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## Lafayette Filmmaker's Directorial Debut a Winner

By Michael Sakoda



Phillip Mayall and his family on the red carpet at the Snake Alley Film Festival in Iowa. Photos provided

Ocean: The Second Story' - and when the movie 'The Game' came out, I worked in that enough to become a SAG member."

In 1999, Mayall took a second job with American Airlines, and took a step back from his true passion. "There was an overlap there that limited my creative window of opportunity," he said.

But he always found a way. "I did the 48 Hour Film Festival a couple of times," he said. "Then I said one of those foolish things people say, 'If we can do this in 48 hours, imagine what we can do in three weeks.'"

Before his retirement in 2011, Mayall read a collection of short stories, and one tickled his fancy. "I read, '8 Guns Over a Dead Girl,' and thought, 'This would be a great movie,'" he said. "So I emailed the author, Patty Templeton, and sent her a script, and it went from there."

Mayall, his cinematographer, Luis Villalon, and producer, Rachel Steinberg, shot the movie in six days, then Mayall embarked on the post-production. "It took about two and a half years in post-production," he laughed. "Next time, I'm going to say, 'If we can do this in three years...'"

The film also marked the beginning of PhilMFilm, Mayall's production company. "It's Film-Film, or Phil M. Film," he said. "It's kind of a play on both." PhilMFilm was involved with Rebuilding Together San Francisco in April 2012. "They do a lot of good work for people who really need it ... sort of like Habitat for Humanity," he said. "They help doing work for senior centers and schools, so we went and shot for four days and made something for them to put on their website."

Over the past 25 years Mayall and his wife, Sharon, also retired from the Postal Service, have lived, raised their three children, Sy, Zach and Katy, and retired in Lafayette. "My wife really liked the schools here; that was what drew us to Lafayette," said Mayall.

"We did all those growing up things: Sy was a pitcher, and I was one of those parents that was always on the edge of being asked to leave; Katy played water polo; and all three of my children did the summer basketball camp at Saint Mary's."

His children are grown now - Sy lives in Dallas and works for American Airlines, Zach is an auto mechanic in Maui, and Katy is an attorney in New York City - and Mayall and his wife are enjoying their retirement, but as always, he has a creative project in mind.

Mayall has a script, "That Night," the story of a 20-year high school reunion and the culmination of a 20-year grudge after a bad break up.

"I have had and am having a good life," Mayall wrote. "It's not been that much different than the way I imagined it ... that night."

"8 Guns Over a Dead Girl," the directorial debut of Lafayette filmmaker Phillip Mayall, took home the award for Best Action Film at the Snake Alley Film Festival in Iowa. "I was genuinely stunned," said Mayall about the win. "I wish I had remembered to thank Luis Villalon and Rachel Steinberg and everyone who made it a success, but I was so shocked that all I could really say was, 'This is an honor, thank you.'"

Mayall was born and raised in Urbana-Champaign, Ill., and that's where his desire to work in film was sparked. "I've had this problem with theater since high school," he said. "I was doing plays there ... did plays at the University (of Illinois) during the summer. We had this community theater called The Depot ... but then I laid off for about 20 years."

In the interim, Mayall worked for the U.S. Postal Service for 28 years, but the itch was always there. "I think it was when Beverly Hills Cop III came along. I was one of the extras and that kind of refueled my interest in it, and I started working as an extra," he said.

"I was in a lot of Robin Williams films and 'Nash Bridges'... did a bunch of commercials for Bay Cable Advertising," he said. "I did some voice over stuff - 'Star



Lafayette filmmaker Phillip Mayall accepts award for Best Action Film.

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