the Men's Track Team and claimed the title, Freshman Athlete of the year. While living in Los Angeles, he discovered acting and committed his summer breaks to attending the American Academy of Dramatic Arts and he later studied acting with Don Richardson and Michael Shurtleff. After transferring to U.S.C., he earned a double major in Communication/Advertising. After years of working in episodic television, he decided to tackle the art of stand-up comedy and worked night after night perfecting his craft.

Mardis' training, natural talent, and ambition to act landed him work as a stand-up comic in Las Vegas, performing in clubs such as the Imperial Palace. While on the circuit, Mardis' hilarious act caught the eye of an up-and-coming producer named Robert Townsend.

Acting in projects for Townsend, Keenen Ivory Wayans, Suzanne DePasse, as well as other projects inspired Mardis to write. In 1991, after completing several full-length scripts, Mardis wrote, produced, and directed his award winning film "Why Colors?" The success of this project enabled Mardis to continue to work not only as an actor, but also to create art as a filmmaker.

His first full-length feature, “One Last Time,” provided him with the challenge and the thrill of his career. T'Keyah Crystal Keymah ("On Our Own," "In Living Color," "The Cosby Show"), co-starred and executive produced the film. In 1995, Mardis produced and directed the Los Angeles run of Keymah's acclaimed one-woman show, “Some of My Best Friends,” winning the NAACP Theatre Award for Best Actress, and Best Play. Mardis was also nominated for Best Director.

In 1996, Mardis wrote, produced, and directed, "Circle of Pain," a drama made for Showtime Cable Networks. The film was well received by critics and audiences, winning screening honors and awards in over sixteen film and television festivals.

In addition to his achievement in feature films, Mardis has produced numerous music videos for various artists such as The “Goodfellaz” and “Sylk130.” Mardis is also known as a commercial producer/director of ads for Converse, No Limit Records, Priority Records, and Nike. He completed Master P's "I Got the Hook up" for Miramax as the Post-Production Supervisor. He is currently completing post production on “Somethin’ to Say” which is about the independent hip-hop and rap scene in San Francisco which stars MC HAMMER, TOO SHORT and E-40.

Bobby is also in post with the film “Passing the Torch” which is a documentary spotlighting over two hundred of our contemporary jazz powerhouse artists. You can also find his comical spoof, “Midnight Blue” which he directed for BET as a MOW out on video at Blockbuster. He has just completed a sitcom pilot entitled, “X & L Customs” which spotlights an all Latin cast. He has a number of straight-to-video projects in post production which include, “Shout,” a gospel comedy, “Livin’ Out Loud,” a feature-length concert and a number of music videos which are currently hitting the dance market. His last project was shooting a project for MTV featuring, the singer, Ciara, which is slated to be released this year. His latest project, “Only in Your Dreams” which he produced can be viewed on AXEATTRactions.COM. His latest project was editing a presentation for Avi Arad of Marvel Entertainment to present to Nintendo in Japan. His next projects include his suspense thriller, “Switch” and “Gone” an urban horror film.



Some structures can be cleaned and renovated, but only with the help of people like you. A lack of insurance is preventing a number of people from rebuilding.

RESEARCH AND DUE DILIGENCE

To find out more information and speed up the due diligence phase as it relates to Bobby Mardis, you can go to any of the following websites and internet search engines and type in, Bobby Mardis.

1. **IMDB.com** - Type Bobby Mardis. – This is the official entertainment industry database where information is researched and compiled for legitimate movie and television credits. This company has already legitimized and compiled the information with relevant resources.
2. **BobbyMardis.com** – This is Bobby Mardis’ website promoting his latest films and production business along with his writing, directing and producing ventures.
3. **Google.com** – This is a powerful search engine that compiles information of people, places, things and research. If you type in Bobby Mardis, you will find projects that have made news, events that he has participated in, films he has completed and a good number of other information that deals with his entertainment exploits.
4. **AltaVista.com** – This is another search engine. Just go to the articles and other reference sources.
5. **DGA.org** – Bobby Mardis is a member of the DGA (Directors Guild of America) and a member of the African-American steering committee within the union. This will give info on the union and Bobby as well.
6. **WGA.org** – Once again, you can type in Bobby Mardis and get information from the Writers Guild of America of which he is a member.
7. **hcdonline.com** - The industry contact bible is the “Hollywood Creative Directory.” This is a list of all legitimate people in the entertainment industry with production companies listed and the projects that they have completed. If you type in Bobby Mardis and Fat Chance Films, you can cross-reference your facts. They also have a book that can be found at most book stores, specifically “Samuel French” in Hollywood. It can also be found at the Academy of Motion Picture Television Arts and Science on La Cienega and Olympic in Los Angeles.
8. **Ifilm Publishing** – also publishes a book called **Producers**, which is also affiliated with Hollywood Creative Directory. This book spotlights over 1700 companies and 8,100 individuals working in the industry. Bobby and his films are listed in the resources as well.
9. **Additional places** - to look for Bobby Mardis would be through SAG (Screen Actors Guild), AFTRA (American Federation of Radio and Television Artists), *Los Angeles Times* info search engine, The Organization of Black Screen Writers and through the reference membership source books at IFP (Independent Feature Project West).

A list of references will be supplied upon request.

LEADS

SUNDAY, JULY 30, 2000 | SECTION E

arts & entertainment

Hammond-born filmmaker Bobby Mardis eager to share world of jazz with the world



Bobby Mardis, a die-hard jazz buff, used seed money from a movie-of-the-week gig to underwrite his current film project, his most ambitious to date. He has bopped between green rooms and smoky clubs and jazz festivals, and bribed numerous security guards to interview more than 130 jazz artists. He plans to edit the footage down to a 90-minute film.

The legends >>



BILLY HARPER



DIANNE REEVES



BONEY JAMES



ELVIN JONES



HILTON RUIZ



GARY BARTZ



NORMAN BROWN

STARDUST MEMORIES

STORY BY MOLLY WOULFE ■ TIMES FEATURES WRITER

Say you're an indie film director toiling to record the memories of jazz giants. Say you sink five years and six figures into your labor of love.

Then documentary king Ken Burns drops a bombshell. *He's* helming a 10-part series on the irreverent, inventive, American music. *His* history of jazz is jam-packed with 500 pieces of music, 2,000 film clips and more than 2,000 photographs. *His* "Jazz" will debut on PBS on Jan. 8.

If you're Bobby Mardis, your heart skips like a warped Louis Armstrong 78. Then you swing your Sony VX 1000 over your shoulder and get back in the groove.

Once the shock wore off, the Hammond-born filmmaker turned upbeat.

Worrying that his "Jazz: The Inside Story" will be upstaged "would not be a service to jazz," he said.

"I just have to look at it as an opportunity. He (Burns) is going to spend millions of dollars to create an awareness, open up the idea of jazz to certain people. Then I'll come along and reap the benefits of people who have been exposed to jazz," he said cheerfully.

And fellow jazz fans are on his side, weary of the genre being eclipsed by rock, rap and country. While the Burns retrospective is destined to be richly textured, Mardis' up close-and-personal effort should complement it well, said Bill McFarlin, executive director of the International Association of Jazz Educators.

See MARDIS, E2

Newsmagazine—Southern West/Southern News—April/May 2005

NAACP Organizes Workshop for Independent

By COURTENAY EDELHART
Staff Writer

HOLLYWOOD— Anything goes when you're a struggling filmmaker trying to produce an independent project.

It's a time to throw pride to the wind and haggle, beg, lie or do whatever else it takes to get what you need, filmmakers told about 120 people at a recent Beverly Hills-Hollywood NAACP workshop called "Down" It the Independent Way.

Coping with limited funds was the main focus of the presentations, which followed screenings of each filmmaker's roughly 30-minute film.

Went for loan

"I went to Citibank for a loan, and they were smiling and everything, and a week later they called me back and said 'no,'" said Shauna Gurr, a producer with MTV Networks. She recently produced and directed "Spell," the fictional story of a teen-age girl grappling with the decision whether to have sex.

"Then I went to my friends and family, and they said 'no.' That is when you start lying," she said. "I went to people and I said, 'Do this work for me and I will pay you back when it's finished.' It took me a year to finally pay everyone, but I did it."



Bobby Mardis

As the lights came up in the Gower Theater on the Paramount Studios lot, actor Bobby Mardis apologized for making his audience endure a seemingly endless list of credits following his comedic anti-gang short, "Why Colors?"

Only payment
"For most of these guys," he said, "this was their only payment."

Mardis said almost everything he needed for the film he got either for free or at dramatically reduced rates.

"Most of what I got, I got because I just asked," he said. "If you are



Shauna Gurr

not afraid of the word 'no,' then you are not afraid to ask, and if you are bold enough to ask, you will probably get what you're asking for."

Mardis drew his cast, which included Regina King and Aune Marie Johnson, from among friends. He obtained donations of food for the cast and crew from area restaurants after presenting vendors with letters of endorsement from local politicians.

Members of the Inglewood and Lynwood city councils, as well as state Sen. Diane Watson, all responded with letters praising the film's anti-gang theme after he ask-

ed them for endorsements. It is important that aspiring filmmakers have opportunities to talk with people who have successfully completed projects so they can learn such strategies, said branch president Sandra Evers-Mamly. The NAACP branch hopes to make the filmmakers' workshop a monthly event.

Who've done it

"This gives them a look at filmmaking from the perspective of individuals who have done it," she said.

"It helps both people who are serious about getting started and people who are just curious, because a lot of people are thinking about getting into filmmaking but haven't made up their minds yet. This way they get to see what they'd be getting into, because it's a lot of work."

The branch hopes monthly workshops will help keep lines of communication open, said Evers-Mamly. The branch is also holding the second annual "Reading, Writing and Arithmetica of Show Business" conference May 16 and 17 at USC. Actors, agents, directors, producers and screenwriters will be speaking on how to get into the industry.

Actress Crystal Jackson of Hollywood also saw the networking advantages of the filmmakers workshop.

"Because I am an actress, I think

Filmmakers

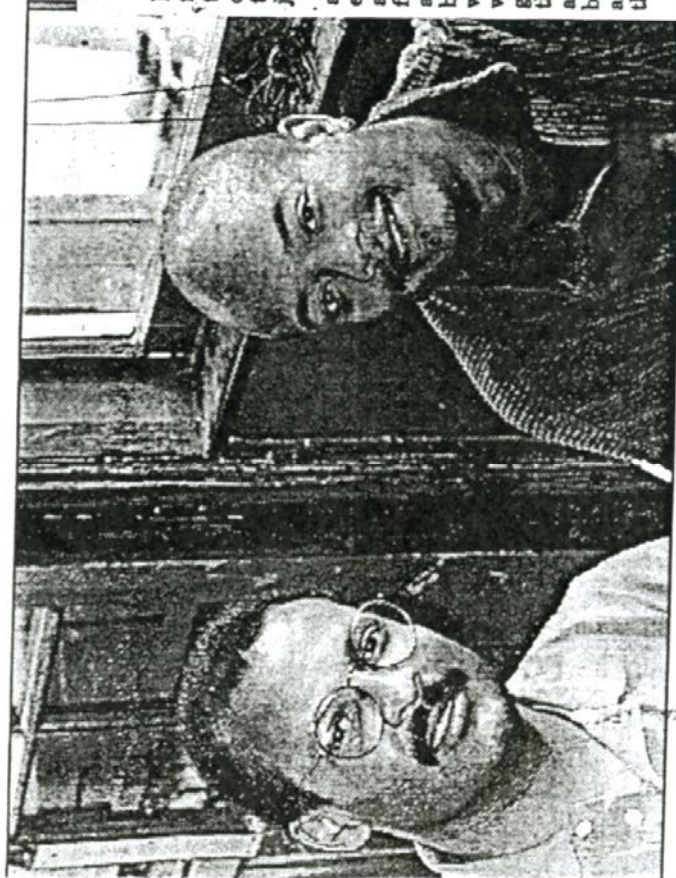
it's really important to try to come up with good roles for our up-and-coming actors and actresses, and the easiest way to do that is by producing independent films," she said.

"But without meeting people and networking, it's hard to do that. You are lost. Mardis urged participants not to underestimate the power of networking. "You people need to meet each other, because my most important resource was people," he said. "I called up someone I'd met along the way, and if they couldn't help me, they almost always referred me to someone who could."

Wednesday, February 18, 2005

ENTERTAINMENT

Todd Bridges Reemerges in "Circle Of Pain"



-r) Director Bobby Marlis and Todd Bridges

By DONALD JAMES

Not so many years ago, Todd Bridges had a successful acting career and the fame and fortune that went with it. His telephone used to ring off the hook with calls from casting agents who were eager to discuss future film and television projects with him.

Today, the phone calls concerning film and television projects are virtually nonexistent. Having been involved with drug addiction, and stints in prison, Todd's fall from Hollywood's grace came faster than any actor's career in recent memory. His bouts with drugs and subsequent trouble with the law earned him the title of Hollywood's Bad Boy. "I was not the greatest guy in the world," Bridges said. "I did some things wrong in my life. I used to be a drug addict and things happened. If I was a 'bad boy'... that was then. I'm more concerned about now, because I've been clean for three years."

Although clean from drugs for three years, Bridges has done very little acting.

He is currently supervising two sober-living facilities for men in Venice, Ca, and works as a chemical dependent technician at a hospital in Culver City, Ca. These jobs are a far cry from his acting career. He has also established The Todd Bridges Foundation based in Carson, Ca, and spends lots of time talking to at-risk youth about the perils of drugs and violence.

Born in San Francisco, California, Bridges comes from a talented family which has built a credible reputation in acting, casting and entertainment management. Todd is best known for his work as Willis Drummond on the long-running television series, "Different Strokes," but has also done numerous other film and television projects including "Fish," "The Waltons," "Little House On the Prairie," "Killing Affair," and "20012." "Sound of Silence." He has appeared in more than two hundred commercials, and has been nominated twice for the NAACP Image Awards.

So why won't casting agents call? It appears that many are afraid of Bridges' reputation; some are concerned that he's