

# Production company pays actors with beer

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Park. Roughly 40 people attended the first screening.

"For an 11-minute movie, that's pretty good," Haufschild said.

Jackman said "Eternal Struggle" is the film they get the most feedback on.

"That's kind of our big one," he said.

The film is also the subject of a mystery. Minary said an acquaintance of the group told them he saw "Eternal Struggle" when it was shown before a film in a Seattle theater.

"The kid described exactly what shots were in the movie and what shots weren't," Minary said.

The members of Plainview said no print of the film had been sent anywhere near Seattle by any of them, and they don't know how it ended up there.

No mysterious prints have turned up for Plainview's second film, "Cable," but the filmmakers are proud of it, anyway. The film boasts a 10-person cast and a 30-minute running time, and it was a lot harder to make, they said.

Getting everyone's schedules worked out when the actors knew they weren't going to be paid was tough, Haufschild said.

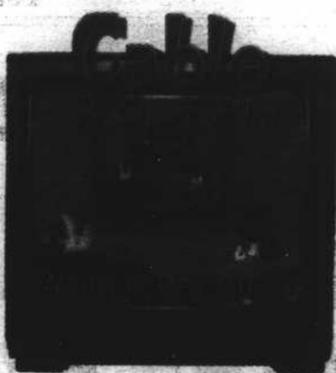
"They don't like to hear that they have to show up at 8 (a.m.) on Sundays," he said. "It's good that they're our friends. We paid them in pizza and beer."

He said the film was slightly more mainstream and dialogue-driven than "The Eternal Struggle."

"It's related to our generation," Minary said. "How we've grown up on TV, with TV in our minds."

Haufschild said they wrote the characters to be played by people they knew.

"Cable" was screened at Rogues Gallery, but it almost didn't happen. The bar, which is usually closed on Sundays, was going to hold a special Sunday all-ages screening of the film. An hour before the show, Haufschild said, the owner called and told him the show had to be canceled because the bar couldn't hold an all-ages event. Haufschild talked him into holding the screening, but it had to be for an audience 21 and older. The show was held, and 40 to 50



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people showed up.

The members, who cite the Coen Brothers, John Hughes, Kids in the Hall, Monty Python and the Farrelly Brothers as influences, currently are working on several projects.

"We always have 15 irons in the fire," Minary said.

Haufschild is going to rewrite his script, "Pray," that he's been working on for years. King also has a feature-length script, "Pursuit of Happiness," that he hopes to finish soon. The group is collaborating on a script for a road movie, "The Search for Wendell."

"Someday that movie will be our calling card," Minary said.

More immediately, Minary and Haufschild are planning on shooting a short film, "Under Pressure," after the holiday season.

While the group members are proud of their short films, they look at them as practice for full-length features.

"The ultimate goal is a full-length feature," Haufschild said. "The shorts are exercises."

King said Plainview is one of the few groups making narrative films in Lincoln, but Minary said more people are starting to try. But Plainview is still distinct for one reason.

"What makes us different is we are dealing with a super-ultra-low budget," Haufschild said.

Jackman agrees.

"People ask us about our budget, and we say pizza, beer, smokes and pie."

# Filmmakers will go digital

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audiences who buy the tickets.

"They don't look at us as individuals. They look at us as money machines," she said. "Going to the movies now is like a series of bad blind dates, a blind date you don't want to talk about."

Foster said all is not lost. She said most of her students were tired of stale films and ready for something new.

"People are already turning around," she said. "Even my least-informed students are tired of Hollywood product."

Ladely agreed with Foster somewhat but said he was more optimistic about the state of independent filmmaking.

He said Hollywood was shooting itself in the foot by spending more and more on films and actors and has been more likely to distribute independent films. He said most major studios have an independent film department, and they help those films get into theaters.

"There's a burgeoning low-budget scene," Ladely said. "Audiences have gone to that side. There are fewer and fewer blockbusters lately."

Ladely said the cheaper digital technology would help independent filmmakers get their stories to the public.

"As long as that's free and open, it makes for a much better society," he said. "When things are expensive,

they're controlled by a few people."

Ladely said he hopes film becomes a more accessible medium in the next millennium.

"What I'm really enjoying, and what I want to see more of, is accessibility," he said. "It's just been a white man's game. That's changing slowly, but not fast enough for me. People of color, you don't see them as executives. That's got to change. Gays and lesbians are making some of the best films right now."

While Ladely, Foster and Mason all expressed discontent with the Hollywood system, they were optimistic about many films and filmmakers, both independent and mainstream.

All three mentioned Payne, an Omaha native and director of "Election" and "Citizen Ruth," as a beacon of hope. Payne has used Omaha talent on both his cast and crew and has been able to get widespread distribution for his smart, offbeat and personal films.

They also mentioned other rays of light.

"One that's impressed me is Harmony Korine," Ladely said about the writer of "Kids" and director of "Gummo" and "Julien Donkey-Boy." "Gummo" was incredible. He's not somebody who makes it easy for the viewer."

Mason said Woody Allen is someone who continues to push the envelope and try to do new things. She also

mentioned Omaha filmmakers like Andy Anderson and the Northsea Productions company.

Foster said films such as "La Promesse," "The Cruise" and "Run Lola Run" boded well for the future.

"Run Lola Run" signals a whole new type of filmmaking. It's free of narrative conventions and invites the audience to be more participatory."

Things may be changing at the cineplex, too. With smart, original films such as "American Beauty" and "Being John Malkovich" gaining widespread distribution, big studios may be more willing to take a chance on small films with good stories.

And there's always undiscovered talent. Future filmmakers are out there, writing the scripts and shooting the footage for the classics of tomorrow.

"Go for it," Foster said. "Make these films. Pick up a digital camera. They're cheap."

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