

doubt MILK

The Curious Case of
BENJAMIN BUTTON

...a conversation with Director David Fincher

Defiance

Revolutionary Road

Appaloosa

...a conversation with Ed Harris, Director/Actor

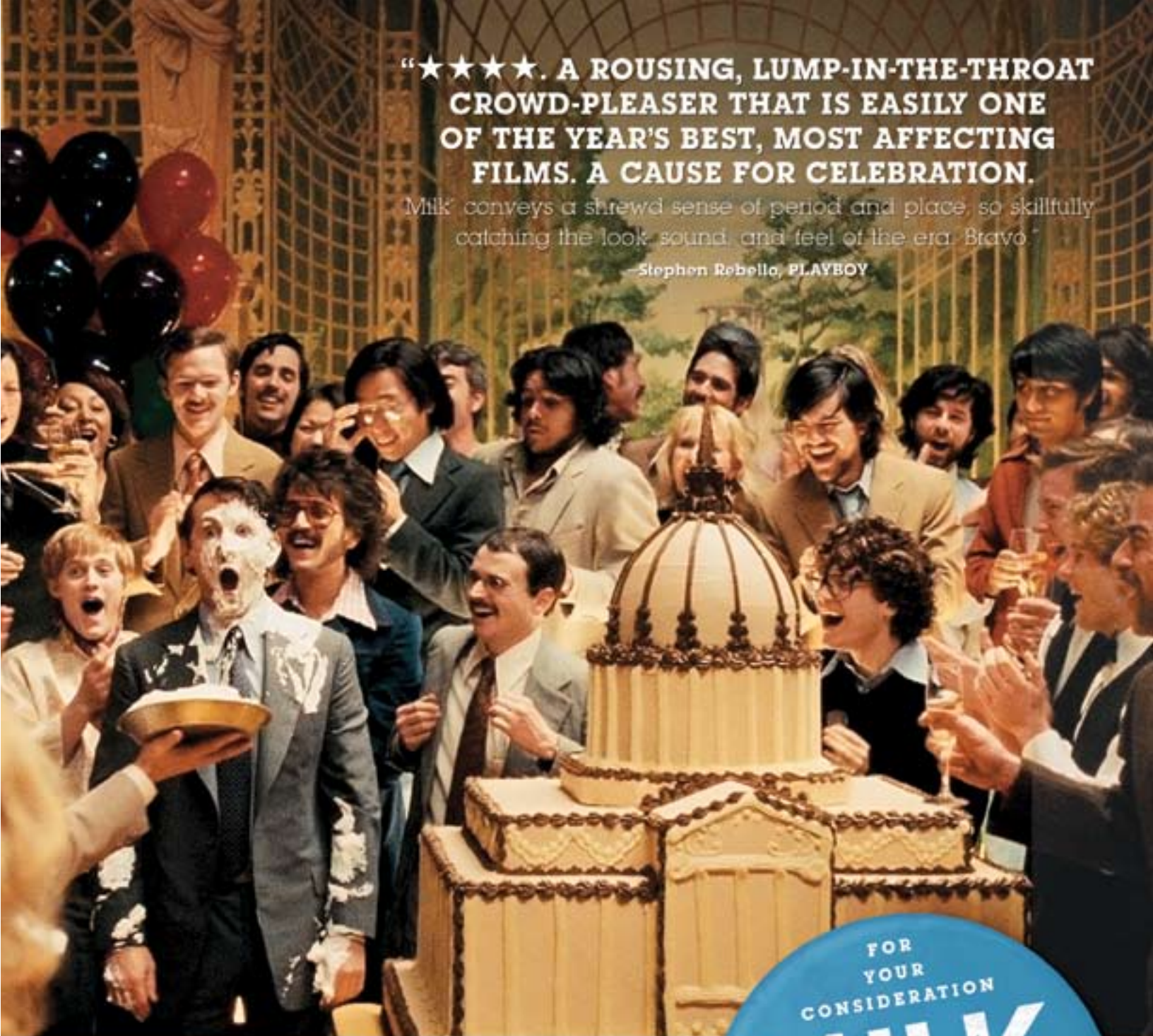
FROST/NIXON

W.

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"I will go out of this world
the same way I came in,
alone and with nothing."

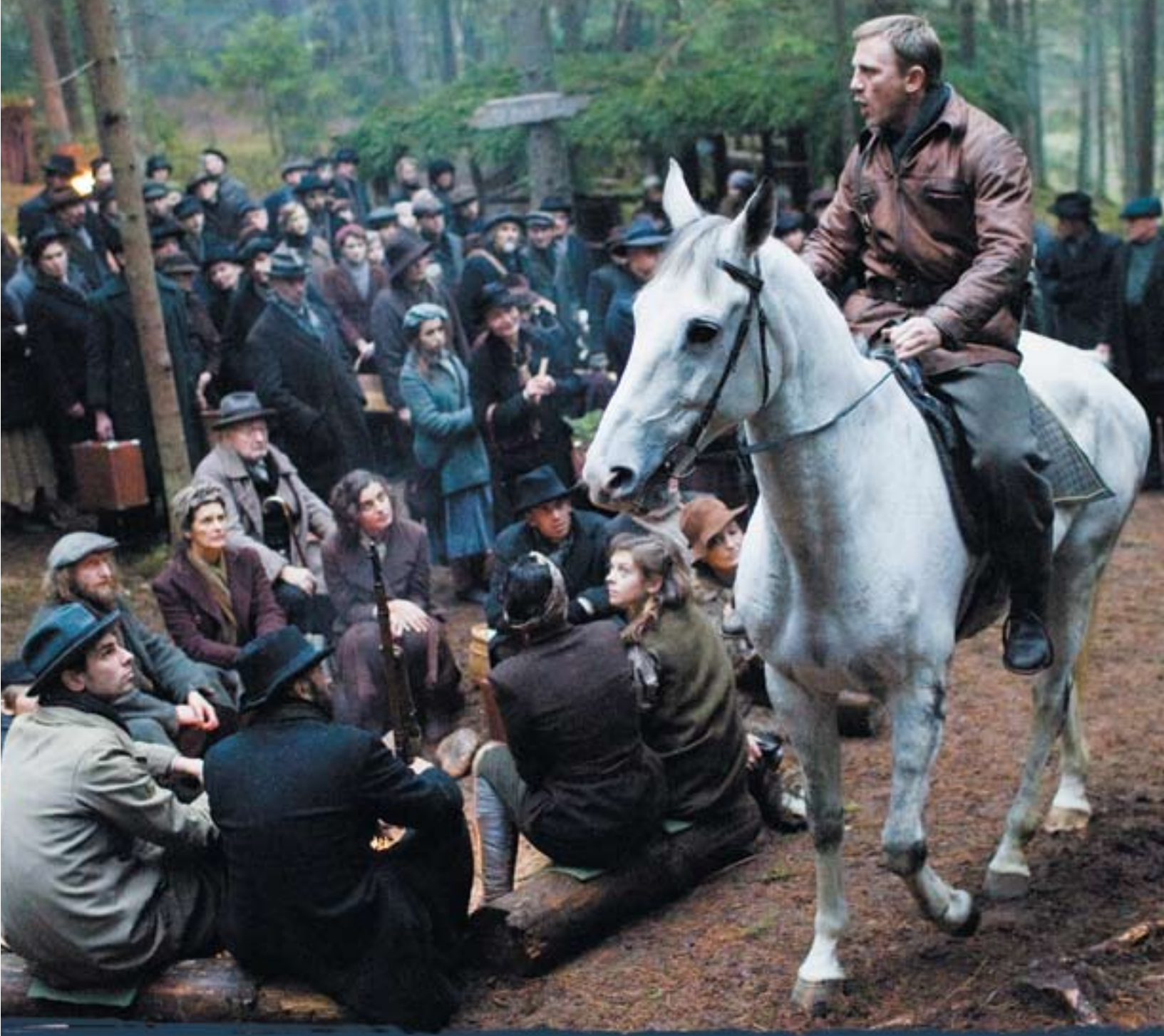
The Curious Case Of
BENJAMIN BUTTON





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F O R Y O U R C O N S I D E R A T I O N

BEST ART DIRECTION

PRODUCTION DESIGNER **DAVID GROPMAN**
SET DECORATOR **ELLEN CHRISTIANSEN**



“A MOVIE THAT IS ACTUALLY ABOUT SOMETHING.
TIME AND PLACE ARE WELL CAUGHT BY TOP-DRAWER
PRODUCTION HANDS, INCLUDING PRODUCTION DESIGNER
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Lisa Dare is a freelance photographer, but her original training was as an academic, with a specialty in film history. The Phi Beta Kappa scholar did research in a number of arenas from the Venice Film Festival to the Film Arts Foundation in San Francisco. Her studies of classic films have helped shape her photographic eye. An SDSA business member since 1998, she has photographed innumerable film and television sets and is a frequent contributor to SET DECOR.

Ken Haber, a frequent contributor to SET DECOR, is an architectural photographer, shooting television and film sets, as well as architecture and interior design for magazines and portfolios. His background in art and photography played an important role in his 25-year career as a location manager with such directors as Adrian Lyne, Oliver Stone, and Ridley Scott; and his photo essays have appeared as set dressing in many film and television projects. He has recently launched Urban Photo Adventures, the only photo tour company in the US dedicated to the urban landscape. Ken Haber Photography is an SDSA business member.

Kenneth Hunter has worked in the film industry in a variety of capacities since 1971; for the last seventeen years in the location department. He has been a scout on films such as CATCH ME IF YOU CAN, COLLATERAL, ZATHURA, and many others. His photography and articles have appeared in several issues of SET DECOR.



Cover: THE CURIOUS CASE OF BENJAMIN BUTTON
Set Decorator Victor Zolfo
Production Designer Donald Burt
Paramount Pictures
Photo: Newell Todd
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SETDECOR

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BOOKS
SETS

This dynamic issue features conversations with two prominent directors about the process of bringing their visions to the screen. Director David Fincher discusses his work with Victor Zolfo SDSA and Production Designer Donald Burt and their collaborative approach to the CURIOUS CASE OF BENJAMIN BUTTON. The unique tale deals with a life lived in reverse and the lessons learned on this unusual journey. Director/Actor Ed Harris describes teaming with Linda Sutton Doll SDSA and Production Designer Waldemar Kalinowski for a spartan, introspective, yet very human depiction of the Wild West in his film APPALOOSA.

Election year—a year of promise and despair, economic fluctuations and disruptive labor/management conflicts: art imitating life has always been fodder for the entertainment industry, and 2008 is no exception.

Director Oliver Stone offers a straightforward representation of our 43rd President, George W. Bush. Mel Cooper SDSA and Production Designer Derek Hill successfully pursued accuracy for the film W.

Politics play in the depiction of a man whose life and passion for civil rights is on point this year for California voters. For MILK, the story of gay activist San Francisco City Supervisor Harvey Milk, Barbara Munch SDSA and Production Designer Bill Groom re-create touchstone locales emblematic of a movement.

The 1977 FROST/NIXON interviews were originally meant to be more entertainment than confessional. Susan Benjamin SDSA and Production Designer Michael Corenblith discuss how they teamed with Director Ron Howard to illustrate this page in history.

Confessionals of another sort are treated in DOUBT. Ellen Christiansen SDSA and Production Designer David Gropman created a vivid backdrop for this 1964 Bronx tale of conflict in a small Catholic parish school in Writer/Director John Patrick Shanley's film.

Homes and marriages have more beneath the surface than appearances might divulge. THE DUCHESS, an 18th century tale of an unhappy union, is depicted in grandiose settings crafted by Rebecca Alloway SDSA and Production Designer Michael Carlin. Fast forward to the mid-century façade of a suburban New York couple, their Connecticut home created by Debra Schutt SDSA and Production Designer Kristi Zea in the claustrophobic REVOLUTIONARY ROAD.

A forest in Belarus is the setting for DEFIANCE, a true story of determined Jews eluding the grasp of Hitler during World War II. Set Decorator Veronique Melery SDSA and Production Designer Dan Weil worked with Director Ed Zwick to convey the tenuousness of survival when everything familiar is gone.

An air of mystery surrounds the film SEVEN POUNDS, with sets created by Leslie Pope SDSA and Production Designer J Michael Riva, filled with subtle clues to the character of a government agent and seven strangers he encounters.

Set Decorator Brenda Meyers-Ballard SDSA and Production Designer Richard Hoover depict life on the rocky road to a comeback in SOUL MEN, a film that will long be remembered as the last work of Bernie Mac and Isaac Hayes.

Action is the calling card of INDIANA JONES AND THE KINGDOM OF THE CRYSTAL SKULL. Set Decorator Larry Dias SDSA describes his work with Production Designer Guy Dyas on the current Atomic Age chapter in Steven Spielberg's and George Lucas' iconic series.

Enjoy the ride and Happy New Year to all!

Rosemary Brandenburg *Executive Editor*
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Harvey Milk [Sean Penn] in his Castro Street store and campaign headquarters



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Castro Camera: “Bill, Barbara, Charlie [Art Director Beale] and the crew did the best kind of work – not showing off, but helping everyone live inside that world. Being in the camera store was a highlight of being on the set; it brought back some vivid memories of 1978 San Francisco.”
—Producer Michael London

“We

Milk

Set Decorator Barbara Munch SDSA
Production Designer Bill Groom
Focus

we were striving for as true-to-life a re-creation of the story as possible in the sets, the costumes, the performances and the dialogue...people have very detailed, sometimes painful but also beautiful memories of what really happened, that helped us re-create so much more. There was this whole other layer of meaning and truth and beauty in making MILK that you don’t usually get on projects. It was extraordinary.”
— Director Gus Van Sant



Harvey's Apartment
TOP & BOTTOM *Living Room*
RIGHT *Dining Room*
OPPOSITE *Kitchen*



Set Decorator Barbara Munch SDSA offers her perspective on the unique experience of making the film MILK. SETDECOR asked her to respond to thoughts from others involved in this lovingly rendered bio-pic of Harvey Milk, one of the first openly gay elected officials in the nation

“People from Milk’s inner circle found themselves hanging out at ‘Castro Camera’ all over again. They would walk in, and they would get a look in their eyes; it was almost like they were time-traveling. This one shop played such an incredible part in the worldwide gay movement.”
—Actor James Franco [Scott Smith]

Munch: There were some profound experiences. Danny Nicoletta is a professional photographer who worked in Harvey’s camera store as a kid and now is a character in the film. There’s a well known photograph of him sitting at the counter, and we re-created that photo for the film. All these years later, he sat there with the same little adding machine in our *camera store*...it was really very moving.

I went to that set very early one day, and he was sitting there by himself on this couch that I had found that looked similar to what Harvey had had in Castro Camera...it was an old Art Deco maroon velvet sofa...and he was very teary. I asked, “What’s the matter? Are you okay?” He said, “Well you know, just sitting here after all these years, I feel like I’m at home and I feel like I’ve gotten some closure to this whole situation.” Other people said the same thing.

Danny and I became quite close. He was in awe of what we were doing, and how quickly we were doing it, guerrilla style. He said, “You’ll never be able to do it in that amount of time.” And I replied, “Just watch!”

He actually became one of the still photographers for the film.

* * * * *

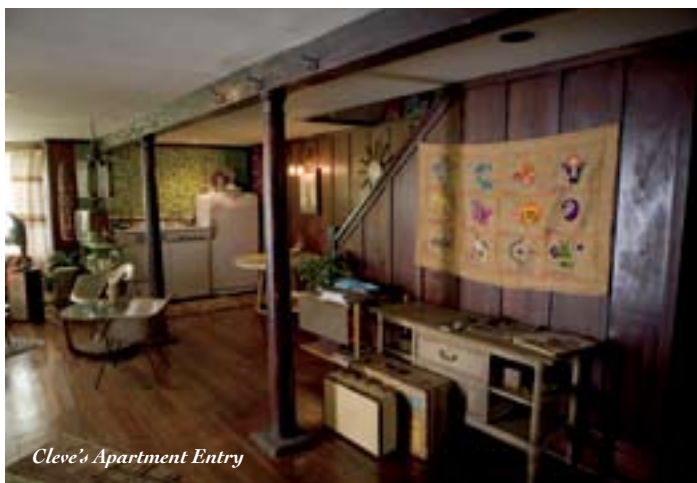
“Harvey would call me up and say, ‘I need a banner for a march,’ and I would make one. It’s funny—here I was making them again in San Francisco for this movie! My friends who call me ‘the gay Betsy Ross’ say, ‘You never sewed that well in 1978.’”
—Gilbert Baker, creator of the LGBT movement’s iconic Rainbow Flag ▶



Cleve's Studio Apartment



Castro Camera's backroom Print Shop



Cleve's Apartment Entry

Munch: Gilbert Baker, who had actually made the first gay flag, was our drapery person. He made all the curtains and the pillows. Harvey apparently loved pillows, particularly the mid-70s Hippie variety...a little on the wild side...so we had them everywhere.

Gilbert just loved being our draper. He'd say, "Okay, I'll have these in a couple of weeks." And I'd say, "No. I need them in 3 days." And he was great about it. He fell right into it and got very involved, and really enjoyed himself. I saw him at the premiere—he was dressed head to toe in sequins.

* * * * *

"We were working already from thousands of photographs and hours of film and video, but everybody from back then helped us interpret those materials. There were a lot of 'aha!' moments along the way when someone stepped in and put the pieces together. People who have been in the Castro for a very long time just started coming forward with not only photographs, but objects from Harvey's camera store."
—Production Designer Bill Groom

Munch: Yes, his friends would come up and say, "Harvey gave

me this. He found it on the beach in Santa Monica and he had it in the camera store." There were several little artifacts like that, and Harvey's nephew Stuart had a couple of items that we also put in the film.

* * * * *

"Even the insides of drawers would be dressed so that the actors would be surrounded by welcoming atmosphere and things they could make use of – especially since Gus Van Sant's style can be improvisational, like jazz."
—Production Designer Bill Groom

Munch: That's something I always do. Having worked with Sean Penn before, knowing what a method actor he is, I always give him as much as I possibly can—because he's very busy on the set and he's looking for things to do something with. It's important for him that the drawers be filled and that he can go into cabinets and find something and use it as if he were in his own environment.

The camera store in particular. Everything had to be exact for the year and what was selling at that point. Although, the camera store was not so much a store but more a campaign

headquarters, so we also always had inks around, paper and printer supplies, silk-screens. We did, in fact, set up the print room in the back. We rented a vintage printing press and had the owner come with it. The press weighed a ton! But we moved it into the location building and the gentleman got it working for us...and you actually see it working in the film.

* * * * *

"There was not only an excellent script to be guided by here. There was also a good amount of archival material. I fell in love with Harvey, with this person, this spirit of this human being, which transcended my own agenda as an actor."
—Actor Sean Penn [Harvey Milk]

Munch: Yes, our own agendas grew. It used to bother me in the beginning that we were doing what producer Bruce Cohen referred to as "the biggest re-shoot you've ever done." But even though we were trying to re-create, it did take on its own visual style—with all the people involved, it became its own element.

There was very little reference material for *Harvey's Apartment*...just a few little photographs. He had been a financial analyst in New York and did have some money; ►

Continued on page 93

45,000,000 people tuned in to public television in the summer of 1977, to see if the disgraced former president of the United States, Richard Milhous Nixon, would finally apologize for the actions which had caused him to step down from office three years prior. Instead of a credentialed journalist or a political scholar, it was glossy talk show host David Frost who conducted the history-making interviews, an electrifying battle of wits, wills and wiliness.

Set Decorator Susan Benjamin SDSA and Production Designer Michael Corenblith helped Director Ron Howard bring this gripping political drama to life in the feature film *FROST/NIXON*. The film delves into the preparations, negotiations and planning that took place all over the world, then flows into the interviews themselves, a legendary confrontation set in a living room in California. Benjamin and Corenblith give *SET DECOR* a behind-the-scenes glimpse of composing the many settings for this television duel and the events that surrounded it. ▶

Set Decorator **Susan Benjamin SDSA**
Production Designer **Michael Corenblith**
Universal

Film re-creation of the historic Nixon-Frost interview, with Michael Sheen as *David Frost* and Frank Langella as *Richard Nixon*. Inset: Photo from actual 1977 interview.



FROST/NIXON



Photo by Ralph Nelson © 2008 Universal Pictures

SET DECOR: Director Ron Howard is known for authenticity throughout his films. Please tell us about your collaboration with him.

Set Decorator Susan Benjamin SDSA: I was very lucky to be invited into this close-knit group of filmmakers. Production Designer Michael Corenblith and Director Ron Howard have worked together on a number of projects, so there already existed a visual dialogue and level of trust between them. Ron and Michael are both very thoughtful and prepared. The amount of research completed before I even started the project was overwhelming. Once a plan was formulated on how they wanted to translate Peter Morgan’s award-winning stage play into a motion picture based on these events, they followed it through on every level.

Production Designer Michael Corenblith: We were dealing with a documented event. We felt we had an obligation to

present it accurately. There is also a strong sense of period memory to which we had to remain faithful. On the other hand, the ‘70s have been replicated so often we had to be careful about not falling into cliché. We didn’t want to undercut the real emotion and the real drama of what was going on by having the audience distracted by the garnish. So it was a question of how to craft something that was true to the period but not an exaggeration of the period, which was a tremendously difficult task at the end of the day.

SET DECOR: Here we see a photograph of the actual Frost/Nixon interview along with a photo of your recreation. Please share some insight with us about this crucial set.

Corenblith: Since we were inevitably going to be compared to the real Frost/Nixon interviews, we took great pains to make anything that had been seen by an audience in 1977 as

ABOVE *Nixon* [Frank Langella] preparing for the interview with his aides, *Diane Sawyer* [Kate Jennings Grant] and *Frank Gannon* [Andy Miller] in his *Casa Pacifica Office/Library*.
RIGHT *The Library* in *Nixon’s Casa Pacifica*.

perfect as we knew how, down to the slightest detail. The exact brick, the tiniest piece of set dressing, the shape of a leaf on the houseplants on the table—we paid attention to everything that was in the interview corner of that room. At the same time, we took liberties with other aspects of the house to give it a certain character when we shot reverses.

Benjamin: It’s funny how enthralled people seem to be with how exactly we matched the *Interview Room* set to the actual room in the Smith house in Orange County, CA. It is much easier to match something than to create something completely new! The *Interview Room* is the only place in the entire film that is an exact match. Michael and Ron made a conscious decision to have the interviews play out exactly as in the original series of interviews. The rest of the sets were either embellished or simplified to forward the story. We were very lucky with the research for the *Smith House*. The film’s location manager found the original house where the interviews took place and cold-called the owners for permission to allow us to research the site. We went down to Orange County to photograph the house and ask questions about the original filming. Interestingly, this wasn’t very different from how the actual interviews came to be in their home 30 years before. David Frost’s producers had hired a real estate agency to find a house near Casa Pacifica, Nixon’s home in San Clemente, so the interviews would be easy for Richard Nixon to get to and so they would be on neutral ground. The realtor had also cold-called the Smiths; and they had agreed to let the interview take place in their living room.



Photo by Brian O'Hara © 2008 Universal Pictures



Frost's glamorous life is revealed through the sets for the posh hotels, *The Beverly Hilton* [left] and *The Plaza* [right].

Mrs. Smith told us stories about how the events transpired, and then proceeded to bestow upon us a treasure box of research that no one could have ever believed existed! Not only did she have photographs from the filming, she had production reports, camera reports, scribbled notes from David Frost on napkins and his company stationery, and a host of other “production droppings” that you would find on any set. When we asked her how she got hold of all of these things, she replied, “I waited until the crew went home every evening and then went through the trash!”

SET DECOR: Tell us about the incredible set *Nixon’s Library/Office at Casa Pacifica*.

Benjamin: I found a copy of ARCHITECTURAL DIGEST magazine that featured Richard and Pat Nixon in their “Western White House,” as Casa Pacifica was often called. This helped us see how they lived and also helped us create a great color palette specific to them.

Nixon’s real office was a small room on the second floor of Casa Pacifica, overlooking the Pacific Ocean. We took some liberty and combined the library with the drawing room. The Art Department spent a great deal of effort researching photographs of President Nixon with foreign heads of state and of historical moments during his term. We then used Photoshop to replace Frank Langella’s image onto all of these images to create “the great wall of *Richard Nixon’s* presidency.”

In this large room, we were able to convey the grandeur of the former president’s life, which would certainly be able to humble or intimidate any adversary.

SET DECOR: There were two major hotel suites for *Frost — The Hilton* and *The Plaza*. What was your approach to these distinctly different depictions, each accurate to the times?

Corenblith: When researching archival images of David Frost, the photographs often showed him in hotel suites, but seldom provided their location. One of the schematic

ideas in keeping the audience oriented was to have a strong stylistic vision for the decor of each suite as an expression of the city and its culture. At the same time we wanted to continue our use of pattern on pattern as a cue to the period.

For the *Plaza Hotel*, we were trying to reflect a more European vocabulary in the choices of furniture, fabrics and wallpapers. The palette was very controlled, but the mixing of pattern unmistakable. The *Beverly Hilton* gave us the opportunity to reference Los Angeles from the perspective of the modern with a mixture of Hollywood glamour and Asian influences. The lines of the furniture and lighting approach a ‘70s interpretation of Moderne.

Benjamin: The room that Frost’s team used in the real 1977 Hilton was much less glamorous than the one we created on stage. In the film, *Frost* is always portrayed as traveling effortlessly in a haze of glamour as compared to *Richard Nixon*, who is seen in more traditional, isolated surroundings. We based the headboard on research from magazines of the time and used the pattern throughout the room.

The key to all of the sets was to make them believable. We wanted to decorate for the time period without calling attention to the scenery.

SET DECOR: The planes, the planes! What great interiors! Tell us about doing the first-class jets and *Heathrow Airport*.

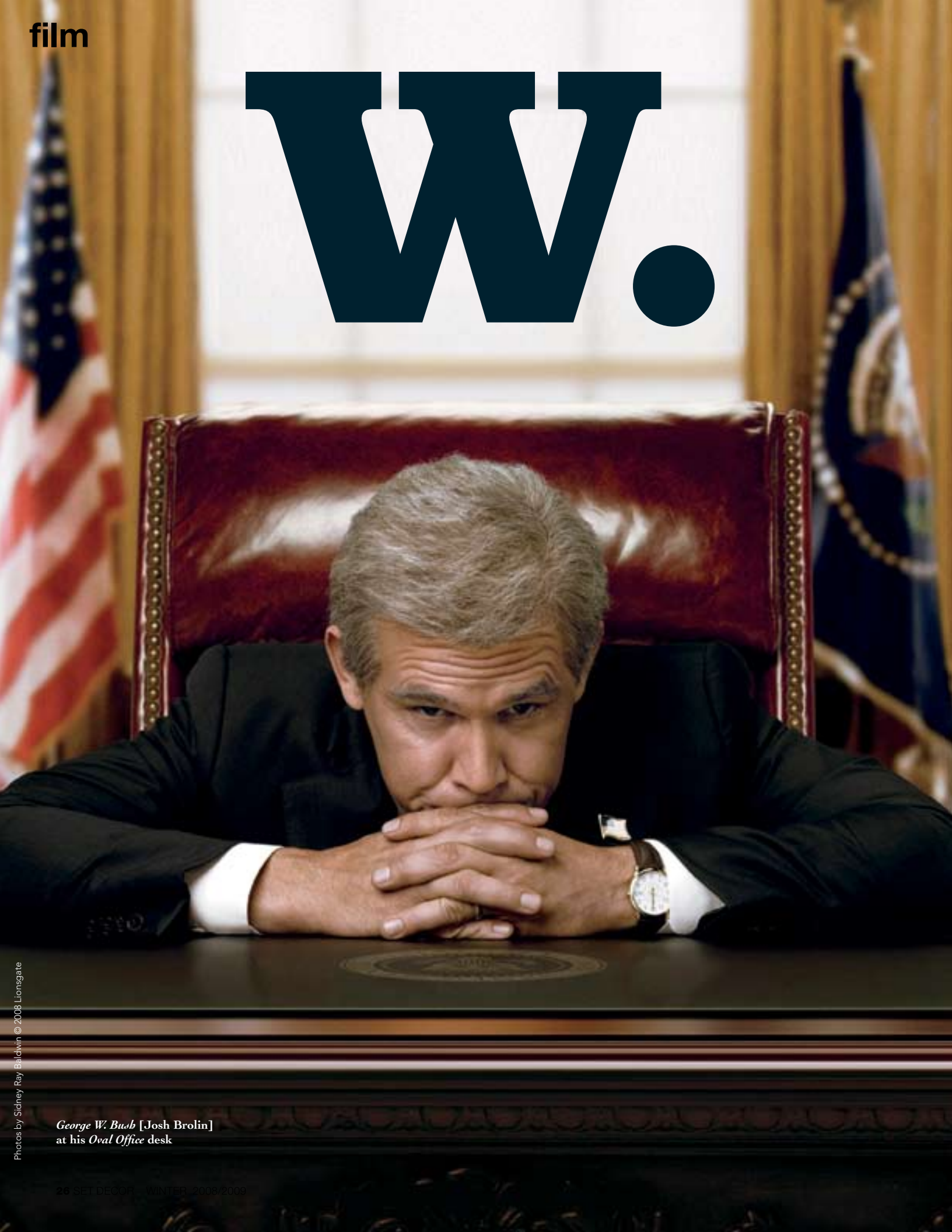
Corenblith: We started amassing images from Heathrow, and it began to shape my idea of film as a whole. Ron always loves technology in transition. So I had an idea of a *Heathrow* terminal and concourse that blended the duty-free area and the crowds of international travelers into a sort of image-heavy representation of the world in which *Frost* traveled.

Since the action aboard *The Airplane* is a seduction scene, we wanted to keep the colors sexy, and chose a lipstick red for the upholstery, accented with a very British-looking tartan.

The ‘70s reality of an *Upstairs Piano Bar* on 747’s was too good to pass up, so the action continues upstairs. We wanted very curvy bench seating, and furniture that reflected an ►

Continued on page 92

W.



George W. Bush [Josh Brolin]
at his *Oval Office* desk



CLOCKWISE
Yale Fraternity House
George Sr.'s Oval Office
Texas Governor's Office
George W.'s Oval Office



Set Decorator **Mel Cooper** SDSA
Production Designer **Derek Hill**
Lionsgate

It's an historic election year and you've been tapped to help relate the story of a sitting president with a famous and gifted director, whose politics have never been a secret. Factor in a limited budget, a distant location and 4 weeks to prepare this contemporary re-enactment. What do you do? How do you begin? What is the perspective?

Taking advantage of tax incentives, *W.* was filmed in Shreveport, Louisiana, under the uncharacteristically even hand of master filmmaker and legendary political agitator Oliver Stone. Set Decorator Mel Cooper SDSA accepted the assignment to decorate the film, alongside Stone veteran Production Designer Derek Hill.

Cooper quickly learned that the devil is truly in the details. Their research, which is public knowledge and has been etched for the past 8 years in any viewer's mind, was the blueprint for the re-creation of these settings. The resounding refrain that Cooper heard throughout filming was, "What does the research show?" Her minimal shopping team, one in Dallas, one in Los Angeles and Cooper herself were armed with albums of this research, "the bible" of the film.

Working with a director of Stone's caliber on a political re-enactment in an election year, in a hot political climate outside of Hollywood, was an experience requiring Cooper to be "on point at all times," as she states. Stone wanted the sets recreated as accurately as possible, down to the last silver pen on the *Oval Office* desk. Cooper was grilled about Bush ►



RIGHT *W* [Josh Brolin] and *Laura Bush* [Elizabeth Banks] with *British Prime Minister Tony Blair* [Ioan Gruffudd] at the *Texas White House*, the *Bush* family compound in *Crawford, Texas*
BELOW *White House Bedroom*



family photographs, framed service medals, furniture styles and art by the meticulous director, himself a stickler for details and a knowledgeable art collector. She defended compromises and provided reasoned solutions where research was lacking.

The Oval Office

The *Oval Office* becomes distinct to every Administration and this one was no different. The challenge for every set decorator faced with re-creating the Oval Office in any era revolves around the oval carpet, the drapes and the desk. The desk was the easy part: a copy of the Resolution desk from Universal Studios Property was packed within a truckload of furnishings Cooper had gathered to help her complete 110 historically accurate sets, filmed in 45 days. The *Oval Office* carpet was fashioned with graphics and paint due to the short prep time. Cooper brought in a Los Angeles draper and had Universal Studios Drapery make the key pieces, carefully managing her minimal drapery funds to maximize the installations.

Chronology

A major goal of the project was to present the facts by re-creating scenarios that we have all observed during the two

Bush Administrations, father's and son's. There were countless opportunities to inflict a viewpoint, but the filmmakers purposely avoided taking advantage of them. Part of the devil in those details was to not *add* personality, but to faithfully represent it. There is a chronology to the film—the shaping of the man who would become “The Decider”—from *W*'s rowdy college fraternity days to the family dynamics of being the directionless grown son of a sitting president, to love and marriage, to becoming the Texas Governor and the unexpected ascent of the political ladder. The college years could have been expanded even more extensively, since Stone was a contemporary of *W*'s, attending Yale at the same time before heading off to Vietnam, although they traveled in different social circles. Again restraint was invoked.

Due to the makeup needed to show the aging of Josh Brolin who skillfully embodies *George W. Bush*, the crew prepared the sets close to the sequential order of the life they were depicting. This presented its own challenges, particularly when a massive “100 Year Storm” arrived in Louisiana, floating away rental cars and a more precious commodity: prep time.

Resourceing

For anyone who has filmed outside of the comfort zone of Hollywood prop houses, there are obstacles to overcome. There are distinct styles of furniture indigenous to specific areas of the country. Shreveport is not necessarily known for Traditional, Colonial or Regency style furniture; so when sets were added, Cooper and team had to be resourceful. There were excursions to Dallas and to a massive swap meet in Canton, Texas—First Monday Trade Days—which were filled with enough diversity to aid in Cooper's quest for variety in style. A feather in the cap of Hill, Cooper and team was when a woman, respectfully referred to as “The Admiral” having served in the Bush White House and acting as the *W.* technical advisor, reported that as she walked through the sets she felt as though she were back in the White House. ■

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Deputy Marshal Everett Hitch [Viggo Mortensen] and Marshal Virgil Cole [Ed Harris]

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30 SET DECOR WINTER 2008/2009

“We’d been keeping the peace together for the last dozen years or so. And as we looked down on a town called Appaloosa, I’d no reason to doubt that we’d be doing just that for the foreseeable future. But life has a way of making the foreseeable that which never happens...and the unforeseeable that which your life becomes.”
– *Everett Hitch*

APPALOOSA

Set Decorator **Linda Sutton Doll** SDSA
Production Designer **Waldemar Kalinowski**
New Line

Revealing the quiet humor and sincerity found in his character, *Virgil Cole*, Director/Actor **ED HARRIS** takes a moment for a conversation with **SET DECOR** about the decoration and design for the introspective western **APPALOOSA**

A succinct review said that APPALOOSA didn't try to be what it wasn't. And that made it all the better.

I'm really proud of it. One of the things I'm most proud of is the look of it. Waldemar and Steve and Linda, and everybody did a great job [Production Designer Waldemar Kalonowski, Art Director Steve Arnold, Set Decorator Linda Sutton Doll SDSA and crew]. I worked really closely with them and I appreciated that they were really into it. Everybody did their research and they scrounged around...we didn't have a ton of money...and we were constantly consulting with one another trying to get it right.



How did the sets help establish the authenticity of the film?

I wanted it to be very simple. I didn't want it to be crowded. I can't stand scenes where it looks like a bunch of ants, you know, in a town, running around. First of all, there weren't that many people in this town. The copper mine had closed down...you see a few more people when Bragg kind of takes the town over, where the saloon's filled with people and there's a lot more noise and a little more activity going on in the town, but nothing is really overdone. I just really wanted it to feel that it is what it is.

So every detail carries weight?

The more specific, the more detailed, the more authentic... I think it goes all the way down the line...the set, the set decoration, the props, the wardrobe. Hopefully it enthruses the actors with specificity as well, so everybody is working in the same arena in terms of trying to be as specific and as detailed as possible.

Waldemar was really specific about the town. Every building had a purpose, and the extras were cast by what they did in the town, in those buildings. And the detail from Linda, even the Barbershop, which you don't really get to see the inside of, had details of personal backstory. I mean, they were both so dedicated and creative.

Linda mentioned that Waldemar used the backstory that the West was part of the great immigration—thus, the twist of having ▶



Photo by Lorey Sebastian © 2008 New Line/Warner Bros. All rights reserved.

Deputy Marshal Everett Hitch [Viggo Mortensen] and *Marshal Virgil Cole* [Ed Harris] start to clean up the town.



Photo by Lorey Sebastian © 2008 New Line/Warner Bros. All rights reserved.

Not much in the West at this time was superfluous. People often arrived with what they were wearing and perhaps with a small satchel or trunk of belongings-- the new Marshal arrived with his cherished books and bookends. *Randall Bragg* [Jeremy Irons], *Marshal Virgil Cole* [Ed Harris], *Joe Whittfield* [Gabriel Marantz]



It is a deft hand that can provide layers and character and still be spare and simple. Some projects lend themselves to a Spartan feel, and can make the viewer taste the dust that has replaced the prosperity in a town.

APPALOOSA is that kind of film, skillfully managed by Director Ed Harris in a small New Mexico town, carefully designed by Waldemar Kalinowski and painstakingly decorated by Linda Sutton Doll SDSA.

The parched town's detailed period sets were as simplistic as were the necessities of the era: *Bar*, *Hotel*, *Marshal's Office/Jail*, *Barber Shop*, *Grocery*, *Mercantile*, *Butcher*, *Sign-Maker*, *Café*, *Train Depot*, and the small house *Virgil Cole* builds throughout the storyline of the film. The *Barber Shop* had the requisite individual customer's mug hung neatly on the wall, to help prevent the spread of disease. Area maps of the period were found locally and utilized in the *Marshal's Office*. Various benches were tested for height, so that the characters could rest their boots on the railing naturally. The *Hotel Parlor* reflected Victorian proprieties—"civilization" in the Wild West.

The sets were extensively researched by the design team, then built and dressed to suit the changing economics of the town. The town, once prosperous when the copper mine was booming, had fallen onto hard times when copper values fell, which Doll illustrated by displaying fashions and fabrics slightly outdated for the time and awnings slightly tattered.

Things begin to change. After his violent and murderous attempts to take over the town are thwarted by *Marshal Virgil Cole* [Ed Harris] ▶

a Chinese family run the dusty town's tiny French restaurant, which had a muted French decor and only 3 or four tables.

And the little Buddha in the background. Linda was great. Man, I really like working with her. She was as excited as I was about the film. You know she really got me excited about the set dressing. I just really appreciated her perseverance, and her eye, and her knowledge, and her aesthetic. She was great.

The film seems filled with simple symbolism combined with the practicalities of life. With Allie & Virgil's House, we get the bare bones of the house being built during the bare bones of their relationship, and then when it's more settled, they're more settled.

Yes. And the windows are important, they add depth. You always see out into the town. I really like to see things with the perspective and the depth—things in the background. We see a lot of things through windows and doorways.

The Hotel & Saloon set seems to reflect the character of the town, from our first view—stiff Victorian settees in the parlor where Virgil Cole and Everett Hitch meet the town aldermen—to it temporarily becoming a courtroom, to the town beginning to succumb to Bragg's oiliness as he takes over the hotel, making it more opulent while lining townspeople's pockets.

Yes. We built up the parlor area. We wanted it to be a specific height. They did a really nice job with the railing and furnishings, and gave just enough room for the actors to fit. We also did a lot of work in the saloon. I was really happy with the way the

stairwell came down from the second story, because of certain things that had to take place, and all the lamps, the chandeliers, the gas lanterns, the bar – the copper top on the bar—and the change of the hotel when Bragg takes over. You know we were paying attention to every aspect that we could.

The sets worked well for you as a director, what about as an actor?

Everything makes a difference. You have to work less as an actor the more specific things are around you...like the little object that Viggo [Mortensen as Cole Everett] picks up when they give him the pen set to sign the paper. Things like that. What the shot glasses are. What kind of whiskey bottles are around. Every thing...the way the curtains were—you could kind of see through them when you needed to... the nature of the tables in the saloon, the chairs... of course, all of the detail in the jail, in the Marshal's Office... everything adds to the character.

Parting thoughts?

Well, you know, it was such a wonderful shoot. And everybody worked so hard, it really was a fulfilling experience. People seem to appreciate the movie quite a bit, which I appreciate. And they just like it for what it is. Like you say, it's not trying to be anything other than what it is. ■



Hitch [Viggo Mortensen] (L) and Cole [Ed Harris] (R) enter into an agreement with the town's aldermen, Abner Raines [Tom Bower], Phil Olson [Timothy Spall] and Earl May [James Gammon].

Photo by Lorey Sébastien © 2008 New Line/Warner Bros. All rights reserved.

and Deputy Marshal Everett Hitch [Viggo Mortensen], the oily Randall Bragg [Jeremy Irons] takes another tack. Using his political connections and ill-gotten funds, he re-positions himself as a benefactor to the town. The ostentatious refurbishment of the hotel is also his attempt to slant the townspeople's goodwill toward him and away from the lawmen. New wallpaper, fresh paint, baby grand piano (a true sign of wealth in the era, due to the travails and expense of shipping to the West), carpeting on the stairs, a massive lighting upgrade—all signify that prosperity has returned...but at what cost?

Though the elements and scarcity of dressing made working in New Mexico challenging, Doll is pleased that the hard work of the design team was so well photographed by Cinematographer Dean Semler. Almost all of the set dressing pieces that she brought from LA by the truckload are visible in the film.

Doll confesses that she finds great joy in researching each project. Set decorators immerse themselves in details. "Dressing a set is like painting—you go in and do your outline; you go back and add a little color; then you go back again and add the fine details and you keep working until you're happy with it". ■

The Hotel Parlor's Entry: Non-electrical lighting of varying styles were revamped or purchased from Amish manufacturers. Camera tests proved that only minor enhancements were needed to evoke the era in the manner that Harris envisioned. Lighting in the hotel began simply and upgraded with the other hotel improvements.



Photo by Colin Zaig © 2008 New Line/Warner Bros. All rights reserved.

DEFIANCE

Set Decorator **Veronique Melery SDSA**
Production Designer **Dan Weil**
Paramount Vantage

Shot in Lithuania, the work on the WWII true story **DEFIANCE** resonated deeply for the Belgian/French team Set Decorator **Veronique Melery SDSA** and Production Designer **Dan Weil**. Director **Ed Zwick** creates an intensely visceral experience of migration, exile, battles, cold, sickness, death, and ultimate survival. There are moments in the theater where one could swear that wind and snow blow out of the screen, creating a deep chill.

Daniel Craig, Liev Schreiber and Jamie Bell, starring as brothers who resist the Nazis in the Soviet Union, head the large cast. “The film is set in Belarus in 1941. It is the moment when the Germans decide to attack Russia, after breaching their alliance,” distills Weil. “At this point in the war, the Jewish communities in the area had no doubt what lay in store for them at the hands of the Germans. The three brothers at the heart of the story begin collecting their own family for safety. Their effort grows, and eventually an entire community coalesces in the forest. Once discovered by the Nazis, they must flee, and found another camp deeper in the forest.”

Weil and the producers selected Lithuania largely for its range of forest types with large mature trees, from regular deciduous forests to birch to conifers. During the shooting schedule from August to November they were able to ►

Tuvia Bielski (Daniel Craig) with his youngest brother *Aron* (George Mackay) in a rare relaxed moment in their forest hideout.



Exiled in the forest, the Belarus Jews maintain tradition by distilling vodka from their few spare potatoes.

portray the full story arc from *Summer* to *Fall*, through a very long *Russian Winter*, and then finally to *Spring*. Settings center mainly on the forest encampments, farms, bogs, swamps and countryside but also plunge briefly into several towns, including a bourgeois apartment and a beleaguered ghetto. The last 10 days of filming brought snow, which enhanced a realistic bitter winter environment.

Shooting in and around Vilnius presented both joys and challenges: “The Lithuanians are friendly, easy people, like Ireland was 20 years ago. Veronique brought a propmaster and a key assistant, but hired locals otherwise,” says Weil. “It’s always different working in places with really inexperienced crews,” adds Melery. “They were nice people, doing their best, of course.” ...Leaving to our imagination the amount of training she provided.

Melery came on board with only 7 weeks of prep remaining. She and Weil read the script together, and Weil showed Melery locations and sketches and a reference book that included Jewish cultural elements. “Veronique, like most Europeans is a quick study, since WWII is very recent history for us, and there are many museums, and libraries that make accessing any information needed a simple matter. Veronique knows the period well.”

“As a set decorator I enter the experience,” muses Melery. “There were a few photos of the camps that Dan found, and I made my own research as well. The sets outside, in shelters, in

the woods, it’s so interesting—the fact of trying to ask, ‘Would they have kept this? Would they have transformed the object?’ This is evident when you do a regular film as well. It’s important to be precise.”

At first Melery wasn’t sure what she could find in Lithuania so she shopped in her home base of France and Belgium, gathered up her selections and within a couple of weeks brought a beginning stock back to Vilnius. Needing more choices, she logged many miles crisscrossing Lithuania, and found more than she expected. “90% of what we needed was in Lithuania,” she recalled, “It was a great discovery because it was the little things that we couldn’t find in France or Belgium, such as Russian items, icons, made in a certain way. In the camps, which were primitive, poor and bare, the people still had things, small and rare items they could escape with—especially religious objects, vital things...or memories. It wasn’t so difficult to find: the people were very open and proud of showing what they had kept from the past,” recalls Melery.

The company shot in several location farms where exteriors were fairly correct to start but which had to be dressed out completely for the period, including a museum town in the Russian style in the Lithuanian countryside.

The location chosen for the bourgeois apartment in town was an empty house and was redressed from wallpaper out. “It was to be a house of a rich family of the time where many people were crowded in, where several families had found refuge. We tend to forget. We don’t see the wartime Jews in a rich, cozy, agreeable atmosphere. We tend to think of them as in a horrible ghetto. It was interesting to give the feeling where it’s rich, yet they are all packed together. It’s poignant: mattresses, belongings, realizing the loss of privacy and personal space.”

Of her experience working with Weil, Melery says, “It was a good collaboration, a complementary relationship. He has a real talent for imagining the whole, including camera angles. He knows how to concentrate on what’s important.”

Weil and Melery found working with Ed Zwick to be a great pleasure. “He is precise yet open-minded, and a nice human being—never closed to a new idea,” said Weil, who last worked with Zwick on *BLOOD DIAMOND*. Melery got the feeling she had known Zwick for a long time. “He was quite easygoing and nice. This was a fascinating script, both interesting and touching. It’s rare to find both qualities combined in one script. It was a great chance to re-create a period.” ■



Cultured Jewish women, including *Lilka* (Alexa Davilos, far left) adapt to their changed circumstances by creating endless meals of potatoes and beets for the exiles.



Tuvia (Daniel Craig, center) and *Assael* (Jamie Bell) *Bielski* attempt to convince affluent *Jews*, now forced by the *Nazis* into living in a single home, to follow them into hiding in the forest.

film

Revolutionary Road

Set Decorator **Debra Schutt SDSA**
Production Designer **Kristi Zea**
Paramount Vantage

*Wheeler Kitchen: Frank [Leonardo DeCaprio] and
April [Kate Winslett] Wheeler*

“The Revolutionary Hill Estates had not been designed to accommodate a tragedy...It was invincibly cheerful, a toyland of white and pastel houses whose bright windows winked blandly through a dappling of green and yellow leaves.... A man running down these streets in desperate grief was indecently out of place.
—REVOLUTIONARY ROAD, the novel

With cutting clarity,
REVOLUTIONARY ROAD
reveals how the restrictions of conformity stifle...
a person, a marriage, a society.

Frank [Leonardo DeCaprio] *Wheeler's* cubicled workplace, martini lunches, meaningless affair and daily commuter train journeys to nowhere bury his hopes and dreams. His wife *April* [Kate Winslett] desperately clings to thoughts of escape from the suffocation and tedium of suburbia. The mundane repetitiveness of their work and play deflates his passion and her self-worth. Their home reflects what she sees as their descent from urban sophistication to the cliché.

The sets are essential players in the story; the *Wheeler's* environments heavily influence their ennui. Their depressive world is not dreary ghetto streets, nor desolate dusty towns, but the pride of the postwar generation, a “perfect” suburban home on a “perfect” street in a “perfect” neighborhood. His featureless office promotes empty communication. Their resolutely happy neighbors, the *Campbells* live in a Rockwell painting.

The controlled palette and carefully edited furnishings reach beyond an era. Set Decorator Debra Schutt SDSA explains, “I think everyone—Director Sam Mendes, Director of Photography Roger Deakins, Production Designer Kristi Zea and I—came to the film with the core idea: How do you do ►



Wheeler House: Kate Winslett as *April Wheeler* and Leonardo DeCaprio as *Frank Wheeler*. Rehearsals and shooting went on for a period of almost three months in the *Wheeler House*, adding truth to the claustrophobia being portrayed.
OPPOSITE *Frank Wheeler* [Leonardo DeCaprio] walks to his desk at *Knox Business Machines*

Photos by Francois Duhamel © 2008 Paramount Vantage. All rights reserved.



a period film that doesn't look like a period film...how to take a story about a marriage and make it believable to be set in any time, and not have it be about wallpaper and about the 1950s?"

"We decided to make a movie that is simple in the look," she continues, "basically modern, so people did not seem to be stuck in another era. I wonder sometimes if a younger generation can really relate to a period movie. The 1950s are so much further away than when I was growing up. This was not about a period. It was more about this young couple who have a very good marriage, who move to suburbia because that's what they think they're supposed to do, and they become suffocated in the world they're in. Their marriage falls apart and they try to save it. It is set in the '50s, but I believe it could be any time."

Schutt and Zea had only 5 weeks of pre-production for the film and the huge challenge of having the *Wheeler House* and the *Campbell House* completed by the end of the first week of shooting. "We shot in a very small house in Connecticut and Sam pretty much shot this in sequence," Schutt recalls. "I dressed the house for everything. Every closet, every drawer and cabinet was filled. It was basically moving into an entire house. It was very fast and furious because it was all up front in the schedule. They would shoot upstairs and downstairs, lots of cooking in the kitchen—they never knew what their shots were until the day of, until the actors rehearsed. Luckily, we had one of the best NY shooting crews and they were very respectful of the set dressing. It rained that whole summer and we had mud everywhere. The entire house had this clean look and it had to be kept clean! All the carpeting is light...it was very difficult."

"We shot in the whole neighborhood. The *Campbell House* was right up the hill. It was tantamount that we see the *Wheeler House* from the *Campbell House*, and the *Campbell House* from the *Wheeler House*. The two houses are very different from each other. I liked the juxtaposition. The *Campbells* were ►





Wheeler House: Frank [Leonardo DeCaprio] and April [Kate Winslett] Wheeler find themselves in opposite places within the confines of their suburban home and their relationship.

“We’re running from the hopeless emptiness of the life here.”

—Frank Wheeler [Leonardo DeCaprio]

tchochke heaven. We wanted maple furniture, but it’s hard to find any more. Who would think that maple furniture would be hard to find? We bought everything, because these houses were fully dressed for about 3 months.”

The shoot began with the *Knox Business Machines* offices on location near City Hall in NYC. The first day of shooting included a *File Room* dressed floor to ceiling with hundreds of matching filing cabinets, challenging to obtain in the short time available. It also turned out to be the first scene cut. Schutt bought new desks and task lighting for the bullpen area, to convey the “modern” business world; but had to rent the extensive ceiling lighting from LA. “We had to. Who else has that many light fixtures? We had a certain amount, and then it started getting bigger and bigger. Roger likes to light everything with practicals—they are very important to him.”

Locations were sometimes chosen for the photographic light opportunities. The angle of light coming through a

restaurant at the Essex House was ideal for photography, but the space proved to be an ordeal for set decorating. Schutt had to bring a muted palette to a room with lime and orange booths and shockingly bright chairs of every color. “Everything had to be changed. There’s a guy in NY who comes on site to reupholster booths, because of all the night clubs in NY with people dancing in the booths with high heels. The booths became a lovely café au lait.”

Art was an important, subtle part of the film, from the loft party where *Frank* and *April* meet, to the statement piece in the *Knox* CEO’s reception area, to the pieces that add urban chic to the *Wheeler*’s home to “...the sweet painting in their bedroom. It’s beautiful. It reminded me of Kate,” reveals Schutt. “*Frank* and *April* collected their friends’ work when they lived in NY.” She chose pieces from artists of the ‘50s who were not famous, which gave a reference to the time period without limiting the look.

Schutt and Propmaster Tom Allen have worked together for years, sharing resources. “I shopped most of the kitchen dressing and props since they overlap so much, but the beach really is an ode to Tom Allen. He had a great contact in Atlantic City for the beach scene, who not only had all the beach chairs and umbrellas, but he brought them up to the location. It’s a very small world, NY. We are like a community; we’re very much a cottage industry. It really is nice working in NY—because it’s so small, we know each other pretty well.”

“Set decorating is so interesting,” Schutt remarks, “because it’s a big question mark. It’s not like construction, where if you need to, you work more hours, get more people. Decorating is: maybe you’ll find it, maybe you won’t. I think people forget that it’s the great unknown. It’s the challenge that makes it exciting, but it’s also difficult. You could go a year without finding something specific—so to find a 1950s playground in 10 days, for instance, you really have to be resourceful.” ■



DOUBT is such a special little world...in the Bronx...working people. It's like a cocoon."
—Set Decorator Ellen Christiansen SDSA

Set Decorator **Ellen Christiansen SDSA**
Production Designer **David Gropman**
Miramax

Working on the feature film DOUBT turned out to be a rewarding experience on every level for Set Decorator Ellen Christiansen SDSA. The piece was compelling: “We had strong material here...The film came from the play, after its Broadway run, and was written by the director, John Patrick Shanley.” Researching the film, Christiansen revisited her childhood at Catholic school and worked with a talented group of collaborators.

Production Designer David Gropman, Costume Designer Ann Roth and Director of Photography Roger Deakins, all with superb creative skills, joined their efforts with Christiansen’s to bring the visuals to the screen. “Ann Roth’s costumes were incredible,” says Christiansen. “The boys with their sweet little haircuts, the people in church in their Sunday best with their gloves on. That brought me right back to my own childhood in Old Greenwich, Connecticut, where we went to church with our covered heads and Sunday coats.... I did go to Catholic school. I loved all the nuns. It was very useful to have those memories.”

DOUBT takes place in 1964, within a small world in a neighborhood of the Bronx, New York, over several months from autumn into winter. “It was not a giant budget, considering the major stars involved [Meryl Streep, Amy Adams, Philip Seymour Hoffman], but the project was fairly contained. There were some big street scenes, but it was mostly shot right in the Bronx, where it took

place, plus bits in Yonkers and Brooklyn.”

The weather serves almost as an additional character: the chilly, rainy autumn blows into a cold winter, culminating in a frosty snow. Scheduled appropriately, it was truly cold and wintry during filming. “We had to make some snow, but one day the greens and set decorating crews actually had to chip away the ice in the courtyard,” recounts Christiansen.

The film is striking for its simple, clean environments, with stunning isolated decorative elements set against them. Asked how the intense color palette was developed, Christiansen responds, “We discussed everything; it was an organic process, very collaborative. It’s such a strong story. There are harsh moments so the strength of the colors provides an intense background for it.”

For the distinct styles of the interiors, the skilful use of color demarcates the strong characters and conflicts in the film. “So many walls were strong color statements, with the actors standing right against them. You get all the clues from the script and go with it,” remarks the set decorator. Yellow is the prominent tone for walls of the *school* interior; emerald green walls scold the viewer in the *Principal’s Office*. The convent’s periwinkle blue *Sitting Room*, with a stark white contemporary standing lamp blasting its presence against traditional soft brown upholstery, supports the theme of modernity intruding into tradition. In the opening scenes of the ▶



doubt



TOP *Principal’s Office*: Sister Aloysius [Meryl Streep] confronts Father Flynn [Philip Seymour Hoffman]
BOTTOM *Father Flynn* [Philip Seymour Hoffman] at the *St. Nicholas Church Altar*

Photos by Andrew Schwartz © 2008 Miramax Film Corp.



LEFT Detail: *Sister Aloysius' Office*.
RIGHT *Sister James' Classroom* at
St. Nicholas Catholic School

film, *Jimmy's Bedroom's* rusty orange walls provide a warm glow and begin a definite arc to the end of the film, set in the wintry white courtyard of the *convent*.

“We did a lot of visual research of course, but the local priests, who were retired Monsignors living near the College of Mt St Vincent where we shot the courtyard and sacristy, were invaluable. They advised on the dressing of the altar, the sacristy, and answered questions about where the altar boys sit, kneel, wash their hands.” The *Principal's Office* was a built set at the College, situated to provide a view down into the courtyard.

The *Principal's Office* serves as a pivotal environment. “She was such a specific character-- determined, opinionated, as she tried to control everything around her.... I spent time sitting at the desk, thinking about the books, letters of a very busy person. I had to make it like someone is really doing a job there...letter to a parent, devotional literature, reaffirmation of the faith, bills. She’s going through a drawer in one scene so we dressed the whole thing out. We were specific—couldn’t have any ball point pens, all the paperwork was written in fountain pen or typed. It’s a story point that she didn’t approve of pencils either.”

Specific set decoration elements were sought that were particular to this era and neighborhood, and the religious artifacts were key. This was a modest parish—objects couldn’t look like they might have been in the Vatican. A formality about the character of this environment was required that pointed to devotion and inspiration. “It was interesting to find all this beautiful religious art, especially the female iconography. It was less about Jesus Christ and more female. Books, religious art—we found them very beautiful. Plain, because it was a simple *convent*, but some pieces of dressing were very ornate.”

“We could not find a big statue of Mother Seton [founder of the first Catholic sisterhood in the United States] for the courtyard of the *convent*. We wanted it larger than they usually are, so it was created by the scenics. On the other side of the courtyard, our *Virgin Mary Lady of Grace* had to be a certain height, but my Assistant Set Decorator Becca DeMarco found this one very quickly.

“We didn’t find so much of the religious art in prop houses. We found beautiful old prints in Manhattan at the Argosy Print shop. We went to antique stores and antique malls. You don’t notice something until you need it. Finding a beautiful prayer card, for example.

“It was a wonderful experience, I love working with David Gropman. The A-list creative team and the whole production staff were wonderful, as were all those who worked for me. Becca DeMarco and I love working together. Dick Tice was the Lead, with a great crew.”

In New York set decorating takes care of all hardware, flooring, window glass, and fencing. “In this case we didn’t do greens, as David Gropman prefers a separate greensman. ... West Coast decorators are always so surprised about all that we do here in New York.”

“I saw the movie the other day and loved it. It was really intense, and seeing the way it was put together was amazing. We filmed in so many different locations: the outside of the church and school was in a Bronx family neighborhood, and the interior was at the College of Mount St. Vincent. And it seemed to work. The film flows well. But then, David’s so great at that kind of stuff... People not in the movie business always think you show up and film it the way it is.” ■

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Seven Pounds

The mysteries of life, the enigma of the sea, the secrets a man carries... age-old themes throughout literature that hold true for filmmakers today. The emotional drama SEVEN POUNDS evokes mystery as *Ben Thomas* [Will Smith], an IRS agent with a fateful secret, embarks on an extraordinary journey of redemption by forever changing the lives of seven strangers. ►

Set Decorator **Leslie Pope SDSA**
Production Designer **J. Michael Riva**
Columbia Pictures



Photos by Merrick Morton ©2008 Columbia TriStar. All rights reserved.



Occasionally, there is a film with a “secret”, which critics respect and allow to be discovered by the audience. In keeping with that philosophy, SET DECOR is pulling back the veil on only one set from the film SEVEN POUNDS: *The Coast House*, home for three generations of the *Thomas* family, lovingly built by *Ben Thomas*’ grandfather.

Great care was taken by Set Decorator Leslie Pope SDSA and Production Designer J. Michael Riva to subtly convey the influence of the sea throughout Ben’s life. On these pages, we are seeing the environment of a man at his happiest moments.

Not surprisingly, sand and water are reflected throughout the home, from palette to textures: sea breezes gently blowing curtains, the beautiful light of magic hour, the art, the artifacts. These were elements very important to Director Gabriele Muccino—they dictated that filming be near the ocean to capture that special light, difficult to reproduce on a soundstage. A coastal house on the cliffs of Malibu was transformed into an idyllic space, everything symbolic of the character of the man living there.

Pope built the history, ever so subtly, into the weave of the home: the linen dyed and washed to a particular shade and level of wear, the flowers at a certain stage of bloom, the selection of ceramics, chosen for their evocation of ocean colors. Small shells and starfish gently placed serve as reminders of walks on the beach. The terra cotta color of the brick floor lent itself to layers of generations-worn, warm-hued rugs to help convey the richness of life. The massive, fully packed bookshelves belonging to the location’s homeowners were retained by Pope and enhanced with photos of the character’s life to further illustrate that this is an intelligent man in a highly skilled profession. Not least of her emblematic choices, Pope commissioned a painting for above the mantle, a diffusion of trees and water, with a hint of darkness foreshadowing changes to come. ■

[Look for a continuation of this article at www.setdecor.com, in January, 2009—more in-depth about more fabulous sets!]

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The Curious Case of Benjamin Button

Set Decorator **Victor Zolfo** SDSA
Production Designer **Donald Burt**
Paramount

*Poignant yet unsentimental,
lyrical yet with a modernist oeuvre,
THE CURIOUS CASE OF BENJAMIN BUTTON
unveils the epic tale of one man's life,
a human anomaly representing each of us.
Director David Fincher, known for unflinching, spare dramas,
delves into the world of magic realism,
keeping his feet firmly planted in the realism
and judiciously dosing the magic.*

*Tizzy [Mahershallhashbaz Ali] and Benjamin
in the Nolan House kitchen, 1920's*

A conversation with Director David Fincher...

Fincher talks with SET DECOR about his collaboration with Set Decorator Victor Zolfo SDSA, Production Designer Donald Burt and Cinematographer Claudio Miranda to visually bring about this unique story.

THE CURIOUS CASE OF BENJAMIN BUTTON was such a road movie, involving time period changes and many locations, many complex sets. How was Set Decorator Victor Zolfo’s contribution helpful to you in defining story and style moments?

I think it’s always a process of starting with the macro and working into the micro... you begin with trying to define what you’re not going to do. In some of the conversations that we had early on—Don and Victor and Freddy [Production Designer Don Burt, Set Decorator Victor Zolfo SDSA, Lead Freddy Waff]—one of the things we defined was that we didn’t want to be precious. We didn’t want to talk about a perfect period in time. I joke with Victor all the time about, “We can’t have a little silver mirror with a little silver brush and a little silver comb at every bedside table,” because you know things just didn’t look like that. I mean, I trust Don and I trust Victor, so we start with those conversations and I turn it over to them. I just say “Here’s what we talked about, right? And when we walk on the set, we need to keep supporting those ideas.” Having been through it with both of those guys before and knowing how great their taste is... they’re going to put more thought into it than I will.

As you mentioned, you had the same team for the 2007 film ZODIAC. [SET DECOR Spring 2007] That must enhance your collaborative process, but this is an entirely different project...

Yes, the movies are different, but the process of making the movies is ultimately extremely similar. Making a movie is very much what it always has been, which is... you define...you talk about the character and then ►



Director David Fincher, on the New York Loft Party, 1947 set



Photos by Newell Todd ©2007 Paramount Pictures. All rights reserved.

Nolan House, New Orleans 1918-1980s

“I wanted to shop and decorate the *Nolan House* completely in Louisiana, for authenticity and practicality. The first thing I did was strip it of everything that wasn’t appropriate for our 1918 start point. We then took the house all the way to the late 1980s. Draper Joel Klaff executed a very complex evolution of the window treatments that we planned for each era. The home reflects what’s going on in the world outside, whether it’s the Depression, World War II, the fifties – so we decided to approach the house as if it were a character in itself. It’s the only constant in the film aside from *Benjamin*. Slowly we see the grandeur peeling away.”

—Set Decorator Victor Zolfo SDSA

Queenie [Taraji P Henson] and *Tizzy* [Mahershalalhashbaz Ali] share joyful news with the *Nolan House* residents, *Thanksgiving 1932*.

from that, you begin to build your list of things that you’re not gonna do, and then from there you’re sort of free to go and explore, “What would it have been like? What would somebody have right there?” And photo references, asking questions, and looking at paintings and all these different elements...whether you’re making a movie that takes place in 1929 or 1969. The nice thing about ZODIAC was, every single kitchen in the movie, I had been in. So I could say, “No, not that Harvest Gold....” So there’s the stuff that you just know and then there’s the stuff that you’re doing research on.

And while this story itself has a fantasy aspect, do the sets? Or are you trying to be as tightly real as possible?

We’re trying to be real. The reality of it is sort of the buried lead. It sort of frames itself as a fable, but then it becomes more and more about real—kind of mundane in a lot of ways, issues that

people have regardless of what year it is or what decade it is. There have always been certain things that people worry about. What we wanted to show is that no matter what direction you’re going, life is still complicated. And there’s definitely some magic, but hopefully by halfway through the movie, you’re done with that.

While *Benjamin* is growing “younger”, the country is becoming more modernized. So in a way, the country is growing younger, as well. Were there specifics that you envisioned to visually convey this, or did you give Victor and Don a general mandate to find ways to reflect the dichotomy, and then just walked away?

Pretty much. There are things that are sort of your sacred cows, that are really important to you, but you also have the details, the research that they’ve gathered.



Bordello, 1932

“We looked at historical photographer EJ Bellocq’s photos of the girls who worked in Storyville, the red light district, and saw a sadness and simplicity to the way they lived—how the brothels, known as ‘cribs’, looked. Yet, we saw playfulness in the women. The details were so specific: a room has several girls, each with a little corner with their meager possessions (wash basin, ribbons, perfume) as well as everyday elements (drying laundry, sewing, cleaning) all crowded in.”

—Set Decorator Victor Zolfo SDSA

Were there a couple of sacred cows in this?

We joked—there’s this whole sequence that takes place in *Paris*, and our sacred cows there, whenever we were talking about background, were: “No baguettes! No berets!”

On BENJAMIN BUTTON you were working with new tools, Hi-Def cameras. Physically, what did you need from Victor and Don for filming in High Definition digital and to aid your ability for digital visual enhancements?

I think that HiDef, as it’s come to be known, is really a misnomer. I mean these are high-def television cameras, but they’re being used in a different way in how you expose them and how you process the data after the image is exposed. So it’s not like shooting a situation comedy.

Because you actually—pardon the antiquated verbiage—because you’re actually going back into the dark room and playing with the image?

We’re playing with it all the way along. We’re playing with it when we expose it—we under-expose it, then we take that under-exposed stuff and process it ►



Captain Mike [Jared Harris] shows off his work as an artist in the Bordello, New Orleans 1932.

Photos by Newell Todd ©2007 Paramount Pictures. All rights reserved.

through a very elaborate image-processing technology so that there's almost nothing left of the high-def anomalies.

One of the things that you get from having a super high resolution image is a lot more softness, as weird as that sounds. The ability to get a soft image means you have to be able to resolve an enormous amount of data between data points in order to create the effect of softness. One of the ways you do that is by shooting wide open, which also allows you to use less light. You don't need as many units. So it actually ends up being more supple in the darkness.

Yes, Victor pointed out that because of that you were able to do a lot of the lighting with practical lights.

That's the thing—and so you end up picking up all this extra spill that's very realistic, because it's really what those light bulbs are doing. We did a night *church tent* sequence and it was really about 200 glass light bulbs, 40-watt each. It's so beautiful. And you go, "How can this be?" You could never do that on film. We also shot a lot with gas lanterns, and there were many times that they were almost too bright for what we were doing. There is even a scene that's lit with a candle in the movie. There is one little bulb next to the candle, but you can actually see the candle—you can see it reflected in their eyes—and it's pretty amazing.

How do you foresee the future needs of set decoration for digital film-making?

I just don't see digital filmmaking really changing that discipline...I think in terms of construction, I do see a day when if you have to go back and do a re-shoot of a scene, you will have made high-resolution photographs of that set and you will be able to just go to a blue-screen stage and call it up. But you will still have had to have built it the first time. The digital of it all is really mostly about, "Do I need to build this boat and go out on the lake?" But not, "Do I need to dress the set?"

I actually think that sets are really important...almost more important for directors than actors. But I think set dressing is more important for actors, because it helps inform them. Whether or not the hallway goes off to the drawing room, doesn't really matter to an actor, but I think what really matters is, "What does this stuff say about this character? What is the environment saying about the character?" It ►



Elizabeth Abbott [Tilda Swinton] awaits Benjamin in the hotel's lobby.

Photos by Newell Todd ©2007 Paramount Pictures. All rights reserved.

Winter Palace Hotel, Murmansk, Russia 1941

“Everything in the hotel is authentic and apropos for the vintage and place, down to the telephones, fly strips, and rotting vegetables. We removed crystals from the chandelier, yellowed the glass, and filled the kitchen with period Russian products. It is a pivotal moment in *Benjamin's* life – he finds tenderness and love for the first time. We were creating a cocoon for *Benjamin* and *Elizabeth Abbott* [Tilda Swinton] to discover their affection for each other and have a rendezvous each evening surrounded by faded opulence and romance.”

—Set Decorator Victor Zolfo SDSA



Benjamin [Brad Pitt] and Elizabeth [Tilda Swinton] in the kitchen of the Winter Palace Hotel, Murmansk Russia 1941



Galley of the Tugboat Chelsea, 1942

Tugboat, Chelsea 1942

“We shot a real tugboat on the river in Morgan City, Louisiana; purchased many of the nautical items locally, built the rigging and bumpers through rope manufacturers, and changed the tug over from harbor tug to US Navy vessel for use in WWII. In LA, the entire tugboat exterior was built onstage at Sony on hydraulics to simulate stormy seas. We matched everything on stage that we had shot in Louisiana; much of it in duplicate. The *Crew Quarters*, *Galley* and *Wheelhouse* were individual sets built on gimbals on another stage. Most of our dressing was bolted down, yet I kept many objects loose and hanging to get good ‘sway’ with the roll of the ocean.

—Set Decorator Victor Zolfo SDSA

does help them. So again, I don’t think what’s out the window is as important to an actor as what they’re going to come in contact with and what they’re going to see around them that’s going to inform who they thought they were.

And of course, the goals of the set decorator are to bring about the vision of the director and to give clues to character, time and place, for both the audience and the actor.

Yes. You’re helping to tell the story. And I look at it as...you know, so often I’ll leave the set and when I return, I’ll notice that someone has moved something onto a table. My reaction is, “What? Why is this over here?” And they’ll say, “Well, because the DP saw it and wanted to be able to hide this thing.” And I’ll respond, “Whoa, whoa, whoa! That thing placed there doesn’t make any sense. You can’t...it’s not about...we’re not here to fill space. We’re here to make sure that we support an idea.”

The range of sets was enormous: interiors and exteriors shot in New Orleans, Montreal, St John, Los Angeles, India and Cambodia—what did shooting on location bring to the film?

Well, an enormous amount. You know it was such a huge part of the story-telling and helped the actors to feel what the place

Continued on page 90

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film

SOUL MEN

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Set Decorator **Brenda Meyers Ballard** SDSA
Production Designer **Richard Hoover**
Dimension



Dressing Room at the Apollo
OPPOSITE *Lewis Hines* [Samuel L. Jackson] and
Floyd Henderson [the late Bernie Mac] at the Apollo

T

wenty years after their group's break-up, two estranged soul singers reunite to appear at the memorial tribute for their former lead singer. Problem: they have to make a cross-country road trip together, from Los Angeles to New York, and the old animosities still run deep!

Spirited dialogue, the sounds of R&B and funky locations gave Samuel Jackson, as Lewis Hind, and the late Bernie Mac, as Floyd Henderson, opportunities to shine in the film SOUL MEN. The two lead characters perform in small venues on the road, trying to hone their rusty skills before appearing in the commemorative show at the Apollo.

Set Decorator Brenda Meyers Ballard SDSA and Production Designer Richard Hoover spent four months on their own multi-state road trip establishing the settings for this comedic adventure.

"Our show opens with flashbacks of Stax's musical group, The Real Deal, from the 1960s, '70s and '80s. It was important to establish our characters' early beginnings and what they had been," Ballard explains. "We showed the trio's crazed fans, a visit at Graceland with *Elvis*, prized platinum records, onstage in a spaceship, with *Muhammad Ali* in *Africa* and on *Saturday Night Live!*. When we used theaters, they were elaborate stages with different heights. The location theaters had seating, but never enough drapery and lighting, so we brought in our own. The setups involved some of the biggest challenges we faced—these vignettes were small movies within our movie, but not necessarily small sets!"

In present day, once *Floyd* talks Lewis into committing

to perform at the tribute, they have to get to the other side of the country. The slight hitch: Lewis refuses to fly. Floyd, now a carwash owner, un-retires a huge vintage Cadillac convertible—the license plate *MUTHASHIP* tells it all—and the road trip begins.

Out of step with the times, they try to polish up their act in bars along the way. *There's a Roadhouse Bar* in Texas, with the two *Motown* musicians in their bell-bottoms in a cowboy joint trying to sell their sound to two-step line dancers. There were numerous *Motel Rooms*, all shot in Shreveport, Louisiana, standing in for different locales across the country; the set dressing was the film's map. For each locale, café/diner booths were re-upholstered and the walls redone to define empty ►

places with the brand of that particular area. The motel sets had less specific, but definitive, changes.

“Finding the appropriate set dressing on location can be the real challenge, because there might be only a few places that deal with the concepts of renting or fast turnaround,” Ballard points out. “We rented medical equipment from real doctors’ offices, and motel room furniture from existing motels. Occasionally you can find a great local store. In Shreveport, Nader’s did framing, had office furnishings and accessories, and possessed the ability to think outside the box—they gave me access to rent whatever I needed, which was really a lifesaver!”

The largest set was the transformation of the entire second floor of an unoccupied commercial building into the prominent *New York*-based *Epstein Music Management Agency*. “The location for this huge set had no electricity, no elevator, only a spiral staircase. So all materials had to be carried up manually—tables, desks, floors, platforms, all of the set dressing, tools and equipment! Locations for filming in Louisiana are film friendly,” Ballard wryly notes. “But it doesn’t mean the location will serve your purposes perfectly.”

“The agency desks had to be manufactured by our propmaker crew, because the number of multiples necessary was simply not available. Luckily, we had clearance for the gold albums from the Hand Prop Room, and I was able to get permission to use a couple pieces from White, who is the official artist for the Grammys,” she discloses.

At the opposite end of the music business spectrum was, as Ballard describes, “... a garage absolutely packed with someone’s life possessions, the living area of a wanna-be rap star.” For research, Ballard went to the local Shreveport rappers and was personally invited to rapper BayBay’s house. The performance artist generously allowed them to rent his equipment for the “*rapper/garage*” set dressing.

Comic twists were not confined to the script. “The interesting part of being a decorator on location is that you often bump into things unexpectedly that would probably not occur elsewhere,” Ballard reflects. “We were doing our *Backstage* set on the third floor of the Municipal Auditorium. It was late on a Friday evening because we had to carry everything upstairs, which took forever. Three kids popped in and were amazed at our ability to transform the environment so completely. We asked them why they were in the building at that time of night. They replied that they were ‘part of the circus,’ a 3-ring event that was going to take place on the ground floor. We went downstairs to find circus members bringing in trapeze equipment, elephants and camels—the animals bending to get through the standard doors! So here we are, moving set dressing around on the third floor for a movie set, and there is a full-blown circus moving in on the first floor! Just a typical Friday night in Shreveport...”

How does one deal with multiple locations and managing 4 crews in 4 states? “It’s all about the speed, the organization and the skill in getting your crew going on what you need to do; who to talk to and how to produce results when things change quickly. You have to really stay on top of things,” comments Ballard. “It helps to have a great team, especially Leads Daril Alder, Ray Garcia and Frank Hendrick, and my buyer Elizabeth Humphrey.”

“The most significant set was the finale at the *Apollo*, which included the legendary Isaac Hayes,” she continues. “Little were we to know it was one of his last performances...and Bernie’s as well. Of course that makes it all the more memorable.”

“The theaters that we ended up shooting as the *Apollo* were The Strand Theatre and The Municipal [the home of the *Louisiana Hayride* radio program and Elvis’ first national stage], both in Shreveport. The



Photos by Doug Hyun. © 2008. The Weinstein Co.



dressing rooms that existed were pretty uninteresting and the staircase was very narrow. We needed banks of dressing tables that had to be built and carried up the stairs—stairs again! This was a mammoth dress under difficult physical limitations, but I got lucky with set dressing. There was a warehouse that had very little that could be used for sets, but the wardrobe inventory was incredible. So I was able to place great costumes in the dressing rooms by setting up their first production rental.”

She adds, “The color tones that Production Designer Richard Hoover chose were spectacular and really brought everything to life. He has a lot of stage experience as a production designer, which gives him the ability to know a stage almost instinctively—what fits and what can be accomplished. And he is extremely creative.”

“Although the show is a comedy in essence, our requisite was to have things look larger than life and still be historically accurate,” Ballard relates. “I grew up with the Motown and Stax sound—the Platters and other earlier performers—so the research from Stax Records was really useful...and nostalgic! Books about their early years, and music sets of CDs proved

to be invaluable. It was extremely helpful to be able to know the times, what created and ended Stax.”

Dealing with the music history gave the crew insight as to how it was for the artists in those days. The visuals were irreplaceable research: from visits to Graceland and Al Green’s church to footage of the ED SULLIVAN TELEVISION SHOW, which revealed the stage dressing for music acts.

“Many of the music landmarks in Memphis are still as they were originally,” Ballard states. “Stax Records, though, was forced to close during the racial riots of the late ‘60s, for unpaid bank loans. The once safe haven for musicians of any color to play music together was left to deteriorate. Years later the exterior was refurbished and the interior became a museum celebrating the artists.

The highlight of this filmmaking experience for Ballard? “The live song and dance numbers with Bernie and Samuel—what talent! They performed so extraordinarily well together that they really convinced us their characters were trying to make a musical comeback. Their stage acts were so entertaining, that even at the end of a long work day we would all just show up to be able to be part of it.” ■

film

INDIANA JONES

AND THE KINGDOM OF THE CRYSTAL SKULL

Set Decorator **Larry Dias** SDSA
Production Designer **Guy Dyas**
Paramount

“It was important for me that the character move into the Atomic Age. Our film takes place in 1957, which is totally informed by the cold War, by McCarthyism, by hot rods... letter sweaters, ponytails and saddle shoes. For me, the '50s were emblematic of music, of the very beginning of rock and roll. It was Technicolor. The Fifties means the bright young faces that Norman Rockwell loved to paint.”

—Director Steven Spielberg

Temple of Akator Artifact Corridor



Indiana Jones [Harrison Ford] in
Bunker Interrogation Room

SET DECOR gets an inside look at the making of *INDIANA JONES & THE KINGDOM OF THE CRYSTAL SKULL* in an interview with Set Decorator Larry Dias SDSA.

SET DECOR: This newest *Indiana Jones* adventure begins in the desert Southwest in 1957. Twenty-seven years ago, the *US Secret Storage Facility* that appeared in the closing shots of the first film, *RAIDERS OF THE LOST ARK*, was created from a matte picture. For the current incarnation, Director Steven Spielberg wanted an actual set to use for the opening action-adventure sequence. How was this well-remembered scene brought to life?

Set Decorator Larry Dias SDSA: We shot the majority of the action scenes at Downey Studios. The reverse, looking outside through the doors of the *Storage Facility*, was shot in New Mexico.

It was a little hair-raising putting it together because it was shot on our second day of filming. The first day was driving shots, so this was the first actual “set”. The pressure of getting it just right was looming and, of course, we were fighting the clock.

We had to truck almost a thousand crates to New Mexico, and all needed to be painted. We had done camera tests earlier to come up with our paint samples and now, in the sweltering desert, the crates were soaking up the paint like sponges. During this process, Production Designer Guy Dyas was overseeing the filming of the opening sequences in Santa Fe. Since he and I had been the only ones present at the camera test done months earlier, it took a while to convince the art director and the lead scenic that the crates needed second and sometimes third coats of paint. I knew the intensity of light we were contending with, because ▶

“The sets gave me a familiar thrill. I’d walk on each one and say, ‘I’m on the set of’ an Indiana Jones movie — how lucky am I that I get to direct another one of these?”

—Steven Spielberg



Nuclear family in *Atomic Age Test Site*

Photos by David James © 2008 Paramount Pictures. All rights reserved.

we had built three-foot diameter spun aluminum custom fixtures that would accommodate four 1000-watt movie lights. Once those lights came on, they would literally bleach out the paint on the crates. I'm sure they thought I was crazy, but Guy knew I had seen the camera test and suggested from his remote location that they go to the color I was proposing—the crates were made darker and all went well on day two.

SD: At Downey Studios a number of sets were erected in a massive hangar that, at more that 600,000 square feet, once served as a facility for the development of the Apollo spacecraft and the Space Shuttle. Among the sets was an experimental military-style bunker that’s related to the set filmed in New Mexico?

Dias: The *Storage Facility* interior was shot at Downey. Lead Scott Bobbitt oversaw the construction and installation of thousands of crates, different shapes and sizes, and the hanging of over 100 of the custom fixtures. The set was tough to dress and even more difficult to maintain, because the level of action in that set was astounding. We had a great deal of interaction with our stunt and special effects departments, since Harrison [Harrison Ford as *Indiana Jones*] was running, jumping and climbing on the crates, and vehicles were crashing through them. As one might imagine, re-setting and re-dressing to camera was quite an endeavor. On-set Dresser Hector Gonzales and Set Dresser Nashon Petrushkin will attest to that.

Downey was also used for the *Missile Launch Test Facility*. This set was designed as an underground bunker, with an early

jet engine mounted on a chassis that ran on a rail. These were pieces of equipment developed by the military that actually exist and are still used today. The special effects department purchased one jet engine and we purchased a matching one to disassemble and use for a parts wall. As part of the action, Harrison/*Indy* is hurled through the window of the *Missile Launch Test Control Room* onto a control panel, causing the jet engine to start. Since it was used for a very physical scene, the control panel was built with all rubber toggles, knobs and switches made to look like metal. The set also had four synchronized countdown clocks and a dizzying amount of electronics put together by Set Dressers David and Steve-O Ladish and Propshop Foreman Damon Allison to emphasize the drama of the jet engine blastoff.

SD: With the Atomic Age artificial town test site, you gave new definition to the phrase “nuclear family”. Tell us about creating this life-sized diorama.

Dias: That was a fun set to do. Prior to researching this film, I had no idea that the government had actually staged environments like this and people could watch the nuclear testing from “a safe distance” armed with special sunglasses! Can you imagine? These tests were conducted to discover the effects of radiation on textiles, food products, consumer goods, etc. We definitely pushed it a little. Guy developed a really bold color palette that was amazing in the intense light of the Southwest desert. It was a great departure from the typical '50s classic pastels or reds. Buyer Sara Gardner Gail and Lead Ernest Sanchez were key to



the *Doomtown* set, which was not without its challenges. The crews faced temperatures above 100°F, lightning and rainstorms with gale force winds. The set was built over an old airstrip that is still used for emergency landings, so we had to contend with not compromising the ground surface. It was very difficult to make mannequins, lampposts and other exterior dressing stable in high winds.

For the interior, Sara and I found the sectional sofa on the sidewalk in front of an antique store, and that piece galvanized the interior color scheme. We scoured thrift stores, antique malls and eBay to find the perfect kitsch elements. Buyer Liza Rudolph, who specializes in textiles, helped find great fabrics for Draper Andy Smith to create the look we wanted for the drapery and upholstery to surround that sofa.

SD: A diner, inspired by the Edward Hopper painting *Nighthawks*, was built on Paramount’s backlot, augmenting the *Marshall College* scenes filmed in Connecticut. Tell us about coordinating all of this cross-country shooting.

Dias: East Coast Set Decorators Beth Rubino & Alyssa Winter decorated the Connecticut campus and street scenes, including the classroom. We also shot a number of scenes on the Paramount backlot that tied in perfectly with ►



Peruvian Marketplace

the location work from the East Coast.

Arnie's Diner was created in an existing facade on the backlot. Guy wanted to steer clear of the ubiquitous '50s diner, to give it more of an earlier feel—a place from the '40s that is still going strong and has sort of grown into itself. We filled it with historic photos, newspaper clippings, awards and trophies to give it some history and placed them right over a beautiful mural that Guy created. It gave it a nice layered, textured look.

SD: Meanwhile, at Universal's backlot, you filmed several key scenes with major sets, including the home of *Professor Henry Jones*. What was your approach and how did you go about revealing the details of *Indy's* history and capturing the moment in time for the film's date of 1957?

Dias: Guy and Steven (Spielberg) wanted to show a transition of time, but not stray completely from the original set that had been seen in previous *Indy* films. We built this incarnation on the bones of the Art Deco motif, warming it up with Persian carpets, kilims and sumptuous textiles on the furniture, drapery and

lampshades in a palette of chocolate brown, caramel and rust-reds. We put together a library with the help of Liza Rudolph's contacts at the Strand bookstore in NYC, and we collected artifacts and cultural iconography from all over the world to show how extensive *Indy's* travels have been over the years. Probably one of the most challenging aspects of this set was having to edit the set dressing, even though we filled every drawer.

SD: We jump from college-town America to a dangerous marketplace in Peru, reminiscent of the souks from earlier *Indy* films, where evil lurks in the shadows of the stalls hawking both everyday and exotic goods. Tell us about creating this treacherous South American Casbah on the streets of Universal's backlot.

Dias: We really worked hard to not have the *Peruvian Marketplace* set recognizable as the backlot of Universal. Buyer Sara Philpott's work was key here. She and Set Dressers Merdyce McClaran, Rich Andrade and Skylar Schmidt really put their best into this

set and it shows. We had all of the traditional vendors one would expect, but beyond that, we had working treadle sewing machines in the *tailor's stall*, working looms in the *weaver's stall*, with weavers trained by Liza Rudolph, a spice market, buses, carts, llamas, mobile food vendors and actual butchers cast as extras in our *butcher shop*. Sara Philpott and Nicole Zaks shopped extensively on the internet to find importers of Peruvian goods. Set Dressers Bob Sica, Ron Sica and Greg Lynch stretched miles of phone wire and hung countless numbers of primitive electrical boxes which added a layer above the set. After shooting the set, Spielberg announced that we would no longer need to shoot scenes on location at a town square in South America.

SD: The *Peruvian Village* led to the huge multi-level and perilous cemetery, guarded by ghouls. Tell us about Production Designer Guy Dias' plans for the menacing *Chuchilla Cemetery* and your role in making it come about.

Dias: Guy designed this ominous and quite grand set with nooks, crannies, turns, excavation pits, completely filling up Stage 27 at Universal. The cemetery was quite a trick to dress since it was three stories deep. I had a crew that transformed into mutant cave dwellers! Set dressers Steve-O Ladish, Nicole Eldredge, George Hess and Chris Larsen were unstoppable! I say this because dressing these cemetery and cave sets did not make for a pleasant environment—they were slippery, multi-level, crouch-inducing, back-wrecking, head-bumping, skin-scraping nightmares and our crew did it with a smile. This type of set eats up dressing because everything is made to look only partially unearthed, somewhat

Continued on page 92



TOP Chuchilla Cemetery sketch
RIGHT Cemetery detail



film



Photo by Nick Wall © 2008 Paramount Vantage. All rights reserved.

The Duchess of Devonshire [Keira Knightly] in the estate's dining hall.

The DUCHESS

Set Decorator **Rebecca Alleway** SDSA
Production Designer **Michael Carlin**
Paramount Vantage

F

ilm projects of grandeur that include castles or stately mansions, most often made in Europe, have been disparaged as *Rent-a-Mansion* movies. This misnomer, based on the assumption that the sites are filmed with the contents as is, does disservice to the work involved. In Britain, for example, most of these estates are governed by the National Trust and none of the furnishings in the houses are worth the risk of exposing to a film crew. The contents are off limits because of their historic status.

Set Decorator Rebecca Alleway SDSA decided early in pre-production for *THE DUCHESS* that the best approach was to remove everything and start fresh. With each piece carried off and stored by the white-gloved National Trust workers and her own white-gloved propmen, she set about finding the pieces she needed to dress the multitude of homes inhabited by the *Duke and Duchess of Devonshire* [Ralph Fiennes & Keira Knightly].

In the 18th Century, the more aristocratic the family, the more sparse yet grandiose the furnishings in their homes.



The Duke of Devonshire [Ralph Fiennes] in his *Office* at his 17th century home, *Chatsworth*



Devonshire Hall: The Duke [Ralph Fiennes] with his mistress, *Bess Foster* [Hayley Atwell] and her children.

“The places were huge, not the smaller Georgian houses that you see a lot in period dramas,” where smaller scale furniture choices are more plentiful. “There were very little choices of the large scale furnishings” said Alleway. Even the wonderful London prop houses Farley’s and Eccentric Trading, though plentiful in many areas, did not have all the pieces in the scale that was required.

So, Alleway set about having all of the beds built from scratch. The beds and bedrooms in this film are in frequent use. Consideration had to not only be given to the period and style, but had to fit with each room—the scale, the height, the action taking place.

Because three of the *Duke’s* many homes are seen in this film, Alleway and Production Designer Michael Carlin established

a palette and style for each one. Complicating their execution of this plan was the fact that the one main home of Devonshire was in reality comprised of 10 different stately homes in various counties, sometimes 75-150 miles apart. Each home had to be given the white-glove treatment, then revamped with wallpaper in most cases, furniture, drapes and dressing in the same style, all while under the stringent rules of the National Trust. Contrary to the pace of filmmaking, there is no rushing when working with these historic homes.

Consider that the ‘practical lighting’ in this film were massive candlelit chandeliers and ornate candelabras. Alleway chose a particular style for each household to reinforce the illusion that we were still under one roof. Logistically, it was quite another story. Often the multitude of candelabras might be filmed one ►



Garden party dessert marquee
BOTTOM *The Duke and Duchess of Devonshire*
[Ralph Fiennes & Keira Knightly] entertain
sumptuously on a regular basis.

Photos by Nick Wall © 2008 Paramount Vantage. All rights reserved.



day for the massive dining room and be required to be in a Ballroom 150 miles away the next morning.

Alleyway, having decorated 18th Century era projects before, returned to her vast research images of plates and paintings to develop the look of each of the three principal homes visited in the script. *Devonshire* was the newest home, built after the *Duke* wed the *Duchess*, very fashionable, grand and sumptuous; Chatsworth, which houses the *Duke's Library* and *Office*, much more austere, with very traditional 'older' period colors, a faded grandeur from the 17th Century; and *Bath*, which was their holiday retreat, filled with flowers and offering respite and freedom. The common theme was the grand, spare opulence, compared to other stories of the same era which depict the middle class and its more cluttered environs.

Alleyway develops the character through color and fabrics. For example, when she found the fabric for the *Duke's* bed, the

Devonshire palette fell into place. Consulting with Carlin, they fleshed out how they could adapt each palette into the various locations and weighed the restrictions of each stately home to make a cohesive look. Having worked together several times, they share a mutual trust that gives way to creative freedom.

Among the other sets in the film were the *Georgian Theatre* and *Covent Garden*, each requiring extensive work and planning. The theatre, in reality located in Bristol, was slated for refurbishment and gave welcome freedom to the filmmakers to fashion exactly what the period theatre needed—seats removed, massive candlelit chandeliers hung, draperies built. *Covent Garden* was shot on location in Greenwich, within a very short prep time. Much coordination was required; and Alleyway determined long in advance every market vendor, so extras could be cast appropriately and wardrobe and hairstyles could be in sync with the player's purpose in the scene. Since it was

a gathering place, it was rife with street sellers, beer drinkers, street performers, prostitutes and politicians.

Set Decorators' responsibilities in Europe encompass a bit more than in the States. Alleyway and her team of florists, food stylists, drapesmen and propmen elegantly laid the lavish Hogarth-inspired feasts, which were the hallmark of this young couple's social circle. Huge tents (marquees) were adapted, draped and laden with food displays befitting royalty.

Alleyway has worked with most of her crew before and has a well-founded trust in them, especially in light of the challenging logistics. Even though some sets may look spare, a great deal of work and planning went into each one. The pure joy for Alleyway: the fabrics and the palettes that define character. As she states, "I'm not an interior designer, my job as a set decorator is to create a world and backdrop for the characters, an atmosphere to enhance the story line." ■

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SDSA

Set Decorators Society of America

From the President

I hope you enjoy this issue of SET DECOR, spotlighting a diverse group of beautifully realized feature films. Each set decorator credited has logged hundreds of hours to produce the sets, but no set decorator works alone. Legions of lead persons, set dressing crews, drapers, upholsterers and specialized vendors have also put in an enormous amount of work to achieve the end result you see in the pages of SET DECOR. Every set decorator relies on and is grateful for the huge number of talented and hardworking people who contribute, to make every set what it needs to be within the framework of the film, as well as staying within the budget and time frame. Set Decorating is a truly collaborative craft.

As set decorators, we work with a wide range of people in pursuit of our common goal. We read, research and simply observe, adding to our ever-expanding knowledge of the world around us. We integrate this knowledge into the sets we create, interpreting story, characters and plot. As you can see from the immense variety of sets in this issue of SET DECOR, set decorators are charged to embrace many styles and periods. It can be great fun to go from pure research to the final realization of a set and along the way we always learn something new and meet new and interesting people.

The SDSA is dedicated to educating the world on what we do and how we do it. We welcome you into our world of reality and fantasy, light and color.

Laura Richarz
SDSA President

From the Chairman of the Board

Dear Set Decorator enthusiasts,

Congratulations to SET DECOR for another beautiful tribute to Set Decorators and the craft that we love so much. SET DECOR has set a high standard to showcase the work of our peers and as a member of the SDSA I am proud of the level of professionalism and creativity represented.

The Set Decorators Society of America reaches the ripe old age of fifteen this year, and we have many things to be proud of: our membership is strong, our goals are ever evolving, and participation is healthy. This year for the first time, Set Decorators will share the limelight at The Art Directors Guild Awards, for their contribution to the look of the nominated and winning projects. This is certainly something to celebrate.

We mourn the recent loss of our dear friend and 2006 SDSA Lifetime Achievement Award recipient Lee Poll. Miss Poll, a real lady and fine example to us all, will truly be missed. We also lost and would like to recognize one of our founding members, Warren Welch.*

My time with the SDSA as Vice President, President and, for the last two years, Chairman of the Board, has taught me to be more patient, open-minded and cautious. I have also learned that all things come to an end, and as the majordomo of this organization, it is time for me to hand the keys over to someone else. I encourage each SDSA member to get involved in a committee, and to reach as high as you can. Run for the board, then for office. Strive for excellence and achieve it.

Sincerely
Daryn-Reid Goodall
SDSA Board Chair

[Due to term limits, Daryn-Reid Goodall will be stepping down as Board chair later this year. We wish him well and thank him sincerely for all of his encouragement and support. Daryn, take a brief break and come back!]

**Detailed tributes appear on the SDSA website*

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Photos by Erik Neldner

Purveyors, set decorators, art directors, production designers, crew members and families caught up with old and new friends, trolled for treasures at the “Bizarre Bazaar” and snapped up research at the “Designer Book Sale”. Product placement houses hosted lounges and the “Raising Dough” bake sale, replete with pink poodles and sculpted layer cakes, was a sellout success. ■

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SDSA Set Decorator members' work is represented in a diverse collection of films from 2008

APPALOOSA Linda Sutton-Doll • **BABY MAMA** Susan Bode-Tyson • **BEDTIME STORIES** Nancy Gilmore • **BOTTLE SHOCK** Barbara Munch • **CLOVERFIELD** Robert Greenfield • **THE CURIOUS CASE OF BENJAMIN BUTTON** Victor J Zolfo • **THE DAY THE EARTH STOOD STILL** Elizabeth Wilcox • **DEFIANCE** Veronique Melery • **DEFINITELY, MAYBE** Ellen Christiansen • **DOUBT** Ellen Christiansen • **DRILLBIT TAYLOR** KC Fox • **THE DUCHESS** Rebecca Alleway • **EAGLE EYE** Cindy Carr • **THE EXPRESS** Denise Pizzini • **THE EYE** Brenda Meyers-Ballard • **FIRST SUNDAY** Halina Siwolop • **FORGETTING SARAH MARSHALL** KC Fox • **FOUR CHRISTMASSES** Jan Pascale • **FROST/NIXON** Susan Benjamin • **FUNNY GAMES** Becca Meis DeMarco • **GET SMART** Leslie E Rollins • **GHOST TOWN** Debra Schutt • **HAMLET 2** Wendy Barnes • **HANCOCK** Rosemary Brandenburg • **THE HAPPENING** Jay Hart • **HELLBOY II: THE GOLDEN ARMY** Elli Griff • **THE HOTTIE AND THE NOTTIE** Peggy Paola • **THE HOUSE BUNNY** Tracey Doyle • **THE INCREDIBLE HULK** Cal Loucks • **INDIANA JONES AND THE KINGDOM OF THE CRYSTAL SKULL** Larry Dias • **IRON MAN** Lauri Gaffin • **JUMPER** Hilton Rosemarin • **LAKEVIEW TERRACE** Don Diers • **LEATHERHEADS** Jan Pascale • **THE LOVE GURU** Gordon Sim • **MARLEY & ME** Hilton Rosemarin • **MAX PAYNE** Carolyn Loucks • **MEET DAVE** Robert Greenfield, Elaine O'Donnell SDSA (NY Unit) • **MIDNIGHT MEAT TRAIN** Andi Brittan • **MILK** Barbara Munch • **MISS PETTIGREW LIVES FOR A DAY** Katie Spencer • **THE MUMMY: TOMB OF THE DRAGON EMPEROR** Anne Kuljian • **ONE MISSED CALL** Frank Galline • **OVER HER DEAD BODY** Tara Stephenson • **PINEAPPLE EXPRESS** Robert Kensinger • **QUANTUM OF SOLACE** Anna Pinnock • **REDBELT** Sandy Reynolds-Wasco • **REVOLUTIONARY ROAD** Debra Schutt • **SEVEN POUNDS** Leslie A Pope • **SEX AND THE CITY** Amy Wells SDSA (LA Unit) • **THE SISTERHOOD OF THE TRAVELING PANTS 2** George DeTitta, Jr • **SOUL MEN** Brenda Meyers-Ballard • **THE SPIDERWICK CHRONICLES** Jan Pascale • **STEP UP 2 THE STREETS** Jennifer Gentile • **STOP-LOSS** Sandy Reynolds Wasco • **STRANGE WILDERNESS** Claire Kaufman • **STREET KINGS** Decorator Hilton Rosemarin • **SWING VOTE** Marcia Calosio • **TOWELHEAD** Fainche MacCarthy • **21** Tracey A Doyle • **TYLER PERRY'S MEET THE BROWNS** C Lance Totten • **TYLER PERRY'S THE FAMILY THAT PREYS** C Lance Totten • **UNTRACEABLE** Cindy Carr • **W.** Mel Cooper • **WHAT HAPPENS IN VEGAS** Susan Bode-Tyson • **YES MAN** Victor J Zolfo

Editors note: If a film released in 2008 does not appear on this list, the set decorator is not currently a member of the SDSA. Set decorators (only) listed. Many SDSA associate members and innumerable crew members helped make each project possible.

2008 Emmys



Photo courtesy of Matthew Imaging © 2008

CONGRATULATIONS!

Set Decorator Susan Eschelbach SDSA and Production Designer Stephan [Steve] Olson with their Emmys received for Outstanding Art Direction For A Multi-Camera Series, for their work on the multi-set, multi-camera series HOW I MET YOUR MOTHER.
Congratulations to all Emmy recipients and nominees for Outstanding Art Direction!

The Curious Case of Benjamin Button

Continued from page 64
is supposed to be like. The bordello was fantastic. That was actually a real place. And we had so much help from the city of New Orleans, especially in terms of the things that we wanted to do to the restaurant rows and how we wanted to bring gas lamps back...it was really a concerted effort in a lot of ways.

And then turning around and re-creating some sets onstage.

Yes, the tugboat was amazing, as was all the stage stuff in the way that it really completed the practical house we had shot in for months. Sometimes you've saved money...you've done the luxurious thing of being able to do the exteriors and whatever you can on location, and then you get to the stage to do the re-creation of that and they're kind of piss-poor. It almost takes the wind out of your sails. But the great thing about Don Burt is that you go there and you look at the interiors that are built onstage and they look more like the place than the place did.

Don and Victor have expressed their appreciation of your openness, your accessibility and your generosity in allowing everyone to go explore the direction they held.

Well, that's my job, it seems to me—hire good people and get out of their way. I mean Victor is going to do more research than I will ever have the patience to do. My attitude has always been, "Get the most out of your people as you can and then take credit for it!" ■

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Continued from page 25

optimistic and futuristic quality.

Benjamin: The back wall of the upstairs lounge was a graphic that we created in-house that we then printed on carpet. [See photo page 4.]

SET DECOR: Final note on bringing this historical moment to life in film?

Benjamin: We had such an extraordinary team, including our art department coordinators and research department. With their help and visual references, we were able to shop confidently and quickly—well versed in what we were seeking. Also, our hard-working teams of set dressers were able to access our “visual bible” when dressing the sets. This project was very difficult but incredibly rewarding. We shot over 80 sets in 40 days. I think my experience working in one-hour episodic television helped me keep up with the pressures and demands of this schedule. Michael’s research and designs, the collaborative aspect that Ron Howard brings to his films, and the opportunity to give the audience a window into history made it an exciting and enriching experience. ■

INDIANA JONES

AND THE
KINGDOM OF THE CRYSTAL SKULL

Continued from page 77

covered with a sediment layer of vine and moss. So we would go in and dress, and then half cover it and make it disappear! Nicole Zaks found a type of fiber that when layered over all the skeletons and artifacts created a beautiful gossamer effect, but it was incredibly labor intensive. The Ladish brothers took the skeleton-making VERY seriously—a little macabre but well worth the effort.

SD: For the *Peruvian* rainforest, the production moved to the big island of Hawaii. You dealt with the elements of the jungle and sea for the film *PIRATES OF THE CARIBBEAN*. Tell us about the logistics of this shoot.

Dias: What I have found when I’ve shot in Hawaii is that when you get back to your hotel at the end of the day, where everyone has been enjoying the sun and the sea, they look at you like you are a freak because you are covered in mud from head to toe.

Lead Brett Smith and I had quite a time there battling the elements. It was very physical shooting in the jungle, dressing out vehicles such as the giant tree cutting machine and the military trucks that would be split in half.

We also dressed the interior of the main tent of the military

encampment to be ready as a cover set in Hawaii. We had readied the tent interior set on the island with dirt skins to cover the warehouse floor, doubled 95% of the dressing and, as with so many cover sets, didn’t shoot it. We then air-freighted the unique set pieces to the Sony stage where it was finally filmed.

SD: The *Temple of Akator* was built on gigantic soundstages at Universal, Sony and Warner Bros. Tell us about that experience!

Dias: We did build so much practically. The sets were only enhanced with CGI, so when the doors open in the *Artifact Corridor of the Temple*, the action is COMPLETELY real. The retracting staircase was an engineering feat, the stairs very realistic to the ancient sites. I’ve been to Chichen Itza and Coba—they are great to ascend and pure hell to descend. Again the set devoured the dressing, plus we had to dress for water-flooding action scenes.

SD: Please talk about the collaboration between you and Production Designer Guy Dias.

Dias: INDY was my first experience working with Guy as Production Designer. We had worked on jobs together before when he was an illustrator. His amazing drawing ability allows him to be incredibly clear about what he wants, because he can literally draw it right in front of you. He is also tremendously eloquent and animated. Guy is tireless, with an amazingly positive energy. He trusted in me and inspired me, as well as my crew, which is the perfect kind of collaboration. ■

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Continued from page 19

eventually he had some antiques brought to San Francisco. So we put a few nice pieces of furniture in his apartment later on...you do see the apartment several times in the film. It’s very quietly lit, because most of the scenes are at night. It’s very moody...and very lovely. Harris Savides, the director of photography, is just amazing. He’s done 3 or 4 films with Gus before and they have an incredible working relationship.

We had to have the apartment done a month in advance for Sean, because he wanted to live there for a week before we started filming. We told him that everything wasn’t exactly what we were going to use, because the filming of the apartment came later in the schedule. But we brought it to that period and placed what we could, so he would feel comfortable with it. I don’t know how much time he spent there, but he had the run of the place for about a week or two and we stayed away.

Since this was filmed on location in San Francisco, the apartment we used was up two flights of stairs. No elevators, narrow hallways. We also re-created the City Hall offices in the old Federal Building downtown. We had to be on our toes

“I was elected to open up a dialogue for the sensitivity of all people, of all the problems. The problems that affect this city affect all of us.”
—Harvey Milk 1977




with logistics. We had a small window of time everywhere we were, steep hills and a tightly congested city to negotiate trucks through. We had a 3-page list of 90+ sets. All the little vignettes mattered, too, because everything had to be period correct.

It wasn’t a huge budget film, but everyone gave it everything they had. There wasn’t anything to not like about it. Everyone became emotionally involved.





* * * * *

“I felt honored to be a part of this movie....Individuality must be celebrated, and people must be reminded of that. There is still a struggle for so many young people today. Hopefully, MILK will awaken the need for people to do something against intolerance and bigotry.”
—Actor Victor Garber [San Francisco Mayor George Moscone]

Munch: That speaks for all of us. ■



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resources

MILK *Pages 14-19*
Los Angeles, various sets: Universal Studios Property, Alpha Medical, Omega Cinema Props
San Francisco, various sets: John Favors Liquidators, Oakland; Omega Salvage, Berkeley; Urban Ore, Berkeley

FROST/NIXON *Pages 20-25*
Plaza Hotel:
Carpet: S.J. Biren
Furniture: Omega Cinema Props
Flowers: Flower Art Inc.
Hilton Hotel:
Wall sconces: Eccola
Wall paper: Astek Wallcovering
Carpet: S.J. Biren
Round Table: Roman Deco
Artwork: Malissa Feruzzi Shriver of Feruzzi Fine Art
Lamps: City Review
Mirror: Lawson Fenning
Nixon Library:
Piano: Jan's Auctioneers
Sconces/Chandelier/Drapery Hdwre: Arte de Mexico
Dog portrait: Jefferson West Antiques
Carpet: Carpet Spectrum
Photographs: Nixon Library, Corbis, Nat'l Archives
Books: The Strand Bookstore, NYC
Blinds: American Screen and Window
Drapery: F. Schumacher
Furnishings: Charles & Charles
Nixon's Chair fabric: Knoll Textiles
Airplanes: Aero Mock-Ups
Fabric: Knoll Textiles
Food stylist: Chris Oliver
Fabrics, general:
Beacon Hill/Robert Allen, Duralée Fabrics, Fabricut, F Schumacher, F&S Fabrics, Jeffrey Stevens, Knoll Textiles, Kravet, Maharam

WV, *Pages26-28*
White House Bedroom:
Chairs: Universal Studios Property
Case furniture: Weirs, Dallas, TX
Bench: Ashley's, Shreveport, LA
Oriental rugs: Ark-la Tex Oriental Rugs, Shreveport, LA
Framing: Lytle's, Shreveport, LA
Flowers: Consider the Lilies, Bossier City, LA
Oval Office:
Carpet printing: Astek Wallcoverings
Bronzes and busts: House of Props, Warner Bros Property
Carpet: International Flooring
Drapery: Universal Studios Drapery
Resolution desk: Universal Studios Property
Paintings: Shreveport artists, thru legallyhungart.com
Framing: Lytle's, Shreveport, LA
Flowers: Consider the Lilies, Bossier City, LA
Furniture: Office Furniture Resources, Bossier City, LA
Side chairs: The Englishman, Dallas, TX
Sofas: Cutting Corners, Dallas TX
Governor's Office:
Sam Houston painting: Reproduced thru legallyhungart.com
Desk and chairs: Dallas Desk, Dallas, TX
Armoire-Ashely's: Shreveport, LA
Framing: Hollywood Cinema Arts; Lytel's, Shreveport, LA
Oriental rugs: Ark-la Tex Oriental Rugs, Shreveport, LA
George Bush, Sr. Vice Presidential Office:
Lighting: Illumination Lighting, Sherman Oaks, CA
Drapery, sofa upholstery: Universal Studios Drapery
Desk, credenza, chairs: Office Furniture Resources, Bossier City, LA
Flowers: Consider the Lilies, Bossier City, LA
Oriental rugs: Ark-la Tex Oriental Rugs, Shreveport, LA
Fraternity House:
Vintage items & furnishings: RC Vintage, Universal Studios Property
Fraternity banner: Universal Studios Drapery
Crawford Ranch:
Bronze pedestal: House of Props
Western sculpture: Lennie Marvin Enterprises
Carpeting: Linoleum City
Dining table, bar stools, coffee table: Omega Cinema Props
Upholstery: Universal Studios Drapery
Breakfront: Ashley Furniture, Shreveport, LA
Flowers: Consider the Lilies, Bossier City, LA

APPALOOSA *Pages 30-35*
Boston Hotel:
Rentals from Los Angeles:
Drapery: Warner Bros Drapery
Furniture: Omega Cinema Props, Warner Bros Property, Universal Property
Lighting: Warner Bros Property, House of Props, Omega Cinema Props, Lehman's
Upright piano: Omega CP-Four
Rugs: Warner Bros Property
Taxidermy: Warner Bros Property
New Mexico Vendors:
Rentals: Big House Props, Santa Fe
Back bar: Munden Family Restaurant, Springer, NM
Baby grand piano: Santa Fe Music and Piano Store
Rugs: Jackalope, NM
New Mexico purchases: Antique Connection, Rough Rider Antiques, Jespersen's Cache, Barrymore's, Morningside Antiques, Simmons & Simmons, Plaza Antiques
Paris Cafe:
Rentals from Los Angeles:
Furniture & Dressing: Warner Bros Property, House of Props
New Mexico Vendors:
Furniture & Dressing: Legacy Antiques, Rough Riders Antiques, Antiques and Things, Queen's Ransom, Big House Props, World Market, Hobby Lobby
Exterior Appaloosa & R & R Ranch:
Bellows: Rick Enterprises
Barrels, trunks, animal taxidermy: David Baumann
Wheels, wagon, farm implements: Vernon Stoddard, Las Vegas, NM
Wagons: Santa Fe Stagecoach Line
Straw: Ranch Way Feed
Exterior: Lehman's; Big House Props
Train Station clock: Stephen's Consignment
Earl Mays Bar:
Bar: built
Tables: Bonanza Creek
Chairs & lighting: Big House Props
Bar glasses: Pete Garcia
Taxidermy: David Baumann
Artwork: Reproduced from cleared archived sources
Stove: Mike Lovato
Cole's House & Whore's Bedroom:
Furniture: Warner Bros Property, Universal Property
New Mexico vendors: House of Old Things, Legacy Antiques, Plaza Antiques, Albuquerque Mercado, Espana Y Mas, Antique Coop, Antique Specialties.
Marshall's Office:
Rentals from Los Angeles:
Chairs: Omega CP-Four
Desks, smalls: Warner Bros Property
New Mexico vendors:
Stove: Mike Lovato
Maps: Simmons & Simmons
Lighting: Big House Props, Lehman's, Cumberland
Smalls: Barrymore's, Antique Specialties, Plaza Antiques
Beauville Town, Austin, TX:
Texas rentals: Wilson Clements, Chester M Anderson, Don Yarton's, El Paso Import Co, Fantastic Finds
Texas purchases: Santo Bulto, Triple S Feed, Living Desert, Antique Specialties

DOUBT *Pages48-50*
All are NY, unless noted
Principal's Office:
Desk: Eclectic/Encore Props
Center table, church print: Chatsworth Auction House
Marmoleum Flooring: Carpet Time
File Cabinets: Moon River Chattel
Small tables: Housing Works Thrift, Old Goode Things
Desk chair: TriCounty Office Furniture
Floor lamps, hanging lamps: City Knickerbocker
Framing: Chelsea Frames
Church Altar:
Fabric for linens: Harry Zarin, Joe's Fabric, NY Elegant Fabric, M&J Trim
Construction of linens: Bethel Studios
Lectern: Irreplaceable Artifacts
Altar candlesticks, torchieres, bookstands: Newel Art Galleries
Classroom:
Hanging lights: City Knickerbocker
Hardware: Old Goode Things
Student desks: Omega Cinema Props (L.A.)
Classroom supplies: Barclay
Resources Continued on page 98 ►
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resources

SEVEN POUNDS *Pages 52-54*
Thomas Living Room/Entry Hall:
 Antique Japanese door Coffee table and small articles: Japanache
 Japanese furnishings, ceramics and artworks: McMullen Antiques
 Photographs: Steven Rood Photography, Angela Hanka, John Huggins, Tom Baril
 Oil Painting: Michael Marlowe
 Sofa, Loveseat, Ottoman: Restored/reupholstered by Omega Cinema Props
 Sheers, roman shades, soft goods manufacture: Drapemaster Brad Curry, Warner Bros
 Drapery, F&S Fabric
 Soft Goods Dyeing: A Dyeing Art
 Soft goods rentals and purchases: Objects, Omega, Warner Bros, Barclay Butera,
 Nest, Courtney's Antiques, Target
 Rugs: Rug Warehouse, Omega, Objects, Pico Modern
 Books: Opamp, Cosmopolitan Book Shop, Faux Library, Omega, Amazon,
 Barnes & Noble
 Floral Design: Andres Floral & Event Design
 Specialty smalls: Ci.pher, Pico Modern, 43:5 Vintage Modern Home
 Upholstered pieces, case goods: Lawson-Fenning, Floor Model, NoHo Modern
 Teak Benches: Manufactured/upholstered at Warner Bros Upholstery
 Lighting: Seva Home, Rewire, Fantasy Lighting, Craig Olsen, Design Modern
 Framing: U-Frame-It
 Outdoor Furnishings: California Living, Silho, The Patio Collection

CURIOUS CASE OF BENJAMIN BUTTON *Pages 56-64*
Key vendors, Los Angeles & national:
 Vintage wallcovering reproductions: Astek Wallcoverings
 Vintage artwork & photography: Hollywood Studio Gallery
 Vintage bureau and table top dressing: History for Hire
 Vintage art, photography, furniture: Omega Cinema Props
 Light fixtures: Practical Props
 Vintage bathroom fixtures: Square Deal Plumbing
 Misc. wardrobe as set dressing: Western Costume
 Circus tent: Dorton's, Riverside, CA
 Cloth covered wire and vintage plugs: Sundial Wire, Northhampton, MA
Key vendors, New Orleans:
 Light fixtures & furniture: La Belle Nouvelle Orleans
 Furniture, light fixtures, unique items: Bush Antiques
 Furniture, artwork, ceramics: Magazine Antique Mall
 Furniture, light fixtures, clocks: Dodge Field Antiques
 Fabric and drapery manufacturing: Probst Decorating
 Gas and electric Lights: Bevolo
 Mid-century furniture, lighting: Neophobia
 Light fixtures: Ricca Demolishing Corp
 Gas lamps: French Quarter Lanterns
 Furniture, artwork: Top Drawer Antiques

SOUL MEN *Pages 66-69*
Floral arrangements in shapes of guitar and cross:
 Sandy Rose Floral Inc
Various sets:
 From California: 20th Century Props; Cinema Paper Resources; Hand Prop Room;
 Lennie Marvin; Charter Furniture, El Monte, CA
 Local to Shreveport, Louisiana: Cirque de Freak, David Carroll Drapery; KaBloom,
 Nader's Custom Framing, River City Antique Mall,
 Shreveport Music

INDIANA JONES *Pages 70-77*
Various sets:
 Omega Cinema Props, 20th Century Props, History for Hire, Hand Prop Room, House
 of Props Art Deco LA, E.C. Props, Hollywood Studio Gallery, Independent Studio
 Services, Lennie Marvin, Modern Props, Ob•jects, Premiere Props, Prop Services West,
 Sony Pictures Property,

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