

# Arts & Entertainment

## Making a film in two days

*Richmond-raised filmmaker tests his creative capacity in making a 10-minute short*

by Matthew Hoekstra

Staff Reporter

Armed with a camera, a handful of actors, a tiny crew and some brewing creativity, Allan Attridge set out on a wild 48-hour ride to make the best short film of his career.

In two days, Attridge's team had to create a film that incorporated a closet, a photograph of raging water, a sound bite from a Charlton Heston movie and a yo-yo.

Attridge emerged from his apartment, where most of the picture was filmed, 38 hours later with the polished "Things Unsaid," which runs for just under 10 minutes.

The 31-year-old Steveston Secondary grad's team was one of 43 to participate in the seventh annual ReelFast 48 Hour Film Festival, Vancouver's independent filmmaking challenge. The event is open to teams up to 10 people who write, shoot and edit a film using an "inspiration package."

On Aug. 12 at 5 p.m., the start of the 48-hour festival, each team received a random sound bite, photograph, location idea and a surprise. Each element had to be worked into a film no longer than 10 minutes.

"Things Unsaid" was screened Tuesday at Performance Works on Granville Island, and could be one of the top 10 films screened at the gala awards event this Saturday at the Commodore Ballroom. Being named one of the top films wasn't what Attridge necessarily wanted when he signed on, but after seeing the sharp finished product, his thoughts have changed.

Attridge, who plays for the Richmond Autobody Budgies baseball team, mostly shot corporate functions under the banner "ehsquared entertainment" since graduating from Victoria Motion Picture School in 1998. He entered the contest to reinvigorate his life as a filmmaker.

"I wanted a creative jumpstart. I went to film school to make movies, but life got in the way of that," he says.

Attridge assembled four young actors (all under 24) and three other crew members—including his equipment-building father—at his apartment at 5:39 p.m. during filming weekend to go over their inspiration package. By midnight, the team's blank slate had transformed into a rough script and all went home for some sleep.

Attridge, however, facing the



Seeking new inspiration for his filmmaking career of mostly routine corporate work, Allan Attridge (with camera) signed on for the ReelFast 48 Hour Film Festival.

task of directing, lighting, sound and editing, stayed up.

By 8 a.m., everyone was back. The actors, all of varying experience, mostly improvised their lines and pulled them off convincingly in the finished film.

"I've never worked with anybody of that calibre before," says Attridge, who only slept for a couple hours during the weekend. "I learned so much about acting with these guys in the day we shot."

**"It's tough to tell a whole story in 10 minutes, but we wanted to do something that people can relate to."**

—Allan Attridge

The film is about a woman who has a hard time expressing herself. She seeks the comfort of her closet to outwardly express her feelings.

"It's tough to tell a whole story in 10 minutes, but we wanted to do something that people can relate to."

The image of water splashing and the sound bite were worked into the character of Hope, an obsessive artist who makes videos and paintings about water. The yo-yo was neatly incorporated into the film by a house guest, who, with the help of his popular string toy, helps break down fears of the woman who seeks a closet for solace.

The Heston quote comes from *Soylent Green*.

All left the experience with new inspiration to work in film, says Attridge, who adds it's easy to be filled with vigor as a film graduate, but much more difficult to become a successful filmmaker.

"It's not like you leave film

school and the next thing you know you're at Sundance. It's a long way from being an overnight success."

Attridge says he's now encouraged by new mediums to market movies (ie: Internet) and the affordability of digital equipment.

"The only thing it's separating you from them is your thinking you're not good enough," he says. "There's the potential for indy producers to go out and get stuff out there now."

Kathleen Duborg, executive producer and founder of the ReelFast festival, says its goal is to encourage filmmakers and creative people from a range of experience to take risks and give them a forum to experiment.

"It's this kind of thing that hopefully puts the creative juices to their maximum and gives people a chance to be as creative as anyone in the world and come up with ideas and things they never thought possible," she said.